


Menopause and the NHS workforce addressing the female brain drain...

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Employee global activism has had a massive impact on societal changes over the last few years and we have also seen celebrities backing other important campaigns which has shone a light on the workplace.

Menopause and in particular the impact it can have on women in the workplace has been a hot topic with celebrities like Davina McCall's documentary on the female brain drain and her campaign with Mariella Frostrup and other prominent women "The Menopause Mandate" highlighting the impact of the menopause. Both have proved to be fantastic advocates for women in this space. Although calls to make the menopause a standalone protected characteristic have not been adopted (at least not yet...), the outcome of a recent All Parliamentary Group inquiry into the impacts of the menopause (including in the workplace) recommended that the government must "co-ordinate and support an employer led campaign to raise awareness of menopause in the workplace and to help tackle the taboo surrounding menopause and work".

The NHS is the biggest employer of women, with women aged between 45 and 54 making up a fifth of its workforce. The Chief Executive of NHS England, Amanda Pritchard, has recently launched the first ever national NHS guidance on menopause, which she hopes will help women "thrive at work".

The Guidance is aimed at helping NHS organisations, line managers, and those working in the NHS understand more about the menopause, how they can support colleagues at work and those experiencing menopause symptoms.

The guidance includes:

- Information on how menopause symptoms can impact on work.
- Practical tips for line managers and leaders on the steps they can take to support colleagues experiencing symptoms, including increasing awareness and normalising asking for help.
- A checklist providing guidance on how organisations can be menopause friendly, including measures such as having a policy in place, training and support and consideration of reasonable adjustments such as lighter uniforms, light duties and flexible working.
- Advice on HR aspects such as how to record menopause-related absence, and how to analyse workforce data to identify trends and address any issues affecting particular groups.
- Signposting support and services available to NHS colleagues.
- Manager's checklist.
- Wellbeing action plan.

The guidance also highlights the impact good menopause care can have on workforce retention, productivity, presenteeism and absenteeism. Ensuring staff get the support they need will hopefully lead to experienced talent and skills being retained, which given the record pressures on the NHS and current staffing crisis anything that can be done to reduce the female brain drain impact on the NHS has to be of the utmost importance.

The full guidance can be viewed [HERE](#).



Jacqui Atkinson

Head of Employment Healthcare

jacqui.atkinson@brownejacobson.com

+44 (0)330 045 2547