



Join the Endometriosis Friendly Employer scheme and be part of a growing community of employers inspiring change, breaking down taboos and supporting employees to thrive at work.

Endometriosis is a long-term, chronic pain condition affecting 1 in 10 women and those assigned female at birth. That's over 1.5 million in the UK, predominately of working age. With an average time to diagnosis of 8 years and a cost of £8.2 billion per year to the UK economy in terms of lost work, treatment and healthcare costs, the potential impact on work and employment is clear. If you have not previously heard of endometriosis, or not realised the serious and sometimes debilitating effects it can have, this is likely to be due to its association with the menstrual cycle which many consider embarrassing or taboo to talk about, and society's historic marginalisation of "women's problems".

Thankfully times are changing, and awareness of endometriosis and menstrual conditions is increasing – but there is still a long way to go. Endometriosis UK set up the Endometriosis Friendly Employer scheme to enable employers to work towards improving support for those with this chronic, long term condition. While the scheme has a specific focus on addressing endometriosis, one of the most common menstrual health conditions that can affect those of working age, it also encourages support and dialogue around all menstrual and female health conditions. Employers who participate are helping break the taboo and stigma around menstrual conditions, developing work environments where all staff are comfortable talking about them, and the possible practical adjustments that could be of benefit.

What is the Endometriosis Friendly Employer Scheme?

Managing work and endometriosis can be a major challenge; we developed the Endometriosis Friendly Employer scheme to help organisations support those with the condition.

The scheme is a way for employers confirm their commitment to developing a work environment and culture that enable employees with endometriosis to thrive at work. Through the scheme, Endometriosis UK provides guidance for employers on how to support employees with endometriosis, and work towards improving the work environment in three key areas:

1. Leadership and management support
2. Tackling stigma and changing culture
3. Communications

Benefits

By signing up to be an Endometriosis Friendly Employer an organisation is demonstrating its commitment to support employees with endometriosis – 1 in 10 women and those assigned female at birth. It is a demonstrable way of showing your commitment to your employee's wellbeing. From our work with those with the disease and employers, we believe that by overcoming the challenges individuals may face in the workplace due to lack of knowledge or misunderstanding of the disease, Endometriosis Friendly Employers will see improvements in employee wellbeing, productivity and performance, employee engagement and morale.

When you sign up to be an Endometriosis Friendly Employer, you will receive:

- a certificate to display your commitment
- your organisation's name on the list of signatories on our website
- twice yearly e-newsletters highlighting organisational best practice and keeping you up to date with latest developments

- support for Endometriosis Champions with an induction webinar and dedicated Endometriosis Champions e-updates
- a copy of the book 'Endometriosis: The Experts' Guide to Treat, Manage and Live well with Your Symptoms' for information and reference within your organisation
- permission to use the Endometriosis Friendly Employer logo

How does it work?

The first step is simple: pledge to be an Endometriosis Friendly Employer and pay the administration fee. We'll then invite you to nominate Endometriosis Champions to help progress the scheme within your organisation. At the end of your first year, send us a review of your activities to show how you're working to meet the principles. Then undertake a review every two years to show your ongoing commitment.



The scheme is not an accreditation, nor a quality standard, rather it is designed to provide a framework for any organisation – irrespective of size or activities – to commit to work towards. All organisations are different, and the scheme has been designed to give you the flexibility to develop and implement initiatives that best support your employees. By signing up to the scheme you are demonstrating your commitment to proactive work to incorporate these principles into everyday life at your organisation.

Principles:

1	Leadership and management support: vital to ensure the employer is committed to becoming an <i>Endometriosis Friendly Employer</i> and change will happen.	
1.1	Evidence of Senior Leadership buy in that the organisation should be an <i>Endometriosis Friendly Employer</i>	Seeing active engagement and support from the top will be vital if behaviours and culture are to change
1.2	Review, update and implement policies to support those with endometriosis	Depending on your organisation, this could relate to reviewing existing HR and facilities policies. Or you may decide to develop a new endometriosis support policy.
1.3	Provide managers with the information and guidance they need to support someone with endometriosis	You will be ensuring that you have in place, in a way that best suits your organisation, the policies and processes to support those with endometriosis – and that managers and employees know what to do if a colleague requires extra support.
1.4	Support flexible working for those with endometriosis where possible	Those with endometriosis often seek flexibility to allow them to manage their condition whilst delivering the best work they can. Where an organisation can offer flexibility, employees with endometriosis can thrive therefore creating a win-win situation.
2	Tackling stigma and changing culture: so those with the disease can have the confidence and trust to discuss their condition with their manager.	



2.1	Endometriosis Champion(s) to be a point of contact and information	People will help change attitudes and keep momentum. You'll need to identify where best this is done in your organisation. This could be someone in your HR team, someone with personal experience of endometriosis or someone who is passionate about inclusivity in the workplace.
2.2	Stigma surrounding endometriosis is actively tackled.	It's hard managing a chronic illness, and that can become even more difficult if it's one that's invisible, no-one seems to have heard of or understand, and the impression given is that it's not something to talk about. Organisations should proactively plan to support staff and managers to be able to have conversations when needed, overcoming any stigma, embarrassment, or taboo of talking about menstrual issues.
3	Communications: to raise awareness of endometriosis, the support offered and how this can be accessed.	
3.1	Raise awareness of endometriosis	People need to be aware of an issue to enable a culture where employees are comfortable to talk about endometriosis.
3.2	Information on endometriosis is readily available, with signposting for more support	So those that want to find out more can do easily, and gain confidence in how they can seek support

Reviewing your progress

At the end of your first year as an Endometriosis Friendly Employer signatory, we'll ask you to complete a review giving an example of how you've worked to meet these principles. After that, we'll ask you to complete a review every two years to show your ongoing commitment.

For your first and subsequent reviews, you will be asked to complete a [simple online form](#) based on the principles above and asking for an example against each criteria of how your organisation has worked towards this. Some examples are given below, to give you an idea of the type of progress we might expect to see.

Principle	Examples of examples ...
1.1 Evidence of Senior Leadership buy in that the organisation should be an <i>Endometriosis Friendly Employer</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter from Senior Management supporting scheme • Senior Manager introducing being an <i>Endometriosis Friendly Employer</i> at staff conference • CEO blog on the scheme for staff
1.2 Review, update and implement policies to support those with endometriosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR policy on flexible working reviewed and updated • Facilities policies reviewed, no updated needed • Flexible working policy developed and implemented
1.3 Provide managers with the information and guidance they need to support someone with endometriosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance for managers added to intranet • Endometriosis Champion held a workshop for managers
1.4 Support flexible working for those with endometriosis where possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a case study



Endometriosis Champions

Endometriosis Friendly Employers are invited to appoint Endometriosis Champions. This role aims to provide employees with a visible member of staff within the organisation to whom they can turn to for support and information in relation to endometriosis. Endometriosis Champions do not need to be experts in endometriosis and don't need to have endometriosis themselves; a willingness to learn about the condition and ability to talk openly about endometriosis, menstrual wellbeing and associated issues are central to the role.

An Endometriosis Champion will:

- Develop an understanding of endometriosis and how this may affect employees
- Be a point of contact for employees experiencing issues at work because of endometriosis
- Know where to signpost colleagues for further information and support
- Be aware of internal HR policies and procedures that could benefit employees with endometriosis

And, where appropriate:

- Be a point of contact for managers who may have people with endometriosis in their team
- Display information leaflets and posters
- Organise awareness events, such as coffee mornings or 'lunch and learn' events, to ensure colleagues know about endometriosis, perhaps in line with national awareness campaigns

This role can be tailored to suit the size and needs of your organisation. Larger multi-site organisations may wish to have an Endometriosis Champion in each location, whereas smaller teams may be better suited to assign the role to one employee. Employees and managers will feel able to approach the champion with issues relating to their own/staff members' endometriosis and the workplace. This may require an understanding of the organisation's HR policies and procedures relating to long term health conditions. Endometriosis Champions aren't medical professionals; their role is not to provide medical advice, or provide emotional support to an individual over a long period of time - the role is focused on signposting, support, and sustaining a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Training and Resources for Endometriosis Champions

Endometriosis Champions will be invited to attend an induction webinar, and provided with their own dedicated Endometriosis Champions e-update twice a year. You can also find a wealth of information about endometriosis on Endometriosis UK's website. Of particular interest will be:

- [Understanding Endometriosis](#)
- [Endometriosis FAQs](#)
- [Personal Stories](#)
- Our Support Pages can help Endometriosis Champions to signpost to [Endometriosis UK's support services](#).

In addition to the above, Endometriosis UK can offer [bespoke in-house training](#) for Endometriosis Champions to further enhance their skills and knowledge. The aim is to equip staff with a knowledge of endometriosis, an understanding of how staff may be affected in the workplace, and how best to support staff in your organisation.

Thank you for considering becoming an Endometriosis Friendly Employer.

Please contact employers@endometriosis-uk.org for further information.