



Menopause Policy

Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all employees of all companies within the Eden Futures Group. Any reference to employee within this policy applies to employees of any of these companies and the policy applies to all geographic areas in which services are delivered or supported.

Introduction

The menopause is the time when a person stops having periods and can no longer get pregnant naturally. The ovaries stop releasing eggs and no longer produce the hormones oestrogen and progesterone.

‘Menopause’ is traditionally defined as having occurred when an individual has not had a period for 12 continuous months (for those reaching menopause naturally).

It usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55. Between 40 and 45 it is known as early menopause but for some people it may occur before the age of 40. This is known as premature menopause, or premature ovarian insufficiency.

Changes can also be brought about by treatments for cancer (e.g. chemotherapy), through removal of the ovaries and by some types of hormone therapy. People with some genetic conditions are more likely to experience a premature menopause.

Symptoms can appear years before periods stop, as the body makes its changes leading up to the menopause. This is called the ‘perimenopause’ or ‘menopause transition’.

It might not always be obvious who is experiencing menopause symptoms. The menopause affects most women and other people who have a menstrual cycle. This can include:

- Trans people – ‘trans’ is an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender is not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth
- People with ‘variations of sex development’ (VSD) – some people might prefer to identify as intersex or use the term ‘differences in sex development’ (DSD)
- Those who identify as non-binary – non-binary people do not think of themselves as simply male or female

Eden Futures is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for everyone.



Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with our:

- Wellbeing Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Dignity at Work Policy

Symptoms of the perimenopause

The most common symptoms of the perimenopause are:

- Anxiety and feeling unable to cope
- A loss of confidence / low self-esteem
- Mood swings
- Problems with memory or concentration (brain fog).
- Hot flushes, which can be short, sudden feelings of heat or cold, usually in the face, neck and chest.
- Night sweats.
- Difficulty sleeping, which may be a result of night sweats, making you tired and irritable during the day.
- Headaches, including worsening of existing migraines.
- Muscle aches and joint pains.
- Changing body shape.
- Skin changes, including dry and itchy skin.
- Repeated urinary tract infections (UTIs) or urinary frequency.
- A change in the pattern of periods. They may get lighter or heavier, happen less often or more often, or become unpredictable. Eventually, periods will stop altogether.

Each of these symptoms can affect an employee's comfort and performance at work. Eden Futures has a duty to provide a safe working environment for all employees and therefore commits to ensuring that adjustments and additional support are available to those experiencing menopausal symptoms.

Everyone has their own unique experience with the menopause and which symptoms they experience.

Our commitment

We value the physical and mental health, safety and wellbeing of everyone and strive to support everyone to achieve their potential.



Our aims are to:

- Foster an environment in which colleagues can openly and comfortably instigate conversations or engage in discussions about the menopause.
- Ensure everyone understands what the menopause is, can confidently have good conversations, and are clear on Eden Futures' policy and practices.
- Educate and inform leaders about the potential symptoms of the menopause, and how they can support their teams at work.
- Assure individuals that we are a responsible employer, committed to supporting their needs during the menopause.

Achievement methods

We aim to facilitate an open, understanding working environment and we will continue to do so through the following methods:

- All leaders are required to undertake the 'Menopause at Work' learning module, as part of EdenEvolve, our leadership development programme, to increase awareness.
- Provide a dedicated space on our wellbeing page to the menopause and support available to our employees and those we support.
- Signpost to our menopause support in monthly Team RoundUp newsletter and Eden Together magazine.

The supportive role of leaders

Leaders play an important role in creating a work environment that supports individuals facing personal struggles. This support begins with fostering open communication, where employees feel comfortable sharing their challenges without fear of judgment or repercussions.

When a leader notices an employee struggling, it's essential to initiate a supportive conversation. This dialogue should be approached with empathy and understanding, focusing on how the workplace can support the employee. Leaders should signpost employees to professional help, such as their GP, and explore reasonable adjustments that can be made within the workplace.

It is a leader's responsibility to:

- Treat the menopause with the same support and understanding as they would treat any other ongoing health problems affecting team members.



- Educate themselves about what changes are common during this time of life, and offer patience, understanding and support. This should be done through completion of the EdenEvolve Menopause at Work module and associated resources.
- Talk about the menopause with their teams alongside other equality and diversity and health and wellbeing topics.
- Have regular, informal one-to-one chats with employees and encourage them to share any issues that could be affecting their workplace wellbeing.
- Let their teams know that they can speak to the HR team in confidence at any time if they feel embarrassed talking to their manager about any health-related concerns.
- Ensure that during team meetings, they talk about Eden Together, our monthly health and wellbeing magazine. We cover a range of topics, including the menopause and signpost to support available.
- Encourage their teams to visit the wellbeing resources page on our main website, which gives advice, support and guidance on the menopause:
<https://edenfutures.org/wellbeing/>
- Conduct and review risk assessments to support team members if they raise concerns about their health.
- Remember that the menopause affects different people in different ways. There is not a one-size-fits-all approach but their awareness and understanding is key.

The role of personal responsibility

When facing personal struggles that impact our work, it's important to acknowledge our role in managing these challenges. Recognising the signs that we're struggling is the first step towards seeking help. Whether it's menopause-related symptoms like memory lapses, difficulty concentrating, or any other health issue, understanding our own needs is important.

Taking personal responsibility means being proactive about our health and wellbeing. This might involve scheduling an appointment with your GP to discuss symptoms and potential treatments. It also means exploring strategies that can help mitigate the impact of these struggles on your work, such as adjusting your work habits.



We understand that employees might not talk about their menopause symptoms at work because they:

- feel it's a private or personal matter
- feel their symptoms might be embarrassing to share with others
- do not know their line manager well enough
- feel they will not be taken seriously
- are worried about confidentiality
- think they will be seen to be less able to do their job
- are worried that job security or promotion opportunities might be taken away
- are worried about outing themselves as a trans person, non-binary person or a person with variations of sex development (VSD)

We want to reassure all our staff that raising a health issue will always be taken seriously and will be managed discreetly and confidentially.

Employees are encouraged to inform their line manager that they are experiencing menopausal symptoms at an early stage to ensure that symptoms are treated as an ongoing health issue rather than as individual instances of ill health. Early notification will also help line managers to determine the most appropriate course of action to support an employee's individual needs.

Employees who do not wish to discuss the issue with their direct line manager may find it helpful to have an initial discussion with a trusted colleague or another manager instead. They can also contact the HR team at any time.

Reasonable adjustments

The frequency of follow-up supportive conversations might differ from person to person, depending on how their symptoms and needs change. It's important to remember that the changes agreed at work might need to be reviewed as the person goes through the different stages of the menopause.

All requests for reasonable adjustments will be carefully considered in order to try to accommodate individual needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

If someone believes a longer-term change to their job would help them with their menopause symptoms they could make a flexible working request.

If managers or employees need support at any time, please speak to the HR team.



Resources and support available

We have a dedicated space for the menopause on our Wellbeing page: <https://edenfutures.org/wellbeing/> This signposts to various sources of help and support for employees and managers.

The following guides are available on our wellbeing page to provide awareness of the menopause and the symptoms that may impact someone at work.

- [For Eden staff – A menopause support guide](#)
- [Menopause support information](#)
- [Understanding the psychological impact of the menopause](#)
- [Menopause – How to talk to someone at work](#)
- [Menopause – Getting the most of our your doctor’s appointment](#)
- [Menopause – Common misdiagnoses](#)
- [Menopause – The myths vs the facts](#)
- [Menopause symptom checker](#)
- [Menopause and brain fog](#)
- [Know your menopause support pack](#)
- [Menopause – The effects of longterm hormone deficiency](#)
- [Living well through your perimenopause and menopause](#)
- [The benefits of HRT](#)
- [Alternatives to HRT](#)
- [FAQs about the menopause and HRT](#)

This is not an exhaustive list and new materials and information are being frequently added to this space.

Within these guides, they include information on:

- [Menopause matters](#), which provides information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options;
- the [Daisy Network](#) charity, which provides support for people experiencing premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency; and
- the [Menopause Café](#), which provides information about events where strangers gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss the menopause.

Data Protection

- We will process any personal data collected during this procedure in accordance with our data protection policies.



- Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.

Training

Eden Futures provides EdenEvolve, a leadership development programme for everyone with people management responsibilities. Within this are modules covering: The Menopause at Work, Wellbeing at Work, and Equality, Diversity and Dignity at Work.

We will continue to review and introduce associated training and policies in order to fulfil our commitments and aims.

Monitoring

This policy is fully supported by senior management and has been agreed through the Eden Executive Team. It will be monitored by the Employee Relations Manager and Head of HR who will discuss any concerns with the Chief Executive Officer and the Eden Executive Team.

New policy: October 2024

Review date: October 2026 (unless legislative changes occur in which the policy needs to be reviewed at an earlier date)