

MENOPAUSE POLICY & GUIDANCE

This document outlines the Scottish Prison Service Policy in relation to the Menopause.

Published by Human Resources, Organisational Development

Published 3 February 2023

Unlocking Potential - Transforming Lives.



Policy Number:

HR087/V001

Directorate Owners:

Organisational Development

Policy Scope:

All Scottish Prison Service Employees

Links to Other Policies:

[Special Leave Policy](#)

[Flexible Working Policy](#)

[Attendance Management Policy](#)

[Employee Wellbeing Policy](#)

[Employee Assistance Programme Website](#)

Approved by:

Director of Organisational Development

Effective date:

3 February 2023

Review Date:

2 February 2026

Policy Content

1.0 Introduction.....	1
2.0 Aim.....	1
3.0 Policy Statement.....	2
4.0 Scope.....	2
5.0 Principles	2
6.0 Roles and Responsibilities	3
6.1 Employees.....	3
6.2 Line Manager.....	4
6.3 Senior Manager/ Governors.....	4
6.4 HR Department.....	4
6.5 Trade union Representative.....	4
7.0 Menopause.....	4
8.0 Menopause Symptoms.....	5
8.1 Symptoms.....	5
8.2 Causes of Menopause.....	5
8.3 Menopause Treatments	6
9.0 Menopause Support	6
9.1 Contacting your General Practitioner (GP)	6
9.2 Additional support and guidance.....	6
9.3 Talking to your line manager about the menopause	7
9.4 Adjustments that may help at work	7
9.5 Confidentiality and Disclosure.....	8
10.0 Manager Support	8
10.1 Supporting colleagues with menopause	8
10.2 Key consideration points for meeting colleagues about menopause	9
10.3 Employee Passport.....	10

1.0 Introduction

The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for all employees.

This policy has been developed to provide information and support to all employees experiencing either perimenopause, menopause, or post menopause symptoms, which for the purposes of this policy document will collectively referred to as 'menopause'. It also includes those who have menopause induced because of surgery or medical treatments, such as chemotherapy or pelvic radiation therapy.

The SPS recognises that employees experiencing menopause related symptoms, whether before, during or after this time of hormonal change and associated symptoms, may need additional consideration. Therefore, this policy sets out the key principles to which the SPS will operate, to ensure that individuals receive person centred support appropriate to their needs, taking account of any required reasonable adjustments.

This policy will take account of both those directly impacted and those indirectly affected, for example, partners, colleagues, or line managers. It also serves to support line managers in understanding their role in managing employees who are experiencing menopause transition.

This document should be read in conjunction with the SPS Attendance Management policy and Employee Wellbeing policy.

2.0 Aim

The aims of this policy are to:

- Support any employee experiencing the menopause and help them to minimise the impact it can have on them while at work.
- Respect the individual experience of each employee and create an environment where an employee can feel confident enough to raise issues about their symptoms or request reasonable adjustments.
- Raise awareness of menopause transition and provide information/ support for employees who are directly and indirectly affected.

- Foster an environment in which colleagues can openly and comfortably instigate conversations or engage in discussions about the menopause in a respectful and supportive manner.
- Minimise disruption to service provision due to the menopause and fulfil duty of care requirements towards employees.

3.0 Policy Statement

This policy is designed to promote good practice and seeks to create an environment where staff feel confident enough to raise issues relating to the menopause.

It has been developed in partnership with the Trade Union Side (TUS) and has been created in accordance with published guidance from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS). This policy complies with the Civil Service Management Code.

Discussions with line managers will be handled sensitively and confidentially, with advice from the Occupational Health being available as appropriate. All personal and sensitive data relating to sickness absence will be treated in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The policy is effective from 3rd February 2023.

4.0 Scope

This policy applies to all SPS employees, including those on temporary contracts and fixed term appointments. It does not apply to agency workers, contractors, consultants, or self-employed individuals working for SPS.

5.0 Principles

All employees involved in this process are expected to behave in a manner that is consistent with organisational values, affording colleagues dignity and respect at all times.

It will be recognised that the menopause is a very individual experience and that employees can be affected in different ways and to different degrees, therefore

different levels and types of support and adjustments may be required to be considered.

The SPS is committed to ensuring that conditions in the workplace do not make menopausal symptoms worse and that appropriate reasonable adjustments are fairly considered. Although not compulsory, the completion of an Employee Passport (see section 10.3) is encouraged to support this process.

Appropriate information/support will be available to all employees concerning the menopause, via this policy document and the Health and Wellbeing SharePoint page.

Training and awareness raising sessions will be available for all employees via the SPS online learning platform. A networking group has also been established to support employees.

The SPS will take a proactive stance to promote a greater understanding of the menopause and seek to eliminate any exclusionary or discriminatory practices.

6.0 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Employees

- Take a personal responsibility to look after their health and familiarise themselves with this policy to raise understanding and awareness of the menopause.
- Where necessary, request support from their line manager (either directly or an agreed alternative contact) and keep them informed of any changes to their health that affects their workplace duties and responsibilities.
- Contribute to a respectful and productive working environment, be willing to help and support their colleagues, and understand any necessary adjustments colleagues are receiving because of their menopausal symptoms.
- Raise any concerns with their line manager or HR if they believe they are being treated inappropriately because of menopausal symptoms.
- Undertake appropriate learning and development activities relating to the policy.

6.2 Line Manager

- Provide person centred support in accordance with the policy to any employee with menopausal symptoms.
- Undertake appropriate learning and development activities relating to the policy.
- Where requested, take responsibility for the completion of an Employee Passport (see section 10.3) with the employee and keep them under review.
- Ensure that employees are not subjected to inappropriate or discriminatory comments relating to the policy.
- Approach conversations supportively and positively, avoiding presumptions and treating any conversation with employees sensitively and professionally.

6.3 Senior Manager/ Governors

- Promote the policy and encourage behaviours that are consistent with organisational values, affording colleagues dignity and respect at all times.
- Undertake any development required relating to the policy and familiarise themselves with support and resources available.

6.4 HR Department

- Work collaboratively with managers on the application of this policy, providing ongoing guidance, support, and advice to help ensure that the policy is applied fairly and consistently across the SPS.
- Undertake any development required relating to the policy and familiarise themselves with support and resources available.

6.5 Trade Union Representative

- Where requested, provide support to the employee experiencing menopausal symptoms.
- Undertake any development required relating to the policy and familiarise themselves with support and resources available.

7.0 Menopause

The **menopause** is when a person stops menstruating/ having periods and experiences hormonal changes such as a decrease in oestrogen levels. It usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 and typically lasts between four and eight years,

although it can last longer. Every experience will be different and menopausal symptoms can begin before the age of 40 years, this is known as **premature menopause** or premature ovarian insufficiency.

Perimenopause is the time leading up to menopause when someone may experience changes, such as irregular periods or other menopausal symptoms. References to menopause throughout the policy should be assumed to include people experiencing the perimenopause.

Post-menopause is the time after menopause has occurred. During this stage, menopausal symptoms can start to ease for many people, although this can take many years.

Surgical menopause occurs when a premenopausal woman has her ovaries surgically removed in a procedure called a bilateral oophorectomy. This causes an abrupt menopause, with women often experiencing more severe menopausal symptoms than they would if they were to experience menopause naturally.

Andropause - The Male Menopause. (Note: The Andropause is not covered in this guidance).

8.0 Menopause Symptoms

8.1 Symptoms

It is important to note that not every employee that experiences menopause will notice every symptom, or even need help or support. However, for some, it can be quite severe and have a significant impact on everyday life.

Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically including, but not exclusively, hot flushes, poor concentration, headaches, panic attacks, heavy/light periods, anxiety, and loss of confidence. Some employees can also have trouble sleeping.

For further information on symptoms, please refer to the [NHS website](#).

8.2 Causes of Menopause

Menopause is caused by a change in the balance of the body's hormones, which occurs as you get older. Premature or early menopause can occur at any age and, in many cases, there is no clear cause.

Menopause happens when the ovaries stop producing as much of the hormone oestrogen and no longer release an egg each month.

Menopause can also occur when ovaries are affected by certain treatments such as chemotherapy or radiotherapy, or when the ovaries are removed, often at the time of a hysterectomy.

8.3 Menopause Treatments

If an employee needs help to manage their symptoms, support can be accessed through the [NHS](#) or bespoke third party organisations. Occupational Health advice can also be provided to support, should this be required from a work perspective.

A range of information and support is available via the [Health and Wellbeing SharePoint page](#), please speak to your line manager or HR for further information.

9.0 Menopause Support

9.1 Contacting your General Practitioner (GP)

Some employees may not be aware that they are going through menopause transition. Therefore, we would encourage employees to consult with their GP if they are experiencing symptoms, the GP can arrange for blood tests to be undertaken to confirm Menopause.

9.2 Additional Support and Guidance

The [NHS website](#) has lots of information and guidance to support employees. Also, if necessary, further advice can be sought from Occupational Health (OH), which an employee can request through their line manager or HR.

Additionally, the SPS has a wide range of guidance and support for employees and line managers in dealing with employees experiencing menopausal symptoms that is available on the [SPS Health and Wellbeing SharePoint Page](#).

Other useful considerations include:

- Joining a network support group, the SPS has collaborated with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) - SWIM (Supporting the Workplace in Menopause) staff network. If you require further information, then please contact your local HR team.
- Discussing with your family, friends and seeking support.
- Having a confidential discussion with your line manager, sharing relevant information about your needs, discussing workplace adjustments and possible impact on your work if any. The SPS has an Employee Passport that can be used to support this process.
- Recording your symptoms, when they occur, and frequency in a diary to share with your GP.

- The SPS contracts on an annual basis the services of a fully independent and confidential [EAP counselling service](#), which can be accessed by any employee on a self-referral basis or through HR if preferred.
- The [Charity for Civil Servants](#) has downloadable resources that provide information and support for employees both directly and indirectly affected by the menopause.

9.3 Talking to your Line Manager about the Menopause

We would encourage any employee experiencing menopausal symptoms to discuss it with their line manager (see section 10); although we appreciate that some employees may prefer to speak to an alternative manager, HR or directly with Occupational Health. The important thing is that a discussion takes place regarding any factors that are affecting the employee and their job role.

Employees may wish to write down any issues and bring this to the meeting along with any thoughts or suggestions about workplace adjustments from their discussion with their GP and/or their own research before the discussion.

If necessary, the employee can ask someone to accompany them to help them focus on the issues they need to raise and explain to their line manager or alternative beforehand.

If the employee requires workplace adjustments to help improve their experience at work, then Occupational health will most likely have to liaise with the line manager to consider this and a management referral may ultimately be required or suggested. Any disclosure of information will be with the employee's consent.

Where applicable, it is recommended that an Employee Passport (see section 10.3) is completed and retained on the career file to document the discussion between the line manager and employee, although this is not compulsory and may not be required in all circumstances.

9.4 Adjustments that may Help at Work

Employees should talk to their line manager about workplace adjustments that might help them in managing their menopausal symptoms at work. Areas of consideration may include:

Working Hours / Location

- Some possible adjustment to working hours or shift patterns.

Uniform / PPE

- A possible change to uniform requirements.

Workspace

- Flexible and easy access to welfare or bathroom facilities.
- Provision of a fan (where appropriate).

An Employee Passport (see section 10.3) can be used to document an agreed plan of action. This is led by the employee and is unique to their situation.

9.5 Confidentiality and Disclosure

All employee data should be managed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Employees have the right to privacy in respect of their medical status, as with any personal information, this should be treated as confidential.

Consent to share information about a disability or health condition must always be sought from the individual concerned, if the employee does not give consent to share their information, then this must be respected, with information only shared with those agreed as part of the initial discussion.

In circumstances where consent has been used to process data, the employee has the right to withdraw their consent at any time. Additionally, line managers must keep their employees' personal data safe, secure, and up to date. Data retained relating to the employee should be kept no longer than is necessary and line managers should ensure that confidential information is destroyed as soon as reasonably practicable when it is no longer required i.e., change in line manager relationship or employee leaves the SPS.

10.0 Manager Support

10.1 Supporting Colleagues with Menopause

An individual may be affected by the menopause directly or indirectly, therefore it is important to have an open mind, be sensitive to the issues and not make any assumptions. When someone has spoken with you in confidence, it is important to respect that and to keep the information confidential, unless you have reason to believe that that individual is at risk of harm.

Menopause transition does not necessarily lead to reduced performance at work and may be managed with consideration, understanding and in some circumstances, with workplace adjustments or workplace adaptations using an Employee Passport (see section 10.3).

Likewise, it is important that managers encourage employees to develop positive behaviour towards each other and all those with whom they have contact in the course of their work to eliminate bullying, discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or any other form of unacceptable behaviour relating to the menopause.

10.2 Key Consideration Points for Meeting Colleagues about Menopause

If an employee requests to meet with their line manager (or alternative) about how they are feeling, the line manager should:

- Familiarise themselves with the policy and available support. The SPS has MYLO online development modules available to support the manager in dealing with matters relating to menopause. HR and/or OH can also support the manager if necessary.
- Have the discussion at the earliest opportunity, allowing adequate time for the discussion to occur; be aware that the employee may feel embarrassed or be noticeably upset and so it may take some time for them to talk openly.
- Ask open-ended questions to allow the employee to speak freely about their concerns.
- Explain to the employee about the Menopause policy and the support identified in the policy document.
- Explore whether the employee is receiving support from their GP, NHS, or a third-party organisation. If necessary, the line manager can refer the employee to OH for further advice and guidance.
- Consider with the employee the appropriateness of completing an Employee Passport (see section 10.3), note in some instances the employee may prefer for OH to provide recommendations to the employer only.
- Be clear on what the employee is requesting. It is always best to summarise the meeting before it ends to ensure both parties agree and follow this up confidentially in writing with the employee.
- Agree actions and how to implement them, this may be the completion of an Employee Passport or referral to OH for consideration before implementing any adjustments. Also, agree with the employee if any other colleagues are to be informed about the discussion.
- Additional guidance to support line managers in dealing with employees experiencing menopausal symptoms can be sourced on the Health and Wellbeing SharePoint page or by contacting HR.
- Please note that some employees may not need assistance during menopause and go through it without medical or alternative interventions.

10.3 Employee Passport

The Employee Passport supports the SPS's legal duty to make reasonable adjustments, its moral duty to try to remove barriers that may be preventing employees from performing at their best at work, and its commitment to an inclusive workplace culture.

This is a voluntary tool available to all SPS employees, which enables the employee to document circumstances, which may be affecting their work at some point in their career.

The Employee Passport can be used to facilitate a conversation between the employee and line manager, to set out the impact of the menopause on the employee and actions that can be taken to support. This might be on a short term, long term, or permanent basis.

Where an Employee Passport identifies adjustments are required, then where feasible actions should be taken by the line manager to mitigate the risk. Line managers are not expected to be experts or act as healthcare professionals when discussing the menopause. In deciding on the 'reasonableness' of any proposed adjustment, line managers will be advised by HR and OH.

A copy of the Employee Passport would preferably be retained on the career file of the employee (as a reference point should the employee need to revisit or change role,) with a regular review process established. As appropriate, the reasonableness of appropriate adjustments may need to be reviewed or revisited. As the Employee Passport is voluntary, the employee has the choice, as to whether a copy should be retained.

The Employee Passport is not a mechanism for raising a grievance or conduct issue. Any employee with concerns should speak to their line manager or HR for further guidance.

An Employee Passport template and example document can be found in the resources section of this SharePoint page. A Q&A has also been developed.

Further Information:

The SPS recognises that from time-to-time employees may have questions or concerns relating to Menopause. In certain situations, employees' rights and obligations regarding Menopause may change. In these circumstances the SPS will abide by any statutory obligations.

The SPS wishes to encourage open discussion with employees to ensure that questions and problems can be resolved as quickly as possible. Employees are encouraged to seek clarification on any issues with the appropriate Line Manager in the first instance.

Sustainability

Improving our environmental performance and doing things in a more sustainable way should be seen as integral to our core business practices.

In line with the SPS Sustainable Policy and to demonstrate compliance with the Scottish Government's commitment to improving environmental and sustainable development performance, please be mindful if printing this document – keeping paper usage to a minimum (print only version), printing on both sides, and recycling.

Equality Statement

The SPS is an equal opportunities employer where all employees are treated with dignity and respect. We are fully committed to equality, diversity, and human rights and to ensuring our culture, working environment, policies, processes, and practices are free from bias. This policy applies to all employees regardless of protected characteristics, and, subject to any eligibility criteria, length of service, grade, working pattern or operational status.

GDPR

This Policy has been subject to a Data Protection Impact Assessment to ensure compliance with GDPR.

Inclusive Communications

It is our ambition to ensure that SPS documents are readable, accessible, and engaging for staff.

In formatting this document, good practice principles around engagement and inclusive communications have been adhered to.

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact Human Resources.

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner where applicable to reflect changing business and legislative requirements.

Human Resources Policy and Guidance in SPS

SPS policies consider current legislation, rules, regulations, and best practice guidance from a range of professional and public bodies, including the following:



UK
Service
Management
Code



Civil UK Legislation



EU
Legislation



ACAS



CIPD Best
Practice