A city skyline at night

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**Coventry City Council**

**Menopause Guidelines**

At Coventry City Council, creating a place to work where our staff are safe, well and happy is a priority for us. This means supporting our employees to be at their best and be able to do their best while at work.

Our flexible working and inclusion agenda is key in making the Council an open and transparent place to work. The Wellbeing Strategy is part of this, which includes raising awareness of health matters to improve understanding and workplace support.

Despite an aging workforce, an important and often avoided subject is menopause. This can result in those affected being faced with unnecessary difficulty in managing their symptoms alongside their work activities. We want menopause to be talked about openly and without embarrassment.

Menopause will be a natural part of some employee’s life at some point, and it isn’t always an easy transition, but with the right support it can be much better. Not every person going through menopause will suffer with symptoms, supporting those who do will improve their experience at work and in their personal lives.

The changing age of the workforce means that more menopausal employees are in work. Research shows that the majority are unwilling to discuss menopause-related health problems with their line manager or ask for the support or any adjustments that they may need. We want to change that.

This guide is to explain more about menopause to help with understanding, encourage open conversation and look at what support can be offered.

# **What is menopause?**

**Menopause** is the stage in an employee’s life when they stop menstruating and reach the end of their natural reproductive life. Usually considered as having occurred when a person has not had a period for 12 consecutive months (for the person reaching menopause

naturally). The average age for a person to reach menopause is 51 but it can be earlier or later than this, either naturally or due to surgery or illness.

**Perimenopause** is the time leading up to menopause when a person may experience changes, e.g. irregular periods or other menopausal symptoms. This can start years before menopause.

**Postmenopause** is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when a person has not had a period for 12 consecutive months.

# **What are the symptoms?**

Every person is different. Not every person will experience every symptom, and some may not notice any at all. However, three out of four will, and one in four could experience severe symptoms.

Also it is important to recognize and understand the different experiences faced by people who suffer with a disability, are transgender, non-binary, intersex and or are of different race and ethnicity.

Symptoms can be both physical and psychological, including hot flushes, night sweats, sleep disturbance, headaches or worsening migraines, poor concentration or memory problems, depression, anxiety, panic attacks and mood changes, weight and skin changes, urinary infections, and joint pain.

# **Managing symptoms**

There are a number of ways to manage any symptoms, from the medical approach to natural remedies, including dietary and lifestyle changes.

For advice on managing symptoms the person can speak to their GP or contact the Occupational Health Service to access the Menopause Clinic led by the Health and Wellbeing Nurse.

# **Open discussions between the manager and employee**

It is recommended that the employee speak to their manager about their experiences. It is also ok if an employee would prefer to speak to an alternative manager or an Occupational Health Advisor if they feel more comfortable doing so.

Both the manager and employee should

* Read through the guidance before the meeting.
* Arrange an appropriate time to meet, allowing enough time for the conversation.
* Find a room that will keep the conversation confidential.
* Create an environment that allows open and honest conversation.
* Discuss the support available, see reasonable adjustments below.
* Agree on any actions or adjustments and how to implement them.
* Arrange a follow-up meeting if needed.

# Assessing any reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments will be made on a case-by-case basis. Many will be simple and may vary in the time they are needed for. During the meeting the employee and manager should discuss what the symptoms are, how the symptoms are affecting them at work, what they’re doing to manage their symptoms and what can be done to help.

Remember that symptoms vary both in their nature and how long they last for. Once adjustments have been agreed the Personal Adjustment Passport will need to be updated.

(<https://coventryccdash.achieveservice.com/service/personal_Adjustment_Passport>)

or if you are unable to access this, please use the template in Appendix 1.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Hot flushes | * Temperature control for their work area. This could include offering a desk fan. * Permanent access to fresh drinking water * Access to a quiet room for breaks if their work involves long periods of standing or sitting, or a quiet area if they need to manage a severe hot flush. * Flexibility about additional breaks to access fresh air. |
| Heavy Periods | * Access to washroom facilities * Sanitary protection is available in toilets. * Allow for more frequent breaks during work to go to the toilet. |
| Headaches | * Have access to fresh drinking water. * Consider if there’s a quieter space to work. * Have time out to take medication if needed. * Ensure lighting can be adjusted, for example blinds or a desk lamp. |
| Muscular aches and bone and joint pains | * Review manual handling requirements. * Ensure the employee has suitable comfortable display screen equipment |
| Difficulty Sleeping | * Consider our flexible working policy or informal arrangements. * Provide option of alternative tasks/duties * Consider if working from home is an option |
| Low mood | * Direct them to the Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service for confidential counselling/advice |
| Loss of confidence | * Regular one-to-one discussions * Have protected time to catch up with work |
| Affected concentration.  and memory | * Adjust working hours to fit times of the day when concentration is better. * Review task allocation and workload * Provide list books, note board or other memory-assisting equipment. * Offer quieter space to work. * Reduce interruptions if possible. * Have protected time to catch up with work |
| Anxiety | * Direct them to the Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service, for confidential counselling/advice |
| Panic Attacks | * Agree time out, if required, there are quiet rooms available. Direct them to the Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service, for confidential counselling and advice |

# **Review how the adjustments are working and if they are still needed.**

After the adjustments have been agreed and put into place, it’s important to monitor their effectiveness and agree a time for a follow-up meeting to discuss. It may be necessary to make changes.

Keep notes on your discussion, and record on the Personal Adjustment Passport, including what you’ve both agreed to do as a result and any necessary follow-ups. Keep these conversations and agreements confidential. If there is a reason to share the information this must only be done with the individual’s consent.

For further support please contact the Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service; email; OHSW@coventry.gov.uk

Below are some useful numbers and links relating to support services and information about menopause.

* National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines. These explain how a GP will determine what types of treatments and interventions they can offer.

[**www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23/ifp/chapter/About-this-information**](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23/ifp/chapter/About-this-information)

* National Health Services. This provides an overview of menopause.

[**www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Menopause/Pages/Introduction.aspx**](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Menopause/Pages/Introduction.aspx%20%20)

* Getting the best from a GP appointment

**https://henpicked.net/how-to-talk-to-your-gp-about-menopause/**

* Menopause information. This provides an overview of menopause.

[**www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/menopause/**](https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/menopause/)

* Information on hysterectomy. This provides an insight into surgically induced menopause as a result of having a hysterectomy [**www.hysterectomy-association.org.uk**](http://www.hysterectomy-association.org.uk/)
* Henpicked. This provides information on managing menopause and an insight into person’s stories[. **https://henpicked.net/menopause/**](https://henpicked.net/menopause/)

Further information

Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Services

Coventry City Council

**Thomas Yeoman House,**

**Coventry Canal Basin,**

**Leicester Row,**

**Coventry**

**CV1 4LY**

**Tel:** 024 7683 3285

**Fax:** 020 3364 8444

**website:** [www.coventry.gov.uk/ohsw](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/ohsw)

**email:** [ohsw@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:ohsw@coventry.gov.uk)

**Appendix 1**

**Confidential Discussion Record – Menopause**

**(where the Personal Adjustment Passport is not available)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date:** | **Present:** |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **STAFF DETAILS** |  |
| **NAME** | **Job Title** | **Department/Location** |
|  |  |  |

**Summary of discussions:**

**Agreed action points/reasonable adjustments:**

**Agreed date of review meeting:**

**Signed (employee)……………………………. Date ………………………….**

**Signed (manager)…………………………….. Date …………………………..**