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Menopause and Women's Health Policy

Introduction

Women's health issues can affect employees at different stages of life and may have a significant physical, psychological and practical impact at work. These issues may include, but are not limited to, menstrual symptoms, painful or heavy periods, endometriosis, polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), perimenopause and menopause.

Symptoms and their impact vary between individuals and may be intermittent, long-term or change over time.

Perimenopause is the transitional period leading up to menopause, during which hormonal changes may cause a range of symptoms. Menopause is generally identified when an individual has not had a menstrual period for 12 consecutive months, where this is not due to another medical or physiological cause. Menopause can also occur earlier as a result of surgery, medical treatment or other health conditions. Symptoms and experiences will vary between individuals.

The purpose of this policy is to explain how the Company will support employees experiencing women's health issues and related symptoms. The Company aims to create a supportive and inclusive working environment in which employees can raise concerns with Managers, HR, or the appointed Women's Health Champion, access appropriate support and discuss reasonable workplace adjustments without embarrassment, stigma or less favourable treatment.

Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Foster an environment in which colleagues can openly and comfortably discuss women's health issues.
- Ensure employees understand the support available under this policy and can confidently approach Managers, HR, or the appointed Women's Health Champion.
- Educate and inform Managers about the potential workplace impact of menstrual symptoms, endometriosis, perimenopause, menopause and other women's health conditions.
- Ensure affected employees feel confident to request support and reasonable adjustments so they can continue to be successful in their roles.
- Reduce avoidable absence and disadvantage arising from women's health issues.
- Assure employees that the Company is committed to responding sensitively, fairly and confidentially to individual needs.

Employee responsibilities

All employees should contribute to a respectful working environment and support colleagues who may be affected by women's health issues. Employees who need support are encouraged to speak openly with their line manager or HR. All employees are responsible for:

- Taking a personal responsibility to look after their health;
- Contributing to a respectful and productive working environment;

- Being willing to help and support their colleagues;
- Understanding any necessary adjustments colleagues receive as a result of women's health symptoms or treatment.

Employees are encouraged to raise any health-related concerns that may affect their work with their Line Manager, HR or the appointed Women's Health Champion, where they feel comfortable doing so. Employees are not required to disclose detailed personal medical information but are encouraged to provide sufficient information to enable the Company to consider appropriate workplace support and adjustments.

If an employee is unable to speak to their Line Manager, or needs additional support, they can speak to HR**,** another member of the management team with whom they would feel comfortable discussing their situation, or the appointed Women's Health Champion.

During any discussions, your Line Manager will consider your individual situation and evaluate if any adjustments can be made. Your individual needs will be addressed sensitively, and confidentiality will be maintained.

Employer responsibilities

All employees are expected to treat colleagues experiencing women's health issues with dignity and respect. Inappropriate comments, jokes, unwanted attention, bullying, harassment or discriminatory behaviour relating to an employee's health, symptoms or treatment will not be tolerated. Any concerns should be raised with Management or HR and will be addressed in accordance with the Company's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation Policy. The Company will take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace and will respond appropriately to any concerns raised.

Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that no one experiences less favourable treatment as a result of women's health issues, related symptoms or treatment.
- Putting in place any required support/adjustments where reasonably possible.
- Recording any agreements made.
- Holding regular reviews with employees regarding support required, including follow-up meetings to review adjustments that have been made.
- Seeking additional advice from Occupational Health where necessary.
- Agreeing with the employee if other colleagues should be informed about any adjustments that have been agreed (even if the reason is not disclosed).

Any personal or medical information disclosed under this policy will be treated sensitively and confidentially and handled in accordance with UK Data Protection legislation. Information will only be shared with those who have a legitimate need to know, for example HR, Occupational Health or relevant Managers involved in arranging workplace support or adjustments. Wherever possible, the employee will be informed before information is shared, and only the minimum information necessary will be disclosed. Records relating to health conditions, discussions and agreed adjustments will be stored securely and accessed only by authorised individuals.

Managers can contact HR for additional guidance and information where necessary.

When responding to an employee experiencing difficulties caused by a women's health issue, Line Managers will maintain an open-door approach so that employees feel comfortable seeking support. Managers will listen without making assumptions about the employee's condition, symptoms or needs and will consider appropriate support on an individual basis.

The Company understands that employees may feel uncomfortable discussing personal information with Management. If this is the case, you are encouraged to discuss your situation with another senior member of staff, HR, the appointed Women's Health Champion, or the Employee Assistance Programme.

Workplace adjustments

Some women's health conditions, including symptoms associated with menopause or perimenopause, may amount to a disability under the Equality Act 2010 where they have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on an individual's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Where this applies, the Company will comply with its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments. The Company will consider requests for workplace adjustments on an individual basis, taking account of the employee's circumstances, the impact of their symptoms and the requirements of their role. Adjustments will be reviewed as appropriate to ensure they remain effective.

As with any longstanding health-related condition, sympathetic and appropriate support from the Company and Management is crucial to provide employees with the support they need. Above all, listen to individuals and respond sympathetically to any requests for adjustments at work.

Women's health issues can affect individuals in different ways. Symptoms may be physical, cognitive or psychological, may fluctuate over time and may arise from a diagnosed or undiagnosed condition, hormonal change or medical treatment.

Some of the more common symptoms include:

- Painful, heavy, irregular or otherwise disruptive periods
- Pelvic pain, abdominal pain, bloating, nausea or digestive symptoms
- Hot flushes, night sweats or difficulty regulating body temperature
- Difficulty sleeping or fatigue
- Headaches or migraines
- Low mood, anxiety, or changes in emotional wellbeing
- Problems with memory, concentration, or confidence
- Pain, discomfort, or side effects associated with endometriosis, adenomyosis, PCOS or other conditions
- Physical or emotional effects connected with investigations, medication, procedures or fertility treatment

Depending on individual circumstances, available support may include the following options:

Temperature control

We strive to achieve a comfortable working temperature for employees and ensure that employees have access to drinking water as a minimum at appropriate intervals during the day. We will allow flexibility within the dress code where reasonable. We will also consider any other appropriate adjustments, for example changing an employee's work location including to nearer a window, providing blinds on windows, ensuring there is always the opportunity to access toilet facilities or providing cooling aids such as a desk fan.

Sickness absence

The Company has a sickness absence policy that can be found in the Employee handbook. Absences relating to women's health issues will be managed sensitively and in accordance with the Company's Sickness Absence Policy. Where an employee experiences recurring or ongoing symptoms, the Company will consider the circumstances of the absence, any relevant medical advice and whether reasonable adjustments may be appropriate. Where symptoms amount to a disability under the Equality Act 2010, the Company will consider whether adjustments to its normal absence management procedures are required. Employees will not be subjected to less favourable treatment because of a disability, and any concerns about attendance will be considered fairly and on an individual basis. Employees should feel able to explain the reason for any absence to their line manager or HR and be treated sensitively and confidentially. Where appropriate, employees are encouraged to seek medical advice and share any relevant workplace recommendations provided by a healthcare professional.

Available support

Employees are encouraged to inform their line manager, HR, or the appointed Women's Health Champion if they are experiencing women's health symptoms or undergoing related treatment that could affect their work. Early discussion can help the Company consider the issue as an ongoing health matter and identify suitable support rather than treating each effect as an isolated instance.

The appointed **Women's Health Champion** provides an additional point of contact for employees who would prefer to discuss women's health concerns outside their normal management arrangements. The Champion can offer a supportive and confidential initial conversation, provide information about available resources and help employees access appropriate workplace support. The Champion is not expected to provide medical advice or make decisions about employment matters or workplace adjustments. Where further action is required, the Champion may, with the employee's knowledge wherever possible, refer the matter to HR or an appropriate Manager. Any information shared will be handled sensitively and in accordance with the Company's confidentiality and data protection requirements.

Early notification will also help line managers to determine the most appropriate course of action to support an employee's individual needs. Employees who do not wish to discuss the issue with their direct line manager may find it helpful to have an initial discussion with a trusted colleague or another manager instead. They can also raise the issue with HR if they need support.

Employees and managers may find external sources of help and support useful, including the following:

- Menopause matters (Menopause Matters, menopausal symptoms, remedies, advice), which provides information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options;

- Daisy Network charity (Charity for Women with POI | The Daisy Network), provides support for women experiencing premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency; and

- Menopause Café - Gather to eat cake, drink and discuss menopause , provides information about events where strangers gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss the menopause.

- Endometriosis UK | Support, Info & Advocacy for Endo, the UK's leading charity for all those affected by endometriosis, determined to ensure that everyone gets prompt diagnosis and the best treatment and support.

- Verity - The UK PCOS Charity - Verity PCOS UK a registered charity for those with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). They are a patient advocacy group that aims to raise awareness around the condition.

- Menstrual Health Project | Education, Advocacy & Change Focuses on menstrual health education, school and workplace sessions, medical advisory support, and breaking the stigma around conditions like endometriosis and PMDD.

Signed: 
Pam Martin, MD

Dated: 22/10/2026

Next Review Date: 22/10/2027