

MENOPAUSE ACCESS, ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW SERVICE

OVERVIEW DOCUMENT

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.

Executive Summary

There are over 13 million women in the UK who are currently perimenopausal, newly postmenopausal, or menopausal.¹

Developing neighbourhood women's health services, building on women's health hubs, to improve women's access to care and enable more integrated service delivery is a core part of the Renewed Women's Health Strategy.²

Menopause care – current situation and future aspiration

- Women make up 51% of the population who will each experience menopause^{2,3}
- With the average life expectancy in the UK exceeding 80 years, many women are living in this postmenopausal phase from one third (33%) to one half (50%) of their lives⁴
- Despite menopause being a natural part of the ageing process, there can still be huge stigma attached to it and to women's health more widely³
- Up to 80–90% of women will have some symptoms when they go through the menopause with more than a third (33%) of women experiencing symptoms past the average of seven years⁵
- 25% of women describe their symptoms as severe and debilitating⁵
- A Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) survey in 2023 of over 2000 women aged 40–60 employed in the UK showed two thirds (67%) of women were negatively affected at work by their menopausal symptoms⁶
- Within this same survey, over half the respondents (53%) were able to think of a time when they were unable to go into work due to menopause symptoms⁶
- Duration of treatment should be individualised. No arbitrary limits should be placed on the dose of HRT, duration of usage or age of women taking treatment⁷
- The Renewed Women's Health Strategy aims to improve awareness of menopause symptoms and treatment options, helping women make informed choices about their care²
- The Renewed Women's Health Strategy aims to improve equitable access to high-quality, best-practice menopause care²

There are relevant key clinical guidelines and policy drivers

- National Guidelines (NICE NG23)⁸
- The Renewed Women's Health Strategy for England²
- British Menopause Practice Standards⁷

These key documents all highlight a growing need to increase the provision of high-quality menopause services in primary care, provide better education for healthcare professionals around awareness of menopausal symptoms and improve provision of education and support to women.

However, many barriers still exist

- Variation in provision of existing NHS menopause services and equity of access to these existing services³
- Gaps in menopause awareness, information and advice limit informed decision-making about care²
- Stigma, taboo and misinformation surrounding menopause deter women from seeking support^{2,3}
- Many workplaces have inadequate menopause services and policies with a lack of support and understanding³

How MAARS may help solve these challenges and address the unmet need

- General Practice plays a pivotal role in promoting and delivering high quality menopause care for all. MAARS offers a framework to address current variation and access to care
- The MAARS framework allows General Practice an opportunity to develop current menopause services or set up a new service led by a competent multidisciplinary healthcare team member
- MAARS enables competent pharmacists to lead the service thereby releasing GP capacity within the practice which will potentially improve patient outcomes, experience and satisfaction
- MAARS will support General Practice to become a role model for menopause friendly workplaces for staff

The Menopause Access, Assessment, and Review Service

The Menopause Access, Assessment and Review Service (MAARS) has been developed in collaboration with an expert multidisciplinary steering committee to assist healthcare professionals in creating and implementing comprehensive menopause services tailored to women's needs.

The service seeks to support Primary Care HCPs such as pharmacists and practice nurses in taking responsibility to set up and deliver menopause services.

Provision of a comprehensive toolkit will provide a framework for the service leads to establish a consistent approach to support service set up.

The service aims to:

- Improve outcomes leading to improvement in overall health and quality of life by increasing access to high quality menopause care and education thereby empowering women to make informed decisions ensuring personalised care
- Provide a framework for set up and delivery will allow General Practice to review their current practice and guidelines to develop their service using skills and competencies of the practice team members
- Release GP capacity and potentially decrease the overall utilisation of healthcare services due to improvement in symptom control

The MAARS Toolkit

The MAARS toolkit has been developed under the guidance of an expert multidisciplinary steering committee comprised of GP clinical lead, menopause nurse specialist, practice nurse, clinical associate, medicines optimisation pharmacist, consultant pharmacist, and speciality doctor and menopause specialist.

The toolkit provides a suite of materials to support and guide healthcare professionals through the process of establishing and delivering menopause clinics and services.

The MAARS toolkit including this overview document is comprised of:



MAARS Overview Document

The overview document gives a guide to all the different sections within the toolkit.

Value to NHS and HCPs

- Provides a comprehensive overview of the rationale for each section of the Besins Healthcare (UK) Ltd (BHUK) MAARS Toolkit
- Acts as a quick reference guide and provides context for each section of the toolkit in one document
- Aligns with the NHS standards by ensuring accessible and evidence-based care for women
- Supports the Women's Health Strategy by enhancing service delivery for menopause care

Value to Patients

- Aim to improve the service to support patient satisfaction, experience and outcomes
- Able to access tailored care throughout the key stages of menopause

Service Specification Guide

The service specification guide with support healthcare professionals looking to design and implement menopause clinics and services.

Value to NHS and HCPs

- Provides a clear, concise, evidence-based framework for designing and implementing menopause services to meet specific needs of patients
- A clear framework for service design and delivery will help healthcare providers to streamline their processes, reduce inefficiencies, and optimise resource utilisation which can help to reduce costs while improving the quality of care
- Promotes consistency in the design and implementation of menopause clinics across the NHS. By standardising the approach to care delivery, healthcare providers can ensure that patients receive consistent care, regardless of where they seek treatment
- Aligns with the NHS standards by emphasising quality and standardisation in service delivery
- Supports the Women's Health Strategy by facilitating tailored care for menopausal women

Value to Patients

- Aim to improve patient satisfaction, experience and outcomes
- Able to access tailored care throughout the key stages of menopause

Clinic Guide

A practical overview of the key stages of menopause management providing recommendations and guidance based on best practice in line with current guidelines.

Value to NHS and HCPs

- Offers a consistent approach to the delivery of high-quality patient care
- Acts as a prompt to ask specific questions during the consultation, ensuring each patient is provided with evidence-based information
- Enhances communication between HCPs and patients, leading to improved patient outcomes
- Aligns with the NHS standards by ensuring that care is patient-centred and evidence-based
- Supports the Women's Health Strategy by promoting holistic menopause management

Value to Patients

- Aim to improve the service to support patient satisfaction, experience and outcomes
- Able to access tailored care throughout the key stages of menopause

Clinic Efficiency Guide

Practical guidance to help healthcare professionals optimise clinic efficiency while creating a menopause-friendly environment and engaging with patients to improve outcomes.

Value to NHS and HCPs

- Offers practical advice on how to optimise clinics and resources within primary care
- Includes considerations for running clinics such as group sessions as well as additional support for patients
- Promotes effective time management and resource allocation in menopause services
- Aligns with the NHS standards by improving service delivery and patient flow
- Supports the Women's Health Strategy by enhancing patient engagement and experience

Value to Patients

- Aim to improve the service to support patient satisfaction, experience and outcomes
- Able to access tailored care throughout the key stages of menopause

Referral Guide

Whilst for the majority of women the menopause will be relatively low risk, for some women there will be additional considerations or complications. The comprehensive referral guide supports healthcare professionals to navigate less common experiences providing essential information on identifying key 'red flags' and actions to consider when assessing menopause patients.

Value to NHS and HCPs

- Best practice for appropriate referral of menopausal women to appropriate specialists
- Flowchart provides easy reference on key checks prior to referral
- Guidance on key information required when referring, ensuring the specialist has the relevant information available at the time of consultation
- Aligns with the NHS standards by ensuring safe and effective patient transitions to specialist care
- Supports the Women's Health Strategy by enhancing the efficiency of care, reducing unnecessary delays and enabling more targeted, effective intervention for women

Value to Patients

- Ensures timely access to appropriate services and support, leading to improved management of menopause symptoms and better health outcomes

Patient Questionnaire

The menopause patient symptom questionnaire is a valuable resource that can help healthcare professionals evaluate and review menopause patients effectively.

Value to NHS and HCPs

- Designed to capture key information for HCPs to support diagnosis
- Patients can monitor symptoms and record accurately throughout the stages of menopause
- Can be made available to the patient prior to the appointment, enabling appointment time to be optimised
- Aligns with the NHS standards by fostering informed clinical decision-making
- Supports the Women's Health Strategy by prioritising patient-centred care and self-management

Value to Patients

- Patients can monitor symptoms and record accurately throughout the stages of menopause ensuring time in appointment is optimised

Patient Information Booklet

The patient menopause information booklet is written in easy-to-understand language, designed to provide essential information and practical advice to women going through menopause. It is hoped that the booklet will provide an resource to support and educate, enabling women to be confident to participate in decisions around management of their menopause.

Value to NHS and HCPs

- Supports shared decision making between HCPs and patients, ultimately optimising consultation time and promoting patient centred care
- It allows education of menopause for patients making sure they are better informed and equipped to make decisions aligned to their needs and preferences, supporting more effective management of menopause in the NHS
- Aligns with the NHS standards by promoting health literacy among patients
- Supports the Women's Health Strategy by empowering women with knowledge and resources

Value to Patients

- A comprehensive guide outlining the key stages of menopause, symptoms, management, and practical guidance on available treatment options
- Advice on how to manage common menopausal symptoms
- Tips and advice around lifestyle changes to improve general health and seek additional support if required

References

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