



## Menopause Policy

Supporting the Wellbeing of our  
employees at work during  
Menopause

The Axholme Academy

Summer 2025

Review date: Summer 2028

## Introduction

This policy outlines guidance for the Academy to help provide staff with the right support to better manage menopausal symptoms at work.

This policy does not form part of any employee's terms and conditions of employment and is not intended to have any contractual effect. We reserve the right to amend this policy at any time.

The menopause is a natural stage of life experienced by most women, although it can also affect transmen, transwomen, non-binary and intersex individuals (please refer to our Transgender and other Gender Equality Policy for more information). However, it remains a stigma or a tabooed subject in many workplaces.

Nearly 3 out of 4 women experiencing menopausal symptoms are in work, and previous studies have shown that most individuals are unwilling to discuss menopause-related health problems with their line manager and ask for the support or adjustments that they may need.

The menopausal transition need not be an awkward topic and it should not be regarded solely as a female issue. Our aim is to create an inclusive working environment where employees feel confident to discuss the symptoms they are experiencing, how it may be affecting their personal and work life and discuss any practical adjustments that they may benefit from.

Whilst not every woman suffers with their symptoms, supporting those who do may help improve their experience at work.

We want to enable everyone to understand what the menopause is and to encourage staff to openly talk about it, without embarrassment.

## What is Menopause?

The menopause is defined as the biological stage in a woman's life when she stops menstruating and reaches the end of her natural reproductive life.

The menopause is a natural part of ageing that usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age, as a woman's oestrogen levels decline. In the UK, the average age for a woman to reach the menopause is 51, but around 1 in 100 women experience the menopause before 40 years of age, this is known as premature menopause.

Before and after a woman's body experiences the menopause, she may experience Perimenopause and Postmenopause, these are defined as:

- **Perimenopause** refers to the time leading up the menopause, during which a woman's body makes the natural transition into menopause, marking the end of her reproductive years.
- **Postmenopause** refer to the years after the menopause, during which, menopausal symptoms, such as hot flushes, can ease in many women. However, as a result of

lower levels of oestrogen, postmenopausal women are at an increased risk for several health conditions, such as osteoporosis and heart disease.

### **Symptoms of the Menopause**

Women can experience a wide range of physical and psychological symptoms associated with the menopause transition; it is important to note that these symptoms can fluctuate and can be felt to varying degrees. Not every woman will notice every symptom, or even need help or support whereas others may experience significant symptoms, some of which can be quite severe and have a significant impact on a woman's everyday activities. Common symptoms include, but are not limited to:

- hot flushes
- difficulty sleeping and night sweats
- feeling tired and lacking energy
- psychological issues such as anxiety and/or depression, panic attacks, etc.
- mood swings
- problems with memory and poor concentration
- headaches including migraines
- recurrent urinary tract infections (UTIs)
- palpitations
- muscle and joint stiffness, aches and pains.

Menopausal symptoms can last for up to several years after a woman's last period, although some women experience them for much longer.

### **The 'Male Menopause'**

When men reach their late 40s to early 50s, some may develop certain physical and psychological symptoms that can cause a significant impact on a man's everyday activities.

The term, 'Male Menopause' (often used in the media) suggests that these associated symptoms are the result of a sudden drop in testosterone in middle age, similar to what occurs in the female menopause. However, this is not true.

Although testosterone levels do decline as men age, this is a steady decline from around the age of 30 to 40, at around a deterioration of less than 2% a year; this decline in itself is unlikely to cause any problems. A testosterone deficiency that develops later in life, also known as late-onset hypogonadism (where the testes produce few or no hormones), can sometimes be responsible for the associated symptoms, but in many cases the symptoms are not related to hormones.

A "midlife crisis" can be responsible for these symptoms; this can happen when men think they have reached life's halfway stage. Alternatively, it can be the result of lifestyle factors or psychological issues such as stress, anxiety or depression.

Men are equally encouraged to raise any concerns they have with their line manager and discuss ways in which we can support you which may include a referral to Occupational Health.

### **Symptoms of the 'Male Menopause'**

Men can experience a wide range of physical and psychological symptoms associated with the 'male menopause' transition; it is important to note that these symptoms can fluctuate and can be felt to varying degrees. Common symptoms experienced by men around the stated age include, but are not limited to:

- mood swings and irritability
- Psychological issues such as anxiety and/or depression, panic attacks, etc.
- loss of muscle mass and reduced ability to exercise
- a general lack of enthusiasm or energy
- difficulty sleeping at night or increased tiredness
- poor concentration and short-term memory
- lowered self-esteem]

### **Scope and Purpose of this Policy**

It is important to note that experiencing any of the above symptoms can pose a challenge for men and women within the workplace. It can influence the way an employee previously handled their responsibilities and relationships at work; for example, they may find certain responsibilities more stressful than before, concentration may lapse from time to time and they may require more support than previously needed. In addition, they can feel physically unwell and require more time off work. Therefore, we are committed to providing the appropriate support to employees going through the menopause or men experiencing the above symptoms and will aim to make adjustments where reasonably practical, on a confidential basis where possible. This includes:

- promoting a culture of open communication, participation and encouragement, allowing employees to engage in discussions about the menopause;
- educating and informing members of the Senior Leadership Team, Line Managers, members of the Governing Body and Academy Business Managers, regarding the potential symptoms of the menopause, and how they can support affected staff at work;
- ensuring staff suffering with menopausal symptoms feel confident to engage in discussions surrounding this and to ask for support and any reasonable adjustments that will help them to enable them to continue to be successful within their roles;
- facilitating requests for flexible working request where reasonably practicable in accordance with our Flexible Working Policy;
- providing support and services, such as occupational health referrals, for staff affected by or absent by reason of the menopause where appropriate;
- ensuring risk assessments include or specifically address menopausal symptoms; and
- maintaining an appraisal process to ensure the suitability of workloads, supported by a capability procedure.

Additionally, in recognition of menopausal symptoms, we acknowledge that increased levels of stress can be a genuine problem and should be considered when supporting applicable individuals. Therefore, this policy should be read in conjunction with our Managing Wellbeing Policy.

We wish to support employees in their personal circumstances and will make necessary accommodations for those experiencing the menopause. However, it is important that the good operation of the Academy is not adversely affected, where this can be avoided.

Staff are encouraged to talk to their line manager if they are struggling with any of their symptoms. However, if they do not feel comfortable talking to their line manager, then they should raise their concerns with a member of SLT. Staff can also discuss their concerns in confidence by accessing our staff wellbeing programme. [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1K7ULZIPdTJZukUhEAV\\_mq\\_xJueau\\_0Eb?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1K7ULZIPdTJZukUhEAV_mq_xJueau_0Eb?usp=drive_link)

The Principal will have responsibility for informing all staff of this policy and their role in its implementation.

### **Absence due to Menopausal Symptoms**

If a member of staff is absent due to the menopausal symptoms they are experiencing, they are required to follow the sickness absence reporting procedure contained within our Sickness Absence and Sick Pay Policy.

We will take into account any absences due to the menopause and adjust its procedure as appropriate.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is an important part of this policy. In order to facilitate our aim to promote a culture of open communication, participation and encouragement, to allow employees to engage in discussions about menopause; every member of staff will be responsible for observing a high level of confidentiality where required, whether another member of staff has confided in them, supporting a colleague who is suffering from menopausal symptoms or because they are otherwise involved in the operation of a policy or procedure.

A breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action in accordance with our Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

However, there are occasions when matters reported by female staff suffering from certain menopausal symptoms (such as stress) may have to be brought to the attention of a third party. For example, where duties may need to be reallocated within to alleviate stress. If this is the case, matters will be discussed with the member of staff concerned before any action is taken.

We will monitor the development and distribution of good practice, the recognition of the symptoms related to the menopause, awareness of and effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its stated objectives.