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**Menopause policy**

**Policy statement**

The Trustees and leadership team of the Horniman Museum and Gardens acknowledge that they have a moral and legal obligation to do their utmost to support staff members through menopause.

**Our commitment**

The Horniman recognises that menopause is a natural process and transition, with multiple physical and psychological effects. The Horniman is committed to being a supportive and inclusive environment for staff experiencing menopause, by: raising awareness among all staff; removing taboos in talking about menopause; empowering and supporting staff to ask for help when they need it; and enabling and training managers to provide effective support for their staff.

The Horniman is committed to ensuring that no one is disadvantaged or discriminated against due to experiencing menopause.

**Definition**

Menopause is a natural process, when key female hormones start to decline, until periods cease. Peri-menopause is the transition phase – which can last several years – and menopause is the point at which 12 months have passed without a period. For the purposes of this policy document, menopause shall be understood to include the fixed point in time when periods cease as well as both the process leading up to it and afterwards, when symptoms may continue, unless otherwise stated.

**Effects of menopause**

The hormone changes during peri-menopause cause imbalances, resulting in a wide range of physical and psychological symptoms. Everyone experiences peri-menopause differently, so an individual may have some, none or all of the symptoms at different times, with a similarly wide range of impacts on their everyday and working life.

There are more than 30 recognised symptoms of peri-menopause. Some of the most common are: irregular or heavy periods; hot flushes and difficulty regulating body temperature; insomnia, sleep disturbance and night sweats; problems with concentration and memory loss; impact on mental health including low moods, anxiety and loss of confidence; fatigue and low energy. See Appendix 1 for fuller list of symptoms.

**Purpose of policy**

* To build organisational and staff knowledge of the effects and impacts of menopause.
* To support and empower staff members experiencing symptoms of peri-menopause to ask for support.
* To enable line managers to provide support to staff members affected, ensuring equity for people experiencing menopause.

**Scope**

24% of Horniman staff are female and aged 35-49 and 15% are female and 50-64; the most common age to go through menopause is between 45 and 55. (Staff figures are correct as of 31 March 2023.)

Some people experience menopause at earlier ages and/or for medical reasons – the Horniman recognises this and wishes to support everyone going through menopause, regardless of age or circumstance.

**What the Horniman will provide / undertake**

1. To share this policy: with all staff via Hornet (intranet), in the staff handbook and during the recruitment/induction process; and publicly on the website.
2. A Hornet (intranet) dedicated page for menopause information, resources and sources of help and support.
3. An annual menopause awareness session, which all staff are recommended to attend and which will, if possible, be recorded and made available for non-attending staff.
4. Training for all line managers – details and frequency to be agreed.
5. Reasonable adjustments, which the Horniman will make for symptoms/effects of menopause to ensure equity for those experiencing menopause. See Appendix 2 for more information.
6. Support a staff menopause working group, which will meet regularly to advise on and drive organisation-wide activity to support the menopause policy, and provide informal information and advice to colleagues concerned about or affected by menopause.
7. An annual staff awareness-raising campaign, during Menopause Awareness Month (October) and/or to mark World Menopause Day (18 October).
8. Support a rolling programme of staff-led activity (eg regular drop-in sessions, informal advice and mentoring) led by members of the menopause working group (part of the wellbeing group).

**What the Horniman expects from all staff**

1. To engage with information and training, and to treat colleagues who may be affected by menopause with compassion and dignity.
2. To be prepared to ask for support, if their wellbeing or ability to do their job are affected.

**What the Horniman expects from line managers (in addition to the above)**

1. To build relationships and provide a forum for team members to comfortably raise health and wellbeing issues including menopause symptoms.
2. To suggest and agree reasonable adjustments according to this policy, and liaise with other teams to ensure these are provided

**Date: [01.11.23] Date of next review: [01.11.25]**

**Appendix 1 – Possible symptoms of peri-menopause and menopause**

Everyone has a different experience of peri-menopause and may be affected by none, a few or many of these symptoms at different times during the process. Some symptoms may also continue beyond menopause, for some people.

* Anxiety
* Low mood
* Depression
* Mood swings
* Crying spells
* Brain fog
* Loss of confidence
* Poor concentration
* Poor memory
* Loss of joy
* Reduced self esteem
* Irritability
* Heart palpitations
* Difficulty sleeping
* Tired/lacking energy
* Headaches
* Painful/aching joints
* Hot flushes
* Night sweats
* Changes to periods
* Vaginal symptoms
* Urinary symptoms
* Loss of libido
* Feeling dizzy/faint
* Dry eyes/ears
* Oral health changes
* Thinning hair
* Dry/itchy skin
* Tinnitus
* Restless legs
* Change to body odour
* Increased allergies
* Digestive issues

Source: [menopausecare.co.uk](https://menopausecare.co.uk/perimenopause-and-menopause-symptoms-explained/menopause-symptom-checklist/)

**Additional sources of information**

[NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/)

[World Health Organisation](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/menopause)

**Appendix 2 – Reasonable adjustments**

Reasonable adjustments should be tailored to an individual’s needs, and reviewed regularly by the individual and their line manager.

| Symptoms | Suggested reasonable adjustments |
| --- | --- |
| * Problems with concentration and memory
 | Reduce meeting lengths where possible Discuss whether there are times of the day when concentration is better or worse, and schedule meetings / particular tasks to accommodate thisAdditional breaks More frequent 1-1 meetingsEnsure verbal instructions are followed up with written recordOffer quieter space to work / protected time where they are not disturbed |
| * Hot flushes
* Difficulty regulating body temperature
 | Arrange for a desk fan to be provided If possible, move to a desk near an opening window to provide ventilationEnsure easy access to cold drinking water Adapt uniform requirements if possible  |
| * Difficulty sleeping
* Feeling anxious on crowded public transport at peak times
* Feeling tired and lacking energy
* Low mood
 | Offer flexible working arrangements such as: * Temporarily adjust working hours to start a little later or finish a little earlier
* Temporary changes to shift pattern and location
* Offer regular breaks /time away from the public
* Enable working from home
 |
| * HeadachesDizziness
* Palpitations
* Aches and Pains
* Heavy periods
* The need for more toilet breaks
 | Discuss taking additional breaks, to allow for time away from the screen, time alone, to get some fresh air or exercise or to use toilet facilities Look into different desk equipment, if symptoms are aggravated by prolonged working in a seated position e.g. standing desk |