

Menopause in the Workplace: A Toolkit for Managers

Menopause in Context

As of April 2026 13,742 of NHS Grampian employees are female, all of whom will experience the menopause. At present there are 3,605 female employees working in NHS Grampian aged between 45 - 54, which is 26% of the NHS Grampian female workforce. For many females, menopause causes a great deal of stress, and being at work can make it worse. Although it is rarely discussed at work, the menopause is a natural stage of life that millions of female workers are either going through now or will experience in the future.

Symptoms of menopause include but are not limited to-

- Mood fluctuations and anxiety
- Aches and pains
- Tiredness
- Recurrent UTI symptoms
- Palpitations
- Hot flushes
- Brain fog and memory issues
- Insomnia, sleep disturbance and night sweats
- Lack of energy
- Heavy and/or unpredictable bleeding

[Click here](#) to watch the short Youtube video on menopause from the British Menopause Society-

The vast majority of females will experience one or more symptoms, but around a third experience severe symptoms that have a significant impact on their wellbeing. This is a workplace issue, with 25% of females are likely to experience difficulties associated with menopausal symptoms at work.

Work conditions which can exacerbate menopause symptoms include-

- High temperatures in the workplace,
- A lack of ventilation,
- Inability to take regular breaks,
- Absence management processes penalising women who have higher absence rates due to Menopause symptoms, and
- Excessive work-related pressures, for example high workload or deadlines, causing stress.

Recommendations to develop a menopause-awareness workplace

Close the Gap, endorsed by the Scottish Government, have created a [Menopause Aware Workplace PDF](#) which outlines four key areas that your team need to focus on to develop a menopause-aware workplace.

- These are:
1. Awareness
 2. Support
 3. Policy
 4. Implementation

The remainder of this document will focus on resources you can use to develop these four areas in your workplace.

1. Awareness

Posters to display in your department

- [NHS Scotland Menopause and Menstrual Health Workplace QR Code Poster](#)

Training opportunities

[Menopause Awareness in the Workplace](#) and [Menstrual Health here](#)

Learning outcomes

- Understand what the menopause is and how it can affect women's lives
- Outline why it is important to raise awareness of the menopause in the workplace
- Identify ways to support women at work who go through the menopause

Overview of menopause in the workplace

- [Why menopause at work- Why Now?](#)
- [What to expect when you are not expecting the menopause.](#)

2. Support for staff

Resources available-

[Menopause Matters](#)

[The Menopause Score Sheet](#) helps identify symptoms and aid discussion between staff member and manager.

[Menopause Balance](#)

[British Menopause Society](#)

[My healthy workplace](#)

[Experiencing peri/ menopause at work: Women's Stories](#)

Create Absence

Employee	<input type="text"/>
Absence Type	SL - Sick leave
Absence Type Reason	Please Choose
Start Date and Time	SL Dental & oral problems
End Date and Time	SL Ear, nose, throat (ENT)
Return Interview	SL Endocrine/glandular problems
Pay Enhancements	SL Eye problems
Workplace Injury	SL Gastro-intestinal problems
Occupational Health Contacted	SL Genitourinary & gynaecological disorders - exclude
	SL Headache/migraine
	SL Heart, cardiac & circulatory problems
	SL Infectious diseases
	SL Injury, fracture
	SL Menopause
	SL Menstrual Health Related Illness
	SL Menopausal symptoms - exclude headache, migr

In September 2022, NHS Grampian were pleased to announce that Menopause is now a recognised reason for absence through SSTS as shown in the image to the left. This is in line with good practise recommended by The Creating a Menopause Awareness Workplace document from Close the Gap.

3. Policy

The interim Menopause Policy launched in October 2023 with the most recent update being released in January 2024 and can be accessed here: [Interim National Menopause and Menstrual Health Policy for NHS Scotland](#)

To inform the policy The University of Glasgow, in collaboration with the Scottish Government and the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland had invited all women or people who menstruate or experiences menopause and work for NHS Scotland to take part in our study exploring menstrual health and menopause at work.

In the interim NHS Grampian's Menopause focus group are following the balance menopause policy and guidance Balance - [Menopause Policy and Guidance](#)

For further information you can access the [Mental Health and Menopause Guidance](#) here through the National Wellbeing Hub

4. Implementation

Guidance

Creating-a-menopause-aware-workplace

Tools to aid conversation & adjustment to support a positive menopause at work

- Working through menopausal transition: A collaborative tool for line managers and employees
- Menopause-savvy conversations for line managers and supervisor
- 5-minute managers guide: Menopause and Reasonable Accommodation Practices
- 5-minute managers guide: Menopause-Related Absences

Implementation Guidance:

MANAGERS GUIDE TO UNIFORM

Options to Support Menopause

A National Uniform was developed to ensure clear role identification for NHS Scotland workforce. This standardised approach enables clear identification of staff roles for patients, members of the public and staff, displaying a clear message of professionalism and standard of care. With the National Uniform Policy developed to support and guide organisations in providing the correct colour coded uniform linked to professional role.

Page 6 of the National Policy CET 46

http://nhsgintranet.grampian.scot.nhs.uk/depts/FacilitiesandEstates/LaundryServices/NHSGDocuments/CEL2010_42.pdf displays a clear table for what colour staff groups are assigned:

Clinical Staff: The five shades of blue (cornflour, navy, ocean, Mediterranean or pale sky blue)

Non-clinical staff: Two shades of green (mid or dark green)

The majority of staff will be expected to wear a tunic however the alternate of a polo shirt is available as per section 8 on CEL 42 and section 3.1.4 on NHS Grampians dress policy.

Menopause is not classed as a disease or illness, therefore not covered under the medical condition policy. That said, two key Acts that cover staff going through menopause are the Equality Act 2010 and the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. With the Equality Act covering the three characteristics of age, sex and disability discrimination. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 ensures a safe working environment for employees. This extends into working conditions when a staff member may be experiencing menopausal symptoms.

Therefore as an employer it is our duty to consider reasonable adjustments to remove or minimise any disadvantage to those who may be experiencing menopausal symptoms. Staff should be given the option to switch their uniform tunic, if required, to reduce any adverse symptoms or effects from poor heat regulation during the menopause. As per point 3.1.5 on NHS Grampians Dress Policy staff who wear tunics or blouses are able to access polo shirts as alternative.

Please refer to the local dress policy for up to date guidance on all options of dress code.

Below is the advised guide on what steps should be taken when a member of staff has identified issues with their uniform:

Staff member experiences issues with heat regulation during menopause



Staff member to meet with manager to discuss issues



Manager to review national uniform policy and joint agreement to be met on trying alternative option to tunic/blouse



Manager to sign off uniform request sheet, specifying polo shirt requirement and colour of shirt –
Please specify polo-shirt under 'other uniform' and what colour you require.



Staff member to visit Linen Services to place order.

Uniform Request Form

Please email your request to gram.sewingservices@nhs.scot. We will no longer accept requests scanned directly from a scanner. All requests must come from a traceable email address.

Opening Times: Monday – Thursday 730-3pm, Friday 730-12pm

First Name:	Surname:
Job Title:	
Department/Ward:	Hospital:
Email Address:	

Uniform Requirements:

	XS	S	M	L	XL	XXL	3XL
Tunics							
Polo							
Trousers							
Other Uniform (please state item and size)							
Inside leg measurement				Working days per week			

These Uniforms Are Required For (Please Tick One)

<p>Staff Member is new to NHS Grampian</p> <p>If yes: staff member will not be issued uniform until they attend the sewing room or nearest linen room for a fitting.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Staff Member new to Department/Job Role</p> <p>If yes: complete the box at the bottom of this form.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Additional Uniform for Staff Member</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Replacement Uniform for Staff Member</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
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All Uniform Requests must be Authorised by a Line Manager:

Authorised by (print):
Signature:
Financial Code No:
Date:

Additional Information: please state in the box below if you have moved location, job role or changed your name since your last uniform. Please write or attach a picture of what is on the white label of your current uniform to speed up receiving your uniforms.

Uniform Issued (Sewing Room Use Only)

Tunic	Polo	Trousers	Other	Date

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SUPPORT

For menopausal symptoms

Staff experiencing menopause symptoms which are impacting on their ability to work may self-refer or be referred to Occupational Health by their manager for advice and support. Early referral allows effective prioritisation and signposting to appropriate support services in order that individual employees can be given the best opportunity to either avoid an absence from work, or to facilitate their early return to work.

An occupational health practitioner [doctor or nurse advisor] will provide advice to the employee and where agreed with the employee, to their manager. Consideration may be given to the following as appropriate:

- A change to shift patterns
- A flexible working arrangement, for example a later start and finish time
- Consider the best time of the day to do certain activities based on energy levels
- Task rotation to allow for pacing, where possible breaking tasks which feel difficult down into smaller chunks, or alternating easier and harder activities.
- Hybrid/home working
- Limit the time wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) such as face masks (subject to Infection, Prevention and Control requirements)
- Access to cold drinking water and washrooms
- Allow for more frequent breaks
- A different uniform if experiencing hot flushes
- Moving to a cooler part of the office or asking for a fan if compliant with Infection, Prevention and Control requirements
- Address work-related stress by carrying out a stress risk assessment recommended by the HSE and advice on stress management techniques
- For those experiencing cognitive issues:
 - Provide a quiet area to work away from distractions for example away from doors, busy phones, loud machinery
 - Adjustments to tasks and duties that are proving a challenge
 - Additional training and/or 1:1 training for new tasks
 - Support with workload
 - Remind the person of important deadlines and review priorities regularly
 - Provide extra time to process information and/or complete tasks
 - Reduce screen time
 - Use of assistive technology e.g. reminders on phone; use of a Dictaphone to record meetings

The Occupational Physician will take a full medical history and complete the Green Climacteric Scale. The referral performance + Green Climacteric Scale are emailed directly to Consultant Gynaecologist Lead for menopause.