

Menopause Policy

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Contents

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Purpose | 3 |
| 2. Scope | 3 |
| 3. Objectives | 3 |
| 4. Definitions | 3 |
| 5. The Legislative | 4 |
| 6. Support Measures | 4 |
| 7. Employee Responsibilities | 5 |
| 8. Manager Responsibilities | 5 |
| 9. Monitoring and Review | 6 |
| 10. Confidentiality | 6 |
| 11. Contact Information | 6 |
| 12. Related Policies | 6 |

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Bolton Impact Trust (BIT) supports employees who are experiencing the menopause and fosters a supportive and inclusive workplace environment. This policy outlines the measures BIT will take to assist employees dealing with menopause symptoms, ensuring they feel comfortable and supported.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Bolton Impact Trust, including full-time, part-time, temporary, and contract staff.

3. Objectives

- To raise awareness about the menopause and its potential impact on employees.
- To provide guidance and support to employees experiencing menopause symptoms.
- To promote a supportive and inclusive working environment.
- To outline the responsibilities of managers and employees in supporting those affected by the menopause.
- To ensure that conditions in the workplace do not make menopausal symptoms worse and that appropriate adjustments and support are put in place, recognising that the menopause and perimenopause is an individual experience and therefore there is no 'one size fits all' solution.
- To reduce sickness absence due to menopausal symptoms and retain valued staff in the workplace.

4. Definitions

According to the World Health Organisation the Menopause is, "The permanent cessation of menstruation due to loss of ovarian follicular activity". It can affect women aged between 40 and 60 but usually occurs between the ages of 45 to 55 with the average age being 51. The transition can last several years typically between four to eight years.

There is usually a gradual onset of symptoms and women can start to experience symptoms early, sometimes before the age of 40, during what is known as the perimenopausal stage. Women can also experience symptoms for about one year after the actual Menopause stage during the postmenopausal stage.

Younger women can also experience early Menopause triggered due to certain medical conditions or treatment. About 80% of women at Menopause stages will experience some symptoms. Everyone's Menopause experience will differ with the range and severity of symptoms varying widely from person to person.

Physical and psychological symptoms can include:

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| Hot flushes | Anxiety | Joint stiffness, aches and pains |
| Night sweats | Depression | Headaches |
| Heart palpitations | Difficulty concentrating or focusing | Urinary problems |
| Insomnia | Reduced memory | Gastrointestinal issues |
| Fatigue | Irritability and mood changes | Weight gain |
| Heavy or light periods | Vertigo | Dizziness |

Menopausal symptoms can have a significant impact on a woman's experience, attendance and performance at work. Symptoms can make employees unwell, affecting mental health, losing confidence to do their job and have a detrimental impact on their performance with some feeling that they have no option but to leave their job.

5. The Legislative

Bolton Impact Trust undertakes to comply with its legal obligations as set out below:

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 requires employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all workers. Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, employers are required to undertake general risk assessments which should include specific risks to those experiencing the menopause, see section 5.3.

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination against people on the grounds of certain 'protected characteristics' including sex, age and disability. Conditions linked to the menopause may meet the definition of an 'impairment' under the Equality Act and require reasonable adjustments.

6. Support Measures

6.1. Awareness and Training

- Training for Managers: Managers will receive advice and guidance throughout the year from internal and external sources on menopause awareness, understanding its symptoms, and learning how to support employees effectively.
- Information Sharing and Resources: BIT will provide informational resources to educate all staff about the menopause and share resources such as posters and leaflets that can be displayed in staff areas and toilets.

6.2. Flexible Working Arrangements

- Flexible Hours: Employees experiencing menopause symptoms may request flexible working hours to manage their symptoms more effectively. Details on making a flexible working request can be found in the associated policy. (Flexible working request policy & procedure)
- Appointments: BIT will allow attendance at menopause related appointments where operationally viable. Details on how to request a Leave of absence can be found in the associated policy. (Leave of absence Policy).

6.3. Workplace Adjustments

- All employees affected by the menopause can complete reasonable adjustments request to help them manage the symptoms of the menopause.
- Comfortable Work Environment: BIT will make reasonable adjustments to the workplace, such as providing fans, the opening of windows and ensuring a comfortable room temperature as well as access to fresh drinking water.
- Access to Facilities: Employees will have access to appropriate facilities for washing and sanitary purposes and if necessary, the ability to take breaks to manage symptoms.

6.4. Health and Wellbeing Support

- Menopause Champions: BIT will provide Menopause Trained Champions to offer support to those employees experiencing the symptoms of the menopause. They will be trained externally by an appropriate provider.
- Risk Assessments: BIT will complete individual menopause risk assessments where appropriate.
- Occupational Health: Employees will have access to occupational health services for advice and support regarding menopause symptoms.
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP): BIT offers a confidential EAP that provides counselling and support services for employees experiencing menopause-related issues. Employees can ask for a referral if they require it.

7. Employee Responsibilities

- Open Communication: Employees are encouraged to communicate openly with their managers or HR about their needs and any adjustments required.
- Utilising Resources: Employees should take advantage of the available resources and support programs offered by BIT.

8. Manager Responsibilities

- Supportive Approach: Managers should approach conversations about the menopause with sensitivity and understanding, maintaining confidentiality at all times.
- Implementing Adjustments: Managers are responsible for facilitating reasonable workplace adjustments and ensuring that employees' needs are met.
- Policy: Managers must understand the menopause policy and how to implement it.
- Performance Management: Managers must understand that the menopause can affect the performance management of an employee. Managers undertaking performance management will be made aware of any known menopause related issues/symptoms prior to meetings taking place and will take these into consideration. Employees also have a responsibility to raise any menopause related issues if they feel it is relevant to the performance management process. If necessary appropriate reasonable adjustments will be discussed relevant to the employee particular situation.

9. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and to incorporate any legislative changes or feedback from employees. The HR department will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and making necessary adjustments.

10. Confidentiality

All discussions and disclosures about the menopause will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Information will only be shared with relevant parties on a need-to-know basis, and with the employee's consent.

11. Contact Information

Employees seeking support or further information about this policy can contact the HR & People Manager or the Trust Leadership Team.

12. Related Policies:

- Flexible Working
- Health & Safety
- Attendance management
- Leave of Absence
- Appraisal
- Equality

By implementing this policy, Bolton Impact Trust aims to create a supportive workplace that acknowledges and accommodates the challenges associated with the menopause, ensuring all employees feel valued and supported.