MENOPAUSE, PERIMENOPAUSE AND POST-MENOPAUSE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

We recognise that menopause is a workplace issue as well as a health and wellbeing issue and are committed to creating an inclusive and supportive working environment for everyone affected by menopause.

Menopause occurs when periods stop due to lower hormone levels and usually affects people between the ages of 45 and 55, although it can happen earlier or later, including as a result of surgery or medical treatment. Many people experience symptoms during perimenopause, the period leading up to menopause, and post-menopause, when symptoms may continue for some time.

Symptoms associated with menopause can have a significant impact on an individual's health, wellbeing and work. We are committed to ensuring that anyone experiencing menopause-related symptoms feels able to seek support without fear of stigma or discrimination and that managers are equipped to provide appropriate assistance.

This policy applies to all employees, workers, contractors, volunteers, apprentices and interns.

We recognise that menopause and related symptoms may affect women, transgender men, non-binary people and others who experience menopause.

EFFECTS OF MENOPAUSE

Menopause, perimenopause and post-menopause affect everyone differently. Symptoms can vary in severity and duration and may fluctuate over time.

Physical symptoms may include:

- hot flushes;
- night sweats;
- insomnia or disturbed sleep;
- fatigue;
- poor concentration;
- headaches;
- joint and muscle pain;
- skin irritation;
- urinary problems;
- irregular or heavy periods;
- dizziness.

Psychological and emotional symptoms may include:

- anxiety;
- depression;
- panic attacks;
- mood swings;
- irritability;
- memory problems;
- loss of confidence;

- difficulty concentrating;
- increased stress.

Some individuals may also experience side effects from treatments such as hormone replacement therapy (HRT) or other medications, including nausea, headaches and leg cramps.

COMMUNICATION

We aim to normalise conversations about menopause in the workplace and remove any associated stigma. Menopause should not be regarded as a taboo subject, and we encourage employees to support one another and promote an open and respectful culture.

Employees are encouraged to prioritise their health and wellbeing. If menopause-related symptoms are affecting any aspect of work, employees should speak to their line manager, HR or another appropriate senior member of staff so that suitable support can be considered.

Managers may also initiate a sensitive and supportive conversation if they notice changes in an employee's wellbeing, attendance or performance and believe support may be beneficial.

We recognise that discussing personal health matters can be difficult. Any information shared will be treated sensitively and confidentially and will only be shared where necessary to provide appropriate support or to meet legal obligations.

Managers will:

- listen sympathetically and without judgement;
- discuss any impact on work;
- consider appropriate workplace adjustments;
- seek advice from HR or Occupational Health where appropriate;
- agree any support measures;
- arrange regular review meetings to assess whether adjustments remain effective.

Records relating to menopause discussions and agreed adjustments will be handled in accordance with our data protection obligations.

MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO YOUR ROLE

We recognise that menopause affects individuals differently and that support should be tailored to individual circumstances.

Where appropriate, managers will discuss and consider reasonable workplace adjustments to help minimise the impact of menopause-related symptoms. No adjustments will be made without consultation with the employee concerned.

Managers will also consider whether existing workplace risk assessments adequately address factors that may affect employees experiencing menopause and whether additional measures are required.

Examples of adjustments may include:

- changing work location to improve access to toilet facilities, natural light or a more comfortable working environment;
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- providing access to fans or improved temperature control;
- relaxing workplace dress code requirements where appropriate;
- providing easy access to drinking water;
- allowing additional rest breaks;
- providing a quiet place to work or rest;
- reviewing workloads and work allocation;
- adjusting duties where appropriate;
- changing start and finish times;
- offering temporary or permanent flexible working arrangements;
- allowing home or hybrid working where operationally possible;
- providing sanitary products in toilet facilities.

Any agreed adjustments will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain appropriate and effective.

While menopause is not itself a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, employees experiencing menopause may be protected from discrimination on the grounds of disability, sex, age or gender reassignment depending on their individual circumstances.

We are committed to meeting our legal obligations and to providing appropriate workplace support, including reasonable adjustments where required.

Employees may also make a flexible working request in accordance with our Flexible Working Policy.

IF YOU ARE UNWELL DUE TO MENOPAUSE-RELATED SYMPTOMS

Employees are not expected to attend work when they are unwell due to menopause-related symptoms.

If you are unable to attend work, you should notify your line manager and follow the organisation's normal sickness absence reporting procedures.

Menopause-related absences will be managed sensitively and managers will consider whether additional support or workplace adjustments could help reduce future absence and improve wellbeing.

Where appropriate, employees may be referred to Occupational Health to help identify suitable support and workplace adjustments.

TRAINING

We are committed to increasing awareness and understanding of menopause throughout the organisation.

We will provide training and information to employees to help them:

- understand menopause and its potential impact;
- know how to seek support;
- support colleagues appropriately; and
- contribute to an inclusive workplace culture.

Managers will receive additional training to enable them to:

- understand the effects of menopause;
- hold sensitive and supportive conversations;
- identify appropriate workplace adjustments;
- understand their legal responsibilities; and
- access additional sources of support and advice.

BEHAVIOUR OF OTHERS

Everyone in the organisation is expected to behave respectfully and supportively towards colleagues.

We operate a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination. Any inappropriate behaviour or comments relating to menopause will be treated seriously and may result in disciplinary action.

If you believe that you have experienced bullying, harassment or discrimination relating to menopause, you should speak to your line manager, HR or another appropriate senior manager. All complaints will be treated seriously and investigated in accordance with our relevant workplace procedures.

OTHER SUPPORT

Employees experiencing menopause-related symptoms are encouraged to seek appropriate medical advice from their GP or other healthcare professional.

Additional sources of support may include:

- the NHS menopause information service;
- Menopause Matters;
- Menopause Cafe;
- Occupational Health services, where available;
- the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), where available; and
- HR and line management support within the organisation.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed periodically every year if not to ensure that it remains legally compliant and reflects current best practice, organisational needs and employee feedback.



Dan Sadler – C.E.O
Dated: June 26