

Menopause Policy

Policy Statement

1.1 The menopause is a long-term health condition affecting an increasing number of barristers and employees working at the Bar. It is estimated that between 75% and 80% of menopausal women are in work in the UK. 18 St John Street Chambers ('18SJS') is committed to fostering an open and supportive atmosphere for all, in which everyone feels empowered to seek help.

1.2 18SJS recognises that the menopause affects everyone differently and no two experiences are the same. Experiences and perceptions of the menopause may also differ in relation to disability, age, race, religion, sexual orientation or marital/civil partnership status. Support must therefore be based on the needs of each individual.

1.3 18SJS further recognises that members of the non-binary, transgender and intersex communities may also experience menopausal symptoms. Due to a variety of factors, the experience of the menopause may be different for those among these communities. Although the policy refers to women, 'people who menstruate' equally require care and support.

Starting the Conversation

3.1 Over 50% of the population will undergo the menopause in their lifetime, and many more are likely to be affected by loved ones going through it. To break the silence surrounding the subject, this policy will be made available to all members and staff.

3.2 Staff may also avail of the accompanying table of adjustments, which provides an insight as to the symptoms of menopause and how staff can help to support menopausal colleagues.

3.3 This policy will be included in any onboarding process and supplied to all current new tenants and staff of 18SJS. Questions and adjustments request will be strongly encouraged.

3.4 18SJS proactively consider the need and availability of training for members and staff, dependent on budget and need.

Definitions

4.1 **Menopause** is defined as a biological stage in a woman's life that occurs when she stops menstruating, and reaches the end of her natural reproductive life. Usually, it is defined as having occurred when a woman has not had a period for twelve consecutive months (for women reaching menopause naturally). The average age for a woman to reach menopause is 51,

however, it can be earlier or later than this due to surgery, illness or other reasons.

4.2 Perimenopause is the time leading up to menopause in which menopausal symptoms may be experienced. Perimenopause can last for months or years, depending on the individual. Post-menopause is the time after menopause. An individual who is post-menopausal (more than a year since periods) may still experience menopausal symptoms for many years.

Chambers Support

5.1 18SJS is committed to identifying and providing appropriate supports to help members and staff remain productive and full participants in the work of chambers.

5.2 18SJS Equality & Diversity Officer – **Olivia Edwards** - operates an ‘Open Door’ policy for all members and staff seeking support or advice. Members and staff should also feel confident to approach both the Chambers Manager and relevant Senior Clerk for support.

5.3 Any individual who seeks help with treated with the utmost care and respect, and any information disclosed will be treated in the strictest confidence.

5.4 If an individual chooses, meetings can be arranged at regular intervals to identify the best way of supporting them and to agree any necessary changes or adjustments.

5.5 Support will be tailored to the needs of the individual, including the following non-exhaustive list:

- Access to cold drinking water to allow better management of hot flushes – there are cold water machines on each floor within Chambers.
- Clean, well-equipped and comfortable toilet facilities near workstations, with appropriate sanitary disposal bins and feminine hygiene products, for women experiencing heavy or irregular periods or urinary incontinence.
- Changes to the Chambers environment e.g. providing a desktop fan, access to aircon, good ventilation and access to rooms with windows.
- Working environment: a reduction of exposure to noise to help reduce fatigue; quiet workplace rest areas are available within Chambers – the library is often free, or reception will be able to assist with finding a room.
- Ensuring flexibility for medical appointments.
- Altering the hours which an individual would normally be available to work.
- Reducing the area in which an individual will be expected to travel.
- Chambers’ support if a practitioner is unable to appear in court/requires suitable adjustments in court.

External Support

6.1 Where a member does not feel comfortable discussing their symptoms or requirements with chambers, the following external resources are recommended:

- [Home | Menopause Hub - Expert information, useful resources, top tips and women's stories](#)
- [Menopause - NHS](#)
- [Menopause - Wellbeing at the Bar](#)

Monitor & Review

7.1 This policy shall be kept under regular review by the chambers EDO. Should you wish to provide comments or feedback on the operation of this policy, they can be contacted at oedwards@18sjs.com