



POLICY INFORMATION (Menstruation Policy no HR039)	
Subject	Menstruation Policy <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. This policy is not contractual and does not form part of the terms and conditions of employment.
Date issued	4 June 2024
Next review date	4 June 2025
Lead responsible for Policy	Director of People Services
Policy written by	Director of People Services
Notified to (when)	Senior Leadership Team (May 2024)
Authorised by (when)	Board of Trustees (4 June 2024)
CQC Standard if applicable	Well Led
Links to other Hospice Policies	Menopause Policy HR033 Flexible Working Policy HR030 Hybrid Working Policy HR034 (Where applicable due to the individual's role) Sickness Absence Policy HR003
Links to external policies	This Policy aims to outline ways in which colleagues who suffer with symptoms of menstruation can be supported and therefore helped to improve their experience at work.
Summary	This policy sets out guidance for employees and line managers on providing the right support to manage menstrual symptoms at work.
This policy replaces	N/A

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Staff should refer to the Hospice website for the most up to date Policy. If the review date has passed it is still valid for 3 months. After that staff should seek advice from their clinical lead or manager.

VERSION CONTROL		
Status	Date	Review date
Original policy written by Human Resources Advisor	May 2024	
Policy reviewed by Senior Leadership Team	May 2024	
Policy notified to Senior Leadership Team	May 2024	
Policy ratified by Board of Trustees	4 June 2024	4 June 2025
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<p>1.</p>	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Nottinghamshire Hospice is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for employees who works here.</p> <p>Menstruation is a natural part of some employees' lives, and some employees may experience difficulties with their periods and the management of their symptoms. With support, it can be much better. Whilst not every employee who experiences menstruation suffers with symptoms, supporting those who do will improve their experience at work.</p> <p>Menstrual cycles and periods should not be a taboo or 'hidden.' We want everyone to understand what menstruation is, and to be able to talk about it openly, without embarrassment.</p> <p>Individuals that can menstruate account for 48% of the UK workforce and can face a myriad of unique health-related issues throughout their working lives (Wellbeing of Women, 2023) and a significant number of Nottinghamshire Hospice's workforce may experience a menstrual cycle and period related symptoms.</p> <p>A report conducted by the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPDO (November 2023) informed that approximately 69% of employees who have experienced menstruation symptoms report that they have a negative impact at work. 53% had been unable to attend work at some point due to menstruation symptoms and 49% of employees informed that they would never tell their manager their absence is related to their menstrual cycle. The main reason for this was that they felt the reason for absence would be trivialised and they felt embarrassed.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Policy Statement/Aims</p> <p>This policy sets out guidance for employees and line managers on providing the right support to manage menstrual symptoms at work.</p> <p>The aims of this policy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage an environment in which employees can openly and comfortably initiate conversations or engage in discussions about the menstrual cycle and conditions linked to menstruation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure everyone understands what menstruation and the Menstrual Cycle 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 menstruation, and how they can support employees at work. • Ensure that employees suffering with menstrual 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 menstrual symptoms. • Assure employees affected by the menstrual cycle, that we are a responsible employer committed to supporting their needs during menstruation and the employee’s menstrual health.
<p>3.</p>	<p>Scope</p> <p>This policy applies to all Nottinghamshire Hospice employees and managers.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Definitions</p> <p>Menstrual cycle is the monthly process in which an egg develops, and the lining of the womb is prepared for a possible pregnancy. The length of the menstrual cycle varies from woman to woman, but the average is to have periods every 28 days. Regular cycles that are longer or shorter than this, from 23 to 35 days, are normal. The menstrual cycle is the time from the first day of a woman's period to the day before her next period.</p> <p>Menstrual health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in relation to the menstrual cycle.</p> <p>A period is part of the menstrual cycle when people who menstruate bleed from their vagina.</p> <p>There are Four Phases of the Menstrual Cycle</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Menstruation Menstruation, or a period, is when uterine blood and tissue come through the vagina. 2. Follicular phase The follicular phase is the longest phase of the menstrual cycle. It lasts

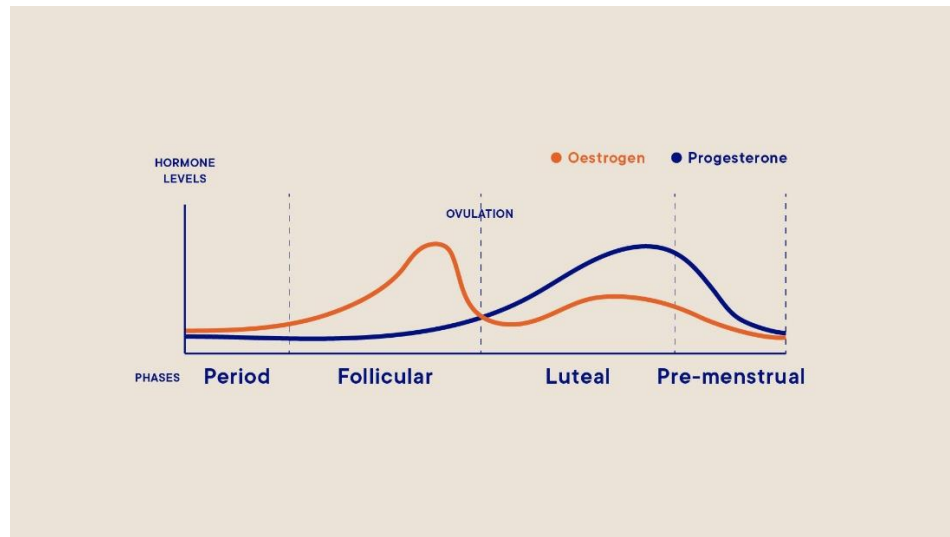
from 14 to 21 days. During the follicular phase, the ovaries house a developing egg they will later release during ovulation.

3. Ovulation

Ovulation is when a mature egg is released from one of the ovaries.

4. Luteal phase

The luteal phase is to prepare your uterus for a possible pregnancy.



The above graph demonstrates the four phases of the menstrual cycle (WWW.Jennis.com).

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Director of People Services / Human Resources Advisor and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- Offer guidance to managers on the interpretation of this Policy and Guidance.
- Attend any necessary training sessions, and develop briefing sessions, for employees.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy in respect of related absence levels and performance.
- If an employee is unable to speak to their line manager or feels that their line manager is not supporting them, they can speak directly to a member of the Human Resources Team or a member of SLT.

Line Managers (see Appendix 1 for Managers' Guidance)

All line managers should:

- Familiarise themselves with the Menstruation Policy and Guidance.
- Be ready and willing to have open discussions about menstruation, 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 Director of People Services 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 their menstrual cycle / menstruation 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).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support and advice to the Senior Leadership Team and Line Managers in identifying reasonable adjustments, if required. <p>Employees</p> <p>All employees are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking a personal responsibility to look after their health • being open and honest in conversations with managers/HR team • 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 menstrual symptoms • speaking to a Mental Health First Aider for additional support • speaking to a Period / Menopause Champion for additional support • keeping a symptoms diary noting the symptoms and their effect (if an affected individual). <p>Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) - RISE</p> <p>The RISE service will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 employee’s own GP is not providing adequate support with menstrual symptoms. <p>Contact RISE on 0800 285 1538 or visit www.myrisehub.co.uk for detailed information. The login code is 206838.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Symptoms of Menstruation</p> <p>It is important to note that not every person who has the ability to menstruate will and/or notices every symptom, or even needs help or support. However, more than two-thirds of employees experience a negative impact at work due to menstruation symptoms. Those aged 18 – 34 are more likely to experience a high proportion of the symptoms listed below compared to those aged 35 – 54 and 55+.</p>

	<p>The CIPD involved 2,060 individuals that can menstruate aged 18-60. Around one in seven (15%) had a menstrual condition, such as Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS), Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD) or Endometriosis, Fibroids and Adenomyosis (source CIPD November 2023).</p> <p>Although not everyone will experience symptoms, for those that do, symptoms can have a huge effect on a person’s comfort and performance when working. Symptoms that individuals can experience vary greatly and commonly include (but are not limited to):-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abdominal pain, bloating and Pelvic Cramps • Menorrhagia (Heavy Periods) • Fatigue, joint and muscle pain • Headaches and dizziness • Lower Back Pain • Low Mood / Mood swings and Anxiety • Feeling sick, constipation and /or diarrhoea • Food craving • Weight gain • Irritability, difficulty concentrating and brain fog • Loss of interest and motivation • Breast tenderness • Insomnia • Fainting
<p>7. Support</p>	<p>Self-management, with support from Nottinghamshire Hospice, managers and colleagues, may help to manage symptoms. Appendix 1 details recommendations to support symptomatic individuals as well as those supporting an individual experiencing the menstruation symptoms who may need advice and support. Appendix 2 is a template to assist a line manager in recording conversations, and agreed actions and adjustments, with an employee.</p>

	<p>In accordance with the NICE guidelines, individuals experiencing menstruation symptoms should be advised to seek medical advice from their GP in the first instance when symptoms are impacting upon their physical, mental health and /or wellbeing. Appendix 3 offers a helpful guide on how to have constructive conversations about menstruation symptoms with a GP.</p> <p>At Nottinghamshire Hospice, we also have additional support in place, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Period & Menopause Champion • Mental Health First Aiders • RISE – confidential, professional telephone support 24/7, 365 days a year • Access to an Occupational Health Service • If you are experiencing difficulties within your working environment, please talk to your line manager in the first instance.
<p>8.</p>	<p>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>References</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nottinghamshire Hospice has used guidance from the CIPD Menstruation and Support at Work’ 2. Periods Overview, Menstrual Health – Menstrual Cycle NHS 3. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). The NICE guidelines set out the recommendations for medical professionals for treatments / interventions that can be offered.

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 NHS – Periods Overview, Menstrual Health, Menstrual Cycle and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

Every individual's experience of menstrual health is unique to them and is a very personal topic. Some people may feel embarrassed or anxious about discussing how menstruation may affect their health and work. At Nottinghamshire Hospice we recognise that other factors, such as cultural backgrounds or neurodivergence, can make it harder for someone to disclose their situation or to seek support.

If an employee wishes to speak about their menstrual health related symptoms, or just to talk about how they are feeling (they may not recognise 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 support below) – hand out the Menstruation Advice Sheet (Appendix 3).
- Agree actions, and how to implement them (you should use the template at Appendix 2 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 and support for individuals impacted by menstruation should be considered as detailed below:

Heavy (Menorrhagia)/light Periods/irregular

- Have permanent access to washroom facilities.

- Clothing Change (e.g. spare clothes, 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.
- Have time out to take medication if needed.

Abdominal and pelvic cramps

- Suggest the use of Hot Water Bottles and Heat Pads (provided by employee) and utilised when able to sit down in their working day.

Headaches

- Have ease of access to fresh drinking water and food.
- Offer a quiet space to work (wherever possible).
- Offer noise-reducing headphones to wear in open offices.
- Have time out to take medication if needed.
- Access to ventilation.

Low Mood / Mood swings and Anxiety

- Agree reasonable time out from others, when required, without needing to ask for permission each time.
- Identify a 'buddy' for the employee to talk to – outside of the work area.
- Identify a 'time out space' to be able to go to 'clear their head' so long as this does not adversely impact on the duties of their role.
- Contact the external Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) helpline - RISE on **0800 285 1538** or visit www.myrisehub.co.uk for detailed information. The login code is 206838.

Poor Concentration / Brain Fog

- Discuss if there are times of the day when concentration is better or worse and adjust working pattern/practice (where appropriate for the role).
- Review task allocation and workload.
- Use stationary such as notebooks to enable the creation of lists/to do actions, action/notice boards, or other memory-assisting Equipment.
- Offer quiet space to work (if practicable).
- Offer noise-reducing headphones to wear in open offices.
- Reduce interruptions wherever possible.

- Have agreements in place in an open office that an individual can have '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 via the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) 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.
- Undertake mindfulness activities such as breathing exercises or going for a walk.
- Identify a 'buddy' outside of work area.
- Identify any time that's appropriate to be 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 during a lunch break.
- Seek support from the Mental Health First Aiders

GP Support

- In all cases, discuss whether the employee has visited their GP. Depending on the discussion, this may be the next step suggested, particularly if the areas of difficulty are symptoms impacting upon an individual's physical and mental Health and Wellbeing. If they have visited their GP, are they being supported by them? It may be helpful at this point to make an Occupational Health referral to seek 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.

Other Support Mechanisms

- Signposting to specialist external organisations for support.
- Flexible working requests.
- Paid and Unpaid Medical appointments (see [Other Leave Policy HR004](#))
- More frequent short breaks when required.
- [Hybrid Working Policy HR034](#) (Where applicable due to the individual's role)
- Paid Sick Leave in line with length of service entitlement.

Confidential Colleague Discussion – Template

Staff Member's Name:	Staff Member's 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	

Menstruation Advice Sheet – How to talk to your GP about Menstruation

If you are suffering from menstruation 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? Below are 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 menstruation to feel they must simply 'put up' with menstrual 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.

You may wish to contact your GP and arrange an appointment to discuss your symptoms.

There are guidelines that GPs follow, these being the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), which you may wish to familiarise yourself with as well as information on the NHS website. By familiarising yourself with these resources it may help you in preparing for the type of conversation your GP may have with you and treatments that may be available to you.

Prepare for your appointment. It's easier for your doctor to understand what's going on if you provide them with all the information.

Keep a list or a diary of your symptoms, your menstrual cycle, the symptoms you experience during menstruation, how you're feeling, and any changes you've noticed during your cycle. 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, medication / hormonal contraceptive or not. Do some research into any treatment options before your appointment so you can ask specific questions about it.

Ask the receptionist which doctor is best to talk to about menstruation and menstrual symptoms. The receptionists 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.

You may wish to take your partner or a friend with you. They may 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 medical and other non-medical treatment options.
- Talk to you about the safety and effectiveness of any treatment.

They should not:

- Tell you that it's just a phase of your life. Yes, menstruation is a natural stage, but please don't feel that means you should have to put up with every symptom without help.
- 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 with symptoms of menstruation that are affecting your health and wellbeing when there is help and support available. Potentially this will be a matter of ongoing conversation, and if your symptoms persist, you will still need help to manage them.
- All staff can access counselling by contacting the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) 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 Programme (EAP) 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

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng88/resources/heavy-menstrual-bleeding-assessment-and-management-pdf-1837701412549>

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 private GP is able to prescribe medications and make referrals.

The National Health Service provides an overview of periods. You can find more at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/periods/period-problems/>

Wellbeing of Women is a charity that provides easy to understand information that explains menstruation symptoms and conditions. You can find more information at

<https://www.wellbeingofwomen.org.uk/what-we-do/campaigns/just-a-period/periods-information-hub/>

Endometriosis UK is the UK official website on Endometriosis. The website provides readers with information on Endometriosis (signs and symptoms); how people with the condition can access support, get involved in fundraising, volunteering and research activities. More information can be found via the link <https://www.endometriosis-uk.org/information>

PCOS Relief is a charitable organisation that has been established to provide support and advice to those who have been diagnosed with any of the four types of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS). For more information on PCOS and be found via the link <https://pcosrelief.org/>

Verity is a self-help group for those with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). The group was established in 1997 to share information about the condition and improve the lives of individuals living with PCOS. The charity is run by a dedicated board of Volunteer Trustees supported by a team of further volunteers, who all support thousands both in the UK and internationally. For more information on PSOC and be found via the link <http://www.pcos->

[uk.org.uk/](http://www.uk.org.uk/)

The below website link is to the National Association for Premenstrual Syndromes (PMS) which provides advice and information on PMS and PMDD. <https://www.pms.org.uk/>

The below link is a document produced by the organisation Mind which helps the reader to understand premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) and explores issues around getting a diagnosis. It also provides information on self-care and treatment options, and how friends and family can help.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/media-a/2947/pmdd-2017.pdf>

The British Fibroid Trust is the UK official website on Fibroids and is a UK based voluntary not-for-profit patient support Group which is run by volunteers. The website provides balanced information on Fibroids and is a platform where individual with fibroids can learn from each other's experiences and ease their anxiety.

<http://www.britishfibroidtrust.org.uk/index.php>

The below website Pelvic Pain provides information on the condition Adenomyosis as well as other conditions which result in Pelvic Pain

<https://www.pelvicpain.org.uk/conditions/adenomyosis/>