

Supporting staff in late career

Approximately a third of the workforce in the NHS are in the late stages of their career and should feel valued and supported to work in a way that meets their individual ambitions and needs.

What people want from their career may change over time and with people choosing to work for longer, it is even more important that in the later stages of their career, our people are supported to continue working for the NHS in a way that supports these changes.

Colleagues should be able to continually access development opportunities that meet their career aspirations, as well as be supported to think about how they can use their skills, experience and knowledge in different ways, recognising that some people often have the most challenging and exciting roles late on in their career. Organisations should consider what flexible options and opportunities they can offer.

Staff late in their career may want to use their experience to lead or support colleagues, potentially work in a less intensive role and/ or inspire newer staff and pass on their knowledge, leaving a legacy for those following in their footsteps. Although not exclusive to those who are in late career stages, we know that at this point many people will be affected by the menopause, which can impact on people's working and home lives, both directly and indirectly. There are resources available to raise awareness of the menopause, including how to improve workplace environments and how line managers can support people to look after themselves.

Things to consider

- Are there opportunities to utilise your most experienced colleagues to provide mentoring or pastoral support to newly qualified colleagues? For example, legacy mentoring can support those staff in early and later stages of career.
- Are there any system wide opportunities via the integrated care system for developing and supporting staff in the later stages of their career?

- How can you raise awareness that NHS staff are managing the menopause at work and best support staff experiencing the menopause?

Top tips

- ✓ Share easy to understand information on NHS Pensions to support staff to make informed decisions about continuing to work or planning their retirement. Dedicated advice is available to help employers deliver the NHS Pensions Scheme effectively for their organisation.
- ✓ Encourage and support people to actively think about and plan for the later stages of their career so that at an earlier stage people can identify the ways of working which suits their individual ambitions, circumstances and needs.
- ✓ Menopause has a very broad range of symptoms and can impact on people's working and home lives and people may need additional support during this time. See practical guidance for employers on how to improve workplace environments.

Making this happen

Leaders can:

- Make sure that there are a range of career pathways and options available for later career stages.
- Offer flexible retirement and flexible working opportunities, across the organisation and ICS, and signpost to how staff can be supported with understanding their pension.
- Raise awareness of the menopause so more people talk openly about it and there are clear expectations of the support that will be provided.

Managers can:

- Hold career conversations to identify people's needs and development opportunities, to retain people in the organisation and ICS.

- Raise awareness of menopause including holding menopause conversations and ensuring menopause related absence is recorded in ESR.

Case studies

- Over 12 months Sherwood Forest Hospital Foundation Trust carried out a research intervention study and expertise from menopause clinical colleagues to develop action plans to educate line managers. Read the full case study.
- North Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group's Healthier Together developed an 'itchy feet' approach across the system to encourage individuals to talk through their career aspirations or concerns with an impartial trained coach in the first instance.
- Nottingham University Hospitals launched a 'Late Career Hub' hosted by the innovative Care4Notts platform to support staff across the ICS. The platform provides resources for late career healthcare professionals, their managers and mentors.

Tools and further reading

- Keep up to date with interventions and practical solutions on NHS England and NHS Improvement's website.
- Support for people in the later stages of their career in the NHS.
- We are recognised and rewarded.
- Later careers: Stemming the drain of expertise and skills from the profession | RCP London.
- Essentials for later career and retired GPs | RCGP.
- Menopause and the workplace.