



# Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Report for:</b>	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Title of report:</b>	Menopause Policy
<b>Date:</b>	6 December 2023
<b>Report on behalf of:</b>	Councillor Carole Weston, Portfolio Holder for People and Transformation
<b>Part:</b>	I
<b>If Part II, reason:</b>	n/a
<b>Appendices:</b>	Appendix 1: Menopause Policy Appendix 2: Community Impact Assessment
<b>Background papers:</b>	Nil
<b>Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:</b>	EDI – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion HR – Human Resources OD – Organisational Development CLT – Corporate Leadership Team SLT – Strategic Leadership Team

## Report Authors / Responsible Officers

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<b>Corporate Priorities</b>	Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery
<b>Wards affected</b>	N/A
<b>Purpose of the report:</b>	1. For the committee to review the new Menopause at Work Policy and provide feedback to assist with the development of the policy.
<b>Recommendation:</b>	1. For the committee to review and provide

	<p>feedback on the Menopause at Work Policy</p> <p>2. For the committee to note the next steps of the approval process.</p>
<b>Period for post policy/project review:</b>	The policy will be fundamentally reviewed in three years post implementation.

## **1 Introduction/Background:**

Menopause in the workplace is currently a high profile topic of discussion. There has been an increase in cases where individuals have taken claims of discrimination to Employment Tribunals due to a lack of support and awareness of Menopause at their place of work.

A Menopause survey of over 4000 women carried out in 2022 found that 1 out of 10 women who have worked while going through the menopause have had to leave their job directly because of their symptoms. It also discovered that 14% of women had to reduce their hours at work, 14% had to go part time and 8% felt they could not apply for a promotion.

The purpose of a Menopause at Work Policy is to educate and provide clarity to staff and managers, remove the taboo associated with the menopause and normalising it within the workplace. It confirms the support available from the Council (including reasonable adjustments), the expected training, information about menopause symptoms and provide guidance around the relevant employment legislation.

## **2 Methodology**

A benchmarking exercise was carried out to review current Menopause Policies within other local government and public sector organisations. There have been various discussions regarding Menopause and support for staff and managers with other Heads of HR across Hertfordshire and also at EDI networking groups.

It was also discussed at the International Women's Day Forum within the Council and further discussions with staff have since taken place at the Gender Equity forum, EDI Reference Group and the Staff Engagement Forum. The Council also received positive feedback about the need for a policy for staff and managers when we delivered Menopause workshops.

In creating this policy we have worked in partnership with our trade union colleagues, the corporate/strategic leadership team and the EDI reference group.

We have also been working in partnership with our voluntary sector colleagues, namely Dens. We have been exploring setting up a support group for staff across the Council and voluntary sector, which will include regular talks from leading experts in the menopause field.

You will also note that additional mandatory training is required for managers as part of this policy where we will be expecting managers to undertake awareness training on menopause and how to effectively manage staff experiencing menopausal symptoms. We will be launching the policy alongside the training plan and via our health and wellbeing offer.

Appendix 1 contains the new proposed menopause at work policy.

### **3 Options and alternatives considered**

Given the feedback from various staffing groups and in light of good HR practice, it would be recommended to have a menopause at work policy. This policy will increase overall menopause awareness and its effects on staff as well as providing our managers with the knowledge and skills to be able to effectively manage staff experiencing menopausal symptoms. The option to not implement this policy will create various risks to the Council as detailed in section 7 of this paper.

### **4 Consultation**

This policy has been reviewed and included comments/feedback from the Council's EDI Reference Group, HR and OD Team, CLT, SLT and also by the Trade Unions. These key stakeholders are all in agreement to support this new policy.

### **5 Financial and value for money implications:**

The launch of the Menopause Policy will be supported by mandatory Menopause Training for Managers that will be available on our current e-learning platform. There will also be staff workshops on the Menopause which will be incorporated in the current corporate training budget.

### **6 Legal Implications**

Although there is no direct legal obligation for employers to have a Menopause Policy in the workplace, not having one can have a negative impact by inadvertently failing to consider and support the health and wellbeing of employees going through the menopause. Not managing menopause effectively in our workforce may result of discriminatory claims under the Equality Act 2010.

### **7 Risk implications:**

The absence of a Menopause at Work Policy could pose several risks including:

- Possible contribution to a lack of engagement, low morale, lower performance and productivity from individuals who may not feel supported
- Rise in absence rates as individuals may not feel supported or confident to share the real reason for their absence.
- Increase the risk of staff experiencing stress, anxiety and depression
- Valuable members of staff leaving the organisation due to the lack of support and stigma attached to the menopause.
- In some cases this can also be seen as a discrimination matter which could lead to an increase in employment tribunal claims

### **8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:**

The Community Impact Assessment can be seen in appendix 2

This indicates that the presence of a Menopause Policy would support staff who may be going through the menopause and also educate managers and colleagues as well. By removing the taboo and stigma attached to a sensitive topic of discussion, women will feel better supported and encouraged to work with their managers.

There are no Human Rights Implications arising from this report.

## **9 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)**

This policy is to support staff and managers by educating and increasing awareness of the Menopause and its symptoms. By removing the stigma attached to this sensitive topic, it is aimed to normalise discussions about the Menopause hence improving the wellbeing of staff and making the workforce more inclusive and supportive.

## **10 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)**

All relevant stakeholders within the Council's infrastructure have been consulted.

## **11 Conclusion**

Feedback would be most welcomed from members of the finance and resources committee on the proposed menopause at work policy so that we can further refine the policy before it is presented to Cabinet in January 2024.