

MENOPAUSE ACCESS, ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW SERVICE

CLINIC EFFICIENCY GUIDE

This document is intended for Pharmacists in Primary Care. However, it may also be used by other healthcare professionals (HCPs) in Primary Care, such as General Practitioners (GPs), Nurses, or any other relevant HCPs involved in initiating or developing a Menopause service.

Adverse events should be reported. Reporting forms and information can be found at <https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/> or search for MHRA Yellow Card in the Google Play or Apple App Store.

Adverse events should also be reported to Besins Healthcare (UK) Ltd. Drug Safety on 0203 862 0920 or Email: drugsafety@besins-healthcare.com.

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1. Addressing the need for Menopause Services

This clinic efficiency resource guide forms part of the Menopause Access, Assessment and Review Service (MAARS). It contains practical advice and suggestions which can be implemented into your practice to maximise time and internal resource, whilst enhancing your patients' experience.

The Women's Health Strategy for England was published in July 2022¹ and renewed in 2026², with the objective of improving women's health, wellbeing and experience of the healthcare system

- The strategy was informed by over 160,000 women who took part in the biggest conversation in NHS history²
- The strategy recognises that women's healthcare can be further strengthened and that action is required at pace²
- The renewed strategy emphasises women's voice, choice and power in healthcare, supporting access to trusted information, informed decision-making and appropriate support²
- A key objective is to improve women's health outcomes and experiences of care, while reducing health inequalities and unwarranted variation in access to services²
- The strategy supports improving access to evidence-based menopause treatments, including hormone replacement therapy (HRT) where clinically appropriate²
- Improving healthcare professionals' knowledge and confidence in menopause management is recognised as an important enabler of better patient care²

The British Menopause Society (BMS) also made some key recommendations:³

- All healthcare professionals should have some understanding of the menopause and know where to signpost women for support and advice
- As the first port of call is to their GP for many women, it is critical that GPs are aware of the range of menopausal symptoms
- That each primary care team should have at least one nominated HCP with a special interest and knowledge of the menopause

2. A growing demand for Menopause Support

Around 54% (1401/2610) of women experiencing menopause symptoms seek menopause-related healthcare advice,⁴ driven by symptom severity, number of symptoms, and women's age

Approximately 13 million in the UK are currently perimenopausal or menopausal.⁵

All women will experience menopause and menopause symptoms can severely impact a woman's quality of life.^{1,6}

The facts

- Up to 80–90% of women will have some symptoms when they go through the menopause⁶
- 25% of women describe their symptoms as severe and debilitating⁶
- One in ten (10%) women who worked during the menopause have left a job due to their symptoms⁷
- Three in five women (usually aged 45–55) were negatively affected by their menopausal symptoms⁸

3. Despite growing awareness, significant barriers remain

Greater knowledge and understanding of the menopause as well as better access to accurate information and support is needed so women can proactively manage their experience and ensure they remain healthy throughout their post-reproductive years.

Current menopause barriers include:¹

- Overcoming the stigma of menopause continues to be a taboo topic
- Limited research into female specific health issues such as menopause
- Availability of trusted and easy to understand information
- Geographical variation in access to services such as menopause clinics
- Lack of support and/or understanding in the workplace, although this is improving, and many larger corporations now have dedicated menopause policies within their HR function

Primary care can significantly improve patient experience⁹



Reducing the stigma associated with menopause



Ensuring high-quality, equitable menopause care



Improving information and education on menopause



Improving experience of the menopause in the workplace

4. Understanding menopause concerns

KEY FINDINGS:

108,813 individuals responded to DHSC 'Women's Health – 'Let's talk about it' survey, 2021¹⁰

- Only 9% said they had enough information about the menopause
- Many reported finding it difficult to access appropriate menopause care
- A lack of recognition of symptoms, by both women and healthcare professionals, with some symptoms being confused with other conditions
- Some healthcare professionals were reluctant to prescribe HRT
- A need for better menopause training for healthcare professionals
- Many want an increase in specialists and services to treat women's health conditions, such as the menopause
- Optimising the provision of information and education to women and professionals on women's health issues to improve health outcomes

The comprehensive responses to the 'Let's talk about it' survey helped to inform the aims and objectives of the Women's Health Strategy for England.^{1,10}

DHSC: Department for Health and Social Care.

5. Working together to share the load

General practice plays a pivotal role in promoting high quality menopause care for all and in recommending specialist referral where needed.¹¹

As the number of patients and demand for services continues to increase, time and capacity are both increasingly precious commodities for GPs and the extended primary care team. Every practice is different. Your primary care team may consist of multiple people with different skills and professional roles and will also link into other multidisciplinary team roles within the wider community.



For most practices having at least one nominated healthcare professional with a special interest in and knowledge of the menopause is ideal.³ Other practices may wish to share different aspects of running their menopause support service with multiple members of staff across their wider primary care team.

Your practice size may also dictate how you run your menopause service. Smaller practices may find it beneficial to offer a combined service with other small local surgeries (as part of a PCN) whilst larger practices with multiple GPs may prefer to get an external expert to run menopause support sessions for their patients.

Things to consider

- Who within your team is/are best suited to facilitate and implement a menopause service?
- What menopausal support does your practice currently offer?
- How can you improve your service to optimise time, resources and equity of access to menopause services?
- How can an approach be tailored to include next of kin, family, or friends who can better support women entering the service? This may be particularly helpful in some BAME communities, for example.

6. A menopause initiative in practice

Things to consider

A simple and effective initiative that can be offered by practices is to run group menopause support sessions. This creates a safe space for women to listen, learn, ask questions, and get the right support.

Tips to get started

- Ensure the session is run by a trained professional who has knowledge, empathy and listening skills
- Tailor sessions appropriately being respectful of time commitment for both healthcare professionals and patients
- Ensure each session contains useful and practical information
- Follow up with factsheets and signpost to trusted sources, please see the 'Additional Resources' section below
- Include time for questions at the end of the session
- If time allows break into smaller groups so attendees can talk with each other
- Can consider face to face, digital or hybrid sessions

7. Meeting patient needs

Menopause Social Groups

The Menopause Café¹² is a registered Charity and not-for-profit organisation. The first Menopause Café began in Perth, Scotland in June 2017, inspired by Kirsty Wark's BBC programme "Menopause and Me". It is run by volunteers and pop-up events have now spread across different parts of the UK and some states of the USA.

A Menopause Café is a discussion where the topics are chosen by the participants on the day. People, often strangers, gather to discuss menopause. Menopause Café events are open to anybody to attend including all genders and ages. They are social not information events, so do not have guest speakers, or promote any particular treatment or product.

The Menopause Café ethos¹²

- An accessible, respectful, and confidential space
- Open for all, regardless of gender or age
- Not intended to lead people to any conclusion, product, or course of action
- Operated on a not-for-profit basis only

To see if there is a local Menopause Café event near you, please Visit [Menopause Café](#)

Please note that Besins Healthcare (UK) Ltd. is not responsible for the content of the above sites and their inclusion does not necessarily imply a recommendation or endorse the views expressed within them.

These resources are for patient support and does not constitute or replace advice from their healthcare professionals.

Menopause Forums

Many menopause support groups and networks are now available online. These can be a useful option to suggest to patients who may be looking for additional support and reassurance that they are not alone.

Forums can be a good place for patients to learn more as well as hear other people's stories and experience. You may be able to find a local group. If there is not a local group available, there are many online communities available for women from all over the world.

National online forums

Peanut Menopause¹³

Peanut is an online community providing a safe space dedicated to helping women navigate perimenopause, menopause, and postmenopause. Peanut began with one mission: To make sure that no woman navigates womanhood alone. [Visit Peanut Menopause](#)

Menopause Matters¹⁴

An award winning, independent website providing up-to-date, accurate information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options. **Founded by Dr. Heather Currie, MBE.** [Visit Menopause Matters](#)

Daisy Network¹⁵

A menopause support group dedicated to providing information, support, and community for women diagnosed with Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI). We are the only UK charity solely focused on POI, offering medical and psychological support while advancing research into treatments and causes. [Visit The Daisy Network](#)

Menopause Social Groups

Pausitivity¹⁶

Two women with ONE simple aim – to make the world #KnowYourMenopause. An independent company offering a free support pack to help women understand what may be happening to their body and mind during menopause.

Each pack contains:¹⁶

- Help to recognise symptoms
- Questions to aid discussion at your doctor appointment
- Self-care tips and resources
- Advice on how to get support in the workplace

To find out more please visit [Pausitivity](#)

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8. Menopause in the workplace

Women of menopausal age are the fastest growing group in the workforce and are staying in work for longer than ever before.⁸ Therefore, it is vital that all peri- and post- menopausal staff, including those in your own practice, feel supported to stay well so they can continue to thrive in the workplace.

Research shows that:

- In a CIPD survey on 1,409 women experiencing menopause symptoms in 2019, two-thirds (65%) said they were less able to concentrate, and more than half (52%) said they feel less patient with clients and colleagues¹⁷
- One in ten women (10%), i.e., ~333,000 who worked during the menopause have left a job due to their symptoms⁷
- In a representative survey in 2022 of 4,014 UK women aged 45–55 who are currently or have previously experienced the perimenopause or the menopause, eight out of ten (80%) women say their employer hasn't shared information, trained staff, or put in place a menopause absence policy.⁷ Additionally, almost half (almost 50%) of women haven't approached their GPs and three in ten (30%) have seen delays in diagnosis⁷

Menopause is not just a gender or age issue, as it can also impact colleagues both directly or indirectly as well as affecting business operations through increased staff turnover, loss of experienced employees, reduced productivity, and low staff morale.¹⁸ Practice managers need to be aware and familiar with how physical and emotional menopausal symptoms may impact their staff so they can offer them support.¹⁹

Things to consider¹⁹

- Do you have a menopause workplace guidance policy in place at your practice?
- Is there an open and receptive culture around menopause?
- Do practice staff know where they can access health-related information and support?
- Can you link up with other local practices or surgeries to offer a menopause service for staff?
- Would an external menopausal service provider be helpful?
- Is menopause friendly uniform/workwear available?
- Are the facilities at your workplace menopause-friendly?

9. Additional resources

Information

Menopause and perimenopause help and support (NHS)²⁰

Visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/help-and-support/>

Eating well for the perimenopause and menopause (British Dietetic Association)²¹

Visit <https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/menopause-diet.html>

Supporting Women to get active during menopause (Women in Sport)²²

Visit <https://womeninsport.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Menopause-summary-report-FINAL.pdf>

Videos

Health Experience Insights²³

Videos of women talking about living with menopause and perimenopause

Visit <https://hexi.ox.ac.uk/menopause/overview>

Menopause App

BALANCE²⁴

Free app to track symptoms, access personalised expert content and share stories

Visit <https://balance-app.com/>

Charities & Services

MENOPAUSE MATTERS¹⁴

Award winning menopause information and support website run by GPs

Visit <https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/>

WOMENS HEALTH CONCERN²⁵

Visit <https://www.womens-health-concern.org>

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