

Version	Date	Responsible	Changes
1.1	September 21	Mark Williams	Initial creation
1.2	September 21	Paul Wickes	Review, edit and approve
1.3	October 21	Mark Williams /Lucy Harris	Final edits and Version control

Menopause Policy

Menopause

Anyone can be affected by hormonal changes during their lives for a number of reasons, including pregnancy, fertility treatment, gender transitioning, conditions needing hormone treatment, and menopause. These can bring about symptoms which could affect a colleague at work.

This policy focuses on menopause, and uses a few key terms:

Menopause: the point at which a woman's oestrogen levels decline, and she stops having periods.

Menopausal symptoms are typically experienced for several years so it's best described as a 'transition' rather than a one-off event.

Perimenopause: this is the phase leading up to the menopause when a woman's hormone balance starts to change, and when she may begin to experience menopausal symptoms. For some women this can start as early as their twenties or as late as their late forties.

Who is this policy for?

CMN aims to support all team members experiencing menopausal symptoms and help colleagues and line managers understand how they can support colleagues experiencing such symptoms.

Why is this policy important?

The menopause is experienced by most women, usually between the ages of 45-55, though some women can experience it earlier than this, due to 'premature menopause' or surgery. Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically; are different for everyone; and for a quarter of women they are severely debilitating. Symptoms can have a huge effect on a woman's comfort and performance when working. This policy is therefore imperative to ensure that CMN provides an inclusive and supportive working environment in the office and whilst working from home for women experiencing the menopause.

Symptoms vary greatly, and commonly include (but aren't limited to):

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

Research suggests that, for 30% of women, the recent global pandemic has made the physiological and mental symptoms of menopause worse. **Source: Survey by The Menopause Hub, April 2020**

This policy sets out the support available to women before, during and after the menopause. It is designed to ensure women suffering with menopausal symptoms can feel empowered to ask for adjustments to ease such symptoms without embarrassment, can carry out their daily role in a safe working environment whether at home or in the office, and can have open discussions with colleagues and line managers so that they feel part of our inclusive work culture.

What are the details of the policy?

Minor adjustments to a team member's working environment can make a huge difference. If a team member is experiencing menopausal symptoms, the following options are available:

- **Desk Fans:** When in the office, desk fans can be provided
- **Quiet/Cool Room:** It can be helpful to take time out to help manage symptoms when working at home, but when in the office CMN will offer a quiet, cool and private space should a team member need it, and can be used on a drop-in basis.
- **Occupational Health:** A working environment assessment can ensure that the physical environment, whether at home or in the office, is not making their menopausal symptoms worse.
- **Flexible Working:**
CMN recognises that flexibility is key to anyone suffering as a result of transitioning through the menopause and aims to facilitate flexible working wherever the circumstances of the company can allow this.

CMN has an established Flexible Working Policy which can be found in the staff handbook that allows employees to make changes to their contract on a temporary/flexible basis where adjusted working arrangements could include:

- more breaks and time away from their computer
- flexibility to work in other areas of the building when in the office
- earlier start times and finish times to avoid peak travel times when travelling into the office
- a request to reduce working hours on a temporary basis
- turning their camera off when on Teams calls

These should be discussed and agreed with the team member's line manager and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure these adjustments continue to support individual needs wherever the circumstances of the company can allow this.

Sickness/Paid Leave

If a team member is feeling unwell and unfit for work due to menopausal symptoms, CMN will support them. This includes the sudden onset of symptoms during the working day.

Details of our Sickness Absence Policy can be found in the staff handbook. This entitles an employee to take paid leave for up to five consecutive days without needing a fit note from their doctor.

Whilst a team member can simply inform their line manager they are unfit for work, they should also feel they can be open about the reason for their menopause-related leave with their line manager without fear of being discriminated against.

General Support

CMN aims to facilitate an open, understanding working environment and so we encourage team members to inform their line manager that they are experiencing menopausal symptoms at an early stage to ensure that symptoms are treated, and the necessary support made available.

Team members who do not wish to discuss the issue with their direct line manager may find it helpful to have an initial discussion with:

- A trusted colleague
- CMN's Menopause Champion,

Medical support

We encourage team members to speak to their GP when they are experiencing symptoms. Our CMN Menopause Champion will be able to advise if they are interested in speaking to a medical menopause specialist.

Online health services such as <https://www.menopausedoctor.co.uk/>; <https://www.womenshealth.gov/menopause>; <https://www.healthandher.com/>; <https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/>; <http://www.menopauseselfcare.org.uk/>; <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/henpicked-menopause-podcast/id1582466260> ; NHS Direct, etc. offer access to support services.

Counselling Service

CMN will also provide access to a confidential Counselling service.

What next?

The following identifies our responsibilities as team members, colleagues, line managers and CMN.

Employees/Colleagues should:

- Educate themselves about the menopause and become familiar with the terms of this policy.
- Understand what information is available. Seek advice and guidance from available support provided at CMN. Support colleagues.
- Be as open and honest as possible with line managers – reviewing and working through the available options together to ensure appropriate measures which support their working environment are in place.
- Agree to keep their line manager and CMN informed to ensure that the right support is being provided.
- If unable to speak to their line manager, or if their line manager is not supportive, speak to one of the people mentioned in 'General Support' (above) or to Lucy Harris CMN Operations Director for a confidential discussion.

Line Managers should:

Take part in future mandatory menopause awareness training.

- Ensure they are aware of the support CMN provides and the terms of this policy.
- Ensure all members of their team are aware of the policies and where to find information and seek support.
- Ensure they listen to the needs of each team member individually and are open and willing to have discussions around the menopause, ensuring confidentiality where requested by team members.
- Work together with the team member to ensure that the right support is provided that satisfies both CMN and the team member's needs.
- Ensure regular check-ins are in place to review any support and make any necessary changes to

the working environment or patterns that are required from both CMN's/the team member's perspective. Regular check-ins are particularly important when working remotely.

CMN should:

- Ensure it reviews its health and wellbeing policies and practices on a regular basis.
- Ensure its health support offerings have provisions to support team members experiencing the menopause.
- Listen and work with team members to support and drive change in relation to the menopause.

Where can you get related information?

The following are links to some external sites that you may find useful. We are aware there is a lot of guidance available and everyone is different so please use this as a guide only and do let us know if there are any links that should be added to this list:

- Menopause matters, which provides information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options <https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/>;
- Menopause Self Care Cornwall are a local group providing self care and wider support to women <http://www.menopauseselfcare.org.uk/>;
- The Daisy Network charity, which provides support for women experiencing premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency [Charity for Women with POI | The Daisy Network](#);
- Henpicked, an online community that gives women a place to have their say, promote healthy debate and bring about positive change. They also provide 'lunch and learn' videos with industry wide experts that can be accessed here [Home - Henpicked](#);
- MegsMenopause, an 'honest and frank' look at all things menopause [MegsMenopause - #1 Women's Health Platform - A Woman Is Forever](#);
- We also recommend this practical guide for people managers from the CIPD [The menopause at work: guidance for line managers | CIPD guides](#), which offers guidance on supporting employees going through the menopause, including how to approach the conversations about it appropriately and sensitively.

This policy was introduced to ensure that CMN provides the best support for women transitioning through the menopause.