

Case Study – Yorkshire Water **By Margaret Wood, Menopause No Longer Taboo**

In terms of the menopause, during two consecutive days in November 2017, it seemed as though the planets aligned for Susan Gee, Group Occupational Health (OH) & Wellbeing Manager at Yorkshire Water (YW). Firstly, Susan was approached by an employee and asked if, through OH, a group could be set up for women going through the menopause. On the following day, I contacted her to ask if YW would be prepared to take part in a pilot study to explore ways in which employers could support women in menopause transition.

Part of the pilot would include trialling a Menopause Support Tool*, being sponsored by Louise Lenton, Area Director for Acas East Midlands, as part of a Civil Service local initiative. OH funded the purchase of the [Henpicked](#) video, 'Menopause in Minutes' customised by them with YW branding.

Approval for the Menopause Support Group (MSG) to be set up came after a briefing for YW management on why it was important to the business for women to be supported at this time in order to retain them and their skills, and also highlighting the other pressures women of this age may be dealing with such as being carers for grandchildren and elderly relatives.

The group which now has 50 members:

- Is employee led, empowering employees to take the lead on projects like this
- Started out with a few Yammer posts to see if anyone was interested in this subject
- Meetings are held every 6 weeks in work time for an hour
- Information is held on 'SharePoint' – meeting notes, people's stories, factsheets, links to NICE, menopause café etc.
- Mailing group was also set up as some people couldn't access 'SharePoint' – it is important to remember not everyone may be able to access where the information is held
- WhatsApp group set up, individuals are just a number for confidentiality and, usually, someone will respond within 5 minutes
- Communication by other people has been key, word of mouth has played a bit part in letting employees know that help is out there in the business – from people wanting to know more, employees wanting support and executive directors needing information
- It is a working group with a clear objective to get menopause in the workplace embedded within the company. Meetings include Mindfulness, Yoga and Pilates sessions
- A half-day workshop 'A Time for Change' facilitated by Margaret Wood and Rosalyn Jones from Menopause No Longer Taboo.
- One-to-one sessions on Emotional Resilience and personal strengths were facilitated

*YW were provided with the prototype toolkit and thought the ideas were good, but the format wasn't in line with its culture and branding. The MSG used YW branding and images and, with the prototype as a template, built their own toolkit which will be maintained by employees on YW's interactive intranet site.

The group has written its own policy around the menopause at work, signed off by all stakeholders.

Menopause is included in YW's induction pack.

Such has been the success that other employee led programmes are being set up, including returning to work after pregnancy and for those going through IVF treatment.