

Menopause policy

Introduction

Menopause is when your periods stop due to lower hormone levels. It usually happens between the ages of 45 and 55, although it can sometimes happen earlier. Menopause can have a big impact on your life and work for a number of years.

The purpose of this policy is to assist with creating an open and menopause friendly workplace where managers and those experiencing menopause feel comfortable discussing any issues associated with this, and to ensure the necessary help is known about and offered to those affected.

This policy applies to everyone in our organisation including employees, workers, contractors, volunteers, apprentices and interns.

Effects of menopause

Physical symptoms of the menopause can include the following:

- hot flushes
- insomnia
- fatigue
- poor concentration
- headaches
- skin irritation
- urinary problems.

As a result of the above, or as an extension of the hormone imbalance, individuals going through the menopause can also experience psychological difficulties, including:

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

It is also commonly acknowledged that Hormone Replacement Therapy, medication which is often prescribed for menopause, can have side effects which cause problems at work. These include nausea, headaches and leg cramps.

Communication

We aim to normalise conversations about menopause in the workplace and remove any stigma. Menopause should not be a taboo subject. We encourage employees to have discussions about the menopause and be supportive of each other.

It is important that, as an employee, you prioritise your personal health and wellbeing. If you are struggling with any aspect of your role because of symptoms associated with the menopause, you should tell your manager, who will treat the matter with complete confidence. So that we can give you the best support possible we encourage you to be open and honest in these conversations.

Alternatively, your manager may talk to you if they notice a change in your behaviour or performance.

We understand that you may feel uncomfortable discussing personal information with your manager. If this is the case, we encourage you to talk to the H R Manager.

During any discussions, your manager will consider your individual situation and evaluate if any adjustments can be made. Your individual needs will be addressed sensitively and confidentiality will be maintained.

Managers will also arrange follow up sessions to review the effectiveness of any adjustments put in place.

Making adjustments to your role

To help you in your daily duties, your manager will explore making adjustments to your role or working environment with the aim of reducing the effect that the menopause is having on you. Risk assessments will be consulted to identify potential issues. We acknowledge that the menopause affects each individual in different ways so no adjustment will be made without fully discussing it with you first.

Examples of adjustments include:

- changing your working location so you are closer to toilet facilities, away from hot and cold spots around the office or to ensure greater access to natural light
- allowing changes to our normal rules on work wear
- implementing further temperature control, such as access to a fan
- assessing how work is allocated and whether you are affected at particular points of the day
- providing a quiet place to work or relax
- allowing additional rest breaks
- providing sanitary products in toilet and shower facilities
- changing start and finish times



- considering flexible working hours or allowing you to work from home

Once the adjustments are agreed, they will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure they are having the required effect.

We are legally obliged by the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to an employee's role or working conditions if they have a disability that places them at a disadvantage when performing their role and we will ensure compliance with our obligations in this regard.

You may also be entitled to make a flexible working request. Please read our flexible working policy if you would like more details.

If you are unwell due to menopausal symptoms

You are not expected to come to work if you are unwell because of menopausal symptoms. If you are unwell you should tell your line Manager or Jo Cloute the H R Manager and follow our usual sickness reporting procedure.

Training

We provide training to all our staff on menopause and how they can ask for help or support their colleagues.

We ensure that all levels of management are trained on the effects of menopause, how to hold discussions with employees who are experiencing menopause and adjustments that can be made to an employee's role to remove or lessen any effects the employee is experiencing.

Behaviour of others

There is an expectation on all employees to conduct themselves in a helpful and open-minded manner towards colleagues.

We maintain a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment and will treat any and all complaints seriously. If you feel that you have been mistreated in any way by a colleague because of matters related to the menopause, please tell Jo Cloute H R Manager.