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Menopause Support Policy (LLT)



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Menopause Support Policy

Lydiat Learning Trust is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for all its workers and supporting wellbeing at every stage of life. It is estimated that between 75% and 80% of menopausal women are in work in the UK, therefore there are many women managing symptoms of perimenopause and menopause at work. We recognise that women who menstruate, may need additional consideration, support and adjustments before (perimenopause), during and after the menopause.

The menopause is a natural part of every woman's life, and marks the end of her reproductive cycle. For many reasons, it may not be an easy time in a woman's life and so it is imperative that individuals who require additional support during this time are treated with understanding, dignity and respect. Whilst we know that many people may not feel comfortable talking about menopause and perimenopause, we encourage individuals not to suffer in silence and to ask for support and expect our leaders to be supportive.

It is recognised that the menopause is a very personal experience and different adjustments, and levels of support may be needed for different individuals. Managers should seek to provide appropriate support and feasible adjustments when needed, to help women deal with issues arising from the menopause. A guide for Managers is available and Managers can also contact the Human Resources team for support.

Whilst this Policy uses the term 'women' to talk about people who may experience perimenopause and menopause transition, we know that it can impact trans or non-binary individuals who don't identify as women in the same manner. We will support all individuals experiencing perimenopause and menopause transition, so encourage colleagues to ask for help if they need it.

This policy sets out the guidelines on providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work.

The policy acknowledges that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution to the menopause and so it is intended as a support guide for all.

Our commitments

We are committed to supporting those who would like support and will take steps to:

- listen to you if you choose to tell us about your perimenopause or menopause symptoms
- support you if you are experiencing symptoms, making reasonable adjustments where possible
- educate and inform managers about the potential symptoms of the menopause, and how they can support women at work
- raise a wider awareness and understanding across the Trust
- create an environment where women feel confident enough to raise issues about their symptoms and ask for reasonable adjustments and additional support at work.

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Definitions

Perimenopause

The perimenopause is the period in a woman's life when she starts to experience hormonal fluctuations and changes to her periods. The average time for a woman to be perimenopausal is between four to five years and typically affects people between the ages of 45 to 55, although age can vary from person to person. . During this time, periods may become increasingly heavy and irregular, meaning it is vitally important for a woman experiencing symptoms to be close to toilets and shower facilities. For some women, the symptoms during this time can be worse than the actual menopause.

Menopause

A woman is described as being menopausal when they have gone 12 months without a period and when her ovaries are no longer responsive, which results in the fall of hormone levels. . The average age for a woman to reach the menopause is 51, but 1 in 100 woman will experience it before the age of 40. This could be as a result of surgery, illness or treatment for other conditions, such as chemotherapy, or it could be for no reason at all.

Post-menopausal

This is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when a woman has not had a period for 12 consecutive months. The average time for women experiencing symptoms of the menopause is five years, but many women experience symptoms for up to ten years and 3% of women will experience symptoms for the rest of their lives.

Post-menopausal women have an increased risk of heart disease, diabetes and osteoporosis and managers should be aware of this.

Symptoms

Symptoms may include:

- psychological issues such as anxiety, depression, memory loss, panic attacks, loss of confidence and reduced concentration
- hot flushes
- sleep disturbances (including night sweats) that can make you feel tired and irritable
- extreme PMS or heavy bleeding that might cause pain or embarrassment at work
- muscle and joint stiffness, aches and pains
- bladder problems including recurrent urinary tract infections and cystitis
- headaches
- skin changes – dryness, itchiness

You may experience all, some or none of the above symptoms, however if you do experience symptoms that are affecting you at work then please do talk to your Manager, another Manager you feel comfortable with, or a member of the Human Resources team, so that we can identify ways to support you.

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What support can we offer

If you choose to talk to your Manager, there might ways in which we can support, by making some reasonable adjustments to help you manage your menopausal symptoms. These will likely be temporary changes whilst you go through the menopause transition.

Your Manager (or person you request to speak to) will arrange a meeting to chat to you. Prior to this meeting, to help identify what support can be put in place, we would ask you to complete a Wellbeing Action Plan. You will then discuss this with your Manager (or person supporting) , this will provide an insight into how your menopausal symptoms might affect you at work and identify any potential adjustments.

Any adjustments we may make will depend on your circumstances, but examples could include:

- making sure you have easy access to toilets;
- making sure you have access to cold drinking water;
- making sure you have access to natural light;
- making sure the temperature is comfortable, providing a fan or access to fresh air
- giving you the time off to attend medical appointments as per our Leave of Absence Policy.
- making a referral for a risk assessment to be conducted, by a 'competent' person;

Additional support can be gained by speaking to our independent Employee Assistance Programme, Smart Clinic and your GP. Your Manager may propose a referral to occupational health if additional information is needed to ensure the right support is identified.

Other sources of support

Menopause matters www.menopausematters.co.uk

The British Menopause Society www.thebms.org.uk

NHS menopause pages www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/symptoms

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