

# Menopause Policy – Employee Guide to Support April 2024 (V2)

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## Introduction

Our Policy applies to all Academies within Spencer Academies Trust and the Central Team. This should be read alongside our Wellbeing Support and welfare guidance within our Attendance Management Policy in terms of support and assistance available when our health and wellbeing are troubling us. A copy of this policy can be found in [SharePoint ASK HR](#) or your document library in Every Compliance.

We are committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in both employment and education provision within Spencer Academies Trust and to creating an environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, or victimisation. We aim to ensure all employees, within our One Spencer community feel they are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. Where our individual differences and the contributions we make are all recognised and valued regardless of age, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, disability, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Every person in our One Spencer community has a responsibility for making our Trust an inclusive environment where all members of our community feel welcome and can be themselves.

Menopause must not be taboo or hidden. We want everyone to understand what menopause is, and to be able to talk about it openly, without embarrassment. This is not just an issue for women, their partners can be affected and need support. The changing age of the UK's workforce means that between 75% and 80% of menopausal women are in work. Research shows that most women are unwilling to discuss menopause-related health problems with their line manager or ask for the support or adjustments that they may need.

Our Policy sets out the guidelines for colleagues and managers on providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work. As an employer SAT is committed to alleviating symptoms, helping to improve employee health, wellbeing and performance. Your HR contact will act as the first point of contact for advice and will issue guidance as appropriate. All supporting documents are available in [SharePoint ASK HR](#). Additional support can be sought from your Central HR contact.

Menopause symptoms may have a long term and substantial impact on a colleague's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, in such cases these symptoms could be considered a disability. Under the Equality Act 2010, we have a legal obligation to make [reasonable adjustments](#) to not discriminate against employees with a disability. Reasonable adjustments for disabilities are also considered to be a part of fulfilling our health and safety obligations. Additionally, colleagues experiencing menopause symptoms may be protected from less favourable treatment related to their menopause symptoms on the grounds of age and sex. We must consider reasonable adjustments, otherwise we are open to a claim of discrimination.

To support our understanding of how menopause effects women in the workplace. It is likely that one or some of the following signs maybe noticed:

- Changes in performance
- Absenteeism
- Changes in behaviour
- Physical changes

## What is menopause

Menopause is when a woman stops having periods and means 'the last menstrual period'. It's not only those who identify as women who will experience menopause. Some transgender men, non-binary people and intersex people or people with variations in sex characteristics may also experience menopause.

Menopause is a natural event and a transition experience; however, the timing and symptoms are different for everyone. You can look at your family history to get an idea of when this might happen to you. It's likely to be a similar age to when your mother or older sisters started theirs. Menopause can also occur due to certain surgeries or cancer treatments. This can sometimes cause symptoms to be more sudden and in some cases more severe.

Perimenopause is the time from the start of menopausal symptoms until after the last period. Periods will usually start to become less frequent over a few months or years before they stop altogether. They might be more irregular and become heavier or lighter. For some, they can stop suddenly.

## Symptoms of the menopause

Most women will experience menopausal symptoms. Some of these can be severe and have a significant impact on everyday activities. Common symptoms may include:

▪ hot flushes	▪ night sweats	▪ difficulty sleeping / sleep disorders	▪ low mood	▪ anxiety / panic attacks
▪ problems with memory and concentration	▪ 'brain fog' / fatigue / lack of energy	▪ joint pain and stiffness	▪ palpitations	▪ headaches / migraines
▪ weight gain	▪ recurrent urinary tract infections	▪ hair thinning	▪ vaginal dryness and discomfort	▪ reduced libido

Menopausal symptoms can begin months or even years before periods stop and last around 4 years after the last period, although some experience them for much longer. The perimenopause (the time during which bodies make the natural transition to menopause) can last 4-8 years, on average, prior to the final period.

## How to support colleagues impacted by the menopause

Supporting colleagues through the menopause should include the completion of our SAT menopause risk assessment. See ASK HR and available from your HR contact or the Central Team HR Advisor. The agreed risk assessment must be kept under regular review and updated as necessary:

Make sure health and safety checks are suitable and reduce or where possible remove workplace health and safety risks for colleagues. This includes:

- ensuring menopausal symptoms are not made worse by the workplace and/or its work practices
- making changes to help colleagues manage their symptoms when doing their job

All line managers and HR contacts should have an awareness of how the menopause can affect colleagues and what support and adjustments may be necessary to support those who are experiencing the menopause. They must undertake an assessment of health and safety risks for employees regarding the perimenopause and menopause. The assessment must be personalised but may include, for example:

- temperature and ventilation
- somewhere suitable for the colleagues to rest
- whether toilet and washroom facilities are easily available
- whether cold drinking water is easily available
- the need to take more breaks during the day
- adjusted working patterns
- employee policies, for example making allowances under professional performance reviews
- where appropriate the materials used in for uniforms and consider whether the uniform might make a worker going through the perimenopause or menopause feel too hot or worsen skin irritation

**In addition:**

- we will ensure that issues such as the menopause are highlighted as part of a wider occupational health awareness, so that employees know the employer has a positive attitude to the issue and that it is not something we should feel embarrassed about.
- All colleagues should be given information on how they can get support for any issues that arise because of the menopause. Because of the way society treats the menopause, they feel uncomfortable going to their line manager, in such cases they should seek advice and support from the HR contact, or other senior colleague.
- Our Health Assured Employee Assistance Programmes may also be helpful.
- SAT and its academies are committed to creating an open and trusted cultured environment where employees feel confident to approach their employer, in a safe environment.

To find out how to carry out a health and safety risk assessment go to the Health and Safety Executive at [www.hse.gov.uk/risk](http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk).

A referral to our SAT occupational health provider for advice and guidance on reasonable adjustments must be considered to support the employee. Employees should also be encouraged to talk to their GP if they have menopausal symptoms that are troubling or if the employee is experiencing symptoms of the menopause at any age. GPs can usually confirm whether a woman is menopausal based on symptoms, but a blood test to measure hormone levels may also be carried out.

## **Employee Assistant Programme – Health Assured**

SAT has partnered with Health Assured to provide a confidential employee assistance programme (EAP) designed to help deal with personal and professional problems that could be affecting an employee's home life or work life, health and general wellbeing. The service provides a complete support network that offers expert advice and compassionate guidance 24/7,

covering a wide range of issues. Health Assured offers cover for employees and their immediate family members, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year:

- Life support: including structured telephone counselling or face-to-face counselling sessions (employees only).
- Legal information.
- Bereavement support.
- Medical information.
- Menopause support
- CBT online including menopause support.

In addition to the counselling support and advice, they also offer a virtual library of wellbeing information. To find out more information on what services Health Assured can provide. Download the online Wisdom AI app. You will need the Employer code: MHA207952 to log in for the first time and set up the App. The app offers access to holistic health and wellbeing support at the tap of a finger anywhere and anytime.

0800 028 0199

[support@healthassured.co.uk](mailto:support@healthassured.co.uk)

[Wisdom \(healthassured.org\)](http://Wisdom(healthassured.org))

The Wisdom AI App also includes useful information to support managers to better understand the menopause and for colleagues there is a wealth of information including articles, webinars and podcasts.

Health Assured delivers a menopause programme, through Right Steps, advising and assisting you on things like managing symptoms, self-care and identifying triggers to help you along the menopause stages.



**health assured Rightsteps**

## Menopause Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

Health Assured is now partnering with Rightsteps to provide a tailored Cognitive Behavioural Therapy solution for people experiencing menopause symptoms.

**Who are Rightsteps?**  
Rightsteps are a social enterprise and charity that have provided health and social care for almost 60 years. The team is made up of a qualified and clinically experienced management team that includes clinical psychologists, CBT Therapists, and counsellors.

**What is Menopause CBT?**

- To manage problematic symptoms such as hot flushes and night sweats
- Effective strategies for managing anxiety and depression
- Functional ways to reduce stress and overly negative thoughts that can make symptoms worse
- How to build your support network, find a relaxation routine and practise mindfulness

**How do I access Menopause support with Rightsteps?**  
To access CBT and support for menopause with Rightsteps, simply call the helpline and tell us some more details about the problems you're facing. Our team will ask a few questions, and we'll get you the support you need.

**0800 028 0199**

## What to record:

Use the Attendance Management welfare guidance to structure the meeting and record any discussion and actions. Complete the menopause risk assessment and keep this under regular review along with any other reasonable adjustments put in place. It is important to set a review date within this meeting. Place these records within the employee's file.

The HR contact can access a template risk assessment and wellness action plan on the HR Google drive.

## Information and support – useful links

Colleagues can also talk to healthcare professional about treatments and work with them to explore lifestyle changes if menopausal symptoms are interfering with day-to-day life. These include:

- hormone replacement therapy (HRT)
- vaginal oestrogen preparations, lubricants or moisturisers for vaginal dryness
- [cognitive behavioural therapy \(CBT\)](#)
- eating a [healthy, balanced diet](#) and [exercising regularly](#)
- taking supplements such as vitamin B6 and vitamin D

### [Further information about treating the symptoms of menopause](#)

ACAS Menopause at Work

<https://archive.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=6752#How%20the%20employer%20and%20worker%20together%20can%20find%20solutions>

NHS Menopause Information

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>

British Menopause Society

<https://thebms.org.uk/>

Daisy Network

<https://www.daisynetwork.org/>

Age UK

[Menopause symptoms & finding menopause support | Age UK](#)

BUPA

[How to support someone during the menopause \(bupa.co.uk\)](#)

Approved by: Director of HR Date: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024

Last reviewed on: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 (V2 update 01 January 2025)

Next review due by: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026

#### VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved By	Revision Date	Description of Change	Author
01/01/21	Director of HR	01/04/24	New guide added to the HR suite of policies	SAT HR Team
01/04/24	Director of HR	01/04/26	A review of the guidance was undertaken and turned into a policy. The support available has been strengthened and highlighted that colleagues must be able to feel comfortable and well supported with reasonable adjustment to maintain their attendance at work. We all need to be aware, especially line managers and our HR colleagues, that menopause affects many women and their partners and can occur at any age. Added the support available through the Health Assured Wisdom App and Right Steps.	SAT HR Team
01/04/24 V2	Director of HR	01/01/25	Apart from the changes to wording to reflect our One Spencer values and expectations and reiterated our commitment to EDI the policy has been updated to better reflect support for all colleagues across our Trust. Links added to SharePoint ASK HR. The legal obligation to consider reasonable adjustments has been added including as part of PPR.	SAT HR Team