



# Menopause Policy

<b>Policy Code:</b>	HR30
<b>Policy Start Date:</b>	April 2023
<b>Policy Review Date:</b>	April 2026

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## **Statement of Intent**

The Community Inclusive Trust (CIT or the Trust) is committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of all employees.

At CIT, we are aware that the menopause is a natural process of every woman's life, and the Trust is in an important position to provide the right support to female employees experiencing the menopause.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Create an environment in which employees can openly and comfortably discuss the menopause.
- Ensure every employee understands what the menopause is and the common signs and symptoms.
- Ensure line managers are aware of the reasonable adjustments that should be put in place to support employees.
- Reduce absenteeism due to menopausal symptoms.

## **1. Legal Framework**

1.1 This policy has due regard to legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

1.2 This policy will be implemented in accordance with the following Trust policies and procedures:

- Absence Management Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Code of Conduct

## **2. Definitions**

2.1 For the purpose of this policy, "menopause" is defined as a biological state in a woman's life that occurs when she stops menstruating and reaches the end of her natural reproductive life. The average age that a woman reaches menopause is 51; however, it can be earlier or later than this due to a number of reasons.

2.2 For the purpose of this policy "perimenopause" is defined as the time leading up to the menopause where a woman begins to experience the signs and symptoms of menopause. This can be several years before the menopause actually occurs.

2.3 For the purpose of this policy "post-menopause" is the time after which the menopause has occurred, starting from the time when a woman has not had a period for 12 consecutive months.

2.4 The term "menopause" in this policy is used to refer to "menopause", "perimenopause" and "post-menopause".

### **3. Signs and Symptoms**

3.1 Common symptoms of the menopause include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Hot flushes
- Palpitations
- Headaches
- Night sweats
- Difficulty sleeping
- Skin irritation
- Vaginal dryness
- Low mood or anxiety
- Panic attacks
- Loss of concentration
- Depression
- Reduced sex drive
- Problems with memory and concentration

3.2 Menopausal symptoms can occur months or even years before a woman's periods stop, and can last for several years after they have stopped.

3.3 The menopause can have a significant impact on women at work and their relationships with colleagues, e.g. if they are experiencing severe anxiety, this may have negative side effects on their happiness at work.

3.4 Not every woman will experience the signs and symptoms of the menopause; however, the list provided above is common for most women.

### **4. Responsibilities**

4.1 Employees are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with the procedures in this policy.
- Being aware of the common signs and symptoms of the menopause to help with their diagnosis or to support others experiencing the menopause.
- Taking a personal responsibility to look after their health.
- Engaging in open and honest conversations with relevant individuals, e.g. line managers, and CIT HR.
- Seeking help where necessary from relevant professionals, e.g. GPs.
- Contributing to a respectful and productive working environment.
- Having a willingness to help colleagues experiencing the menopause.
- Adopting any reasonable adjustments that the Trust implements to support them.
- Creating an action plan in conjunction with their line managers.
- Engaging in training to ensure they are able to support others.

4.2 Head Teachers and the Executive Leadership Team are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with the procedures in this policy.
- Organising discussions with employees experiencing the menopause.
- Acting sensitively and empathetically towards employees experiencing the menopause.
- Deciding on which reasonable adjustments need to be made to support employees experiencing the menopause, and ensuring they are implemented.

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- Implementing an action plan in conjunction with employees experiencing the menopause.
- Recording all reasonable adjustments and reviewing them on a regular basis i.e. termly, quarterly, etc.
- Making changes to action plans and reasonable adjustments, as necessary.
- Discussing referrals to Occupational Health, and referring staff to them, where necessary with the support of CIT HR.
- Implementing any recommendations by Occupational Health, as required.
- Monitoring staff absence in line with the Trust's Absence Management Policy.

### 4.3 CIT HR are responsible for:

- Offering guidance to Head Teachers, ELT and line managers to enable them to effectively support employees experiencing the menopause.
- Monitoring staff absence in line with the Trust's Absence Management Policy.
- Developing and delivering training sessions for all employees.
- Maintaining effective communication with Head Teachers, ELT, line managers and staff experiencing the menopause.

### 4.4 Occupational Health is responsible for:

- Carrying out holistic assessments of individuals who believe they are experiencing the menopause.
- Providing advice to employees experiencing the menopause.
- Providing information as to where employees can seek further advice.
- Making recommendations to Head Teachers, ELT, line managers and CIT HR in relation to reasonable adjustments.
- Providing support to Head Teachers, ELT, line managers and CIT HR, as required.
- Monitoring all referrals made as a result of the menopause.

## **5. Notification**

- 5.1 Where any employee believes they are experiencing symptoms of menopause which may affect their work, or where they will require reasonable adjustments, they will notify their Head Teacher or line manager in the first instance.
- 5.2 If they do not feel comfortable notifying their head teacher or line manager they should notify a suitable senior manager or CIT HR.
- 5.3 The Head Teacher/line manager will hold a one-to-one discussion with the employee to discuss the symptoms and which reasonable adjustments are required.
- 5.4 The one-to-one discussion will be held in an appropriate location to maintain confidentiality, e.g. an office.
- 5.5 If necessary, the Head Teacher/line manager will discuss a referral to Occupational Health for further support.
- 5.6 The Head Teacher/line manager will conduct a risk assessment for any staff member experiencing the menopause, and will review working conditions.
- 5.7 The Head Teacher/line manager and employee will devise a written action plan which details the following:

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- Their signs and symptoms
- The perceived or actual effects on their work
- Necessary reasonable adjustments
- Time frames for reasonable adjustments to be in place
- Next steps
- Review date

5.8 Where a referral has been made to Occupational Health, the Head Teacher/line manager will ensure any recommendations for reasonable adjustments are included in the action plan.

5.9 The Head Teacher/line manager and employee will discuss whether any other employees should be notified – if so, who and how the employee would like them to be notified.

5.10 The Head Teacher/line manager will notify CIT HR of the action plan.

5.11 The Head Teacher/line manager will schedule a follow-up meeting one month after the initial discussion to review progress so far. Any changes will be made as necessary.

5.12 The Head Teacher/line manager will schedule regular review meetings, i.e. termly, quarterly, to review the action plan and make any changes as necessary.

### **6. Risk Assessments**

6.1 Where an employee has voiced concerns about their symptoms of the menopause, the Head Teacher/line manager will conduct a risk assessment of their work practice to identify risks and implement appropriate control measures.

6.2 A separate risk assessment will be conducted for each employee experiencing the menopause.

6.3 The risk assessment will consider the specific needs of employees experiencing the menopause. Specific information that will be considered includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Temperature and ventilation
- Current symptoms
- Access to toilet facilities
- Access to fresh drinking water
- Workplace stress

6.4 Appropriate reasonable adjustments will be implemented in light of the risk assessment where possible.

6.5 The risk assessment will be reviewed and updated by the Head Teacher/line manager when any circumstances change, e.g. symptoms.

### **7. Reasonable Adjustments**

7.1 In order to support employees' symptoms of the menopause, the Trust will implement a variety of reasonable adjustments, suitable to employees' individual needs where possible.

7.2 Each case will be treated individually, and the below adjustments are not exhaustive and

may not be possible in all workplaces.

**7.2.1 Hot flushes – the Trust will endeavour to:**

- 7.2.1.1 Adjust the temperature control of the work area, such as putting a fan on their desk or moving their desk close to a window.
- 7.2.1.2 Ensure there is easy access to drinking water.
- 7.2.1.3 Make adaptations to dress code, where appropriate, providing that this in accordance with the Trust's Code of Conduct.
- 7.2.1.4 Ensure there is adequate access to toilets.
- 7.2.1.5 Provide a quiet area for the employee if they experience a severe hot flush.
- 7.2.1.6 For teaching staff, ensure the employee has support from an appropriate Teaching Assistant who can lead the class should the staff member need to take a break.

**7.2.2 Heavy and light periods – the Trust will endeavour to:**

- 7.2.2.1 Ensure there is adequate access to toilets.
- 7.2.2.2 Have sanitary products available, where possible, for emergencies.
- 7.2.2.3 Ensure storage space is available for a change of clothing, should the employee require it.
- 7.2.2.4 Allow the employee to bring extra clothing with them, providing it is in accordance with the Trust's Code of Conduct.

**7.2.3 Headaches and lack of sleep – the Trust will endeavour to:**

- 7.2.3.1 Ensure there is access to fresh drinking water at all times.
- 7.2.3.2 Offer a quiet space to work, if necessary.
- 7.2.3.3 Discuss the effects of a healthy balanced diet on improving symptoms.
- 7.2.3.4 Allow employees time to take a break if they experience a headache.
- 7.2.3.5 For teaching staff, ensure the employee has support from an appropriate Teaching Assistant who can lead the class should the staff member need to take a break.

**7.2.4 Low mood and loss of confidence – the Trust will endeavour to:**

- 7.2.4.1 Allow employees time to take a break whenever required, without needing to ask for permission.
- 7.2.4.2 Identify a 'time out space' where the employee may go if they need to take a break, e.g. the staff room.
- 7.2.4.3 For teaching staff, ensure the employee has support from an appropriate Teaching Assistant who can lead the class should the staff member need to take a break.
- 7.2.4.4 Ensure the employee has a sufficient support mechanism in place from their line manager, and another colleague should they require it.
- 7.2.4.5 Ensure there are personal development discussions in place with the employee's line manager on a regular basis i.e. termly or quarterly.
- 7.2.4.6 Establish, with the employee's line manager, an agreed time for the employee to catch up on any missed work as a result of absence.

**7.2.5 Poor concentration – the Trust will endeavour to:**

- 7.2.5.1 Discuss with the employee if there are times of the day where concentration is better or worse, and review how working can be managed around this.
- 7.2.5.2 Review the employee's task allocation and workload, distributing tasks to others

where possible.

- 7.2.5.3 Provide materials to assist with concentration and memory, such as action boards.
- 7.2.5.4 Offer quiet spaces to work wherever possible.
- 7.2.5.5 Establish, with the employee's line manager, an agreed time for the employee to catch up on any missed work as a result of absence.

#### **7.2.6 Anxiety and panic attacks – the Trust will endeavour to:**

- 7.2.6.1 Provide the employee with contacts for external support and counselling and discuss referral to Occupational Health.
- 7.2.6.2 Ensure the employee has a sufficient support mechanism in place from their line manager, and another colleague should they require it.
- 7.2.6.3 Encourage the employee to seek help from their GP.
- 7.2.6.4 Identify a time out space where the employee may go if they need to take a break.
- 7.2.6.5 For teaching staff, ensure the staff member has support from an appropriate Teaching Assistant who can lead the class should the employee need to take a break.
- 7.2.6.6 Discuss relaxation techniques, such as breathing exercises, and encourage the employee to practise these when taking a break.

### **8. Staff Training**

- 8.1 The HR Director is responsible for organising training for employees.
- 8.2 The Trust will ensure that all line managers have been trained to be aware of the signs and symptoms of the menopause, how it can affect work, and what adjustments should be made to support employees.
- 8.3 The Trust will ensure that, as part of a wider Occupational Health awareness campaign, issues of the menopause are highlighted so all employees understand how it affects individuals, and to create a positive attitude towards managing the menopause whilst being employed at the Trust.
- 8.4 The Trust will ensure all female staff members are provided with sufficient information as to where they can access support for any issues that arise as a result of the menopause.
- 8.5 Training will be refreshed on an annual basis for all employees.

### **9. Attendance Procedures**

- 9.1 Attendance of employees experiencing the menopause will be managed in line with the Absence Management Policy.
- 9.2 All menopause-related sickness absences will be recorded as ongoing issues, rather than individual absences.
- 9.3 Absence management triggers may be adjusted accordingly for employees experiencing the menopause.
- 9.4 Any requests for breaks or flexible working will be outlined in the employee's action plan.
- 9.5 The Trust will ensure that any appraisal, capability and performance procedures are not applied in a way as to discriminate unlawfully against female staff members experiencing the menopause.



## **10. Signposting**

10.1 Additional support and information can be found here:

- NHS information pages [www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Menopause/Pages/Introduction.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Menopause/Pages/Introduction.aspx)
- British Menopause Society [www.thebms.org.uk/](http://www.thebms.org.uk/)
- Menopause Matters [www.menopausematters.co.uk](http://www.menopausematters.co.uk)
- The Daisy Network [www.daisynetwork.org.uk](http://www.daisynetwork.org.uk)

## **11. Monitoring and Review**

11.1 This policy will be reviewed by the HR Director every three years.

11.2 Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all employees.