

Employer Responsibilities

This policy assists with the creation of a workplace culture that is supportive and inclusive to ensure appropriate support is provided to any employee experiencing menstrual health conditions (see appendix 1).

The organisation has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all its employees under the Health and Safety at work act 1974. In addition, the Equality Act 2010 outlines that individuals must not be discriminated against due to sex or any form of disability, and the organisation recognises that in certain circumstances some menstrual health conditions may constitute a disability.

The organisation understands that employees may feel uncomfortable discussing personal information with a manager and if this is the case the employee is encouraged to discuss their situation with **[insert details of a point of contact in place within the organisation for this situation, e.g. Wellbeing Champion, Occupational Health, Employee Assistance Programme, if applicable]**.

1. Purpose

[Input your company aims and values from this policy – example below].

Our aim is to ensure dignity, health, equity, and inclusion by providing practical support, reducing stigma, and fostering an environment where individuals can thrive at all stages of their working lives.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, regardless of gender identity or age, who experience menstruation, perimenopause, or menopause.

It also provides guidance for managers and colleagues to ensure understanding, respect, and support. **[insert specific employees such as a womens wellbeing network or champions]**.

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Menstruation & Menopause Policy Template

3. Menstrual Leave & Support Clause

Employees who experience menstrual-related symptoms that impact their ability to work may take up to **[X days]** of menstrual leave per month without the need for a medical certificate.

This leave is separate from sick leave **[company discretion]** will not affect performance evaluations or attendance records.

You may also consider other related policies to align with the policy here:

- Absence
- Wellbeing
- Sick Pay

The organisation will also: **[recommendations to consider please remove if n/a]**

- Provide free and hygienic menstrual products in all washrooms.
- Ensure sanitary disposal bins/bags are available in all bathrooms, including gender-neutral spaces.
- Access to drinking water
- Offer access to rest areas or quiet spaces when needed.
- Support flexibility in duties or remote work during menstruation.
- Promote a respectful, stigma-free environment around menstrual health.

4. Menopause Support

Employees experiencing perimenopause or menopause may request adjustments to help manage symptoms. These must be approved by **[insert who would approve this request]**

These may include: **[please remove or add reasonable adjustments below]**

- Flexible working hours or remote work.
- Access to fans, cooler office spaces, or rest areas.
- Adjustments to uniforms or dress codes.
- Temporary workload modifications where appropriate.

Names:

Signed off by all necessary parties:

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Read only – not necessary to include in the policy.

Appendix 1

Menstrual Health Conditions

These are outlined as a brief and broad overview. There will be variations in their presentation for different individuals, and there are other related medical conditions that may not be mentioned within this list, so this list is not exhaustive.

Endometriosis occurs when cells like the ones in the lining of the womb (uterus) are found elsewhere in the body. These cells can grow and change in response to hormones in the menstrual cycle, this can cause inflammation, pain and scar tissue.

Common symptoms include pelvic pain, painful periods that interfere with everyday life, heavy menstrual bleeding, pain during or after sex, painful bowel movements/when having a poo, pain when urinating/peeing, difficulty getting and fatigue.

Adenomyosis is when endometrial tissue in the lining of the womb starts growing into the muscular wall of the womb.

Common symptoms include an enlarged uterus, feelings of abdominal bloating, fullness or heaviness. heavy bleeding during periods, pain during sex, pelvic pain and severe cramps during periods.

Heavy menstrual bleeding is when there is heavy blood loss or when a period lasts longer than 7 days. For some, period pain can be so debilitating they are unfit for work or if they are able to attend work despite pain, their performance at work may be impacted.

Fibroids are growths of spindle shaped muscle cells which commonly grow in the womb wall and can vary in size. Their impact on quality of life can vary; symptoms may include fatigue due to anaemia, heavy bleeding, pelvic pain, and abdominal bloating.

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) Polycystic ovaries contain follicles that are sacs often unable to release an egg that means ovulation does not take place.

Common symptoms include irregular or no periods; irregular or no ovulation leading to difficulty getting pregnant; excess androgen causing physical signs such as unwanted facial or body hair; thinning hair or hair loss from the scalp; or weight challenges. PCOS can also be asymptomatic.

Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) or Premenstrual Tension (PMT) is when, for some, changes in the body's hormones before a period can cause physical and emotional changes such as mood changes, irritability, increased interpersonal conflict, or anxiety.

Read only – not necessary to include in the policy.

Pre-Menstrual Dysphoric Disorder arises during the week or two before a period. It can affect 1 in 20 women and is commonly seen in the perimenopausal phase. Often described as ‘bad PMS’, it is not suspected to be a negative response to hormone fluctuations – a hormone sensitivity disorder. It causes a range of emotional and physical symptoms and severity will differ.

Common symptoms include mood changes, irritability, increased interpersonal conflict, anxiety, and being ‘on edge.’

Perimenopause relates to the onset of symptoms of menopause which can be equally as debilitating prior to the body going into menopause. Also referred to as ‘the change of life’, the perimenopause and menopause can cause a chain reaction of physical and psychological side effects to the body of an individual born female.

Physical symptoms of the menopause can include hot flushes, insomnia, fatigue, poor concentration, headaches, skin irritation, and urinary problems.

Menopause is the time during a biological woman’s life when menstruation periods permanently stop. It is defined as occurring when the individual has experienced no periods for 12 consecutive months and no other biological or psychological cause can be identified.

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5. Key Focus Areas [not necessary to include in the policy]

Our approach is structured around five focus areas:

1. Workplace Adjustments & Flexibility

- Flexible working arrangements (remote work, adjusted hours).
- Additional wellbeing days where symptoms are severe.
- Access to rest areas for breaks.
- Adjustments to uniforms/dress codes.
- Task reassignment or workload changes where necessary.

2. Facilities, Hygiene & Physical Environment

- Free menstrual products in all staff washrooms.
- Sanitary disposal bins/bags in all bathrooms.
- Clean and private toilets close to workstations.
- Access to cold water, good ventilation, and fans.
- Rest/quiet rooms for symptom management.

3. Manager & Employee Education

- Training for managers on menstrual and menopause awareness.
- E-learning and resources available to all staff.
- Awareness campaigns to normalise discussion.
- Inclusion in onboarding and wellbeing programs.
- Creating a safe culture for open dialogue.

4. Inclusion & Language

- Use of gender-inclusive language (e.g., “people who menstruate”).
- Recognition of trans and non-binary experiences.
- Consideration of intersectional challenges (cultural stigma, disability, etc.).
- Equal access to support regardless of role, age, or gender identity.

5. Policy Access & Implementation

- Policy published on the intranet and included in onboarding.
- Clear, confidential process to request adjustments.
- Named HR/wellbeing contacts available for support.
- Co-created with employee input via surveys or focus groups.
- Regular review to reflect feedback and legal updates.

6. Business Case & Market Insights [internal business case use]

- 66% say they're more likely to stay with their current employer if they introduce policies and practices that support menstrual health. (TOTM 2024)
- 73% of people who menstruate report struggling to work due to symptoms (Bloody Good Period, 2022).
- 90% believe workplace support for menstruation and menopause would improve retention and experience (Forth, 2023).

Progressive organisations like Vodafone, Co-op UK, and Hargreaves Lansdown have adopted combined Menstruation & Menopause Policies to reduce stigma, improve wellbeing, and support retention.

7. Suggested Implementation Steps

- Pilot menstrual support clauses in one department.
- Provide free period products in workplace restrooms.
- Educate managers on key topics and to facilitate conversations.
- Run an anonymous staff survey to measure needs.
- Review and update policy regularly based on feedback.

Next Steps for Customisation

- Replace [X days] with your organisation's chosen number of leave days.
- Add HR contact details or wellbeing champions.
- Adapt wording for your jurisdiction (e.g., employment law, equality requirements). If you're unsure on legal grounds please contact vic@totm.com who will introduce you to **Thrive Law**.

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Menstruation & Menopause Policy Template

Core Policy Commitments

- ✓ Menstrual Leave: Up to [X days] per month, separate from sick leave.
- ✓ Facilities & Products: Free menstrual products, disposal bins, rest areas, ventilation, and water.
- ✓ Flexibility: Remote work, adjusted hours, uniform flexibility, and workload adjustments.
- ✓ Education: Training for managers, resources for staff, and awareness campaigns.
- ✓ Inclusion: Gender-inclusive language, support for trans and non-binary employees, intersectional considerations.

Strategic Benefits:

- Enhances employee wellbeing & retention
- Reduces absenteeism & presenteeism
- Demonstrates leadership in diversity, equity & inclusion (DEI)
- Builds a stigma-free, supportive workplace culture

Next Step: Adopt this policy framework to show commitment to employee dignity, health, and equity across all life stages.