



The Menopause Policy

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1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Make sure that the Trust can support staff affected by the menopause and help them to feel comfortable at work, both when experiencing symptoms and when asking for support and adjustments
- Set out how we can make reasonable adjustments to support staff experiencing menopausal symptoms at work
- Educate staff on the menopause and the symptoms staff may experience
- Provide further resources to help staff, particularly line managers, to support others through the menopause

2. Definitions

The **menopause** is a stage of life when a woman* stops having periods. It typically affects those aged between 45 and 55, when oestrogen (female sex hormones) levels begin to fall. In the UK, the average age to reach the menopause is 51.

Perimenopause is the time of hormonal change leading up to this, when a woman may experience symptoms. **Post-menopause** is the time beyond menopause.

Early menopause is when a woman's periods stop before the age of 45. It can happen naturally, or as a side effect of some treatments.

For the purpose of this policy, any reference to the menopause shall include perimenopause and early menopause.

*We acknowledge that while the majority of people affected by the menopause will be women, those who are trans or non-binary may also experience the menopause or menopause-type symptoms. The support outlined in this policy is designed to meet the above aims for all affected colleagues.

2.1 Symptoms

Individuals suffering from the menopause may experience symptoms that cause changes to their emotions and other aspects of their health, some of which may impact them at work.

Menopausal symptoms might include:

- Hot flushes, night sweats and palpitations
- Difficulty sleeping, insomnia and fatigue
- Low mood, anxiety and depression
- Headaches and joint and muscle pain
- Weakened bladder function and urinary tract infections
- Vaginal dryness and reduced sex drive
- Problems with memory, confidence and concentration

We acknowledge that the menopause will affect everybody differently – some individuals may experience no symptoms at all, and some may experience a variety. We will adapt our response to staff affected by the menopause on a case-by-case basis.

3. Legislation and Guidance

Under the [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#), employers have a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all staff, so far as is reasonably practicable.

The [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#) require that employers make an assessment of the risks to the health and safety of their employees. This requires undertaking general risk assessments, which should include specific risks to the health of staff affected by the menopause.

The [Equality Act 2010](#) prohibits discrimination against an individual based on the protected characteristics, which include age, sex and disability. Employers are under a statutory duty to consider whether any ‘reasonable adjustments’ are required to alleviate any disadvantages staff encounter based on these characteristics.

[Section 6](#) of the Equality Act 2010 states that a person has a disability if:

- They have a physical or mental impairment, **and**
- The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

Ongoing symptoms linked to the menopause may meet the definition of a disability and where they do, employers will be required to consider whether any reasonable adjustments are required to alleviate any disadvantage.

Any such adjustments will be made on a case-by-case basis and, where appropriate, staff affected by the menopause will be offered a variety of approaches to support them.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Trustees and Local Governing Board

The Trustees and Local Governing Board have ultimate responsibility for health and safety matters in the Trust, but will delegate day-to-day responsibility to the CEO, DFO and Headteachers.

The Trustees and Local Governing Board have a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that staff are not exposed to risks to their health and safety on the school premises.

The Governor who oversees health and safety is Simon Holmes.

4.2 Role of the Senior Leadership Team

Senior staff will make reasonable adjustments to the workplace to support staff experiencing the menopause, and to make sure the workplace doesn’t make their symptoms worse, by:

- Carrying out individual risk assessments to assess working conditions in line with the specific needs of staff affected by the menopause

- Monitoring the wellbeing of staff through regular surveys and structured conversations
- Providing resources and training opportunities to make sure that all line managers are aware of the menopause, its potential impact on work, and what adjustments may be necessary
- Promoting information about and access to external support services
- Ensuring good ventilation and air quality throughout the schools, leaving doors open where appropriate and ensuring windows can be safely opened
- Ensuring regular access to cold drinking water for all staff
- Regulating and monitoring the temperature of the school and collecting feedback from staff, as well as ensuring the temperature can be regulated per room
- Ensuring toilet, washing and sanitary facilities are accessible for staff, and establishing a system that allows for cover for staff to access these facilities where necessary while they are teaching
- Providing small desk fans on request to help staff cool down
- Fitting blinds to windows
- Designating a member of staff such as a wellbeing champion that staff affected by the menopause can speak to about their symptoms in confidence, if they do not feel comfortable doing so with their line manager
- Giving permission for absence to attend medical appointments
- Referring to Occupational Health and the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) where appropriate

4.3 Role of Line Managers

Line managers who work with staff who may be affected by the menopause will:

- Provide a non-judgmental, empathetic and confidential support system to staff
- Monitor sickness absence, and have support meetings with staff if any patterns emerge
- Have regular, informal conversations with staff that they line manage who are affected by the menopause to discuss what support they need, and record any reasonable adjustments that are agreed
- To help facilitate staff affected by the menopause to take regular breaks from their work if necessary to help manage symptoms
- Promote information about and access to external support services
- Be sensitive to health issues such as the menopause during the performance management/appraisal process
- If necessary, seek advice from HR or discuss a referral with the staff member to occupational health for further support

4.4 Role of staff members affected by the menopause

We encourage staff who are experiencing menopausal symptoms that are impacting their health and wellbeing at work to:

- Share their practical needs to reduce the difficulties the menopause can cause and their preferred coping strategies with their line manager or the wellbeing champion
- Make time in their schedule to visit their GP and other support services
- Access the Trust Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for further support

4.5 Role of all staff

All staff are expected to:

- Promote health and wellbeing for themselves and others at all times
- Treat each other with empathy and respect
- Support other members of staff, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance

5. Further Resources

Here are some resources to help staff understand and provide support for staff affected by the menopause.

- [Menopause](#) (NHS)
- [Menopause Matters](#)
- [Menopause: diagnosis and management](#) (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence)
- The [Daisy Network](#) charity
- [Menopause in the Workplace](#)
- [Menopause resources](#) from the CIPD, particularly for:
 - [Line managers](#)
 - [HR staff](#)

6. Links to Other Policies

- NSAT Staff Wellbeing Policy
- NSAT Health and Safety Policy
- NSAT Managing Sickness and Supporting Attendance Policy
- NSAT Leave of Absence Policy