

OPEN-SOURCE MENOPAUSE POLICY



Over The Bloody Moon is a global agency helping organisations create menopause-inclusive workplaces with our Menopause Inclusive Workplace Standard of Excellence accreditation program. We deliver awareness events, workshops & panels, training for managers, Mentors, and employees, as well as digital resources that represent diverse experiences and communities.

In the UK, guidance and changes to legislation, such as The Employment Bill sends a strong message to employers to provide a duty of care to those impacted by menopause. Employers must ensure they are not discriminating against or making symptoms worse through the way in which work is conducted.

To mark Menopause Awareness Month, we have collaborated with Royce Lingerie to provide an open-source menopause policy for you to adapt for your organisation. A report by YouGov in 2023, found that 75% support organisations having a menopause policy. Organisations that have a standalone policy or guidance have better productivity rates and lower absenteeism and exit rates for those impacted by menopause.

For further inquiries, we'd love to hear from you.

Drop us an email to: hello@overthebloodymoon.com or visit www.overthebloodymoon.com where we have a library of free resources to support individuals impacted by symptoms.



Considerations when writing your menopause policy

- ❖ **Be inclusive:** whilst the policy may use the term 'women' as this represents most people who experience menopause, the policy acknowledges that this transition can happen to non-binary / intersex / trans men.
- ❖ **Menopause is a unique experience:** represent different cultures, perspectives and challenges e.g. living with a physical disability / neurodiversity, same-sex relationships, trans / non-binary etc...
- ❖ **Avoid scaremongering:** not everyone is going to have a challenging time, so use a tone that is positive, balanced, and provides hope.
- ❖ **Make sure people know about it:** a policy is worthless if people don't know where to find it or aren't reading it. Communicate & remind people to use it and don't forget about new joiners.

1. Our Policy

Insert Company Name is committed to creating an inclusive and supportive workplace for everyone who works here.

Menopause is a normal part of a woman's life (as well as for some trans, intersex and non-binary people). Menopause should not be taboo or 'hidden'. At *Company Name*, we want our colleagues to understand what menopause is and to be able to talk about it openly and without embarrassment.

Menopausal women are the fastest growing demographic in the workforce and with women having longer careers, around 75% will transition through menopause and beyond whilst working. This impacts us too – as a partner, friend, family member and colleague. xx% of our workforce are cis women [*insert data*] and xx% [*insert data for women aged 40-54 years*] will be most likely to be experiencing some hormonal changes associated with menopause.

This menopause policy ensures employees and managers are equipped to respond empathetically to those impacted, as well as for people to know what resources are available to enhance their wellbeing.

Understanding women's health and how it impacts on people's daily lives is an important part of retaining and nurturing our talent. *Company Name* is committed to developing a workplace culture that supports, retains, and promotes workers experiencing the menopause – just like other life events that might create specific needs.

Research has shown that cultures that allow for safe, open conversations on menopause help people feel more positive about their experience with severity of symptoms declining. So, let's talk about it!



2. Aims

The aims of the policy are to: *[Select from this list the top few aims which best suit your business]*

- ✦ Enable everyone to perform in their role and thrive at work, at all stages of their lives.
- ✦ Foster an environment in which colleagues can openly and comfortably start conversations and engage in discussions about the menopause in a respectful and supportive manner.
- ✦ Raise wider awareness and understanding among all employees about the menopause.
- ✦ Help us to recruit and retain valuable employees experiencing the menopause.
- ✦ Outline support and reasonable adjustments available.
- ✦ Help managers to understand how the menopause can affect people, and how they can support those experiencing the menopause at work.
- ✦ Support people experiencing the menopause so they feel confident to raise issues about their symptoms and feel they can ask for reasonable adjustments at work without being penalised.
- ✦ Support those impacted indirectly, such as partners, colleagues and friends.
- ✦ Signal our commitment to female leadership and development, inclusion and diversity, and enhancing women's wellbeing.
- ✦ Create conditions that lead to improving gender equality, including greater representation of women at senior management and leadership levels by ensuring menopause is not a barrier.



3. Menopause explained

What is menopause?

The menopause is a stage in a woman's life during which they stop having periods and she reaches the end of natural reproductive life. It is usually defined as 12 months of ceasing menstruation for those over 50 years of age, and 24 months of no bleeding for those under the age of 50.

Menopause usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 but can happen much younger, brought on prematurely naturally or due to medical interventions or surgery. Whilst we may associate menopause with midlife, it's important to recognise that younger women will have their own unique set of challenges surrounding their transition. As will trans men and non-binary people.

Menopause is most often experienced as a transition that happens in stages. Perimenopause is the stage before menopause where women may experience changes to their periods (lighter / heavier, less / more frequent, more painful) and due to fluctuations in hormones, this can trigger cognitive, physical, and psychological symptoms. Getting support and talking about these changes and how they are making the person feel can be hugely helpful and ensure symptoms don't become severe. Perimenopausal changes can be described as being very gradual or hardly noticeable whereas others may describe waking up with full blown 'symptoms' overnight.

Common impacts

Over 70% transitioning through perimenopause and beyond will notice some changes to varying degrees of impact. With nearly fifty associated symptoms, it can be hard to unpack whether 'not feeling right' is down to the menopause or other medical conditions or events. Therefore, it's important to get diagnosis from a trained healthcare professional (even if the person isn't wanting to go on Hormone Replacement Therapy) which will involve recalling symptoms or a blood test. To get the best out of your consultation, read this [helpful guide](#).

You can review potential impacts by [clicking here](#).

Symptoms associated with the menopause include disrupted sleep, hot flushes, palpitations, night sweats, sleep disturbance, fatigue, poor concentration / memory, irritability, mood changes, increased anxiety (including going out and driving), weight gain, and headaches. There are lesser-known ones that include tinnitus, itchy or dry skin or eyes, electric shocks, gut problems, and joint pain.

3. Menopause explained



These can vary. For those in surgical or induced menopause, symptoms are often more numerous and pronounced. For black women, hot flushes are generally more severe and last longer than for white women. Those with autism and ADHD may find emotional regulation and focusing on tasks or conversation more challenging than neurotypical women. Those with small networks, a lack of peer, workplace or partner support, or in cultures where talking about their problems is a taboo may find themselves more isolated.

Menopause alone does not cause burnout, but it can reduce someone's usual level of resilience or energy reserves. People experiencing the menopause may need additional consideration, support and adjustments at work, during this transitional stage of their lives.



4. What we can do to support

Everyone in the business has a responsibility, from leaders to line managers to colleagues of those going through the menopause.

Employer Responsibilities

The company is responsible for:

- ✦ Accessible & well-publicised policy or guidance.
- ✦ Raising awareness that menopause in the workplace will be handled sensitively and with dignity and respect.
- ✦ Raising awareness and educating on menopause.
- ✦ Supporting people experiencing menopause and those indirectly affected.
- ✦ Providing a duty of care for the health and safety of people at work.
- ✦ Conducting risk assessments in a timely, documented manner.
- ✦ Supporting reasonable adjustments.
- ✦ Developing Managers to support people effectively.
- ✦ Communicate signposting and support available.
- ✦ Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity of support.

Members of Staff Impacted by Menopause

People impacted by menopause are responsible for:

- ✦ Taking personal accountability for looking after their health and wellbeing and using EAP, insurance, and healthcare options available to them.
- ✦ Complying with the policies and processes relating to equality and diversity, ensuring that everyone is treated with respect and dignity and are not subjected to ageist or sexist comments when experiencing symptoms of the menopause.
- ✦ Familiarising themselves with the guidance and information provided.
- ✦ Requesting support from their line manager or HR / People Team (rather than suffering in silence) and keeping them informed of any changes to their health that impacts on their work.
- ✦ Contributing to a respectful, supportive, inclusive and productive working environment.

4. What we can do to support



Manager Responsibilities

Managers are responsible for:

- ❖ Supporting staff experiencing menopausal symptoms in the same way as an employee with any ongoing health matter.
- ❖ Treating any conversation with colleagues sensitively and professionally.
- ❖ The health and safety of their team members.
- ❖ Requesting that a risk assessment is undertaken.
- ❖ Understand how to signpost people appropriately.
- ❖ Identify, agree and implement reasonable adjustments.
- ❖ Documenting key meeting points including any adjustments agreed with the employee
- ❖ Ensuring ongoing dialogue and review dates with the team member.
- ❖ Ensuring that all agreed workplace adjustments are implemented.
- ❖ Liaising with HR to ensure that they are fully informed of any issues and can support the line manager with risk assessments, suitable workplace adjustments and referrals to Occupational Health (if necessary).

Colleagues Responsibilities

Peers and employees are responsible for:

- ❖ Being a listening ear – be willing to have open discussions around menopause and be curious, asking sensitive questions to understand how symptoms are impacted your colleague, what you can do to support them, and understand what they have done so far to seek support.
- ❖ Validating their experience – avoid saying anything that dismiss their challenges or makes them feel like a failure.
- ❖ Being confidential in their trust – don't share what they've disclosed to you without their consent.
- ❖ Encouraging them to seek out medical support and use the Company's resources to research on how to improve their symptoms in and out of the workplace.
- ❖ Enable them to come up with reasonable adjustments (see section below) that would address challenges at work and give them confidence to speak to HR / People Team or their manager.

5. Reasonable Adjustments & Resources

What are reasonable adjustments?

These are tailored adjustments that may involve changes to work tasks and the way these are conducted, working hours, schedules and shifts, equipment or uniform, and environmental that includes where the work takes place. Ideas may not always be able to be introduced due to service or commercial needs but a suitable alternative should be provided. These should ideally be suggested by the individual impacted and talked through with HR / People Team or their manager. These will need to be signed off and agreed on how changes should be shared formally with the team. These should be documented, dated and signed by a supervisor for regular review. Note menopause symptoms can evolve and be replaced by other symptoms so it's a good idea to meet monthly to review.

Examples of reasonable adjustments

Hot flushes

- ✦ Desk / neck fans
- ✦ Cooler spaces
- ✦ Access to cold water
- ✦ Private space to work
- ✦ Regular breaks to get fresh air

Brain fog

- ✦ Extra time on tasks
- ✦ Working from home / a quiet space – meeting room or booth if appropriate
- ✦ Adjusting hours of work to when they feel they concentrate the best
- ✦ Reviewing type of tasks and how long these are worked on

Sleep problems

- ✦ Reviewing hours, they work
- ✦ Changing schedules to when they feel more energetic
- ✦ Including longer breaks in between shifts or meetings

Psychological and medical support

Confidential support is available for individual employees from our insurance provider and the employee assistance programme which includes counselling if appropriate, in addition to practical information and advice. *[insert links to Occupational Health, insurance providers, employee assistance support etc... as appropriate]*

5. Reasonable Adjustments & Resources



Peer network [include if relevant]

A problem shared is a problem halved! Talking with peers about menopause experiences enhances a sense of belonging and can make you feel less alone. Sign up to our Menopause Café / network *[insert details]* or talk to one of our Menopause Mentors / Mental Health First Aiders who offer a confidential space to support and signpost you, so you feel more empowered about menopause.

Resources

We have a range of resources *[insert]* found *[insert location]* to help individuals, partners, and managers on menopause.

In addition, visit www.overthebloodymoon.com/resources/free-resources for checklists, fact sheets, podcasts, videos, meditations and more or [sign up to the monthly newsletter](#) for tips to enhance menopause wellbeing.

Other specialist websites and organisations include:

- ✦ **The Daisy Network:** educational resources for premature menopause
- ✦ **Queer menopause:** resources and community support for LGBTQIA
- ✦ **The Surmeno Connection:** resources for those in surgical menopause
- ✦ **Menopause Café:** nationwide meet-ups with others going through menopause

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be kept under review and will be monitored at regular intervals to ensure its fairness and effectiveness. We reserve the right to vary the terms, conditions and procedure set out in this Policy at any time.

[insert date]

