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Via Email

Wednesday 16th August 2023

Female Detainee Care and Dignity - The Menopause Transition Report from the Betterment (Healthcare) Working Group

Dear Colleagues,

The Menopause is a natural biological progression that all women in their 40s and 50s (sometimes earlier) will experience. Peri-Menopausal, Menopausal and Post-menopausal symptoms can sometimes be debilitating, potentially leading to unseen vulnerabilities.

There is currently no clear consistency across Forces in relation to additional considerations for detained females experiencing the Menopause, or how Forces actively identify any vulnerabilities linked to Menopausal symptoms.

If left unaddressed, Forces could be in danger breaching Article 3 ECHR (freedom from torture or degrading or inhuman treatment). There is also the potential for a miscarriage of justice, should a person with vulnerabilities not be identified as such during the Criminal Justice process.

The Betterment Workstream (Healthcare Group) have met with ICVA and the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioners office several times to directly consider the points raised in the Sussex PCC's briefing report. From these meetings, the following recommendations are now being made for your consideration:

- Forces should offer health screening to all female detainees aged 40 or over, with the following suggested wording: ***“As someone over the age of 40 you meet the criteria for us to offer you a health screening with a healthcare professional, which includes questions around perimenopause, menopause and post-menopause. It is our recommendation that you consider this opportunity whilst in custody. Would you like to see the healthcare professional?”***
- Forces should liaise directly with their healthcare providers to ensure that they are able to provide specific care plans for detainees affected by the Menopause. Care plans may consist of (but are not limited to):
 - Locate the detainee to a cooler cell if appropriate
 - Provision of cool drinks
 - Provision of decaffeinated drinks
 - Regular provision of breaks in the exercise yard
 - Provision of a menopause care pack

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- Provision of distraction items to ease menopause related stress and to ease relaxation
- Provision of showers
- Consideration of food types and access to non-spicy food
- Provision of additional blankets

- Forces should liaise directly with their healthcare providers to ensure that they identify any additional vulnerabilities, resulting from Menopausal symptoms, which may affect fitness to interview and to consider additional care needs during interview such as:
 - Standard PACE requirements around vulnerability (Appropriate Adults etc)
 - Provision of memory aids for interview (pen, paper etc)
 - Consideration of regular breaks during the interview
 - Additional consideration, where practicable, of start and finish time for interview, to be cognisant of concentration levels

- Forces should liaise directly with their healthcare providers to ensure that they are able to develop care pathways and appropriate referral processes to Menopause services, including GP services.

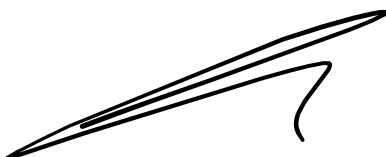
- Forces should purchase Menopause hygiene items and offer a package of items to female detainees consisting of:
 - Leaflet (bespoke to Forces and local signposting options). **“See attached”**
 - Water face mist spray or moist towelettes
 - Lip balm
 - Paper fan
 - Intimate hygiene wash/wipes

- Forces should be cognisant of Menopause related symptoms at the exit risk assessment and to provide signposting advice and to allow detainees leaving custody to take the Menopause Hygiene Pack with them.

Recommendations have been made to the College of Policing to make amendments to APP as **per the attachment.**

To support better knowledge and understanding of the Menopause an awareness package has been developed. Whilst this has been submitted to the College to consider adopting, we would request that you review the attached proposed awareness guide and consider implementing in your forthcoming continuing professional development (CPD) cycles.

Regards



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