

MENOPAUSE POLICY



ST JOHN STREET
CHAMBERS

INTRODUCTION

18 St John Street Chambers is committed to ensuring the health, safety and well-being of its workforce and ensuring everyone is treated with dignity and respect. Chambers recognises the need to support members/clerks/members of staff who are affected by menopause. 18 St John Street Chambers is committed to creating an atmosphere in which individuals feel they can ask for help.

1. Menopause is a natural process and for some it can be positively managed through lifestyle adjustments. However, we recognise that menopause is not always an easy transition. Some may need additional considerations to support and improve their experience at work.
2. With this in mind, Chambers is committed to supporting those who are affected in any way by menopause and to support and inform, so that those reporting issues are treated fairly and given appropriate support.

AIMS

3. The aim of this Policy is to:

- (a) support employees and members to remain at work;
- (b) raise awareness of menopause, the related issues and how this can affect employees/members;
- (c) break the stigma and taboo surrounding menopause at work and to promote an environment in which those affected feel confident in discussing menopausal issues and ask for support and adjustments, if required;
- (d) provide guidance and direction on how to support those who raise menopausal issues not only for the individuals experiencing menopause but also those who may be affected indirectly which may include managers and colleagues;
- (e) inform managers of the potential symptoms of menopause, how this can affect employees/members and what can be done to support individuals, including reasonable adjustments.

SCOPE

4. This Policy applies to all Chambers employees and members.
5. This Policy is inclusive of all gender identities including trans and non-binary employees.

DEFINITIONS

6. **Menopause** - Menopause is a natural part of ageing and refers to the time in life when periods have stopped and the natural reproductive cycle ends. It usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 with the average age being 51.
7. **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).
8. **Peri-menopause** - the time leading up to menopause when menopausal symptoms can be experienced. Symptoms can start a few months, or even years, before periods stop.
9. **Post-menopause** - The time after the last period.

SYMPTOMS OF MENOPAUSE

10. It is important to note that not everyone will experience the same symptoms or need help and support.
11. **Some common symptoms include:**
 - Hot flushes
 - Night sweats
 - Sleep disruption
 - Fatigue
 - Difficulty concentrating/memory problems/loss of confidence
 - Mood disturbances including anxiety and depression
 - Headaches
 - Irregular periods/heavy bleeding

- Bone and Joint problems

12. Symptoms on average continue for 2-4 years, however some individuals will experience symptoms for longer. These symptoms can have a significant adverse impact on the quality of both personal and working life.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

13. All employees and members are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable responsibility and care for their own health and wellbeing (see below for sources of information and support);
- Being open to having conversations with managers/clerks/members of staff. If for any reason they feel unable to speak to their manager/clerk/member of staff they can also speak to Chambers Equality and Diversity Officers,
- Upholding a positive working environment treating others with dignity and respect.

14. All line managers, management committee members and clerks will:

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

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

15. When considering this policy, it may be useful to also consider the Equality and Diversity Policy, Reasonable Adjustment Policy, Flexible Working Policy, Chambers Absence Management Policy & Procedure and Health and Wellbeing Policy. These policies can be accessed via Microsoft Teams.

GUIDANCE ON DISCUSSIONS REGARDING THE MENOPAUSE

16. Regular, informal conversations between managers and employees or clerks and members can enable discussions about issues related to menopause. One of the most valuable things a manager/clerk/member of staff can do is listen and respond sympathetically if issues relating to menopause are reported. These conversations can assist in identifying support at work which can make a real difference with how employees cope with menopause. This may enable them to continue working well, productively and to remain at work.

17. It is important to note that employees experiencing menopausal issues may feel uncomfortable or embarrassed to approach their manager/clerk/member of staff however, if a manager or clerk or member of staff is aware of the symptoms associated with the menopause and how this can affect a person, this can greatly assist in promoting an environment where those affected feel more confident to seek support, if required.

18. If an employee or member wishes to talk about changes in health including symptoms of menopause it is important to:

- (a) Encourage the employee/member to discuss any relevant health concerns with their GP practice.
- (b) Maintain confidentiality when handling health information (seek a private room/office and ensure any records are stored in a safe and confidential manner).
- (c) Allow for sufficient time to have the conversation and encourage the employee/member to be open and honest when discussing any difficulties they may be experiencing.
- (d) Explore with them ways in which they can be supported, if required;
- (e) Agree an action plan, record the outcome of the discussion and agree a review timeframe.
- (f) Provide details of support and external services available (see below).

SYMPTOMS AND SUGGESTED ADJUSTMENTS TO CONSIDER

19. We recognize that every woman is different, and it is, therefore, not feasible to set out an exhaustive or definitive list of symptoms and adjustments. Those set out below are merely examples.

20. **Hot Flashes** - Can result in discomfortable and in tolerance of workplace temperatures.

- Review control of workplace temperature and ventilation.
- Consider desktop fan in an office or locate desk closer to an opening window or away from a heat source.
- Easy access to drinking water.

21. **Night Sweats/Sleep disruption** - Can result in increased tiredness and fatigue.

- Consider flexible working hours or temporary shift changes to accommodate difficulties.

22. **Difficulty concentrating/Memory problems** - Can negatively affect performance.

- Consider holding regular meetings to identify if there is a need for additional support.
- Review task allocation and workload.
- Identify if there are times of the day when concentration is better or worse, and adjust working pattern/practice accordingly.

23. **Low mood/Depression/anxiety/panic attacks/loss of confidence** - Can make work tasks more difficult to carry out and performance may be affected.

- Provide opportunity to openly discuss any concerns/difficulties.
- Encourage discussion regarding symptoms with their GP practice.
- Signpost to sources of support including counselling.
- Consider referral to Occupational Health.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

24. **If you have troublesome menopausal symptoms, please arrange to see your GP practice in the first instance who will be able to discuss management options with you.**

25. All employees and members can access counselling by contacting the Employee Assistance helpline on **0800 030 5182**, or online through the [Health Assured Website](#) or App, [Apple](#) or [Android](#).

You will have been provided with logon details by the Chambers Manager.

26. **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 [here](#).

27. **Menopause information.** The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists offer further information in a dedicated area of their website.

28. [Menopause Matters](#)

29. [NHS Choices](#)

30. [The Daisy Network](#) (support for early menopause/premature ovarian insufficiency)

31. [The Menopause Exchange](#)

32. [Women's Health concern](#)

33. [Remploy \(mental health support service\)](#)

34. [British Menopause Society](#)

This policy will be reviewed annually – October 2025 next review date.