

## Peri Meri Menopause Employer Network – Meeting Notes

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2026 – 10.30am to 12.00pm

Online via MS Teams

### Attendees:

Paula Batchelor - Peri Meri Project Lead

Sharon Keeble - Project Support Officer

Rod Smith - GamCare – Women’s Pathway

Nicola Eaton-Taylor - Lincoln Diocese and Leadership Coach/Holistic Therapist and Workplace Menopause Advocate

Samantha Watford - Wellbeing Manager, Home from Home Care

Holly Hardiman-Crust - PA to SLT, Lincoln UTC; Wellbeing Strategy

### Focus of the meeting:

Updates from the Peri Meri Menopause Moments Project and Employer Network; guest inputs on workplace menopause support and links to gambling-related harm; review of draft ‘Menopause Friend/Champion’ role definition; overview of Menopause Cafés and upcoming project activity.

### 1. Welcome and introductions

- Paula confirmed the session was being recorded for those unable to attend and invited questions via the chat/Q&A.
- Attendees briefly introduced themselves and shared current/planned menopause-in-the-workplace activity (e.g. action plan development; wellbeing strategy implementation).

### 2. Guest speaker: Nicola Eaton-Taylor (Lincoln Diocese)

- Shared approach to developing a draft **Women at Work** policy (covering menopause alongside menstrual health, maternity/returning to work, and other reproductive health factors) rather than a standalone menopause policy.
- Emphasised the importance of **manager training** to enable supportive conversations and appropriate adjustments.
- Examples of support offered/considered: flexible and hybrid working; access to a quiet/breakout space; ability to step away when needed; Occupational Health referrals.
- Diocese hosting **monthly staff meet-ups** for peer support.
- Signposted evidence and guidance sources including CIPD resources and UK Government guidance. Nicola offered to support other employers with developing their plans.
- Highlighted holistic wellbeing options (e.g. reflexology, yoga) as supportive approaches for stress, anxiety, sleep disruption and symptom management.

### 3. Guest speaker: Rod Smith (GamCare – Women’s Pathway)

- Outlined how **gambling harm can be hidden** and may not be routinely asked about in workplace wellbeing conversations.
- Noted that women’s gambling behaviours may present differently (e.g. bingo, scratch cards, online ‘free spins’) and may be linked to stress, trauma, loneliness or significant life changes.

- Shared headline figures referenced during the session:
  - **2.7%** of adults in Great Britain scoring 8+ on the Problem Gambling Severity Index (harmful gambling category).
  - **8.1%** of adults estimated to be affected by someone else's gambling (women more likely to be affected).
- Promoted GamCare's **free training sessions** (online or in person), including women and gambling-related harms; women, domestic abuse and gambling-related harms; lived experience session ("Nikki's story"); and a forthcoming session on starting supportive conversations.
- Signposted GamCare support routes, including the **National Gambling Helpline (24/7)** and referral pathways.
- Noted outreach support may be available for events (stalls/leaflets) to raise awareness locally.

#### 4. Draft resource: 'Menopause Friend/Champion/Buddy' role definition

- Paula shared a draft, generic role outline designed to be adapted by employers, clarifying that a 'Menopause Friend/Champion' is not expected to be a clinical expert.
- Key elements included: active listening; confidential, informal peer support; signposting to internal/external support; raising awareness; encouraging an open culture; maintaining impartiality (e.g. not promoting personal views on treatment options); and understanding safeguarding escalation.
- Suggested relevant training included **Mental Health First Aid**, active listening, unconscious bias, and information/advice/guidance (IAG) or referral-focused training.
- **Feedback:** Nicola, Samantha and Holly confirmed the format was clear and useful, and welcomed having a resource they can tailor for their organisations (including linking with mental health first aiders where appropriate).
- **Outcome:** Paula to "pretty up" the document and publish it to the project website for employer use.

#### 5. Menopause Cafes - Host & Facilitator Training Sessions

- Paula shared an overview of the Menopause Cafe model (peer discussion space open to all ages/genders; in-person or online), noting the value of using an established model rather than "reinventing the wheel".
- Two 'How to set up a Menopause Cafe' sessions are being held on MS Teams on **Wednesday 29th April from 10.30 to 11.30am** and **Monday 18th May from 2 to 3pm** (same session delivered twice).
- Small start-up funding may be available for cafes open to the public; employers are welcome to attend to explore running workplace cafes.

#### 6. Project updates and upcoming activity (Peri Meri Menopause Moments Project)

- **Menopause Wellbeing Day:** Saturday 16th May from 10am to 2pm in Sleaford at St Denys Church Room (open to all).
- **Programmes:** Free, face-to-face **5-week programme** (2-hour session each week) covering symptoms, mental health, medications/clinical input, health,

wellbeing and holistic therapies and a final “What next?” session. Booking details vary by location and information can be found on our website.

- **Midday Mindfulness:** Free online monthly session (open to all).
- **Menopause Awareness for Men:** Short awareness sessions available via MS Teams.
- **Cancer and Menopause Co-production group:** Ongoing work with people with lived experience, including development of a post-treatment information postcard/resource.
- **App mentioned:** CONNECTPlus is a women’s health app from the NHS.
- **Peri Meri Celebration event:** Tuesday 13th October 2026 to celebrate project activity and shared employer practice over the 3 years of the project. This is an invitation only event.

#### 7. Any other business / ideas for future network sessions

- Suggestion to invite workplace wellbeing practitioners to a future network meeting to share what they deliver and examples of workplace practice (example name mentioned: **Pete Ison**).

#### 8. Date of next Employer Network meeting

- Thursday 16th July 2026 from 10.30am to 12.00pm.

#### Actions and next steps

- **Paula** to finalise and publish the ‘Menopause Friend/Champion’ role definition resource on the project website and share link with the network.
- **Rod (GamCare)** to send Paula a short slide pack/contact details for circulation with the recording/notes.
- **Paula** to confirm and circulate correct details for the “Connect Plus” women’s health app referenced.
- **Paula/Sharon** to circulate dates/booking links for Menopause Café facilitator sessions (29 April, 18 May), programmes, and upcoming events.
- **Network members** to propose topics/speakers for July meeting (including workplace wellbeing practitioners).