



Workforce

**Menopause and Menstrual Health
Policy: guide for employees**

This guide will help you understand how the Menopause and Menstrual Health Policy is applied.

The following guide forms part of the standard for workforce policies. These policies apply to all eligible staff within NHS Scotland, regardless of the board they are employed by. The guide covers:

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What is the purpose of the Menopause and Menstrual Health Policy?

This policy aims to:

- Support you at work if you experience menstrual health and menopause symptoms, and minimise the impact that they can have.
- Create an open culture where you feel confident asking for help with your menstrual health or menopause symptoms. Get the adjustments you need to feel comfortable at work.
- Increase awareness of menstrual health and menopause through education, inclusive conversations and compassionate leadership.

Who is covered by this policy?

This policy applies to everyone working within NHS Scotland. That includes all employees, plus bank, agency, and sessional workers, volunteers, contractors, and anyone on placement, such as students or trainees.

Employee responsibilities

Your health is a priority. As an employee, you should:

- Take care of your own health and wellbeing.
- Speak to your manager at the earliest opportunity if menopause or menstrual health-related symptoms are affecting you at work.
- Think about what might help. Consider any support or workplace adjustments that could make work more comfortable.
- Keep the conversation going. Talk to your manager regularly to review any agreed adjustments.

Supported conversation

If symptoms are affecting you at work, you should speak with your manager as soon as possible.

Symptoms associated with menopause and menstrual health are often considered a private and personal issue. You may find it challenging to discuss openly how these symptoms are impacting you at work.

- Who to talk to—It is important that you feel comfortable speaking with someone. If you prefer not to discuss the matter with your

direct manager, you can choose to approach another manager or a trade union representative.

- What to expect—In this situation, they will provide a safe and confidential space for you to discuss how your symptoms affect you at work. With your permission, they will then work with your manager and HR to arrange any support or reasonable adjustments you need.

Menstrual health symptoms and related conditions

Menstrual health symptoms can include heavy bleeding, pain and cramps, irregular periods, and mood changes.

Related conditions can include:

- premenstrual syndrome (PMS)
- polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS)
- premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD)
- endometriosis
- fibroids
- adenomyosis

Common symptoms of perimenopause and menopause include:

- hot flushes and night sweats
- sleep disruption and fatigue
- difficulty concentrating, memory problems, loss of confidence
- mood changes, including anxiety and depression
- headaches, bone and joint problems and pains
- irregular periods and heavy bleeding

The goal of this conversation is to agree on a support plan that works for you. You'll discuss any workplace adjustments or changes that could help make your work more comfortable and manageable.

After the meeting, your manager will give you a copy of the notes. This is your simple action plan and will include:

- The adjustments that you've both agreed on.
- A review date to check in and see how things are going.

Workplace support and adjustments

There are many practical adjustments that can help you at work. These will be different for everyone, and not all adjustments are possible in every workplace.

Examples of adjustments that can be considered include:

- easy access to drinking water, toilets, and changing facilities
- flexible or more frequent breaks
- flexible working hours or location
- access to period products
- a fan or better ventilation
- lightweight or additional uniforms

Seeking advice from occupational health for your menstrual, perimenopausal, or menopausal symptoms is an option. However, it shouldn't be the default first step for getting the support you need.

Absence reporting and recording

If you are absent from work because of menstrual health, perimenopause, or menopause issues, you should report your absence as normal, following the [Attendance Policy](#). Your manager will follow the absence recording procedures outlined in the same policy.

Resolution of disagreements

If a disagreement arises, you have the right to raise the issue under the [Grievance Policy](#). You can also seek advice from HR or a trade union representative. You are encouraged to seek early resolution wherever possible.

Useful links

- [Menopause in the workplace](#)
- [NHS Inform - Menopause](#)
- [Menopause and your mental wellbeing](#)
- [NHS inform – Girls and young women \(puberty to around 25\)](#)
- [NHS Inform – Later years \(around 50 years and over\)](#)
- [Guide to reasonable adjustments](#)