

Wellbeing policy

This policy sets out the measures we will take to support your wellbeing at work. We recognise that health and wellbeing are important to your success at work and we are committed to creating an environment that promotes good mental health and where you can thrive and feel supported.

This policy should be used alongside other policies related to wellbeing and employee protections, including our policies on equality, diversity and inclusion, health and safety, anti-bullying and anti-harassment, flexible working and remote working.

Through encouraging open and honest two-way communication, we hope you will recognise any health issues if they arise and take responsibility for improving your own mental and physical wellbeing as much as possible.

Responsibilities

Company responsibilities

As far as reasonably practical, we will ensure the health, safety and welfare of all our employees through developing policies and procedures to protect the wellbeing of employees, assist Line Managers in supporting individuals, and liaise as appropriate with occupational health practitioners or other relevant professionals, to maintain good mental health and wellbeing at work.

We will also aim to operate our business in a way that manages stress at work, for example by:

- Ensuring the demands of jobs are not unacceptable
- Giving you the tools you need to do your job, including appropriate training and support
- Having policies and procedures in place to support you if you are experiencing mental ill health at work
- Ensuring you have a good work-life balance
- Making sure you are treated with respect by your Line Manager and colleagues; and
- Maintaining positive working conditions.

We will assess the risk of stress to you, which may be caused or increased by work, inappropriate workload, time pressures, unclear instructions or inadequate training.

Line manager responsibilities

Your Line Manager has a responsibility to minimise the risks to your wellbeing, particularly from negative pressure or stress at work. Your Line Manager should ensure you understand your role and receive the necessary information and support from managers and colleagues to do your job.

To reduce the risks to employee health and wellbeing, Line Managers should:

- Monitor workloads to ensure they are manageable
- Monitor working hours and annual leave to ensure you work appropriate hours and take regular breaks
- Familiarise themselves with our policies and procedures that are linked to wellbeing, e.g. EDI, anti-bullying and anti-harassment and flexible working
- Encourage individuals to participate in wellbeing initiatives

- Liaising with the relevant professionals, including our outsourced HR consultant and occupational health, and
- Maintaining the confidentiality of any individuals they are supporting

Your responsibilities

We ask that you are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of your own health and safety
- Taking reasonable care of the health and safety of anyone else you come into contact with
- Working appropriate hours, taking regular breaks, and building healthy working habits into your day and
- Alerting your Line Manager, or another appropriate manager to health and safety and wellbeing problems affecting your work

Mental health awareness and support

If you are struggling with your mental health, it is important you let your Line Manager know so we can support you. We also have trained mental health first aiders who are there to confidentially support and signpost employees to suitable help. Their details can be found on noticeboards around the office.

You are also encouraged to speak to a colleague if you notice they have sudden behavioural changes with no clear reason (i.e. something more than work pressures etc) and encourage them to speak to someone about their concerns.

If there are concerns regarding your ability to work, or your interactions with the wider team, HR or your Line Manager will support and explore these issues. You are encouraged to enter into a two-way dialogue with us, so issues can be discussed honestly before they potentially lead to more serious consequences. We may also work with you on a Wellness Action Plan to support and aid discussions, and for us to understand your needs and experiences, and ultimately better support your mental health. Issues will be treated sensitively and in confidence and we will work with you to make reasonable adjustments where possible and appropriate.

Health promotion initiatives

We run a range of health promotion initiatives designed to raise awareness of health and lifestyle issues affecting mental health and wellbeing. The initiatives include:

- Training on how to manage stress and mental health issues; disability awareness, bullying and harassment, handling violence and traumatic incidents at work, lifestyle behaviours
- A mental health first-aider programme
- Procedures for reporting and handling inappropriate behaviour (for example bullying and harassment)

Speak Up Service

There may be times you feel concerned about something, and want some balanced and impartial advice. To provide ongoing support to employees, we offer a Speak Up service to allow employees to speak confidentially to an independent HR professional about their concerns. The details of your call will not be shared with the business, unless you provide permission to do so.

They could help with:

- Helping you find the right words to use to take the next steps
- Signposting to the right Company policies or external resources that may provide additional support or advice
- Giving sensible, impartial and balanced advice
- Discussing who might be the right person within your business to escalate their concerns to
- With their permission, raising concerns on their behalf with the right people to ensure you are supported internally

If you would like to speak to an independent HR professional about your concerns, please call 01794 874 232.

Perimenopause and menopause

We are committed to creating an open, understanding and supportive culture. We want you to feel comfortable speaking about how menopause-related symptoms may be affecting you at work and able to ask for the support that you need to help you manage your symptoms.

In this policy, where we refer to menopause, we also mean perimenopause.

Menopause is a natural process and each person's experience will differ. For some it can be positively managed through lifestyle adjustments, whereas others will not have an easy transition, and some may need additional considerations to support and improve their experience at work. There can also be an indirect impact on colleagues and families.

The aim of this policy is to:

- Support individuals at work, enabling them to feel as comfortable as possible
- Raise awareness of menopause related issues and how this can affect individuals
- Create an environment where people can openly and honestly initiate or engage in discussions about menopause, whether they themselves, or someone they are supporting, is experiencing symptoms
- Provide guidance and direction on how to support those who raise menopause issues and those indirectly affected
- Create awareness about the potential symptoms of menopause and
- Recognise that menopause is an individual experience and people can be affected in different ways and to differing degrees, and therefore, different levels and types of support and adjustments may be needed

Natural menopause is part of the ageing process and takes place when the ovaries become unable to produce the hormones oestrogen and progesterone. However, some individuals experience a medical or surgical menopause which can occur suddenly when the ovaries are damaged or removed by specific treatments (e.g. chemotherapy or surgical hysterectomy).

The menopause usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 and typically lasts between four and eight years. Occasionally, menopausal symptoms can start before 40 years. Perimenopause, or menopause transition, begins several years before menopause. An individual may start to experience menopausal symptoms during the final two years of perimenopause. However, menopause will affect people of different ages, have many phases, with some symptoms being experienced over varying lengths of time and the transition can take several years.

While symptoms vary, they commonly include: Hot flushes and sweats

- Difficulty sleeping and night sweats
- Dizziness or fatigue
- Lack of confidence
- Irritability or mood swings
- Poor concentration or memory loss
- Anxiety and depression
- Headaches and migraines
- Urinary problems e.g. recurrent UTIs
- Joint stiffness, aches and pains
- Weight gain or
- Irregular light or heavy period

The above list is not exhaustive and not everyone will experience symptoms during this time. For those that do, the type, amount and severity of symptoms can differ, ranging from mild to severe. Individuals may wish to seek advice from their GP if their symptoms are impacting their daily lives.

When the menopause has ended, known as post-menopause, symptoms are likely to continue for around four years from their last period. There is potentially an increased risk of certain conditions such as heart disease and osteoporosis during post-menopause because of lower levels of certain hormones. These risks are higher for those who have had an early or premature menopause.

There are other circumstances in which symptoms may be experienced:

- Menopause can sometimes be sudden and acute following serious illness, medication or surgery. People experiencing sudden menopause tend to experience more severe symptoms and may require treatment and/or post-operative care to manage further problems
- Individuals undergoing treatment for certain conditions may experience menopausal symptoms whilst receiving treatment; e.g. endometriosis, polycystic ovary syndrome, infertility or diabetes and
- Surgical and medical treatments as part of an individual's gender transition

You are encouraged to speak to your Line manager at an early stage if you are experiencing menopausal symptoms to ensure symptoms are treated as an ongoing health issue rather than as individual instances of ill health. Early notification will also help managers determine the most appropriate course of action to support your individual needs. If you do not wish to discuss the issue with your direct Line manager, you may find it helpful to have an initial discussion with a trusted colleague or another manager instead. You can also raise the issue with HR or our outsourced HR consultant if you need support.

Line Manager responsibilities

Line Managers are expected to:

- Provide opportunities for individuals to raise any issues relating to their wellbeing
- Respect the personal nature of conversations and treat them professionally and confidentially
- Not make assumptions regarding the menopause and ensure they listen to the needs of each individual
- Discuss and agree with the individual how best they can be supported and be prepared to make reasonable adjustments, if appropriate
- Encourage them to discuss any relevant health concerns with their GP, if appropriate
- Be aware of the potential impact of menopause on performance. If someone's performance suddenly dips, it is worth considering whether the menopause may be playing a part in this
- Seek input from the HR team or our outsourced HR consultant for advice and support (if required), reviewing any advice received and implement any recommendations, where operationally feasible
- Discuss what, the individual wants shared with colleagues (if anything), how this will be done, by who and in a way that respects the individual's privacy but ensures colleagues understand and
- Deal with any inappropriate conduct aimed towards someone because of their symptoms

Reasonable adjustments

If someone is experiencing menopausal symptoms, we will do our best to provide appropriate reasonable adjustments. Examples could include:

- Temperature control ie flexibility with dress code and/or desk fans
- Flexible working requests (in line with our flexible working policy)
- Additional breaks
- Reviewing task allocation and workload and
- Providing a quiet space to manage symptoms etc

Additional support

- **Wellbeing support** from our external HR Consultants
- **NHS - Menopause Overview** www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause - An overview of the menopause, together with information about symptoms and treatment option
- **Menopause café** www.menopausecafe.net - Offers the opportunity to discuss the menopause with no agenda, objectives or themes
- **Menopause matters** www.menopausematters.co.uk - Gives up-to-date information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options
- **Daisy Network Charity** www.daisynetwork.org - Provides information and support to women with Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI)/ premature menopause
- **Verity** www.verity-pcos.org.uk - Provides information and support to women with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)