

# ICG MENOPAUSE AND MENSTRUATION POLICY

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 PURPOSE

This policy is designed to raise awareness of menopause transition and menstruation and provide information to support individuals who are directly or indirectly affected. It contains information relevant to employees, their managers, and other colleagues.

### 1.2 SCOPE

This policy applies to all permanent and fixed term employees only. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants, self-employed contractors, volunteers, or interns. This policy is for guidance purposes only and does not form part of your contract of employment. ICG may, at its absolute discretion, amend this policy from time to time. Any information you provide to us about your health will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and Employee Privacy Notice. We recognise that this data is sensitive and will handle it in a confidential manner.

## 2. POLICY STATEMENT

As a Company we recognise that many colleagues will experience menopause and menstruation, and that for some, it can have significant physical and emotional consequences, which may affect a colleague's attendance or performance at work. We are committed to supporting our colleagues affected by the menopause. This policy sets out the support available to all colleagues globally experiencing menopausal and menstruation symptoms.

This policy and guidance aim to:

- Raise awareness of menopause and its impact in the workplace.
- Foster an environment in which colleagues can openly and comfortably instigate conversations or engage in discussions about the menopause and menstruation in a respectful and supportive manner.
- Support colleagues experiencing menopausal and menstruation symptoms to enhance their health and wellbeing whilst continuing to be effective in their roles over the long-term.
- Provide guidance for managers to understand how the menopause and menstruation can affect colleagues, and how they can support those experiencing the menopause and menstruation at work.

## 3. OVERVIEW

The Policy covers the following:

- About the Menopause
- Menopause Symptoms
- Menstruation and Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) symptoms
- Premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) symptoms
- Support available
- Resources
- Benefits

## 4. RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTATION

- Attendance Management Policy
- Annual Leave Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Data Protection Policy & Employee Privacy Notice

## 5. POLICY DETAILS

### 5.1 About the Menopause

The menopause is usually a natural event during which women stop having periods and experience hormonal changes such as a decrease in oestrogen levels. Whilst we commonly associate menopause with women, non-binary, trans and intersex people can experience menopause too. It generally occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 and typically lasts between four and eight years but can continue for longer. Each person's experience will differ, and menopausal symptoms can occasionally begin before the age of 40.

Perimenopause, or menopause transition, begins several years before menopause. Women may start to experience menopausal symptoms during the final two years of perimenopause, but in some cases, it can be longer as perimenopause can start up to ten years before menopause. For the purpose of this policy, any reference to menopause includes perimenopause.

Those who have total or radical hysterectomy (removal of their ovaries) experience the menopause immediately after their operation, regardless of age. This is known as a surgical menopause. Menopause can also be induced, for example through cancer treatment that damages ovaries or through certain hormone suppressants.

A significant proportion of our workforce has gone, is going or will go through the menopause. Many people leave work temporarily because of menopausal symptoms and for some it can affect their performance at work, ability to work, and overall physical and mental health.

### 5.2 Menopause Symptoms

Each individual experiences the menopause differently and will be affected in various ways and to varying degrees over different periods of time.

While symptoms vary greatly, they commonly include:

- Physical signs including hot flushes, night sweats, palpitations through anxiety, dizziness, fatigue, memory loss, headaches, recurrent urinary tract infections, joint stiffness, aches and pains, and heavy periods before they subside entirely.
- Mental signs include anxiety or stress, lethargy, low mood or depression, irritability, low self-esteem. People can also experience cognitive signs such as poor concentration, memory lapses, reduced vocabulary, and slower processing.

Each of these symptoms can affect people's comfort, performance, and attendance at work.

### 5.3 Menstruation and PMS symptoms

These symptoms are characterised by their monthly predictable pattern, as they come before and during the menstrual cycle. Some women get only mild symptoms. For others, symptoms may be so severe that it makes it hard to pursue everyday activities, including coming to work.

Symptoms tend to recur in a reasonably predictable pattern; however, their severity can vary at different times of a woman's life. Most experienced symptoms include breast swelling and tenderness, bloating, acne breakouts, leg, back, or stomach cramping, constipation, diarrhoea, headaches, back pain, mood swings, depression or anxiety.

Again, each of these symptoms can affect people's comfort, performance, and attendance at work.

## 5.4 PMDD symptoms

Similarly, to PMS, PMDD follows a mostly predictable monthly pattern. However, PMDD is a much severe form of PMS. Symptoms vary from person to person, and can include irritability and agitation, insomnia, difficulty concentrating, depression, severe fatigue, anxiety, forgetfulness, swelling of ankles, hands and feet, fluid retention, allergies, eye infection, headache, dizziness, fainting, numbness, palpitations, muscle spasms, skin inflammation, and severe cramping, aches, and pains.

## 5.5 Support available

As a Company, we want to create a safe and inclusive working environment for all colleagues and therefore, are committed to ensuring that adjustments and appropriate support are available to those experiencing menopausal, PMS or PMDD symptoms. Menopause is not just an issue for women. All colleagues should be aware of menopause so that they can support those experiencing it or otherwise affected by it.

The type and severity of menopausal, PMS or PMDD symptoms can vary significantly. We encourage an environment in which colleagues can have open conversations about menopause. We expect all employees to be supportive of colleagues who may be affected by menopause in the workplace. Individuals can discuss their menopausal or menstruation symptoms in confidence to explore and agree what support or adjustments, including equipment, would be helpful and can reasonably be implemented.

It is usually helpful to discuss any issues with your line manager. However, if you are not comfortable doing so, please speak to your HR Business Partner or one of your Wellbeing Champions. Please remember that these can be serious health issues and there is no stigma whatsoever attached to them.

We are committed to ensuring the health and safety of all our colleagues and will consider any aspects of the working environment that may worsen menopausal, PMS and/or PMDD symptoms.

The following support is available, depending on individual needs:

- ***Accessing information/professional support/wellbeing services***

This may be in the form of signposting you to information or external experts which are able to offer you support (please refer to the list of resources and external organisations below); or in the form of professional support that you can receive via our Employee Assistance (EAP) provider and/or medical insurance benefits (e.g., clinical psychology or counselling to support your mental wellbeing). In addition, we will run webinars/information session for employees and managers to understand more about the menopause, PMS and PMDD and their effects. We may refer you to Occupational Health or seek medical advice from your GP to better understand any adjustments and other support that may help alleviate symptoms affecting you at work.

- ***Navigating other company policies and processes***

- Flexible Working Policy - you may wish to apply to adjust where, when, or how much temporarily, permanently, or periodically you work for a period, depending on your symptoms e.g., working from home when helpful to manage symptoms.
- Attendance Management Policy- colleagues who are absent due to menopausal, PMS or PMDD symptoms are encouraged to inform their line manager or HR Business Partner at an early stage to ensure that symptoms are treated as an ongoing health issue in accordance with our policy on sickness absence.
- Work allocation - where symptoms include difficulty concentrating, you and your manager could explore a temporary adjustment to the type and volume of work allocated to you.

- **Physical needs/adjustments**

While many individuals who experience menopause, PMS and/or PMDD can carry on their working lives as normal, we recognise that some colleagues may benefit from adjustments to their working conditions to mitigate the impact of the symptoms on their work.

The organisation strives to achieve a comfortable working environment, including temperature, for employees. The air conditioning system is adjustable to an extent and desk fans can be provided upon request. We also have a Family room on the 3rd floor if you need to take a short break during the day to manage any symptoms or take any medication in a quiet and comfortable space.

- **Additional time off**

If you need some time off work to manage your symptoms arising from menopause, PMS or PMDD, you may be eligible to take up to 5 days paid leave per annum (which is in addition to any holiday or sick leave allowances).

In the event you wish to use any of the additional days leave, please notify your HR Business Partner as soon as possible, and noting that this leave is related to menopause, PMS or PMDD and taken in accordance with this policy. Once you have exceeded these 5 days additional leave, any further time off you need should be taken in accordance with our Attendance Management Policy and/or Annual Leave Policy.

The list above is not exhaustive; these are examples of adjustments and support available and we encourage you to discuss your individual situation and how we can support you with your manager or HR Business Partner.

Information shared will be kept confidential unless necessary to implement an adjustment, or if there are exceptional circumstances where it is imperative to disclose to maintain your safety or the safety of other colleagues. In these circumstances, disclosure of the situation will be kept to a strictly 'need to know' basis.

## 5.6 Resources

There are several external sources of help and support we would like to signpost to colleagues experiencing menopause, including:

Resource	Description
Menopause matters <a href="https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/">https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/</a>	Information about menopause, menopausal symptoms, and treatment options
The Daisy Network <a href="https://www.daisynetwork.org/">https://www.daisynetwork.org/</a>	Charity providing support for women experiencing premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency
The Menopause Café <a href="https://www.menopausecafe.net/">https://www.menopausecafe.net/</a>	Information regarding events that encourage the sharing of experiences in a social and friendly setting
Queer Menopause Collective <a href="https://www.queermenopause.com/queermenopausecollective">https://www.queermenopause.com/queermenopausecollective</a>	Queer / LGBTQIA+ and Menopause
Association Française Etude Menopause <a href="http://www.menopauseafem.com/afem/">http://www.menopauseafem.com/afem/</a>	Information about menopause, menopausal symptoms, and treatment options
Peppy <a href="https://info.peppyhealth.com/">https://info.peppyhealth.com/</a>	Menopause support at work

## 5.7 Benefits

Our ICG Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to colleagues for confidential and free support service. This valuable benefit includes not only counselling sessions for colleagues and their immediate family but includes services to help colleagues manage many aspects of life, including guidance around how to manage the menopause and menstruation.

For more information regarding the other healthcare provisions in place for you, please go to the HR hub to view your local benefit guide. For more information contact [Benefits@icgam.com](mailto:Benefits@icgam.com).

## 6. RESPONSIBILITY AND OBLIGATIONS

### Responsibility for the policy

The Executive Directors have overall responsibility for the effective implementation and operation of this policy. All senior Management within the Company are expected to support them in this. This policy is also supported by the Company's Diversity and Inclusion Champions Group, Wellbeing Champions, and HR team.

All management and employees of the Company are expected to pay due regard to the provisions of this policy and should ensure compliance with it when undertaking their jobs or representing the Company:

- **Individual** - If you are experiencing menopausal, PMS or PMDD symptoms, you are encouraged to discuss this confidentially with your manager or HR Business Partner and explore the support or adjustment you may need. Also consider seeking medical advice from your GP or healthcare professional.
- **Managers** - Managers should speak to the individual openly and non-judgementally if they notice any changes in behaviour or performance. If approached by an individual they must treat all discussions sensitively, professionally, and confidentially. Managers are not expected to be an expert or a healthcare professional when discussing the menopause, PMS or PMDD but will be expected to encourage individuals to access the support and adjustments offered.
- **HR** - HR will support the individual and their manager to access the support outlined in this policy.

The HR department holds responsibility for ensuring the maintenance, regular review and updating of this policy. Revisions, amendments, or alterations to the policy can only be implemented following consideration and approval by the Executive Directors.

### Employee obligations

All employees are bound by their contract of employment and ICG Policies, including the ICG Compliance Policies and Procedures throughout the tenure of their employment up to and including their last day of service.

This includes all leaves of absence i.e., annual leave, primary care giver leave, secondary care giver leave, sick leave, sabbaticals, and gardening leave.

Failure to follow ICG Policy may result in a Compliance Breach and will be recorded as a Conduct Breach in Workday.