

Menopause Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to raise awareness of the menopause and its impact on women in the workplace.
- 1.2 We want to end any stigma or taboo around talking about the menopause and to encourage open conversations between colleagues, and between employers and their staff.
- 1.3 We are committed to supporting staff who are affected by the menopause. We are also committed to educating and providing guidance to everyone in the workplace so that everyone is aware of what our female colleagues might be experiencing and the ways in which we can support them through this transition.
- 1.4 This policy applies to all employees, workers, contractors, volunteers, management, officers, consultants, casual staff and agency workers. It does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended from time to time.

2. Understanding the menopause

- 2.1 Menopause is the biological stage in a woman's life when she stops menstruating and her reproductive life ends. It is usually said to have occurred when a woman has not had a period for twelve consecutive months.
- 2.2 The menopause is a transition that will affect all women. It will generally happen for a women who is between the ages of 45 and 55 although for some women they may start experiencing symptoms earlier. Symptoms can last for anywhere from four to eight years, or in some cases can last much longer.
- 2.3 There is a period before the menopause begins called the perimenopause which is when a woman's body starts to prepare for menopause. A woman can experience similar symptoms to the menopause during this stage and perimenopause itself can last for several years.
- 2.4 The extent to which a women going through the menopause will experience symptoms varies greatly between women and everyone is different. It is important for everyone to understand that symptoms can be very debilitating for some women. For others, they may be quite mild or even unnoticeable and the woman will not need any support.
- 2.5 Symptoms can include:

| | | | |
|---------------|------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Sleeplessness | Headaches | Loss of confidence | Dizziness |
| Hot flushes | Muscle and joint pains | Poor concentration | Night sweats |
| Memory loss | Depression | Fatigue | Heavy periods |

3. Talking about the menopause

- 3.1 We want to encourage open and honest conversations between colleagues and management about the menopause. This is not just an issue for women. All staff should have an awareness of the menopause and how it may affect their female colleagues so that they can be supportive and sensitive to it.
- 3.2 Women suffering from symptoms of menopause should feel confident to talk about it and to ask for any help or adjustments that they need, without embarrassment. If you are affected by the menopause, you are welcome and encouraged to talk to your manager or HR about it and about any support that you need to help you at work.
- 3.3 We expect all staff to be supportive of colleagues who may be affected by the menopause in the workplace, just as we would expect them to be supportive of anyone who is feeling unwell in the workplace.
- 3.4 Whilst open conversations are encouraged, each woman speaking about the issue should be treated sensitively and her right to privacy maintained. No personal information should be shared with anyone else without the woman's express consent.

4. Adjustments

- 4.1 If you are experiencing any difficulties at work as a result of menopause symptoms, you should speak with your manager or with HR about it so that they can support you at work.
- 4.2 Adjustments can be made to help you at work including things like:
- ❖ Making a private, cool and quiet space available
 - ❖ Adjusting your workspace or working environment to ensure it is not making your symptoms worse such as providing a fan, removing heat sources, adjusting any uniform or dress code.
 - ❖ Making sure wash facilities, space for changes of clothes and sanitary products are available.
 - ❖ Agreeing a period of flexible working
 - ❖ Allowing more frequent rest breaks
 - ❖ A temporary or permanent change to your duties
 - ❖ Regular support meetings

These are examples only and the adjustments that are needed or which can be accommodated by the business will need to be looked at on a case by case basis.

4.3 In some cases we may ask for medical advice from your GP or Occupational Health if we need further guidance on how to support you at work.

5. External Resources

5.1 There are a lot of free resources available online to help women experiencing perimenopause and the menopause and to educate those who support them. We would encourage anyone who is or has a colleague who is transitioning through the menopause to take the time to learn more about it.

5.2 Here are some organisations and websites which might be helpful:

- ❖ **NHS:** Information and guidance on the menopause can be found at www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause
- ❖ **Menopause matters:** A website dedicated to providing information about the menopause (see www.menopausematters.co.uk)
- ❖ **Women's Health Concern:** The patient arm of the British Menopause Society (see www.womens-health-concern.org)
- ❖ **Acas (archive):** Guidance on the menopause in the workplace (see www.archive.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=6752)
- ❖ **Henpicked:** The website Henpicked has a dedicated Menopause Hub including shared stories (see www.henpicked.net/menopause-hub/)