
MENOPAUSE POLICY

Solent NHS Trust O-SOPs can only be considered to be valid and up-to-date if viewed on the intranet. Please visit the intranet for the latest version.

Purpose of Agreement	To provide guidance and information for all employees and line managers on the potential impact of menopause in the workplace and to highlight ways in which all staff experiencing symptoms can be supported to continue being successful in their roles. To acknowledge that menopause awareness is not just for women, but for all employees.
Document Type	Policy
Linked to Policy	N/A
Reference Number	Solent NHST/Policy / OH14
Version	Version 1
Name of Approving Committees/Groups	Integrated Care Board (ICB), Policy Steering Group, Clinical Executive Group
Operational Date	December 2022
Document Review Date	December 2025
Document Sponsor (Job Title)	Associate Director of Occupational Health and Wellbeing (OH&WB) and ICB Programme manager
Document Manager (Job Title)	Occupational Health and Wellbeing Manager
Document developed in consultation with	Occupational Health and Wellbeing Menopause service Health and wellbeing Hub Sexual Health
Intranet Location	Business Zone > Policies, SOPs and Clinical Guidelines
Website Location	Publication Scheme
Keywords (for website/intranet uploading)	Menopause, women's health, perimenopause, menopausal, HRT, Policy, OH14

Review Log

Version Number	Review date	Lead Name	Ratification Process	Notes
V1	New policy – originally created by ICB and adjusted to comply with Solent NHS Trust Policy templates		Policy Steering Group, Clinical Executive Group	November 2022

Amendment Log

Version Number	Review date	Amendment section no.	Page	Amendment made / summary	Changes approved by

Executive Summary

Solent NHS Trust is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for all staff.

This policy is intended to support staff who are experiencing symptoms associated with the menopause or the perimenopause (the transition phase which can last years, either side of the menopause). The menopause itself is defined as having occurred when someone has not had a menstrual period for twelve consecutive months (for people reaching menopause naturally and not, for example, using hormonal contraception). However, some people can also have menopause induced as a result of surgery or medical treatments, such as chemotherapy or pelvic radiation therapy. Not everyone will experience symptoms during the perimenopause but offering support to those who do should help improve their experience at work. These natural symptoms are associated with a lack of oestrogen but can have adverse impact.

This policy is aimed to help all those who are perimenopausal or menopausal, but the term 'menopause' will be used throughout this document.

A significant proportion of staff working for Solent NHS Trust are in the age range of 40 - 60, when symptoms are most likely to occur. Evidence shows that some people may not feel comfortable discussing menopause related health problems, and the potential impact these can have on their work, with their managers.

Staff within Solent NHS Trust should be made to feel that the menopause is not an issue that needs to be hidden; they should be assured of being able to talk about it openly without any hesitancy or fear of embarrassment. However, it should be noted that there is no obligation for staff to disclose that they are experiencing the menopause but that if they do, they can be confident that they will be listened to, understood and supported.

This policy is intended to help improve the experience of staff working within Solent NHS Trust but does not form part of an employee's contract of employment. The policy may be revised by Solent NHS Trust Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service from time to time.

Table of Contents

Item	Contents	Page
1	INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE	5
2	SCOPE	5
3	DEFINITIONS	6
4	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	6
5	SYMPTOMS OF MENOPAUSE	6
6	REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS	7
7	TRANSGENDER, NON-BINARY AND INTERSEX EMPLOYEES	8
8	EQUALITY ACT 2010: EQUALITY ANALYSIS	8
9	TRAINING CONSIDERATIONS	9
10	DISSEMINATION / PUBLICATION	9
11	MONITORING	9
12	REVIEW AND REVISION	9
13	STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION INFORMATION	9
14	FURTHER SUPPORT ON SOLNET	9
15	REFERENCES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS	9
	Appendix 1 - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	11

MENOPAUSE POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

- 1.1 Solent NHS Trust recognises that our employees are valuable, and it is important to ensure all employees are supported in the workplace.
- 1.2 Menopause needs to be normalised, acknowledged and accepted across all levels of the organisation. By having conversations regarding the menopause, its impact at an individual level and the personal challenges it may present in the workplace progress can be made towards furthering an inclusive organisational culture.
- 1.3 Anyone can be affected by hormonal changes during their lives for a number of reasons, including pregnancy, fertility treatment, gender transitioning, conditions needing hormone treatment, and the menopause. These can bring about symptoms which could affect a colleague. Menopause is a transition of life and it is not something which is 'taboo' or off limits as a topic of conversation. We want all our colleagues to feel comfortable and supported at work.
- 1.4 Menopause and perimenopause are very personal experiences and will differ from individual to individual. Symptoms will fluctuate during the course of the menopause and may not always be visible. Different levels of adjustments and support may be required at different times based on individual need, so it is important to use a flexible approach.
- 1.5 The aims of this policy are to:
 - Provide guidance and information for all employees and line managers on the potential impact of the menopause in the workplace (this policy is supported by a guidance document which you can find at Appendix A).
 - Outline the requirements for all employees experiencing peri- menopausal or menopausal symptoms that are affecting them in the workplace so they can be supported and continue to be successful in their roles and responsibilities.
 - Acknowledge that menopause awareness is not just for women, it is for all employees.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to bank, locum, permanent and fixed term contract employees (including apprentices) who hold a contract of employment or engagement with the Trust, and secondees (including students), volunteers (including Associate Hospital Managers), Non-Executive Directors, governors and those undertaking research working within Solent NHS Trust, in line with Solent NHS Trust's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy. It also applies to external contractors, Agency workers, and other workers who are assigned to Solent NHS Trust.
- 2.2 The emphasis of the policy is on supporting employees who are going through the menopause.
- 2.3 The policy should be applied fairly and consistently, according to the work and circumstances of the individual concerned.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 **Menopause** is defined as a biological stage experienced by a woman, trans-man or non-binary person, that occurs when their hormones change and eventually menstruation stops. Usually, it is defined as having occurred when they have not had a period for 12 consecutive months (for those reaching menopause naturally). The average menopause age is 51, however it can be earlier naturally or due to surgery, illness or other reasons.
- 3.2 **Perimenopause** is the time leading up to menopause when a person may experience changes and menopausal symptoms. This can be years before menopause.
- 3.3 **Post-menopause** is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when a person has not had a period for 12 consecutive months and for the rest of their life. When we talk about menopause in this guidance, we are referring to any of these stages.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 **Chief Executive** has ultimate accountability for the strategic and operational management of the organisation, including ensuring all policies are adhered to.
- 4.2 **Policy Steering Group** is responsible for ratifying all policies in use by the organisation.
- 4.3 **Line Managers** should be aware of the content of this policy (and supporting guidance) and use it to support employees who maybe or are experiencing menopausal changes/symptoms It is expected that all line managers will consider all reasonable adjustments to support our employees to support them in the workplace.
- 4.4 **Employees** should be aware of the policy and help support colleagues going through the menopause.
- 4.5 **People Team** to signpost managers to advice in the management of menopause affecting employees in the workplace and to promoting positive health and wellbeing.
- 4.6 **Occupational Health and Wellbeing team** will signpost and support in the management of menopause affecting employees in the workplace and promoting positive health and wellbeing.
- 4.7 **Menopause Service** will signpost support in the management of menopause affecting employees in the workplace and promoting positive health and wellbeing.
- 4.8 **Menopause Advocates** to promote Menopause awareness across Solent NHS Trust and provide support and advice to all employees and line managers. Menopause Advocates can be identified on the Menopause Tile, Occupational Health and Wellbeing on SoLNet.

5. SYMPTOMS OF MENOPAUSE

- 5.1 The symptoms of menopause can vary from person to person, to varying degrees of severity and in some cases, individuals can be symptom free. Everyone is different and so

it is important that consideration is given to each individual without generalisation or bias. However, 3 out of 4 people may experience some form of symptoms.

5.2 Symptoms can be physical or psychological (hidden) and symptoms can include but are not limited to:

- Difficulty sleeping, insomnia or fatigue
- Hot flushes during the day and night
- Low mood, depression or changes in mood
- Nervousness, worry or anxiety
- Reduced ability to concentrate or focus
- Problems with memory recall
- Migraines or headaches
- Aches and pains
- Irregular and/or heavy periods
- Urinary issues, e.g., increased frequency.

5.3 Line managers are not expected to initiate menopause conversations with employees. Conversations should, in the main, be initiated by the employees themselves or resulting from Occupational Health referrals.

5.4 Employees should speak to their line managers wherever necessary if they are experiencing symptoms which are affecting their work. The line managers are best placed to support employees with adjustments to support their symptoms. However, Solent NHS Trust recognises it may not be easy for an individual to speak to their line manager in some circumstances so encourage the employee to speak to another senior employee, Occupational health and Wellbeing service, Menopause service, Trade Union Representative or menopause advocate in the first instance.

5.5 Line managers should handle any conversations with employees in an appropriate and sensitive way particularly when meeting with any employee to discuss their circumstances and needs in relation to their menopause. The menopause guidance (Appendix 1) gives advice and some points to consider helping facilitate a supportive conversation with employees.

5.6 Line managers must ensure they explore, consider, and implement reasonable adjustments.

5.7 Other important facts of note concerning Menopausal symptoms:

- Symptoms can occur without warning and can vary in their severity and frequency
- Symptoms cannot always be easily controlled or managed
- Symptoms are not always visible

Whilst this policy provides an overview of the symptoms it is not exhaustive.

6. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

6.1 This policy supports employees and line managers to work together to identify flexible solutions to managing the impact of menopausal symptoms in the workplace.

- 6.2 Where an individual's symptoms are severe and have lasted for more than 12 months, this falls within the definition of a 'disability' set out in the Equality Act 2010. Where this is the case, Solent NHS Trust has a duty to consider reasonable adjustments.
- 6.3 Line managers should be aware that staff experiencing long lasting menopausal symptoms may not see themselves as having a 'disability', or wish to be labelled as such, and so sensitivity is needed during conversations between line managers and individual employees.
- 6.4 Often those who are experiencing symptoms of menopause will be under the care of their General Practitioner or health care professional and will be able to discuss reasonable adjustments with their line manager. However, if there are any concerns or if the individual is unsure about reasonable adjustments, a referral to the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service should be sought.
- 6.5 Line managers should reasonably consider all potential adjustments alongside Leave, Absence & Wellbeing and Flexible working policies.
- 6.6 All policies and procedures should take account of the effects of the menopausal symptoms to ensure that employees experiencing the menopause are not disadvantaged as a result of their symptoms.
- 6.7 Solent NHS Trust recognises the potential impact of menopausal symptoms on performance or absence by employees experiencing the menopause. Managers will seek to support staff sympathetically.
- 6.8 In order to assist line managers to identify the need for reasonable adjustments, absence related to menopausal symptoms will be recorded as such in ESR.

7. TRANSGENDER, NON-BINARY AND INTERSEX EMPLOYEES

- 7.1 Solent NHS Trust recognises that the menopausal symptoms identified within this policy can also be experienced by transgender, non-binary and intersex employees. Transgender employees may be affected due to the natural menopause or as a result of the treatment and/or surgery they are undergoing.
- 7.2 Some trans employees may choose not to associate their symptoms to the menopause as this will disclose their trans status. Managers are therefore reminded of the importance of responding promptly to requests for support from all employees.

8. EQUALITY ACT 2010: EQUALITY ANALYSIS

- 8.1 This policy and procedure sets out to treat all employees fairly, consistently, impartially, promptly and reasonably and will be applied without discrimination.
- 8.2 If an employee has difficulty with any stage due to a disability or English is not their first language, they should discuss this with their line manager or People Services manager as soon as possible.
- 8.3 A full equality impact assessment is included as Appendix 1.

9. TRAINING CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 There is no formal training requirement for employees and line managers in the use of this policy, although the advice contained within this document will be added to the line managers development programme.

9.2 Menopause Advocates can be a source of further education and training if required.

10. DISSEMINATION / PUBLICATION

10.1 This policy will be held on Solent site and will be communicated across various platforms.

11. MONITORING

11.1 The People Partner team will support managers in compliance with this policy and will report any concerns to their manager.

11.2 The People Partner team will monitor consistency in managerial decision making across the Solent NHS Trust and may recommend additional training and development for managers as required.

12. REVIEW AND REVISION

12.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years by the ICB and Occupational Health and Wellbeing to ensure continued validity and relevance.

13. STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION INFORMATION

13.1 This policy has been reviewed in consultation with the recognised Trade Unions, amongst staff forum and other staff groups by Solent Policy Steering Group

13.2 The consultation requirements for this policy have been met

14. FURTHER SUPPORT ON SOLNET

14.1 Further advice and guidance is available in the *Menopause Support Guide* for both individuals and line managers. The Menopause Support Guide is available on SoLNet in the Occupational Health and Wellbeing page and the People Services Hub

15. REFERENCES AND LINKS TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

[NHS Menopause guidance](#)

[Hampshire and IOW Menopause Support Guide](#)

[NHS Employers Menopause at Work Guide](#)

[The Menopause Explained – 7 Short Video Guides from the British Menopause Society](#)

[Menopause Taboo in Ethnic Minorities](#)

[Menopause Support Pack - Free Download](#)

[Gov UK Guidance on Menopause in the Workplace](#)

[NICE Guidelines on Menopause and Treatment](#)

[NHS England » Supporting our NHS people through menopause: guidance for line managers and colleagues](#)

Appendix 1: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Step 1: Scoping and Identifying the Aims

Service Line / Department	Occupational Health and Wellbeing	
Title of Change:	Menopause Policy	
What are you completing this EIA for? (Please select):	Policy	(If other please specify here)
What are the main aims / objectives of the changes	New Policy	

Step 2: Assessing the Impact

Please use the drop-down feature to detail any positive or negative impacts of this document /policy on patients in the drop-down box below. If there is no impact, please select "not applicable":

Protected Characteristic	Positive Impact(s)	Negative Impact(s)	Not applicable	Action to address negative impact: (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
Sex	X			
Gender reassignment	X			
Disability	X			
Age	X			
Sexual Orientation	X			
Pregnancy and maternity	X			
Marriage and civil partnership	X			
Religion or belief	X			
Race	X			

If you answer yes to any of the following, you MUST complete the evidence column explaining what information you have considered which has led you to reach this decision.

Assessment Questions	Yes / No	Please document evidence / any mitigations
In consideration of your document development, did you consult with others, for example, external organisations, service users, carers or other voluntary sector groups?)	Yes	NHS, British Menopause Society, Current legislation and guidance, NICE guidelines, NHS employers
Have you taken into consideration any regulations, professional standards?	Yes	As above

Step 3: Review, Risk and Action Plans

How would you rate the overall level of impact / risk to the organisation if no action taken?	Low <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Medium <input type="checkbox"/>	High <input type="checkbox"/>
What action needs to be taken to reduce or eliminate the negative impact?	NA		
Who will be responsible for monitoring and regular review of the document / policy?	OH&WB		

Step 4: Authorisation and sign off

I am satisfied that all available evidence has been accurately assessed for any potential impact on patients and groups with protected characteristics in the scope of this project / change / policy / procedure / practice / activity. Mitigation, where appropriate has been identified and dealt with accordingly.

Equality
Assessor:

Sarah Baker

Date:

04/11/2022
