

# THE LIFESTYLE MEDIC

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO OVERALL HEALTH

A photograph of two women in professional business attire sitting at a desk. The woman on the left, with long brown hair, is gesturing with her hands while looking at a laptop screen. The woman on the right, with short dark curly hair, is smiling and looking at the same screen. The background is a blurred office environment.

## Menopause policy

# Menopause policy

Ladies experiencing the perimenopause and menopause can be subject to discrimination, rude comments, unfair treatment and issues within the workplace. We want to ensure that none of your employees feel let down by a lack of support and understanding by the entire team.

## Introduction

- Menopause is when your periods stop due to lower hormone levels. This usually happens between the ages of 45 and 55.
- It can sometimes happen earlier naturally. Or for reasons such as surgery to remove the ovaries (oophorectomy) or the uterus (hysterectomy), cancer treatments like chemotherapy, or a genetic reason. Sometimes the reason is unknown.
- Perimenopause is when you have symptoms before your periods have stopped. You reach menopause when you have not had a period for 12 months.
- Menopause and perimenopause can cause symptoms like anxiety, mood swings, brain fog, hot flushes and irregular periods. These symptoms can start years before your periods stop and carry on afterwards.
- Menopause and perimenopause symptoms can have a big impact on your life, including relationships and work.
- There are things you can do to help with symptoms. There are also medicines that can replace the missing hormones and help relieve your symptoms.

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

## Aims

- We want to help you create an environment in which colleagues can openly and comfortably instigate conversations or engage in discussions about menopause.
- Ensure everyone understands what menopause is, can confidently approach the subject, whilst being aware of the Company's policy and practices.
- Educate and inform Managers about the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can support individuals experiencing these symptoms at work.
- Provide a supportive setting in which those who may be suffering with menopause symptoms are able to discuss them with confidence and ask for any support and reasonable adjustments so they can continue to be successful in their roles.
- Reduce absenteeism due to menopausal symptoms.
- Assure individuals that as a responsible employer, you are committed to supporting their needs during menopause



## Employee responsibilities

All employees should contribute to a respectful working environment and be willing to support colleagues who may be experiencing the menopause. We encourage colleagues to be open and honest about any concerns, so we can provide appropriate support where required.

All employees are responsible for:

- Taking a personal responsibility to look after their own health;
- Contributing to a respectful and productive working environment;
- Being willing to help and support their peers;

## Employer responsibilities

Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that no one experiences less favourable treatment as a result of the menopause.
- Ensuring that any conversations are kept strictly confidential.
- Putting in place any required support / adjustments where reasonably possible.
- Recording any agreements made.
- Holding regular reviews with employees regarding support required, including ongoing support and appropriate follow up meetings.
- Seeking additional advice from Occupational Health where necessary.

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An open door policy creates ease of access to support. Scheduling time to discuss the matter may create unnecessary anxiety for the individual seeking support. We encourage you to make your employees aware that they can address concerns regarding the menopause in various ways and at appropriate times throughout the working day.

## Flexible working

Temporary changes may be implemented to support the journey of menopause. Agreeing on such supportive measures will ensure your employee that they are understood and respected, which will reduce absenteeism and will help to retain your team. Such steps may include:

- More frequent breaks;
- A change to start and finish times;
- To work from home.

## Temperature control

Comfortable working temperatures are stipulated by HSE Gov; providing appropriate heating and cooling facilities with access to cool drinking water is a legal obligation. Remind your team that such policies are in place, and encourage them to utilise such facilities.

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)

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## Available support

Employees are encouraged to seek support and highlight any concerns to their line manager. This will enable the most appropriate support to be implemented, and any action required to take place.

Encouraging an open policy that provides support, without judgement or prejudice will highlight to your employees that you understand their concerns and make reasonable adjustments.

We understand that some employees will not wish to discuss menopause related concerns with their line manager and may feel more comfortable talking to a colleague, who can relay concerns to the appropriate department, or seek support from HR.

Employees and managers may find external sources of help and support useful including the following:

- **Menopause matters (Menopause Matters, menopausal symptoms, remedies, advice)**, which provides information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options;
- the **Daisy Network** charity (**Charity for Women with POI | The Daisy Network**), which provides support for women experiencing premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency; and
- the **Menopause Café (Gather to eat cake, drink and discuss menopause ([menopausecafe.net](https://menopausecafe.net)))**, which provides information about events where strangers gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss the menopause.

