

APPENDIX A

Menopause Policy

AUTHOR	Human Resources and Organisational Development
SCOPE	<p>This policy applies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• employees of Manchester City Council• staff deployed to the Manchester Local Care Organisation (MLCO)• Employees on secondment outside of the council but who remain on Manchester City Council terms <p>This policy does not apply to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• school employees
PURPOSE	<p>The purpose of this policy is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to encourage staff to talk more about the perimenopause and menopause and ask for the help they need• Increase managers' knowledge and confidence to know what to do if employees need support through this time.
APPROVAL	N/A - document submitted to Personnel Committee for approval
REVIEW	The policy will usually be reviewed every 3 years, but may be reviewed sooner if there are changes to legislation or statute; agreement of new national terms and conditions of service or Government Policy; organisational change; or resulting from changes agreed through Trade Union Consultation.

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1. Policy Aims

The Council is committed to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of all employees by providing support for colleagues experiencing the menopause. The aim of this policy is to raise awareness of how the menopause can affect staff, and how staff experiencing the menopause can be supported at work. The Council recognises that staff may need additional support, consideration and adjustments during this transitional time before, during and after the menopause and will work to ensure that employees are supported to reflect their individual needs.

This policy sits alongside other policies and guidance which will support staff experiencing the menopause. These include the [Menopause Guidance](#), [Supporting Mental Health Guide](#), [Flexible Working Policy](#), [Managing Attendance Policy](#) and the [Special Leave Policy](#).

2. Equality

Manchester City Council is committed to becoming a fair and inclusive employer where everyone feels valued and included and is treated fairly and with dignity and respect.

The Council will offer reasonable adjustments to support employees who are experiencing the menopause. Managers should take advice from the HR Casework team about the types of adjustments that can be offered.

People who are non-binary, trans or intersex, and who may not identify as a woman, may also experience menopausal symptoms. This policy therefore applies to anyone experiencing the menopause, regardless of their gender expression or identity. The Council will support all colleagues experiencing menopause transition and encourage staff to ask for help if they need it.

3. Definitions

Premenopause

A person experiencing premenopause has periods that may or may not be regular, and they are still considered fertile or in their reproductive phase of life. During premenopause, there are no noticeable changes in the body, but hormonal changes may start to occur.

Peri-menopause

The peri-menopause is the period of hormonal change leading up to the menopause. This is the time when many people start to experience symptoms. The peri-menopause can often last for four to five years, although for some people it may continue for many more years whilst for others it can last just a few months. Some people refer to this phase as the 'menopause transition'.

Menopause

The menopause is a natural event in some colleagues' lives during which they stop having periods and experience hormonal changes such as a decrease in oestrogen levels. It usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 and typically lasts between four and eight years. However, each person's experience will differ.

Post menopause

Refers to the stage after the menopause when a person has not had a period for at least 12 consecutive months.

Premature menopause

The average age for a person to undergo the menopause in the UK is 51, but around 1 in 100 experience it before the age of 40, known as premature ovarian failure (POF), primary ovarian insufficiency (POI) or 'premature menopause'. Often, there is no clear cause for the early onset of menopause, but it can also be as a result of surgery (for example hysterectomy, oophorectomy), illness or treatment (such as chemotherapy).

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Through supporting staff experiencing symptoms of menopause transition, the Council understands that not everyone experiences menopause in the same way. Like with other life events and health conditions, colleagues will experience different symptoms and need different support at different times. It's important that we understand any difficulties and anxieties employees may be experiencing.

Manager Responsibilities

- Be aware of and understand this policy.
- Listen to their staff when they tell them about perimenopause or menopause symptoms.
- Keep information about their team's health confidential.
- Support staff if they're experiencing menopausal symptoms, making reasonable adjustments where needed.
- Treating staff with respect, not making judgements or assumptions about them based on their age or because they've disclosed that they're in menopause transition.
- Treat any issues of bullying and harassment in relation to health issues associated with the menopause seriously – see the [Employee Dispute Resolution Policy](#) for more information.

Employee Responsibilities

- Be aware of and understand this policy.
- Seek medical advice from their GP in the first instance.

- Raise any health-related concerns with their manager or someone else at work they feel comfortable talking to, so that appropriate support can be provided.
- Report any absence in-line with the Council's [Managing Attendance Policy](#), providing a fit note(s) if required and taking all necessary steps to maintain their health.

5. Symptoms of the Menopause

We recognise that the menopause is a very individual experience and that people will be affected in different ways and to different degrees. While symptoms vary greatly, they commonly include:

- Psychological issues - such as mood disturbances, anxiety and/or depression, memory loss, panic attacks, loss of confidence and reduced concentration
- Hot flushes – often brief and sudden surges of heat
- Sleep disturbances that can make people feel tired and irritable
- Night sweats – hot flushes that happen at night
- Irregular periods that can be painful and heavier or lighter than usual
- Muscle and Joint stiffness, aches and pains
- Recurrent urinary tract infections (UTI's) including cystitis
- Headaches
- Weight gain
- Palpitations – heartbeats that become more noticeable
- Skin changes – dryness, acne, general itchiness
- Dizziness
- Fatigue

Each of these symptoms can affect an employee's wellbeing and comfort and their performance at work. Managers will discuss with staff what adjustments they can put in place to help and support staff manage symptoms at work

6. Available Support and Reasonable Adjustments

Employees can speak with their manager about the adjustments they might need at work to help them feel more comfortable because of the impact of their menopause symptoms.

The Council also offers a range of flexibility, services and benefits for staff to consider when supporting their health and well-being which can be discussed and agreed with managers. These include occupational health, flexibility around working from home (in many cases), TOIL and flexitime schemes to provide some adjustments to working hours. The Employee Assistance Programme is also an important benefit which is available to support health and wellbeing.

7. Sickness Absence Relating to Menopause

The menopause in itself is not an illness, but there may be times when the symptoms of menopause transition are severe enough to cause employees to take sickness absence, or for it to affect performance. Because this issue is intensely personal, a manager may not be aware that any impacts are menopause-related. A manager should make all reasonable efforts to ensure an employee is able to share information confidentially to help manage their symptoms whilst at work.

If the employee is absent from work because of the impact of the menopause or it is affecting their performance, line managers and employees should consider if an occupational health assessment would be appropriate, to ensure the best support can be put in place for the employee.

When managing an employee with a disability or prolonged sickness (such as someone suffering symptoms related to the menopause), line managers must use the [Managing Attendance Policy](#).

Managers should be aware that sickness absence relating to menopause transition can lead to unexpected absence and fluctuating levels of absence. They should speak to the HR Casework team for further advice.