

# Period Policy





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## Purpose

Channel 4 ('C4') is committed to enabling employees who are experiencing difficulties with their periods to get the support they need to manage their symptoms at work, regardless of their length of service and whether they are in the office or working remotely.

To achieve this, it is important for managers and employees to have adequate knowledge regarding menstrual cycles and periods and to know that not everyone experiences them in the same way. These topics should not be taboo or hidden and can be discussed openly and without embarrassment.

## Who is this for?

This guidance is for all employees who menstruate. It also helps colleagues and line managers understand how they can support employees experiencing such symptoms.

Periods do not only affect women, people who identify as non-binary, transgender and gender-diverse people may also experience symptoms relating to their menstrual cycle and periods.

## Why is this important?

This policy is designed to ensure people suffering with symptoms can feel empowered to ask for adjustments to ease such symptoms without embarrassment, can carry out their daily role in a safe working environment whether at home or in the office, and can have open discussions with colleagues and line managers so that they feel part of an inclusive work culture.

It is possible that a person's period can have a negative impact on their personal and working life. A lack of knowledge and understanding has created a culture of secrecy around menstruation at work. This makes working life tougher than it needs to be for people who have periods.

Although not everyone will experience symptoms, for those that do, symptoms can have a huge effect on a person's comfort and performance when working. This policy is therefore imperative to ensure C4 provides an inclusive and supportive 50/50 working environment for people experiencing symptoms in relation to their menstrual cycle. These vary greatly, and commonly include (but aren't limited to):

- abdominal or pelvic cramping;
- lower back pain;
- pain that stops normal activity;
- bloating and sore breasts;
- feeling sick, constipation and/or diarrhoea;
- food cravings;
- mood swings and irritability; and
- headache and fatigue



## What are the details?

What support is available to me as an employee?

### **Free Reproductive Health Screening**

C4 recognises the value of providing access to high-quality reproductive healthcare for employees who may be experiencing symptoms such as heavy or painful periods, irregular periods or trouble conceiving. C4 employees are eligible for a free Hormone & Fertility test to help them understand their symptoms.

### **Free Period Products**

When in the office, free period products will be made available in all toilets and the changing rooms.

### **Heat Pillows**

When in the office, microwavable heat pillows can be obtained. Alternatively, you can bring in your own microwavable heat pillow/hot water bottle to use in the office. Please refer to our safety protocol instructions, available on our intranet for guidance on how to use these items when in the office.

### **Quiet Room**

You can find more details on where quiet rooms are in the Channel 4 Offices on our intranet.

### **Occupational Health**

A working environment assessment can ensure that an employee's physical environment, whether at home or in the office, is not making their menstruation symptoms worse. Employees can request one at any time by contacting (or asking their manager to contact) with People Services or their People Partner.

### **Flexible Working**

C4 have an established Flexible Working Policy that allows employees to make a permanent change to their contract. However, should an employee require a more temporary/flexible change, working arrangements could include:

- more breaks and time away from their computer
- earlier start times and finish times to avoid peak travel times when travelling into the office
- turning their camera off when on Teams calls, and also having a walking meeting instead if helpful

These should be discussed and agreed with the employee's line manager and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure these adjustments continue to meet the needs of the employee.

### **Sickness/Paid Leave**

An employee may feel unwell and unfit for work due to painful periods or other menstrual symptoms, this includes the sudden onset of symptoms during the working day and if so, C4 will support them.

Details of our Sickness Absence Policy can be found on our intranet.



## General Support

C4 aims to facilitate an open, understanding working environment and so we encourage employees to inform their line manager that they are experiencing symptoms caused by periods to ensure necessary support is made available. Some other avenues that employees might want to consider:

- A trusted colleague.
- A dedicated **Period Champion**.
- **Email 4Womxn** who can provide confidential support.
- Speak to a **Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA)**. Contact anyone on the list who will listen, guide and direct you to the most appropriate help and resources.
- **Email the 4Inclusion team** who can provide confidential support.
- Get in touch with **your department 4Rep**.
- Speak to **your People Partner**.

## Supporting Sensitive Conversations

Some employees may find it particularly hard to talk to a line manager about the impact of period-related symptoms and may wish to refer to the following points:

- Keep a symptoms diary noting how their symptoms are affecting them.
- Update their Inclusion Passport.
- Consider what reasonable adjustments may help, bearing in mind the need to be flexible and what is operationally feasible.

## Medical Support

We encourage employees to speak to their GP when they are experiencing symptoms.

C4 Employees have access to a virtual health service which offers access to a GP 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to those employees. Details of how to access the virtual GP can found on Your4.

C4 also provides access to a confidential service via the Employee Assistance Programme, which can be found on our intranet. There are also a number of support groups that can offer expert advice and the details can be found under the Health and Wellbeing section on our intranet.

## Where can you get more related information?

The following are links to some external sites that you may find useful.

We are aware there is a lot of guidance available, and everyone is different, so please use this as a guide only and do let us know if there are any links that should be added to this list:

- [National Institute for Health & Care Excellence \(NICE\) guidelines](#), which outline how a GP will determine what types of treatments/interventions they can offer.
- [NHS – Periods Overview](#) provides an overview of periods, together with information about different products and problems.
- [Hertilt's knowledge centre](#) has a range of articles written by reproductive health experts.
- [Endometriosis UK](#) provides information and support to people with Endometriosis.
- [Verity](#) provides information and support to people with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS).
- [Women's Health – Menstrual Cycle](#) provides information and resources regarding periods.
- [Fertility Network](#) provides support for those who have ever experienced fertility problems.
- [NHS – Mindfulness](#) provides an overview of mindfulness, together with tips on how to be more mindful.
- [Mind - PMDD](#) provides an overview of what PMDD is and how to access treatment and support.

This policy applies to all Channel 4 employees and does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. We may amend it at any time.

