

### Introduction

Fife Council is committed to ensuring all our employees are treated fairly, with respect, and feel supported in their working environment. We recognise that individuals within our workforce will go through different phases and stages in their lives and may require additional support and understanding from us during these times.

At the Council, we aim to empower our managers and employees to hold open, honest and supportive discussions about menopause, the associated symptoms and what we can do to support employees to manage their health and ability to perform well in their roles.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to raise wider awareness and understanding of the menopause and how this can affect employees and their work colleagues. Both managers and employees' responsibilities are set out in this policy to make clear the Council's expectations and to assure those experiencing symptoms of menopause that we, as an employer, are committed to supporting you in your role.

### Key Principles

The key principle of this policy is to have a positive approach to discussing and managing menopausal symptoms within the workplace.

As a manager, you should:

- Familiarise yourself with this policy and associated information, such as links to external information from professional health resources
- Be prepared to have open discussions about menopause and appreciate the personal nature and sensitivity required during these discussions
- Create an environment within your team where employees feel confident to raise menopause-related issues and request reasonable adjustments
- Be approachable and available to hold discussions surrounding menopause
- Record all adjustments and associated details as and when these are agreed in your employee's personnel file
- Refer employees to Occupational Health where appropriate, for example if adjustments are unsuccessful or symptoms prove to be increasingly problematic, and implement recommendations where reasonably practical

As an employee, you should expect:

- Approachable and supportive managers who can hold open discussions about menopause
- A supportive working environment where reasonable adjustments are discussed, agreed, implemented and reviewed within an appropriate timescale

As an employee, you should:

- Take personal responsibility to look after your health through your GP and other available supports
- Be as clear and as accurate as possible with your manager about how the menopause is affecting you at work, so they can best support you, making them aware of changes in your health that may affect you in your role or affect reasonable adjustments already in place
- Approach another manager, or another colleague for support to do so, if you are not comfortable discussing your circumstances or symptoms with your own manager
- Be supportive and understanding of colleagues who may be experiencing symptoms or have reasonable adjustments in place

### **Menopause Definition**

The menopause is a biological stage that occurs when menstruation ends. This can be defined as having occurred when an individual has not had a period for 12 consecutive months. This can occur naturally or because of surgery, illness or other reasons. Menopause usually occurs during the ages of 45 and 55 but can occur earlier or later depending on the individual and their health circumstances. Hormonal changes pre, post and during the menopause can lead to physical and emotional symptoms.

### **Symptoms and Adjustments**

Not all affected employees will experience menopausal symptoms, but for those that do, these can be very uncomfortable and disruptive to their work and home life. Symptoms can manifest both physically and emotionally and vary in intensity from one individual to another. On the next page you will find a list of common symptoms and possible adjustments which can be made to help negate negative impacts whilst at work.

**The following is not an exhaustive list as there are numerous symptoms that can occur due to menopause.**

<b>Symptom</b>	<b>Possible Adjustment</b>
Hot flushes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temperature control of the individual's work area (for example a desk top fan, or moving next to a window)</li> <li>• Easier access to drinking water (for example moving to a desk closer to a water dispenser)</li> <li>• Flexibility in prescribed uniform or sourcing of uniform made from natural fibres</li> </ul>
Heavy periods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra uniform provided</li> </ul>
Headaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easier access to drinking water (for example moving to a desk closer to a water dispenser)</li> <li>• Offer a quieter space to work in</li> </ul>
Problems sleeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore flexible working options</li> </ul>
Poor concentration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjustments to working pattern if identified through discussion there are certain times of day when concentration is worse</li> <li>• Review workload and allocation and support offered</li> <li>• Give protected time so the individual may catch up with work</li> </ul>
Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow time for employee to practice mindfulness exercises in a designated area</li> <li>• Consider a referral to our employee Counselling Service (Time for Talking)</li> <li>• Consider flexibility to attend external supports</li> </ul>
Low mood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify a 'safe space' within the building where the individual may go if they begin to feel like this</li> <li>• Consider a referral to our employee Counselling Service (Time for Talking)</li> <li>• Consider flexibility to attend external supports</li> </ul>

**Reasonable adjustments should always be tailored to the individual's needs and the practicalities of implementing these within their Service.**

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all single status, craft and teaching employees.

## **Further Information**

### For everyone:

WB01 Supporting Mental Wellbeing at Work Policy

FW20 Flexible Working Quick Reference Guide

AM55 HR Guide to Time off for Medical Appointments

OH01 Occupational Health Policy

OH02 Employee Counselling Policy

OH17 Employee Stress Questionnaire

### For managers:

WB11 Supporting Mental Wellbeing at Work - Manager Guide

*Produced by Fife Council Human Resources Service  
Issue Number 1.0  
Issue date: February 2020*