

**DIOCESE OF SODOR AND MAN**

**MENOPAUSE SUPPORT POLICY**

This policy supersedes any previous policy of this nature. It will be reviewed as appropriate, and amended where any clarification or actions are needed, and at a minimum 2 yearly.

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| Date of Approval | March 2023 |
| Date Due for review | January 2025 |

04.01.2023

**MENOPAUSE SUPPORT POLICY**

1. **Introduction**

The purpose of this policy is to assist with creating open and honest spaces, where individuals can discuss any issues associated with the menopause. The Diocese recognises that the menopause can be a significant issue for those affected, and we seek to actively support and/or share information about the help and assistance that we can provide or signpost people to. In our responses to any menopause related needs, we are committed to exploring with you a wide range of flexible supportive options and arrangements in ministry and employment.

Our aim is to build a culture of trust and confidence for clergy, officers and employees where they are able to talk openly and honestly about the impact of the menopause on them, and that they are listened to in supportive, positive and respectful ways.

1. **Definition**

The menopause is a natural event in most women's lives during which they stop having periods and experience 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. However, each employee's experience will differ, and menopausal symptoms can occasionally begin before the age of 40. Perimenopause, or menopause transition, begins several years before menopause. An individual may start to experience menopausal symptoms during the final two years of perimenopause.

Also referred to as ‘the change of life’, the menopause can cause a chain reaction of physical and psychological side effects to a woman’s body. As a Diocese, we have a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all of our employees under the the Health and Safety at Work Order 1998. In addition, the Equality Act 2017 outlines that individuals must not be discriminated against due to any form of disability and we recognise that the symptoms of the menopause may constitute a disability. We are committed to ensuring appropriate support and assistance is provided to any employee who is going through the menopause.

1. **Symptom**

We know that around 80% of women will have symptoms of some form during the menopause, whether physical, psychological or both. While symptoms vary greatly, they commonly include:

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| hot flushes  night sweats  insomnia  headaches  recurrent urinary tract infections  joint stiffness, aches and pains  dizziness  fatigue  memory loss/brain fog  heavy periods | depression  anxiety  reduced concentration  panic attacks  mood swings  irritability  loss of confidence. |

Each of these symptoms can affect an individual’s comfort and performance at work. The Diocese has a duty to provide a safe working environment for all clergy, officers, and employees and therefore commits to ensuring that adjustments and additional support are available to those experiencing menopausal symptoms.

1. **Speaking Out**

The Diocese encourages everyone to prioritise their personal health and wellbeing. If you find yourself struggling with any aspect of your role as a result of symptoms associated with the menopause, please do feel able to discuss these in confidence with the Archdeacon, or with the HR Officer; or an appropriate senior colleague. The Diocese will always urge you to seek professional medical advice and support.

1. **Making practical and pragmatic adjustments**

For clergy making adjustments to a `working environment’ can be complex, but there may be a number of ways in which exploring how adjustments to your role/working environment may reduce the effect that the menopause is having on you.

For Officers & Employees the Diocese will explore making adjustments to your role or working environment with the aim of reducing the effect that the menopause is having on you, and no adjustment will be made without fully discussing it with you first.

Adjustments will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Diocese strives to achieve a comfortable working environment for all clergy, officers and employees. The below possible suggestions are suggestions only and the Diocese is not obligated to consider all or any of them. Those appropriate may be considered upon completion of a supportive assessment/risk assessment.

* Flexible working (with later/earlier start or end days/weeks)
* Locality to toilet facilities when visiting churches, homes, schools etc
* Reviewing rest breaks
* Reviewing support for additional sickness absence

1. **Support and sites for information and guidance**

NHS

* <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>
* <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/help-and-support/>
* <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/treatment/>

Menopause support websites -

* Over the bloody moon - <https://www.overthebloodymoon.com/>
* <https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/>
* Daisy Network – [www.daisynetwork.org](https://www.daisynetwork.org/) support for women experiencing early menopause
* [Meg’s Menopause](https://megsmenopause.com/), which provides information, advice and honest discussions around all things menopause
* [Gen-M](https://gen-m.com/), a company on a mission to make the menopause a more positive experience for everyone

Menopause charity

<https://www.themenopausecharity.org/menopause/>

1. **Confidentiality and Data Protection**

All discussions about support for menopausal symptoms at work will be kept confidential and will not be shared with anyone without express consent unless there is a serious health or safety concern. It is completely up to individual to share as much or as little as they would like, and who they share this with. The Diocese will process any personal data collected in accordance with its data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which we become aware of the issue is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of providing the necessary support.