

# Menopause Policy 2023/2024



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The College aims to create an environment in which all our employees feel informed about the menopause and are comfortable and confident talking about its impact. We aim to support those going through the menopause, in coping with its effects so they can continue to do their job successfully.
- 1.2. This policy and procedure will not discriminate either directly or indirectly against any individual on grounds of gender, race, ethnicity or national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or belief, age, trade union membership, disability, socio-economic status, offending background or any other personal characteristic.
- 1.3. This policy should be read alongside the college Flexible Working Policy, EDI Policy, Attendance Management Policy and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan.
- 1.4. This policy does not form part of your employment contract, and may be updated at any time.

## 2. SCOPE

- 2.1. The menopause can have significant effects on a woman's personal life and on her work life. Trans and non-binary employees may be affected in the same or similar ways and are covered by this policy.

## 3. WHAT IS THE MENOPAUSE?

- 3.1. The menopause is a biological process that signals the end of a woman's ability to conceive a child. The average age for a woman to reach menopause is 51, however, it can be earlier or later than this due to surgery, illness or other reasons.
- 3.2. Perimenopause is the time leading up to menopause when a woman may experience changes, such as irregular periods or other menopausal symptoms. This can be years before menopause.
- 3.3. The menopause produces a range of physical and psychological symptoms that can affect many aspects of life. Every woman is different and not all will be affected in the same way or to the same extent.
- 3.4. Common symptoms can include but are not limited to:
  - Hot flushes
  - Headaches
  - Poor concentration
  - Dry eyes
  - Anxiety
  - Low mood
  - Lack of confidence
  - Panic attacks
  - Poor sleep
  - Weight gain
  - Fatigue
  - Poor memory

- Joint and muscle pain

3.5. Menopause symptoms tend to last about four years but can last longer.

## 4. UNDERSTANDING THE MENOPAUSE

4.1. Despite its potentially serious impact on a woman's everyday life, the menopause is still not spoken about as freely as some other physical or mental health issues and the aim is for the menopause to become a normal part of the health and wellbeing conversation.

4.2. Through training and raising awareness of the symptoms and related issues, we will promote an organisation wide understanding of what the menopause means for those going through it. This is essential to building a culture of openness, trust, sensitivity and respect around what is for many women a challenging time in their lives.

4.3. If required and where possible to do so, the College will make adjustments to a person's role, their working environment or their working day to support them during the menopause.

4.4. The College will always respect the privacy of staff with menopausal symptoms.

4.5. Unprofessional comments relating to someone going through the menopause may be dealt with through the college Disciplinary Policy.

4.6. For managers, recognising the symptoms of the menopause is vital to treating an affected employee fairly. It can explain certain behaviours that you might otherwise put down to a bad attitude or poor performance.

4.7. If you think that someone who reports to you may be going through the menopause and it is affecting their performance, and you're not sure what to do, please contact a Member of the HR Team.

## 5. HELPING TO SUPPORT STAFF THROUGH THE MENOPAUSE

5.1. The college is keen to support any employee going through the menopause.

5.2. We know that the menopause is a very personal matter, so even if it is thought a member of staff is displaying symptoms they might be asked how they are, in general terms rather than asked about it directly. They can then decide whether to discuss the menopause or not. Staff are encouraged to talk about it so support can be provided.

5.3. The College has a four step procedure that applies to discussions around the menopause and the action to take. Please note these are optional guidelines and do not necessarily need to be followed in this order:

Step 1

5.4. Speak to GP – staff are encouraged to speak to their GP or another medical specialist about menopause related concerns initially.

5.5. Talk to line manager or HR who will offer support or signpost to one of our Menopause champions, who are trained in providing support to staff.

5.6. Self-referral to Occupational Health Adviser (via the Hub – speak to HR if you need support with doing this).

## Step 2

5.7. Meet with line manager. for a private, friendly, honest and constructive conversation. It could be helpful for a member of the HR Department to be at the meeting too, but it's not essential.

5.8. Adjustments to make things easier will be discussed, these depend on symptoms and College resources but may include:

### 5.9. Hot flushes

- Controlling the temperature of the work area, such as providing a desktop fan, moving near a window or away from a heat source;
- Providing easy access to drinking water;
- Modifying dress code;
- Having access to a rest room for breaks if the work involves long periods of standing or sitting or providing a quiet area to manage a severe hot flush.

### 5.10. Heavy periods

- Ensuring easy access to toilets;
- Providing extra uniform;
- Providing access to sanitary products in toilets;
- Providing storage space for a change of clothing.

### 5.11. Headaches

- Providing easy access to drinking water;
- Providing a quiet space to work;
- Providing noise-reducing headphones to wear in open offices.

### 5.12. Low mood

- Agreeing time out from others, when required, without needing to ask for permission;
- Having access to a quiet area.

### 5.13. Loss of confidence

- Having regular protected time with your manager to discuss any issues.

### 5.14. Poor concentration

- Adjusting work patterns;
- Reviewing task allocation and workload;
- Providing quiet spaces to work;
- Offering noise reducing headphones to wear in open offices;
- Reducing interruptions;
- Agreeing protected time to not be disturbed.

### 5.15. Panic attacks and anxiety

- Providing mindfulness training or counselling for anxiety;
- Agreeing to have time away from work to undertake relaxation techniques or going for a walk.

5.16. Please note: This list is not exhaustive and there may be other suggestions that the College will consider.

5.17. All conversations will be kept confidential although there may be times that it is necessary to discuss things with others such as HR, other managers, the

College Occupational Health Nurse/Advisor etc who are also subject to the same duties of confidentiality.

- 5.18. Whilst the College will work hard to balance the needs of those suffering from menopausal symptoms and their colleagues, it is recognised however that on occasions a solution that works for everyone may not be found.
- 5.19. . Symptoms will only be discussed with colleagues where permission has been given to do so.
- 5.20. Notes of discussions may be taken but will be kept in line with the College's Data Protection Policy.
- 5.21. After the initial line manager meeting and periodically after that health and safety risk assessments may be carried out and/or advice from Occupational health may be sought.

### Step 3

- 5.22. Taking account of any specialist advice received, any adjustments to the role/working day will be agreed with the staff member,
- 5.23. A further meeting will take place to ensure the adjustments are working and if any modifications or further adjustments are required.

### Step 4

- 5.24. Ongoing review to ensure that adequate support is in place and symptoms are being managed effectively.
- 5.25. If symptoms change further adjustments can be considered. Staff are expected to advise their manager once symptoms have passed so that their can be further discussion regarding removing the adjustments in place.
- 5.26. The College may consult with the Occupational Health Adviser for professional support throughout.

## 6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 6.1. Updates to this policy will be made as and when they are needed/

## 7. DOCUMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS POLICY

- 7.1. Flexible Working Policy
- 7.2. Attendance Management Policy

## 8. APPENDIX

- 8.1. The NHS website has some good, basic information about the menopause:  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>
- 8.2. The British Menopause Society:  
<https://thebms.org.uk>

8.3. Women's Health Concern:

<https://www.womens-health-concern.org/>

8.4. A free app is also available to manage and track symptoms, access personalised expert advice and obtain support:

<https://balance-app.com/>

## Policy Cover Sheet

Please fill in the following details:

Policy Name	Menopause Policy
Version Number	V2
Policy Owner	HR
Release Date	1/2/24
Policy valid for	3 years

Documents included:

Completed Checklist (below)	Y
Policy text	Y
Filled in EIA	Y

Where should this policy be shared? All policies will be shared on the HUB.

The HUB	Y
Net Consent	
Website	

### Policy Checklist

Have you completed the following tasks:

Used the Microsoft Accessibility Checker	Y
Used formatted headings	Y
Used Arial 12pt font	Y
Included numbered paragraphs	Y
Included page numbers	Y
Included alternative text for all images which accurately describe what's in the picture	n/a
Checked for gender neutral language e.g. remove dinner ladies, workmen, he/she and replaced with servers, contractors, they.	Y
Used the full phrase instead of the acronym at least the first time	Y
Used the spelling and grammar check	Y
Gained feedback from colleagues to ensure the policy is clear and accurate	Y
Included any legal, social or organisational changes since the last policy review	Y
Reviewed the connected policies to ensure they are still active	Y
Filled in the change log	Y
Listened to the policy using the accessible reader	
Reviewed the policy flowchart	
Informed the EDI Manager of upcoming policy deadlines	

**Sign Off: To be filled in by the named person only**

	Name	Date
SLT		
Corporation (if required)		
Trade Union		
EIA		



## Changes for 22/23

Change log: this has been added to the template. Below is an example change log:

Version number	Changes description and page number	Major changes? Y/N	Initiator	Rationale	Date active from	New version number
2	Section 3 wording change to reflect symptoms not confined to the list	N			1/2/24	2

Details are given on what has changed, where, when, why, and by whom. This ensures we have appropriate version control, supports staff to read updated versions of policies, and provides an auditable trail.