Menopause Policy

Menopause Matters

The menopause is a normal part of every woman's life and isn't always an easy transition. We recognise that staff may need appropriate flexibility, support and adjustments during the time of change, before, during and after the menopause.

We recognise that the menopause and perimenopause is an individual experience and there is no 'one size fits all' solution. Whilst every woman does not suffer with symptoms, we recognise that supporting those who do will improve their experience at work.

We want to support and encourage a culture where all staff are confident in discussing menopausal symptoms openly, without embarrassment. We want to create an environment where our staff members feel confident enough to raise issues about their symptoms and ask for support and adjustments at work.

We recognise that wide-ranging physical and psychological symptoms can feel seriously inhibiting to someone in their career. By providing the right support and communicating openly we hope to enable all people – and teams – to perform at their best.

This is not just an issue for women, men should be aware too. The changing age of the UK's workforce means that between 75% and 80% of menopausal women are in work. Research shows that the majority of women are unwilling to discuss menopause-related health problems with their line manager, or ask for the support or adjustments that they may need. Twenty-five per cent of menopausal women have considered leaving work because of their symptoms.

Across our Trust we recognise that people of diverse gender expressions and identities experience menopause. Across all the schools/colleges in our Trust we are committed to supporting our staff through this time. We will work to ensure that where possible the workplace does not make symptoms worse.

This policy sets out the guidelines for members of staff and line managers on providing support to manage menopausal symptoms at work.

The Legislative Setting

The Trust undertakes to comply with its legal obligations as set out below:

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (1974) requires employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all workers. Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, employers are required to undertake general risk assessments which should include specific risks to menopausal women.

The Equality Act (2010) prohibits discrimination against people on the grounds of certain 'protected characteristics' including sex, age and disability. Conditions linked to the menopause may meet the definition of an 'impairment' under the Equality Act and as a result require reasonable adjustments.

Our commitment

We will educate and inform our line managers and staff to raise awareness of how the menopause can impact on working women and about the potential symptoms of the menopause and how they can support team members who are experiencing them.

If a member of staff feels uncomfortable speaking to their line manager, we will ensure an alternative contact is made available.

Where possible we will consider reasonable adjustments to support members of our staff community who are experiencing the menopause. These could include simple measures such as the examples included below:

- ✓ Leaving doors open
- ✓ Ensuring that windows can be safely opened
- ✓ Ensuring that is possible to regulate the temperature in the classroom or other room by turning down radiators (provided room temperature does not drop below 18 degrees celsius).
- ✓ Fitting blinds to windows
- ✓ Arranging access to a fan

It is recognised that many of these practical and easy-to-institute changes to the workplace, that will make working life more bearable for menopausal women, will benefit all staff.

Collaboration

We will welcome the opportunity to understand more about the lived experience of our staff who are experiencing the menopause.

It is recognised that everyone who works across our community of schools/colleges at the Trust has a role to play in ensuring a comfortable working environment for all staff, including women experiencing the menopause.

To help us work together and to explore possible avenues of support we encourage all staff to be open and honest with us to help our understanding.

All staff are responsible for:

· taking personal responsibility to look after their health;

· being open and honest in conversations with the People Team and Occupational Health;

· contributing to a respectful and healthy working environment;

· showing compassion and being willing to help and support their colleagues;

· accepting and supporting any necessary adjustments their colleagues request or are receiving as a result of their menopausal symptoms.

Support available to you

As a first step you may wish to complete a self-identification form to help you consider how your symptoms impact on you.

Your line manager*. Your line manager can listen to you and consider reasonable adjustments to support you to manage your symptoms at work. They may work with you to complete a risk assessment to consider options to support you.

Our Employee Assistant Scheme (EAP). Our EAP can give all staff across our community of schools / colleges, including those struggling with peri/menopause, confidential support and guidance. Staff can access a range of emotional and practical support including counselling, financial and legal advice and online health and wellbeing resources.

The Trust People Team. The Trust People Team can signpost you to support available to you. They can also provide support if you do not feel comfortable speaking to your line manager at this time.

Occupational Health: we have an Occupational Health service who can provide advice and guidance to line managers, and can carry out a holistic assessment with you to ascertain whether or not the working environment may be exacerbating menopause symptoms. They may discuss with you what adjustments would help, and signpost you to other appropriate sources of help and advice. Where Occupational Health make suggestions about adjustments, your line manager will consider these where they can be reasonably accommodated.

**If you would prefer not to speak to your line manager, please contact the Trust People Team in the first instance.*

The role of line managers

We recognise that the most important and valuable thing a manager can do is listen and, wherever possible, respond sympathetically to any requests for adjustments at work.

If a colleague is experiencing symptoms, they should be encouraged to also seek advice and support from their doctor with regard to their health.

All managers should familiarise themselves with this policy and the Menopause Matters guidance.

We expect all line managers to:

- ✓ encourage the member of staff to speak openly and honestly
- ✓ be ready and willing to listen and have open discussions about menopause, appreciating the personal nature of the conversation, and treating the discussion sensitively and confidentially and allowing adequate time for the discussion.
- ✓ where appropriate, carry out a HSE risk assessment.
- ✓ record adjustments agreed, and actions to be implemented;
- ✓ ensure ongoing dialogue via a follow-up meeting.
- ✓ ensure that all agreed adjustments are adhered to and reviewed as regularly as necessary.
- ✓ be aware of the potential impact of menopause on performance. (If someone's performance suddenly dips, consideration will be given as to whether the menopause may be playing a part in this).

Where adjustments are unsuccessful, or if symptoms are proving particularly severe, the line manager may:

- discuss with the employee a referral to Occupational Health for further advice;
- review Occupational Health advice, and implement any additional recommendations;
- update the actions agreed and continue the review process.

Risk assessments

Risk assessments should consider the specific needs of menopausal women and ensure that the working environment will not make their symptoms worse. Often, making simple changes to the working environment can help to alleviate the impact of some symptoms.

A risk assessment should look at issues such as:

- temperature and ventilation
- the materials used in any uniform or school / college/ trust clothing
- access to toilet facilities and access to cold water.

A risk assessment form is available from the Trust People Team.

Guidance for line managers

Additional guidance for managers can be accessed through the links below:

The menopause at work: a practical guide for people managers (CIPD)

Supporting staff - Menopause at work - Acas

Menopause: a guide for managers (NHS)

Supporting employees through the menopause (BUPA)

Work-related stress and how to manage it: stress risk assessment - HSE

POLICY AMENDMENT RECORD

Date	Reviewed by	Nature of Change	Adopted by Board	Date of Next Review
Sept 2024	EWo/P&V Committee	New policy	8 Oct 2024	Sept 2026 or sooner as required.
Oct 2026	EWo	Reviewed. No material changes		Oct 2028 or sooner as required.