

Menopause Policy

This policy is non-contractual and as such does not form part of your contract of employment.

June 2024

General Principle

Section 2 of the Health and Safety Work Act 1974 requires employers to ensure 'the health and safety and welfare at work' of all employees.

We recognise the importance of staff wellbeing and that this extends to age related issues. In particular, we will give support and flexible working conditions to women who are experiencing menopause.

We believe it is important to support staff currently going through this change and that we manage this issue by raising awareness, training and development for all management and colleagues.

Menopause should not be taboo or 'hidden'. We 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 women, men should be aware too.

For those experiencing symptoms it can be a difficult and stressful time. Everyone will experience the menopause differently and for some, symptoms can be quite severe and can affect people both physically and mentally.

The menopause is a natural stage of life which affects most women and other people who have a menstrual cycle. This can include:

- trans people – 'trans' is an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender is not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth
- people with 'variations of sex development' (VSD) – some people might prefer to identify as intersex or use the term 'differences in sex development' (DSD)

It's important for employers to be aware of all of the people who might go through the menopause and menopause symptoms and to support them all equally.

The menopause usually happens between 45 and 55 years of age but it can also happen earlier or later in someone's life. For many people symptoms last about four years, but in some cases symptoms can last a lot longer.

Menopause Stages

All stages and types of the menopause are different, and symptoms can vary from person to person, and range from very mild to severe.

There are three different stages to the menopause:

- perimenopause
- menopause
- postmenopause

Perimenopause is the stage from the beginning of menopausal symptoms to the menopause.

Menopause means the last menstrual period. Periods stop because the low levels of estrogen and progesterone do not stimulate the lining of the womb (endometrium) in the normal cycle. Hormone levels can fluctuate for several years before eventually becoming so low that the endometrium stays thin and does not bleed. This can be as a result of age or surgery.

Post menopause is the time following the last period and is usually defined as more than 12 months with no periods in someone with intact ovaries, or immediately following surgery if the ovaries have been removed.

More information can be found on the [NHS Inform website](#).

Menopause and the Workplace

Early menopause symptoms include **Physical**, **Sexual** and **Psychological** problems.

Find more information in these useful links below:

- <https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/womens-health/later-years-around-50-years-and-over/menopause-and-post-menopause-health/menopause-and-the-workplace/>

Or

- <https://menopauseintheworkplace.co.uk/articles/menopause-and-work-its-important/>

Some people might also experience early menopause or go through medical menopause earlier in their lives. These types of menopause can be medically complicated, so Managers should consider this when supporting their staff.

How We Support Team Members

We wish to support our colleagues at what can be a very difficult time in their lives; the menopause is a health and wellbeing concern for staff and needs to be handled sensitively.

It's important for us to be aware that the menopause and its symptoms can affect staff at any time. Being aware of this can help our staff continue to do their job confidently and effectively.

The menopause can also have an impact on those supporting someone going through the menopause, for example a relative, partner, colleague or carer.

Although the menopause will only be experienced by women and other people who have a menstrual cycle, men should also be included in conversations and training. This is because they might be supporting others going through it and also need to understand the impact it can have on colleagues.

Supporting and creating a positive and open environment between an employer and someone affected by the menopause can help prevent the person from:

- losing confidence in their skills and abilities;

- feeling like they need to take time off work and hide the reasons for it;
- having increased mental health problems such as stress, anxiety and depression; or
- leaving their job.

The way in which we will support our colleagues includes:

- Risk assessments for staff experiencing the menopause;
- Flexible working conditions;
- Review of menopausal employees working area i.e. providing a window desk or extra fan for combating hot flushes;
- Availability of shower facilities;
- Support managers so they can signpost employees to resources and support; and
- Support managers so they are aware of the symptoms of menopause and can manage these successfully with their colleagues.

The benefits of our policy include:

- Supporting colleagues to help them understand this transition; Information which can relate to home life as well as work;
- Reducing absenteeism due to menopausal symptoms.