

Workplace Menopause Policy

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- _____ is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for everyone who works here.
- Whilst every woman does not suffer from symptoms, supporting those who do will improve their experience at work.
- Although it is rarely discussed at work, the menopause is a natural stage of life that millions of women workers are either going through now or will experience in the future. Menopause should not be taboo or kept a secret. At _____ want everyone to understand what menopause is, and to be able to talk about it openly, without embarrassment. This is not just an issue for female staff, men should be aware too.
- Employees should be able to expect respectful behaviours at work including those that relate to their gender and age.
- Women now make up almost half the UK workforce and there are an estimated three and a half million women over the age of 50 currently in work. Research shows that the majority of women are unwilling to discuss menopause-related health problems with their line manager, nor ask for the support or adjustments that they may need. We don't want this to be the case at _____.
- This policy sets out the guidelines for members of staff and managers on providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work. It is not contractual and does not form part of the terms and conditions of employment.

2. THE AIMS OF THIS POLICY ARE TO

- Ensure everyone understands what menopause is, can confidently have good conversations, and are clear on the company's policy and practices, supported by Human Resources and Occupational Health.
- Adopt an environment in which colleagues can openly and comfortably start conversations, or engage in discussions about menopause.
- Educate and inform managers about the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can support women at work.
- Ensure that women experiencing menopause symptoms feel confident to discuss it, and ask for support and any reasonable adjustments so they can continue to be successful in their roles.
- Ensure that women in menopause or approaching it menopause know that it will be accommodated by their employer.

3. DEFINITIONS

Menopause

Menopause is defined by changes in the hormones and the ending of menstruation (when a woman's periods stop for 12 consecutive months). For most women it happens between the ages of 45 and 55. In the UK the average age for a woman to reach the menopause is 51.

Perimenopause

Perimenopause is the time leading up to menopause when a woman may experience changes, such as irregular periods or other menopausal symptoms (including hot flushes, night sweats, intimate body problems, weight gain & mood changes). This can be years before the actual menopause.

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4. RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of staff at are responsible for:

- Taking a personal responsibility to look after their own health.
- Being open and honest in conversations with managers/HR and Occupational Health.
- Being willing to help and support their colleagues.
- Understanding any necessary adjustments their colleagues are receiving as a result of their menopausal symptoms.

All employers should (via Occupational Health or HR):

Ensure that all line managers have been trained to be aware of how the menopause can affect work and what adjustments may be necessary to support women who are experiencing the menopause.

Ensure that the menopause is highlighted in health and wellbeing practices so all staff know that the employer has a positive attitude to the issue, and it is not something that women should feel embarrassed about.

Make guidance on how to deal with the menopause freely available in the workplace.

Sickness absence procedures should make it clear that they are flexible enough to cater for menopause-related sickness absence.

Carry out risk assessments that should consider the specific needs of menopausal women and ensure that the working environment will not make their symptoms worse. Issues that should be looked at include temperature and ventilation and the materials used in any uniform or corporate clothing provided to women workers. The assessments should also address welfare issues such as toilet facilities and access to cold water.

All line managers should:

- Be ready and willing to have open discussions about menopause, appreciating the personal nature of the conversation, and treating the discussion sensitively and professionally.
- Ensure that all agreed adjustments are adhered to.
- Be aware that workplace stress can worsen menopausal symptoms. Stress should also be risk assessed.
- Consider working time arrangements that are flexible enough to ensure that they meet the needs of menopausal women, who may require leaving suddenly. They may also need more breaks during the day.
- Consider other practical ways to help. For example: Can the employee be moved to a desk closer to a window? Can personal desk fans be provided?

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5. SYMPTOM SUPPORT

For some, going through the menopause may be uneventful and may not impact on their working life but for others it may become increasingly difficult to function effectively at work and their working conditions may exacerbate their symptoms. Some symptom support to consider:

Hot flushes

- Request temperature control for their work area, such as a fan on their desk, moving near a window, or away from a heat source
- Easy access to cold drinking water
- Be allowed to adapt uniform, such as by removing a jacket or wearing lighter fabrics
- Have access to a bathroom or a quiet area if they need to manage a severe hot flush

Heavy/light periods

Have permanent access to bathroom facilities

Allowance for more frequent bathroom visits

Request an extra uniform

Ensure sanitary products are available in bathrooms

Ensure storage space is available for a change of clothing.

Brain fog/poor concentration

- Discuss if there are times of the day when concentration is better or worse, and adjust working pattern/practice accordingly
- Review task allocation and workload
- Provide books for lists, action boards, or other memory-assisting equipment
- Offer quiet space to work
- Offer noise-reducing headphones to wear in open offices

Live Better With curates hand-picked practical products for women going through the menopause. All our products help in some way with the wide-ranging symptoms of the perimenopause and menopause including hot flushes, mood swings, loss of libido, skin changes and incontinence.

Live Better With also provides free, informative guides on the menopause and its symptoms and runs a Menopause at Work Programme for employers and employees.