



MENOPAUSE PROCEDURE

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A - Corporate	B - Divisional	C - Contract
HR		
Manual	Procedure	Guidance

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Issue record

This document will be updated when necessary by distribution of a complete replacement.

Amended or additional parts of revised pages will be marked by a vertical black line in the margin. The briefing notes will detail any text removal from the document.

Issue	Date	Comments/Remarks	Updated by
1.0	May 2021	New procedure on rights of employees experiencing menopausal symptoms and explains the support available to them.	Mel McGhie-Williams & Anna Tropeano



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1. Purpose

This procedure sets out the rights of employees experiencing menopausal symptoms and explains the support available to them.

2. Scope

This applies to all employees of the Company (Colas Rail), regardless of length of service. The term “employee” refers to an individual who has entered into, or works under, a contract of employment with the Company.

3. Definitions

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 woman's experience will differ, and menopausal symptoms can occasionally begin before the age of 40. Perimenopause, or menopause transition, begins several years before menopause. Women may start to experience menopausal symptoms during the final two years of perimenopause.

While symptoms vary greatly, they commonly include:

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

Each of these symptoms can affect an employee's comfort and performance at work. Our organisation has a duty to provide a safe working environment for all employees and therefore commits to ensuring that adjustments and additional support are available to those experiencing menopausal symptoms in a sensitive and confidential manner.



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4. Menopause Procedure

4.1. Telling us about your symptoms

Employees are encouraged to inform their line manager that they are experiencing menopausal symptoms at an early stage to ensure that symptoms are treated as an ongoing health issue rather than as individual instances of ill health. Early notification will also help line managers to determine the most appropriate course of action to support an employee's individual needs. Employees who do not wish to discuss the issue with their direct line manager may find it helpful to have an initial discussion with another manager or the HR team instead if they need support.

Any information given to Line Managers is confidential. Colleagues will only be told about your symptoms if this is what you want. Your Line Manager will discuss your wishes with you.

A variety of initiatives such as our employee assistance programme and mental health and wellbeing support services are also on offer. Further details of these are set out in within Appendix A.

4.2. Reasonable adjustments

It has been recognised that certain aspects of work and the working environment can aggravate menopausal symptoms. It is therefore important to consider whether adjustments can be made to help employees experiencing those symptoms by removing any barriers that get in the way of them doing their job. It is recognised however that every workplace is different (e.g. in some workplaces it is not possible to open a window).

If you feel that additional support is required to help you continue to carry out your day to day duties, then you should bring this to your Line Manager's attention to discuss and, where appropriate, with additional advice from Occupational Health and/or your GP.

The following are adjustments which could be considered in order to help with various menopause symptoms:

- Flexibility to attend clinics, hospital or appointments and for women and men seeking advice relating to the menopause in line with the Sickness and Absence Procedure.
- Flexibility to take breaks when needed rather than at pre-determined times - while undergoing the menopause employees may experience bouts of feeling unwell at work so a flexible and sympathetic approach to breaks is needed, including to take medication in a private space, to walk around and ease any pain. There may also be a need to leave work suddenly to return home.
- Consideration of phased return after sick leave in line with the Sickness and Absence Procedure for women suffering with particularly severe symptoms and impairment.



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- Provision of private spaces for women to rest temporarily, to talk with a colleague or to phone for personal or professional support.
- Consideration of role – stressful environments, high work demands, and long hours can aggravate menopausal symptoms and, in some cases, have been shown to bring on an earlier menopause.

4.3. Other reasonable adjustments

Temperature control

Colas Rail strives to achieve a comfortable working temperature for employees. We will allow flexibility within its dress code where reasonable. There is an air conditioning system in operation in most of our buildings, chilled water is provided on each floor, and desk fans will be provided upon request.

Flexible working

Colas Rail recognises that difficulty sleeping is a common symptom of the menopause. To reflect this, as well as the impact of other common symptoms, we aim to facilitate flexible working wherever possible. Requests for flexible working could include asking for:

- a change to the pattern of hours worked;
- permission to perform work from home;
- a reduction in working hours; or
- more frequent breaks.

Employees should discuss such requests with their line manager and or the HR Team. Depending on the circumstances, requests may be approved on a permanent or temporary basis.

Whilst it is important to consider whether adjustments can be made to help employees experiencing menopausal symptoms, we understand employees may benefit from self-help management, or seeking medical help to manage their symptoms themselves. For further information, please refer to Appendix A.

Your Line Manager will arrange a meeting with you to discuss any assistance that you may require so that you feel supported and listened to in the workplace.

5. Data protection

We will process any personal data collected in accordance with our [data protection](#) procedure and our [special categories data](#) procedure. Data collected from the



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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.

6. Associated Forms

Nil

7. Associated Procedures

NIL

8. Appendices

Appendix A EAP and Wellbeing Support



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Appendix A - EAP and Wellbeing Support

- EAP – Employee Assistance Programme – A Company funded programme that provides you with a dedicated independent and confidential EAP offering 27/7/365 telephone service. [Available here: Helpline 0800 030 5182; counsellingadvice@healthassured.co.uk]
- Menopause [matters](http://www.menopausematters.co.uk), which provides information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options [Available here: www.menopausematters.co.uk];
- The [Daisy Network](http://www.daisynetwork.org) charity, which provides support for women experiencing premature menopause or ovarian insufficiency [Available here: www.daisynetwork.org]; and
- The Menopause [Café](http://www.menopausecafe.net), which provides information about events where strangers gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss the menopause [Available here: www.menopausecafe.net].