

# HUMAN RESOURCES AND COUNCIL TAX COMMITTEE

7 JULY 2022

## REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PARTNERSHIPS)

### A.2 NEW MENOPAUSE POLICY

(Prepared by Katie Wilkins & Karen Harges)

#### PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

##### **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To introduce the Human Resources & Council Tax Committee to the new Menopause Policy which is intended to be implemented by the Council. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Council remains compliant with employment legislation (*including the Equality Act 2010*), identified best practice and is in line with the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy.

##### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of implementing a Menopause Policy is primarily to ensure that staff who are experiencing the menopause are appropriately supported by the Council as their employer.

The policy aims to provide information about the menopause (*and references andropause*) for both staff experiencing the menopause and their managers, as well as colleagues and highlight the support available both from the Council and external agencies.

The Policy incorporates guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and is written in accordance with current ACAS guidelines.

The Policy sets out: -

- A clear definition of what is menopause, peri-menopause, post-menopause and andropause
- An overview of potential symptoms
- Responsibilities of both managers and employees
- Support available and additional resources for employees, managers, and colleagues

In line with the Council's commitment to Equality and Diversity the policy has been developed to be truly representative of all sections of society and ensure all staff feel respected and able to give their best.

In addition, it provides specific guidance to support managers' talking to their staff about the menopause and an advice sheet to support staff to talk to their GP about their symptoms and what support is available.

Unison has been consulted on the new Menopause Policy and has offered agreement and support for the implementation of these proposals.

The introduction of a Menopause Policy is only the start of a comprehensive suite of health and well-being activities including information, support and advice that is planned to be cascaded throughout the Council over the coming months. This will include support sessions for those experiencing the menopause, along with information sessions and training for both those experiencing the menopause, line managers and colleagues. The HR team plans to collaborate with all staff to identify the most appropriate support for staff experiencing menopause, which might include drop-in groups, one to one support sessions, and information briefings. Additionally, the promotion of self-help support and the Employee Assistance Programme.

#### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**It is recommended that the Human Resources & Council Tax Committee supports the implementation of the new Menopause Policy, which includes the programme of support for staff experiencing the menopause.**

### **PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

#### **DELIVERING PRIORITIES**

This policy will ensure that the organisation continues to observe recognised best practice and employment legislation as a responsible employer

#### **FINANCE, OTHER RESOURCES AND RISK**

No specific risks have been identified. This is a policy needed to ensure best practice and continued legal compliance. This work sits within existing budgets.

#### **LEGAL**

The Council has a duty to ensure its Menopause Policy is compliant with employment law (*including the Equality Act 2010*), the constitution and best practice, in line with ACAS Codes of Practice and guidance.

In considering Policies, the Council must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, which states:

- (1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to —
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

...

(3) Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—

(a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;

(b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;

...

(5) Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—

(a) tackle prejudice, and

(b) promote understanding.

(6) Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act.

(7) The relevant protected characteristics are—

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

#### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

None.

## **PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **Menopause Policy**

The Council's Menopause Policy is a new policy. It is part of a suite of health and well-being activities being introduced across Tendring District Council. The menopause is significant for many employees within the Council, whether it is as someone personally experiencing menopausal symptoms, or managing, working, or living with someone who is experiencing the menopause.

It is important for the Council, as an employer, to be aware of menopause symptoms and to support them equally. If an employee or worker is put at a disadvantage or treated less favourably because of their menopause symptoms, this could be discriminatory.

Menopause usually happens between 45 and 55 years of age. However, it can also happen earlier or later. Of those experiencing the menopause, 75% will experience some symptoms, and of those, 25% will experience severe symptoms. This may lead to absenteeism and performance issues. For many individuals, symptoms last about 4 years, but in some cases, symptoms can last a lot longer.

The menopause should not be taboo or 'hidden.' This policy aims to encourage employees to discuss their experience of the menopause openly and without embarrassment so that we can ensure individuals are supported effectively by managers and colleagues.

The policy aims to ensure everyone understands what menopause is, and so they can confidently discuss it and their experiences and feel supported.

The policy offers clear information and guidance to educate and inform managers about the potential symptoms of menopause and how they can support staff at work.

It gives staff clear guidance on the symptoms of the menopause and the support available.

Finally, the policy aims to reduce absenteeism due to menopausal symptoms by encouraging staff to seek advice and identify when they might need support.

The Council is a responsible and caring employer and is taking this first positive step to show all staff that we are committed to supporting their needs as they experience the menopause.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The new Menopause Policy will ensure that the Council maintains its high standard of employment practices and has a policy that observes best practice and current employment legislation.

### **APPENDICES**

Menopause Policy – June 2022