



## Service Policy Menopause Support

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Guidance document		Menopause guidance	ED&I portal
SI	0853	Capability	Portal
SI	0852	Absence Management	Portal

### Distribution List:

Name	Position	Department

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### Target Audience:

All MFRS	Principal Officers	Senior Officers	Operational Crews	Fire Safety	Community Fire Safety	Support Staff
x						

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Title

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## Menopause Policy

### 1. Policy Introduction and Background:

This policy outlines to all employees and managers the ways in which we can support employees during their menopause. The menopause and any related symptoms are often seen as a taboo, with both the women experiencing them and those around them often shying away from discussing the topic or any support that may be needed.

The aim of MFRS' approach is reducing the embarrassment that some people can feel when talking about the menopause.

Its symptoms can affect any employees at any time, including women, Trans and intersex people. For ease of reading, the female pronoun and noun is used throughout to reflect the biological background to menopause.

The menopause is a health and wellbeing concern for all employees due to its direct and indirect impact and needs sensitive handling. Having early and regular follow up conversations with women to understand their individual needs can help to put support and procedures in place to enable a woman to do her job effectively.

The Service pays for HRT prescriptions, however it recognises that not all women can benefit from this forward thinking assistance and has therefore devised a range of options from an organisational to individual level of action that may benefit each individual situation.

### 2. Policy Explanation:

The Service has adopted a cafeteria approach to support a woman through her menopause. The suite of options is branded as "Your Menopause" to reflect that each woman has a completely different experience and that this experience can change over time. This meets best practice guidance as detailed in the recent House of Commons Report of the Women and Equality Committee' Menopause and the Workplace Survey results (2022).

Not only are there sensible employee relationship and organisational benefits to have an employee performing to their best, if a woman is disadvantaged or treated less favourably

because of her menopause symptoms, this could be discriminatory if connected to a protected characteristic.

Menopause can be a frightening or an unsettling time for an individual and it is therefore critical that an employee feels comfortable speaking to her manager about the symptoms she is experiencing. We want our employees to feel supported in work and will work with them to reduce the detrimental impacts that some women can experience in their menopause.

The main problems frequently reported in relation to work are;

- poor concentration,
- tiredness,
- poor memory,
- feeling low/depressed and,
- lowered confidence and self-esteem.
- Mood swings
- Temperature control

Having a suite of options can therefore assist women and their managers to mitigate the issues above and to help them to contribute in a meaningful way in work.

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### **3. Policy Implementation:**

People and Organisational Development:

This team develops organisation-wide policies and procedures to protect and promote the wellbeing of employees, assist line managers in supporting individuals, and liaise as appropriate with occupational health and other medical professionals, to help employees to maintain good physical and psychological health. The team will;

- Raise greater awareness and understanding through guidance for line managers, which

will assist in understanding the impact of the menopause and what simple adjustments can be made to support women to remain in work.

- Raise awareness with all staff through campaigns, demonstrating our positive attitude to issues associated with the menopause and emphasising it is not something to be embarrassed about. A set of workshops are being designed; one solely for women, one for managers and a mixed session for any employee. An Occupational Health Nurse and a member of the POD team will run these on an ongoing basis.
- Continue to provide information for female staff on how they can get support for any issues that arise because of the menopause. This is in the form of a guidance document which is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Signpost to a Fast Facts for Women information guide about the menopause. This provides the information women need to have an informed discussion with their healthcare professional and to help them choose how they want to manage their menopause transition.  
<http://intranetportal/sites/smd/equalityanddiversity/Menopause%20lounge%20Library/Fast%20Facts%20for>
- Consider temporary adjustments in absence triggers, which would be based on the professional advice of the Service Doctor and reviewed annually, and would meet our obligations under then Equality Act.
- Develop an E-Learning module in Learn Pro, utilising elements of the Davina McCall Menopause programme which discussed menopause in a simple but effective manner.
- Offer a voluntary over 45's menopause health check/ conversation which will enable female staff to be more informed when consulting with their General Practitioner over appropriate treatment such as HRT. These checks will be with an Occupational Health Nurse.
- Offer the Healthwork Rapid Access Female Treatment (RAFTS) to access advice and guidance from a qualified medical practitioner, if a female employee is discontented with their GP support.
- Operational Appliances & Equipment in liaison with members of the Gender Equality Network, Menopause Lounge and Female Firefighters forum will continue to explore

options for uniform issue to assist menopausal women with issues with heat and temperature, and review the requirement for Control staff to wear hosiery as part of uniform.

- Operational Appliances & Equipment will consider welfare arrangements at incidents, to consider cool sprays and gel, and the availability of women only toilets at incidents.
- Estates will explore a trial of women only gym time at Service Gyms. The specifics in terms of duration and days will need to be negotiated and agreed with partners. This in particular could benefit women unused to using gyms and concerned that they are a male only environment. The Service will utilise our female Health and Fitness Advisors who are supportive of this initiative.
- Strategy & Performance will consider food and drink options offered by the Service canteen and conferencing Teams, to provide some availability of food and drink that may assist menopausal women with their symptoms.
- Continue to provide the Menopause Lounge with information pertaining to Service developments and continue to champion this and the Gender Networks.

#### **4. Relationship with other policies**

This should be read in conjunction with other policies and procedures covering positive mental health, management, attendance, policies on work-life balance, special leave, flexible working, the management of short and long-term absence, sick pay, and equal opportunities.