

# Heighington Parish Council

## Menopause policy

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/11%20181%20Menopause%20at%20work\\_03.pdf](https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/11%20181%20Menopause%20at%20work_03.pdf)

## **1. Introduction and purpose**

- 1.1 Heighington Parish Council (“the Council”) is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for everyone who works here.
- 1.2 The Council recognises that women experiencing the menopause, whether before, during or after this time of hormonal change and associated symptoms, may need additional consideration, support and adjustments.
- 1.3 Menopause is a natural part of every woman’s life. It isn’t always an easy transition and can be a significant issue in the workplace for those affected but, with the right support, it can be much better. Not every woman will suffer with symptoms related to menopause, but supporting those who do will improve their experience at work.
- 1.4 The Council recognises that the menopausal symptoms can also affect transgender and nonbinary people.
- 1.5 For the purposes of this policy, the term employee refers to staff members, volunteers, contractor’s staff and councillors.

## **2 The Law**

- 2.1 This policy is constructed in line with and regard to the Equality Act 2010, which protects workers against discrimination and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (as amended) that states an employer must, where reasonably practical, ensure everyone’s health, safety and welfare at work.

## **3 Definition**

- 3.1 Menopause is the time during a woman’s life when menstruation periods permanently stop. It is defined as occurring when the individual has experienced no periods for 12 consecutive months and no other biological or psychological cause can be identified.
- 3.2 Menopause usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 and typically lasts between four and eight years. However, each employee’s experience will differ, and menopausal symptoms can sometimes begin before the age of 40.
- 3.3 Perimenopause or menopause transition, begins several years before menopause and individuals may start to experience menopausal symptoms during the final two years of perimenopause.
- 3.4 While symptoms related to menopause vary greatly, they commonly include:
  - Hot flushes
  - Night sweats
  - Anxiety
  - Dizziness
  - Fatigue

- Memory loss
- Depression
- Mood swings
- Panic attacks
- Insomnia
- Skin irritation
- Headaches
- Weight gain
- Recurrent urinary tract infections
- Joint stiffness, aches and pains
- Reduced concentration
- Heavy and painful periods

3.5 Each of these symptoms has the potential to affect an employee's comfort and performance.

## **4 Support**

4.1 Employees are encouraged to speak to their line manager if they experience menopausal symptoms to ensure that these symptoms are treated as an ongoing health issue rather than as individual instances of ill health.

4.2 Line managers will maintain an open-door policy so that employees feel comfortable in approaching them. Employees who do not wish to discuss the matter with their line manager may find it helpful to have an initial discussion with a trusted colleague or another manager instead. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

4.3 The Council can offer a variety of initiatives to support women experiencing menopausal symptoms, including:

- Issuing fans to be used on desks.
- Relocation of desk (if possible) nearer to fresh air sources.
- Access to a Mental Health First Aider.
- Providing a safe space in which emotions can be discussed in a non-judgemental environment.
- Time off for health appointments, up to 6 appointments a year.
- Ability to leave the office environment to access fresh air for extended periods of time.

4.4 External support and help for individuals and those responsible for line management can be found at:

- Menopause Matters<sup>2</sup>, which provides information about the menopause, symptoms and treatment options.
- The NHS<sup>3</sup>, which provides information and treatment options.
- The Daisy Network<sup>4</sup>, a charity which provides support for people experiencing premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.menopausematters.co.uk](http://www.menopausematters.co.uk)

<sup>3</sup> [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

<sup>4</sup> [www.daisynetwork.org](http://www.daisynetwork.org)

## **5 Reasonable adjustments**

- 5.1 The Council has a duty, written in law, to provide a safe working environment for all employees and commits to ensuring that suitable adjustments and additional support are available to individuals experiencing menopausal symptoms.
- 5.2 The Council acknowledges that the menopause affects individuals in different ways and so no adjustment will be made without fully discussing it first.
- 5.3 Examples of adjustments include:
- Conducting a Risk Assessment to identify any potential issues for an employee going through the menopause.
  - Changing the location of the employee so that they are away from hot and cold spots in the office.
  - Implementing temperature control, such as access to a fan.
  - Allowing flexibility within any dress code where reasonable.
  - Assessing how work is allocated.
  - Considering flexible working patterns, such as changes to the pattern of hours worked, working from home or a temporary reduction in working hours.
- 5.4 Any adjustments agreed, will be regularly reviewed.

## **6 Data Protection**

- 6.1 All requests for support or adjustments must be dealt with confidentially and in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy.
- 6.2 Data is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of providing the necessary support to employees.