

Menopause at Work Policy

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1. Aim

The Combined Authority is committed to the well-being of its workforce. This Policy is designed to support employees who are or think they are experiencing Menopause. This Policy may also be used by Line Managers and colleagues across the organisation, as a source of information.

2. Principles

Our policy outlines the impact that the menopause can have on your experience at work and details how we will support you to manage your symptoms. We want you to feel able to talk about the menopause with your manager and colleagues and ask for the help that you need.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority employees. There is no qualifying period.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time. It does not apply to Agency Worker or Contractors. This does not apply to Casual or Agency Workers.

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Note that this policy refers to 'women' throughout, but the principles equally apply to trans employees with menopausal symptoms.

4. Vision and Values

Our vision is for a prosperous and sustainable Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Driven by our values and using our collective voice and strengths, we seek inclusive good growth for an equitable resilient, healthier and connected region.

Our values define what is important in the way we deliver this vision. At Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority our core values are Collaboration, Integrity, Vision, Innovation and Leadership. We are committed to ensuring our culture enables our employees to display these values regardless of their roles within the organisation. Managers and employees alike must ensure our core values are upheld when implementing this policy.

5. What is the menopause?

The menopause is a natural event that happens in most women's lives during which they stop having periods, and experience hormonal changes such as a decrease in oestrogen levels. The menopause usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age and typically lasts for several years. Some women experience menopause before 40 years of age which can be as a result of natural early menopause or medically induced due to essential surgery or treatments such as chemotherapy. Perimenopause, or menopause transition, begins several years before menopause. Women may start to experience symptoms during the final two years of perimenopause.

The menopause can cause both physical and psychological side effects. Every woman's experience will be very different, and not every woman will experience every symptom. We recognise that your symptoms are likely to affect how you feel and perform at work. The support that you need will be particular to your individual situation.

Physical symptoms of the menopause can include the following:

- hot flushes
- insomnia
- Nights sweats
- fatigue
- reduce concentration
- heavy periods
- headaches
- joint stiffness, aches and pains
- urinary problems

As a result of the above, or as a consequence of hormone changes, some women can also experience psychological effects, including:

- anxiety
- Depression
- panic attacks
- Mood swings
- Irritability
- Problems with memory
- Loss of confidence

For some people the menopause can make existing health conditions worse, triggering or coinciding with a flare up of symptoms. Alternatively, an existing health condition may also worsen menopausal symptoms.

More information can be found in the Menopause Handbook available on Citrus.

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6. Support available

We all need to be supported in the workplace to do our best work and feel valued. Menopause symptoms can affect your comfort and performance at work so we are committed to making any reasonable adjustments that we can to help you manage the symptoms you are experiencing.

We encourage you to tell your line manager that you are experiencing menopausal symptoms at an early stage. This will ensure that symptoms are treated as an ongoing health issue and will help your line manager to agree how best to support you.

If you do not feel able to discuss your symptoms with your direct line manager you may find it helpful to have an initial discussion with a trusted colleague (perhaps someone that you know has experienced the menopause), another manager or an HR Advisor or one of our workplace menopause champions.

7. Respect at Work

We expect all CPCA employees to conduct themselves in a helpful and open-minded manner, as defined in our Code of Conduct. It is not acceptable for you to experience negative behaviour because of symptoms that you are experiencing or because adjustments have been made to help you at work. If you experience unacceptable behaviour, you should raise these concerns using our Dignity at Work policy.

8. Managers Responsibilities

Good day-to-day management and open communication with your team members is the first step to being supportive and will ensure that individuals are comfortable to speak to you and ask for the help that they need.

Managers should

- a. Read this Guidance alongside the Menopause Handbook. Use the questions in Appendix 1 as a starting point for a 1-2-1 conversation.
- b. Talk to your team about the support that is available to manage their health conditions, including menopause.
- c. Be approachable and willing to have sensitive discussions with your team members.
- d. Conduct these conversations in private. Face to face conversation during regular one-to-one meetings are most suitable. Remember that some individuals may find it challenging to talk about the menopause, allow enough time for a proper discussion.
- e. Do not make assumptions about how the menopause is affecting the individual.
- f. Discuss and agree the reasonable adjustments and put these in place.
- g. Review adjustments that are in place periodically and make changes where needed, menopause lasts an average of 4 years and the adjustments that are needed are likely to change over this time.
- h. Agree how information is shared with colleagues – an individual may wish to disclose to their colleagues that they are experiencing menopausal symptoms if they feel able to do so.
- i. Give reassurance that there won't be any effect upon other aspects of work, for

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example development opportunities and allocation of work tasks.

9. How you can help yourself

There are some things that you can do to help manage your experience of the menopause

- a. Look after your health and wellbeing.
- b. Be as open as you feel able to be with your line manager about your symptoms.
- c. Talk to your line manager about any practical measures that may help you at work, remember even small changes can improve your experience at work.

10. Workplace Adjustments

Menopause is a personal experience and the reasonable adjustments that you need will depend on your individual situation.

You need to discuss and agree any workplace adjustment with your line manager.

Together you should complete the Workplace Adjustment Agreement form – this will help you and your manager put in place appropriate reasonable adjustments.

Some suggested measures to consider are given below. However, you will have insight into what will best help you.

| Symptom/Difficulty | Examples of support and adjustments that may help |
|--|--|
| Hot flushes Hot flushes can start in the face, neck or chest, before spreading upwards and downward. Most only last a few minutes. The heart rate can also become quicker or stronger. High workplace temperatures can cause or exacerbate this. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Temperature control for the work area, for example a fan on the desk, or a move nearer to a window or away from a heat source. – Easy access to drinking water. – Adaptions to Dress code or prescribed uniform (where worn) e.g., if the style and material of the uniform is exacerbating symptoms, allow the employee to wear alternative clothes. – Time away from the workstation to manage a severe hot flush and freshen up when needed. – Provide a place to store spare clothes or personal supplies. |

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| <p>Sleep disturbance/Insomnia Sleep disturbance, sometimes caused by night sweats, can also be caused by the anxiety some women feel during the menopause. Sleep loss can cause fatigue, irritability or lack of concentration at work.</p> | <p>Allow an individual to work flexibly for example varying when they start and finish work or to take a number of short breaks throughout the working day if fatigue is an issue.</p> |
| <p>Heavy/ Irregular periods Heavy periods are common, and some periods may last longer. Most women will also experience irregular periods, which make it harder to prepare for them.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Easy access to appropriate toilet facilities and where available shower facilities. – Provide storage space for personal supplies and spare clothes. – Consider whether any adjustments to the working day or pattern may help. – Provide an extra uniform (where worn). |
| <p>Difficulties concentrating and memory loss</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Discuss if there are times of the day when concentration is better or worse and if possible. – If the individual is affected at particular times of the day allow them to schedule their work to take account for this where possible. – Review task allocation and workload. – Provide books for lists, action boards or other memory-assisting equipment. – Offer a quiet space to work if possible. – Offer noise-reducing headphones to wear in open offices. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Agree protected time to catch up on work which may be done in a different location to help concentration. |
| Anxiety or depression | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Contact CPCA Employee Assistance Programme. – Consider a referral to Occupational Health. – Be flexible with the work pattern where possible to enable the person to take time away from work if needed. – Discuss whether extra support is needed, particularly when dealing with certain tasks that could increase levels of anxiety. |
| Headaches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Easy access to drinking water. · Offer a quiet space to work if possible. · Offer noise-reducing headphones to wear in open offices. |
| Low mood | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · If appropriate, identify a colleague to talk to; this may be outside of the work area. · Contact CPCA - Employee Assistance Programme. |
| Urinary Problems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Easy access to a toilet/rest room. |
| Loss of confidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure regular Supervisions to discuss any issues and to offer support at a frequency agreed with the individual. |

Make brief notes of the reasonable adjustments agreed so that you can periodically review if the arrangements in place are helping or if these need to be revisited.

Further information about practical measures to manage symptoms is available from the Menopause Handbook.

11. Impact of the menopause on others

An individual can be indirectly affected by the menopause if their partner, family member or dependent is experiencing menopause symptoms. For example, a person may also be experiencing disturbed sleep and fatigue if they are living with someone going through the menopause. An individual in this situation may also need support for example by varying the time that they start working, taking regular breaks during the working day and managers should be open to discussing and considering these requests.

12. Other Support Available

- **Our Employee assistance programme** is through Vivup. It provides free and confidential support service for all employees. This can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Please see the HR Hub for details.
- **Occupational Health** – Our occupational health adviser can provide advice to managers on the

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potential impact of the menopause on other health conditions.

- **Employee Wellbeing** – The wellbeing programme offers a range of opportunities to support physical health.
- **Workplace Menopause Champions** – If you feel unable to talk to your line manager you can seek the support of one of our Workplace Champions
- **Unison Menopause Support Group** – This group is open to all employees, including non-Unison members. For information, please contact our union rep, Bess Sayers
bess.sayers@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk

13. External Sources of information

- [Henpicked Menopause Hub](#)
- [Menopause Matters](#)
- www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause
- www.menopause.org.uk
- www.womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice/factsheets/menopause/
- [NICE Guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence](#)
- [British Menopause Society](#)
- [The Daisy Network](#)
- www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/menopause
- [Menopause Swings and Roundabouts](#)
- [The Menopause Exchange](#)
- [Women's Health Concern](#)
- [Healthtalk.org: menopause experiences](#)

14. Further assistance

As a manager if you feel you need further assistance to be as supported as you can speak to a member of the HR Team.

15. Acknowledgement

We hope that this Policy will help to end the stigma around the menopause and encouraging a

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more open work environment where you can ask for the help that you need.

The information on the appendixes is based on that produced by NHS Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG and NHS West Suffolk CCG who worked with Cambridgeshire County Council to produce this policy. We have also used information from Henpicked. Cambridgeshire County kindly gave their permission to the Combined Authority to use its policy.

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Appendix 1

Menopause Good Practice Questions

The following section offers practical guidance for your discussion– it tells you about some support that you might want to consider. However, you might have other suggestions which can be considered to help manage symptoms of the menopause.

| Health and Safety | Yes/No | Comments |
|---|--------|----------|
| Does the employee have access to information on the menopause? | | |
| Has a referral to Occupational Health been considered in relation to the menopause? | | |
| Sanitary and Health Issues | Yes/No | Comments |
| Are private washing and changing facilities available? | | |
| Does the employee have easy access to a locker or appropriate place to store sanitary products or spare clothing/uniform? | | |
| Is there easy access to drinking water? | | |
| Is there easy access to a breakout room/rest area away from the workstation e.g., to manage a severe hot flush? | | |
| Other Considerations | Yes/No | Comments |
| Is the ventilation adequate? | | |
| Is additional ventilation available? for example USB fan, or by opening a window | | |
| Has the employee had a recent workstation assessment? Does the employee need to have a new one taking into account menopause symptoms? | | |
| If anxiety is presenting as a significant symptom, are there opportunities to switch to lighter duties or extra support particularly when dealing with certain tasks that could increase levels of anxiety? | | |
| Is additional flexibility required in relation to working hours, location and breaks? | | |
| Where driving is required, is fatigue presenting as an issue and if so what consideration has been given to this? | | |

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| Do manual handling assessments need to be carried out / reviewed? | | |
| Is an employee able to sit near a window that can be opened? | | |
| Are medical treatments or appointments required? If that's the case please see the Time Office Policy | | |
| Does your role require you to undertake a lot of travel during your working day? If that's the case consider any practical adjustments that may be needed when traveling to different work locations, meetings or appointments e.g., taking more frequent breaks to rest or freshen up. | | |

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Appendix 2

Menopause Advice Sheet – How to talk to your GP about the menopause

If you are experiencing menopausal symptoms to the point they are getting in the way of you enjoying life, it is time to talk to your GP.

We it can sometimes be difficult to get a GP appointment, and then it is often only ten minutes. In addition, talking about symptoms can be hard, let alone if you feel rushed or unprepared. So, what can you do? We have put together some helpful, straightforward tips to help you get the best from your appointment.

Don't wait. It is all too common for women to feel they must simply 'put up' with menopausal symptoms as a part of life, but if they are affecting you, there are things you can do, and support available. There is no need to wait until symptoms feel unbearable.

Read the [NICE guidelines](#). This stands for National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and these guidelines are what your doctor will use to determine the type of conversations to have with you and treatments to offer. There are guidelines for patients, which are useful to read before you see your GP, so you know what to expect.

Prepare for your appointment. It is easier for your doctor to understand what is going on if you provide them with all the information. That may sound obvious, but blood tests to say where you are on the menopause transition are not always available or accurate - your hormones can fluctuate daily during this time. So, your doctor will be thinking about what to recommend for you, based on your symptoms.

Keep a list of your symptoms. Your menstrual cycle, hot flushes, how you are feeling, and any changes you may have noticed. Write them down and take them to your appointment. Your doctor will thank you for it and it is more likely that together, you will find the right solution faster. And, if you have any preferences about how you manage your symptoms, tell them that too - for example, if you'd like to try hormone replacement therapy (HRT), or not. You may wish to use the checklist below.

Ask the receptionist which doctor is best to talk to about menopause. They are often the font of all knowledge at a surgery and can help you find the best person to speak to - it might not be your usual GP; it could be someone who has had special training in the subject.

Ask for a longer appointment. If you do not think your standard appointment will be long enough, try to book a double appointment, as some surgeries do offer this.

Do not be afraid to ask for a second opinion. If you do not feel you have received the help you need, ask to speak to someone else. Do not be put off; you know how you are feeling, and how it is affecting you.

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Ask if there is a menopause clinic in your area. Occasionally, there are regional clinics, specifically devoted to menopause. If there is one in your area, and you think this would be helpful, ask for a referral.

Take your partner or a friend with you. The chances are, you spend your life supporting others and, during menopause, it is your turn to ask them for support. Your partner, or a friend, will know how the symptoms are affecting you. They could support you at the appointment and find out how they can continue supporting you.

What to expect from your doctor

There are certain things a GP should - and should not - do during your appointment.

They should:

- Talk to you about your lifestyle, and how to manage both your symptoms, and your longer-term health.
- Offer advice on hormone replacement therapy and other non-medical options; Talk to you about the safety and effectiveness of any treatment.

They should not:

- Tell you that it is just that time of your life. Yes, menopause is a natural stage, but please do not feel that means you should have to put up with every symptom without help.
- Tell you they do not prescribe HRT. It is up to you what you want to try, and for them to say whether it could be right for you, depending on your medical history.
- Impose unnecessary time restrictions, such as they will only prescribe this once, or for a year or two. This is an ongoing conversation, and if your symptoms persist, you will still need help to manage them.

Remember, your GP is there to help and support you, and you should feel comfortable and confident in talking to them about your symptoms, and any help you need. Do not think you have to struggle through menopause when there is help and support available.

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Checklist of symptoms

| SYMPTOMS | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 0 = NO PROBLEM 1 = MILD SYMPTOMS 2 = SEVERE SYMPTOMS 3 = EXTREMELY SEVERE SYMPTOMS | | | | |
| PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Hot flushes/Night sweats | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Sleep problems | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Skin (dryness, itching or acne) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Aching joints | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Weight gain or bloating | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Fatigue | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Heart palpitations | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Changes in periods | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Breast tenderness | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| UTI, urinary frequency & leakage | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS | | | | |
| Worry or anxiety | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Lower self confidence | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Mood swings | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Memory problems | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Low mood or depression | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Panic attacks | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Easily tearful | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Decreased ability to concentrate | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Brain fog | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Inability to multi task | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

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Appendix 3

Menopause Workplace Champions

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Governance – Menopause at Work Policy

References:

Time Off Policy

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| Issue date: | 2023 |
| Version number: | 1 |
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Document Control Sheet

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| Purpose of document: | This policy is designed to ensure that staff are treated with dignity and respect and that there is a consistent approach when matters are raised under this Policy. |
| Type of document: | Policy |
| Document checked by Legal | No |
| If applicable, has an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been completed? | Yes |
| Document lead and author: | HR Team |
| Dissemination: | |
| What other documents should this be read in conjunction with: | Guidance documents listed in policy |
| Who will review the document (job title): | HR Team |
| Why is this document being reviewed? | N/A – new Policy |
| Mandatory read | Yes |

Revisions

| Version No. | Page/ Paragraph No. | Description of amendment | Date approved |
|-------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
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