

Menopause Policy

PHX083

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Phoenix Software is committed to ensuring that all individuals are treated fairly with dignity and respect. As an employer, Phoenix has a duty to manage age related issues effectively and to provide reasonable and appropriate support to those individuals who are experiencing the menopause. It is important for Phoenix management to understand the difficulties and anxieties of anyone going through this change and that it is managed by raising awareness with managers and colleagues.

Menopause is a natural and inevitable stage of life and while some women and other people ("other people" refers to some transgender and intersex individuals who may experience menopause or menopausal symptoms), do not suffer with symptoms, it is important to support those that do to improve their work experience. For most individuals going through the menopause, it occurs between the age of 45 and 55 although some people will experience the menopause earlier in life.

The menopause should not be a taboo or "hidden" subject and Phoenix wants all staff to understand what it is and for individuals to be able to talk about it openly without embarrassment. This is not just an issue for menopausal individuals therefore men should be equally aware also.

This policy sets out information on providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work. This policy is not contractual and does not form part of the terms and conditions of employment.

Policy Scope

This policy applies to all staff of Phoenix Software Limited.

The aim of the policy is to:

- Create an environment in which individuals can openly and comfortably instigate conversations or engage in discussions about menopause
- Ensure that everyone understands what menopause is, can confidently have good conversations and are clear on the Company's policy and that it is supported by HR
- Provide support to male and female members of staff that are coming to work impacted by the symptoms of menopause in the home environment whereby their wife, partner, or someone they live with is potentially suffering with severe menopausal symptoms
- Educate and inform managers about the potential symptoms of menopause and how they can support their colleagues
- Ensure that all employees going through the menopause or menopausal symptoms feel confident to discuss it and ask for support and any reasonable adjustments so they can continue to be successful in their role

Perimenopause

This is the time when many women and other people going through the menopause may experience menopausal symptoms but are still having periods. Some women going through the menopause can commence the premenopausal period several years prior to starting the menopause.

Menopause

The menopause is when a woman and other people going through the menopause have their last menstrual period and is no longer able to get pregnant. Menopause occurs when the ovaries stop producing eggs and as a result the levels of hormones called oestrogen and progesterone fall.

The menopause is a natural part of ageing that usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age as a woman's oestrogen levels decline. Premature Ovarian Insufficiency is when the menopause occurs under the age of 40.

In the UK, the average age for a woman to reach the menopause is 51. Most women and other people going through the menopause will experience menopausal symptoms. Some of these can be quite severe and have a significant impact on their everyday activities.

Symptoms include:

- Brain fog (memory problems, poor concentration, low motivation, forgetfulness)
- Irritability including feeling nervous, inner tension, feeling aggressive
- Depressive mood (feeling down, sad, on the verge of tears, lack of drive, mood swings)
- Anxiety (inner restlessness, feeling panicky)
- Physical and mental exhaustion (general decrease in performance)
- Bladder problems
- Digestive issues, bloating, altered bowel habits
- Weight gain
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of motivation
- Hot flushes and night sweats
- Headaches and migraines
- Joint stiffness, muscle aches and leg cramps
- Irregular and heavy periods
- Skin changes, brittle nails, facial hair

Post Menopause

Symptoms may continue on average for four years from the last period and can continue for up to twelve years.

There is potentially an increased risk of certain conditions including heart disease and osteoporosis (brittle bones) during post-menopause because of lower levels of certain hormones. These risks are higher for those who have had an early or premature menopause

Male Menopause

The male menopause differs from the female menopause in several ways. Not all men experience it, and it doesn't involve a complete shutdown of your reproductive organs. Sexual complications may arise however as a result of lowered hormone levels.

Some men develop depression, loss of sex drive, erectile dysfunction, and other physical and emotional symptoms when they reach their late 40's to early 50's.

Other symptoms common in men this age are:

- Mood swings and irritability
- Loss of muscle mass and reduced ability to exercise
- Fat redistribution such as developing a large belly or man boobs (Gynecomastia)
- A general lack of enthusiasm or energy
- Difficulty sleeping (insomnia) or increased tiredness
- Poor concentration and short-term memory

As individuals age, various aspects of the human body start to slow down. Testosterone, an androgenic hormone, is a perfect example of this, as it naturally starts to decrease with age.

Unfortunately, low testosterone levels in men can have both physical and emotional implications. The average male loses roughly 15% – 25% of their testosterone levels per year after the age of thirty.

Responsibilities of Individuals

All staff are responsible for:

- Taking personal responsibility to look after their own health
- Seeking medical advice if needed or perceived to be needed
- Being open and honest in communications with management or HR
- If an employee feels unable to speak to their line manager, they can speak to the Welfare Manager or a trusted colleague (Wellbeing Network Lead or Mental Health First Aiders)
- Contributing to a respectful and productive working environment
- Be willing to support and help colleagues
- Understanding any necessary adjustments their colleagues are receiving as a result of their menopausal symptoms

Responsibilities of Managers

All managers should:

- Familiarise themselves with the Menopause Policy
- Be ready and willing to have open discussions about menopause, appreciating the personal nature of the conversation and treating the discussion sensitively and professionally
- Consider the impact of any unexpected changes to an individual's role or work environment.

An employee with menopausal symptoms should be supported in the same way as an employee with any ongoing health problems. Small adjustments to someone's job or working pattern can help them manage their symptoms and continue to perform well in their role.

Version Control

<u>Author</u>	<u>Version</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>
Trevor Hutchinson	1.0	06/02/2023	Original Document

Document Approval

<u>Name</u>	<u>Version</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Position</u>
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