

## **Perimenopause and Menopause policy**

### **Introduction**

The perimenopause and menopause is a natural stage of life that occurs as woman age. In most woman it will happen naturally between the ages of 45 and 60, and last for a few months to several years. Even a decade or more. During the perimenopause, hormone levels change, and the ovaries start to produce fewer eggs. Once a woman stops having a period for 12 months or more, officially a woman has reached the menopause.

Also referred to as 'the change of life', The perimenopause and the menopause can cause a chain reaction of physical and psychological side effects to a woman's body. North Halifax Partnership (NHP) has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all of our employees under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. In addition, the Equality Act 2010 outlines that individuals must not be discriminated against due to any form of disability and we recognise that the symptoms of the menopause and the perimenopause could constitute a disability. We are committed to ensuring appropriate support and assistance is provided to any employee who is going through the menopause.

The purpose of this policy is to assist with creating an open and honest workplace where line managers and employees can discuss any issues associated with the perimenopause and the menopause, and to ensure the necessary support is known and offered to employees when needed.

Throughout this policy we have referred to 'line manager'. We recognise that you may not wish to share very personal information with your direct line manager, and to support this you are able to share any concerns with any manager. Therefore 'line manager' refers to any manager you prefer to share information with. Where they are unable to directly respond to matters, they will advocate on your behalf.

### **Symptoms**

Physical symptoms of the perimenopause and the menopause can include the following:

- hot flushes
- insomnia
- fatigue
- poor concentration
- headaches
- skin irritation
- urinary problems.

As a result of the above, or as an extension of the hormone imbalance, individuals going through the perimenopause and the menopause can also experience psychological difficulties, including:

- depression
- anxiety
- panic attacks
- mood swings
- irritability
- problems with memory
- loss of confidence.

To ensure we can provide you with the best support possible we encourage you to be open and honest in these conversations.

## **Employee Responsibilities**

### **Reporting any issues**

It is important that, as an employee, you prioritise your personal health and wellbeing. If you are struggling with any aspect of your role as a result of symptoms associated with the perimenopause and the menopause, you should report any concerns you may have to a line manager, who will treat the matter with complete confidence. Early notification will also help line managers to determine the most appropriate course of action to support an employee's individual needs.

### **Supporting colleagues**

There is an expectation on all employees to conduct themselves in a helpful and open-minded manner towards colleagues.

We maintain a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment and will treat any and all complaints seriously. If you feel that you have been mistreated in any way by a colleague because of matters related to the perimenopause and the menopause, please make your concerns known to your line manager.

## **Manager Responsibilities**

### **Approachability**

When responding to an employee experiencing difficulties caused by the perimenopause and the menopause line managers will maintain an open-door policy so that employees feel comfortable in approaching them. They will support you to talk openly about your current situation and will not make presumptions about how it is affecting you.

### **Discussion**

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.

Line managers will also arrange follow up sessions in order to evaluate the effectiveness of any adjustments put in place.

We understand that you may feel uncomfortable discussing personal information with your line manager. If this is the case, you are encouraged to discuss your situation with another senior member of staff.

As an alternative you may request a referral to occupational health, which will be arranged on your behalf.

## **Workplace adjustments**

In order to assist you in your daily duties, we will explore making adjustments to your role or working environment with the aim of reducing the effect that the perimenopause or the menopause is having on you. We acknowledge that the perimenopause and the menopause affects each individual in different ways so no adjustment will be made without fully discussing it with you first.

NHP has will try and find a range of adjustments which might help an individual; some examples of adjustments may include:

- conducting a risk assessment to identify any particular areas that are a detriment to individuals going through the perimenopause and the menopause
- implementing temperature control, such as access to a fan or window in the shared working area
- assessing how work is allocated (e.g. meetings) and whether the employee is affected at particular points of the day
- allowing additional rest breaks
- flexible working patterns (permanent or temporary changes to hours or days worked)
- making allowances for additional needs for sickness absence.

Once the adjustments are agreed, they will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure they are having the required effect.

NHP is legally obliged by the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to an employee's role or working conditions if they have a disability that places them at a disadvantage when performing their role and we will ensure compliance with our obligations in this regard.

## **Training and support**

Occupational Health support is available for employee's experiencing menopause and perimenopause symptoms. A referral will seek advice on how NHP can support an employee and provide guidance on any reasonable adjustments that could be considered.

External support sources of help and support for employees and managers, such as:

- The CIPD guide to managing menopause at work. This guide also include useful resources and external support links for employees
- Menopause matters ([www.menopausematters.co.uk](http://www.menopausematters.co.uk))
- Menopause support ([menopausesupport.co.uk](http://menopausesupport.co.uk))