



## **Wells City Council**

### **Menopause Policy**

#### **Document No. 25**

<b>Purpose</b>	Guidance to both Councillors and Staff in the management of the Council
<b>Additional Papers</b>	No additional papers
<b>Reviewed by</b>	Town Clerk
<b>Adopted</b>	October 2025
<b>Review Date</b>	October 2026

## **1. Purpose**

Wells City Council recognises that the menopause is a natural stage of life that can have a significant impact on employees. The Council is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment where staff feel able to discuss issues related to the menopause and access reasonable adjustments where needed and recognises that staff may need additional consideration, support and adjustments during the transitional time before, during and after the menopause and ensure that all employees are treated according to their circumstances and needs, ultimately, ensuring that all employees are treated fairly and with dignity and respect in their working environment. We are also committed to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of the workforce.

This policy sets out the guidelines for members of staff and managers on providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work. It is not contractual and does not form any part of the terms and conditions of employment.

This policy aims to:

- Raise awareness and understanding of the menopause and its effects.
- Encourage open, honest, and respectful conversations.
- Provide guidance to managers and employees on support available.
- Promote wellbeing and retain valuable skills and experience within the workforce.

## **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees of Wells City Council. It also provides guidance to councillors, volunteers, and agency workers where relevant.

## **3. Definition**

The term menopause relates to the stage of life when menstruation permanently stops, typically occurring between ages 45 and 55, but it can happen earlier or later. Perimenopause refers to the transitional phase leading up to menopause. Both can be accompanied by a wide range of physical and psychological symptoms, including (but not limited to):

- Hot flushes and night sweats
- Fatigue and sleep disturbance
- Memory or concentration difficulties
- Mood changes or anxiety
- Headaches and joint pain

This is followed by Post-Menopause, which is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when a woman has not had a period for twelve consecutive months.

The experience of menopause is different for everyone, and the Council recognises that symptoms may fluctuate and vary in severity.

## **4. Principles**

While there are no specific legislations addressing the impact of the menopause in the workplace, there are regulations of which we should be aware:

Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) - The Act requires employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees - and this will include women experiencing the menopause. Under the Act, employers are required to carry out risk assessments under the Management Regulations and these should include specific risks to menopausal women, considering their specific needs and ensuring that the working environment will not worsen their symptoms

The Equality Act (2010) - The Act protects people from discrimination in the workplace because of 'protected characteristics' and includes both direct and indirect discrimination and harassment. This will include women experiencing the menopause.

Wells City Council is committed to:

- Treating menopause as a workplace wellbeing issue, not a private or taboo subject.
- Providing appropriate support and reasonable adjustments to employees affected.
- Ensuring staff are not disadvantaged or discriminated against because of menopause-related issues, in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- Training managers to respond sensitively and appropriately.

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Employees**

- Speak with their line manager (or, if preferred the Town Clerk) if adjustments are needed.
- Access support available through the Council (see Section 6).
- Be respectful and supportive of colleagues experiencing menopause.

### **Line Managers**

- Maintain an open, approachable attitude to enable supportive conversations.
- Handle menopause discussions sensitively and confidentially, as you would with any physical or mental ailment being experienced by a member of staff.
- Consider and implement reasonable workplace adjustments, which may include:
  - Flexible working hours or patterns
  - Access to fans, cooler working environments or suitable uniforms
  - Adjusted workloads or deadlines where appropriate
  - Time off for medical appointments
- Seek advice from the Town Clerk where necessary.

## **Council as Employer**

- Provide information and resources on menopause awareness.
- Offer training for managers and staff on menopause in the workplace.
- Ensure policies (e.g. sickness absence, flexible working, wellbeing) support employees experiencing menopause.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of this policy.

## **6. Support Available**

Employees may access support including:

- Confidential conversations with their manager, or the Town Clerk.
- Adjustments to working patterns or environments.
- Signposting to occupational health or external medical advice.
- Employee wellbeing resources (where available).
- Peer support through open and respectful workplace culture.

## **7. Confidentiality**

All discussions relating to menopause will be treated with strict confidentiality and dignity. No information will be shared without the employee's consent.

## **8. Training and Awareness**

Wells City Council will provide training and guidance to managers and councillors to raise awareness of menopause, reduce stigma, and promote supportive working practices as part of the wider council training program.

## **9. Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if required, to ensure it remains effective and reflects current good practice.

## **APPENDIX A - Wells City Council - Manager's Guidance: Supporting Employees through Menopause**

This note supports the Council's Menopause Policy and is intended to give managers confidence when supporting employees.

### **1. Key Principles**

1. Listen first – every person's experience of menopause is different.
2. Be approachable – create an environment where staff feel comfortable raising issues.
3. Keep it confidential – do not share information without the employee's consent.
4. Be proactive – reasonable, often small, adjustments can make a big difference.

### **2. Having the Conversation**

1. Choose a private, quiet space free from interruptions.
2. Ask open questions such as:

*“How are you managing at the moment?”*

*“Is there anything at work that's making things more difficult?”*

*“What support would help you feel more comfortable?”*

3. Reassure the employee that discussions are confidential and that the Council is committed to support.
4. Avoid making assumptions – let the employee describe their own experience.

### **3. Possible Workplace Adjustments**

Managers should work with employees to identify adjustments that meet individual needs. Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically and as such a mixture of needs may need to be considered. Options include:

- Working arrangements: flexible hours, temporary home working, adjusted start/finish times, a quieter location allocated for desk space.
- Work environment: desk fans, easy access to cool water, changes to uniform or dress code.
- Workload: reviewing priorities, extending deadlines, adjusting duties where appropriate.
- Leave and appointments: allowing time off for medical advice or treatment.

#### **4. Supporting Wellbeing**

- Encourage breaks and self-care during the working day.
- Signpost to resources such as occupational health, GP services, NHS menopause guidance.
- Promote a respectful culture where colleagues support one another.
- Ensure sickness absence or performance is handled sensitively and fairly, recognising the impact of menopause symptoms.
- Identify a 'time out' space to go for short breaks without justification,
- Hold regular personal development discussions to support confidence and ease of access to support.

#### **5. What to Avoid**

- Do not dismiss or trivialise symptoms.
- Do not assume menopause affects everyone in the same way.
- Do not make changes without discussing them with the employee.

#### **6. When to Seek Further Advice**

Managers should consult the Town Clerk before agreeing a plan with a member of staff and if:

- They are unsure what adjustments are reasonable.
- Absence or performance issues are becoming complex.
- Specialist occupational health input may be required.

#### **Remember:**

Supporting staff through menopause is not only a legal duty under equality and health & safety law, but also good practice that helps retain experienced, valued employees and promotes a healthy, inclusive workplace.

## APPENDIX B - Wells City Council - Menopause Support – Staff Factsheet

Wells City Council is committed to supporting all employees through the menopause and perimenopause.

### What is the Menopause?

- A natural stage of life when periods stop, usually between ages 45–55, but it can happen earlier or later.
- *Perimenopause* is the transition leading up to menopause.
- Symptoms vary, but may include: hot flushes, night sweats, tiredness, poor sleep, memory or concentration difficulties, mood changes, anxiety, headaches, or joint pain.
- Post-Menopause, is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when a woman has not had a period for twelve consecutive months

### How the Council Can Support You

- Feel free to have open and confidential conversations with your line manager, or the Town Clerk.
- Know that you can request reasonable adjustments such as:
  - Flexible working or adjusted hours
  - Desk fans, cooler uniforms, or access to cool spaces
  - Adjusted workload or deadlines
  - Time off for medical appointments
- Feel able to access to occupational health or signposting to medical and wellbeing resources.

### Your Responsibilities

- If you need support, let your manager (or the Town Clerk) know – you only need to share as much as you're comfortable with.
- Be respectful and supportive of colleagues.
- Make use of available resources and look after your wellbeing.

### Where to Find Help

- **NHS Menopause Guidance:** [www.nhs.uk/menopause](http://www.nhs.uk/menopause)
- **Balance Menopause App** (free information and tracking)
- **Employee wellbeing support** (ask your manager for details of any local resources)

### Our Commitment

We want Wells City Council to be a workplace where menopause is understood, respected, and supported. No one should feel they have to suffer in silence. If you are struggling – talk to us.