

Menopause Policy



The Council recognises health and wellbeing as crucial to the successful delivery of our services. We are committed to promoting and supporting healthy living through internal health improvement initiatives, occupational health advice, and collaborative processes with individual employees to meet their physical and mental wellbeing needs at work.

This Menopause Policy provides guidance to the Council’s People Managers and employees on the appropriate procedures for managing menopause-related issues in the workplace. The Council ensures this policy is fair, equitable, and transparent, with the needs of employees at its core. It is fully compliant with equality and diversity standards, ensuring care and consideration are given to the needs of our employees while balancing these with the Council’s business requirements.

Policy	Menopause Policy
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Policy Consultation	Trade Unions recognised by the Council Policy Readers Panel Senior Leadership Team
Policy Sign-off	Head of Paid Service / SHDC Council

Menopause Policy

Introduction

The Council recognises that menopause can affect individuals in different ways. People may experience menopausal symptoms due to hormonal changes, and the impact can vary widely from person to person. The Council is committed to supporting all employees who are affected by menopause in the workplace.

This policy outlines the Council's approach to supporting employees experiencing menopausal symptoms, including peri menopause, menopause, and post menopause.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to provide guidelines for employees and People Managers on supporting menopausal symptoms at work. The policy objectives are:

- Ensure everyone understands menopause, can confidently have conversations, and are clear on the Council's policy and practices, supported by the Senior Leadership Team.
- Educate and inform People Managers about menopausal symptoms, and how they can support employees.
- Ensure employees feel confident to discuss menopause, ask for support and request reasonable adjustments to continue being successful in their roles.
- Reduce absenteeism due to menopausal symptoms.
- Assure employees that the Council is a responsible employer committed to supporting their needs during menopause.

Scope

This policy applies to all Council employees, excluding agency workers and contractors.

Our Commitment to You

The Council is committed to creating an open and supportive culture where employees feel comfortable discussing how menopause-related symptoms affect them at work and can ask for the support they need.

Menopause is a natural process that can often be managed through lifestyle adjustments. However, we recognise that for some, it can be a difficult and stressful time, as well as a sensitive and private matter. We understand that additional support may be needed to improve their experience and continued performance at work.

The Council is dedicated to ensuring all employees experiencing menopause are treated equally, fairly and with respect, whether temporary, part-time, or full-time employees.

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1. Responsibilities under this Policy – The Council

- 1.1 Create a culture where employees can talk about their symptoms and challenges of menopause.
- 1.2 Ensure all policies are inclusive and supportive of employees experiencing menopause.
- 1.3 Provide resources to People Managers and employees about menopause.

2. Responsibilities under this Policy – Employees

- 2.1 Be as open and honest as possible to ensure People Managers can offer the right support.
- 2.2 Take reasonable responsibility and care for your own health and wellbeing.
- 2.3 Uphold a positive working environment treating others with dignity and respect.
- 2.4 Utilise available resources and support systems provided by the Council.

3. Responsibilities under this Policy – People Managers

- 3.1 Be approachable, enabling employees to have open and honest conversations about how they are feeling.
- 3.2 Remember that every employee's issues are unique to them, do not make assumptions.
- 3.3 Provide practical support to employees experiencing menopause, such as implementing reasonable adjustments where practicable.
- 3.4 Maintain regular contact with employees (for example through 121 meetings) to ensure they are able to succeed within their role.
- 3.5 Do not feel you have to be an expert on matters; listen and take advice and guidance where needed.
- 3.6 Take account of the employees' and business' needs when dealing with requests.
- 3.7 Outline the support available, such as the Employee Assistance Programme.
- 3.8 Ensure confidentiality and sensitivity when discussing menopause-related issues.

4. Responsibilities under this Policy – PSPS Human Resources Team.

- 4.1 Provide accurate and informative advice to People Managers to enable them to support employees.
- 4.2 Support, inform and advise employees.
- 4.3 Ensure up to date knowledge of employment law in relation to menopause.
- 4.4 Facilitate guidance from health professionals, such as Occupational Health, where required.

5. Menopause Overview

Menopause is a natural biological stage in a person’s life, marking the end of menstruating and significant hormonal changes such as a decrease in oestrogen.

Menopause typically occurs between the ages of 45 to 55 and lasts between four and eight years. However, symptoms can start earlier due to illness or other factors and vary greatly among individuals.

Menopausal symptoms may not affect everyone in the same way.

Perimenopause: The time leading up to menopause when symptoms may begin, often before menopause starts.

Post-menopause: The period after menopause, starting when a person has not had a period for 12 consecutive months.

6. Menopausal Symptoms

Menopausal symptoms can be both physical and mental, varying in severity and impact. Not everyone will experience every symptom, and the frequency and nature of symptoms can be unpredictable, significantly affecting personal and working life.

Physical Symptoms		Mental Symptoms
Hot Flashes	Irregular Menstrual Cycle	Problems with memory and/or concentration (Brain Fog) Changes to mood such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low mood• Anxiety• Mood Swings• Low Self-Esteem/Confidence• Panic Disorder• Irritability
Fatigue	Breast Soreness	
Palpitations	Changes in Taste	
Headaches / Migraines	Bloating	
Difficulty Sleeping	Thinning Hair	
Night Sweats	Dizzy Spells	
Muscle Aches / Joint Pain	Body Odour	
Weight Gain	Irregular Heartbeat	
Dry / Itchy Skin	Chills	
Urinary Tract Infections	Body Changes	

Please note that this list is not exhaustive, and employees may experience other physical and mental symptoms.

7. Impacts of Menopause

Menopausal symptoms can negatively affect relationships, whether the employee is experiencing symptoms or is close to someone who is. This can lead to feelings of loneliness, isolation and feeling misunderstood, both at home and work.

Employees may face additional pressures such as supporting children or ageing parents which can be overwhelming when combined with hormonal changes. This can result in feelings of sadness, unexplainable irritability, lack of motivation and loss of confidence.

8. Complications

After menopause, the risks of developing certain medical conditions increase, including:

- Cardiovascular disease: Declining estrogen levels increase the risk of heart and blood vessel diseases.
- Osteoporosis: Bones become brittle and weak, increasing risk of fractures. Rapid bone density loss can occur.
- Urinary Incontinence – Loss of elasticity in vaginal and urethral tissues, sudden urges to urinate (urge incontinence), involuntary urine loss (urge incontinence), or involuntary urine loss with coughing, laughing, or lifting (stress incontinence). Urinary tract infections may also become more frequent.

9. Sickness Absence

The Council does not expect employees who are unwell to work, including those unwell due to menopause symptoms.

If employees are sick and unable to work, they should follow the procedure set out in the Council's Absence and Sickness Management Policy and Procedure. Whilst employees do not have to disclose that their absence is related to the menopause, we encourage openness to ensure the Council are able to provide the appropriate support.

10. Requesting Support at Work

Employees struggling at work due to menopausal symptoms are encouraged to speak to their People Manager. If they do not feel comfortable doing so, they can contact a member of the HR Employee Relations team by e-mailing hr@pspsl.co.uk.

To ensure the right support, employees should be as open as possible about their difficulties. Any health-related information shared by employees will be treated sensitively and confidentially and only shared with HR if additional support is required.

11. Guidance for People Managers

11.1 Conversations with Employees

Regular, informal conversations between People Managers and employees can facilitate discussions about menopause-related issues. Listening and responding sympathetically can make a significant difference in how employees cope with work and menopause and helping to identify support that can make a real difference. This support may enable employees to continue working productively and remain at work.

It is important to note that employees experiencing menopausal issues (directly or indirectly)

may feel uncomfortable or embarrassed to approach their People Manager. However, if a People Manager is aware of the symptoms associated with menopause and how this can affect a person, this can greatly assist in promoting an environment where employees feel more confident to seek support. People Managers should encourage employees to discuss any health concerns with their GP.

People Managers will:

- Maintain confidentiality and handle health information sensitively.
- Allow sufficient time for conversation and encourage openness.
- Explore ways to support employees and agree on an action plan (please see Appendix 1 for a discussion template).
- Provide details of available support and external services.

12. Support Available

12.1 Occupational Health

If menopause symptoms adversely affect employees they may be referred to Occupational Health, with their consent.

Occupational Health can advise on the impact of symptoms and recommend appropriate adjustments. Occupational Health may also signpost employees to external sources of help and advice.

12.2 Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

The Council's EAP offers a free confidential counselling and support service available 24/7.

12.3 Maximus

Maximus provides support for mental health concerns related to menopause, helping employees stay in or return to work.

13. Adjustments During the Menopause

Employees are encouraged to discuss necessary adjustments with their People Manager.

The Council is committed to exploring reasonable adjustments, where practicable, and aims to support employees in succeeding in their roles. Adjustments might include:

13.1 Flexible Working

Temporary flexible working arrangements may include working from home, adjusting start and finish times, or taking more frequent breaks. Employees should discuss and agree on these adjustments with their People Manager

The Council are committed to facilitating, where possible, taking into account service requirements, temporary flexible working arrangements and when implemented they will continue to monitor them to ensure they remain relevant, and the service can accommodate them.

Employees who are considering a permanent change to working arrangements should refer to the Council's Flexible Working Policy for the process to apply.

13.2 Working Environment

Where employees feel their working environment is exacerbating their menopausal symptoms, they are encouraged to discuss this with their People Manager.

Practical adjustments, such as moving the workstations to cooler areas, or closer washroom facilities can be considered to ensure comfort at work.

13.3 Quiet Place to Work

Employees needing a short break to manage symptoms, or take medication, should discuss this with their People Manager who will accommodate it, where practicable. Additionally, the Council recognises that menopause symptoms can make it harder to concentrate in busy environments and may reduce tolerance to day-to-day noise. Employees experiencing such symptoms are encouraged to discuss possible adjustments with their People Manager, including the option to work in quieter offices or designated quiet spaces within the workplace where feasible.

Appendix 1 – Confidential Discussion Template

Employee		Job Title	
People Manager		Service	

Date of Discussion	
Summary of Discussion	

Agreed Actions/Adjustments	
Date of Next Review Meeting	

Employee Signature	
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People Manager Signature	
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