



# Mind in Croydon

## Menopause Policy

### 1. Purpose of the policy

Mind in Croydon recognises that menopause can be a challenging time, and it can have a big impact on relationships and work.

This policy sets out how MiC will support employees who are going through menopause. It also aims to educate employees on key points surrounding menopause.

### 2. Scope of the policy

This policy applies:

- to employees who, will experience, or are experiencing, menopause. This includes, female, trans, non-binary and intersex employees
- in the perimenopause, menopause and post-menopause phases
- to employees regardless of their contract type. For example, it applies to full-time and part-time employees, and those on fixed-term contracts

This policy does not cover 'male menopause', which is sometimes known as andropause.

### 3. Role and responsibilities

- Head of HR/CEO has overall responsibility for this policy
- managers are responsible for familiarising themselves with the contents of this policy and for applying it consistently
- employees are responsible for following this policy
- Head of HR/SMT is responsible for reviewing this policy once a year

### 4. Definitions

Menopause is when periods stop due to lower hormone levels. Menopause is considered to have officially begun when 12 consecutive months have passed since the last period.

Perimenopause is when someone experiences menopausal symptoms, but their periods have not stopped for 12 consecutive months.

Post-menopause is the term used to describe the phase from the onset of menopause to the end of life.

### 5. Who will go through the menopause?

Menopause usually happens naturally between ages of 45 and 55, but it can happen at younger ages.

Menopause can be medically induced at any age. For example when:

- ovaries or the uterus are removed surgically (oophorectomy or hysterectomy respectively)
- someone is given cancer treatments, like chemotherapy

Menopause will only be experienced by those with a female reproductive system. This can include:

- transgender men
- those with a female reproductive system who identify non-binary
- intersex people with a female reproductive system
- others with a variance in sex characteristics

## 6. Symptoms of menopause

The most common menopausal symptoms are:

- hair loss
- difficulty sleeping and night sweats
- feeling tired and lacking energy
- mood swings
- feeling anxious
- panic attacks
- low mood
- anxiety
- hot flushes
- struggling to concentrate, focus and remember things
- taking longer to recover from illness
- irregular periods
- heavy periods
- aches and pains, including muscle and joint stiffness
- urinary problems
- headaches including migraines
- palpitations
- weight gain
- skin irritation
- dry eyes

This list is not exhaustive.

Symptoms of menopause may:

- be experienced severely by some
- exacerbate other pre-existing medical conditions
- last for several years

## 7. Does menopause count as a disability?

For menopause to be classed as a disability under the Equality Act 2010 the law requires:

- the condition to have a physical or mental impairment

- a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out day to day activities

Only an employment tribunal can decide if a condition meets the definition of a disability under the Equality Act 2010.

If employees think their experience of menopause should be classed as a disability, they should inform their line manager who will arrange an occupational health assessment. Employees' consent will be sought before any referral for an occupational health assessment is made.

## **8. Reasonable adjustments for menopausal symptoms**

If menopausal symptoms are affecting an employee at work, reasonable adjustments may be put in place. These adjustments will be decided and implemented by the employee's line manager in consultation with the employee.

Please note, an employee may be referred for an occupational health assessment before any reasonable adjustments are put in place.

Examples of reasonable adjustments could include:

- flexible start and end times
- frequent breaks
- homeworking where the role allows for it
- adjustment of sickness absence triggers
- time off for medical appointments and treatment
- personal desk fans
- changes in temperature and increased ventilation in the workplace
- access to nearby toilet and washing facilities
- access to cold drinking water
- changes to uniform
- access to a quiet room
- regular welfare meetings
- consideration of flexible working requests
- support from a mental health first aider
- referral to the employee assistance programme

## **9. Sickness absence related to menopause**

Employees going through menopause may have a higher sickness absence rate. If so, these absences will be managed in line with MiC's absence policy, which can be found on the website.

However, when applying the sickness absence policy for menopause-related absences, HR have the discretion to relax or adjust absence triggers.

## **10. Discussing menopause**

Mind in Croydon is committed to creating a supportive and safe work environment. Discussions around menopause are welcome. However, employees are under no obligation to share any information relating to menopause with their line managers or colleagues.

Discussing menopause in the workplace can help:

- ensure the right reasonable adjustments are put in place, if necessary
- challenge stigma surrounding menopause

Jokes or insensitive comments about menopause or age will not be tolerated and may be handled under MiC's disciplinary policy. The Charity's disciplinary policy can be found on the website.

## **11. Menopause and training**

Menopause will be covered in training for line managers and mental health first aiders so they:

- are educated in the facts around menopause
- can engage in supportive welfare conversations with employees
- encourage employees to seek help from their GP or specialist services, if appropriate
- challenge any insensitive language they hear in the workplace

Menopause will also be covered in general health and safety training for all staff.

*Reviewed by the Board of Mind in Croydon – November 2023*