

Dental practices want reassurance on how to support staff with menopause

Just ahead of World Menopause Day on 18 October, the Dental Defence Union's HR partner Peninsula said that dental practices want reassurance on how to support staff with menopause.

A recent legal judgement in which an employee was awarded £65,000 compensation after an employer failed to make reasonable adjustments when her role was affected by menopause symptoms, illustrates the importance of having a menopause policy in place for staff in dental practices.

Vicky Kitney from Peninsula said it was seeing an increase in enquiries from dental principals about accommodating staff with menopause symptoms.

Ms Kitney said: 'From 1 June 2023 to 31 August 2023, Peninsula received over 120 calls and emails from DDU members requesting advice on a range of HR matters.

'With the growing awareness of the need to support women with menopausal symptoms, we are seeing a steady stream of enquiries from dental practices about this issue. These account for a small but significant number of cases and the trend is increasing.

'Typical scenarios include practices who want to accommodate staff experiencing symptoms like hot flushes, as well as enquiries about supporting those who may be struggling with performance issues like forgetfulness.

'The recent legal judgement is a reminder for all employers to ensure they make adjustments and support employees with menopause symptoms.

'Fostering an open, inclusive environment where employees feel they can raise concerns about how the menopause is affecting them with no stigma or embarrassment, will help practices in becoming menopause friendly employers.'

'Research has shown that 10% of women leave their jobs¹ and many more are reducing their hours or passing up promotions because of their menopausal symptoms. Ensuring colleagues feel supported is an important part of addressing this concern. It should also help in meeting the overall commitments set out in NHS England's Long Term Workforce Plan,² which emphasises the need to retain valued employees by encouraging them to stay in the workplace.'

BDJ Team has published a collection of content on Menopause and the workplace. Visit <https://www.nature.com/collections/menopause>.

References

1. Fawcett. Menopause and the workplace. Available at: <https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/menopauseandtheworkplace> (accessed October 2023).
2. NHS England. NHS Long Term Workforce Plan. 30 June 2023. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-long-term-workforce-plan/> (accessed October 2023).

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