**Organisation Details here**

**Menopause Policy**

**Approved on:**

**Next Review Date:**

**Introduction**

xxxxxxx is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of its staff and aims to deal fairly and sympathetically with those who are experiencing menopausal symptoms. Xxxxx recognises that for someone experiencing symptoms, it can be a difficult and stressful time and that it is a very sensitive and personal matter which can greatly impact an individual’s work and home life.

**Scope**

This policy applies to all employees of xxxxxxx

**Principles**

The main aims of this policy are to:

* Define the terms ‘menopause’ and ‘perimenopause’, and describe common symptoms;
* Set out the rights of employees experiencing menopausal symptoms;
* Explain the support which is available to affected staff members, both the support offered by the organisation, and external support; and
* Explain the applicable procedure if symptoms lead to sickness absence.

**Definitions**

The menopause is a natural event in most women's lives during which they stop having periods and experience hormonal changes such as a decrease in oestrogen levels. It usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 and typically lasts between four and eight years. However, each woman's experience will differ and menopausal symptoms can occasionally begin before the age of 40. Perimenopause, or menopause transition, begins several years before menopause. Women may start to experience menopausal symptoms during the final two years of perimenopause.

While symptoms vary greatly, they commonly include:

* 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.

Each of these symptoms can affect an employee's comfort and performance at work. The organisation has a duty to provide a safe working environment for all employees and therefore commits to ensuring that adjustments and additional support are available to those experiencing menopausal symptoms.

**Available support**

The organisation aims to facilitate an open, understanding working environment. Employees are encouraged at an early stage to inform their line manager, and the HR team, that they are experiencing menopausal symptoms to ensure that symptoms are treated as an ongoing health issue rather than as individual instances of ill health. Early notification will also help line managers/the HR team to determine the most appropriate course of action to support an employee's individual needs. All discussions on this subject will be kept confidential.

***Reasonable adjustments***

* *Temperature control*: The organisation strives to achieve a comfortable working temperature for employees.
* *Detail adjustments available here*

*eg*

* *Desk fans can be provided if a request is made to*
* *The organisation will allow flexibility within its dress code where reasonable*.
* *Flexible working:* The organisation recognises that difficulty sleeping is a common symptom of the menopause. To reflect this, as well as the impact of other common symptoms, we aim to facilitate flexible working wherever possible (it is important to remember that we do also offer a flexitime system for ad hoc changes to working hours). Requests for flexible working could include asking for:
* a change to the pattern of hours worked;
* permission to perform work from home;
* a reduction in working hours; or
* more frequent breaks.

Employees should discuss such requests with their line manager. Depending on the circumstances, requests may be approved on a permanent or temporary basis.

***Employee health***

Detail any support your organisation can provide here.

**Other support**

There are a number of external sources of help and support including:

* [Menopause matters](https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/), which provides information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options;
* The [Daisy Network](https://www.daisynetwork.org/) charity, which provides support for women 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 the menopause.

**Sickness absence**

Severe menopausal symptoms may lead to sickness absence. In this case, the Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure will apply.

*Reporting the absence – amend the details to suit your organisation here (i.e. your absence reporting procedures)*

If you feel unwell and cannot come into work, you must telephone to notify your line manager as early as possible on the first day of absence and no later than 9.15am. It is reasonable for the organisation to ask to be kept updated on your situation, therefore, you must keep in contact with your line manager each day (during your first week of absence or as otherwise agreed) and as agreed on a regular basis thereafter.

If an employee is absent for more than seven calendar days, they must provide a medical certificate from their GP. Any medical certificates provided must cover all relevant absence dates. It may affect your sick pay if certificates are not received on time or do not cover relevant absence dates.

*Recording the absence*

For an absence of 1-7 calendar days inclusive, a self-certification absence form must be completed on your return. It should be noted that seven calendar days includes those days on which you may not normally work e.g. weekends and public holidays.

A return to work interview will be conducted to allow you to discuss your absence with your line manager. During this meeting, your line manager will complete a Return to Work Form.