Menopause Policy - All Staff

Document Control Information	
Senior Management Team (NJNC - Circular CC 60/22 National Menopause Policy for Support Staff and Lecturing Staff – 01.10.2022)	04.10.2022
Approved by the Finance and Resources Committee	29 November 2022
Date of Next Review	29 November 2025

The Board of Management (or any person/group with delegated authority from the Board) reserves the right to amend this document at any time should the need arise following consultation with employee representatives. This Policy has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment, which is published on our website: https://www.glasgowkelvin.ac.uk/equality-diversity/

1. Introduction 3
2. Aim of Policy 3
3. Scope 4
4. Definition of the Menopause 4
5. Symptoms of Menopause 5
6. Roles and Responsibilities 7
7. Support for Employees Experiencing the Menopause 8
8. Self-Management for Staff Experiencing the Menopause 11
9. Review and Monitoring 11
10. Data Protection 12
11. Supporting Policies and Procedures 12
12. Further Sources of Information 12
13. Further Reading 13
14. Glossary 13

1. Introduction

Glasgow Kelvin College is committed to ensuring that everyone is treated with dignity and respect in a fair manner in their working environment. It is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for all staff.

The College is also committed to improving the well-being of its employees and recognises that women affected by the menopause may need additional consideration, support and adjustments during the time of hormonal change before, during and after the menopause.

Glasgow Kelvin College will aim to provide appropriate support to those who are experiencing menopausal symptoms. It is important the College understands the difficulties and anxieties of employees currently going through this hormonal change and that we manage this issue by raising awareness, challenging discrimination, promoting a culture of openness and providing training and development for all line management and colleagues.

The College notes 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. The College is committed to developing a workplace culture that supports staff experiencing the menopause in order for them to feel confident to raise issues about their symptoms and ask for reasonable adjustments at work.

Experiences and perceptions of the menopause may also differ in relation to disability, age, race, religion, sexual orientation or marital/civil partnership status. It is important to recognise that for many reasons, women's experiences of the menopause may differ greatly.

(Although the policy refers to women, please consider that this policy refers to anyone suffering the symptoms of menopause)

2. Aim of Policy

The aim of the policy is to:

- Pro-actively promote the **Managers Guide** (**Appendix 1**) which provides direction and clarity on dealing with menopausal symptoms for those affected both directly and indirectly, e.g. partners, managers, and colleagues.

- Ensure that managers are aware of menopause related symptoms and how they can assist their employees. Managers take cognisance of the **Managers Guide** (**Appendix 1**) which provides clarity for those affected by the menopause.

- Create an environment where those affected feel comfortable enough to discuss the issues around their symptoms and can openly instigate conversations or engage in discussions about the menopause in a respectful and supportive manner.

- Ensure those experiencing menopausal symptoms suffer no detriment.

- Create a workplace that respects and values all employees and their differences, that promotes dignity and combats prejudice, discrimination and harassment.

- Benefit the welfare of women members of staff, retain valued employees; improve morale and performance and promote the College as an employer of choice

- Help the College to recruit and retain employees experiencing the menopause.

This policy is part of the College's commitment to:

- equality and diversity and creating a workplace that respects and values individual differences, that promotes dignity and combats prejudice, discrimination and harassment. This policy seeks to benefit the welfare of individual members of staff; retain valued employees; improve morale and performance and enhance the reputation of the College as an employer of choice; and

- ensuring the health and safety and wellbeing of its staff and will ensure the workplace does not make the menopausal symptoms of employees worse.

The College recognises that many of the changes to workplace culture and adjustments offered may not only be of benefit to workers experiencing the menopause, but to all staff.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Glasgow Kelvin College.

4. Definition of the Menopause

- The menopause is a natural transition stage. It is marked by changes in the hormones and when periods stop.

- The menopause may result in a wide range of physical and psychological symptoms and those with symptoms may encounter difficulties at work as a result of symptoms.

- Each woman will be affected in different ways and to different degrees over different periods of time. Menopausal symptoms can often indirectly affect their partners, families, and colleagues as well.

- Some women experience early menopause due it being medically induced, due to surgery, illness, cancer treatment (radiotherapy, chemotherapy etc) or other reasons. As a result of these hormonal changes, many women will experience both physical and emotional symptoms.

- Perimenopause – this is a period of time before the menopause, in the years leading up to the menopause where there can be significant changes for women, including irregular and heavy menstrual bleeding and many of the classic symptoms associated with menopause.

- Post-menopause – a term used when a woman's periods have stopped for 12 consecutive months. However, other menopausal symptoms may not have ended so soon. Problematic symptoms may continue for years.

Some:

- trans men may experience natural menopausal symptoms;
- trans women may experience pseudo-menopausal symptoms related to their hormone therapy treatment; and
- non-binary people may experience menopausal symptoms.

The College recognises that for many reasons, people's individual experiences of the menopause may differ greatly.

5. Symptoms of Menopause

Menopausal symptoms may include:

Those affected will experience only some or all of these symptoms (and others not on the list). Some people experience no noticeable symptoms, however 75% of women experience symptoms with 25% of those classed as severe. Symptoms tend to be experienced for around four years after the last period, however, this can last up to twelve years in some cases. Symptoms may include:

- Hot flushes – a very common symptom that can start in the face, neck or chest,

before spreading upwards and downward, may include sweating, the skin becoming red and patchy, and a quicker or stronger heart rate.

- Heavy and painful periods and clots, leaving those affected exhausted, as well as practically needing to change sanitary wear more frequently. Some affected may become anaemic.

- Night sweats, restless leg syndrome and sleep disturbance.

- Low mood, irritability, increased anxiety, panic attacks, fatigue, poor concentration, loss of confidence and memory problems.

- Urinary problems – more frequent urinary incontinence and urinary tract infections such as cystitis. It is common to have an urgent need to pass urine or a need to pass it more often than normal.

- Irritated skin – including dry and itchy skin or formication, and dry eyes. Also, vaginal symptoms of dryness, itching and discomfort.

- Joint and muscle aches and stiffness.

- Weight gain.

- Headaches and migraines.

- Menopausal hair loss.

- Osteoporosis – the strength and density of bones are affected by the loss of oestrogen, increasing the risk of the bone-thinning disease osteoporosis.

- Side effects from hormone replacement therapy (HRT), a form of treatment for menopausal symptoms for some people (although not suitable or appropriate for all).

- Menopausal symptoms may also exacerbate existing impairments and conditions that those affected may already be struggling to cope with.

Each of these symptoms can affect an employee's comfort and performance at work. The College has a duty to provide a safe working environment for all employees and therefore commits to ensuring that adjustments and additional support are available to those experiencing menopausal symptoms.

Employees are encouraged to inform their line manager that they are experiencing menopausal symptoms at an early stage 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. Employees who do not wish to discuss the issue with their direct line manager may find it helpful to have an initial discussion with a member of the HR team.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Line Managers** – all managers should:

  - Familiarise themselves with the **National Menopause Policy**, **Managers Guide (Appendix 1)** and available resources.

  - Be open to having discussions around the menopause whilst being sensitive to the personal nature of the discussion and maintaining confidentiality and professionalism.

  - Make use of the available guidance, agreeing arrangements with the affected woman with support plans and reasonable adjustments. Record the agreements to be implemented and ensure these are adhered to.

  - Line managers with appropriate support will undertake a gender sensitive risk assessment to consider the specific needs of employees experiencing the menopause and to ensure that the working environment will not make their symptoms worse. The risk assessment will assist with the identification of any potential adjustments that may be required.

  - Liaise with HR and Occupational Health providers where appropriate.

  - Set review dates and engage in ongoing conversations.

  - Take seriously and investigate any complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimisation in accordance with the appropriate policy and procedure, the Dignity and Respect Policy and Procedure, Grievance Policy and Procedure and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. Confidentiality will be respected at all times.

  - Deal with all requests for support or adjustments confidentially and in accordance with the data protection policy.

  - Support employees in informing colleagues about the situation if appropriate.

- **Employees** – all employees are:
    - Responsible for their health and wellbeing.
    - Encouraged to inform their manager (or the alternative contact, should they not feel comfortable speaking to their manager) if they are struggling with menopausal symptoms and need any support.
    - Responsible in contributing to a respectful and productive working environment, being willing to help and support their colleagues, and understand any necessary adjustments their colleagues are receiving as a result of their menopausal symptoms.
    - Responsible for making contact with either HR, a wellbeing officer where available or a trade union representative, regarding any instances of harassment, victimisation or discrimination experienced because of issues related to the menopause.
    - Employees should report any instances of harassment, victimisation or discrimination experienced because of issues related to the menopause.

If an employee feels unable to speak to their line manager they can contact People and Culture Services or a Trade Union representative.

If an employee is found to have harassed, victimised or discriminated against another employee in relation to the menopause, then they will be seen as having committed a disciplinary offence.

7. Support for Employees Experiencing the Menopause

The College is committed to working with staff and its recognised Trade Unions to take positive action to support staff experiencing the menopause.

It will raise awareness of the impact of the menopause so that they are able to better understand the effects of the menopause and be comfortable about discussing and addressing the impact that it can have on employees in carrying out their roles.

All awareness raising and associated training will be aimed at supporting the development of an understanding and supportive culture. All College 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.

The College recognises that some employees experiencing the menopause may find that related symptoms may impact on their health and wellbeing, and it aims to provide as much support as is reasonably practicable for individuals. The College recognises that the menopause is a very personal experience and therefore different levels and types of support and adjustments may be needed.

Employees experiencing the menopause are encouraged to let their line manager know if they are struggling with symptoms that may impact on their work, so that appropriate support is provided. Such information will be treated confidentially and in accordance with College's data protection policy.

A Human Resources representative is available to employees experiencing the menopause should they not feel comfortable discussing their problems with their line manager. Employees may also prefer to discuss their problems with an alternative manager and/or a trade union representative.

Managers should acknowledge that there may be an additional need for sickness absence by employees experiencing the menopause in order to manage their menopausal symptoms. Absence will be recorded as related to menopausal symptoms where disclosed and managers will consider such absence as an ongoing condition requiring the consideration of reasonable adjustments and flexibility in absence procedure triggers. Further details can be found in the College's Attendance Management and Support Policy and Procedure.

The College recognises the potential impact of menopausal symptoms on performance by employees experiencing the menopause. Managers will seek to support staff sympathetically.

The College runs menopause support groups throughout the academic year to support employees affected by the menopause directly or indirectly, where employees can share knowledge and information, gain peer support and provide feedback on College policies that may have an impact on staff experiencing the menopause.

Employees who are experiencing the menopause may apply for the following adjustments to support them at work:

- Control over environmental factors – with provision of desk fans on request, review of office seating plans so that affected employees can be near the window or open doors, or away from direct sources of heat such as radiators, fitting blinds to windows, greater access to chilled drinking water, and to toilets and washing facilities.

- Where uniforms are provided, staff may request that items ordered contain natural fibres wherever possible.
- Flexibility over uniform and dress codes should they exacerbate symptoms such as hot flushes and sweating, and provision of additional spare uniforms.
- Changing/washing facilities for staff to change clothes during the working day.
- For employees who are required to drive as part of their usual work pattern, duration of travel to be reduced and increased rest breaks provided.
- Flexible working arrangements including options for flexitime (to work round symptoms or adjusting start and finish times for example), more details can be found in the College's Family Friendly and Flexible Working Policy and Procedure. The College seeks to balance the needs of its staff with the requirements of delivering a high-quality service for students and the communities it serves. Good working practices, and the benefits derived from them are key to delivering effective services, increasing morale, commitment and improving recruitment and retention of skilled and experienced staff.
- Flexibility around the taking of breaks, or increased breaks during the working day, and if required providing cover as necessary for these breaks where staffing levels permit.
- Flexibility around attending relevant medical appointments, more details can be found in the College's Family Friendly and Flexible Working Policy and Procedure
- Temporary changes to the employee's duties, where this is possible.
- Provision of private spaces for women to rest temporarily, to talk with a colleague or to phone for personal or professional support.

(For further advice on reasonable adjustments available contact Human Resources Team).

This is not a definitive list of adjustments. The College working staff and its recognised Trade Unions, will consider additional suggestions put forward by members of staff and union representatives.

Confidential support is available for individual employees from the Employee Assistance Programme. The Employee Assistance Programme provides independent counselling and advice – face to face counselling, 24 hour help line and access to the website. An online site is also available to support employees. The web based service is designed to help with today's challenges and to provide a chance to prepare for any major events that may arise in the future. Online is accessed Employee Wellbeing (glasgowkelvin.ac.uk)

8. Self-Management for Staff Experiencing the Menopause

Employees experiencing the menopause are encouraged not to suffer in silence. You should consider:

- Seeking medical advice from your GP;
- Discussing symptoms with your manager or with the alternative contact and with your trade union representative and requesting appropriate workplace adjustments; and
- Contacting the Employee Assistance Provider.
- Employees are also encouraged to make healthier lifestyle choices to help with some of the symptoms such as:
- Eating healthily and regularly – research has shown that a balanced diet can help in alleviating some symptoms, in keeping bones healthy and in not gaining weight;
- Drinking plenty of water;
- Exercising regularly – to reduce hot flushes, improve sleep, boost mood and maintain aerobic fitness levels;
- Not smoking – to help reduce hot flushes and the risk of developing serious conditions such a cancer, heart disease and stroke;
- Ensuring alcohol intake is within recommended levels and cutting down on caffeine and spicy food – all of which can trigger hot flushes;
- Having access to natural light;
- Staying cool at night – wearing loose clothes in a cool and well-ventilated room to help with hot flushes and night sweats.
- Ensuring adequate rest and relaxation – to reduce stress levels and improve mood (through, for example, activities such as mindfulness, yoga and tai chi); and
- Trying vaginal lubricant or moisturiser – available from shops and pharmacies for anyone experiencing vaginal dryness.

9. Review and Monitoring

All new employees, supervisors and managers will receive induction on College policies and procedures.

Adequate resources will be made available to fulfil the aims of this policy. The policy

will be widely promoted and is available on the staff intranet.

The recommendations of the menopause support group on how working conditions, practices and policies may impact on staff experiencing the menopause, will be considered jointly by trade union representatives and management.

The purpose of this monitoring and review is to identify where reasonable adjustments can be made to working conditions, practices and policies in order to make this policy effective.

10. Data Protection

The College will process and manage any personal data collected in accordance with its Data Protection Policy.

11. Supporting Policies and Procedures

- Dignity and Respect Policy and Procedure
- Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Family Friendly and Flexible Working Policy and Procedure
- Attendance Management and Support Policy and Procedure

12. Further Sources of Information

The All employees can access support and counselling through the College Wellbeing Service.

Further information on the menopause can be found through the following links:

i. https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause
ii. http://menopausematters.co.uk
iii. https://www.womens-health-concern.org/help-and- advice/factsheets/menopause
iv. https://thebms.org.uk
v. https://www.daisynetwork.org
vi. https://menopausesupport.co.uk
vii. https://www.menopausedoctor.co.uk/
viii. www.menopause-exchange.co.uk
ix. www.menopausehealthmatters.com

13. Further Reading

i. https://menopausehealthmatters.com/symptoms-of-menopause/
ii. https://menopausehealthmatters.com/menopause-and-weight-gain/
iii. https://menopausehealthmatters.com/menopause-insomnia/
iv. https://menopausehealthmatters.com/menopause-diet/
v. https://menopausehealthmatters.com/menopause-diet/exercise-for-women/
vi. https://menopausehealthmatters.com/hormone-replacement-therapy/
vii. https://menopausehealthmatters.com/menopause-and-weight- gain/osteoporosisand-menopause/
viii. https://menopausehealthmatters.com/heart-disease-in-women/
ix. www.menopauseacademy.co.uk
x. www.thebms.org.uk
xi. www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause
xii. www.nhs.uk/conditions/early-menopause
xiii. www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23/ifp/chapter/About-this-information

14. Glossary

Menopause – a natural transition stage in most women's lives lasting four to eight years, although for some women it can be much longer. Most women experience the menopause between the ages of 45 and 55. It is marked by changes in the hormones and the woman stops having periods. Women may also experience a wide range of physical and psychological symptoms as a result of the menopause.

Premature menopause – for some women, it can be experienced at a much younger age, in their 30s or even younger. This is sometimes called premature ovarian insufficiency. The NHS estimates that 1 in every 100 women will experience premature menopause.

Medical or surgical menopause – there are some medical circumstances that will create an immediate menopause, whatever the woman's age, such as a medically induced menopause to shrink fibroids or when the ovaries are damaged by specific interventions such as treatment for cancer, or when a woman's ovaries are removed as part of a hysterectomy.

Perimenopause – a period of time before the menopause, in the years leading up to the menopause where there can be significant changes for women, including irregular and heavy menstrual bleeding and many of the classic symptoms associated with menopause.

Post-menopause – a term used when a woman's periods have stopped for 12 consecutive months. However other menopausal symptoms may not have ended so soon. Problematic symptoms may continue for years.

Appendix 1

Managers Guide

Everyone who is affected is different and, as such, it is difficult to set out specific guidelines. When conversations occur with those who are affected either directly or indirectly, ensure that you:

- allow time and space for the conversation – find an appropriate place where confidentiality can be maintained
- be open to the discussion and encourage the staff member to honestly share their issues
- suggest reasonable adjustments (see below)
- agree any actions and record in a suitable confidential manner
- discuss whether other team members should be informed and who should undertake this
- arrange a follow up meeting at a suitable time and place.

Reasonable Adjustments

The following list of reasonable adjustments have been suggested by the CIPD in their '*A guide to managing menopause at work: guidance for line managers*' (2021):

Sleep disruption and/or night sweats

- Recognise someone may take more short-term absence if they've had a difficult night.
- Consider a change to shift patterns or the ability to swap shifts on a temporary basis.
- Carrying out risk assessments and making appropriate adjustments.
- Offer a flexible working arrangement, for example a later start and finish time.
- Where a role permits and the manager can support it the member of staff could work from home for a short period if symptoms have been significant, for example disrupted sleep pattern.

Hot flushes and/or daytime sweats

- Look at ways to cool the working environment, for example provide a fan, move a desk close to a window or adjust the air conditioning.
- Provide easy access to cold drinking water and washrooms.
- Adapt uniforms to improve comfort.
- Limit the time wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) such as face masks (subject to any COVID-secure measures required).
- In customer-focused or public-facing roles, it may help to have access to a quiet

room for a short break so as to manage a severe hot flush.

Heavy or irregular periods

- Provide easy access to washroom and toilet facilities.
- Allow for more frequent breaks to go to the toilet.
- Be understanding about someone working from home if they have very heavy bleeding.
- Make sanitary products available in washrooms.
- Make it easy to request extra uniforms if needed.

Headaches and fatigue

- Consider a temporary adjustment to someone's work duties.
- Provide a quiet area to work.
- Provide access to a rest room.
- Offer easy access to drinking water.
- Allow regular breaks and opportunities to take medication.

Muscular aches, and bone and joint pain

- Make any necessary temporary adjustments through review of risk assessments and work schedules.
- Allow someone to move around or stay mobile, if that helps.

Psychological issues (for example loss of confidence, poor concentration, anxiety, and so on)

- Encourage employees to discuss concerns at one-to-one meetings with you and/or occupational health.
- Discuss possible adjustments to tasks and duties that are proving a challenge.
- Address work-related stress by carrying out a stress risk assessment recommended by the HSE.
- Signpost to an Employee Assistance Programme or counselling services if available.
- Identify a supportive colleague to talk to away from the office or work area, such as a wellbeing champion.
- Allow time when needed, to have some quiet time or undertake relaxation or mindfulness activities.
- Provide access to a quiet space to work or the opportunity to work from home.
- Have agreed protected time to catch up with work.
- Discuss whether it would be helpful for the employee to visit their GP, if they haven't already.

Other examples of adjustments include:

- Provide private areas for those affected to rest, recover or make a telephone call to access personal or professional support.
- Ensure working time arrangements are flexible enough to meet the needs of menopausal women. For example, they may also need more breaks during the day, or may need to leave work suddenly if their symptoms become severe.