



[Angela Jukes](#)

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World Menopause Day: Raising awareness

Angela blogs about how raising awareness of the menopause is key, from understanding your symptoms to knowing your rights at work.

I had been suffering symptoms of the menopause for a while before I realised what it was. I was already taking vitamin B12 injections and had memory issues which I thought explained the terrible brain fog. But then I started getting hot flashes where I'd feel like I was burning up. Sex became a problem - I'll leave it at that - and when I went for a painful cervical smear, I was sent away with pessaries before another attempt.

Apart from lockdown, I enjoy good mental health. So the worst part of my menopause was when I started waking up in a really low mood. This scared me and I realised I needed to try hormone replacement therapy (HRT).

There's a serious lack of awareness and understanding around the menopause, even amongst medical practitioners. One woman I heard of went to her GP for menopause symptoms and was given antidepressants. Also, I really felt the stigma attached to entering menopause - that I was losing everything that made me a woman.

Fortunately, I was able to speak to a woman doctor who took my symptoms over the phone, asked questions and helped me choose what type of HRT I wanted to try. After a male colleague told me the story of finding his wife's HRT patch on his bum when he woke up, I decided I'd go for tablets!

HRT worked in helping me manage my symptoms and I feel so much better. That's just one reason it should be free in England, as it is in Scotland and Wales. Some women have felt they've had to stop working, not realising that help should be available. But employers can make plenty of adjustments in the workplace to help workers manage menopause symptoms.

Vital information for members and reps on rights, awareness and support is on [PCS Digital](#): search 'menopause'.

Please [contact your PCS rep](#) for support if you're not being treated fairly.

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