

### Purpose

The purpose of this guidance is to raise awareness of the menopause, provide information and, above all, to assist managers in supporting employees who are experiencing the menopause. Here at Leicester City Council we are committed to the health and wellbeing of our employees and strive to create an environment where employees feel confident enough to speak about their symptoms and seek support at work.

### Definitions and Symptoms

- **Menopause** is when menstruation ceases for 12 consecutive months. This usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 and is a natural part of the aging process. However, menopause can happen earlier or later than this, due to illness, surgery or for other reasons.
- **Peri-menopause** is the period leading up to the menopause, during which many of the symptoms can be experienced. Peri-menopause can last between four and eight years.
- 13 million people in the UK are going through, the, menopause. 750, 000 of these are under 40 and this number is on the rise. Therefore, many people are, or will be, working through the menopause and coping with associated symptoms at work.
- **Symptoms** vary for each person. Some may not experience as many symptoms as others and some no symptoms at all. However, symptoms can include:
  - hot flushes
  - palpitations
  - night sweats
  - sleep disturbance
  - fatigue
  - poor concentration
  - vaginal problems
  - mood disturbance
  - skin irritation
- **Post menopause** is defined as the time after the menopause transition has been completed and menstruation has ceased for 12 consecutive months. In some

cases, the symptoms experienced during post menopause can be very similar to those experienced during peri-menopause.

- On average menopause symptoms last around four years, however one in ten people will experience them for up to twelve years.

The menopause and associated symptoms should be dealt with in the same way as any other medical condition. Managers should consider and sensitively discuss any appropriate measures that can be put in place to support an employee experiencing the menopause where requested.

## **For Managers:**

### **How can you help?**

Any impacts on an employee's health and wellbeing caused by the menopause may make an employee feel like it is negatively impacting on their work and their manager's perception of them/their competence. Helping an employee manage those symptoms in the workplace can lessen those feelings and stress levels. Be prepared to have an open and meaningful conversation with your employee, if they wish to do so (given the personal nature of the topic, no assumptions should be made that an employee wants to talk about their experience of menopause, rather wait to be approached).

However, if you feel that symptoms are beginning to affect an employee's performance or resulting in absence, managers may need to ask/broach this subject.

Please be mindful of our duty to support any employees who, due to the menopause, may fall within the protected characteristics of disability and sex under the Equality Act 2010. If an employee has suffered symptoms which have led to a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out day to day activities over a period of twelve months, this could be classed as a disability.

Managers can use the health and wellbeing passport proactively to record if there are any health concerns in relation to the menopause together with any support that has been agreed. The health and wellbeing passport can be found [here](#)

### **Support measures to consider:**

- ✓ Adjustments to the work environment (e.g. obtaining fans or opening windows) and consideration of access to bathroom facilities and drinking water for those who are not normally based in a building.

- ✓ Where the role and service permit, consider adapting working arrangements if the employee is experiencing debilitating symptoms. For example, working from home, coming in later or finishing earlier.
- ✓ Flexibility around timing/frequency of breaks during the day.
- ✓ Flexibility around attending relevant medical appointments.
- ✓ Where uniforms are required, consider the use of natural fibres where possible and provide additional uniforms to change into during the day (if needed).
- ✓ Share this guidance with your employee and signpost to the links below for extra support, if required.

## For Employees:

### Support measures for you to consider:

- ✓ Speak to your line manager if you feel like the menopause is impacting upon your work and if you feel you need some support. If for any reason, you feel uncomfortable talking to your line manager, then please liaise with the next senior manager (your line manager's manager) or another manager within the service .
- ✓ The health and wellbeing passport, as mentioned above, can be found [here](#) . You can use this to start an open conversation with your line manager about what you're experiencing, and it gives you a chance to think about what might help in the workplace.
- ✓ Contact your trade union for information and support.
- ✓ Amica confidential counselling: Call Amica directly on (0116) 254 4388 from 8.30 am to 8.30 pm 365 days per year and access their other services via: <http://interface.lcc.local/our-organisation/corporate-resources-and-support/hr-employment-and-organisational-development/hr/health-safety-services/health-and-wellbeing/confidential-counselling/> .

## For Managers and Employees:

### Case studies, useful links and further guidance/support:

- **NHS:** Provides an overview of the menopause  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>
- **BUPA:** Provides an overview of the menopause  
<https://www.bupa.co.uk/health-information/directory/m/menopause>
- **The British Menopause Society:** Various documents available to download to provide further information  
<https://thebms.org.uk/publications/factsheets/>

- **A GMB Guide: Women’s Health and Safety at Work:**  
[original/1496401764/Women's H S guide A5 - ONLINE.pdf?1496401764](https://www.gmb.org.uk/media/1496401764/Women's_H_S_guide_A5_-_ONLINE.pdf?1496401764)
- **The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists:** Offer further information in a dedicated area of their website:  
<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/menopause/>
- **Henpicked:** Provides information on managing menopause and an insight into women's stories  
<https://henpicked.net/menopause/> )
- **UNISON:** The menopause and work: A factsheet:  
<https://southeast.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/sites/41/2018/08/Menopause-and-Work.pdf>

## Document Control

Implementation Date	Author	Summary of Changes	Date to be reviewed
21 <sup>st</sup> November 2018	Tina Holt		