

Advancing support for endometriosis and menstrual wellbeing

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Steps taken by Nottingham College to support staff affected by endometriosis and other menstrual health conditions.

Background

Nottingham College has taken steps to support staff affected by endometriosis and other menstrual health conditions.

The college has focused its efforts on 3 key areas:

- enhancing leadership and management support
- tackling stigma and fostering cultural change
- improving communication

The college committed to membership with Endometriosis UK as an Endometriosis Friendly Employer and introduced 'Menstrual Health' as a recognized sickness category in its HR system. It has also expanded its successful Café Connections initiative (which began with the Menopause Café in 2019) and launched comprehensive Menstrual Health and Menopause Policy in July 2025. This expansion also includes a dedicated Menstrual Health Café.

Creating a supportive culture that keeps talent thriving

The college's proactive approach to menstrual and menopausal health has improved workforce retention by fostering trust and support, boosting morale and reducing absence.

The introduction of flexible accommodations and the visibility of trained champions has helped staff feel valued and understood, contributing to a stronger sense of belonging.

Early anecdotal feedback suggests that these initiatives have supported retention and enhanced recruitment appeal, positioning the college as a progressive employer.

Empowering change through staff engagement

Nottingham College has actively engaged staff through consultation, feedback, and peer-led programmes.

The Café Connections Programme continues to be a cornerstone of engagement, offering regular opportunities for staff to connect, share experiences, and learn from guest speakers.

Evidence-based approach to supporting women's health

The college analysed workforce protected characteristic data to estimate how many staff may be affected by menopause and other women's health issues.

It's well-established Menopause Café, in its sixth year, provided feedback from staff experiences to accompany survey data.

Partnerships with experts (Endometriosis UK and Henpicked), and research from the CIPD and other professional bodies, built a compelling organisational case for providing staff with the right support.

Advancing workplace wellbeing

The college continues to strengthen its commitment to staff wellbeing through initiatives such as:

- ongoing leadership training to support staff
- a network of 50 trained Mental Health First Aiders, including support for menopause symptoms
- Menopause Café members reviewing the draft action plan ahead of 2027 Employment Rights Bill requirements
- application for full Menopause Friendly Employer accreditation in February 2026

Key Lessons

You should:

- listen to staff: introducing 'Menstrual Health' as a sickness reason came directly from staff feedback
- partner with experts: collaborating with organisations like Endometriosis UK added specialist insight and credibility
- build on success: Café Connections evolved from the Menopause Café, showing how initiatives can grow
- train champions: dedicated, trained staff provide visible and accessible support
- use data: workforce analysis strengthened the business case and targeted support effectively

What you can do

If you're considering similar initiatives in your college:

- review sickness absence categories and include menstrual health if appropriate
- explore partnerships with organisations like Endometriosis UK or Menopause Friendly Employer schemes
- consider establishing peer support groups or cafés for staff to share experiences
- analyse equality and diversity data to assess your workforce impact
- contact Nottingham College on 0115 9100 100 or People.Services@nottinghamcollege.ac.uk to learn from their experience

<https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/advancing-support-for-endometriosis-and-menstrual-wellbeing>