

Menopause Policy

1 Introduction

Access2Funding aims to support all staff experiencing menopausal symptoms and help colleagues and line managers understand how they can support employees experiencing such symptoms.

2 Definitions

2.1 Menopause

The point at which a woman's oestrogen levels decline, and she stops having periods. Menopausal symptoms are typically experienced for several years so it is best described as a 'transition' rather than a one-off event. It usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 and typically lasts between four and eight years. However, each woman's experience will differ, and menopausal symptoms can occasionally begin before the age of 40.

2.2 Perimenopause

This is the phase leading up to the menopause when a woman's hormone balance starts to change, and when she may begin to experience menopausal symptoms. For some women this can start as early as their twenties or as late as their late forties.

3 Symptoms

While symptoms vary greatly, they commonly include:

- hot flushes;
- night sweats;
- anxiety;
- dizziness;
- fatigue;
- memory loss;
- depression;
- headaches;
- recurrent urinary tract infections;
- joint stiffness, aches and pains;
- reduced concentration; and
- heavy periods.

Each of these symptoms can affect an employee's comfort and performance at work. Access2Funding has a duty to provide a safe working environment for all employees and therefore commits to ensuring that adjustments and additional support are available to those experiencing menopausal symptoms.

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4 Available support

We aim to facilitate an open, understanding working environment. Employees 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 as individual instances of ill health.

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.

5 Employee Assistance Programme

Upon successful completion of your probation period employees have access to a confidential service via the Employee Assistance Programme, **Medicash**.

The service offers support, expert advice and specialist counselling. It's free and easy to access and is available online or on the telephone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

6 Medical support

We encourage employees to speak to their GP when they are experiencing menopausal symptoms.

7 Further resources

The following are links to some external sites that you may find useful. We are aware there is a lot of guidance available, and everyone is different so please use this as a guide only and do let us know if there are any links that should be added to this list:

- **Menopause Matters**, which provides information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options;
- the **Daisy Network Charity**, which provides support for women experiencing premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency;
- the **Menopause Café**, which provides information about events where strangers gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss the menopause;
- **Henpicked**, an online community that gives women a place to have their say, promote healthy debate and bring about positive change;
- **MegsMenopause**, an 'honest and frank' look at all things menopause;
- **CIPD**, we also recommend this practical guide for people managers from the CIPD, which offers guidance on supporting employees going through the menopause, including how to approach the conversations about it appropriately and sensitively.

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8 Reasonable adjustments

8.1 Temperature control

Access2Funding strives to achieve a comfortable working temperature for employees. We will allow flexibility within its dress code where reasonable. Desk fans will be provided upon request.

8.2 Flexible working

Access2Funding recognises that difficulty sleeping is a common symptom of the menopause. To reflect this, as well as the impact of other common symptoms, we aim to facilitate flexible working wherever possible. Requests for flexible working could include asking for:

- more breaks and time away from their computer
- flexibility to work in other areas of the building when in the office
- earlier start times and finish times to avoid peak travel times when travelling into the office
- a request to reduce working hours on a temporary basis
- turning their camera off when on Teams calls, and also having a walking meeting instead if helpful
- a change to the pattern of hours worked
- permission to perform work from home

Employees should discuss such requests with their line manager or HR. Depending on the circumstances, requests may be approved on a permanent or temporary basis.

9 Responsibilities for employees, colleagues and line managers

The following identifies our responsibilities as employees, colleagues and line managers.

Employees/Colleagues should:

- Educate themselves about the menopause and become familiar with the terms of this policy.
- Understand what information is available.
- Seek advice and guidance from available support provided at Access2Funding.
- Support colleagues.
- Be as open and honest as possible with line managers – reviewing and working through the available options together to ensure appropriate measures which support their working environment are in place.
- Agree to keep their line manager informed to ensure that the right support is being provided. If unable to speak to their line manager please speak to HR.

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Line Managers should:

- Ensure they are aware of the support Access2Funding provides and the terms of this policy.
- Ensure all members of their team are aware of the policies and where to find information and seek support.
- Ensure they listen to the needs of each employee individually and are open and willing to have discussions around the menopause, ensuring confidentiality if requested by the employee.
- Work together with the employee to ensure that the right support is provided that satisfies both Access2Funding and the employee's needs.
- Ensure regular check-ins are in place to review any support and make any necessary changes to an employee's working environment or patterns.

10 Data protection

We will process any personal sensitive data collected in accordance with the data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which we become aware of the issue is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of providing the necessary support.

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