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POLICY & GUIDANCE

MENOPAUSE

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1. INTRODUCTION

The changing age profile of the UK's workforce means that nearly 80% of menopausal women are in work. (Faculty of Occupational Medicine cited in ACAS, *Menopause at Work*.)

Crosby Training is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for everyone who works for the company and for those using our services. This menopause policy seeks to benefit the welfare of individual members of staff, to retain valued employees, improve their morale and performance, and to enhance the reputation of Crosby Training as an employer of choice.

This policy sets out the guidelines on providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work and recognises that people may need additional consideration, support and adjustments before menopause (perimenopause), during menopause and after it (post-menopause). It is not contractual and does not form part of the terms and conditions of employment.

2. SCOPE

This menopause policy and guidance apply to all Crosby Training staff and managers and also determine the support we give to our customers affected by the menopause.

We recognise that individuals may experience the menopause differently, including those who identify as non-binary, transgender or intersex, who may experience menopausal symptoms.

Experiences and perceptions of the menopause may also differ in relation to disability, age, race, religion, sexual orientation, or marital/civil partnership status. The menopause can also affect partners and families.



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3. LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

This policy and guidance form part of Crosby Training's commitment to equality and diversity and are compliant with:

- 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, Regulation 4 (GB)
- The Equality Act 2010

Exclusionary or discriminatory practices will not be tolerated. Menopausal symptoms may in some cases amount to a disability under the Equality Act 2010, and Crosby Training will consider whether reasonable adjustments are required in such cases.

4. AIMS

The aims of this policy are:

- To raise wider awareness and understanding of menopause among the workforce.
- To educate and inform about the potential symptoms of the menopause and how people in the workplace can be supported.
- To ensure staff are clear on Crosby Training's policy and practices.
- To outline the support and reasonable adjustments that are available.
- To create an environment where individuals feel confident enough to raise issues about their symptoms and ask for reasonable adjustments and additional support at work.
- To reduce absenteeism due to menopausal symptoms.
- To support the physical and mental wellbeing of staff and to meet our statutory duties and best-practice expectations.



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5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

- Ensure that the policy is communicated, reviewed and implemented across the organisation.
- Ensure that line managers are trained in how to handle menopause-related issues confidentially and supportively.

5.2 LINE MANAGERS

- Be the first point of contact for staff who wish to discuss menopausal symptoms or related concerns.
- Seek guidance from HR, our Employee Assistance Provider *Health Assured*, or the wellbeing/safeguarding team when needed.
- Implement agreed adjustments and monitor their effectiveness.

5.3 HR & SAFEGUARDING/WELLBEING TEAM

- Provide information, guidance and support to staff and managers.
- Facilitate confidential discussions and record agreed adjustments.
- Signpost to external resources and occupational health where appropriate.

5.4 EMPLOYEES

- Communicate any concerns or needs relating to menopausal symptoms in a timely manner.
- Cooperate with managers and wellbeing staff in identifying and reviewing suitable adjustments.
- Take reasonable responsibility for their own health, safety and welfare, while recognising that workplace demands can affect this.



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6. STANDARD REQUIREMENTS FOR EMPLOYEES

Crosby Training recognises that employees have a basic responsibility for their health, safety and welfare, but that workplace demands can complicate this. Employees can expect the following standard requirements:

- Access to toilets.
- Access to drinking water.
- Access to natural light where practicable.
- Risk assessments carried out by a competent person.
- Regulated temperatures in line with health and safety guidance.

These standard requirements apply to all staff and are considered baseline conditions for a safe and comfortable working environment.

7. ADDITIONAL WORKPLACE SUPPORT & REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

Menopause is a very personal experience and different adjustments and levels of support may be needed for different individuals. For some people, this may be a difficult time and it is important that workers who require additional support are treated with understanding, dignity and respect.

Crosby Training has a well-established safeguarding team and a designated wellbeing officer to provide practical and emotional support for staff. Since the pandemic we have provided additional support for all staff with morale-boosting activities and additional half-days off for mental recuperation.

The safeguarding / wellbeing team will meet with any staff member who identifies that they have additional requirements because of menopausal symptoms and will help with the planning of specific adjustments during the meeting. The agreed



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adjustments will be recorded on the **Confidential Discussion Record** and shared with the employee at the end of the meeting.

Adjustments may include, but are not limited to:

- Changes to working environment (e.g. temperature, ventilation, lighting).
- Flexible working arrangements.
- Adjusted working hours or breaks.
- Temporary or permanent changes to duties or workload.
- Access to quiet spaces or rest areas.

Where appropriate, and where the employee agrees, colleagues and managers may be informed of the agreed adjustments, but only with the employee's consent and in line with confidentiality expectations.



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8. APPENDIX 1: DEFINITIONS & SYMPTOMS

8.1 DEFINITIONS

Perimenopause

The perimenopause is the period in a person's life when they start to experience hormonal fluctuations and changes to their periods. The average time for a person to be perimenopausal is between four and five years. During this time, periods may become increasingly heavy and irregular, meaning it is important for someone experiencing symptoms to have close access to toilets and, where available, shower facilities. For some people, the symptoms during this time can be worse than the actual menopause.

Menopause

A person is described as being menopausal when they have gone 12 months without a period and when the ovaries are no longer responsive. The average age for a person to reach the menopause in the UK is 51. American evidence suggests that this may differ for some Asian and Black people, but there is currently no definitive UK evidence on this issue.

Post-menopausal

This is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when a person has not had a period for 12 consecutive months. The average number of years that people experience symptoms of the menopause is five, but many people experience symptoms for up to ten years and 3% of people will experience symptoms for the rest of their lives.

Post-menopausal people have an increased risk of heart disease, diabetes and osteoporosis, and managers should be aware that health-related risks can change over time.

8.2 SYMPTOMS OF THE MENOPAUSE

Symptoms of the menopause may include, but are not limited to:

Vasomotor symptoms

- Hot flushes and night sweats

Psychological effects of hormone changes

- Low mood or mood swings



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- Poor memory and concentration
- Insomnia
- Loss of libido
- Anxiety or panic attacks

Physical symptoms

- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Joint aches and pains
- Palpitations
- Formication (creeping skin)
- Insomnia

Sexual symptoms

- Reduced sex drive
- Painful sex or vaginal dryness
- Vaginal irritation

Long-term health considerations associated with oestrogen deficiency

- Increased risk of heart disease, diabetes and osteoporosis
- Associated risks of chronic arthritis, cognitive decline and certain cancers

(This is not an exhaustive list and should be understood in the context of wider medical advice.)

8.3 SYMPTOMS & PRACTICAL SUPPORT

Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically. The following sets out examples of how support may be considered, but each individual's needs will be different and adjustments will be agreed on a case-by-case basis.



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Hot flushes

- Request temperature control for their work area, such as a fan on their desk (where possible a USB-connected desk fan to ensure environmental considerations are met) or moving near a window or away from a heat source.
- Easy access to drinking water.
- Adaptation of prescribed uniform where appropriate.
- Access to a rest room for breaks if work involves long periods of standing or sitting, or a quiet area if they need to manage a severe hot flush.

Heavy or light periods

- Permanent access to washroom facilities.
- Storage space made available for a change of clothing.

Headaches

- Easy access to fresh drinking water.
- A quiet space in which to work.
- Provision of noise-reducing headphones in open-plan offices.
- Agreed time out to take medication if needed.

Difficulty sleeping

- Consideration of flexible working arrangements, particularly if suffering from a lack of sleep, in line with the organisation's flexible-working policy.

Low mood

- Agreed time out from others when required, without needing to ask permission each time.
- Identification of someone for the colleague to talk to - outside the immediate work area.
- A designated 'time-out space' to clear their head.



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Loss of confidence

- Regular Personal Development Discussions.
- Regular protected time with their line manager to discuss any issues.
- Agreed protected time to catch up with work eg Work from Home.

Poor concentration

- Discussion of times of day when concentration is better or worse, and adjustment of working pattern or practice accordingly.
- Review of task allocation and workload.
- Provision of aids such as notebooks, action boards, or other memory-assisting equipment.
- A quiet space in which to work.
- Noise-reducing headphones in open-plan offices.
- Reduction of interruptions.
- Agreements in an open office that an individual is having 'protected time' and should not be disturbed.
- Agreed protected time to catch up with work.

Anxiety

- Promotion of counselling services provided by Crosby Training's Employee Assistance Provider *Health Assured* on 0800 206 2552, and online at www.healthassured.org
- Identification of a 'buddy' for the colleague to talk to—outside the work area.
- Time away from work to undertake relaxation techniques, where this can be accommodated within operational requirements.

Panic attacks

- Agreed time out from others when required, without needing to ask permission.
- Identification of someone to talk to outside the work area.
- Time away from work to undertake relaxation techniques.
- Opportunity to undertake mindfulness activities, such as breathing exercises or going for a short walk, where this is reasonably practicable.



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9. APPENDIX 2: GUIDANCE FOR COLLEAGUE DISCUSSIONS

9.1 WORKPLACE SUPPORT: SAFEGUARDING/WELLBEING MANAGERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Taking into account the concerns listed in Appendix 1, the safeguarding and wellbeing manager will consider the adjustments needed to support a staff member, recognising that every person is different and it is not feasible to set out a single, fixed set of guidelines.

The safeguarding / wellbeing manager will provide appropriate support and adjustments when needed to help staff deal with issues arising from the menopause. The meeting will be used to discuss the individual's needs and agree specific adjustments. The agreed adjustments will be recorded on the Confidential Discussion Record and shared with the employee at the end of the meeting.

If an employee 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 a male employee wishes to speak about a family member, please ensure that you:

- Allow adequate time for 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 above).
- Agree actions and how to implement them.
- Use the **Confidential Discussion Record** 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 stored securely.
- Agree if other members of the team should be informed, and by whom.
- Ensure that designated time is allowed for a follow-up meeting.

Discuss whether the member of staff has visited their GP. Depending on the discussion, this may be suggested as the next step, particularly if the areas of difficulty relate to sleeping, panic attacks or anxiety.



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10. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & RESOURCES

Additional information can be obtained from the following reputable sources:

- Menopause Matters:
- The British Menopause Society:
- NHS menopause pages:
- NICE guidelines: National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (search for relevant menopause guidance)

Staff may be signposted to these resources as part of their support, but medical advice should always be sought from a GP or healthcare professional.

11. MONITORING, REVIEW & COMPLIANCE

This policy will be:

- Reviewed at least annually, or more frequently if required by changes in legislation, guidance or organisational practice.
- Communicated to all staff and included in induction and training materials.
- Monitored for effectiveness through staff feedback, sickness absence data (where appropriate), and manager feedback.

Any concerns, suggestions or improvements to the policy may be raised with line managers, HR, or the safeguarding / wellbeing team.