****

**Menopause Policy**

**Contents**

1. **Introduction**
2. **Definition**
3. **Symptoms**
4. **Management of Menopause Symptoms**
5. **Reasonable Adjustments**

6. Raising Awareness and Understanding

7. Flexible Working

8. Psychological Support

9. Temperature Control

10. Heavy and Irregular Periods

11. Aches and Pains

12. Fatigue and Headaches

1. **Sickness**
2. **Support Services**
3. **Links to other policies**

**1. Introduction**

1.1 PEEK aims to be a supportive employer. As part of its commitment to good employment practice, PEEK is keen to help its team members to balance the demands of work and life wherever possible. The aim of this policy is to raise awareness of menopause, the related issues and how this can affect team members; to break the stigma and taboo surrounding menopause at work; to support team members to remain at work; and to promote an environment in which team members feel confident in discussing menopause and ask for support and adjustments, if required.

1.2 This policy therefore provides guidance and direction for those team members experiencing menopause and those who may be affected indirectly including managers and colleagues. This document seeks to inform of the potential symptoms of menopause; how symptoms can affect team members; and what can be done to support individuals including reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

1.3 By implementing this policy, PEEK aims to strike a reasonable balance between the pursuit of its organisations needs and the genuine needs of team members. This policy is designed to be as comprehensive as possible however PEEK recognises that the menopause affect all people differently and commits to consider each case individually.

1.4 In order to be gender-inclusive, PEEK recognise that any woman or person with a uterus can experience menopause and will refer to ‘they/them’ throughout this document.

**2. Definition**

2.1 The menopause is a natural event in the life of any woman or person with a uterus. According to the NHS, it is defined as 12 consecutive months without a period. The menopause usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 and typically lasts between four and eight years however, each person’s experience will differ and menopausal symptoms can occasionally begin before the age of 40. The onset of the menopause can be affected by genetics, ethnicity and other factors such as smoking.

2.2 Typically, perimenopause, or menopause transition, begins several years before menopause. People may start to experience menopausal symptoms during the final two years of perimenopause.

2.3 Post menopause is defined as the period of life thereafter 12 months without a period.

**3. Symptoms**

3.1 The nature of symptoms will vary from mild to severe. All of these symptoms can affect comfort and performance at work. During the menopause, people will stop having periods and will experience hormonal changes such as a decrease in oestrogen levels.

3.2 Other symptoms of the menopause include but are not limited to;

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Hot flashes/flushes
 | * Heart palpitations
 |
| * Night sweats
 | * Tiredness
 |
| * Insomnia
 | * Aches and pains
 |
| * Memory loss
 | * Weight gain
 |
| * Brain fog e.g. blanks and forgetfulness
 | * Painful sex
 |
| * Lack of energy
 | * Vaginal dryness
 |
| * Anxiety
 | * Loss of/lower sex drive
 |
| * Mood swings
 | * Recurrent UTI symptoms
 |
| * Reduced concentration
 | * Heavy periods
 |

**4. Management of Menopause Symptoms**

4.1 The menopause can be positively managed through lifestyle adjustments for many. These adjustments may include but are not limited to;

* **Use of accessible painkillers** including paracetamol, ibuprofen, etc;
* **Use of hot compresses** e.g. hot-water bottles, heat pads, etc;
* **Regular exercise** can help reduce hot flushes, strengthen bones, boost mood and help with sleep;
* **Smoking cessation** can improve wellbeing during the menopausal transition and reduce the risk of hot flushes;
* **Changes to diet** e.g. reducing the intake of spicy food, caffeine and alcohol can help with night sweats and hot flushes;
* **Stress awareness** including lowering levels of stress where possible, can help with physical and mental health symptoms;
* **Cognitive-behavioural therapy** can be used to improve low mood, anxiety and stress but also hot flushes, night sweats, insomnia or brain fog;

4.2 Hormone Replacement Therapy is a widely used treatment for menopausal symptoms. More commonly known as HRT, this therapy replaces the female hormones at a lower level and can help with hot flushes, insomnia, vaginal symptoms and mood swings. HRT must be prescribed by a GP or a specialist.

**5. Reasonable Adjustments**

5.1 In order to create a more comfortable workplace environment for people experiencing the menopause, PEEK is committed to implementing a variety of steps listed below.

5.2 In any occasion a team member feels they are not adequately supported or that they are unfairly treated due to their menopause experience, they should raise their concern with an appropriate senior member of the team or follow PEEK’s Disciplinary and Grievance procedures.

5.3 If it is found that any team member has treated a member of the team who is experiencing the menopause in an unfair or discriminatory manner, they may be subject to disciplinary action.

**6. Raising Awareness and Understanding:**

6.1 Menopause is a common life event but many people have a limited understanding of its impact. To reflect this, the organisation as a whole as well as line managers will:

* Learn more about menopause, understanding what menopause is and what the symptoms might be;
* Listen to team members experiencing the menopause in order to understand how the menopause is affecting them individually;
* Provide words of support and encouragement in line with PEEK’s values to help team members experiencing the menopause to feel valued, respected and empowered;
* Ask how they and we as an organisation can help and what they need in order to work;
* Challenge discriminatory language or jokes regarding the menopause;
* Pursue disciplinary action where appropriate where and when it is found that a team member has been discriminated against;
* Ensure the menopause and its impact are discussed within the Health and Wellbeing Working Group to ensure the wider team also have a basic understanding.

**7. Flexible Working:**

7.1 Difficulty sleeping, memory loss and brain fog are common symptoms of the menopause. To reflect this, as well as the impact of other common symptoms mentioned below, the organisation aims to facilitate flexible working wherever possible. Requests for flexible working may include:

* A change to the pattern of hours worked;
* Working from home or hybrid working;
* A reduction in working hours;
* More frequent breaks;

7.2 Team members should formally discuss such requests with their line manager and/or the Head of People and Programmes. Depending on the circumstances, such requests may be approved on a permanent or temporary basis. If it is not possible for requests to be approved, a specified reason must be offered and other supportive measures should be considered.

**8. Psychological Support:**

8.1 People experiencing the menopause may suffer from memory loss, mood swings, reduced concentration and bouts of depression and/or anxiety. To reflect this, PEEK will:

* Allow extra time to relax and practice mindfulness during the working day;
* Ensure flexible working arrangements where appropriate;
* Provide space and encouragement to discuss concerns with occupational health, line manager and/or Health and Wellbeing Working Group;
* Refer team member to access Employee Assistance Programme and/or Life Link where appropriate.

**9. Temperature Control:**

9.1 Hot flashes/flushes are a common symptom of the menopause. To reflect this, PEEK will:

* Ensure all office spaces have air conditioning and heating. The affected team member is permitted to change/adjust temperature as required;
* Permit flexibility with regards to dress code where reasonable;
* Provide running water in the communal kitchen;
* Provide desk fans upon request;
* Support to move desk or working area to a cooler area, for example, closer to the windows or air conditioning units;

**10. Heavy and Irregular Periods:**

10.1 Heavier than typical bleeding and irregular periods are common symptoms of the menopause. To reflect this, PEEK will:

* Provide all team members experiencing the menopause the option to work from home on an ad hoc basis or using a hybrid model;
* Ensure a range of sanitary products are provided toilets;
* Ensure easy access to toilets;
* Cover costs to clean furniture e.g. chairs soiled by blood, ensuring this is managed in a discreet and dignified manner.

**11. Aches and Pains:**

11.1 Muscle, breast, bone and joint pain are a typical symptom of the menopause. To reflect this, PEEK will:

* Provide supportive furniture or aids to make the workplace more comfortable, e.g. an ergonomic office chair, sitting/standing adjustable desk, foot rest, wrist rests, etc;
* Allow extra time to stretch and move during the working day;
* Conduct individual risk assessments to review job responsibilities and, where appropriate, reduce or remove responsibilities which cause discomfort and/or pain.

**12. Fatigue and headaches:**

12.1 Those experiencing the menopause may experience tiredness and headaches, ranging from minor to severe. To reflect this, PEEK will:

* Ensure all team members experiencing the menopause have the option to work from home on an ad hoc basis or using a hybrid model;
* Consider flexible working requests;
* Provide a quiet office working environment with access to natural lighting;
* Ensure running water is available in the communal kitchen.
1. **Sickness**

13.1 If a team member is unable to work due to symptoms of the menopause, they should refer to the Sickness Policy and follow the organisations procedures for reporting absence from work.

13.2 PEEK offer company enhanced sick pay in accordance with the following tier system. Thereafter Statutory Sick Pay applies:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Continuous Service**  | **Maximum Payment in any rolling 12 month period**  |
| After 6 months’ probation  | 2 working weeks full pay and 2 working weeks half pay |
| After 2 years’ service | 3 working weeks full pay and 3 working weeks half pay |
| After 3 years’ service | 4 working weeks full pay and 4 working weeks half pay |
| After 5 years’ service | 5 working weeks full pay and 5 working weeks half pay |
| After 10 years’ service | 6 working weeks full pay and 6 working weeks half pay |

13.3 PEEK may request medical information on occasion.

**14. Support Services**

14.1 The health and wellbeing of team members is of upmost importance to PEEK. To support team members through any hardships in work and/or in their personal lives, PEEK provides an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provided through Peninsula UK.

14.2 The EAP is available 24/7 and is a free and confidential service and can provide support on a wide range of topics including mental health, addiction, relationships and financial matters. All team members are encouraged to contact 0800 047 4097.

14.3 PEEK will at all times act with sensitivity and will provide reasonable support wherever possible.

14.4 External sources of help and support for team members and managers are also available, including:

* [Menopause matters](https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/) which provides information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options;
* The [Daisy Network](https://www.daisynetwork.org/) charity which provides support for women experiencing premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency;
* The [Menopause Café](https://www.menopausecafe.net/) which provides information about events where strangers gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss the menopause;
1. **Links to other policies:**
* Equal Opportunities Policy
* Menstrual Health Policy
* Sickness Policy
* Team member Handbook
* Disciplinary Policy
* Grievance Policy

Date Approved:

Approved by:

Next Review Date:

Possibilities for Each and Every Kid PEEK

The Legacy Hub

301 Springfield Road

Glasgow

G40 3LJ

Email: info@peekproject.co.uk

Website: www.peekproject.org.uk

Charity No: SC030814 Company No: 273784