

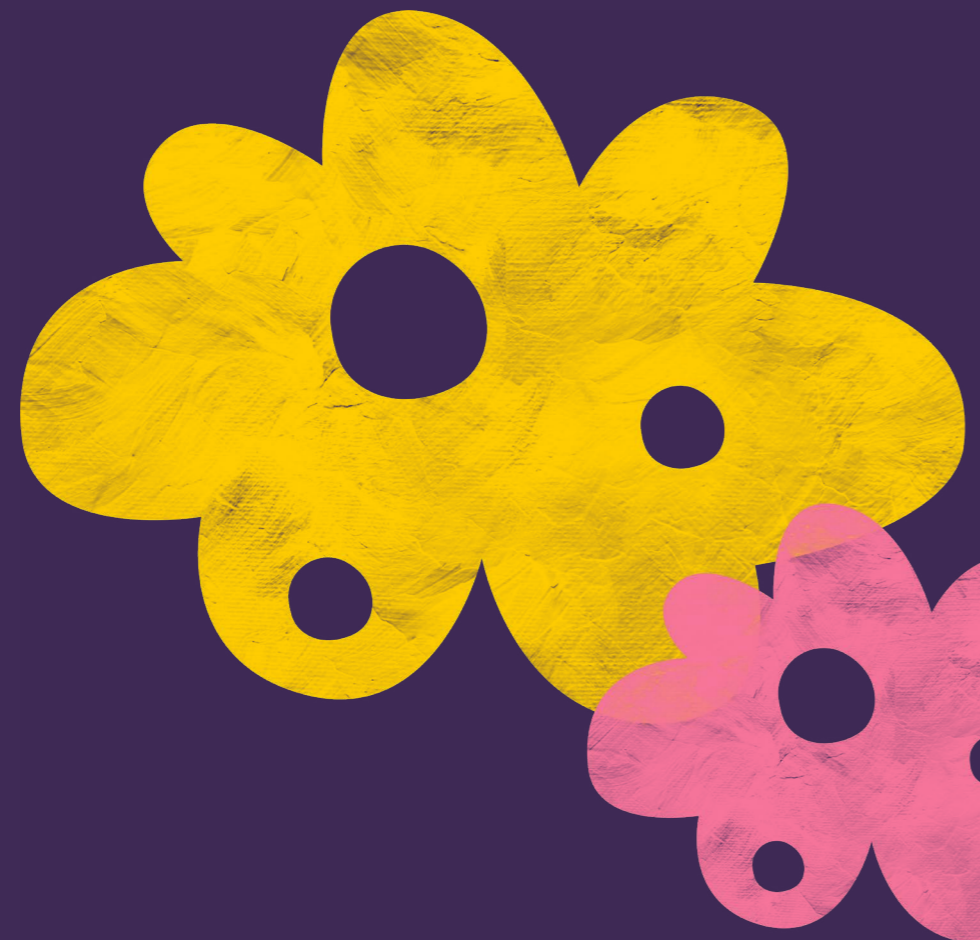
# What businesses need to know about endometriosis



An expert's guide written by Dr. Edward Morris

## About the author

Dr. Edward Morris (MD PRCOG) is a consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist and the current President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG).



# Your endometriosis questions answered



## What is endometriosis?

It is the presence of tissue similar to the lining of the womb in areas where it should not normally be. It causes inflammation, pain and often heavier and more regular periods.

## What are the most common symptoms of endometriosis?

- very painful and heavy periods
- painful sex (during or after)
- pain when going to the toilet
- pain between periods

## Does endometriosis cause infertility?

No, many women who have endometriosis get pregnant without problems. However, fertility can be affected if endometriosis is severe or found in cysts on a person's ovaries.

## Can endometriosis be treated?

It can be very difficult to treat endometriosis as it is often invisible to the naked eye, and even after treatment, endometriosis can come back. Once someone has a diagnosis, it's important that they are aware of the symptoms that suggest it could be getting worse.

## How common is endometriosis?

It affects about 1 in 10 women of reproductive age.

## How is endometriosis diagnosed?

There are two ways to diagnose endometriosis. One, which is known as a presumptive diagnosis, is to take a careful history of how pain impacts periods, sexuality and everyday activities like exercise and having bowel movements. The other way is to have the endometrial tissue directly visualised during surgery. In either case, treatments can be started, while a personalised plan for management is developed.

## What areas can be affected by endometriosis?

More commonly, areas in or around the womb are affected:

- fallopian tubes
- ovaries
- bladder
- vagina
- bowel

More rarely, endometriosis can affect areas around the liver and in the chest.

# Endometriosis myths



**✘ It's normal for periods to be very heavy and painful**

Some people without endometriosis, do have naturally heavy, painful periods, but if period pain gets in the way of their normal life, they should talk to a women's health specialist.

**✘ Pregnancy is a cure for endometriosis**

Pregnancy is not a cure. The unique hormonal environment of pregnancy suppresses endometriosis temporarily, but symptoms tend to return after pregnancy when periods start again.

**✘ There is no treatment for endometriosis**

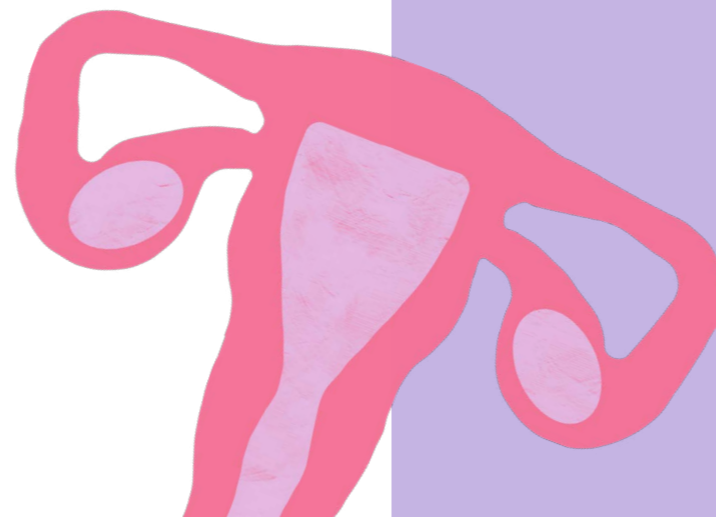
There are many really good treatments available that allow people to get on with their lives, living with endometriosis. Most commonly, people treat endometriosis with pain killers and hormonal treatment. Keyhole surgery can help with more accurate treatment in more extreme cases, including hysterectomy – but this is rarely needed.

**✘ Only women can have endometriosis**

Only people who are assigned female at birth can have endometriosis, as it affects the lining of the womb. It's important to remember that trans men and non-binary people can have endometriosis.

**✘ People with endometriosis always have symptoms**

Endometriosis symptoms can range from mild to severe. Some people with mild endometriosis may not have significant symptoms or pain.



# Helpful tips to share with colleagues who think they may have endometriosis

- **Start by tracking your symptoms.**  
Jot down when you have pain and how severe it is.
- **Record whether there is pain with urinating and/or bowel movements.**
- **Try using an over the counter pain reliever.**  
Such as Ibuprofen or Naproxen and record whether it works. (Be sure to take these with food, as they can cause stomach upset).
- **Reach out to a qualified clinical expert in endometriosis.**



# The impact of endometriosis on the workplace<sup>1</sup>

## 1 in 10

women in your organisation have endometriosis

## 55%

often or very often take time off work due to their endometriosis

## 31%

have reduced their working hours as a result of having endometriosis

## 27%

have had to change or leave their job

## 95%

say endometriosis has impacted their wellbeing negatively or very negatively

## 81%

say endometriosis has impacted their mental health negatively or very negatively



# What can workplaces do to support their employees?



## Education and training

Train your team (not just your female employees) about the symptoms of endometriosis so that line managers, HRs and direct reports feel more comfortable talking about it and know the pathway to support.



## Appoint women's health champions

A women's health champion is someone who can offer support to others and start the conversation around women's health issues at work. This is a simple way to break down stigma and encourage openness.



## Offer personalised support

Give your colleagues free access to specialist endometriosis support. Ideally, choose an easy-to-access, confidential digital solution, like the Peppy app.



## Encourage flexible working

Flexible working can enable colleagues to manage their symptoms in the comfort of their own home and take breaks when needed, with no questions asked. If flexible working isn't an option for colleagues, make sure they are taking their full break allowance.



## Start an endometriosis group

Self-help groups or wellbeing groups can offer colleagues a safe, judgement-free space to open up and connect with others going through a similar experience. These can be done in-person, as coffee mornings or virtually as a Yammer or WhatsApp group.



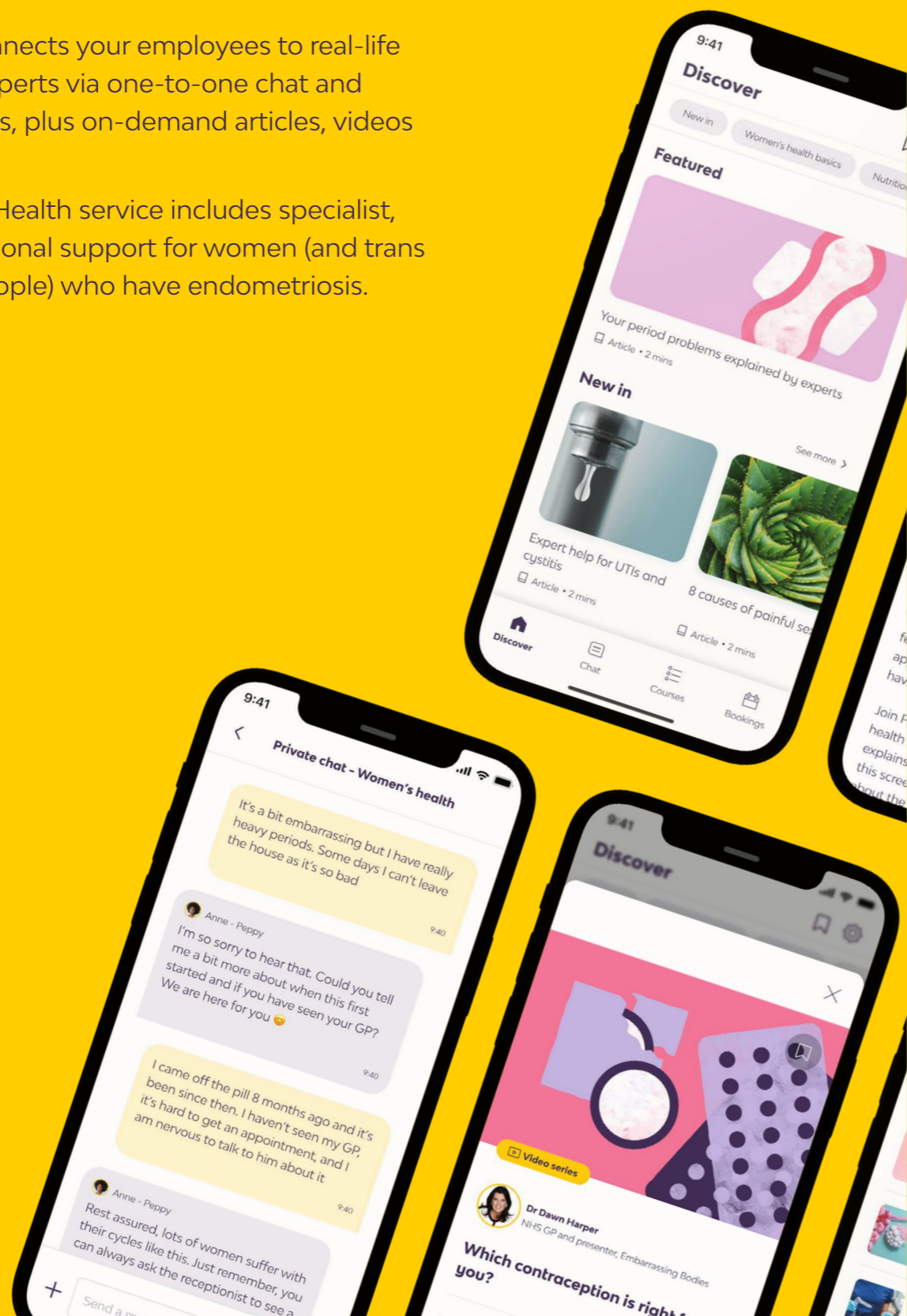
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.endometriosis-uk.org/sites/default/files/files/Endometriosis%20APPG%20Report%20Oct%202020.pdf>

# How can Peppy's Women's Health service help?



The Peppy app connects your employees to real-life women's health experts via one-to-one chat and virtual consultations, plus on-demand articles, videos and audios.

Peppy's Women's Health service includes specialist, practical and emotional support for women (and trans and non-binary people) who have endometriosis.



# Hear more about how Peppy can support your people, and your business



Find out why you should offer Women's Health support from Peppy's experts

**Book a call**