

SOLIHULL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Menopause Policy

This policy sets out the terms of agreement reached by those participating in the Council's Consultation and Negotiating Framework

For those schools/Academies not participating in the Council's Consultation and Negotiating Framework this Model Policy was provided by the Solihull School's HR Service. The school must undertake negotiation and consultation with the relevant Trade Union/Staff Association representatives before this policy is adopted by the School Governing Body. Advice is available from your HR provider on how to undertake this, if required.

SMBC can provide information in a range of different ways, for example via the use of large print, audio, summarising large documents, interpretation, translation and British Sign Language interpreting services.

If you require this information in an alternative format or need assistance because English is not your first language, please contact your line manager or nominated Human Resources Advisor in the first instance for further support.

MENOPAUSE POLICY

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Prepared by: Claire Cooksey – HR Advisor Policy Development

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| 1.1 | 20.02.2024 | Updated EAP details |
| 1.2 | 12.11.2024 | Additional inclusive wording added to include non-binary, trans people and intersex people. Additional definitions added. New section 8 added on sickness absence and performance. New section 9 on other medical conditions. More information added on making reasonable adjustments and added the Menopause Agreement form to the Appendices |

MENOPAUSE POLICY

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1. Introduction

According to official figures there are approximately 3.5 million women in the UK of menopausal age in work. Solihull Council's workforce is made up of 74% women and there are a significant number of employees who will be experiencing, or about to experience, the menopause. The Council is committed to ensuring that all individuals are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, in their working environment and seeks to continually improve the wellbeing of its workforce.

The policy will help us to understand the difficulties and anxieties of women currently going through the menopause, either naturally or prematurely, and aims to help manage this issue by raising awareness with all line managers and employees.

The School recognises that menopause can be a life-altering experience for many employees, and it directly affects everyone who has a menstrual cycle, including women, non-binary, trans people and intersex people. This policy is our commitment to support all those experiencing menopause symptoms to remain in work, without suffering detriment or discrimination. We encourage all employees to disclose if they are experiencing difficulties arising from menopause. Please note, the policy will refer to 'women' experiencing menopause from here on but will apply to all those experiencing menopausal symptoms.

In this policy, where we refer to the menopause, we also mean the perimenopause (see definitions below).

It is recognised that the menopause is a very individual experience, and that people can be affected in different ways and to different degrees, therefore different levels and types of support and adjustments may be needed. The menopause can also often indirectly affect partners, families and colleagues too.

There is further information in section 9 that raises awareness of other medical conditions affected by hormones that can impact men.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees including those on fixed term contracts and casual/ -workers.

This policy has been developed in line with the following legislation:

- **The Equality Act 2010** places a legal obligation on all public bodies to promote gender equality and eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. The Act protects women and other protected characteristics against direct or indirect discrimination or harassment. If an employee is put at a disadvantage and treated less favourably because of their menopause symptoms, this could be discrimination if related to a protected characteristic, including age, disability, gender reassignment and sex.

Severe menopausal symptoms may combine to have a substantial adverse effect on normal day-to-day activities – potentially meeting the legal definition of a disability under the Equality Act and requiring reasonable adjustments. Employers who fail to properly support women could be found to be discriminatory. It is important to note that

the menopause is not automatically classed as a disability; it depends on how it affects the individual woman at that stage in her life.

- **The Health and Safety Work Act 1974** requires employers to ensure ‘the health and safety and welfare at work’ of all employees.
- **The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992** place an overriding duty on employers to make workplaces suitable for the individuals who work in them.
- **The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999** require the employer to undertake a suitable and sufficient assessment of risks and take action to prevent exposure to risks.

The school has a ‘duty of care’ towards all of its employees. This places an obligation on the school to manage and safeguard the physical and psychological wellbeing of its workforce.

To support these objectives, the school has a range of policies and guidance in place that aims to support wellbeing in the workplace. Please refer to the Menopause Hub on the Employee Wellbeing pages of the Intranet for more information on menopause. These policies and guidance documents can be found on the Intranet / Extranet:

- Sickness Absence Management
- Reasonable Adjustments guidance
- Equal Opportunities Policy Statement
- Flexible Working
- Smarter Working Guidance
- Carers Policy

3. Policy Aims

The aim of this policy is to:

- Provide appropriate support to women who are experiencing the menopause.
- Demonstrate the school’s commitment to supporting female employees experiencing, in some cases, a significant life change.
- Raise awareness and understanding of all employees and managers to the needs of women experiencing the menopause, ensuring there are no discriminatory practices.
- Create a working environment in which women feel able to openly disclose and discuss their symptoms with their line manager and request adjustments, if appropriate, without fear or embarrassment.
- Ensure that work conditions are reviewed to take account of the difficulties some women experience during the menopause and ensure that appropriate adjustments and support are put in place.
- Provide guidance to employees on how they can source information to help manage their symptoms.

4. Definitions & background

‘Menopause’: The menopause is when a woman stops having periods and is no longer able to get pregnant naturally. Periods usually start to become less frequent over a few months or years before they stop altogether. Sometimes they can stop suddenly (*NHS England*).

‘Peri-menopause’: This is the period of hormonal change that leads to the menopause and is when many women may experience symptoms. Peri-menopause begins several years before menopause and can start from mid 30’s (or earlier).

‘Premature menopause’ (or premature ovarian insufficiency)’

This happens when a woman’s periods stop before the age of 45. It can happen when a woman’s ovaries stop making normal levels of reproductive hormones including oestrogen or because of certain medical treatments including some cancer treatments.

‘Post menopause’ The time after menopause has occurred, starting when a woman has not had a period for twelve consecutive months. Although the menopause has ceased, symptoms can persist for several years.

The menopause is a natural part of ageing that usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age, as a woman’s oestrogen levels decline. In the UK, the average age for a woman to reach the menopause is 51 (NHS).

Sometimes the menopause is caused by a treatment such as surgery to remove the ovaries, a hysterectomy, some breast cancer treatments, chemotherapy or radiotherapy, or it can be brought on by an underlying medical condition.

On average, most symptoms last between four and eight years from the last period. However, around 1 in every 10 women experiences them for up to 12 years. Not all women will have symptoms and those that do can vary in type, amount and severity.

It should be noted that. Trans men (assigned female at birth) may experience menopause symptoms if they do not take HRT or retain their ovaries; Trans women (assigned male at birth) who are on hormonal treatment, (especially where hormonal treatment is disrupted); Non-Binary and Intersex people may experience menopause symptoms, dependent on sex assigned at birth and medical treatments. Due to a variety of factors, the experience of the menopause may also differ in relation to disability, age, race, religion, sexual orientation, marital/civil partnership or sexual orientation status. It is important to recognise that employees’ individual experiences of the menopause will vary greatly.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Line Manager’s / Headteacher’s Responsibilities:

Line managers are key to implementing this policy. Each woman’s situation requires a different response from the manager, so managers should take into account the whole range of support options available when putting in place support for team members experiencing the menopause.

Key responsibilities of **line managers/Headteachers** include:

- To be familiar with this policy and be willing to have open, professional and sensitive conversations, ensuring confidentiality, with the employee. Ensure that follow up discussions are conducted.
- To listen to the employee and understand what symptoms they're experiencing. Acknowledge that they may find the menopause difficult to talk about – discuss somewhere private where it's easy to speak openly.
- Recognising the symptoms of the menopause is vital to treating an affected employee fairly. It can explain certain behaviours that may not normally be displayed by an individual which are affecting their conduct, performance, or attendance at work.
- Consider requests promptly for medical appointments, flexible working, smarter working and other workplace adjustments that may be necessary, making decisions in line with the needs of the service. (Managers can use the Agreement form and adjustments guide the appendices to prompt a conversation). Liaise with HR if they have any queries about adjustments that may need to be considered to the workplace.
- Ensuring the employee has access and is aware of the support available to them. This may include Occupational Health or the Employee Assistance Programme and signposting to other policies and external support or information.
- Create a workplace culture that is supportive and enables women to raise, without inhibition or fear of negative responses, their experience of menopause and how it affects their work. Even if people make light or joke about their symptoms they should not be ignored and conversations around support or adjustments are still important.
- Be clear that negative or belittling comments about menopause in the workplace are not acceptable and act swiftly in response to any inappropriate "banter".
- To ensure these employees are not treated less favourably than other employees.
- To ensure a record of any sickness absence due to the menopause or peri-menopause is correctly recorded on Oracle using the correct code. Recognise that it may be necessary to adjust the sickness absence trigger points for absences related to the menopause, where guidance should be sought from HR.
- To agree with the individual which colleagues (if any) should be informed of the situation and on what basis.

5.2 Employee's Responsibilities:

- Employees are encouraged to facilitate a conversation with their line manager (or with a female or similar-age colleague, a Wellbeing Lead, HR Advisor, or Trade Union representative, if preferred) if they feel they are experiencing difficulties at work.
- Keep their line manager up to date of any relevant changes in their health.
- Be flexible with their line manager in assessing options and suggesting alternative ways in which responsibilities and tasks could be undertaken, where necessary.
- To utilise the external resources and use self-help strategies to alleviate symptoms (see appendices).
- Seek advice from their GP on available treatment options if symptoms persist or are having a significant adverse effect on their health and wellbeing. Being proactive to improve their own health and wellbeing.
- Contributing to and helping foster an inclusive, respectful, and supportive working environment, ensuring that any individual experiencing menopause is treated with respect and confidentiality is maintained.

- Understanding, accepting and supporting any necessary adjustments their colleagues request or are receiving as a result of their menopausal symptoms.

5.3 Human Resources Responsibilities:

- Support and advise line managers/Headteachers on the policy.
- Develop HR policies and procedures that promote and support the health and wellbeing of women experiencing the menopause.
- Assist managers and liaise with Occupational Health, other medical professionals and agencies, as appropriate, in order to support employees in maintaining good physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- Assist employees requesting a confidential conversation if they feel unable to speak to their line manager about their symptoms.
- Maintain and review this policy.

6. Menopause Symptoms

Most women will experience physical and/or psychological menopausal symptoms. Some of these can be quite severe and have a significant impact on their everyday activities, including work life. Every woman's experience of the menopause will be different but the most common symptoms include:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • Hot flushes | • Headaches, aches and pains |
| • Night sweats | • Skin irritation |
| • Sleep disruption | • Palpitations |
| • Low mood or anxiety | • Fatigue |
| • Depression | • Loss of confidence |
| • Difficulty concentrating | • Mood swings |
| • Forgetfulness | • Weight gain and slowed metabolism |
| • Urinary problems | • Heavy periods and clots |
| • Clarity of thought impaired | • Dry eyes |

These symptoms can adversely affect the quality of both an employee's personal and working life. At work, they can cause embarrassment, affect confidence and be stressful to deal with.

A common form of treatment for the menopause is known as hormone replacement therapy (HRT). Some women find these treatments helpful for alleviating symptoms, but HRT is not suitable, or appropriate, for all women. Women who have had a hormone-related cancer, such as breast cancer, are not usually recommended to take HRT by their GP. It contains oestrogen which may increase the risk of the cancer coming back. (Please also refer to the Supporting Employees with Cancer guidance where appropriate). Some women using HRT may experience side effects which may also require adjustments in the workplace.

Many women report that the menopause can make existing health conditions worse, triggering, or coinciding with, a flare up of symptoms. Some women report that the menopause seems to trigger or coincided with the onset of a new condition. An existing health condition may also worsen symptoms of the menopause. It may be difficult to tell whether a symptom is caused by the menopause or by the existing condition, or to tell which is making the other worse. Many symptoms can interconnect or overlap.

Women report a wide range of conditions that can be adversely affected by the menopause including arthritis, multiple sclerosis (MS), mental health conditions, skin disorders, diabetes, hyperthyroidism, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia and many others. This may result in needing more time off for medical appointments or treatment for that condition and so it may be necessary to review any reasonable adjustments that were previously in place.

Women with conditions that cause differences in communication or sensing and perceiving (such as women with autism), or women with certain mental health conditions, may perceive menopausal symptoms differently, and may find it more difficult to access medical help for symptoms, or to get the right support.

If a woman has an existing condition that is worsened by the menopause, they may need more time off for medical appointments or treatment for that condition and there may need to be a review, and possibly changes, to any reasonable adjustments that were previously in place.

7. Ways to support employees

There is much that line managers can do to support women going through all stages of the menopause/ peri-menopause including:

- 7.1 **Reasonable adjustments** - Someone with menopausal symptoms should be supported in the same way as an employee with any ongoing health conditions. Small adjustments to someone's job or working pattern can help people manage their symptoms and continue to perform well in their role. The individual is usually best placed to recognise what might help them, so managers should encourage members of their team to have open conversations with them. (*See Reasonable Adjustments guidance*)
- 7.2 A **Menopause Support Agreement** can be used to aid a joint discussion about symptoms and any adjustments that can be made in the workplace to help the employee. This is designed to be a 'live' document to be reviewed periodically and when circumstances change, ideally every 3 months to check the adjustments are still relevant. The form does not cover all symptoms and adjustment options as it also provides potential discussion points depending on menopause/peri-menopause symptoms experienced. The Agreement form can be found on the Menopause Hub and in Appendix 4. The tool in Appendix 3 can assist with the identification of any potential adjustments which may be required, according to the employee's symptoms.
- 7.3 If the employee is experiencing more severe symptoms that are having an impact at work or from carrying out their job, it will be necessary for the line manager to complete a **risk assessment** with the employee. Managers should use Appendix 3 as a guide to help complete the risk assessment but should also take account of any additional issues/symptoms raised by the employee. A blank risk assessment template form can be found on the [Intranet](#)/ [Extranet](#). If you require any advice on completing the form, please contact your Health & Safety or HR Advisor.
- 7.4 All managers are expected to take a positive and supportive approach towards discussions about the menopause; however, the school understands that some individuals may feel uncomfortable talking directly to their line manager if they are experiencing problems, especially if their line manager is male or much younger than them. Therefore, other options are available, including speaking to another female manager; or by contacting a HR Advisor for a confidential discussion.

- 7.5 Ensure employees are aware of this policy are given details of the [Employee Assistance Programme](#). *(Some schools may also have access to a menopause support service via their school insurance policy.)*
- 7.6 Encourage the employee to seek help in the form of self-help management or medical help. Refer the employee to the Menopause Hub page available on the school's extranet for more information.
- 7.7 It may be necessary in some cases to **consider temporary changes in work patterns and start times** or recognise that sickness absence may be more frequent if an employee suffers with symptoms such as heavy bleeding, stomach cramps or sleep deprivation. This may require an adjustment to the usual sickness absence management triggers and advice can be obtained from your HR Advisor. Please also see the Flexible Working Policy for more permanent requests to working hours and Smarter Working guidance.
- 7.8 If medical symptoms persist and are impacting on the employee's wellbeing or work performance, a referral to **Occupational Health** should be considered, with the employee's consent. They will be able to advise on how the employee's symptoms are impacted at work and make recommendations on the types of adjustments that may be appropriate.
- 7.9 **Review workstations and ventilation** when considering the employee's needs. This might include seating the employee next to a window and away from a heat source and providing a desktop fan. The employee should be able to easily access toilet facilities and cold drinking water.
- 7.10 Where the employee is expected to wear a **uniform**, flexibility should be considered to include the provision of an extra uniform(s) where necessary, optional wearing of layers, being allowed to remove jackets/jumpers etc.
- 7.11 If the employee is in a customer-facing or a teaching role, for example, consider providing access to a room for them to have a short break in order to manage a severe hot flush or heightened emotions. Line managers should ensure cover is available so that staff can leave their posts, if needed.

8. Sickness absence and performance

There is no expectation on employees to work if they are unwell because of menopausal symptoms and the procedure set out in our Sickness Absence Management policy should be followed. Employees do not have to disclose that their absence is related to the menopause if they wish to keep this private. However, the school want staff to feel that they can be open about the reason for their leave so they can be properly supported. If the employee does disclose the reason for absence is due to menopause or peri-menopause symptoms, this should be recorded on Oracle using these codes.

If regular sickness absence is likely due to menopausal symptoms, line managers should treat those absences as an ongoing condition requiring the consideration of reasonable adjustments and flexibility in sickness absence management triggers. Please contact your HR Advisor for further advice.

The school recognises the potential impact of menopausal symptoms on performance by employees experiencing the menopause. Managers will seek to support staff sympathetically rather than moving directly to capability or disciplinary procedures and take into account the

impact menopausal symptoms may temporarily have on a woman's workplace performance with possible memory loss, poor concentration, fatigue, lack of confidence and other symptoms. Please contact your HR Advisor for further advice in these situations.

9. Other medical conditions to be aware of

This policy is predominantly about menopause but there are other hormone related medical conditions to be aware of.

Andropause

Andropause (more commonly clinically referred to as late-onset hypogonadism or testosterone deficiency syndrome) refers to the symptoms men can experience as their testosterone production levels decrease with age. Andropause is not the male equivalent to female menopause, however after the age of 40, testosterone levels start to decline steadily, although it is unlikely to cause any problems for most men (whereas oestrogen levels drop drastically during the female menopause). Testosterone levels can also decline due to medications and lifestyle choices.

Andropause symptoms that some men may experience can include; mood swings / irritability; depression; loss of muscle mass / reduced ability to exercise; insomnia / increased tiredness; poor concentration and short-term memory. These symptoms are not exhaustive and nor specific to andropause, however they can interfere with everyday personal life and at work, so it's important to find the underlying cause and work out what can be done to resolve it. Employees should speak to their GP, to gain advice and help with their symptoms.

In order to support all employees/workers with their health and wellbeing, the principles of encouraging open communication, a supportive work environment, access to support mechanisms and where applicable reasonable adjustments, should still apply to all.

More information can be found on the [NHS pages](#).

Information on other medical conditions relating to the endocrine system can be found [here](#).

Information and support

- **Occupational Health**

The [Occupational Health service](#) is available for employees who require additional support or may be experiencing symptoms that are impacting the employee at work. Line managers can contact the Occupational Health Clinical Duty Manager service to discuss the management of particular health conditions. Details of how to do an online Occupational Health referral can be found on the HR section of the Intranet & Extranet.

- **Employee Assistance Programme**

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is an employee benefit designed to help employees to deal with personal and professional problems which could be affecting their home or work life, health or general wellbeing. The programme is run by an organisation called **Health Assured**.

This is a confidential facility that will provide information, expert advice and structured counselling by telephone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The service gives employees and their immediate family* a place to turn for support any time of day or night, 365 days a year. Support is available for whatever issues you might be facing; personal or work-related problems including stress, depression, anxiety, medical issues, marriage and relationship issues, coping with change, parenting/caring difficulties and more.

**Health Assured define immediate family members as spouse/partners and children aged 16 to 24 in full time education, living in the same household.*

To use the confidential service employees can contact the freephone number **0800 028 0199**, or via the live web chat facility or request a call back via the website: [Wisdom\(healthassured.org\)](http://Wisdom(healthassured.org)). You will need to create a new account with an email address and password of your choice. The website also features WisdomAI which is a search engine which combines their counsellor's knowledge with the latest artificial intelligence to help you find answers fast. There is also the '**Wisdom**' Mobile App that offers employees access to online webinars, podcasts, factsheets and tailored programmes online, allowing them to take control of their wellbeing independently, or alongside their counselling support. The Wisdom app provides an enhanced set of wellbeing tools and features designed to improve your mental and physical health by using personal metrics to set goals and achievements. It is available on the Apple Store and Google Play store and you will need to use the **employer code which is MHA109491**.

- **Training for line managers** – Line manager training sessions are run by the Wellbeing team in Human Resources for Core Council but a recording is available on the Employee Wellbeing pages of the extranet. Managers are encouraged to watch the video and recorded briefing to increase their awareness of the subject.
- **Trade Unions** - Trade Union members can seek help and guidance from their Trade Union.

External organisations:

- The **CIPD** has produced a practical guide for line managers '[The Menopause at Work](#)' which offers advice on supporting colleagues to help them thrive at work.

[The British Menopause Society](#)

The BMS provides education, information and guidance to healthcare professionals specialising in all aspects of reproductive health.

[NHS](#)

Provides an overview, together with information about menopausal symptoms and treatment options.

[Menopause Matters](#)

An independent website which gives up-to-date information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options.

[Live Better With - Menopause](#)

For practical tips, advice and products to help you get through the menopause as well as an online community forum to share experiences.

[Henpicked](#) - One of the UK's largest, fastest growing communities for women over 40.

[The Daisy Network Charity](#)

A registered charity providing free information and support to women with Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI) also known as Premature Menopause.

[Simply Hormones](#)

Provides blogs and articles about the menopause and the opportunity to sign up to receive a free Menopause Survival Kit, newsletters and updates.

Solihull Active, [‘This Girl Can - Solihull - Solihull On The Move’](#) a guide for women in Solihull who want to be active.

Centre for Men's Health – provides information and support about andropause / male menopause: <https://www.centreformenshealth.co.uk/mens-health-services/male-menopause>

Self-help measures for employees

Some ways employees can help manage their symptoms of the menopause/peri-menopause include:

- Discussing your practical needs with your line manager, HR or another manager that you feel comfortable talking to.
- Using symptom trackers to monitor your symptoms to aid discussions with your GP.
- Avoid hot flush triggers (such as hot food and drinks) at work, especially before meetings or presentations, for example.
- Consider your lifestyle choices. Cease smoking and follow a healthy eating diet: research has shown that a balanced diet can help alleviate some symptoms and keep bones healthy. Cutting down on alcohol, spicy food and caffeine also helps.
- Exercising regularly. Exercise can help reduce hot flushes and improve sleep. It can also boost your mood and maintain strong bones.
- Drink plenty of water; some women find chilled water helpful.
- Wear natural fibres. Consider wearing layered clothing so that they can be easily undone/removed.
- Consult with your GP on the management of the menopause and to ensure that any symptoms are not due to other causes.
- Get adequate rest and relaxation.
- Use technology where this is helpful, e.g. for reminders, to do lists or note taking.
- Hormones can play havoc on the skin, such as causing dry skin, acne, rashes and itchiness. Some people find keeping a good soothing lotion on their desk some help.
- Use the Employee Assistance Programme website and helpline for information and advice on the menopause. Utilise information and support from external organisations (see Appendix 1).
- Going through the menopause with its many physical and emotional symptoms affects not only women but also their partners. You can encourage your partner to read information and use website forums to share experiences and advice.

Suggested Adjustments for the Menopause/Peri-menopause in the Workplace

(Each employee’s individual experiences of the menopause will vary greatly)

| Symptom | Examples of how it can affect work | Suggested adjustments |
|---|--|---|
| Daytime sweats and hot flushes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less tolerant of workplace temperatures. • Work clothes/uniform may become uncomfortable/ wet. • Lack of access to rest breaks or suitable break areas. Hot flushes and facial redness may cause women to feel self-conscious, or the sensation may affect concentration or train of thought. • May suffer with headaches or migraines. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure easy access to the supply of cold drinking water. • Ensure easy access to washroom facilities. • Look at ways to cool the working environment: move to a desk near the window; provide desktop fans, etc. • Avoid nylon or close-fitting uniforms. They may require an extra uniform. (When purchasing uniforms, it is worth noting that natural fibres such as cotton are preferable to synthetic materials if, for example, an individual is experiencing hot flushes). |
| Night time sweats and hot flushes Sleep difficulties | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatigue at work due to lack of sleep. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider temporary adjustment to start/finish times/shift patterns to accommodate any difficulties. • Consider flexible or agile working. • Signpost to support and advice on sleep (Employee Assistance Programme). |
| Urinary problems (e.g. increased frequency, urgency) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to access toilet facilities more frequently. • May need to drink more fluids. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure easy access to toilet and washroom facilities. • Allow for more frequent breaks in work to go to the toilet. • Ensure access to supply of cold drinking water. |

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| <p>Irregular or heavy periods</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to access toilet and washroom facilities more frequently. • May need to change clothes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure easy access to toilet and washrooms facilities. Access to a shower room, where available. • Allow for more frequent breaks in work to go to the toilet. Show understanding if the employee needs to suddenly leave the office or go home. Ensure cover is available so staff can leave their posts if needed. • Additional uniform provided (where applicable) and additional storage space for a change of clothing |
| <p>Muscular aches and pains</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving and handling or adopting static postures may be more uncomfortable. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make any necessary adjustments through review of a risk assessment. • Consider providing alternative lower risk tasks. • Follow H&S guidance on manual handling. • Consider referral to Musculoskeletal (MSK) Clinic if an on-going issue. |
| <p>Weight gain</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniform may become uncomfortable. • May require replacement uniform to meet change in size. • Difficulties with mobility. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote physical wellbeing at work – signpost to the EAP website/helpline and Wellbeing pages. |
| <p>Psychological problems for example: Loss of confidence. Forgetfulness. Memory loss. Difficulty</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May feel isolated from work colleagues. • Certain tasks may become more difficult to carry out temporarily; for example, learning new skills (may be compounded by lack of sleep or fatigue). • Performance may be affected; work-related stress may exacerbate these | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote physical wellbeing at work – signpost to Employee Wellbeing pages ,and EAP website information/Wisdom app. • Encourage employee to discuss concerns openly at one-to-one PDR meetings with manager or Occupational Health and negotiate possible adjustments. Having regular protected time with your manager to discuss any issues. • Signpost employee to the Employee Assistance Programme, explaining the access to counselling services. Check if employee has visited their GP to discuss possible medication. |

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| <p>concentrating</p> <p>Change in mood/low mood</p> <p>Depression</p> <p>Anxiety</p> <p>Panic attacks</p> | <p>symptoms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace relationships may be affected. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address any work-related stress through the stress risk assessment process. Reduce demands if workload identified as an issue. Provide additional time to complete tasks if needed. • Ensure a quiet area/room is available when necessary. Wearing noise reducing headphones in open offices • Agreeing to have time away from work to undertake relaxation techniques or going for a walk. |
| <p>All symptoms</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effects of the menopause and hormone replacement therapy (HRT) may increase the likelihood of sickness absence in some women. • Symptoms may affect concentration and performance at times. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symptoms and side effects should be taken into account in the implementation of sickness absence, capability and disciplinary policies to ensure that women are not unfairly disadvantaged and do not experience detrimental treatment as a result of their menopause symptoms. Line managers should seek advice from their HR Advisor, when necessary. |

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

MENOPAUSE SUPPORT AGREEMENT

Private and Confidential

Copy of this Menopause Support Agreement to be retained by the employee and line manager

This is designed to be a 'live' document to be reviewed periodically and when circumstances change, ideally every 3 months to check the adjustments are still relevant. The list below does not cover all symptoms and adjustment options as it also provides potential discussion points depending on menopause/peri-menopause symptoms experienced. Please use the empty rows to add any additional support or adjustments required.

| EMPLOYEE: JOB TITLE | | MANAGER: JOB TITLE: | | DATE: |
|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Discussion topics / hazards | For discussion | What adjustments /support would help? | Agreed actions | Review date |
| Information/Self Help | <p>Has the employee read and understood the Menopause Policy? (<i>Does the policy or guidance need to be provided or explained in an alternative language or format?</i>)</p> <p>What has the employee found helpful so far with regards to self-care?</p> <p>Has the employee accessed the EAP support or visited the Menopause Hub on the Employee Wellbeing Pages?</p> <p>Is the employee willing to contact their GP about their concerns if they have not already done so? If they are receiving support or medical treatments for menopause, how are they helping?</p> | | | |

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|---------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Sickness Absence | <p>Has there been an impact on attendance at work or sickness absence in relation to their menopause symptoms?</p> <p>Would the individual benefit from additional 1-1 meetings?</p> <p>Is an Occupational Health referral appropriate?</p> <p>Are there any specific health implications Occ Health need to be aware of? <i>E.g. women who are at high risk of breast cancer may not be prescribed hormone replacement therapy, women who are anaemic might experience different and more serious symptoms and women from some ethnic groups appear to go through menopause earlier and have higher hysterectomy rates.</i></p> | | | |
| Facilities | <p>Has the employee got access to toilets and washing facilities within an easily accessible distance?</p> <p>Can sanitary products be easily accessed from bag / locker if required?</p> <p>If the employee stands a lot of the time, do they have access to seating if required?</p> <p>Is there somewhere spare clothing / personal belongings can be stored safely at work?</p> | | | |
| Working environment | <p>Does the employee's work environment /meeting rooms used have a suitable level of ventilation?</p> <p>Do they take regular breaks if using a VDU?</p> <p>Has a DSE assessment been completed? Is hybrid working an option for the employee?</p> <p>Can home working be accommodated during a heavy period/flooding /severe menopause symptoms?</p> | | | |

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| | <p>Can they access a quiet space if required? (If working in an open or noisy area, use of noise cancelling headphones can be helpful)</p> <p>If driving frequently, visiting different sites – factor in rest /toilet breaks</p> | | | |
| Temperature | <p>Can the employee be offered alternative uniform options, including provision of extra uniforms if appropriate?</p> <p>If the employee wears PPE, can the time wearing PPE be limited or reduced?</p> <p>Has the employee got access to a portable fan or desk fan?</p> <p>Does the employee have access to cold water?</p> | | | |
| Fatigue / Aches and pains / Stress | <p>Can the employee be offered lighter or less stressful duties if appropriate, even if temporarily?</p> <p>Can regular breaks be accommodated into their working day?</p> <p>Consider flexible working options.</p> <p>Signpost to a Local Wellbeing Lead / consider completing a Wellness Action Plan</p> | | | |
| Mood swings / Low mood / Lacking concentration / loss of confidence | <p>Is it appropriate to offer adjusted breaks / start times?</p> <p>Has the employee got access to natural light?</p> <p>Is there access to a quiet space when needed?</p> <p>Can interruptions be reduced?</p> | | | |

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| | <p>Has well-being and time for self-care been discussed?</p> <p>Is additional time needed in manager/employee 1-1s?</p> <p>Signpost to L& D team regarding coaching sessions/ online courses</p> <p>Signpost to a Local Wellbeing Lead</p> | | | |
| | | | | |
| <i>I consent to my Line Manager retaining a copy of my Menopause Support Agreement</i> | | | | |
| Signed and agreed by Employee | | Date | | |
| Signed and agreed by Manager | | Date | | |