



Menopause Policy

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Menopause Policy

Newton Abbot Town Council

1. Introduction

Newton Abbot Town Council is committed to ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of its employees and ensuring everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Menopause is a natural process and for many can be positively managed through lifestyle adjustments. Newton Abbot Town Council recognises that for some, the menopause is not always an easy transition. Some employees may need additional considerations to support and improve their experience at work.

The Council is committed to supporting employees who are affected in any way by the menopause, to support and inform managers so that employees reporting issues are treated fairly and given appropriate support.

This policy is inclusive of all gender identities, including trans and non-binary employees, and acknowledges that menopause can affect individuals in different ways.

2. Legislative Drivers

The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) requires employers to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all workers. Within this, employers are required to perform risk assessments that should include any specific risks to menopausal employees.

Menopause is also an equalities issue. Under the Equality Act (2010), employers have a duty not to discriminate in terms of age, sex, and disability. Detrimental treatment related to menopause could represent direct or indirect sex discrimination under any or all these protected characteristics.

3. Aims

The aim of this policy is:

- To support employees to remain at work.
- To raise awareness of menopause, the related issues, and how this can affect employees.
- To break the stigma and taboo surrounding menopause at work and to promote an environment in which employees feel confident discussing menopausal issues and asking for support and adjustments, if required.
- To provide guidance and direction on how to support employees who raise menopausal issues—not only for individuals experiencing menopause but also those who may be affected indirectly, including managers, colleagues, partners, and family members.

- To inform managers of the potential symptoms of menopause, how this can affect employees, and what can be done to support individuals, including reasonable adjustments.

That the Council signs the Menopause Workplace Pledge Action Framework (see appendix A). **By signing the pledge, the Council commits to:**

1. Recognising that the menopause can be an issue in the workplace and women need support.
2. Talking openly, positively and respectfully about the menopause.
3. Actively supporting and informing your employees affected by the menopause.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Newton Abbot Town Council, including permanent and fixed-term employees, agency workers, and those on work experience or training placements.

5. Definitions

1. Peri-menopause – The time leading up to menopause when symptoms can be experienced.
2. Premature ovarian insufficiency (premature menopause) – Affects 1 in 100 individuals, occurring before the age of 40.
3. Medical or surgical menopause - circumstances that will create an immediate menopause, whatever the woman's age i.e. hysterectomy
4. Menopause – The natural part of ageing when periods stop, and the natural reproductive cycle ends. Typically occurs between the ages of 45 and 55.
5. Post-menopause – The time after the last period.

6. Symptoms of Menopause

Common symptoms include:

- Hot flushes
- Night sweats
- Sleep disruption
- Fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating/memory problems/loss of confidence
- Mood disturbances, including anxiety and depression
- Headaches and migraines
- Irregular periods/heavy bleeding
- Bone and joint problems
- Urinary problems
- Irritated skin
- Hair loss
- Osteoporosis
- Menopausal symptoms may also exacerbate existing impairments and conditions that women may already be struggling to cope with.
- Not being able to perform at usual levels due to tiredness caused by hormonal induced insomnia to severe bleeding, pain, and discomfort.

These symptoms can last 2-4 years on average but may persist longer for some individuals. Symptoms can coincide with other health issues and caring responsibilities.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

a. Employees

- Take reasonable responsibility for their own health and well-being.
- Be open to discussions with managers or seek alternative support (Occupational Health, Human Resources, Trade Union/Professional Organisations).
- Treat others with dignity and respect.

b. Line Managers

- Familiarise themselves with the Menopause Policy.
- Have open and sensitive discussions with employees regarding menopause-related health changes.
- Implement reasonable adjustments.
- Consider flexible working arrangements when necessary.
- Make Occupational Health referrals if necessary.
- Ensure confidentiality in discussions and documentation.
- Engage in mandatory menopause awareness training.

c. Senior Leadership Team

- Support managers and employees in policy implementation.
- Promote awareness and ensure training on menopause-related issues.
- Establish an Employee Menopause Support Group.

8. Flexible Working Options

Employees experiencing menopause symptoms can request flexible working arrangements, including:

- Adjusted start and finish times.
- Temporary changes to shift patterns.
- Work-from-home options where feasible.
- Additional rest breaks.

9. Manager Guidance for Employee Discussions

Managers should:

- Encourage employees to discuss health concerns with their GP.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Allow sufficient time for discussions and ensure support is in place.
- Provide access to a female manager if preferred.
- Offer signposting to support services.
- Document discussions and agreed adjustments.

10. Symptoms and Suggested Adjustments

Hot Flashes

- Adjust workplace temperature and ventilation.
- Provide desk fans and access to washroom facilities.
- Recommend comfortable clothing/uniforms.

Sleep Disruption/Fatigue

- Consider flexible working hours or shift changes.
- Offer additional rest breaks.

Memory/Concentration Issues

- Adjust workloads and task allocation.
- Provide a quiet workspace if feasible.

Mood Disturbances/Anxiety/Depression

- Provide regular check-ins and emotional support.
- Offer access to a quiet space for short breaks.
- Signpost employees to counselling and mental health services.

Physical Symptoms (Headaches, Joint Pain, Heavy Bleeding)

- Provide access to drinking water.
- Allow for additional short breaks.
- Make ergonomic adjustments where needed.

11. Confidential Support System

To ensure all employees feel supported, Newton Abbot Town Council will:

- Establish a Menopause Champion as a point of contact.
- Offer an Employee Menopause Support Group for peer support.

12. Policy Review & Employee Feedback

- This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and relevant.
- Anonymous employee surveys will be conducted to gather feedback and improve support services.

APPENDIX A - The Menopause Workplace Pledge Action Framework

Small changes can make a big difference in the workplace. Becoming a menopause positive employer doesn't have to be stressful, expensive or time consuming. The Menopause Workplace Pledge Action Framework can support the Council to make changes that are meaningful but manageable.

After signing the pledge, employers are encouraged to take at least one positive action a year toward becoming a menopause positive workplace.

Employers who sign up to the pledge will receive our supportive emails guiding them through their journey towards becoming a menopause-positive workplace, including access to information, resources and webinars.

By signing the pledge, you will commit to:

1. Recognising that the menopause can be an issue in the workplace and women need support.
2. Talking openly, positively and respectfully about the menopause.
3. Actively supporting and informing your employees affected by the menopause.

5 key areas of the action framework:

1. Listening to what staff need

- Create ways for staff to tell you what they need to support their menopause symptoms. This could be in one-to-one meetings or anonymous surveys.

2. Encouraging open conversations across the organisation

- Make time to have conversations as a whole organisations and within teams
- Share the 'Talking About Menopause' guides in the [Workplace Pledge Toolkit](#) across your organisation.

3. Providing adequate adjustments, policies and support for staff experiencing the menopause.

- There is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution to supporting staff effectively. Think about what your staff need and what is manageable for your organisation to provide.

4. Raising awareness of menopause both internally and across our networks

- You can use the toolkit to do this.

5. Making information about the menopause widely available across the organisation.

- To help you get started we have provided some information in the Menopause Workplace Pledge Toolkit.
- Make sure any information and advice you share is from a reputable source.

Links to External Support

- Menopause Matters: <https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/>
- NHS Menopause Information: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>
- British Menopause Society: <https://thebms.org.uk/>
- Women's Health Concern: <https://www.womens-health-concern.org/>

NHS information

www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause
www.nhs.uk/conditions/early-menopause

NICE guidelines on 'Menopause: diagnosis and treatment' NICE guidelines provide advice on the care and support that should be offered to people who use health and care services.

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23/ifp/chapter/

Menopause Matters An award-winning, independent website providing up-to-date, accurate information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options.

www.menopausematters.co.uk

Women's Health Concern

A charitable organisation – the patient arm of the British Menopause Society – that aims to help educate and support women with their healthcare by providing unbiased, accurate information.

www.womens-health-concern.org

Daisy Network

Daisy Network is dedicated to providing information and support to women diagnosed with Premature Ovarian Insufficiency, also known as Premature Menopause.

<https://www.daisynetwork.org>

The Menopause Exchange

The Menopause Exchange gives independent advice about the menopause, midlife and post-menopausal health. They send out a free quarterly newsletter with useful impartial help and support.

www.menopause-exchange.co.uk

Menopause cafés

At a menopause café people, often strangers, gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss menopause. The website includes guidance on how to set up your own menopause café.

www.menopausecafe.net

Manage my menopause

Website for tailored menopausal advice for individuals provided by experts.

www.managemymenopause.co.uk

My Menopause Doctor

A website that aims to help empower women with necessary information to make informed decisions regarding any treatment they may take to help turn the menopause into a positive experience that does not negatively impact their lives.

www.menopausedoctor.co.uk