

Menopause Procedure

2019



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MENOPAUSE PROCEDURE

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Menopause is a part of every woman's life, and it isn't always an easy transition. With the right support, it can be much better. Whilst every woman does not experience symptoms, supporting those who do is vital. As a caring employer, we all have a role in this.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This procedure applies to all employees of Clackmannanshire Council.
- 2.2 Menopause should not be taboo or 'hidden'. We want everyone to understand what menopause is, and to be able to talk about it openly, without embarrassment. This is not just an issue for women, men should be aware too.
- 2.3 Whilst throughout this policy we refer to women being affected by the menopause, we also take into account the affect menopausal symptoms may have on others individuals/groups.

3.0 Definition

- 3.1 Menopause is defined as a biological stage in a woman's life when she stops menstruating and reaches the end of her natural reproductive life. The average age for a woman to reach the menopause is 51, however, it can be earlier or later for a number of reasons including surgery, illness or other reasons. As a result of these hormonal changes, many women experience physical and mental health symptoms.
- 3.2 Peri-menopause can also lead to similar symptoms, this is the period leading up to the menopause, which can be many years before the menopause itself.

- 3.3 Post-menopause is the time after menopause has occurred. Symptoms continue on average for four years from the last period and can continue for up to 12 years.
- 3.1 Whilst 75% of women do experience some symptoms, and 25% could be classed as severe, it is important to note that not every woman will experience or notice every symptom, or even need support.
- 3.2 Symptoms can be both physical and psychological and can include hot flushes, sweats, poor concentration, insomnia, headaches, panic attacks, heavy/ light periods, anxiety and loss of confidence and difficulty sleeping.

4.0 Why Menopause is a workplace issue

- 4.1 More women are working than ever before and are a vital part of an efficient workforce.
- 4.2 UK state pension age for women will be 66 by 2020 and as this continues to increase the expectation is women will remain in employment for longer
- 4.3 Employment rate for women age 50 plus have increased dramatically over the last three decades. By 2020 1 in 3 female employees will be over the age of 50.
- 4.4 Employers need to consider the consequences of not supporting women experiencing menopausal symptoms. This can include the high costs of recruitment in replacing women who may choose to leave the workplace due to these issues, losing talented and in particular experienced members of staff
- 4.5 Risks associated with “managing staff out” due to performance and health issues, which may have been able to be supported through the correct processes, by recognising the menopause can be covered by the Equality Act. Recent case law also demonstrates how seriously the Employment Tribunals are taking these issues and the expectation of employers to fulfil their caring duties towards these groups of staff.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Employees

5.1 All employees are responsible for:

- Taking personal responsibility to look after their health;
- Being as open and honest as possible in conversations with line managers
- Being willing to help and support their colleagues and ensure at all times symptoms are treated with dignity and respect
- Seeking the correct help from the NHS, for example making an appointment to discuss possible medical support mechanisms with their GP, as part of this duty to look after their own health and well-being. See also Appendix 1 for further guidance on seeking help and self help strategies.

Line Managers (see Appendix 1 for Managers' Guidance and FAQs)

5.2. Line managers play a pivotal role in supporting those experiencing issues associated with the menopause. A supportive manager who is willing to listen sympathetically and be open to considering reasonable adjustments can, like any on-going health condition, make a major difference to how the employee is able to manage their symptoms in the workplace.

5.3. All line managers should:

- Familiarise themselves with the Menopause Procedure and Guidance;
- Be ready and willing to have open discussions about menopause, appreciating the personal nature of the conversation, and treating the discussion sensitively and professionally; ensuring confidentiality is maintained at all times

- Ensure any sickness absences attributed to menopausal symptoms are recorded under this category in iTrent and on the return to work and if applicable support and guidance paperwork
- Use the guidance in Appendices, signposting and reviewing together, before agreeing with the individual how best they can be supported and any adjustments. Record any adjustments agreed and actions to be implemented.
- If appropriate involve Health and Safety in exploring Stress Risk Assessment tools as per Maximising Attendance procedures. Put any adjustments into place as necessary.
- Consider a referral to Occupational Health for further advice and particularly when considering reasonable adjustments which may be required. A list of possible adjustments is included in the Manager's Guidance (taking into account that not all of these will be possible in every role or work environment).
- Promote PAM Assist Employee assistance service for confidential counselling support 24/7 for any employee.
- Discuss with their HR Business Partner any concerns, including performance or attendance issues and particularly any adjustments which cannot be reasonably accommodated.
- Ensure ongoing conversations take place and measures in place are continually reviewed and recorded and ensure that all agreed adjustments are adhered to.
- If required, support measures and performance management plans should be managed in line with the appropriate Council procedures. This should be done in a supportive manner and in conjunction with your HR Business Partner. This would allow potential support measures including redeployment, change of hours, and any other suggested helpful measures which should be given serious consideration by the Council.

- If you witness any inappropriate behaviours such as inappropriate references towards menopausal symptoms, educate all staff that this is not acceptable, does not confirm to the Council's Dignity at work policy, and ensure a culture of inclusivity and tolerance. For any more serious dignity at work issues, these should be discussed with HR and dealt with through the correct formal procedures.

Human Resources

5.4 Human Resources will:

- Offer guidance to managers on the interpretation of this Policy and Procedure
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy in respect of related absence levels and performance
- Ensure resources are provided for all employees and managers.
- Work closely with our Occupational Health providers to ensure we do all we can as a caring employer to support those affected to allow them to remain in employment and fulfil their full potential in their role.

6. Different groups and the potential impact of the menopause

- 6.1 There are many different factors and personal circumstances that may affect how someone experiences the menopause, including the protected characteristics described in the Equality Act.
- 6.2 Please refer to Managers Guidance (appendix 1) for examples which illustrate how certain groups of people may be affected by the menopause. This is not an exhaustive list but gives managers some idea of the types of issues they may not have considered.

7. Links to other policies/procedures

- Dignity at Work;
- Maximising Attendance

- Work Life Balance and Flexible Working
- Capability (Performance and Ill health)

