

Menopause Policy

October 2024

Anyone can be affected by hormonal changes during their lives for several reasons, including but not limited to pregnancy, fertility treatment, gender transitioning, conditions needing hormone treatment, and Menopause. These can bring about symptoms which could affect a colleague at work.

This policy focuses on menopause but is inclusive of Perimenopause and Premature Menopause.

Menopause:

The point at which a woman's oestrogen levels decline, and she stops having periods. The menopause marks the end of a woman's reproductive years (which also means the end of their monthly periods) and is medically defined as 12 consecutive months without menstruating. All women, some trans and some non-binary people, will go through the menopause. Although trans women do not go through the menopause, they may also experience similar symptoms to perimenopause as a result of withdrawing from hormones.

Perimenopause:

The phase leading up to the menopause when the female body makes its natural transition to menopause – literally the pause of menstruation – also sometimes referred to as 'menopausal transition'. During this phase the levels of the hormones oestrogen, progesterone, and testosterone change and decline giving rise to any number of 48 possible physical and psychological symptoms. Not every woman will experience every symptom, and some don't experience any at all. There is no one-size-fits-all and everyone's experience is individual. Perimenopause is a transitional phase that can last anywhere between 4 - 12 years with most women starting to notice signs such as more irregular periods in their forties.

Premature Menopause:

Also known as 'early' menopause, is a natural but quite rare (1%) phenomenon when a woman experiences her menopause much earlier than average. This can be extremely distressing and even more 'othering' in a work environment for those who experience it. Early menopause or surgical menopause can also be a by-product of other procedures such as fibroids, hysterectomy and cancer.

Who is this policy for?

Zodia Markets aims to support all staff experiencing menopausal symptoms and help colleagues and line managers understand how they can support employees experiencing such symptoms.

Why is this policy important?

The menopause is experienced by most women, usually between the ages of 45-55, though some women can experience it earlier than this, due to 'premature menopause' or surgery. Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically, are different for everyone, and for a quarter of women they are severely debilitating. Symptoms can have a huge effect on a woman's comfort and performance when working. This policy is therefore imperative to ensure Zodia Markets provides an inclusive and supportive working environment in the office and whilst working from home for women experiencing the menopause.

Whilst an employee can simply inform their line manager when they feel that they are unfit for work, they should also feel that they can be open about the reason for their menopause-related leave with their line manager without fear of being discriminated against. Symptoms vary greatly, and commonly include (but aren't limited to):

- hot flushes
- night sweats
- anxiety
- dizziness
- fatigue
- memory loss
- depression
- headaches
- recurrent urinary tract infections
- joint stiffness, aches and pains
- reduced concentration
- heavy periods

Research suggests that 90% of women experience hot flushes, 56% panic attacks and/or anxiety, 80% brain fog and/or memory loss, 72% broken sleep, 66% depression and sadness, 18% suicidal

thoughts, 40% migraines, 65% fatigue and 22% dizziness (Source: Survey by Bloom, July 2022). This policy sets out the support available to women before, during, and after the menopause. It is designed to ensure women suffering with menopausal symptoms can feel empowered to ask for adjustments to ease such symptoms without embarrassment, can carry out their daily role in a safe working environment whether at home or in the office and can have open discussions with colleagues and line managers so that they feel part of an inclusive work culture.

What are the policy details?

Minor adjustments to an employee's working environment can make a huge difference. If an employee is experiencing menopausal symptoms, the following options are available:

Desk fans

When in the office, desk fans, handheld, or neck fans can be requested from your line manager by email.

Quiet / wellness room

It can be helpful to take time out to help manage symptoms when working at home, but when in the Zodia Markets UK office - WeWork 33 Queen Street, London or Zodia Markets Ireland Office - WeWork One Central Plaza, Dublin there is a wellbeing room which offers a quiet, cool and private space should an employee need it. It can be accessed by informing a member of the WeWork Community team.

Flexible working

Zodia Markets recognises that flexibility is key to anyone suffering as a result of transitioning through the menopause and aims to facilitate flexible working wherever possible. Zodia Markets have an established Flexible Working Standard which can be found in the Employee Handbook that allows employees to make a permanent change to their contract.

Flexible working (Cont.)

Zodia Markets encourages employees to structure their day and work in a way that works best for them to get the work done, however should an employee require a more temporary specified changes working arrangements can be discussed with their line manager, these could include:

- More breaks and time away from their computer.
- Flexibility to work in other areas of the building when in the office.
- Earlier start times and finish times to avoid peak travel times when travelling into the office.
- A request to reduce working hours on a temporary basis.
- Turning their camera off when on Teams calls and also having a walking meeting instead if helpful.

These should be discussed and agreed with the employee's line manager and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure these adjustments continue to meet the needs of the employee.

Sick leave

An employee may feel unwell and unfit for work due to menopausal symptoms, and if so, Zodia Markets will support them. This includes the sudden onset of symptoms during the working day. These symptoms are covered under our paid sick leave policy outlined in this employee handbook.

Whilst an employee can simply inform their line manager they are unfit for work, they should also feel they can be open about the reason for their menopause-related leave with their line manager without fear of being discriminated against.

General support

Zodia Markets aims to facilitate an open and understanding working environment, and so we encourage employees to inform their line manager that they are experiencing menopausal

symptoms at an early stage to ensure that the necessary support made available. Employees 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
- Our HR Department
- Make use of our Global
- Employee Assistance Programme

Medical support

We encourage employees to speak to their GP when they are experiencing symptoms. If your GP makes any recommendations for your working environment, we welcome this to be shared with your line manager so we can ensure we are supporting you.

Counselling service

Zodia Markets also offers access to a Global Employee Assistance Program where employees can access counselling support and advise.

We are aware there is a lot of guidance available, and everyone is different so please use the below external support groups if you think they would be appropriate and helpful and do let us know if there are any other groups that should be added to this list.

- [NHS: Menopause](#)
- [NHS: Early Menopause](#)
- [ACAS: Menopause at work](#)
- [CIPD: Let's talk Menopause](#)
- [The Daisy Network](#)
- [British Menopause Society](#)
- [Menopause Exchange](#)
- [Henpicked's Menopause Hub](#)
- [Talking Menopause](#)
- [Menopause Matters](#)
- [My Menopause centre](#)
- [Gen M](#)
- [Bloom](#)

How do you now go about things?

The following identifies our responsibilities as employees, colleagues, line managers, and Zodia Markets.

Employees / colleagues should:

- Educate themselves about the menopause and become familiar with the terms of this policy.
- Understand what information is available.
- Seek advice and guidance from available support provided at Zodia Markets.
- Support colleagues.
- Be as open and honest as possible with line managers – reviewing and working through the available options together to ensure appropriate measures which support their working environment are in place.
- Agree to keep their line manager and Zodia Markets informed to ensure that the right support is being provided.
- If unable to speak to their line manager, or if their line manager is not supportive, speak to our HR department.

Line managers should:

- Take part in future mandatory menopause awareness training.
- Ensure they are aware of the support Zodia Markets provides and the terms of this policy.
- Ensure all members of their team are aware of the policies and where to find information and seek support.
- Ensure they listen to the needs of each employee individually and are open and willing to have discussions around the menopause, ensuring confidentiality where requested by the employee.
- Work together with the employee to ensure that the right support is provided that satisfies both Zodia Markets and the employee's needs.
- Ensure regular check-ins are in place to review any support and make any necessary changes to an employee's working environment or patterns that are required from both Zodia Markets's and the employee's perspective. Regular check-ins are particularly important when working remotely.

Zodia Markets should:

- Ensure it reviews its health and wellbeing policies and practices on a regular basis.
- Ensure its health offerings (Employee Assistance Programme) have provisions to support employees experiencing the menopause.
- Listen and work with employees to support and drive change in relation to the menopause.

Where can you get related information?

The following are links to some external sites that you may find useful. We are aware there is a lot of guidance available, and everyone is different so please use this as a guide only and do let us know if there are any links that should be added to this list:

- [Menopause Matters](#), which provides information about the Menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options;
- [The Daisy Network](#), which provides support for women experiencing premature Menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency;
- [The Menopause Café](#), which provides information about events where strangers gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss the Menopause;
- [Henpicked](#), an online community that gives women a place to have their say, promote healthy debate and bring about positive change. They also provide 'lunch and learn' videos with industry wide experts that can be accessed [here](#);
- We also recommend this [practical guide for people managers](#) from the CIPD, which offers guidance on supporting employees going through the Menopause, including how to approach the conversations about it appropriately and sensitively.

This policy was introduced by Zodia Markets's October 2024 to ensure Zodia Markets provides the

best support for women transitioning through the Menopause. Please get in touch if you have any feedback or feel there are other ways Zodia Markets could provide support.

Please note: This policy does not form part of any employee's terms and conditions of employment and Zodia Markets may amend it at any time.

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