

Menopause Support Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The menopause is part of the natural aging process for women and trans men. As women make up 70% of our workforce, and given that the number of older workers forecast to stay in or go back to work is increasing, The Two Counties Trust has considered the impact which the menopause may have on the health and safety and wellbeing of our employees and the support that can be offered.
- 1.2 Menopause should not be a taboo subject. The Trust wants to encourage a culture in which employees can talk about this openly and without embarrassment.

2. Scope of this policy

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees.
- 2.2 This policy applies to women and trans men who may experience perimenopausal and menopausal symptoms.

3. What is the Menopause

- 3.1 Menopause is a natural part of every woman and trans man's life and it isn't always an easy transition. With the right support it can be much better. It can happen naturally between 45 and 55 years of age or as late as mid- 60s. The average age to reach menopause is 51. However, menopause can happen naturally much earlier or as a result of surgery, serious illness and medication. It is important to note that these symptoms may vary in degree between different individuals, from minor or not even needing help or support, to very significant.
- 3.2 The time leading up to the menopause is called the perimenopause, which can start years before menopause. Perimenopause is when the body prepares for menopause and changes start to happen, though they may not always be that obvious.
- 3.3 Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically including, but not exclusively, hot flushes, poor concentration, headaches, panic attacks, palpitations, heavy/light periods, anxiety, difficulty sleeping and loss of confidence.
- 3.4 There are many options available which can help alleviate symptoms. These include lifestyle changes and natural options such as diet, exercise, managing stress, and also include medical options. Employees are encouraged to seek medical advice if they are experiencing symptoms which effect their day to day life.
- 3.5 Some women and trans men do not always realise that they are experiencing the perimenopause or menopause and may not understand what is causing their symptoms. This can be a barrier to accessing support.

4. Communication

- 4.1 Employees are encouraged to speak to their Line Manager if they are experiencing symptoms of the menopause.
- 4.2 If an employee feels unable to broach the subject with their line manager, then other options include discussing this with a member of the Leadership Team, their HR Business Partner or a Trade Union Representative.

5. Support and Adjustments

- 5.1 Individuals should discuss any menopausal symptoms which are becoming a barrier to performance or attendance with their Line Manager (or other contact as set out above), and a risk assessment (this may include a stress risk assessment) should take place at this stage. The HR Business Partner can support with this conversation and completing the risk assessment.
- 5.2 Following the risk assessment temporary reasonable adjustments to the employee's working systems or environment which may be appropriate will be considered. When considering what is reasonable, factors such as practicality, cost, the impact on colleagues will be taken into account. Adjustments may include, but are not limited to, a change to temperature and ventilation, access to toilet facilities and cold water or flexible working arrangements.
- 5.3 Employees may benefit from the advice of Occupational Health who can assist with adjustments at work and the risk assessment. To request a referral please contact your HR Business Partner.
- 5.4 Where appropriate Occupational Health may wish to request relevant advice and information from the employee's GP.
- 5.5 The experience of one woman or trans man's menopausal transition can vary enormously compared with another's and so there is no uniform set of adjustments that may be required. Some employees may not need any assistance with the menopause and require no medical intervention.

6. Time off to attend medical appointments (Special Leave Policy)

- 6.1 Where possible, employees should make health and welfare appointments outside of their normal working hours. Where this is not possible, employees may be granted a short period of time off with pay during the working day in order to visit the doctor, or a reasonable period of time off with pay during the working day in order to attend a hospital appointment. Appointments should be kept to a minimum and cause as little disruption as possible.
- 6.2 Where an employee requests a considerable amount of time off to attend various medical appointments, the School / Academy will discuss the matter with the employee in advance of the appointment to determine if this time is paid or unpaid.
- 6.3 Evidence of medical appointments may be requested. Personal information may be redacted to leave only the name of the employee and the date and time of the appointment.

7. Sickness Absence

- 7.1 Where employees are absent from work due to the symptoms of the menopause, they must contact their School / Academy in accordance with local procedures.
- 7.2 Where employees are experiencing menopausal symptoms, consideration may be given to delaying the absence management process as a reasonable adjustment.

8. Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

- 8.1 Provided by Health Assured, the EAP provides confidential counselling and advice by fully qualified professionals. All calls are treated in strict confidence and in line with the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) code of ethics.

- 8.2 Health Assured offers cover for employees and their immediate family (legal partner and children aged 18-24 in full time education residing in the same household). The service is open 24 hours per day, 7 days a week on 800 030 5182. Alternatively, employees can access the health and well-being portal at www.healthassuredeap.com

9. General Data Protection Regulation

9. All data within this policy will be processed in line with the requirements and protections set out in the General Data Protection Regulation.

10. Sources of External Support

NHS

This provides an overview of Menopause. You can find out more at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>

Menopause Doctor

This provides support on Menopause from a specialist doctor. You can find out more at <https://www.menopausedoctor.co.uk/menopause/what-is-the-menopause>

Menopause information

This provides an overview of Menopause. You can find out more at <https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/menopause/>

Menopause Matters

This provides an overview of Menopause and discusses treatment You can find out more at <https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/>

Review cycle:	Every 2 years
Next review due:	February 2022
Policy owner	Head of HR
Equality Analysis completed:	January 2020