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GRAY'S INN SQUARE

Perimenopause and Menopause Policy



Perimenopause and Menopause Policy

4-5 Gray's Inn Square Chambers

1. Purpose

This policy reflects Chambers' commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. Chambers recognises that perimenopause and menopause can have a substantial and long-term adverse impact on an individual's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities both generally and in the workplace. This policy aims to ensure that individuals are supported, protected from discrimination, and able to continue practising or working in Chambers as far as possible.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All self-employed barristers practising from Chambers (including pupils);
- All employed staff of Chambers.

For the avoidance of doubt, Chambers recognises that whilst barristers are self-employed, Chambers has responsibilities under equality legislation and professional obligations to ensure a non-discriminatory and supportive working environment.

Positive commitment to support.

No individual shall be treated unfavourably because of perimenopause or menopause symptoms (such as insomnia, hot flushes, fatigue or cognitive impairment). This includes decisions relating to work allocation, clerking support, progression, tenancy, pupillage, appraisal, or continued employment.

5. Reasonable Adjustments and Support

Chambers will consider and, where reasonable, implement reasonable adjustments including flexible working, adjusted hours, remote working, temporary workload reduction, deadline flexibility, and reasonable adjustments to the physical working environment.

7. Guidance for Clerks

Clerks play a key role in ensuring this policy operates effectively. Clerks will: -
Treat disclosures sensitively and without judgment; - Avoid assumptions about capacity or commitment; - Discuss workload adjustments collaboratively with the member or employee; - Keep information confidential;

- Seek guidance from the Equality and Diversity Officers where appropriate.

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed every year to ensure ongoing compliance with best practice.

Perimenopause and Menopause Policy

4-5 Gray's Inn Square

1. Purpose of this Policy

4-5 is committed to fostering a working environment that is inclusive, supportive and free from discrimination. This policy recognises that perimenopause and menopause can have a significant impact on an individual's physical and mental health, wellbeing, and ability to work, sometimes for a prolonged period.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide support to barristers and staff experiencing perimenopause or menopause symptoms;
- Ensure that no individual is treated unfavourably or disadvantaged because of such symptoms;
- Promote openness, understanding and flexibility within Chambers; and
- Enable individuals to continue working, wherever possible, in a way that supports their health and wellbeing.

This policy forms part of Chambers' wider commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

2. Principles

Chambers is committed to the following principles:

- Perimenopause and menopause are normal life stages and should not be a source of stigma or disadvantage.
- Individuals experiencing symptoms will be treated with dignity, respect and understanding.
- No one will be pressured to disclose personal medical information.
- Reasonable adjustments will be considered on a case-by-case basis, recognising that needs may fluctuate over time.
- No individual will be discriminated against, directly or indirectly, because they are experiencing perimenopause or menopause symptoms.

3. Definitions

Perimenopause refers to the transitional period before menopause, during which hormonal changes occur. Symptoms may begin from an individual's late 30s or early 40s and may last anything from 3 to 10 years.

Menopause is defined as the point at which a person has not had a menstrual period for 12 consecutive months.

Symptoms of perimenopause and menopause may include (but are not limited to):

- Insomnia and/or disrupted sleep which can cause tiredness and irritability during the day;
- Hot flushes and night sweats;
- Fatigue;
- Brain fog or difficulty concentrating;
- Anxiety, low mood or depression;
- Physical discomfort;
- Headaches;
- Slowed metabolism
- Joint pain;
- Weight gain;
- Bloating and nausea;
- Skin/hair changes;
- Vaginal dryness;
- Sensitive teeth, painful gums or other mouth problems.

Chambers recognises that experiences of perimenopause and menopause vary significantly between individuals, both in type and severity of symptoms.

4. Disclosure and Confidentiality

Disclosure of perimenopause or menopause symptoms is entirely voluntary.

Where an individual chooses to disclose symptoms or request support:

- Information will be treated sensitively and confidentially;

- Information will only be shared with others where necessary and with the individual's consent.

Individuals may raise concerns with:

- The Equality and Diversity Officer;
 - The Senior Clerk or appropriate member of the clerking team;
 - The Practice Manager or Line Manager (for staff).
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5. Support and Adjustments

Chambers recognises that perimenopause and menopause symptoms may at times severely affect an individual's ability to manage a full workload.

Where symptoms are impacting work, Chambers will give positive consideration to reasonable and proportionate support measures, which may include (but are not limited to):

a. Flexible Working

- Temporary or longer-term flexible working arrangements;
- Adjusted working hours or start/finish times;
- Remote or hybrid working where practicable;
- Flexibility around attendance at Chambers or court where possible.

b. Workload Management

- Temporary reduction or adjustment of workload;
- Flexibility in accepting new work;
- Adjustments to deadlines where feasible;
- Consideration of intensity of work.

No individual will be criticised, penalised or disadvantaged for being unable to maintain a full workload where perimenopause or menopause symptoms are having a significant impact on their health.

c. Physical Working Environment

- Temperature control and ventilation where reasonably practicable;
- Access to quiet space;
- Flexibility around dress codes or professional attire where appropriate.

d. Time Off and Leave

- Use of sick leave or other appropriate leave without stigma;

- Recognition that symptoms may fluctuate and not follow predictable patterns.
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6. Non-Discrimination and Equality

Chambers will not tolerate discrimination, harassment or victimisation related to perimenopause or menopause.

In particular:

- No assumptions will be made about an individual's competence, commitment, or suitability for work because of symptoms;
 - Decisions relating to work allocation, progression, tenancy, pupillage, or employment will not be influenced by perimenopause or menopause-related issues;
 - Any conduct that undermines or trivialises an individual's experience may be addressed under Chambers' disciplinary or complaints procedures.
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7. Training and Awareness

Chambers will take reasonable steps to:

- Promote awareness and understanding of perimenopause and menopause;
 - Provide training or guidance to clerks, managers, and those with leadership roles;
 - Encourage a culture in which individuals feel able to raise concerns without fear of negative consequences.
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8. Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Equality and Diversity Committee to ensure it remains effective, lawful and reflective of best practice.

Feedback from barristers and staff is welcomed and will be taken into account as part of any review.



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