

Menopause in the Workplace Policy

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1. Introduction

Throughout this Policy, the words 'Translink' 'Company' and/or 'the Group' refer to all corporate entities under the ownership of the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC). This includes the parent company and each subsidiary either individually or taken together as a group.

2. Policy Statement

The menopause is a normal part of life for many of us; this policy acknowledges that some employees may need additional consideration, support and adjustments during the time of change before, during and after the menopause. Whilst not everyone suffers with symptoms, supporting those who do will improve their experience at work. This policy applies to all employees who may experience the menopause, including cis women (women whose sex and gender have been the same since birth), and some trans and non-binary people. Experiences and perceptions of the menopause may also differ in relation to disability, age, race, religion, sexual orientation or marital/civil partnership status. It is important to recognise that for many reasons, people's individual experiences of the menopause may differ greatly.

We are committed to promoting an inclusive and supportive working environment for all employees and creating a positive attitude towards the menopause. We are committed to ensuring that all individuals are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, in safe working environments that do not negatively impact on their symptoms. We want to ensure that all employees feel confident in discussing menopausal symptoms openly, without embarrassment and are able to ask for support and adjustments in order to continue working safely. Employees should be aware that this can be an issue for everyone.

The policy acknowledges that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution to the menopause and so it is intended as a support guide for all employees. All stakeholders agree to work proactively to make adjustments where necessary to support employees experiencing the menopause and to ensure the workplace does not make their symptoms worse.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all colleagues including those on temporary and fixed term contracts regardless of length of contract. We aim to support all staff experiencing menopausal symptoms and help colleagues and line managers understand how they can support employees experiencing such symptoms.

4. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Educate and inform managers about the potential symptoms of the menopause, and how they can support colleagues at work;
- Understand the menopause and related issues, and how they can affect staff;
- Outline support and reasonable adjustments that are available;
- Create an environment where colleagues feel confident enough to raise issues about their symptoms and ask for reasonable adjustments and additional support at work.

5. Menopause in the workplace

The menopause usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55, in the UK the average age is 51 but it can also happen much earlier. Some people may also experience a medical menopause which occurs suddenly when ovaries are damaged or removed by specific treatments such as chemotherapy,

radiotherapy or surgery. Due to a variety of factors their experience of the menopause may be different, and this should be taken into consideration when determining the required support or adjustments.

Menopause is a very individual experience and people can be affected in different ways and to different degrees, therefore different levels and types of support and adjustments may be needed.

There are different stages in the menopause as outlined below.

Perimenopause

The perimenopause is the period in a person's life when they start to experience hormonal fluctuations and changes to their periods. The average time for a person to be perimenopausal is between four to five years. During this time, periods may become increasingly heavy and irregular, meaning it is vitally important for a person experiencing symptoms to be close to toilets and where possible, shower facilities. For some people, the symptoms during this time can be worse than the actual menopause.

Menopause

Menopause is defined as a biological stage in a person's life that occurs when they stop menstruating and they reach the end of their natural reproductive life. A person is described as being menopausal when they have gone 12 months without a period and when their ovaries are no longer responsive.

Post-menopausal

This is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when a person has not had a period for 12 consecutive months. The average time for people experiencing symptoms of the menopause is five years, but many people experience symptoms for up to ten years and 3% of people will experience symptoms for the rest of their lives. Post-menopausal people have an increased risk of heart disease, diabetes and osteoporosis.

6. Why this Policy is Important

Menopausal symptoms can have a huge effect on an employee's comfort, confidence and performance when working. The number of symptoms can vary from person to person and range from very mild to severe.

Symptoms include:

- Hot flushes
- Difficulty sleeping and night sweats
- Feeling tired and lacking energy
- Feeling anxious and experience panic attacks
- Struggling to remember things, concentrate and focus
- Taking longer to recover from illness
- Irregular periods which can become heavier
- Aches and pains including muscle and joint stiffness
- Urinary problems
- Headaches including migraines
- Low mood and depression

N.B. This is not an exhaustive list.

This policy sets out the support available to employees and is designed to ensure employees suffering with menopausal symptoms can feel empowered to ask for adjustments to ease such symptoms without embarrassment, can carry out their daily role in a safe working environment whether at home or in the

office, and can have open discussions with colleagues and line managers so that they feel part of an inclusive work culture

Appendix 1 outlines symptoms of menopause and possible adjustments which managers and employees can consider when agreeing support measures.

7. Roles and responsibilities

Line Managers

It is recognised that the menopause is a very personal experience and different adjustments and levels of support may be needed for different individuals. Line managers should seek to provide appropriate support and adjustments when needed to help employees deal with issues arising from the menopause.

All line managers should:

- Familiarise themselves with the Menopause in the Workplace Policy and Management Guidelines
- Be aware of the support Translink has available and the terms of this policy
- Be ready and willing to have open discussions about menopause, appreciating the personal and individual nature of the conversation, and treating the discussion sensitively and professionally
- Signpost and review potential support together, before agreeing with the individual how best they can be supported, and any adjustments required
- Record adjustments agreed, and actions to be implemented
- Ensure ongoing dialogue and review dates
- Ensure that all agreed adjustments are adhered to
- Complete a risk assessment to consider the specific needs of menopausal employees

Where adjustments are unsuccessful, or if symptoms are proving more problematic, the Line Manager may:

- Liaise with Human Resources who may recommend a referral to Occupational Health
- Review Occupational Health advice and implement any recommendations, where reasonably practical
- Confirm the agreed actions with the employee and continue to review regularly.

Employees

It is recognised that employees have a responsibility for their health, safety and welfare but that workplace demands can complicate this.

All employees are responsible for:

- Taking a personal responsibility to look after their health
- Being open and honest in conversations with managers/HR and Occupational Health – some employees may require additional support during conversations with their manager so they may be accompanied at any meetings by their TU Rep or a work colleague. See section 8 for other support available.
- Contributing to a respectful and productive working environment
- Being willing to help and support their colleagues
- Keeping their line manager informed to ensure that the right support is being provided.

Employees are asked to:

- Educate themselves about the menopause and become familiar with the terms of this policy
- Understand what information is available
- Seek advice and guidance from available support provided

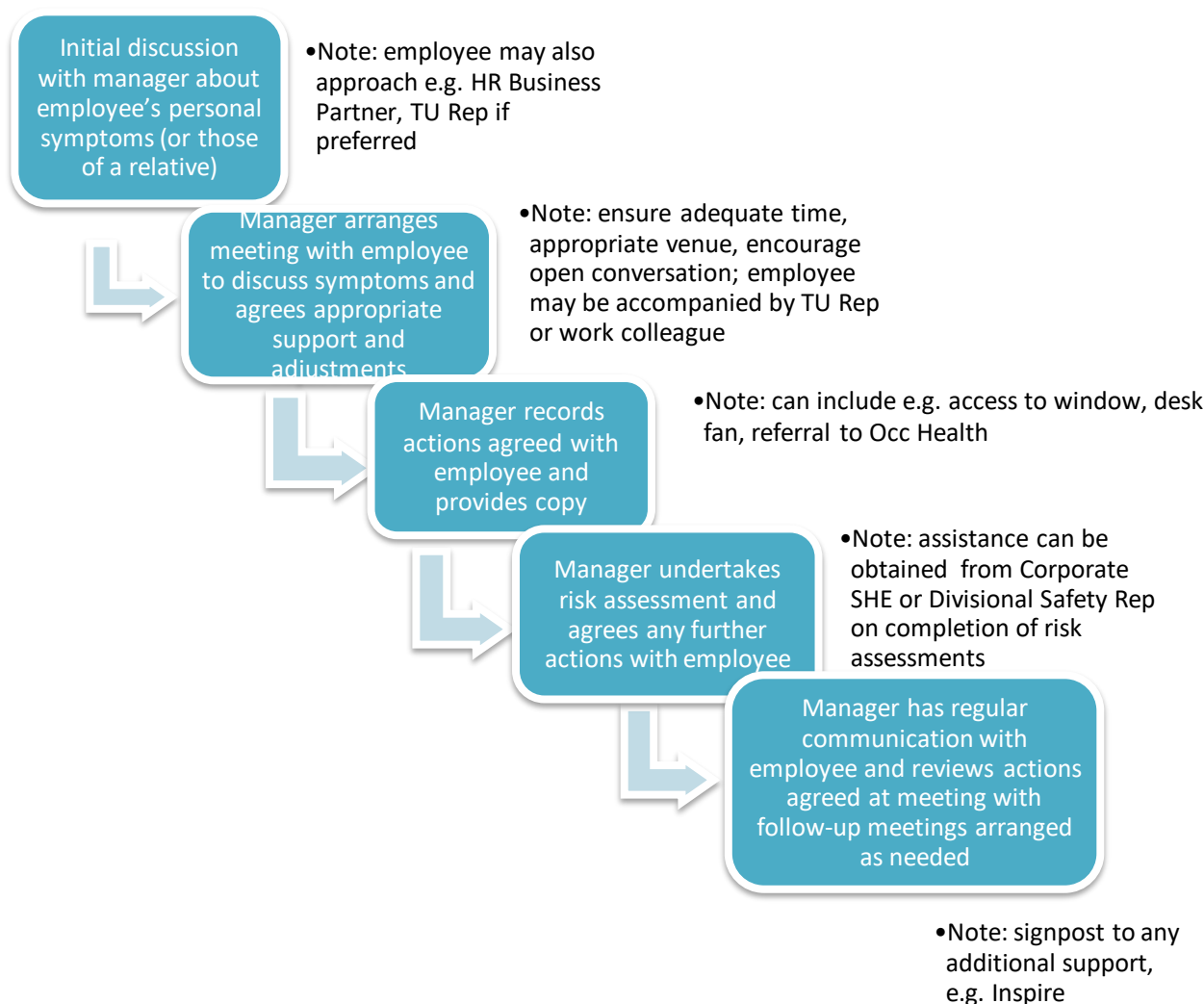
Human Resources

Human Resources will:

- promote a positive, open attitude to menopause in the workplace and support this with appropriate wellbeing initiatives
- Offer guidance to managers on the interpretation of this Policy and the Management Guidelines;
- Provide regular training and awareness sessions for managers and staff;
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy

8. Procedure for facilitating employees experiencing symptoms of menopause in the workplace

Note: the procedure below is applicable for employees who are experiencing symptoms of menopause. An employee may also wish to discuss issues involving a family member for which support is also available.



Intrinsic throughout this process is the need for confidentiality, sensitivity, and professionalism. Agreement should be sought with the employee about who should be informed.

9. Access to support

Translink aims to facilitate an open, understanding working environment and so we encourage employees to inform their line manager that they are experiencing menopausal symptoms at an early stage to ensure that symptoms are treated, and the necessary support made available. Employees who do not wish to discuss the issue with their direct line manager may find it helpful to have an initial discussion with:

- An HR Business Partner
- A trade union representative
- Our Employee Support Officer
- Inspire confidential helpline, or log into the Inspire Support Hub
- Occupational Health Advisor
- A Mental Health First Aider (the full list can be found on Ulink or the Spirit App)
- A Wellbeing Champion who has appropriate knowledge and training
- Or seek further information in the Menopause Awareness e-learning on the Learning Management System.

10. Workplace Factors

This policy recognises that there are many workplace factors which can make working life more difficult for employees experiencing the menopause and which may make symptoms worse. Translink will try to address these, where possible, for the individual needs of someone going through the menopause, such as:

- Providing risk assessments
 - Assistance can be obtained from Corporate Safety or Divisional Reps on undertaking risk assessments if required; however, employee confidentiality should be maintained throughout the process
 - Alternatively, visit the Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland website at <https://www.hseni.gov.uk/topic/risk-assessment>.
- Raising awareness of the menopause and its symptoms
 - This will be done via online learning, manager and employee menopause workshops and promoted throughout the year as part of our employee wellbeing programme
- Having wellbeing champions available
 - A number of wellbeing champions will attend specific menopause training and will be able to provide support across the business

We are committed to taking proactive steps to eliminate the factors that may negatively impact on the menopause.

11. Additional Self-help Measures

There are additional self-help measures that employees can take, such as:

- healthy eating – a balanced diet can help alleviate some symptoms and keep bones healthy
- eating regularly
- drinking plenty of water – always make sure to carry a bottle
- wearing natural fibres – employees can avail of alternative uniform garments and should contact the HR Uniform Administrator on 07815484307 to discuss their requirements
- exercising regularly
- consulting a GP on the management of the menopause
- carry a minifan or ‘Magicool’ to help reduce hot flushes
- ensuring adequate rest and relaxation

12. Reasonable Adjustments for Managing Menopause Symptoms

Translink recognises that flexibility is key to anyone suffering as a result of transitioning through the menopause and a range of policies are available to assist in supporting an employee including Attendance Management and Rehabilitation Policy, Flexible Working Policy and Sick Pay Scheme. Time off should not be treated more or less favourably than time off for any other appointment or medical procedure, in accordance with the applicable Agreement for your job role and with reference to the Attendance Management and Rehabilitation Policy.

Any and all options available should be discussed and agreed with the employee’s line manager and the employee and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure these adjustments continue to meet the needs of the employee.

Employees are encouraged to be open about the reason for their menopause-related leave with their line manager so reasonable adjustments can be considered.

13. Legislation

Northern Ireland’s employment laws:

1. Equal Pay Act (NI) 1970
2. Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976
3. Fair Employment & Treatment Order (NI) 1998
4. Disability Discrimination Act 1995
5. Race Relations (NI) Order 1997
6. Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2003
7. Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006
8. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000, NI Regulation 3(1);
9. Health and Safety, NI Order, 1978;
10. The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) requires employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all workers. Under the Act employers are required to do risk assessments under the Management Regulations which should include specific risks to all employed menopausal employees.
11. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998;
12. Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999.

14. Related Policies

- Attendance Management & Rehabilitation Policy;
- Dignity at Work Policy;
- Flexible Working Policy;
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Sick Pay Scheme

15. External Support

All colleagues can access confidential 24/7, 365 days a year counselling by contacting Inspire, the Employee Assistance Programme helpline on 0808 800 0002.

Other routes of support and/or information include:

BITCNI	Digital menopause toolkit, providing a range of clickable links that signpost users to a variety of sources. These are of benefit to employees and line managers.	The Menopause and Me Digital Toolkit Business in the Community (bitcni.org.uk)
Daisy Network	A charity for those with Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI). Created to provide support to women, along with their families and partners, who have been diagnosed with POI.	The Daisy Network (www.Daisynetwork.org)
The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists	Offer further information in a dedicated section of their website	https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/menopause/
Hysterectomy Association	This provides an insight into surgically induced menopause as a result of having a hysterectomy	https://www.hysterectomy-association.org.uk
Derry Well Women	Offer a free Menopause Clinic. This clinic is by appointment only. It is open to any employee going through the menopause who wishes to discuss care or treatment.	(By appointment) Call (028) 71 360 777 or email info@derrywellwoman.org
Chartered Institution of Personnel Development (CIPD)	Offer interactive information to both Line Managers and Staff	Let's talk menopause CIPD Guidance (www.CIPD.co.uk)
NICE	Guidance on menopause diagnosis and management.	NICE www.NICE.org.uk
NHS	Guidance on menopause symptoms and treatment	Menopause - NHS (www.nhs.uk)
Henpicked	Menopause in the Workplace	Menopause and work Menopause Hub - Expert information, useful resources, top tips and women's stories (henpicked.net/menopause-hub/)
Menopause Experts	Subscribe to a free magazine which provides understanding, support and guidance – supporting women going through hormonal change, at any age	Menopause Experts Award-Winning Resources For Women (https://menopauseexperts.com/)

Appendix 1 – Menopause symptoms and Possible Adjustments

Symptoms	Examples of Workplace Factors which could worsen or interact with symptoms	Possible adjustments – can be considered if feasible
Daytime sweats, hot flushes, palpitations	Lack of access to rest breaks or suitable break areas. Hot flushes and facial redness may cause women to feel self-conscious, or the sensation may affect concentration or train of thought.	Be flexible about additional breaks. Allow time out and access to fresh air. Quiet area/room. Where possible, ensure cover is available so workers can leave their posts if needed.
Night time sweats and hot flushes. Insomnia or sleep disturbance	Rigid start/finish times and lack of flexible working options may increase fatigue at work due to lack of sleep	Consider temporary adjustment of hours to accommodate any difficulties. Flexible working. Option of alternative tasks/duties.
Urinary problems; for example, increased frequency, urgency, and increased risk of urinary infections	Lack of access to adequate toilet facilities may increase the risk of infection and cause distress, embarrassment and an increase in stress levels. Staff member may need to access toilet facilities more frequently, may need to drink more fluids and may feel unwell.	Easy access to toilet and washroom facilities. Allow for more frequent breaks during work to go to the toilet. Easy access to supply of cold drinking water. Take account of mobile workers schedules and allow them to access facilities during their working day.
Irregular and/or heavy periods	Lack of access to adequate toilet facilities may increase the risk of infection and cause distress, embarrassment and an increase in stress levels. Staff member may need to access toilet and washroom facilities more frequently.	Easy access to well-maintained toilet and washroom or shower facilities. Allow for more frequent breaks in work to go to the toilet/ washroom. Sanitary products readily available. Take account of mobile workers schedules and allow them to access facilities during their working day. Where possible, ensure cover is available so staff can leave their posts if needed.
Skin irritation, dryness or itching	Unsuitable workplace temperatures and humidity may increase skin irritation, dryness and itching. There may be discomfort, an increased risk of infection and a reduction in the barrier function of skin.	Comfortable working temperatures and humidity. Easy access to well-maintained toilet and washroom or shower facilities.
Muscular aches and bones and joint pains	Lifting and moving, as well as work involving repetitive movements or adopting static postures, may be more	Make any necessary adjustments through review of risk assessments and work schedules/tasks and keep under review. Consider providing alternative lower-risk

	uncomfortable and there may be an increased risk of injury.	tasks. Follow Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance and advice on manual handling and preventing MSDs (musculoskeletal disorders).
Headaches	Headaches may be triggered or worsened by many workplace factors such as artificial lighting, poor air quality, exposure to chemicals, screen work, workplace stress, poor posture/ unsuitable workstations, unsuitable uniforms or workplace temperatures	Comfortable working temperatures, humidity and good air quality. Access to natural light and ability to adjust artificial light. Allow additional rest breaks. Quiet area/room. Carry out Display Screen Equipment (DSE) and stress risk assessments
Dry Eyes	Unsuitable workplace temperatures/humidity, poor air quality and excessive screen work may increase dryness in the eyes, discomfort, eye strain and increase the risk of infection	Comfortable working temperatures, humidity and good air quality. Allow additional breaks from screen based work. Carry out DSE risk assessments
Psychological symptoms, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depression • Anxiety • Panic Attacks • Mood changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of confidence 	Excessive workloads, unsupportive management and colleagues, perceived stigma around the menopause, bullying and harassment and any form of work-related stress may exacerbate symptoms. Stress can have wide-ranging negative effects on mental and physical health and wellbeing. Performance and workplace relationships may be affected.	Carry out a stress risk assessment and address work-related stress through implementation of the HSE’s management standards. Ensure that workers will not be penalised or suffer detriment if they require adjustments to workload, tasks or performance management targets. Ensure that managers understand the menopause and are prepared to discuss any concerns that staff may have in a supportive manner. Ensure managers have a positive attitude and understand that they should offer adjustments to workload and tasks if needed. Flexible/home working. Ensure that staff are trained in mental health awareness. Raise general awareness of issues around the menopause so colleagues are more likely to be supportive. Quiet area/room. Refer to Inspire for one to one confidential support.
Psychological symptoms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memory problems • Difficulty concentrating 	Certain tasks may become more difficult to carry out temporarily; for example, learning new skills (may be compounded by lack of sleep and fatigue), performance may	Carry out a stress risk assessment and address work-related stress through implementation of the HSE’s management standards. Reassure workers that they will not be penalised or suffer detriment if they require adjustments to workload or

	<p>be affected and work related stress may exacerbate these symptoms. Loss of confidence may result</p>	<p>performance management targets. Ensure that managers understand the menopause and are prepared to discuss any concerns that staff may have in a supportive manner. Ensure managers have a positive attitude and understand that they should offer adjustments to workload and tasks if needed. Reduce demands if workload identified as an issue. Provide additional time to complete tasks if needed, or consider substituting with alternative tasks. Flexible/home working. Offer and facilitate alternative methods of communicating tasks and planning of work to assist memory. Quiet area/room. Refer to Inspire for one to one confidential support.</p>
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Note: this list is not exhaustive – reasonable adjustments should be considered for each individual job role.