



# Menopause Policy

## Introduction

The menopause is a natural ageing process and refers to the time when the natural reproductive cycle ends and periods stop. It usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55, but can be significantly earlier or later. It can also be triggered by health conditions or by treatment for health conditions. In addition, individuals can experience some menopausal symptoms in the months and years prior to the cessation of periods (referred to as the perimenopause), as well as for some time after the last period.

The menopause is a stage of life, not an illness. Nevertheless it may cause symptoms of discomfort and potentially ill health which can range from mild to very severe. It can also be viewed as a 'taboo' subject that cannot be openly or easily discussed to allow help to be sought and provided. Yet the symptoms associated with the menopause can often be alleviated, at least in part, through lifestyle changes including workplace adjustments.

Symptoms of the menopause will vary from individual to individual and are associated with a change in the level of oestrogen produced by the body. Some of the most common symptoms include the following:

- Hot flushes
- Night sweats (with associated sleep disruption)
- Fatigue
- Irregular periods/heavy bleeding
- Difficulty concentrating/memory loss (which can lead to a loss of confidence)
- Mood disturbances (including anxiety or depression)
- Headaches
- Bone and joint problems

The symptoms may occur in isolation but are often interrelated (e.g. heavy bleeding can cause fatigue as can sleep disruption and fatigue can lead to difficulty concentrating). Typically symptoms may continue for 2-4 years but could be shorter or longer. It is important not to make assumptions as to whether a member of staff is experiencing the menopause as the typical symptoms listed above can also be caused by a number of other conditions or life circumstances.

The purpose of this policy is

- to raise awareness of the menopause/perimenopause, the related issues and how it can affect you and your colleagues in the workplace;
- to encourage employees and their line managers to feel comfortable to talk openly about the menopause and its impacts and to seek and provide support;
- to ensure that employees experiencing adverse symptoms from the menopause are treated with empathy and are appropriately supported to manage the symptoms effectively whilst at work.

## **Policy Statement**

CIEEM is committed to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of all its staff and that all staff are treated with dignity, understanding and respect. This includes supporting staff who are adversely affected by symptoms of the menopause and enabling colleagues and line managers to understand the issues involved and how to provide appropriate support and help. It is also important to recognise that there are some symptoms of the menopause that individuals may be experiencing but may not have attributed to the menopause or may not be aware of their impacts on others. Creating a positive culture of openness and respect allows issues to be raised in a supportive and solutions-orientated environment.

This policy applies to staff of all gender identities.

CIEEM will seek to support any member of staff who is negatively experiencing or is otherwise adversely impacted by symptoms of menopause/perimenopause. All staff are encouraged to appropriately raise the subject with their line manager or, if they do not feel comfortable doing so, with another manager, staff representative or colleague who can act on their behalf. Staff are also encouraged to complete the [Helping You at Work form](#) to help facilitate a discussion with their line manager or another manager.

CIEEM is committed to ensuring that:

- all staff are aware of this policy;
- managers will be expected to listen sympathetically and respond appropriately when concerns about the impacts of the menopause are raised;
- managers will be trained to recognise symptoms and to identify appropriate workplace adjustments to help staff manage their symptoms and remain comfortable in their work environment;
- all staff will receive regular menopause awareness training to help them understand and recognise the adverse impacts of the menopause and respond appropriately.

Reasonable adjustments will vary according to the adverse impacts being experienced and their severity but may include:

- assistance with controlling workspace temperature and ventilation including provision of desk fans and/or priority for workstations close to a window;
- provision of quiet area for rest periods to manage acute symptoms;
- adjustment of start/finish times to help manage impacts of sleep disruption;
- management of workload to coincide with periods when concentration is better;
- additional time working from home;
- individual risk assessment;
- referral for an occupational health assessment.

Note: Some employees who menstruate may regularly experience severe pain and discomfort/heavy bleeding at the start or throughout their period. CIEEM encourages such individuals to make their line managers aware so that reasonable adjustments can be made as appropriate.

## **Sources of support**

There a number of sources of support for those staff experiencing adverse impacts from the menopause or who wish to understand more about the issues. Staff should be directed to make use of their GP, if appropriate, and/or the Employee Assistance Programme available at <https://www.well-online.co.uk/> .

Additional online information and support is available at:

NHS Choices <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>

Menopause Matters <https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/>

The Daisy Network (support for early menopause/premature ovarian insufficiency)

<https://www.daisynetwork.org/>

The Menopause Exchange <https://menopause-exchange.co.uk/>

Women's Health concern <https://www.womens-health-concern.org/>

Henpicked (community site for women over 40) <https://henpicked.net/>

Meg's Menopause <https://megsmenopause.com/34-symptoms/>