

Leading the way in menopause support

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Key lessons from Warrington & Vale Royal College following the introduction of a dedicated Menopause Policy in 2022.

Background

In 2022, Warrington & Vale Royal College introduced a dedicated Menopause Policy and reviewed existing workplace policies to strengthen inclusivity and staff support. This was followed by an all-staff 'Menopause Matters' presentation on World Menopause Day, engaging both male and female staff. The college then developed a Menopause Action Plan to ensure appropriate help and support for staff.

Creating a culture of openness and wellbeing

The college has fostered a culture where staff can openly discuss menopause and other wellbeing topics. Team members regularly share symptom updates and effective treatments, creating trust and mutual support.

Warrington & Vale Royal College provides multiple channels for staff to discuss workload and wellbeing, including performance and probation reviews, surveys, and forums. Recent survey results show 96% of staff feel supported to do their job effectively, and 97% are proud to work at the college.

The college was one of only 4 further education (FE) colleges in the UK to recently achieved the Platinum Investors in People (IIP) award, recognising its exceptional commitment to staff mental health and wellbeing. In November 2025 it was also awarded the IIP Employer of the Year Award.

Staff engagement

Warrington & Vale Royal College actively engages staff through initiatives such as:

- sharing resources via the Health and Wellbeing Hub
- offering Time to Talk sessions
- promoting menopause awareness days with interactive activities (such as quizzes)
- delivering menopause awareness training for staff and line managers, including guidance on supportive conversations and reasonable adjustments
- highlighting menopause-friendly practices in adverts, on the website, and in information sheets
- providing access to Occupational Health and the Employee Assistance Programme, including a Menopause Mentor Service
- ensuring practical support, such as desk fans for symptom relief
- supporting all staff, including those indirectly affected (such as partners of menopausal individuals)

Research-informed decisions

The HR Business Partner has attended multiple training sessions to stay informed and share best practice across the college, including the Menopause in the Workplace Conference, an ACAS webinar, and Irwin Mitchell training.

A staff member published an article to raise awareness of menopause in the FE sector and encourage open conversations among all colleagues.

Continuous improvement

Menopause remains a priority within the college-wide Mental Health Working Party, led by the Principal and CEO as part of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The HR Business Partner recently completed the Senior Mental Health Leadership in Education Settings course (Charlie Waller Trust and University of Reading, Department for Education-approved), further enhancing their ability to support staff, including those with menopause-related needs.

Key lessons

You should:

- engage everyone: include male staff to build understanding and support
- start with policy: a clear policy signals organisational commitment and drives action
- make it personal: share real experiences to reduce stigma
- invest in training: equip HR and managers for consistent, informed support
- link to wellbeing: embed menopause in wider mental health strategies
- provide practical help: simple measures like desk fans make a difference

What you can do

If you're considering similar initiatives in your college:

- check if you have a dedicated menopause policy or coverage in existing policies
- raise awareness among all staff, including those not directly affected
- explore training opportunities for HR staff and line managers
- make practical adjustments (for example, flexible working, fans, quiet spaces)
- use staff surveys to measure impact and build evidence
- contact Warrington & Vale Royal College at jocelynsmith@wvr.ac.uk to learn from their experience

<https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/leading-the-way-in-menopause-support>