



Bollington

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Menopause Policy

This policy was adopted by the Council at its meeting held on 3rd October 2023.

This version of the Menopause Policy supersedes any previous versions.

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. What is the Menopause?	3
2.1. Menopausal Symptoms.....	3
3. What you can expect from the Council	4
4. What the Council expects of you	5
5. Support and adjustments.....	5
6. Further information and sources of help	6
7. Equality.....	7
8. Data Protection.....	7

Table 1 Document Version Control

Version	Date	Initials	Comment
00.01_2023	17/07/2023	HW	New policy
01.00_2023	03/10/2023	HW	Reviewed by Personnel, Policy & Governance Committee on 13/09/23. Adopted by Full Council 03/10/23.

Date of next review – Quarter 2 2025

1. Introduction

This policy applies to all employees of Bollington Town Council.

The Council recognises that for some the menopause will have an adverse impact on their working lives. The purpose of this policy is to raise awareness of menopause symptoms and to support employees who are affected.

It should be noted that people who are non-binary, transgender or intersex may also experience menopausal symptoms. Due to a variety of factors, the experience of the menopause may be different for those among these communities.

2. What is the Menopause?

The menopause is a natural part of ageing and represents a major change in a woman's life. For many women, symptoms can impact daily life both inside and outside work. The medical definition of the menopause is when a woman has her last period. It usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age, although it can occur prematurely (before 40) and to mid-60s. Peri-menopause is the period that leads to the menopause when many women experience symptoms.

2.1. Menopausal Symptoms

The severity of symptoms varies significantly. Symptoms of the menopause commonly include, but are not limited to:

- Period changes and heavy periods,
- Hot flushes and night sweats,
- Sleep disturbances/difficulty sleeping,
- Tiredness, fatigue and low energy,
- Mood changes, such as feeling irritable, depressed or anxious,
- Brain fog, problems with memory and poor mental focus/concentration,
- Urinary problems, such as recurrent urinary tract infections and loss of bladder control,
- Heart palpitations,
- Migraines and headaches,
- Joint stiffness, aches and pains,

- Hair and skin changes,
- Dizziness or feeling faint.

In some cases symptoms can be exacerbated by the work environment, for example if office temperature is too high this can worsen or increase the frequency of hot flushes. A hot flush is a sudden onset of feverish heat all over the body; these can cause dizziness, discomfort, sweating and heart palpitations and are one of the most common symptoms of the menopause. Symptoms such as insomnia can reduce the ability to concentrate and stay focused. Decreased confidence could affect a woman's feelings towards carrying out certain aspects of her role. Changes in mood and irritability could impact on relationships with others at work.

Some commentators have referred to the 'andropause' in males during their late 40s to early 50s where similar symptoms may be experienced, e.g. mood swings, insomnia and poor concentration, however, lifestyle factors or psychological issues can be responsible for these symptoms (see [NHS website](#)). In these circumstances, you should talk to your manager and/or access the sources of available support outlined in this policy.

3. What you can expect from the Council

If you are affected by the menopause, you are encouraged to speak with the Town Clerk about your symptoms at an early stage and discuss the support and possible adjustments you may need to minimise the impact of the menopause at work. You should also consider talking to your colleagues, so they are in the picture about day-to-day considerations.

If you feel uncomfortable or embarrassed approaching the Town Clerk, you may find it helpful to have an initial discussion with a Councillor you do feel comfortable speaking to.

The Council is committed to ensuring the health and safety of all our employees and will consider any aspects of the working environment that may worsen menopausal symptoms. This may include identifying and addressing specific risks to the health and wellbeing of those going through the menopause.

The Council will:

- Seek to ensure that your mental health and wellbeing is always treated as a priority and ensure that you are supported if you are facing such issues.

- Aim to foster a supportive working environment and create a culture where we are all more comfortable openly talking about the menopause and facilitate discussion about any concerns.
- Listen to you and work proactively to ensure that the right support and adjustments are in place wherever possible so that the workplace does not contribute to making menopausal symptoms worse.
- Ensure regular check-ins are in place to review any support and adjustments, particularly if you are working remotely.
- Provide information about flexible working options or signpost you to the appropriate source for the information.
- Respect and ensure the confidentiality of all information relating to your personal circumstances in line with data protection legislation.
- Treat all employees with dignity and respect.

4. What the Council expects of you

- Care for your own health and wellbeing by adopting good health behaviours.
- Seek to understand more about the menopause and become familiar with the terms of this policy, and support colleagues where necessary.
- Inform the Town Clerk (or a Councillor you feel comfortable speaking to) at an early stage if you are struggling with the perimenopause or menopause (directly or indirectly).
- Seek advice and support from your GP if you need support with menopausal symptoms.
- Tell your Town Clerk if you see or experience anything that is inappropriate or wrong so that the issue or your complaint may be properly investigated in a timely manner and, if appropriate, action taken.

5. Support and adjustments

While many who go through the menopause will be able to carry on their working lives as normal, we recognise that you may benefit from adjustments to your working conditions to mitigate the impact of menopause symptoms on your work and help you to remain productive.

If you believe that you would benefit from adjustments or other support, you should speak to the Town Clerk the first instance. If you feel unable to do so, you should approach a Councillor instead.

You are also encouraged to speak to your GP or a health professional to benefit from additional medical support.

Agreed adjustments identified through discussion, risk assessments and/or advice should be confirmed in writing and regular discussions should be arranged to review them, and to seek to ensure that the adjustments continue to support your needs.

Common areas to consider include workplace temperature, provisions of electric fans, ventilation and the materials used in any uniform which is provided. Welfare issues such as access to adequate toilet facilities, drinking water and rest facilities should also be considered. Depending on individual needs and the demands of the service, adjustments such as more frequent rest breaks or changes to work allocation may also need to be considered. These are examples only and not an exhaustive list.

We also recognise that flexibility is key to anyone experiencing the menopause and the Council aims to facilitate flexible working wherever possible.

The menopause should also be a subject that is discussed openly and supported in the context of other work-related conversations and processes, for example – performance, absence and discipline. It is helpful if you are open and transparent about anything that could affect your performance at work, the reasons for absence and any other mitigating factors, which could include the fact that you are going through the menopause.

6. Further information and sources of help

Sources of external information and advice are also widely available, please see the following resources and websites:

- [NHS](#) – information about the symptoms and treatment, also includes a video of people describing their experience of the menopause.
- [Daisy Network](#) – provides information and support to people diagnosed with Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI), also known as Premature Menopause.
- [British Menopause Society \(BMS\)](#) – educates, informs and guides Healthcare professionals on the menopause and all aspects of post reproductive health.
- [Women's Health Concern \(WHC\)](#) – is a charitable organisation that provides a confidential, independent service to advise, reassure and educate people of all ages about their gynaecological and sexual health, wellbeing and lifestyle concerns.

- [Menopause Support](#) – information and advice on the menopause, includes links to several free resources (factsheets, videos and podcasts).
- [The Menopause Exchange](#) – provides independent advice about the menopause, midlife and post-menopausal health; also includes access to a free newsletter.

7. Equality

The Council is committed to promoting equal opportunities in employment. You (and any job applicants) will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation or caring responsibility. This means that the policy may need to be adjusted to cater for the specific needs of an individual including the provision of information in alternative formats where necessary.

8. Data Protection

The Council processes personal data, including information about your health, in accordance with its data protection policy. Inappropriate access or disclosure of your data constitutes a data breach and should be reported immediately in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the Council's disciplinary procedure.