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| New Logo 2 | Barnardo’s |
| Corporate Policy |
| **Menopause Policy** |
| **Sponsor:** | Director of People & Culture |
| **Owner:** | People Strategy & Policy Team |
| **Date Approved:** | September 2020 |
| **Date for Review:** | 30 April 2024 |
| **Distribution:** | Non-Confidential Internal and External Use |
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| 1. **Purpose**
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| This policy sets out Barnardo’s approach to supporting colleagues experiencing menopausal symptoms. Further support and guidance are contained within Barnardo’s Menopause Toolkit. |
| 1. **Scope**
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| This policy applies to all Barnardo’s colleagues. |
| 1. **Definitions and Key Concepts**
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| * **Menopause** - A biological stage when you have not had a period for 12 consecutive months. It usually affects women between the ages for 45 and 55, but it can happen earlier or later than this.
* **Perimenopause** - The time leading up to the menopause when changes occur, such as irregular periods or other menopausal symptoms. This can be years before the menopause.
* **Premature menopause** - Can happen naturally, or because of illness or surgery.

**Symptoms**While symptoms vary, they commonly include:* difficulty sleeping
* fatigue
* anxiety
* hot flushes
* night sweats
* memory loss
* depression
* headaches/migraines
* recurrent urinary tract infections
* joint stiffness, aches and pains
* reduced concentration/brain fog.
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| 1. **Roles and Responsibilities**
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| **Colleagues** are responsible for:* Taking a personal responsibility to look after their health.
* Being open and honest in conversations with managers/ People Teams about their health.
* Being willing to help and support their colleagues experiencing menopausal symptoms.
* Understanding any necessary adjustments their colleagues are receiving as a result of their menopausal symptoms.

**All Managers** are responsible for:* Familiarising themselves with this Policy and the Menopause Toolkit and participating in any awareness raising and training made available.
* Being ready and willing to have open, sensitive and professional discussions about menopause.
* Using this Policy and the Toolkit to agree with individuals how they can be supported, and any adjustments required.
* Recording and adhering to any agreed adjustments and actions.

**People Teams** are responsible for:* Advising and guiding managers on the interpretation of this Policy and the Toolkit.
* Where required, making occupational health referrals.
* Where required, support any local awareness raising or training initiatives.
* Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this policy.
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| 1. **Policy**
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| **5.1 Introduction**Barnardo’s is committed to providing an open, inclusive and supportive working environment for all colleagues. The menopause occurs when periods stop and hormonal changes occur, such as a decrease in oestrogen levels. It typically occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 and can last between four and eight years, although it can last longer. Perimenopause, or menopause transition, begins before the menopause. Barnardo’s recognises and appreciates that menopause can impact on trans and non-binary colleagues who do not identify as female; we therefore use gender neutral language in this Policy.We also recognise that disabled colleagues may experience the menopause in a different way to non-disabled colleagues. The menopause can also directly and indirectly affect others both within the workplace and at home. The symptoms of the menopause can affect a colleague's comfort and performance at work. Barnardo’s has a duty to provide a safe working environment for all colleagues and therefore commits to ensuring that appropriate adjustments and additional support are available to those impacted at work due to them experiencing menopausal symptoms.**5.2 Managing Menopause Symptoms at Work**Colleagues are encouraged to inform their line manager that they are experiencing menopausal symptoms at an early stage. Early notification will help line managers to determine the most appropriate course of action to support a colleague's individual needs; and ensure that it is managed as an on-going health condition. Colleagues 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, another manager or seek support through our Women’s and EDI networks.Managers and colleagues should discuss and consider each of the following in relation to managing menopause symptoms at work. **5.2.1. Environmental control**Barnardo’s strives to achieve a comfortable working temperature for colleagues. Barnardo’s will allow flexibility within its dress code where reasonable to support this. Where local facilities allow, air conditioning and chilled water maybe available, and desk fans may be provided upon request.**5.2.2. Flexible working**Barnardo’s recognises that difficulty in sleeping is a common symptom of the menopause. To reflect this, as well as the impact of other common symptoms, we aim to facilitate flexible working wherever possible. Requests for flexible working could include asking for:* a change to the pattern of hours worked
* permission to perform work from home
* a reduction in working hours; or
* more frequent breaks.

Colleagues should discuss such requests with their line manager in the first instance. If a change in the overall work pattern is required a flexible working request form [Flexible working policy | Inside Barnardos](https://inside.barnardos.org.uk/people-and-culture/taking-time/flexible-working-policy) must be completed. Depending on the circumstances, requests may be approved on a permanent or temporary basis.**5.3 Managing Attendance at Work and Occupation Health Support**Barnardo’s recognises that if a colleague experiences serious symptoms from the menopause and/or menopause transition they could be classed as having a disability under the Equality Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in Northern Ireland[[1]](#footnote-1). Barnardo’s will therefore consider reasonable adjustments relating to menopause symptoms in the same way any as any other long-term medical condition. Adjustments will be considered in relation to the individual colleague and their specific role. Appendix A (Self Identification of Menopausal Symptoms) of the Menopause Toolkit gives examples of symptoms and potential adjustments that can be considered.Managers and colleagues should also discuss whether there is a need for an occupational health referral to provide a medical opinion on appropriate support and/or reasonable adjustments that could be considered.Absences that are directly related to the symptoms of menopause are treated or recorded as sickness absences and should specifically refer to symptoms of menopause on the return-to-work recording. Where a colleague’s symptoms amount to a disability, and in accordance with Barnardo’s Sickness Absence Policy, consideration will be given to discounting a certain amount of menopause related absence from the absence trigger points. **5.4 Health and Safety**Employers have a legal duty to control the risks to people’s health and safety at work; this should involve conducting a risk assessment to help prevent and manage these risks. This includes the potential risks that colleagues experiencing the menopause could face to make sure the working conditions will not adversely impact on their symptoms. Appendix A (Self Identification of Menopausal Symptoms) of the Menopause Toolkit can be used alongside a Wellness Action Plan to log any agreed adjustments.If the individual’s symptoms include depression, anxiety and/or stress a [stress risk assessment](http://livelink.barnardos.org/livelink91/livelink.exe/open/176586832) must also be completed. **5.5 Data Protection**Barnardo’s will process any personal data collected in accordance with its data protection policy [Data protection policy | Inside Barnardos](https://inside.barnardos.org.uk/resources-and-guidance/information-governance-and-data-protection/data-protection-policy).  |
| 1. **Associated Legislation, Guidance, References and Documents**
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| Our **Menopause Toolkit** [Menopause policy | Inside Barnardos](https://inside.barnardos.org.uk/menopause-policy) contains a number of resources for colleagues and managers to refer to and can be used to facilitate discussions and set out any agreed actions, such as temporary adjustments to working hours or conditions etc. There is a menopause **Workplace group** for the promotion and awareness raising of the menopause and associated symptoms for all colleagues. There is also a **closed Workplace group** to provide a safe and collaborative space for colleagues to seek advice and share their experiences. The Local People Teams and our Women’s and EDI networks and colleague assistance programme (EAP) are available as additional sources of support and advice. There are also a number of external sources of help and support for colleagues and managers listed in the Menopause Toolkit. |
| 1. **Risk Assessment**
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| The policy presents a low-risk rating and therefore will be reviewed at least every three years. Statutory changes and any legal or organisational developments may prompt more frequent reviews.  |
| 1. **Compliance and Oversight**
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| In addition to the compliance and oversight arrangements set out under Roles and Responsibilities, the following applies:* The Policy Owner will ensure that management information demonstrating adherence to and compliance with this Policy is produced and provided to relevant parties as required.
* Feedback from UNISON and Barnardo’s EDI Networks.

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| 1. **Document History**
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| **Version** | **Date** | **Author** | **Status** | **Approval (by/when)** | **Comments** |
| 1.0 | Oct 2020 | People Strategy & Projects | CLT | Sept 2020 | New policy |
| 1.1 | Oct 2023 | People Strategy & Projects |  |  | Policy updated to reflect revised review date in accordance with planned schedule agreed with Audit & Assurance |
| 1.2 | April 2024 | People Strategy & Projects |  |  | Policy updated to reflect revised review date in accordance with planned schedule agreed with Audit & Assurance |

1. 1The Acts define disability as ‘a mental or physical impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on an individual’s ability to carry out day-to-day activities’. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)