

Menopause Policy

What this policy covers

This policy applies to employees, workers and contractors. This policy sets out the rights of anyone experiencing menopausal symptoms and explains the support available to them in the workplace. It also helps line managers to understand how best to support someone who is experiencing symptoms and what adjustments might need to be considered.

Your entitlements and responsibilities

The menopause usually occurs in women who are in their late 40's or early 50's and is a natural stage of life for women when their periods stop and they experience hormonal changes such as a decrease in oestrogen levels. It can also happen much earlier in their twenties/thirties for women but this is not common. The term 'perimenopause' is used when a woman's body is starting to change in the build up to the menopause. The perimenopause usually starts in the mid-forties, but can start earlier or later and last several years. It is important to be aware that certain surgery such as a hysterectomy or having chemotherapy, rather than natural ageing, will trigger the menopause in a woman. Managing the impact of the menopause at work is important for all parties.

For those experiencing symptoms:

- it can be a difficult and stressful time which sometimes goes undiagnosed and/or untreated;
- they could be experiencing physical changes to the body which can be considerable and require a change in lifestyle and habits;
- their mental health and over-all sense of wellbeing could be impacted; and
- it is a very sensitive and personal matter which can last many years.

For management:

- to understand the health and wellbeing issues which might be raised and ways in which they can provide support; and
- to understand the potential impact on work

Your responsibilities

If you believe you are in the perimenopause stage or are entering the menopause and you feel that this is impacting upon your work it is important to talk to your manager or the relevant person at work.

Understanding the symptoms is not easy as there are more than 34 symptoms, which can include:

- difficulty sleeping and night sweats;
- feeling tired and completely lacking in energy;
- mood swings or depression;
- feeling anxious and panic attacks;
- hot flushes or noticeable hearbeats;
- struggling to remember things or to concentrate and focus;
- taking longer to recover from illness;
- irregular periods which can become heavier before stopping altogether;
- aches and pains including muscle and joint stiffness;
- recurring urinary tracts infections and problems;
- headaches including migraines;
- putting on weight;
- skin irritation or dry eyes; and
- joint stiffness, aches and pains.

Each of these symptoms might affect performance at work. In order to support you during this time the company needs to be made aware of how the menopause is impacting you, so honest and open conversations are encouraged. With your consent medical information may be requested and guidance from professionals sought.

Employer responsibilities

Provide support

The Company aims to facilitate an open and understanding working environment. You are encouraged to inform your line manager that you are experiencing menopausal symptoms at an early stage to ensure that symptoms are treated as an ongoing health issue rather than as individual instances of ill health. Early notification will also help line managers to determine the most appropriate course of action to support your individual needs. If you do not wish to discuss the issue with your direct line manager you may find it helpful to have an initial discussion with a trusted colleague or another manager.

There are many external sources of help and support for employees and managers, including the information points below:

- www.menopausematters.co.uk which provides information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options;
- the www.daisynetwork.org charity, which provides support for women experiencing premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency; and
- the www.menopausecafe.net which provides information about events where strangers gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss the menopause.

Reasonable adjustments

Following discussions with your manager and/or after seeking medical advice certain reasonable adjustments may be put in place to support you because being able to manage the effects of the menopause and perimenopause includes making sure health and safety checks are in place, are regularly carried out and risks minimised, reduced or where possible removed.

Environment

Consideration will be given to your wellbeing and this could include things like the environment, for example are you able to access ventilation easily or sit next to a window to enable you to cool down quickly when experiencing a hot flush. Take the time to discuss any needs.

Flexible working

The Company recognises that difficulty sleeping is a common symptom of the menopause. To reflect this, as well as the impact of other common symptoms, we aim to facilitate flexible working wherever possible. Requests for flexible working could include asking for:

- a change to the pattern of hours worked;
- permission to perform work from home;
- a reduction in working hours; or
- more frequent breaks.
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You should discuss such requests with your line manager and (where applicable) follow the Flexible Working Request procedure in the Flexible Working Policy. Depending on the circumstances, requests may be approved on a permanent or temporary basis.

Data Protection

The Company will process any personal data collected in accordance with its Data Protection policy. Data collected from the point at which the Company becomes aware of the issue is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of providing the necessary support.

Discrimination

The menopause can in extreme cases amount to a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010. The Company will ensure that you are not treated less favourably than others as a result of any disability and will also work with you to make reasonable adjustments as required.

Health and safety

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 imposes a duty on the Company to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable everyone's health, safety and welfare at work. The Company will consider whether or not a risk assessment is necessary to identify how working conditions could affect those experiencing the menopause in the workplace.

Policy Review and Assessment

This policy may be amended by Interr at any time in order to take into account changes in legislation and best practice. This policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Board and seeks to be reviewed and updated annually. Any queries arising regarding this policy should be addressed to Mick Tabori.



Mick Tabori - CEO
January 2023