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# Menopause Policy

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## Document Control

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## Change History

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*This Policy is not for publication externally*



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## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Council is committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive working environment for all our staff.
- 1.2 The Council recognises that many members of staff will experience the menopause and that for some the menopause can have an adverse impact upon their working lives.
- 1.3 The Council recognises that those experiencing the menopause may need additional support and adjustments and the Council is committed to supporting these workers and ensuring their workplace does not make their symptoms worse.
- 1.4 The purpose of this policy is to
  - 1.4.1 raise awareness of the menopause and how it can affect staff
  - 1.4.2 encourage open conversations between staff and their line managers
  - 1.4.3 foster an environment in which staff can openly and comfortably engage in conversations about the menopause in a respectful and supportive way
  - 1.4.4 support workers experiencing the menopause to continue to be effective in their jobs
- 1.5 Personnel Committee has approved the Menopause Policy.

## 2. Applicability

- 2.1 This Policy applies to:
  - 2.1.1 All non-school based employees working for the Council, including those working from home or at non-Council locations.
  - 2.1.2 Other persons including Elected Members, consultants, agency staff and contractors working for the Council, volunteers, external organisations working with the Council, whilst engaged on Council business.
- 2.2 It is the responsibility of each employee and other persons mentioned in section 2.1 to familiarise themselves with and adhere to this Policy.
- 2.3 Adherence to this Policy is a condition of working for the Council or using its assets.
- 2.4 This Policy has had consultation with Heads of Service and Trade Unions and the Council's Corporate Board. It has been approved by Personnel Committee.

## 3. What is the menopause?

- 3.1 The menopause is a natural transition stage in most womens' lives when oestrogen levels decline. It usually occurs in their late forties/early fifties, although it can happen earlier or later.

- 3.2 The NHS defines the menopause as ‘when a woman stops having periods and is no longer able to get pregnant naturally’. Part of the process of reaching the menopause is termed the ‘perimenopause’. This is when a woman’s body is starting to change in the build up to the menopause. For simplicity perimenopause is included in the term ‘menopause’ in this policy.
- 3.3 Some women may go through the early menopause – one in 100 women may go through the menopause before the age of 40 so it is important not to make assumptions about who is likely to be going through the menopause. Early menopause may happen for a variety of reasons including where a woman has certain medical conditions and/or health treatments such as hysterectomy or treatment for cancer, other women may naturally go through the menopause early.
- 3.4 The menopause can also impact on trans, intersex and non-binary people who may not identify as female. Trans men can experience menopausal symptoms as well as those presenting as women.
- 3.5 The menopause can impact indirectly upon employees whose partners/other family members are going through it.
- 3.6 Symptoms can be physical and/or psychological and vary from person to person, in severity, and may fluctuate. Symptoms are due to changes in hormone levels that begin in perimenopause and can continue for a number of years after a woman’s last period. Symptoms often last between four to eight years in total, but may last longer or for less. A list of some of the symptoms can be found at appendix one.
- 3.7 Menopausal symptoms may also exacerbate existing impairments and conditions.

#### 4. **Policy**

- 4.1 It is the Policy of the Council to ensure that staff affected by the menopause are supported. Menopause is not just an issue for women. All staff should be aware of the menopause so that they can support those going through it or otherwise affected by it.
- 4.2 The Council encourages an environment in which colleagues can have open conversations about the menopause should they wish to do so. We expect all staff to be supportive of colleagues who may be affected by the menopause in the workplace.
- 4.3 Anyone affected by the menopause should feel confident to talk to their line manager about the impact which the menopause is having upon them, and the support they may need to reduce the difficulties it can cause them at work. Some may want to talk about support without talking about their symptoms in detail.
- 4.4 Line managers should be ready to have open conversations about the menopause and to discuss the support available. Such conversations should be treated sensitively and professionally and any information provided should be handled confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation.

- 4.5 Managers will consider requests for support and reasonable adjustments sympathetically and will not discriminate against employees who are experiencing the menopause.
- 4.6 Whilst the employee's line manager is the person who can put support measures in place, in some circumstances the employee may prefer to talk to someone else in the first instance. This may be their manager's manager, another manager within their service or their trade union. Managers are expected to be prepared to have these conversations with members of staff even where they are not the employee's line manager. Where the employee wishes, this person can support them in discussing with their line manager the impact the menopause is having and the support that could reduce the difficulties this may cause them at work.

## 5. **Risk assessment**

- 5.1 The Council is committed to ensuring the health and safety of its staff and will consider any aspects of the working environment that may worsen menopausal symptoms. This may involve identifying and addressing specific risks to health and well-being of those going through the menopause.
- 5.2 A menopause risk assessment form, for managers to use where an employee tells them they are experiencing symptoms, is available on the intranet. The risk assessment should focus on how the menopause is affecting the employee individually, including any impact on or due to any existing conditions the employee may have.

## 6. **Support and adjustments**

- 6.1 The Council recognises that the menopause is a very personal experience. While many who go through the menopause will be able to carry on their working lives as normal, others may benefit from reasonable adjustments to their working conditions to mitigate the impact of menopause symptoms at work.
- 6.2 Employees experiencing the menopause are encouraged to let their line manager know if they are experiencing symptoms that impact on their work so that they can discuss appropriate support.
- 6.3 Where an employee tells their line manager that they are experiencing symptoms the line manager will conduct a menopause risk assessment to assess whether the employee's menopausal symptoms are being made worse by the workplace or by work practices. Areas to consider include:
- 6.3.1 Workplace temperature
  - 6.3.2 Access to toilet and washing facilities
  - 6.3.3 Access to drinking water
  - 6.3.4 Uniforms and personal protective equipment
  - 6.3.5 Working times and break times
  - 6.3.6 Workload

- 6.4 The line manager and employee should discuss whether there are reasonable adjustments that could help the employee and the line manager may refer the employee to Occupational Health to better understand any adjustments and other support that may help alleviate symptoms affecting the employee at work.
- 6.5 Depending upon individual and business needs, adjustments that might be considered include:
- 6.5.1 Provision of electric fans
  - 6.5.2 Flexible working/changes to work patterns
  - 6.5.3 Changes to work allocation
  - 6.5.4 More frequent rest breaks
  - 6.5.5 Access to somewhere suitable to rest
  - 6.5.6 Changes to work allocation/duties
  - 6.5.7 Flexibility over uniform/dress code and/or provision of additional spare uniforms
  - 6.5.8 Ready access to chilled water and to toilets and washing facilities

These are examples only and not an exhaustive list.

- 6.6 Managers should seek further advice on making reasonable adjustments from HR as some symptoms of the menopause may meet the definition of a disability under the Equality Act 2010 where they have a substantial and long-term effect on the employee's ability to do normal daily activities.
- 6.7 Managers will put agreed support and reasonable adjustments into place in a timely manner and will regularly review them with the employee, keeping in mind that symptoms and their impact may fluctuate.

## 7. **Sickness absence**

Absences due to menopausal symptoms may be viewed as part of an on-going health issue rather than short term sickness absence. Managers should seek advice from Human Resources at an early stage if they believe the absence of an employee, or other symptoms impacting their work, may be related to the menopause. HR, with advice from Occupational Health where appropriate, will advise how menopause related sickness absence should be recorded and managed.

## 8. **Roles and Responsibilities**

- 8.1 Human Resources is responsible for maintaining this Policy and for providing advice and guidance on request on its implementation.
- 8.2 All managers are directly responsible for implementing this Policy within their service areas, and for the adherence of their staff and others (2.1.2).

8.3 All personnel detailed at 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 have an individual responsibility to adhere to this Policy.

9. **Review**

9.1 This policy will be reviewed to respond to any changes and at least every 3 years.

9.2 The Service responsible for reviewing and maintaining this Policy is Human Resources.

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## Useful sources of information

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### Internal sources of support:

Employee Assistance Programme (available via the Intranet)  
Menopause Risk Assessment

### External sources of information:

NHS guidance on the menopause [Menopause - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/video/Pages/coping-with-the-menopause.aspx)  
<https://www.nhs.uk/video/Pages/coping-with-the-menopause.aspx>

Support for premature menopause [The Daisy Network | The Daisy Network](#)

NICE Menopause <https://www.nice.org.uk/favicon.ico>

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists  
<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/menopause/>

Other sources

<https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/>

<https://thebms.org.uk/>

<https://thebms.org.uk/publications/videos/bms-tv/>

<https://www.womens-health-concern.org/>

<https://healthtalk.org/menopause/overview>

<https://www.wellbeingofwomen.org.uk/the-menopause/>

<https://henpicked.net/>

[The Menopause in the workplace - a toolkit for trade unionists - TUC Wales](#)

## Other Relevant Documentation

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Template Menopause Risk Assessment

[The Stress and Mental Well-Being Policy and Guidance](#)

[Sickness absence reporting and management policy, procedure and guidance](#)



## Appendix one – symptoms of the menopause

Symptoms can be physical and/or psychological and may include:

- Difficulty in sleeping
- Night sweats
- Feeling tired and lacking in energy
- Low mood, irritability, depression, anxiety, panic attacks
- Poor concentration, loss of confidence and memory problems
- Hot flushes – may include sweating, the skin becoming red and patchy and a quicker or stronger heart rate
- Taking longer to recover from illness
- Irregular periods
- Heavier, painful periods and clots leaving those affected exhausted as well as practically needing to change sanitary wear more frequently. Some affected may become anaemic.
- Aches and pains including muscle and joint stiffness
- Urinary problems – more frequent urinary incontinence and urinary tract infections such as cystitis.
- Headaches including migraines
- Putting on weight
- Noticeable heartbeats
- Skin and/or vaginal irritation and/or dryness
- Menopausal hairloss
- Osteoporosis
- Dry eyes
- Side effects of hormone replacement therapy (HRT)

**This is not an exhaustive list.**