



Menopause Policy

| Policy Information | |
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| Policy Owner | HR Manager |
| Issue Version | 1 |
| Approving Committee | Education, Safeguarding & Wellbeing Committee |
| Adopted Date | December 2023 |
| Review Cycle | Bi annual |
| Last Review Date | September 2023 |
| Next Review Date | September 2025 |

Adoption of the Policy

This Policy has been adopted and reviewed by the Trustees of Transforming Futures Trust

Signed

Date: 19.12.23

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. C. Hume', is positioned below the 'Signed' label.



1. Purpose

Transforming Futures Trust (the Trust) is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment in which colleagues can openly and comfortably instigate conversations, or engage in discussions about menopause.

Employees are entitled to be treated fairly and professionally at all times. The Trust takes very seriously its duty of care as an employer to all members of staff and a number of policies and procedures have been made in relation to this duty.

This policy applies to all staff and specifically women going through the menopause. It also applies to trans men and women who may suffer actual or pseudo menopausal symptoms as a result of treatment or treatment interruptions, intersex and non-binary people and also carers, spouses and partners of women going through the menopause who may be seeking support for issues they experience at home.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Foster an environment in which colleagues can openly and comfortably instigate conversations or engage in discussions about menopause.
- Educate and inform managers about the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can support colleagues at work.
- Ensure that employees suffering with menopause symptoms feel confident to discuss it and ask for support and any reasonable adjustments so they can continue to be successful in their roles.
- Assure employees that the Trust is a responsible employer, committed to supporting their needs during menopause.
- The policy seeks to raise awareness of the problems some people may have when experiencing menopausal symptoms.
- Acknowledge the needs of the employees, and how these change over time
- Make managers aware of the Trust's responsibility to understand the menopause and related issues and how they can affect staff.
- It also aims to raise wider awareness and understanding among employees and to outline support and reasonable adjustments that are available.
- The Trust is committed to ensuring that conditions in the workplace do not make menopausal symptoms worse and that reasonable adjustments and support are put in place.
- The Trust takes a proactive stance and will promote a greater understanding of the menopause and seek to eradicate any exclusionary or discriminatory practices.
- Ensure that employees understand their role in working towards the above aims.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Role of all staff

All staff are expected to:

- Contribute to a positive, respectful and productive working environment where colleagues are treated with dignity and respect.
- Be open in conversations with managers, People Service and Occupational Health (OH) in relation to how their symptoms are affecting them at work and what support may help manage them.
- Support other members of staff, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- Accept and support any adjustments that staff affected by the menopause may be receiving as a result of their symptoms
- Report honestly about their wellbeing to their line manager or to another trusted member of staff

3.2 Role of line managers

Line managers are expected to:

- Provide a non-judgmental, empathetic and confidential support system to staff
- Appreciate the personal nature of any conversations about the menopause and treat them confidentially and sensitively
- Monitor sickness absence, and have support meetings with staff if any patterns emerge
- Have regular, informal conversations with staff that they line manage who are affected by the menopause to discuss what support they need, and record any reasonable adjustments that are agreed
- Allow staff affected by the menopause to take regular breaks from their work if necessary to help manage symptoms
- Promote information about and access to external support services
- Familiarise themselves with the Menopause Policy.
- Agree and implement reasonable adjustments where applicable.
- Follow the employee's lead and ensure ongoing dialogue and review dates should they ask for it.
- Where adjustments are unsuccessful, or if symptoms are proving more problematic, the Manager may:
 - Refer the employee to HR for Occupational Health
- Provide a non-judgmental and confidential support system to their staff
- Take any complaints or concerns seriously and deal with them appropriately using the school's policies
- Understand that personal issues and pressures at work may have a temporary effect on work performance, and take that into account during any appraisal or capability procedures
- Carry out a risk assessment, where necessary, and especially when concerns have been raised, as soon as possible.
- Conduct return to work interviews to support staff back into work

3.3 Role of Head Teacher and School Leaders

Head Teachers and School Leaders are expected to:

- Create a culture that supports the wellbeing of all employees
- Carry out individual risk assessments to assess working conditions in line with the specific needs of staff affected by the menopause
- Ensure all employees have the appropriate skills to support their own emotional wellbeing and each other
- Monitoring the wellbeing of staff through regular surveys and structured conversations
- Provide a thorough induction for all new starters and ensure staff wellbeing is included
- Provide resources and training opportunities to make sure that all line managers and HR staff are aware of the menopause, its potential impact on work, and what adjustments may be necessary
- Give swift permission for absence to attend medical appointments
- Consider flexible working requests in order to accommodate acute symptoms
- Ensure good communication between leaders, and teams
- Support employees experiencing challenging circumstances outside the workplace, direct them to appropriate support and consider a plan to support them in work during challenging periods.

3.4 The role of HR

The HR team shall:

- Provide the necessary professional advice, support and training to the Trust as and when required.
- Assist with the referral of staff to Occupational Health, Counselling or mediation when appropriate.
- Assist in the formulation of return-to-work programmes and provide advice on the implementation of statutory requirements.

4. Definitions

The menopause is a stage of life when a woman* stops having periods. It typically affects those aged between 45 and 55, when oestrogen (female sex hormones) levels begin to fall. In the UK, the average age to reach the menopause is 51.

Perimenopause is the time of hormonal change leading up to this, when a woman may experience symptoms. Post-menopause is the time beyond menopause.

Early menopause is when a woman's periods stop before the age of 45. It can happen naturally, or as a side effect of some treatments.

For the purpose of this policy, any reference to the menopause shall include perimenopause and early menopause.

*We acknowledge that while the majority of people affected by the menopause will be women, those who are trans or non-binary may also experience the menopause or menopause-type symptoms. The support outlined in this policy is designed to meet the above aims for all affected colleagues.

4.2 Symptoms

Individuals suffering from the menopause may experience symptoms that cause changes to their emotions and other aspects of their health, some of which may impact them at work.

Menopausal symptoms might include:

- Challenges with memory, confidence and concentration
- Low mood, anxiety and depression
- Hot flushes, night sweats and palpitations
- Difficulty sleeping, insomnia and fatigue
- Headaches and joint and muscle pain
- Weakened bladder function and urinary tract infections
- Vaginal dryness and reduced sex drive

For some individuals, being at work may make their symptoms worse. For example, if the temperature is too high, this may cause symptoms such as hot flushes, dizziness, discomfort, sweating and heart palpitations.

Symptoms affecting sleep can make it difficult for staff experiencing them to concentrate and stay focused, while low confidence, low mood and anxiety may impact on decision-making and relationships with colleagues.

This policy recognises that the menopause could be both equality and health and safety issues and that employees may need appropriate flexibility, support, and adjustments during the time of change before, during and after the menopause.

We acknowledge that the menopause will affect everybody differently – some individuals may experience no symptoms at all, and some may experience a variety. We will adapt our response to staff affected by the menopause on a case-by-case basis.

4.3 Access to workplace support

It is recognised that the menopause is a very personal experience and different adjustments and levels of support may be needed for different individuals. This Trust is committed to ensuring that line managers are sympathetic and provide appropriate support and adjustments when needed to help women deal with issues arising from the menopause.

Although all managers are expected to take a positive and supportive approach towards discussions about the menopause, this Trust understands that some individual staff members who are affected may feel uncomfortable talking directly to their line manager if they are experiencing problems, especially if the line manager is male or much younger. Therefore the organisation has made other options available including HR. The Trust also understands that women may wish to approach another manager whom they trust or that they may wish to approach their union rep for support.

4.4 Making reasonable adjustments

Managers should ensure risk assessments consider the specific requirements of menopausal women and ensure that the working environment is suitable and will not make women's symptoms worse. The risk assessment will assist with the identification of any potential adjustments which may be required. Managers should use the menopause risk assessment checklist as a guide but also take account of any additional issues raised by individuals affected.

The effects of the menopause and hormone replacement therapy (HRT) should be taken in to account in the implementation of sickness absence, capability, disciplinary and performance policies to ensure that menopausal women are not unfairly penalised and do not experience detrimental treatment as a result of their symptoms.

Changes to working time arrangements should be made available where needed including adjustments to start/finish times, reduced hours, options for home working, additional breaks and leave should be granted at short notice where necessary.

5. Occupational Health

The Trust uses Occupational Health to enable an employee to discuss any concerns about their health and wellbeing with a nurse or doctor trained in occupational medicine. This is an opportunity to discuss any health condition and get feedback about managing or improving that condition to help an employee to carry out their duties or return to work.

6. Monitoring, Review, and Evaluation

The HR team will periodically monitor the use of this policy to consider its impact upon the Trust and will review it as necessary in line with changes to legislation. The Trust will review this policy each year to ensure that the policy reflects the latest position as determined by the Local Authority.

This policy will be reviewed considering feedback from:

- Human Resources
- The Board of Trustees
- Executive Leadership Team
- Trade Union Representatives

Following the review, any proposed changes made will be made in consultation with recognised Trade Unions and their representatives. Any proposed changes will be communicated, and we will endeavour to seek agreement with Trade Union representatives. Where proposed changes are disputed, the Trust will maintain final decision/authority on any changes recommended; however, in the first instance will seek to come to an agreement where reasonable and practicable.

7. Legal Considerations

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, employers have a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all staff, so far as is reasonably practicable.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require that employers make an assessment of the risks to the health and safety of their employees. This requires undertaking general risk assessments, which should include specific risks to the health of staff affected by the menopause.

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination against an individual based on the protected characteristics, which include age, sex and disability. Employers are under a statutory duty to consider whether any 'reasonable adjustments' are required to alleviate any disadvantages staff encounter based on these characteristics.

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974;
- The Equality Act 2010;
- Working Time Regulations;
- Employment Rights Act 1996;
- Employment Relations Act 1999.

Ongoing symptoms linked to the menopause may meet the definition of a disability and where they do, employers will be required to consider whether any reasonable adjustments are required to alleviate any disadvantage.

Any such adjustments will be made on a case-by-case basis and, where appropriate, staff affected by the menopause will be offered a variety of approaches to support them.

8. Trust Policies and Other References

Other policies contribute to staff wellbeing by providing certainty, fairness and consistency in the treatment of staff in different contexts, including:

- Grievance Procedure
- Whistleblowing Procedure
- Capability Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Appraisal Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Absence Management Policy
- Managing Sickness Absence Procedure
- Child Protection Procedures for Staff Working in Childcare Settings
- Recruitment & Selection Policy

Appendix 1 – Version Control Amendments

| Version No | Date | Summary of Changes |
|------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | September 2023 | Adoption of policy |
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