



Menstrual and Menopause Wellbeing Policy

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Approved by: Sarah Hawkes

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Policy overview

At Global 50/50 we are committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive working environment for all our staff. We recognise that experiences of menstruation and menopause can, for some, be very debilitating, yet wider society has been enculturated to mask their existence, including in the workplace.

Menstruation and menopause are not protected characteristics in their own right under the Equality Act 2010. However, treating someone less favourably because of menstrual or menopause symptoms, or failing to support them, may be unlawful discrimination or harassment related to sex, age, disability or gender reassignment. We will not tolerate this, and no one will be treated less favourably, or victimised, for asking for support under this policy or for raising a concern. Everyone is also entitled to a safe and healthy working environment, and we will take menstrual health and peri/menopause into account when we assess health and safety risks.

This policy supports staff in their ability to adequately self-care during their menstrual cycle and peri/menopause, while not being penalised by having to deplete their sick leave. Menstruation and menopause are not a sickness after all. This is why we offer paid menstrual and menopause leave (see below). Some people do have menstrual health conditions, or menopause symptoms, that are a health condition or a disability, and they are fully supported by this policy too.

This policy is designed to provide opportunities for restful working circumstances and self-care for staff experiencing symptoms of menstruation and menopause.

This policy is designed to be flexible depending on the staff member's needs, including the following options:

- Flexible working, including working from home;
- Provide quiet spaces for short-term recuperation, rest and management of symptoms;
- Enable unplanned leave, where required, to assist with management of symptoms, including paid menstrual and menopause leave;

- Provide free menstrual products in our office; and
- Make workplace adjustments, including reasonable adjustments where symptoms amount to a disability.

This policy also seeks to remove the stigma and taboo surrounding menstruation and menopause, through awareness-raising and creating spaces for open conversations.

This policy applies to all employees and workers, including interns and fixed-term staff, from their first day, whatever their length of service or working hours. It supports all women and others who menstruate who are experiencing perimenopause and menopause, and anyone with menstrual or menopause symptoms caused by medical treatment or a health condition. Staff who are supporting a partner or family member can also ask for support, such as flexible working. This policy does not form part of any contract of employment, and we may change it after consulting staff.

Support and workplace adjustments

While many women and others who menstruate and go through peri/menopause will be able to carry on their working lives as normal, we recognise some may benefit from adjustments to their working conditions.

In order to assist staff with their daily duties, we will explore making adjustments to the role or working environment with the aim of reducing the impact that menstruation or menopause is having. We acknowledge that menstruation and menopause affect each person in different ways so no adjustment will be made without fully discussing it with the staff member.

Examples of adjustments could include:

- temperature control or changing desk location
- access to rest facilities
- providing electric fans
- allowing additional rest breaks
- flexible working or changes to work allocation
- working from home, or changing start and finish times, on days when symptoms are difficult
- easy access to toilets, cold drinking water and a private space to rest, change or take medication
- adjusting meeting times, deadlines and work travel (for example, avoiding long-haul or overnight travel at difficult times)
- allowing cameras to be switched off in online meetings when needed
- paid time off for medical appointments related to menstrual health or menopause.

These are examples only and not an exhaustive list.

We aim to respond to requests for adjustments within 10 working days. We will confirm what we agree in writing, review it with you regularly, and change it if your needs change. Adjustments can be temporary. You do not need to make a formal flexible working request for a temporary change, but you can also ask for a permanent change under our Flexible Working Policy, which you can do from your first day of employment. You do not need to explain your symptoms in detail to ask for an adjustment. We will keep a short record of the adjustments we agree so that they stay in place if your line manager changes, and having adjustments in place will not affect your access to training, development or progression. If we cannot agree to a request, we will explain why in writing, and you can discuss it with the Head of Operations or one of the Co-CEOs.

If your symptoms have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your normal day-to-day activities, they may amount to a disability under the Equality Act 2010, and we have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments. We will focus on supporting you, rather than on whether your condition meets the legal definition.

With your agreement, we may ask an occupational health adviser to recommend adjustments. We will pay for this. You can also choose to share advice from your GP or specialist.

Paid menstrual and menopause leave

If your menstrual or menopause symptoms make it difficult to work, you can take up to 12 days of paid menstrual and menopause leave in each leave year (pro rata for part-time staff), at your normal pay. You can take it as full or half days, and at short notice. The leave is non-cumulative: days you do not use are not carried over or paid in lieu. Taking it does not affect your pay, pension contributions, holiday accrual or any other benefit.

You only need to tell your line manager, or the Head of Operations, that you are taking menstrual and menopause leave, by the usual time for reporting absence. You do not need to describe your symptoms or provide a fit note or other medical evidence.

If you are well enough and prefer to, you can work from home or adjust your hours instead. This is always your choice, and you will never be expected to work when you are unwell.

We will record menstrual and menopause leave separately from sickness absence. It will not reduce your sick pay entitlement, will not count towards any absence triggers or review points under our Sickness Absence Policy, and will not be taken into account in decisions about performance, pay, promotion or redundancy. Only your line manager and the Head of Operations will know that leave was taken under this policy, and our records will not describe your symptoms.

If you need more time off, you can take sick leave under our Sickness Absence Policy. Sickness absence related to menopause or to a menstrual health condition will also be recorded separately and will not count towards absence triggers or review points. If absences become frequent, your line manager will talk with you about adjustments, flexible working or an occupational health referral, rather than starting formal absence management.

We will review how this leave is used after 12 months, using anonymised information only using anonymised information only. As part of that review we will check for any

unintended consequences, for example whether anyone who has taken the leave feels it has counted against them.

Facilities and menstrual products

We will provide free menstrual products in our office, so that everyone who needs them can get them discreetly. We will also make sure staff have access to cold drinking water, different areas to work in with varying temperatures and ventilation areas should they be needed, and somewhere private to rest.

Open conversations and supporting colleagues

Menstruation and peri/menopause are workplace issues for everyone. All staff should be aware so that they can support those who need it. We expect all staff to conduct themselves in a helpful and open-minded manner and be supportive towards colleagues who may be affected.

To remove the stigma and taboo associated with menstruation and peri/menopause, Global 50/50 aims to promote a supportive and open culture where conversations about menstruation and peri/menopause are encouraged and not considered problematic. We understand the benefits of raising awareness and understanding around menstrual and peri/menopausal wellbeing and their impact in the workplace across the organisation. Building awareness helps foster an environment where staff can share their stories and realise that they are not alone in this experience. It also prepares staff who are not yet experiencing peri/menopause, reduces the stigma surrounding menstrual health, and signposts staff to where they can access support. We will undertake a range of activities, including promoting access to information and evidence-based websites.

It is important that staff prioritise their personal health and wellbeing, and if they are struggling with any aspect of their role because of symptoms associated with menstruation or peri/menopause, we would encourage them to talk to their manager in confidence, or to the Head of Operations.

Managers will maintain an open-door policy so staff should feel confident and comfortable in approaching them. Managers will support staff to talk openly about their current situation and will not make presumptions about how it is affecting individuals. Such conversations will be treated sensitively and any information provided will be handled confidentially. It will only be shared with others, such as the Head of Operations as HR lead, with the staff member's agreement or where the law requires it.

During any discussions, managers will consider the staff member's individual situation and evaluate if any adjustments can be made. They will also arrange follow up sessions in order to evaluate the effectiveness of any adjustments put in place.

We understand that staff may feel uncomfortable discussing personal information with their manager, therefore we also encourage staff to access our free and confidential Employee Assistance Programme for support and advice.

Unwanted comments, jokes or other behaviour about someone's periods, peri/menopause or symptoms can amount to harassment, including sexual harassment, and will not be tolerated, whoever it comes from, including partners, funders, contractors

and event participants. We have a legal duty to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of our staff, and this policy, the training under it and our risk assessments form part of those steps. Concerns can be raised with the reporting contacts in the Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy.

Risk assessments

We are committed to ensuring the health and safety of all our staff and will consider any aspects of the working environment that may worsen menstruation or menopausal symptoms. This may include identifying and addressing specific risks to the health and wellbeing of those experiencing menstruation or menopause.

Our risk assessments, including for home working and work travel, will consider temperature and ventilation, access to toilets and cold drinking water, somewhere suitable to rest, and workload and working hours. We record our risk assessments in writing and review them at least once a year. We will also carry out an individual risk assessment with any staff member who asks for one, without their needing to give a reason, and review it when their circumstances change. Asking for an assessment will never count against anyone.

Evaluation and review

We will continue to evaluate and review the effectiveness of this policy at least every two years, and sooner if the law changes, to ensure it is achieving its stated objectives.

When we review the policy, we will ask for feedback from staff, including those with lived experience of menstrual health conditions and menopause, and we will look at anonymised information about the use of leave and adjustments and about staff retention. We will only report figures where individuals cannot be identified.

The legal duty to publish a menopause action plan, expected from 2027, will only apply to employers with 250 or more employees. However, as a gender-equality organisation, we will report each year on the actions we are taking under this policy, for example to the Board of Trustees.

Confidentiality and data protection

Information about your health, including menstrual health and menopause, is special category personal data under the UK GDPR. We will record only what we need to support you (for example, agreed adjustments and leave taken), keep it securely, share it only with people who need to know, and keep it no longer than necessary, in line with our Data Protection Policy. We rely on the employment condition for processing special category data in the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, and we keep the appropriate policy document that this requires. Your line manager will only see what they need to support you, and you can ask to see the information we hold about you at any time.

Related policies and further information

This policy should be read alongside our Sickness Absence Policy, Flexible Working Policy, Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Anti-

Harassment and Bullying Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Data Protection Policy, Fertility Support Policy, Abortion Care Support Policy and Parental Bereavement Policy.

Further information: the NHS website (periods, menopause and perimenopause, endometriosis, PMDD and PCOS pages); Endometriosis UK; Verity (PCOS); The Daisy Network (premature ovarian insufficiency); Women's Health Concern (British Menopause Society); IAPMD (premenstrual dysphoric disorder); Bloody Good Period; the Acas guidance on menopause at work; and our Employee Assistance Programme.