**Menopause Policy**

**Introduction**

This policy sets out the rights of employees experiencing menopausal symptoms and explains the support available to them.

We are committed to creating an open and supportive culture. We want you to feel comfortable speaking about how menopause-related symptoms may be affecting you at work and be able to ask for the support that you need to help you manage your symptoms.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

**Scope**

This policy applies to anyone working for us. This includes employees, workers, contractors, volunteers, interns and apprentices.

In this policy, where we refer to menopause, this also includes perimenopause.

**Symptoms of menopause**

Menopause is a natural event during which a person stops having periods and experiences hormonal changes, such as decreased oestrogen levels.

Menopause usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 and typically lasts four to eight years. Occasionally, menopausal symptoms can begin before the age of 40.

Perimenopause, or menopause transition, begins several years before menopause. An individual may start to experience menopausal symptoms during the final two years of perimenopause.

While menopausal symptoms vary greatly, they commonly include the following:

* hot flushes;
* night sweats;
* anxiety;
* dizziness;
* fatigue;
* memory loss;
* depression;
* headaches;
* recurrent urinary tract infections;
* joint stiffness, aches and pains;
* reduced concentration; and
* heavy periods.

**Our commitment to you**

We are committed to ensuring all line managers receive adequate training to support individuals experiencing adverse menopausal symptoms.

**Requesting support**

If you find it difficult to cope at work because of menopausal symptoms, you are encouraged to speak to your line manager. You can talk to the HR department if you cannot approach your line manager.

We urge you to be as open as possible about any particular issues you are experiencing or adjustments you need to ensure you are provided with the right level of support.

Any health-related information you disclose during discussions with your line manager or the HR department will be treated sensitively and in confidence.

**Working flexibly on a temporary basis**

You have the right to request flexible working; if you require a permanent change to working arrangements, please follow the procedure set out in our Flexible Working Policy.

However, we recognise that for individuals affected by menopausal symptoms, the option to work flexibly on a temporary (rather than permanent) basis may be appropriate. For example, this could include working from home, changing your start and finish times, changes to your work allocation or taking more frequent breaks. This is a partial list.

If you would benefit from a temporary change to your working arrangement on an ad hoc basis because of sleep deprivation or other symptoms that may impact your performance, you should discuss and agree on these with your line manager.

We will facilitate temporary, flexible working arrangements wherever possible and continue reviewing them to ensure they meet your needs.

**Working environment**

If your working environment exacerbates your menopausal symptoms, you should raise this with your line manager.

We can implement various practical adjustments to make your working life easier, such as moving your workstation to a cooler area or providing you with a fan. We will allow reasonable flexibility if you are required to wear a uniform.

[There is an air conditioning system in operation in the building, and chilled water is provided on each floor.]

**Quiet place to work**

If you need a time out to relax, a short break to manage symptoms or take medication, or a quiet workplace space, you should speak to your line manager, who will try to accommodate this.

**[Sanitary products]**

We will ensure that sanitary products are available in toilet and shower facilities.

**Sickness**

You are not expected to work if you are unwell because of menopausal symptoms.

Unless otherwise set out in your contract, if you are sick and unable to work, you should follow the procedure for absence reporting.

You do not have to disclose that your absence is related to menopause if you wish to keep this private. However, we want you to be open about the reason for your leave.

**Occupational health**

In some cases, we may refer you to occupational health so that they can advise on how your symptoms are impacted at work and make recommendations on the types of adjustments that may be appropriate. Occupational health may also signpost you to external sources of help and advice.

**Employee assistance programme**

Help and support are also available through our employee assistance programme (EAP). You can use our EAP to speak to an independent adviser on a confidential basis about any issue troubling you. To access the EAP website, go to [details of the website, with username and password].

**External sources of help**

Various organisations provide help and support on menopause, including:

* [Menopause matters](https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/), which includes information about menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options;
* The [Daisy Network](https://www.daisynetwork.org/) charity, which provides support for people experiencing premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency; and
* The [Menopause Café](https://www.menopausecafe.net/), which provides information about events where strangers gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss menopause.

**Data protection**

We will process any personal data collected in accordance with our [data protection policy](https://www.xperthr.co.uk/policies-and-procedures/processing-special-category-personal-data-and-criminal-records-data-policy/163520/)/[policy on processing special categories of personal data](https://www.xperthr.co.uk/policies-and-procedures/data-protection-policy/162690/). Data collected from the point at which we become aware of the issue is held securely and accessed by and disclosed to individuals only to provide the necessary support.