MENOPAUSE POLICY

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1. Introduction

1.1. Yeovil Town Council are committed to creating an open and supportive culture in which employees feel comfortable to talk openly and without embarrassment about how menopause-related symptoms may be affecting them at work.

1.2. This is not just an issue for women. It will affect trans men and some non-binary people, and men will be affected by it indirectly.

1.3. Most individuals experience symptoms during perimenopause and menopause due to changes in hormone levels. With the right support and medical treatment for their symptoms, their experience at work will not be affected.

1.4. This policy sets out the guidelines for members of staff and managers on providing the right support to individuals to help them manage perimenopause and menopause symptoms at work.

1.5. In this policy, any reference to menopause also includes the perimenopause.

2. Symptoms of menopause

2.1. The menopause is a natural event during which a person stops having periods and experiences hormonal changes such as a decrease in oestrogen levels. Over 80% of women, trans men and some non-binary people experience symptoms due to changes in hormone levels. 25% of these experience symptoms which could be classed as severe and have a significant impact on their daily life.

2.2. There are four key stages:

2.3. Pre-menopause: the time in life before any menopausal symptoms occur.

2.4. Perimenopause: when menopausal symptoms occur due to hormone changes, but periods still happen (even if irregular).

2.5. Menopause: when there has been no period for 12 consecutive months. The menopause usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 but can happen earlier. Menopause typically lasts between four and eight years.

2.6. Postmenopause: the time in life after 12 months with no periods.

2.7. While menopausal symptoms vary greatly, they commonly include:

- hot flushes;
- night sweats;
- anxiety;
- dizziness;
- fatigue & trouble sleeping;
- memory loss;
- depression;
- headaches or migraine;
- recurrent urinary tract infections;
- joint stiffness, aches and pains;
- reduced concentration and brain fog;
- heavy periods;
- loss of confidence and self-esteem.

3. Requesting support

3.1. Employees who are finding it difficult to manage at work because of menopausal symptoms are encouraged to their line manager to discuss what support may be available. This could include temporary changes to an employee's working arrangements or working environment, or seeking external support, as set out below. Any health-related information disclosed by employees during discussions will be treated sensitively and in confidence.

3.2. Yeovil Town Council encourages employees to be as open as possible about any particular issues that they are experiencing or adjustments that they might need to ensure that they are provided with the right level of support to improve their experience at work.

3.3. If for any reason employees feel unable to approach their line manager, they can speak to HR, Chief Executive / Town Clerk or a member of the Staffing Committee.

4. Working arrangements

4.1. Employees who require a permanent change to working arrangements, such as changing contracted hours, should speak to their line manager. However, the Council recognises that for individuals affected by menopausal symptoms, the option to work flexibly on a temporary (rather than permanent) basis may be appropriate. For example, this could include working from home, changing start and finish times, or taking more frequent breaks. This is not a definitive list.

4.2. Employees who feel that they would benefit from a temporary change to their working arrangements on an ad hoc basis because of sleep deprivation or other

symptoms that may be impacting on their performance, should discuss their line manager.

4.3. The organisation will try to facilitate temporary flexible working arrangements wherever this is possible and will continue to review these to ensure that they meet the employee and the Council's needs.

5. Working environment

5.1. If an employee feels that their working environment is exacerbating their menopausal symptoms, they should raise this with their line manager.

5.2. There are a range of practical adjustments that the organisation may be able to consider in order to help make employees' working life easier.

6. Sickness Absence relating to the menopause

6.1. If you are sick and unable to work, you should follow the procedure set out in the organisation's Absence Policy.

6.2. In some cases, the Council may refer an employee to Occupational Health so that they can advise on how the employee's symptoms are impacted at work and make recommendations on the types of adjustments that may be appropriate, where reasonably practical.

7. External Sources of help

7.1. There are various organisations that provide help and support on the menopause including the NHS where you will find a range of further information and advice.

7.2. The following organisations and websites also provide advice and guidance:

- Balance by Newson Health
- The British Menopause Society
- Women's Health Concern
- Menopause Matters
- Daisy Network for premature menopause
- Menopause Cafe
- Queer Menopause for people who identify as LGBTQ+

Yeovil Town Council
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