CHILDREN'S HOSPICE ASSOCIATION SCOTLAND

HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY NO: 24

MENOPAUSE POLICY
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INTRODUCTION

Children's Hospices Across Scotland (CHAS) is committed to ensuring the health, safety and Well-being of its employees, volunteers and guests, ensuring everyone is treated with dignity and respect. One area that CHAS is supporting of is recognizing that staff, colleagues and family members would like further awareness around the menopause, how they experience it, how we support our colleagues and friends going through it and how we might begin to recognise and understand a little better.

The menopause is a natural process and for many can be positively managed through lifestyle adjustments. However, CHAS recognises that for some the menopause is not always an easy transition. Some employees may need additional considerations to support and improve their experience at work and CHAS recognizes that we have an increasingly female workforce over the age of 45, with many colleagues working through the natural age of perimenopause and beyond. Therefore there is a need for clear guidance in this area. With this in mind, the organisation is committed to supporting employees who are affected in any way by the menopause and to support and inform managers so that employees reporting issues are treated fairly and given appropriate support. This Policy is inclusive of all gender identities including trans and non-binary employees. Guidance from the Faculty of Occupational Medicine (FOM), the British Menopause Society (BMS) National Institute for Care and Excellence (NICE) and the GG&C Menopause Service has been used to inform this Policy

AIM

The aim of this Policy is –

- To support employees to remain at work
- To raise awareness of menopause, the related issues and how this can affect employees.
- To break the stigma and taboo surrounding the menopause at work and to promote an environment in which employees feel confident in discussing menopausal issues and ask for support and adjustments, if required.
- To provide guidance and direction on how to support employees who raise menopausal issues not only for the individuals experiencing the menopause but also those who may be affected indirectly which may include managers, colleagues, partners and family members.
- To inform managers of the potential symptoms of menopause, how this can affect employees and what can be done to support individuals including reasonable adjustments.

LEGISLATION

The Health and Safety at work act (1974) requires employers to ensure the health safety and welfare of all workers. Within this, employers are required to perform risk assessments which should include any specific risks to menopausal employees. The menopause is also an equalities issue. Under the Equality Act (2010), employers have a duty not to discriminate in terms of age, sex and disability. Detrimental treatment related to the menopause could represent direct or indirect sex discrimination on any or all of these protected characteristics.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all workers of CHAS who work across the Organisaton. It includes permanent and fixed-term employees, members of staff on bank contracts, those working on behalf of other agencies, those on secondment to CHAS, volunteers, and those on work experience or training placements.

DEFINITIONS

Defining the Menopause

Menopause – The menopause is a natural part of ageing and refers to the time in life when periods stop and the natural reproductive cycle ends. It usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 with the average age being 51.

Premature ovarian insufficiency (premature menopause) – Approximately 1 in 100 affected people will experience menopause before 40 years of age (naturally or as an effect of a medical condition or treatment).

Perimenopause – the time leading up to menopause when menopausal symptoms can be experienced. Symptoms can start a few months or even years before periods stop.

Post-menopause – The time after the last period.

SYMPTOMS OF MENOPAUSE

According to the National Institute for Health Care and Excellence (NICE) the most commonly reported symptoms of menopause (hot flushes and night sweats) can occur in approximately 75% of cases with 25% being severely affected.

Symptoms are associated to a decrease in the body's production of the hormone estrogen. Other factors such as diet and exercise, lifestyle and medication can also influence the symptoms. It is important to note that not

everyone will notice symptoms or need help and support. The most common symptoms include:

• Hot flushes
• Night sweats
• Sleep disruption
• Fatigue
• Difficulty concentrating/memory problems/loss of confidence
• Mood disturbances including anxiety and depression
• Headaches
• Irregular periods/heavy bleeding
• Bone and Joint problems

Symptoms on average continue for 2-4 years however some individuals will experience symptoms for longer.

The nature of symptoms will vary from mild to severe. These symptoms can have a significant adverse impact on the quality of both personal and working life.

It is also important to note that the onset of menopause symptoms can also coincide with other health issues as well as potential caring responsibilities for elderly parents/relatives/children.

RECOGNISING WORKPLACE EFFECTS OF THE MENOPAUSE

Managers should be aware that the menopause in it severest form could come to light in various ways. The following characteristics, especially when arising in combinations, could indicate that support is needed.

Absenteeism

- Instances of unauthorised leave
- Leaving work early
- Lateness (including on returning from lunch)
- Increased levels of sickness absence
- Vagueness around reasons for absence
- Unscheduled short-term absences, with or without explanation

Possible Increased Accident Level

- At work
- Elsewhere, e.g. driving, at home

Possible Changes in Work Performance

- Difficulty in concentration and/or disinterest in work
- Work requires increased effort
- Individual tasks may take more time
- Problems with remembering instructions or possible increased mistakes
- Reduction or loss in confidence

Potential Mood Swings

- Irritability
- Depression
- General confusion

Physicality

- Flushed appearance
- Sweats / perspiration
- Reduction or loss in confidence

Self-referral to Support Services

In some instances, employees may come forward voluntarily and seek help themselves. In this situation employees can contact Validium directly in confidence or they can speak to their line manager and/or the HR Manager for guidance.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees - All employees are responsible for

• Taking reasonable responsibility and care for their own health and well-being (see appendix 2 for sources of information and support).

• Being open to having conversations with managers. If for any reason they feel unable to speak to their manager they can also speak to (Occupational Health Provider/Employee Assistance Programme, Validium, GPs, Human Resources, Trade Unions/Professional Organisations)

• Upholding a positive working environment treating others with dignity and respect

Utilise the policy appropriately.

Line Managers - All line managers will

• Familiarise themselves with the Menopause Policy (see section 8 for other policies and guidance which may also link to this)

• Be willing to have open discussions with employees about changes in their health including issues relating to the Menopause, treat the discussion sensitively and recognise that each individual's experience may differ.

• Use the guidance in section 9 to inform the discussion, reviewing together before agreeing with the individual how best they can be supported.

• Use Appendix 1 to record a summary of the discussion and any agreed actions or adjustments.

• Ensure on-going communication and agree a plan for review where appropriate.

• Implement agreed adjustments

• If adjustments have not been successful and/or a member of staff is reporting on-going difficulties or concerns about their health at work consider a referral to Occupational Health for further advice.

Human Resources, L&D and ED&I will -

• Offer support to managers and employees on the interpretation of this Policy.

• Promote awareness-raising activities including training and education for employees and managers

Occupational Health & Employee Assistance Programme/EAP will -

• Provide support and information to employees who are referred to the service (either self-referral or management referral) to discuss health related issues as a result of menopause.

• Provide support and advice to employees, managers and HR in relation to workplace adjustments, if required.

• Signpost to appropriate sources of help and advice (see Appendix 2)

GUIDANCE FOR MANAGER DISCUSSIONS WITH EMPLOYEES

Regular, informal conversations between manager and employee can enable discussions about issues related to menopause. One of the most valuable things a manager can do is listen and respond sympathetically if issues relating to menopause are reported. These conversations can assist to

identify support at work which can make a real difference with how employees cope with menopause.

This may enable them to continue working well, productively and to remain at work. It is important to note that employees experiencing menopausal issues (directly or indirectly) may feel uncomfortable or embarrassed to approach their manager however, if a manager is aware of the symptoms associated with the menopause and how this can affect a person, this can greatly assist in promoting an environment where employees feel more confident to approach their manager and seek support, if required. If an employee wishes to talk about changes in health including symptoms of menopause it is important to:

• Encourage the employee to discuss any relevant health concerns with their GP practice.
• Maintain confidentiality when handling health information (seek a private room/office and ensure any records are stored in a safe and confidential manner).
• Allow for sufficient time to have the conversation and encourage the employee to be open and honest when discussing any difficulties they may be experiencing.
• Explore with them ways in which they can be supported, if required
• Agree an action plan, record the outcome of the discussion and agree a review timeframe (please see Appendix 1 for a Discussion template).
• Provide details of support and external services available (Appendix 2)

SUGGESTED ADJUSTMENTS TO CONSIDER

Hot Flushes – Can result in employees feeling uncomfortable and less tolerant of workplace temperatures.
• Review control of workplace temperature and ventilation – consider desktop fan in an office or locate desk closer to an opening window or away from a heat source.
• Access to drinking water
• Access to washroom facilities (take into consideration employees who travel or work in multiple locations)
• Avoid tight fitting uniforms/clothes. Preference given to natural fibres rather than manmade fibres.
• For staff who are not required to wear uniforms recommend loose fitting layers and cotton fabrics rather than manmade fibres.
• Access to a rest area/room for breaks if work involves prolonged periods of standing or sitting.
• Access to a quiet room/area for a short break to manage a severe hot flush.
Night Sweats/Sleep disruption – Can result in increased tiredness and fatigue.
• Consider flexible working hours or temporary shift changes to accommodate

difficulties concentrating/Memory problems – Performance may be affected
• Regular supervision/review with manager for additional support, if required
• Review task allocation and workload
• Consider flexibility in working pattern or shift pattern; for example if concentration is better or worse at certain times of the day.
• Offer quiet place to work (if feasible; for example in office environments)

Low mood/Depression/anxiety/panic attacks/loss of confidence – Can make work tasks more difficult to carry out and performance may be affected.
• Provide opportunity to openly discuss any concerns/difficulties
• Regular supervision/review with manager for additional support, if required
• Access to a quiet area for a short break if required (allowing time for simple relaxation and mindfulness techniques)
• Encourage that they discuss symptoms with their GP practice
• Signpost to sources of support including counselling/Living Life/Remploy (see Appendix 2)
• Consider referral to Occupational Health (see Appendix 2 for contact details)

Headaches
• Access to drinking water
• Access to quiet space or area for short break to reduce noise impact and to take medication if required
Alter lighting where possible and if needed, no harsh lighting

Bone and Joint problems
– certain moving and handling tasks may be more uncomfortable
• Local risk assessments and moving and handling assessments, if required.
• Consider temporary adjustments or modifications to work tasks

Personal/intimate issues
• Irregular/heavy bleeding
• Access to toilet and washroom facilities
• May require more frequent short breaks
Advise to attend GP practice for advice
• Signpost to Menopause information sheet from the Menopause Service accessed via the link here - menopause-services

RELATED POLICIES

• Dignity at Work Policy
• Working from Home Policy
• Managing Attendance Policy
• Health and Safety
• Flexible Working Policy

ASSISTANCE

Where employees require further support, this will be on the understanding that:

- CHAS will give reasonable time off (e.g. to attend appointments) to employees.
- Where support may come in the form of adjustment to duties in the short term or a temporary redeployment, line managers alongside the HR Team will review the full circumstances and agree an appropriate course of action in conjunction with the employee. This may include the offer of suitable short term alternative employment.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

CHAS will provide training for appropriate managers and staff in recognising and responding to employee's needs. CHAS will attempt to provide health educational initiatives to raise awareness of the policy and risks associated.

MONITORING AND POLICY REVIEW

Records will be kept by the HR department of all relevant cases and this policy will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis taking into account experience gained from its operation, employment legislation or advice obtained from emerging good practice.

APPENDIX 1
Confidential discussion template

Name:

Date of Birth:

Job Title:

Department:

Manager's Name:

Date of Discussion:

Summary of Discussion -

Agreed Actions/Adjustments –

Date of next review meeting:

Signed (Member of Staff)……

Signed (Manager) ……

APPENDIX 2
Sources of information/support

If you have troublesome menopausal symptoms please arrange to see your GP practice in the first instance who will be able to discuss management options with you.

Speak to your line manager or e-mail HR@Chas.org.uk

Useful links-

Menopause Matters https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/ NHS Choices

The Daisy Network (support for early menopause/premature ovarian insufficiency) https://www.daisynetwork.org

Menopause Services https://www.sandyford.org/sexual-health-information/fertility/menopause/

The Menopause Exchange https://menopause-exchange.co.uk/

https://breathingspace.scot/living-life/

Women's Health concern https://www.womens-health-concern.org/

Remploy (mental health support service) https://www.remploy.co.uk/employers/mental-health-and-wellbeing/workplacemental-health-support-service-employers

Henpicked (community site for women over 40) https://henpicked.net/

Menopause Café (gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss menopause) https://www.menopausecafe.net/

Menopause Service information leaflet can be accessed via the following link https://www.sandyford.org/media/3728/menopause-services-nhsggc-pil-12-3- 2019.pdf

References -

1 Faculty of Occupational Health Medicine (FOM) Guidelines on Menopause in the Workplace http://www.fom.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Policy-on-menopause-and-the-workplacev6.pdf

2 National Institute for Health Care and Excellence (NICE) Policy on Menopause Diagnosis and Management https://cks.nice.org.uk/menopause

3 Menopause Service GG&C https://www.sandyford.org/media/3728/menopause-services-nhsggc-pil-12-3- 2019.pdf

4 British Menopause Society https://thebms.org.uk/

5 Royal College of Nursing (RCN) The menopause and Work: Policy for RCN Representatives https://www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/publications/pub-005467

6 CIPD Menopause at Work A Practical Guide for Managers https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/menopause-guide_tcm18-55426.pdf