EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Policy title:	**Menopause and Menstruation Policy**
Policy lead/ owner:	HR Business Partner
Others involved in EqIA assessment group	Assessment group included: HR Business Partner
Policy implementation date:	14/12/2022

1 Framing the policy

1.1 Briefly describe the outcomes, aims and purpose of the policy:

The purpose of the Menopause and Menstruation Policy is to support employees who may experience related symptoms at work. The purpose of the Policy is to educate all SRUC employees about the impact of Menstruation and Menopause on employees and offer guidance to managers to enable them to support their employees.

The policy and supporting guidance offers a range of reasonable adjustments for managers to support employees.

1.2 Is the policy new or being changed, reviewed or stopped?

New policy

1.3 Who is affected by this policy?

All current and future SRUC employees who may experience menopausal or menstrual symptoms will directly benefit from this Policy.

All SRUC employees will benefit as it will promote a workforce where menopause and menstruation are no longer a taboo subject, and employees will have clarity on what to expect from their managers should they need support.

SRUC managers who will be giving guidance and tools to support employees. Customers, Students and Clients of SRUC will benefit from receiving a high-quality level of service from an engaged and supported workforce.

1.4   Are there any other SRUC policies that may be affected by this policy?

Attendance Management, Flexible working, Special leave policy, Hybrid Working framework, Heating Policy

Evidence relevant to the policy including consultation
The information you gather in this section will:

- help you to understand the importance of your policy/ practice/ process/ service for different equality groups,
- inform the depth of equality impact assessment you need to do (this should be proportional to the potential impact on equality groups), and
- provide justification and an audit trail behind your decisions, including where it is agreed an equality impact assessment is not required.

1.5   Evidence: Set out in the table what you know about the experiences of people in terms of each equality group. Consider the diversity within each group (e.g. experiences of people from different religions or faiths) as well as the differences between groups. There may also be cumulative barriers experienced by people when you look at more than one group together (e.g. experiences of women of different minority ethnic groups, so the intersectional impact of sex and race).

General evidence

The policy is developed in line with best practice and has been reviewed against the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) guide on menopause at work [Managing the effects of the menopause: Menopause at work - Acas](#)

Other sources of information around symptoms and managing the affect on individuals has come from the following sources:
- Menopause – https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/
- Menstruation – https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/periods/
- Endometriosis https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/endometriosis/
- PCOS – https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/polycystic-ovary-syndrome-pcos/

Internal SRUC evidence / data: SRUC does not currently record absences under menopause or menstruation and therefore do not have meaningful data to report on either symptom. This has now been updated on the HR system to allow SRUC to record these instances and the impact on employees.

The external information tells us that around 8 in 10 women will experience symptoms of the menopause, experiencing an average of 7 symptoms; symptoms usually last 4 years, but can last for up to 12 years and change over time. [Effects of menopause on women's health | My Menopause Centre](#)

You can add more rows to present the evidence if required.

Equality characteristics	Evidence source (e.g. web link, report, survey, complaint)	What does the evidence tell you about the experiences of this group in relation to the policy/ practice/ process/ service? Lack of evidence may suggest a gap in knowledge/ need for consultation (step 3).
Age	[Menopause – NHS (www.nhs.uk)](#)	There may be perceptions that the Menopause only affects women of a certain age, while it is more likely to affect woman 50+

Equality characteristics	Evidence source (e.g. web link, report, survey, complaint)	What does the evidence tell you about the experiences of this group in relation to the policy/ practice/ process/ service? Lack of evidence may suggest a gap in knowledge/ need for consultation (step 3).
Disability	The EQIA group discussed the importance of accessible formatting and the Attendance management policy	The policy should be accessible in a range of formats for employees with different needs. We are aware that people with Disabilities can face additional barriers within the workplace. Employees with disabilities may have higher absence rates due to their disability and therefore may feel that requiring additional support may influence any absence triggers.
Race	[Cultural differences in Menopause - The Menopause Charity](#) [Menopause in Different Cultures - Women's Health Network (womenshealthnetwork.com)](#)	Research shows that there are cultural differences in the type and severity of symptoms someone will experience during menopause, based on their ethnicity. Discussion during the EQIA around employees from particular ethnic groups may be less likely to discuss their symptoms with male managers.
Sex	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/ https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/periods/	Menopause and menstruation affects employees who were assigned female at birth. SRUC has just over 59% of employees who may be affected by menopausal or menstrual symptoms. This is a higher percentage than the average in Scotland. [Home	Scotland's Census (scotlandscensus.gov.uk)](#)
Gender Reassignment	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/ https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/periods/	Menopause and menstruation affects employees who were assigned female at birth.

Equality characteristics	Evidence source (e.g. web link, report, survey, complaint)	What does the evidence tell you about the experiences of this group in relation to the policy/ practice/ process/ service? Lack of evidence may suggest a gap in knowledge/ need for consultation (step 3).
		Equality data is collated by SRUC on Gender Reassignment, there is limited meaningful data.
Sexual orientation	Limited data	The EQIA panel did not find any meaningful research around sexual orientation and menopause/menstruation
Religion or Belief	Views of Menstruation in Religions and Cultures around the world | IndiaFactsIndiaFacts	Different religions and beliefs have differing views on menopause and menstruation, which may impact an employee's ability to discuss the impact of their symptoms. Muslim women are unable to partake in Ramadan while experiencing menses.
Pregnancy or maternity	Menopause and pregnancy: All you need to know (medicalnewstoday.com) Menopause and Pregnancy: What You Should Know (healthline.com) Irregular periods – NHS (www.nhs.uk)	1.23% of employee within SRUC confirmed maternity leave through SRUC from January 2022 – December 2022. As menopause approaches, it can be more difficult to get pregnant naturally. In some cases, this might influence a person's decisions on birth control and when to plan for a family. Individuals are able to conceive following menopause through IVF. Employees who suffer from irregular periods may have difficulties in conceiving.

Equality characteristics	Evidence source (e.g. web link, report, survey, complaint)	What does the evidence tell you about the experiences of this group in relation to the policy/ practice/ process/ service? Lack of evidence may suggest a gap in knowledge/ need for consultation (step 3).
Marriage or civil partnership	balance – Menopause puts final nail in marriage coffin	Women have reported an impact on their relationships following the affects of menopause.

1.6   **Consultation and stakeholder involvement**: Speaking to people who will be affected by your policy/ practice/ process/ service can help clarify the impact it will have on different equality groups. Describe below what you learned from the consultation/ involvement. Consultation can take time so make sure that you build this into your policy review/ development timeline.

This policy is currently being developed in consultation with all SRUC recognised Trades Unions, Prospect, EIS and Unison, who represent all staff throughout the organisation.

In addition, as this is an internal policy, SRUC will also consult with all employees through their policy review process. These include SRUC Rainbow Network.

1.7   **Record here if you need to undertake a full equality impact assessment based on your evidence above.**

Outcome of Step 2 following initial evidence gathering and relevance to equality characteristics	Yes/ No (Y or N)	Next steps
There is no relevance to equality	No	Proceed to sign off (step 5) to agree with decision makers that no EqIA is required based on current evidence
There is relevance to some or all of the equality groups	Yes	Proceed to Step 3: complete full EqIA

It is unclear if there is relevance to some or all of the equality groups	Yes	Proceed to Step 3: complete full EqIA

2 Impact on equality groups and changes to policy

You must consider the three aims of the general duty for each protected characteristic. The following questions will help:

- **Is there potential for discrimination, victimisation, harassment or other unlawful conduct that is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010?** Yes. This will be mitigated by ensuring confidentiality, and promoting a fair and consistent application of the policy. The policy offers guidance on best practice. SRUC offers support through the Grievance Policy and Dignity at Work policy to ensure that any potential discrimination, victimisation or harassment can be investigated and addressed. The data around Menopause and menstruation will be reported on under the PSED through the HR MI reporting.

- **Is there potential to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who do not**? How can this be achieved? The policy will be launched to all employees and through the Rainbow staff network. SRUC will also promote WORLD MENOPAUSE DAY – October 18, 2023 – National Today through our annual equality calendar to try and minimise any perceived stigma or uncomfortable conversations.

- **Is there potential for developing good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not?** How can this be achieved? Through the promotion of the equality section of the Policy scope through the rainbow network.
  Given the limited internal data SRUC has sought feedback from a range of employees to understand lived experiences.

2.1 **Does the policy have any impacts (whether intended or unintended, positive or negative) on any of the equality characteristics?** In the tables below, record the impact of the policy, as it is planned or as it operates, might have on each equality characteristic and describe what changes in policy or actions will be required to mitigate that impact or to take advantage of a positive impact.

Equality group	Public sector equality duty	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe the changes or actions (if any) you plan to take. E.g. to mitigate any impact, maximise the positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes despite the potential for adverse impact.
		Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact	
Age	Potential for discrimination			X	There may be perceptions that the Menopause only affects women of a certain age, while it is more likely to affect woman 50+ the Policy clearly details the different type of menopause including peri–menopause, medically induced menopause and the early menopause that employees can experience at a range of ages.
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity			X	
	Potential to foster good relations	X			
Disability	Potential for discrimination	X			The policy uses inclusive language. The policy is formatted to promote accessibility. The policy also offers the employee to access alternative formats. The policy will be published with the option of immersive format and accessibility mode. The policy and guidance also guides the manager to reasonable consideration with regards to absence triggers.
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity	X			
	Potential to foster good relations	X			
Race	Potential for discrimination			X	

Equality group	Public sector equality duty	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe the changes or actions (if any) you plan to take. E.g. to mitigate any impact, maximise the positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes despite the potential for adverse impact.
		Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact	
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity			X	The most common symptoms have been detailed in the Policy which may limit a manager's knowledge on how best to support an employee if one of their symptoms is not covered. We will mitigate this by including in the policy that the list is not exhaustive and people can experience a vast range of symptoms, unique to them which all fall under the policy and should be taken seriously. The policy encourages employee to inform their manager about symptoms, the impact and to describe what support they think they can benefit from which would hopefully help enable managers. The clearly defined policy and guidance recommend that employees who don't feel comfortable speaking to their line manager, speak to either another manager or a member of HR.
	Potential to foster good relations	X			
Sex	Potential for discrimination	X			

Equality group	Public sector equality duty	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe the changes or actions (if any) you plan to take. E.g. to mitigate any impact, maximise the positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes despite the potential for adverse impact.
		Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact	
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity	X			The Policy is likely to have a positive impact on employees who were assigned female at birth as they may experience symptoms and receive the appropriate support during their time at work. The Policy also offers support to partners of individuals who experience symptoms.
	Potential to foster good relations	X			
Gender Reassignment	Potential for discrimination	X			There may be transgender employees who may feel uncomfortable to discuss any symptoms with their line manager. The policy and guidance recommend that employees who don't feel comfortable speaking to their line manager, speak to either another manager or a member of HR.

Positive impact as the clearly defined policy and guidance are intended to support all staff. The Policy does not limit the effect of menopause or menstruation to a set number of groups. |
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity	X			
	Potential to foster good relations	X			
Sexual orientation	Potential for discrimination			X	SRUC will promote the menopause and menstruation policy through the Rainbow staff network.
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity			X	

Equality group	Public sector equality duty	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe the changes or actions (if any) you plan to take. E.g. to mitigate any impact, maximise the positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes despite the potential for adverse impact.
		Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact	
	Potential to foster good relations	X			
Religion or Belief	Potential for discrimination			X	As part of the Policy and guidance, SRUC proposes to make sanitary products available to employees. Some religions, beliefs and faiths would avoid the use of tampons therefore SRUC should be aware of other options for employees. This is mitigated by the offer of both tampons and pads. The policy and guidance recommend that employees who don't feel comfortable speaking to their line manager, speak to either another manager or a member of HR. Positive impact as the clearly defined policy and guidance are intended to support all staff.
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity			X	
	Potential to foster good relations	X			
Pregnancy or maternity	Potential for discrimination			X	The policy details additional mental health support for employees.
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity			X	
	Potential to foster good relations	X			
Marriage or civil partnership	Potential for discrimination			X	Evidence has shown an increase of GBV during times of menopause and reported increase numbers of relationship
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity			X	

Equality group	Public sector equality duty	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe the changes or actions (if any) you plan to take. E.g. to mitigate any impact, maximise the positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes despite the potential for adverse impact.
		Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact	
(in employment only)	Potential to foster good relations	X			breakdowns. SRUC have a safe leave policy in place to support employees who experience GBV. SRUC will promote the menopause and menstruation policy through the Rainbow staff network.

2.2 **Think about and describe below how your assessment impacts on your policy review/ development timeline including but not limited to:**

- Procurement criteria: do you need to include specific equality criteria as part of the technical specification ?
- Communication plan/ products: do you need to communicate with people affected by this policy/ practice/ service/ process in a specific format (e.g. audio, subtitled video, different languages)?
- Cost: do you propose any actions because of this assessment which will incur additional cost?
- Resources: do the actions you propose require additional or specialist resource to deliver them?

2.3 **Record the outcome of this assessment below having considered the potential or actual impacts of your policy/ practice/ process/ service on equality groups.** Choose from one of the following (mark with an X or delete as appropriate):

Note: You must take action to remove barriers or take advantage of positive opportunities BEFORE the policy goes live.

Please select (X)	Implications for the policy/ practice/ process/ service
	No major change: Your assessment demonstrates that the policy service is robust. The evidence shows no potential for unlawful discrimination and that you have taken all opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitoring and review.
X	**Adjust the policy:** You need to take steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality of to foster good relations. You have set actions to address this and have clear ways of monitoring the impact of the policy when implemented. Added in the Appeals Procedure under the SRUC Grievance
	Continue the policy: The policy will continue despite the potential for adverse impact. You have justified this with this assessment and shown how this decision is compatible with our obligations under the public sector equality duty. When you believe any discrimination can be objectively justified you must record in this assessment what this is and how the decision was reached.
	Stop and remove the policy: The policy will not be implemented due to adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be mitigated.

3   Monitoring policy impact and further actions

It is important to continue to monitor the impact of your policy/ practice/ process/ service on equality groups to ensure that your actual or likely impacts are those you recorded. Your monitoring information will also inform a future review of the policy.

3.1   Record in the table below how you intend to monitor the impact of this policy/ practice/ process/ service on equality groups. In the table below you should:

- list the relevant measures,
- Identify who or which team is responsible for implementing or monitoring any changes
- Where the measure will be reported to (e.g. committee, ELT, Board) and how often.

Measure	Lead department/ individual	Reporting (where/ frequency)
Menopause and Menstruation monitoring	HR Business Support Data and Reporting Analyst	Monthly in absence reports
Menopause and Menstruation monitoring	HR Business Support Data and Reporting Analyst	Annual

3.2   Record further actions or changes required after the policy is implemented in the table below. Make it clear if there are no outstanding actions.

Action	Lead department/ individual	Action target date
EDI committee recommendation for other groups of representatives	Business Partner	End December 2022 – February 2023 committee date

4   Sign off and future review

Equality impact assessments must be signed off by the relevant Head of Service/ Department, even where an EqIA is not required. Also note here when you plan to review the policy and accompanying EqIA which should be no later than 5 years from policy implementation.

4.1   Senior Responsible Owner/ Committee sign off.
Job/ Committee title: Chief People Officer
Date: 17/03/2023

4.2   Equality impact assessment review date.
Date: 17/03/2028

Important: You must send the final version of this equality impact assessment to:

- **the Equality Diversity & Inclusion Lead.**
- **the Communications team for publication on SRUC's equality page on the external website.**

Document control	
Document control:	V0.1
Date policy live from:	01/02/2023
Review/ Approval Group:	Human Resources
Last reviewed:	01/02/2023
Review cycle:	No more than five years
Document change log		

Version/ Author	Date	Comment
V0.1 Senior HR BP	01/04/2025	