

menopause at the gym group

The menopause is a natural part of most women's lives and at The Gym Group we do recognise that it isn't always an easy transition. As part of our commitment to inclusion and providing a supportive working environment this policy will outline what the menopause is and support comfortable conversations, without embarrassment, about the menopause, to ensure that the right support and adjustments can be put in place.

It is important to note, that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution to the menopause and so this policy and any associated documents are intended as a support guide for all workers.

It should also be noted that people from the non-binary, transgender and intersex communities may also experience menopausal symptoms. Due to a variety of factors, the experience of the menopause may be different for those among these communities. Although the policy refers to women, we do recognise, and it is important to consider that 'people who menstruate' also require consideration.

definitions

Menopause is defined as a biological stage in a woman's life that occurs when she stops menstruating, and reaches the end of her natural reproductive life and experiences hormonal changes such as a decrease in oestrogen levels. Usually, it is defined as having occurred when a woman has not had a period for twelve consecutive months (for women reaching menopause naturally). It usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55, however, it can be earlier or later than this due to surgery, illness or other reasons.

Perimenopause is the time leading up to menopause when a woman may experience changes, such as irregular periods or other menopausal symptoms. This can be years before menopause.

Post menopause is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when a woman has not had a period for twelve consecutive months.

symptoms of menopause

Whilst not every woman will notice every symptom, or even need further help or support; it is reported that 75-80% of women do experience some symptoms, and up to 25% could be classed as severe. Symptoms vary greatly and can manifest themselves both physically and psychologically and commonly include:

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

This is not an exhaustive list, rather these are the common symptoms that can affect someone's comfort and performance at work. As their employer, we have a duty to provide a safe working environment for all of our employees and therefore must ensure that adjustments and additional support are available to those experiencing menopausal symptoms.

available support

We aim to facilitate an open, understanding working environment and we would encourage everyone who is experiencing menopausal symptoms to discuss this with their line manager, as soon as they become aware 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.

If, however you are experiencing symptoms and did not wish to discuss the issue with your direct line manager it may be helpful to have an initial discussion with a trusted colleague, another manager or a member of [the People Team](#).

All of our employees have access to a number of resources such as our third-party Employee Assistance Programme, offering 24/7 access to confidential advice and emotional support services, e-learning supporting mental health and internal support from our Wellness Champions. More information about the support available more generally can be found under the [Wellbeing Hub of CORE](#).

Within our Wellbeing Hub we also have a dedicated section for women's health concerns which includes the menopause. [Here](#) you can find further external sources of help, support and information.

reasonable adjustments

There are a number of practical steps we can take to lessen the impact of the menopause for our employees and to ensure that working conditions do not exacerbate symptoms.

All employees can expect the following as standard when at work:

- access to toilets and shower facilities
- access to drinking water
- access to natural light
- risk assessments

However further adjustments may be required, depending on the employee's experience, symptoms, job role, location and working environment(s). These could include:

Temperature control

- greater flexibility in uniform requirements
- additional equipment such as a desk fan

Flexible working

- a change to the pattern of hours worked
 - This could be required to support symptoms or to accommodate the individual's attendance to therapy which can help
- a reduction in working hours
- more frequent breaks
- working from home where job role and business requirements will allow

Work allocation

- changing the type or volume of work

Managers should meet with employees, to discuss an employee's requirements and agree any reasonable adjustments. This could be on a temporary or permanent basis. Further guidance for managers can be found in the Managers menopause guide.

responsibilities

We all have a responsibility to help create and maintain an open and supportive working environment and everyone can help to do this by:

- Taking a personal responsibility for looking after your own wellbeing.
- Being willing to help and support your colleagues;
- Being respectful and treating all matters regarding health and wellbeing sensitively and confidentially
- Being understanding of any necessary adjustments their colleagues are receiving as a result of their menopausal symptoms.

Employees who are experiencing menopausal symptoms have a responsibility to;

- To make any relevant lifestyle changes to help self-management of symptoms. Further advice and support on this can be found on the [Menopause section under the Women's Health tile](#) of the Wellbeing Hub.
- Speak openly and honestly with managers and [the People Team](#) about your health and wellbeing. You can find further help and support for this in the [Menopause section](#) of the Wellbeing Hub
- Inform colleagues where symptoms might have an impact on them, for example if you are experiencing mood swings. Your manager and [the People Team](#) may be able to provide further support to have these discussions

Managers have further responsibilities to:

- Familiarise yourself with the Menopause Policy and associated guidance
- Be ready and willing to have open discussions about menopause, appreciating the personal nature of the conversation, and treating the discussion sensitively and professionally
- Use [The Menopause - a Manager's Guide](#) to enable a supportive discussion with the individual, signposting relevant documentation and resources before agreeing how best they can be supported, and any adjustments required using [The Menopause Risk Assessment Template](#) if applicable
- Record adjustments agreed, and actions to be implemented using [The Menopause Risk Assessment template](#)
- Ensure there is an ongoing dialogue as part of 121s and continue to review
- Ensure that all agreed adjustments are adhered to
- Treat all discussions and documentation with discretion and confidentiality, remembering that Health data, as special category data, has additional protection under the GDPR. Further information regarding special category data can be found in the [Data Protection Policy](#).

Where adjustments are unsuccessful, or if symptoms prove more problematic, please ensure you discuss the matter with a member of [the People Team](#) to explore further support from Occupational Health.

The People Team will:

- Offer guidance to managers on the interpretation of this Policy and Guidance;
- Continually review this policy and other policies to ensure working practices are supportive of employee wellbeing and performance.