

Menopause Support Policy

The aims of this policy are to:

- Foster an environment in which colleagues can openly and comfortably instigate conversations or engage in discussions about menopause.
- Ensure everyone understands what menopause is, can confidently have good conversations, and are clear on Sport Structures' policy and practices.
- Educate and inform managers about the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can support women at work.
- Ensure that women suffering with menopause symptoms feel confident to discuss it and ask for support and any reasonable adjustments so they can continue to be successful in their roles or studies.
- Reduce absenteeism due to menopausal symptoms.
- Assure women that we are a responsible employer, committed to supporting their needs during menopause.

Menopause is a natural biological process that marks the end of a woman's reproductive years. It can cause a range of symptoms that can impact an employee's work and personal life. As an employer, we are committed to supporting our employees who are experiencing menopause with a comprehensive Menopause Support Scheme.

Definitions:

Menopause – refers to the time in life when periods stop and the natural reproductive cycle ends. It usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 with the average age being 51.

Premature ovarian insufficiency (premature menopause) – Approximately 1 in 100 affected people will experience menopause before 40 years of age (naturally or as an effect of a medical condition or treatment).

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:

- It is important to note that not every woman will notice every symptom, or even need help or support. However, 75% of women do experience some symptoms, and 25% could be classed as severe.
- Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically including, but not exclusively, hot flushes, poor concentration, headaches, panic attacks, heavy/light periods, anxiety, and loss of confidence. Some women also experience difficulty sleeping.

1. Education and Awareness

We will provide educational resources on menopause to all our employees to increase awareness and understanding of the symptoms and challenges of menopause. This will include information on the physical and emotional symptoms of menopause, as well as the impact it can have on work and personal life.

Symptom Support, Menopause Advice Sheets and External Links are available in the Appendices.

2. Flexible Working Arrangements

We will consider flexible working arrangements for employees who are experiencing menopause symptoms. This may include flexible start and finish times, reduced hours, or the ability to work from home. [The Confidential Discussion Template](#) can be used for conversations about menopause, and this can be found on the company SharePoint.

3. Menopause Officer

Our Internal Menopause Officer will act as a point of contact for employees experiencing menopause. These champions will be able to provide support, advice and signposting to relevant resources.

The Menopause Officer is:

Teodora Geleva (HR Manager)

Email: Teodora.Geleva@sportstructures.com

5. Signposting Support

We will provide employees with access to signposting support to manage their menopause symptoms. This may include referrals to healthcare professionals, counselling, or other support services.

The role of Signposting support is to:

- Carry out a holistic assessment of individuals as to whether or not menopause may be contributing to symptoms/well-being, providing advice and guidance in line with up-to-date research.

- Signpost to appropriate sources of help and advice (refer to Appendix 2 for more information).
- Provide support and advice to SMT and Line Managers in identifying reasonable adjustments, if required.

6. Adjustments in the Workplace

We will make reasonable adjustments in the workplace to ensure that employees experiencing menopause symptoms are not disadvantaged. This may include adjustments to working conditions or equipment to manage hot flushes or other symptoms.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 Employees:

- Taking reasonable responsibility and care for their own health and well-being (see Appendices for sources of information and support).
- Being open to having conversations with managers. If for any reason they feel unable to speak to their Line Manager, they can also speak to (Human Resources Manager)
- Upholding a positive working environment treating others with dignity and respect.

7.2 Line Managers:

- Familiarise themselves with the Menopause Policy.
- Be willing to have open discussions with employees about changes in their health including issues relating to Menopause, treat the discussion sensitively and recognise that each individual's experience may differ.
- Use the guidance to inform the discussion, reviewing together before agreeing with the individual on how best they can be supported.
- Use Appendix 1 to record a summary of the discussion and any agreed actions or adjustments.
- Ensure ongoing communication and agree on a plan for review where appropriate.
- Implement agreed adjustments.
- If adjustments have not been successful and/or a member of staff is reporting ongoing difficulties or concerns about their health at work, consider a referral to Occupational Health for further advice.

8. Conclusion

We are committed to supporting our employees who are experiencing menopause symptoms and creating a supportive and inclusive workplace environment. We recognise the impact that menopause can have on work and personal life and are committed to supporting employees who are experiencing menopause symptoms, Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that staff are supported effectively to carry out their role to the best of their ability.

Appendix 1 – Managers' Guidance to Support Discussions

We recognise that every woman is different, and it is, therefore, not feasible to set out a structured set of specific guidelines.

All advice is given, and written, in accordance with the Faculty of Occupational Medicine (FOM) recommendations and best practices.

If an employee wishes to speak about their symptoms, or just to talk about how they are feeling (they may not recognise themselves that they are symptomatic), or if a male employee wishes to speak about a family member, please ensure that you:

- Allow adequate time to have the conversation.
- Find an appropriate room to preserve confidentiality.
- Encourage them to speak openly and honestly.
- Suggest ways in which they can be supported (see symptoms below) – hand out the Menopause Advice Sheet (Appendix 3).
- Agree on actions, and how to implement them (you should use the template in Appendix 1a to record the meeting, so that all parties agree on what has been discussed, and the next steps before the meeting ends). Ensure that this record is treated as confidential and is stored securely.
- Agree if other members of the team should be informed, and by whom.
- Ensure that designated time is allowed for a follow-up meeting. Do not rely on quick queries during chance encounters in the corridor or break room.

Symptoms Support

Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically, including, but not exhaustively or exclusively those listed below; support for women should be considered as detailed below:

Hot Flushes

- Request temperature control for their work area, such as a fan on their desk (where possible a USB-connected desk fan to ensure environmentally friendly) or moving near a window, or away from a heat source.
- Easy access to drinking water.
- Have access to a restroom for breaks if their work involves long periods of standing or sitting, or a quiet area if they need to manage a severe hot flush.

Heavy/light Periods

- Have permanent access to washroom facilities.
- Ensure storage space is available for a change of clothing.

Headaches

- Have ease of access to fresh drinking water.
- Offer a quiet space to work.
- Offer noise-reducing headphones to wear in open offices.

- Have time out to take medication if needed.

Difficulty Sleeping

- Ask to be considered for flexible working, particularly if suffering from a lack of sleep.

Low Mood

- Agree time out from others, when required, without needing to ask for permission.
- Identify a 'buddy' for the colleague to talk to – outside of the work area; - Identify a 'time out space' to be able to go to 'clear their head'.
- Contact AUKCAP's Employee Assistance helpline on 0800 030 5182, online at www.healthassuredeap.com

Loss of Confidence

- Ensure there are regular Personal Development Discussions.
- Have regular protected time with their manager to discuss any issues.
- Have agreed on a protected time to catch up with work.

Poor Concentration

- Discuss if there are times of the day when concentration is better or worse and adjust working pattern/practice accordingly.
- Review task allocation and workload.
- Provide books for lists, action boards, or other memory-assisting equipment; - Offer quiet space to work.
- Offer noise-reducing headphones to wear in open offices.
- Reduce interruptions.
- Have agreements in place in an open office that an individual is having 'protected time', so that they are not disturbed.
- Have agreed on a protected time to catch up with work.

Anxiety

- Promote counselling services provided by AUKCAP's Employee Assistance provider on 0800 030 5182, online at www.healthassuredeap.com
- Identify a 'buddy' for the colleague to talk to – outside of their work area.
- Be able to have time away from their work to undertake relaxation techniques.
- Undertake mindfulness activities such as breathing exercises or going for a walk.

Panic Attacks

- Agree time out from others, when required, without needing to ask for permission.
- Identify a 'buddy' outside of the work area.
- Be able to have time away from their work to undertake relaxation techniques.

- Undertake mindfulness activities such as breathing exercises or going for a walk.

Discuss whether the member of staff has visited their GP. Depending on the discussion, this may be the next step suggested, particularly if the areas of difficulty are sleeping, panic attacks or anxiety.

If they have visited their GP, and are being supported by them, it may be helpful at this point to make an Occupational Health referral to give specific advice regarding the workplace.

Appendix 2 – Advice and Signposting

If you are suffering from menopausal symptoms to the point, that they're getting in the way of you enjoying life, it's time to talk to your doctor. But, sometimes, that's easier said than done.

We all know how difficult it can often be just to get an appointment, and then it's often only ten minutes. And talking about symptoms can be hard, let alone if you feel rushed or unprepared. So, what can you do? We've put together some helpful, straightforward tips to help you get the best from your appointment.

Don't wait. It is all too common for women to feel they must simply 'put up' with menopausal symptoms as a part of life, but if they are affecting you, there are things you can do, and support available. There is no need to wait until symptoms feel unbearable.

Read the NICE guidelines. This stands for National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and these guidelines are what your doctor will use to determine the type of conversations to have with you and treatments to offer. There are guidelines for patients, which are really useful to read before you see your GP, so you know what to expect.

Prepare for your appointment. It's easier for your doctor to understand what's going on if you provide them with all the information. That may sound obvious, but blood tests to say where you are on the menopause transition aren't always available or accurate – your hormones can fluctuate daily during this time. So, your doctor will be thinking about what to recommend for you, based on your symptoms.

Keep a list of your symptoms, your menstrual cycle, hot flushes, how you're feeling, and any changes you've noticed. Write them down and take them to your appointment. Your doctor will thank you for it, and it's more likely that together, you'll find the right solution faster. And, if you have any preferences about how you manage your symptoms, tell them that too – for example, if you'd like to try hormone replacement therapy (HRT), or not.

Ask the receptionist which doctor is best to talk to about menopause. They are often the fount of all knowledge at surgery and can help you find the 11 best person to speak to – it might not be your usual GP, it could be someone who has had special training in the subject.

Ask for a longer appointment. If you don't think your standard appointment will be long enough, try to book a double appointment, as some surgeries do offer this.

Don't be afraid to ask for a second opinion. If you don't feel you've received the help you need, ask to speak to someone else. Don't be put off, you know how you're feeling, and how it's affecting you.

Ask if there is a menopause clinic in your area. Occasionally, there are regional clinics, specifically devoted to menopause. If there is one in your area, and you think this would be helpful, ask for a referral.

Take your partner or a friend with you. The chances are, you spend your life supporting others and, during menopause, it's your turn to ask them for support. Your partner, or a friend, will know how the symptoms are affecting you. They could support you at the appointment, and also find out how they can continue supporting you.

What to expect from your doctor

There are certain things a GP should – and should not – do during your appointment.

They should:

- Talk to you about your lifestyle, and how to manage both your symptoms and your longer-term health.
- Offer advice on hormone replacement therapy and other non-medical options.
- Talk to you about the safety and effectiveness of any treatment.

They should not:

- Tell you that it's just that time of your life. Yes, menopause is a natural stage, but please don't feel that means you should have to put up with every symptom without help.
- Tell you they don't prescribe HRT. It's up to you what you want to try, and for them to say whether it could be right for you, depending on your medical history.
- Impose unnecessary time restrictions, such as they will only prescribe this once, or for a year or two. This is an ongoing conversation, and if your symptoms persist, you will still need help to manage them.

Remember, your GP is there to help and support you, and you should feel comfortable and confident in talking to them about your symptoms, and any help you need. Don't think you have to struggle through menopause when there is help and support available.

All staff can access counselling by contacting the Employee Assistance helpline on 0800 030 5182, or online at www.healthassuredeap.com.

External Links

All colleagues can access counselling by contacting the Employee Assistance helpline on **0800 030 5182**, online at <https://www.healthassuredeap.com>.

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines.

These explain how your GP will determine what types of treatments and interventions they can offer you. You can find out more information by using the following link

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23/ifp/chapter/About-thisinformation>.

The **National Health Service** provides an overview of menopause. You can find more at

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Menopause/Pages/Introduction.aspx>.

Menopause information. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists offer further information in a dedicated area of their website at: <https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/menopause/>.

Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI) information and support on very early menopause. You can find out more at <https://www.daisynetwork.org.uk>.

Information on hysterectomy. This provides an insight into surgically induced menopause as a result of having a hysterectomy. Further details can be found at <https://www.hysterectomy-association.org.uk>.

Henpicked. This site provides information on managing menopause and an insight into women's stories (see <https://henpicked.net/menopause/>).

Menopause Matters

<https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/>

Menopause Services NHS GG&C

<https://www.sandyford.org/sexual-health-information/fertility/menopause/>

The Menopause Exchange

<https://menopause-exchange.co.uk/>

Living Life (Online/Telephone guided CBT)

<https://breathingspace.scot/living-life/>

Women's Health Concern

<https://www.womens-health-concern.org/>

Remploy (mental health support service)

<https://www.remploy.co.uk/employers/mental-health-and-wellbeing/workplacemental-health-support-service-employers>

Menopause Café (gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss menopause)

<https://www.menopausecafe.net/>