**Menopause Policy**



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It is the policy of Scientific Group to provide support and for employees and managers who are/may be experiencing issues relating to menopause.

For the purposes of this policy, menopause is the time during an individual’s life when menstruation periods permanently stop. It is defined as occurring when the individual has experienced no periods for 12 consecutive months and no other biological or psychological cause can be identified. Also referred to as ‘the change of life’, the menopause can cause a chain reaction of physical and psychological side effects to a person’s body.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to assist with creating an open and honest workplace where line managers and employees can discuss issues associated with menopause, and to ensure the necessary support is known and offered to employees when needed.

Table of Contents

* [Purpose](https://asandkcommunications.sharepoint.com/sites/SOPCentral/SitePages/Menopause-Policy.aspx#purpose)
* [Legal Obligations](https://asandkcommunications.sharepoint.com/sites/SOPCentral/SitePages/Menopause-Policy.aspx#legal-obligations)
* [Recruitment](https://asandkcommunications.sharepoint.com/sites/SOPCentral/SitePages/Menopause-Policy.aspx#recruitment)
* [Line Manager Responsibilities](https://asandkcommunications.sharepoint.com/sites/SOPCentral/SitePages/Menopause-Policy.aspx#line-manager-responsibilities)
  + [Approachability](https://asandkcommunications.sharepoint.com/sites/SOPCentral/SitePages/Menopause-Policy.aspx#approachability)
  + [Discussions](https://asandkcommunications.sharepoint.com/sites/SOPCentral/SitePages/Menopause-Policy.aspx#discussions)
* [Workplace Adjustments](https://asandkcommunications.sharepoint.com/sites/SOPCentral/SitePages/Menopause-Policy.aspx#workplace-adjustments)
* [Employee Responsibilities](https://asandkcommunications.sharepoint.com/sites/SOPCentral/SitePages/Menopause-Policy.aspx#employee-responsibilities)
  + [Reporting any issues](https://asandkcommunications.sharepoint.com/sites/SOPCentral/SitePages/Menopause-Policy.aspx#reporting-any-issues)
* [Supporting colleagues](https://asandkcommunications.sharepoint.com/sites/SOPCentral/SitePages/Menopause-Policy.aspx#supporting-colleagues)
* [Confidentiality](https://asandkcommunications.sharepoint.com/sites/SOPCentral/SitePages/Menopause-Policy.aspx#confidentiality)
* [Other information](https://asandkcommunications.sharepoint.com/sites/SOPCentral/SitePages/Menopause-Policy.aspx#other-information)

**Legal Obligations**

The Company understands our duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all of our employees under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. In addition, the Equality Act 2010 outlines that individuals must not be discriminated against due to any form of disability and we recognise that the symptoms of the menopause may constitute a disability. We are committed to ensuring appropriate support and assistance is provided to any employee who is going through the menopause.

**Recruitment**

Unless it is related to the specific requirements of the job, the company will not ask applicants at any stage of the recruitment process for information regarding any previous health issues, to ensure potential employees are not discriminated against.

**Line Manager Responsibilities**

**Approachability**

When responding to an employee experiencing difficulties caused by menopause, line managers will maintain an ‘open door’ policy so that employees feel comfortable in approaching them. They will support you to talk openly about your current situation and will not make presumptions about how it is affecting you.

**Discussions**

During any discussions, your line manager will consider your individual situation and evaluate if any adjustments can be made. Your individual needs will be addressed sensitively, and confidentiality will be maintained. Line managers will also arrange follow up sessions in order to evaluate the effectiveness of any adjustments put in place.

We understand that you may feel uncomfortable discussing personal information with your line manager. If this is the case you are encouraged to discuss your situation with another senior member of staff or People & Culture. Scientific Group has a number of support mechanisms including free access to a confidential and independent Employee Assistance Programme (details can be found via PerkBox or on the Intranet, or you can speak to People & Culture for more information). In addition, we have trained Mental Health Champions who are available to speak with you regarding any issues.

**Workplace Adjustments**

In order to assist you in your daily duties, we will explore making adjustments to your role or working environment with the aim of reducing the effect that the menopause is having on your work. We acknowledge that the menopause affects each individual in different ways so no adjustment will be made without fully discussing it with you first.

Examples of adjustments include:

* Conducting a risk assessment to identify any particular areas that are a detriment to individuals going through the menopause
* Supporting flexible working, including office based, home based working, as well as time flexibility
* Implementing further temperature control, such as access to a fan
* Assessing how work is allocated and whether the employee is affected at particular points of the day
* Allowing additional rest breaks
* Making allowances for additional needs for sickness absence

Once the adjustments are agreed, they will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure they are having the required effect.

The Company is legally obliged by the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to an employee’s role or working conditions if they have a disability that places them at a disadvantage when performing their role, and we will ensure compliance with our obligations in this regard.

**Employee Responsibilities**

**Reporting any issues**

It is important that, as an employee, you prioritise your personal health and wellbeing. If you are struggling with any aspect of your role as a result of symptoms associated with the menopause, you should report any concerns you may have to your manager, who will treat the matter with complete confidence.

Physical symptoms of the menopause can include the following:

* Hot flushes
* Insomnia
* Fatigue
* Poor concentration
* Headaches
* Skin irritation
* Urinary problems.

As a result of the above, or as an extension of the hormone imbalance, individuals going through the menopause can also experience psychological difficulties, including:

* Depression
* Anxiety
* Panic attacks
* Mood swings
* Irritability
* Problems with memory
* Loss of confidence

In order to ensure we can provide you with the best support possible we encourage you to be open and honest in these conversations.

**Supporting colleagues**

There is an expectation on all employees to conduct themselves in a helpful and open-minded manner towards colleagues.

We maintain a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment and will treat any and all complaints seriously. If you feel that you have been mistreated in any way by a colleague because of matters related to the menopause, please make your concerns known to your department head or a member of the People & Culture team.

**Confidentiality**

Information concerning an employee’s mental and physical health are classed as a special category of personal data. This information will only be disclosed to others in line with the company’s policies on data protection.

**Other information**

For further information, see:

* <https://henpicked.net/>
* [CIPD Line Manager Menopause Guide](https://asandkcommunications.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/internal/HR/ERYA_uKopBxAlP6ZPOiFNRABldI5Xt6uniBrJEOLqZR23A?e=u7wimw)
* <https://www.wellbeingofwomen.org.uk/your-health/menopause>
* Channel 4 programme: Davina McCall: Sex, Mind and the Menopause
* Channel 4 programme: Davina McCall: Sex, Myths and the Menopause