



POLICY/PROCEDURE INFORMATION (Policy no HR0033)	
Subject	Menopause Policy & Guidance <i>(This policy is non-contractual and is subject to periodic review and will be amended according to service development needs).</i>
Applicable to	All employees of Nottinghamshire Hospice
Target Audience	All employees of Nottinghamshire Hospice
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Lead responsible for Policy	Director of People Services
Policy reviewed by	Corporate Management Team (CMT)
Notified to (when)	SCG Board of Trustees March 2022
Authorised by (when)	CEO, March 2022
CQC Standard if applicable	Well-led
Links to other Hospice Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flexible Working Policy• Hybrid Policy and Procedure (Where applicable due to nature of the individual's role)• Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure
Summary	This Policy aims to outline ways in which colleagues who suffer with symptoms of the menopause can be supported and therefore to improve their experience at work.

VERSION CONTROL		
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1. Purpose

Nottinghamshire Hospice is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for everyone who works here.

The Menopause is a natural part of some of our colleagues' lives, and it isn't always an easy transition. With the right support, it can be much better. Whilst not every colleague who experiences the menopause suffers with symptoms, supporting those who do will improve their experience at work.

Menopause should not be a taboo or 'hidden'. We want everyone to understand what the menopause is, and to be able to talk about it openly, without embarrassment.

The changing age of the UK's workforce means that between 75% and 80% of menopausal people are in work. Research shows that the majority of employees are unwilling to discuss menopause-related health problems with their line manager or ask for the support or adjustments that they may need.

The latest Nottinghamshire Hospice Equality, Diversity and Inclusion monitoring questionnaire confirms that 36% of staff consider themselves premenopausal or menopausal. The actual figure could be even higher because not all staff chose to complete the questionnaire.

This policy sets out guidance for members of staff and their managers on providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work. It is not contractual and does not form part of the terms and conditions of employment.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Nottinghamshire Hospice staff and managers.

3. Policy Statement/Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Encourage an environment in which colleagues can openly and comfortably instigate conversations or engage in discussions about the menopause.

- Ensure everyone understands what the menopause is, can confidently have good conversations, and are clear on Nottinghamshire Hospice's policy and practices.
- Educate and inform managers about the potential symptoms of the menopause, and how they can support members of staff at work.
- Ensure that staff suffering with menopausal symptoms feel confident to discuss them and ask for support and any reasonable adjustments so they can continue to be successful in their role.
- Reduce absenteeism due to menopausal symptoms.
- Assure staff affected by the menopause, that we are a responsible employer committed to supporting their needs during the menopause.

4. Definitions

Menopause is defined as a biological stage that occurs when menstruating stops, and the individual reaches the end of natural reproductive life. Usually, it is defined as having occurred when the individual has not had a period for twelve consecutive months (for those reaching menopause naturally). The menopause usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age. The average age for those to reach menopause is 51. However, it can be earlier (with one in 100 people experiencing the menopause before the age of 40) or later than this due to surgery, illness or other reasons.

Perimenopause is the time leading up to menopause when an individual may experience changes, such as irregular periods or other menopausal symptoms e.g., hot flushes, poor concentration, headaches, panic attacks, heavy/light periods, anxiety, and loss of confidence. Some individuals also experience difficulty sleeping. This can be years before menopause.

Post menopause is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when an individual has not had a period for twelve consecutive months.

5. Symptoms of Menopause

It is important to note that not every menopausal person will notice every symptom, or even need help or support. However, 75% do experience some symptoms, and 25% of those could be classed as severe.

Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically, including, but not exclusively, hot flushes, poor concentration, headaches, panic attacks, heavy/light periods, anxiety, and loss of confidence. Some individuals also experience difficulty sleeping.

6. Drivers

Nottinghamshire Hospice has used guidance from the Faculty of Occupational Medicine (FOM), and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), to inform this policy. The NICE guidelines set out the recommendations for medical professionals when treating menopausal people, and for patients as to the treatment and guidance they should be offered.

Self-management, with support from Nottinghamshire Hospice, managers and colleagues, will help to manage symptoms. Appendix 1 details some recommendations to support symptomatic individuals as well as those supporting an individual experiencing the menopause who may need advice and support. Appendix 1a is a template to assist you in recording conversations, and agreed actions and adjustments, with members of staff.

In accordance with FOM and NICE guidelines, individuals experiencing the menopause should be advised to seek medical advice from their GP in the first instance. Appendix 2 offers a helpful guide on how to have constructive conversations about menopause with a GP.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Members of staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Taking a personal responsibility to look after their health
- Being open and honest in conversations with managers/HR team
- If a member of staff is unable to speak to their line manager, or if their line manager is not supporting them, they can speak directly to a member of the Human Resources Team or another member of the SMT
- Contributing to a respectful and productive working environment
- Being willing to help and support their colleagues

- Understanding any necessary adjustments their colleagues are receiving as a result of their menopausal symptoms.

Line Managers (see Appendix 1 for Managers' Guidance)

All line managers should:

- Familiarise themselves with the Menopause Policy and Guidance
- Be ready and willing to have open discussions about menopause, appreciating the personal nature of the conversation, and treating the discussion sensitively and professionally
- Use the guidance in Appendices 1 and 2, signposting and reviewing together, before agreeing with the individual how best they can be supported, and any adjustments required
- Record adjustments agreed, and actions to be implemented
- Ensure ongoing dialogue and review dates
- Ensure that all agreed adjustments are adhered to

Where adjustments are unsuccessful, or if symptoms are proving more problematic, the Line Manager may:

- Discuss a referral to Occupational Health for further advice
- Refer the employee to Occupational Health with the assistance and guidance from the Head of Human Resources or Human Resources Advisor
- Review Occupational Health advice, and implement any recommendations, where reasonably practical
- Update the action plan and continue to review.

Occupational Health

The role of Occupational Health is to:

- Carry out a holistic assessment of individuals as to whether or not the menopause may be contributing to symptoms/wellbeing, providing advice and guidance in line with up to date research
- Signpost to appropriate sources of help and advice (refer to Appendix 2 for more information)
- Provide support and advice to SMT and Line Managers in identifying reasonable adjustments, if required.

The Head of Human Resources / Human Resources Advisor & SMT

The Head of Human Resources / Human Resources Advisor; & SMT will:

- Offer guidance to managers on the interpretation of this Policy and Guidance
- Attend any necessary training sessions, and develop briefing sessions, for staff
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy in respect of related absence levels and performance.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) - RISE

The RISE service will:

Provide access to 24/7 telephone counselling and face-to-face counselling for all members of staff. RISE also provides access to online well-being self-help materials and access to a private GP – this can be useful if the member of staff's own GP is not providing adequate support with menopause symptoms.

Contact RISE on **0800 285 1538** or visit www.myrisehub.co.uk for detailed information. The login code is 206838.

Managers' Guidance for colleague discussions

We recognise that every person is an individual, is different, and it is, therefore, not feasible to set out a structured set of specific guidelines.

All advice is given, and written, in accordance with the Faculty of Occupational Medicine (FOM) recommendations and best practice.

If a member of staff wishes to speak about their symptoms, or just to talk about how they are feeling (they may not recognise themselves that they are symptomatic), or if an employee wishes to speak about a family member, please ensure that you:

- Allow adequate time to have the conversation
- Find an appropriate room to preserve confidentiality
- Encourage them to speak openly and honestly
- Suggest ways in which they can be supported (see symptoms below) – hand out the Menopause Advice Sheet (Appendix 2)
- Agree actions, and how to implement them (you should use the template at Appendix 1a to record the meeting, so that all parties agree what has been discussed, and the next steps, before the meeting ends). Ensure that this record is treated as confidential and is stored securely in line with data protection / GDPR.
- Agree if other members of the team should be informed, and by whom
- Ensure that designated time is allowed for a follow up meeting. Do not rely on quick queries during chance encounters in the corridor or break room.

Symptoms Support

Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically, including, but not exhaustively or exclusively to those listed below; support for individual impacted by the menopause should be considered as detailed below:

Hot Flashes

- Request temperature control for their work area, such as a fan on their desk (where possible a USB connected desk fan to ensure environmentally friendly) or moving near a window, or away from a heat source
- Easy access to drinking water

- Be allowed to adapt prescribed uniform and have spare change of uniform on site / more sets uniforms to enable spare sets at work or for future days of work
- Have access to a rest room for breaks if their work involves long periods of standing or sitting, or a quiet area if they need to manage a severe hot flush.

Heavy/light Periods

- Have permanent access to washroom facilities
- Ensure storage space is available for a change of clothing.
- Spare sets of uniform for changing
- Access to sanitary products in Hospice buildings and shops.

Headaches

- Have ease of access to fresh drinking water
- Offer a quiet space to work
- Offer noise-reducing headphones to wear in open offices
- Have time out to take medication if needed.

Difficulty Sleeping

- Follow a regular sleep schedule. Go to sleep and get up at the same time each day
- Avoid napping in the late afternoon or evening if you can. It may keep you awake at night
- Develop a bedtime routine. e.g., read a book, listen to soothing music, or soak in a warm bath
- Try not to watch television or use your computer or mobile device in the bedroom. The light from these devices may make it difficult for you to fall asleep.
- Keep your bedroom at a comfortable temperature, not too hot or too cold, and as quiet as possible.
- Exercise at regular times each day but not close to bedtime
- Avoid eating large meals close to bedtime
- Avoid caffeine (found in many coffees, teas, and chocolate) late in the day
- Remember, alcohol won't help you sleep. Even small amounts make it harder to stay asleep
- Inform your line manager if you are having difficulty sleeping and if and how this maybe impacting you within your role

- Speak to your GP if you are experiencing difficulty sleeping to see if they have any suggestions.

Low Mood

- Agree time out from others, when required, without needing to ask for permission
- Identify a 'buddy' for the colleague to talk to – outside of the work area
- Identify a 'time out space' to be able to go to 'clear their head'
- Contact Nottinghamshire Hospice Employee Assistance helpline RISE on **0800 285 1538** or visit www.myrisehub.co.uk for detailed information. The login code is 206838.

Loss of Confidence

- Ensure there are regular Personal Development Discussions
- Have regular protected time with their manager to discuss any issues
- Have agreed protected time to catch up with work.

Poor Concentration

- Discuss if there are times of the day when concentration is better or worse, and adjust working pattern/practice accordingly
- Review task allocation and workload
- Stationary such as notebooks to enable the creation for lists / to do actions, action/notice boards, or other memory-assisting equipment
- Offer quiet space to work
- Offer noise-reducing headphones to wear in open offices
- Reduce interruptions
- Have agreements in place in an open office that an individual is having 'protected time', so that they are not disturbed
- Have agreed protected time to catch up with work.

Anxiety

- Promote counselling and self-help services provided by Nottinghamshire Hospice Employee Assistance helpline RISE on **0800 285 1538** or visit www.myrisehub.co.uk for detailed information. The login code is 206838.
- Identify a 'buddy' for the colleague to talk to – outside of their work area
- Be able to have time away from their work to undertake relaxation techniques
- Undertake mindfulness activities such as breathing exercise or going for a walk.

Panic Attacks

- Agree time out from others, when required, without needing to ask for permission
- Identify a 'buddy' outside of work area
- Be able to have time away from their work to undertake relaxation techniques to calm the mind and reduce muscle tension e.g., mindfulness meditation, deep breathing, visualization, and yoga.
- Undertake mindfulness activities such as breathing exercises or going for a walk.

GP Support

In all cases, discuss whether the member of staff has visited their GP. Depending on the discussion, this may be the next step suggested, particularly if the areas of difficulty are sleeping, panic attacks or anxiety. If they have visited their GP, and are being supported by them, it may be helpful at this point to make an Occupational Health referral to give specific advice regarding the workplace. If they have visited their GP and feel that they are not being fully supported, it may be appropriate to use the private GP services within RISE.

Confidential Colleague Discussion – Template

Staff Members Name: -	Staff Members Job Title: -
Department: -	Location: -
Date of discussion: -	Other Attendees Present e.g. Line Manager: -
Summary of Discussion	
Agreed Actions / Adjustments: -	
Date of next Review Meeting: -	
Staff members Signature	
Line Managers Signature	

Menopause Advice Sheet – How to talk to your GP about menopause

If you are suffering from menopausal symptoms to the point they're getting in the way of you enjoying life, it's time to talk to your doctor. But, sometimes, that's easier said than done.

We all know how difficult it can often be just to get an appointment, and then it's often only ten minutes and talking about symptoms can be hard, let alone if you feel rushed or unprepared. So, what can you do? We've put together some helpful, straightforward tips to help you get the best from your appointment.

Don't wait. It is all too common for those impacted by the menopause to feel they must simply 'put up' with menopausal symptoms as a part of life, but if they are affecting you, there are things you can do, and support available. There is no need to wait until symptoms feel unbearable.

Read the NICE guidelines. This stands for National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and these guidelines are what your doctor will use to determine the type of conversations to have with you and treatments to offer.

There are guidelines for patients, which are really useful to read before you see your GP, so you know what to expect.

Prepare for your appointment. It's easier for your doctor to understand what's going on if you provide them with all the information. That may sound obvious, but blood tests to say where you are on the menopause transition aren't always available or accurate – your hormones can fluctuate daily during this time. So, your doctor will be thinking about what to recommend for you, based on your symptoms.

Keep a list of your symptoms, your menstrual cycle, hot flushes, how you're feeling, and any changes you've noticed. Write them down and take them to your appointment. Your doctor will thank you for it and it's more likely that together, you'll find the right solution faster. If you have any preferences about how you manage your symptoms, tell them that too – for example, if you'd like to try hormone replacement therapy (HRT), or not. Do some research into HRT before your appointment so you can ask specific questions about it.

Ask the receptionist which doctor is best to talk to about menopause. They are often the fount of all knowledge at a surgery and can help you find the best person to speak to – it might not be your usual GP; it could be someone who has had special training in the subject.

Ask for a longer appointment. If you don't think your standard appointment will be long enough, try to book a double appointment, as some surgeries do offer this.

Don't be afraid to ask for a second opinion. If you don't feel you've received the help you need, ask to speak to someone else. Don't be put off, you know how you're feeling, and how it's affecting you. You may also consider contacting the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) – RISE. This can give you access to a private GP.

Ask if there is a menopause clinic in your area. Occasionally, there are regional clinics, specifically devoted to menopause. If there is one in your area, and you think this would be helpful, ask for a referral.

Take your partner or a friend with you. The chances are, you spend your life supporting others and, during menopause, it's your turn to ask them for support. Your partner, or a friend, will know how the symptoms are affecting you. They could support you at the appointment, and also find out how they can continue supporting you.

What to expect from your doctor

There are certain things a GP should – and should not – do during your appointment.

They should:

- Talk to you about your lifestyle, and how to manage both your symptoms, and your longer-term health
- Offer advice on hormone replacement therapy and other non-medical options
- Talk to you about the safety and effectiveness of any treatment.

They should not:

- Tell you that it's just that time of your life. Yes, menopause is a natural stage, but please don't feel that means you should have to put up with every symptom without help
- Tell you they don't prescribe HRT. It's up to you what you want to try, and for them to say whether it could be right for you, depending on your medical history;

- Impose unnecessary time restrictions, such as they will only prescribe this once, or for a year or two.
- This is an ongoing conversation, and if your symptoms persist, you will still need help to manage them.
- Remember, your GP is there to help and support you, and you should feel comfortable and confident in talking to them about your symptoms, and any help you need. Don't think you have to struggle through menopause when there is help and support available.
- All staff can access counselling by contacting the Employee Assistance helpline RISE on **0800 285 1538** or visit www.myrisehub.co.uk for detailed information. The login code is 206838.

External Links / Support Available

All colleagues can access counselling by contacting the Employee Assistance helpline RISE on **0800 285 1538** or visit www.myrisehub.co.uk for detailed information. The login code is 206838.

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines. These explain how your GP will determine what types of treatments and interventions they can offer you. You can find out more information by using the following link [Menopause | Information for the public | Menopause: diagnosis and management | Guidance | NICE](#)

If you do not feel that your GP is supporting you and your symptoms, RISE enables you access to a private GP, just ring **0800 285 1538**.

The National Health Service provides an overview of menopause. You can find more at <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Menopause/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

The British Menopause Society provides information to individuals, employers and healthcare workers on the menopause the website is www.thebms.org.uk

Menopause Matters is an award winning, independent website providing up-to-date, accurate information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options. Here you will find information on what happens leading up to, during and after the menopause, what the consequences can be, what you can do to help and what treatments are available the website is: www.menopausematters.co.uk

Menopause & Me, this site provides tailored information about all stages of the menopause and the tools and support to help you make informed choices when it comes to managing your symptoms. www.menopauseandme.co.uk/

Menopause app for on-demand personalised symptom relief: STELLA app <https://www.onstella.com/>

Menopause information. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists offer further information in a dedicated area of their website at: <https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/menopause/>

Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI) information and support on very early menopause. You can find out more at <https://www.daisynetwork.org.uk>

Information on hysterectomy. This provides an insight into surgically induced menopause as a result of having a hysterectomy. Further details can be found at <https://www.hysterectomy-association.org.uk>

Henpicked. This site provides information on managing menopause, and an insight into individual's stories see <https://henpicked.net/menopause/>.

Clue is a website in which a free app can be downloaded and information can be provided on the menopause and the perimenopause <https://helloclue.com/articles/menopause>.