

*Staff Guide*  
To  
**MENOPAUSE**

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# ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This booklet is intended to help staff who may be experiencing the symptoms of menopause and perimenopause. It includes updated guidance on recording menopause symptoms absence on Healthroster.

Guidance within this document is also designed to support managers in signposting staff towards help, both from within the organisation and outside of it – ultimately helping those who experience symptoms to better control, manage and live with any physical and mental impact.

The guide may also support members of our workforce that are experiencing the symptoms of menopause and perimenopause through signposting to various sources of support.

Any queries or questions can be sent to the Health and Wellbeing team: [KHFT.staffwellbeingappointments@nhs.net](mailto:KHFT.staffwellbeingappointments@nhs.net)

# AIMS

The ultimate aim of Hounslow and Richmonds Community Healthcare and Kingston Hospital's menopause support offer is to create a supportive environment, driven by a culture where staff can discuss menopause and its impact openly .

This booklet ensures we are working towards a more aware and action led culture by providing informative and supportive guidance to managers on how to best support our workforce.

It is recognised that while women are often referred to as those who experience symptoms of menopause, peri-menopause and other associated challenges that these audiences are exclusive to each other and consequently, those who experience menopause, peri-menopause and associated challenges are not always of any specific gender.

For this reason, and while it is acknowledged that the majority of the audience that experiences menopause are cisgender women (women who were assigned female at birth), it is our intention as NHS organisations to be inclusive of those who are not women but may still experience symptoms of menopause. This is inclusive of audiences including but not limited to transgender men, non-binary and intersex people.

As a result, this booklet is intended to support anybody impacted by symptoms of menopause, of any gender. In accordance with this, throughout this document the word 'people' thereby refers to 'those who experience symptoms of menopause, peri-menopause and any other associated challenges'.

# WHAT IS THE MENOPAUSE?

The menopause is a natural stage in the lives of most women as well as other people with ovaries, during which the person stops having periods and experiences hormonal changes such as a decrease in oestrogen levels. Not all who experience menopause will experience significant symptoms, but for those who do, the effect can often be debilitating.

Perimenopause begins several years before menopause. Those experiencing perimenopause may start to experience menopausal symptoms during the final two years of perimenopause.

The menopause usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age, although menopausal symptoms can occasionally begin before the age of 40 and even right down to teenage years. Though rarer, this can mean that menopause can be indiscriminate of age to some.

Whilst menopause is generally a natural process involving gradual change, it can be sudden and acute – particularly following medical or surgical intervention (e.g. surgical hysterectomy, chemotherapy or radiotherapy).

# WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

The CIPD tell us that “some women go through the menopause with little impact on their daily life but others experience symptoms that can last for several years and have a negative impact on their performance and attendance at work. A bad night’s sleep can affect concentration, while heavy periods or hot flushes can be physically distressing and embarrassing. The psychological effects can also impact relationships at work. For some, the symptoms are so severe that women are forced to leave their job altogether”.

While symptoms vary greatly, they commonly include (but are not limited to):

- hot flushes
- night sweats/ sleep disturbance
- anxiety / low mood/ depression
- headaches
- recurrent urinary tract infections
- heavy/ irregular periods

# WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?

## Manager Support

People are encouraged to inform their line manager that they are experiencing menopausal symptoms at an early stage to ensure that symptoms are treated as an ongoing health issue rather than individual instances of ill health. Early notification will also help line managers to determine the most appropriate way in which to support their team member's individual needs.

Line managers are now able to select **Menopause - All Symptoms** when recording sickness for staff on Healthroster. If you have any questions on the recording of this, please contact the rostering team: [khft.erosteringsupport@nhs.net](mailto:khft.erosteringsupport@nhs.net) or [hrch.erostering@nhs.net](mailto:hrch.erostering@nhs.net)

Those who do not wish to discuss this matter with their line manager may find it helpful to speak to a trusted colleague, another manager, or a member of the Health and Wellbeing Team. You can email them on: [KHFT.staffwellbeingappointments@nhs.net](mailto:KHFT.staffwellbeingappointments@nhs.net)

Per below, there is also an internal menopause support group available for colleagues and a specialist menopause nurse clinic.

# WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?

## Menopause Support Group

The Menopause support group was formed primarily for those who have experienced or are experiencing symptoms of the menopause.

The group meets in-person or virtually on a regular basis to offer a friendly community and a safe space to discuss the physical and emotional aspects of going through the menopause, and is also accessible to the partners of people who are experiencing menopause who are looking to more effectively support their partner. As well as community and understanding, meetings also provide the opportunity for shared learning and support with a wide variety of guest speakers, all of whom are specialists in their field. Subjects and are determined by the groups needs and requests.

To join the group please email: [KHFT.staffwellbeingappointments@nhs.net](mailto:KHFT.staffwellbeingappointments@nhs.net)

# WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?

## GP

Your GP can offer a range of support to help with the physical and emotional aspects of the menopause. GPs are particularly useful when struggling heavily with symptoms, and can help you find solutions and assistance to better manage and control symptoms.

If your symptoms of menopause are perhaps irregular – such as unscheduled vaginal bleeding, heavy menstrual bleeding, weight gain or otherwise, a GP can help diagnose potential related and/or menstrual issues – such as fibroids, PMS, PCOS, adenomyosis, endometriosis or otherwise.

## Online Resources

There are a range of web pages and social media accounts dedicated to raising awareness and improving menopause knowledge. We have tried to put these together for you to view on the Wellbeing website: [www.khftstaffwellbeing.co.uk](http://www.khftstaffwellbeing.co.uk)



# REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

Sometimes, simple practical adjustments and support can improve the quality of life if you are experiencing menopausal symptoms.

## Fatigue / Sleep disturbance

Allowing flexibility for the individual, who may be suffering from fatigue during the day. Have reasonable adjustments been discussed with the line manager?

## Hot flushes / Night Sweats

- Ensuring the working environment is a reasonable temperature and is well-ventilated
- Reviewing seating plans (if relevant) to allow the individual to sit near a window
- Allowing flexibility within uniform provision – can items/ layers be removed? Could an additional uniform be provided in order for it to be changed throughout the day if needed?
- Provide access to cold water supplies
- Making temporary adjustments to duties - hot flushes can be difficult to cope with when undertaking high visibility work such as formal meetings

# REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

## Psychological problems

- Agreeing adjustments wherever possible
- Encouraging open discussion at 1:1 meetings with the line manager or Occupational Health
- Encouraging the staff member to join the Menopause Support Group
- Referring to (or encouraging the individual to) Occupational Health or the Staff Specialist Menopause Nurse Clinic

## Urinary tract infections/ Urogenital Problems/ Heavy and irregular periods

- Allowing more frequent toilet breaks
- Providing easy access to drinking water
- Allowing water bottles to be used in the work area

# Transgender People

Transgender men (who were assigned female at birth) and some non-binary people will experience a natural menopause if their ovaries remain in place and no hormone therapy is given. Transgender men will also experience menopausal symptoms if the ovaries and uterus are surgically removed, and this may happen at an earlier age than commonly happens with a natural menopause.

Transgender women (who were assigned male at birth) and some non-binary people undertaking hormone therapy will usually remain on this for life and should generally experience limited menopausal-like symptoms, unless hormone therapy is interrupted, or hormone levels are unstable, for example when they are required to stop hormone therapy for several weeks before and after any type of major surgery.

Some transgender people may not wish to disclose their transgender status and as a result, may be reluctant to discuss menopausal symptoms if doing so would disclose their status. Negative and discriminatory attitudes may also make it more difficult to disclose difficulties or request adjustments.

Our LGBTQ+ Staff Network may be a suitable option of support for transgender colleagues who are experiencing symptoms of menopause. Email: [charly.tshiota1@nhs.net](mailto:charly.tshiota1@nhs.net) for more details on the networks.

# Useful Resources

- NHS England – [Menopause Help & Support Menopause - Help and support - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)
- CIPD “The menopause at work: guidance for people professionals”  
[https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being/menopause/people-professionals-guidance?  
utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=cpc&utm\\_campaign=menopauseatwork&utm\\_content=MAW\\_PP  
C\\_BMM&gclid=EAlaIqobChMI206yldmi7AIVWuztCh0ztAobEAAYASAAEgLfefD\\_BwE](https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being/menopause/people-professionals-guidance?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=menopauseatwork&utm_content=MAW_PP_C_BMM&gclid=EAlaIqobChMI206yldmi7AIVWuztCh0ztAobEAAYASAAEgLfefD_BwE)
- British Menopause Society <https://thebms.org.uk/publications/tools-for-clinicians/>
- Health and Wellbeing Website - [www.khftstaffwellbeing.co.uk](http://www.khftstaffwellbeing.co.uk)

