



Cabinet



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Report for:	Cabinet
Title of report:	Menopause Policy
Date:	30 th January 2024
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Carole Weston, Portfolio Holder for People and Transformation
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix 1: Menopause Policy Appendix 2: Community Impact Assessment
Background papers:	Nil
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	EDI – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion HR – Human Resources OD – Organisational Development CLT – Corporate Leadership Team SLT – Strategic Leadership Team

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Corporate Priorities	Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery
Wards affected	N/A

Purpose of the report:	For Cabinet to consider the Council's new Menopause Policy
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker(s):	That Cabinet approves the new Menopause Policy.
Period for post policy/project review:	The policy will be fundamentally reviewed three years post implementation.

1 Introduction/Background:

- 1.1 Menopause in the workplace is currently a high-profile issue. Recently, 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.
- 1.2 A Menopause survey of over 4000 women, carried out by Savanta ComRes 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.
- 1.3 The purpose of a Menopause at Work Policy is to educate staff and provide clarity to staff and managers, to remove the taboo associated with the menopause and to normalise it within the workplace. It confirms the support available from the Council, (including reasonable adjustments), the expected training, information about menopause symptoms and provides guidance around the relevant employment legislation.

2 Proposals/Methodology

- 2.1 In order to develop the Council's policy, 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.
- 2.2 The menopause 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 Menopause workshops were delivered.
- 2.3 In creating this policy, officers have worked in partnership with trade union colleagues, the Corporate and Strategic Leadership teams and the EDI reference group.
- 2.4 The Council has also been working in partnership with its 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.
- 2.5 It should be noted that additional mandatory training is required for managers as part of this policy where managers will be expected to undertake awareness training on the menopause and how to effectively manage staff experiencing menopausal symptoms.
- 2.6 Appendix 1 contains the proposed Menopause Policy.

3 Options and alternatives considered

Given the feedback from various staffing groups and, considering good HR practice, it is recommended that the Council has a Menopause Policy. This policy will increase overall menopause awareness, and an understanding of its effects on staff, as well as providing managers with the knowledge and skills to be able to effectively manage staff experiencing menopausal symptoms. The option not to 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 includes comments/feedback from the Council's EDI Reference Group, HR and OD Team, CLT, SLT, Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny and the Trade Unions. These key stakeholders all 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 the Council's 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, not having one could 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 the Council's 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 could be seen as a discrimination matter, which could lead to an increase in Employment Tribunal claims.

8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

8.1 The Community Impact Assessment can be seen in Appendix 2.

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

8.3 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, the Council aims to normalise discussions about the Menopause, hence improving the wellbeing of staff and making the workplace more inclusive and supportive.

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

All relevant stakeholders have been consulted and support this policy.

11 Statutory Comments

Monitoring Officer:

The Policy will help to ensure equality of treatment of all employees and minimise complaint or legal claim and is recommended for approval.

S151 Officer:

No further comments to add to the report.

12 Conclusions:

This new policy has received full support from key stakeholders during the consultation process and will support the Council's workforce. If approved, it provides another essential employment policy to the existing suite of staff policies, which fully aligns with the Council's ambitions to be an employer of choice through the delivery of its People Strategy.