



East Dunbartonshire Council

Menopause Policy Toolkit

**Chief Officer, Local Government Employee, Teachers and
Employees on SNCT Conditions of Service**

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Menopause Policy Toolkit

1.0 Purpose

This toolkit is designed to provide appropriate support to women who are experiencing symptoms associated with the menopause whilst providing advice and guidance to Managers required to provide assistance.

This toolkit should be read in conjunction with the Menopause policy.

2.0 Scope

The Menopause toolkit applies to all employees of the Council including Chief Officers, Local Government Employees, Teachers and employees on SNCT Conditions of Service.

3.0 Underpinning Principles and Objectives

To provide Managers and employees with a framework of direction and guidance in relation to either seeking support or supporting employees who raise menopause related issues, either from women experiencing these or those who are affected indirectly, for example partners and colleagues.

Informing Line Managers about the potential symptoms of menopause, what the affects can be, what they can do to support employees at work and through appropriate support and intervention reduce absence due to menopausal symptoms.

The approach of the Council will be through the following principles:

- Confidentiality
- Person Centred
- Solution Focused
- Fair and Consistent

Matters should be dealt with in the following way:

- Early Intervention
- Consideration to reasonable adjustments

4.0 Process Overview

The Toolkit will support Manager's understanding of their responsibilities and range of support available to equip them in supporting employees experiencing menopause related issues including:

- Awareness of possible symptoms of the menopause
- Starting the conversation
- Workplace Adjustments
- Available support both internal and external

There may be instances where symptoms may be so severe or long term they may be covered under the Equality Act 2010.

5.0 Associated Policies/Documents

This forms part of the Council's Policies and Procedures base surrounding employment and certain policies, procedures and toolkits may be referenced throughout this document to support employee health and wellbeing.

All policies/documents can be accessed via the [Employee Zone](https://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/employee-zone/):
<https://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/employee-zone/policies-and-procedures>

6.0 Support Mechanisms

6.1 Women Experiencing Symptoms

For women who are experiencing menopausal symptoms that are affecting their wellbeing or ability to carry out their normal duties it is recommended they undertake the following:

- Access support information from their Line Manager, HR Case Adviser or Wellbeing and Attendance Improvement Adviser. A contact list can be found in Section 3;
- Feel confident about being able to seek support in accordance with the Policy and related guidance;
- Contact their GP for medical guidance to manage their symptoms;
- Discuss support required and practical needs with their Line Manager;
- Explore tools that can assist in the management of symptoms for example taking notes to aid memory loss;
- Access the Council's support facilities such as Occupational Health or the Employee Assistance Programme;
- Take preventative measures to reduce related symptoms for example avoiding hot flush triggers such as having hot food and drinks, particularly before meetings or when undertaking front line duties, carrying a bottle of water to ensure frequent hydration;
- Consider lifestyle changes for example weight reduction, smoking cessation and exercise;
- Seek advice from their local pharmacy in relation to health supplements;
- Wear natural fibres to help control the increase in temperature.

6.2 Managers Guidance for Starting a Conversation

We recognise that every employee is different, and it is, therefore, not feasible to set out a structured set of specific guidelines.

If an employee wishes to speak about their symptoms, or just to talk about how they are feeling (they may not recognise themselves that they are symptomatic), or speak about a family member, please ensure that you:

- Allow adequate time to have the conversation;
- Find an appropriate space and forum to preserve confidentiality;
- Encourage them to speak openly and honestly;
- Suggest ways in which they can be supported (see symptoms below) – provide the Menopause Advice Factsheet if appropriate (**Appendix 5**);
- Agree actions, and how to implement them (you should use the template at **Appendix 1** to record the meeting), so that all parties agree what has been discussed, and the next steps, before the meeting ends. Ensure that this record is treated as confidential, and is stored securely;
- Agree if other members of the team should be informed, and by whom;
- Ensure that designated time is allowed for any follow up meeting/s.

Appendices 2-4 contain key information for Managers in relation to Managers 'do's and don'ts' how Managers can support and Positive Management Behaviours.

6.3 Symptoms Support & Adjustments

Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically. The list below outlines examples of symptoms that may be experienced along with suggested adjustments for consideration:

6.3.1 Vasomotor Symptoms:

Hot Flushes and Night Sweats:

- Request temperature control for their work area, such as a fan on their desk (where possible a USB connected desk fan to ensure environmentally friendly) or moving near a window, or away from a heat source;
- Easy access to drinking water;
- Be allowed to adapt prescribed uniform, such as by removing a jacket where Health & Safety regulations allow;
- Consider different types of uniform and personal protective equipment;
- Have access to a rest 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.

6.3.2 Physical Symptoms:

Heavy/Light periods:

- Have access to toilet facilities;
- Request an extra uniform.

Headaches:

- Have ease of access to fresh drinking water;
- Offer a quiet space to work;
- Have time out to take medication if needed.

Fatigue/Insomnia/Difficulty Sleeping:

- Consider flexible working even on a short term temporary basis, particularly when suffering from a lack of sleep.

6.3.3 Psychological Effects of Hormone Changes:

Low Mood/Mood Swings:

- Agree time out from others, when required, without needing to ask for permission;
- Identify a 'time out space' to be able to go to 'clear their head';

Loss of Confidence:

- Ensure there are regular Personal Development Review discussions (PDR/ Professional Review and Development discussions (PRD));
- Have time with their manager to discuss any issues;
- Have agreed protected time to catch up with work following discussions.

Poor Concentration:

- Discuss if there are times of the day when concentration is better or worse, and consider adjusting working pattern/practice accordingly;
- Review task allocation and workload;
- Offer quiet space to work;
- Have agreements in place in an open office that an individual is having 'protected time', so that they are not disturbed;
- Have agreed protected time to catch up with work.

Anxiety:

- Be able to have time away from their work to undertake relaxation techniques;
- Undertake mindfulness activities such as breathing exercises, or going for a walk.

Panic Attacks:

- Agree time out from others, when required;
- Be able to have time away from their work to undertake relaxation techniques;
- Undertake mindfulness activities such as breathing exercises, or going for a walk.

Remember, where appropriate in your discussions, you can provide the employee with the Freephone number for counselling support through the Council's Employee Assistance provider, **Time for Talking** 0800 970 3980. Details are provided in section 9.2 of this toolkit.

Discuss whether the member of staff has visited their GP. Depending on the discussion, this may be the next step suggested, particularly if the areas of difficulty are sleeping, panic attacks or anxiety.

If they have visited their GP, and are being supported by them, it may be helpful at this point to make an Occupational Health referral to give specific advice regarding the workplace and any reasonable adjustments.

7.0 Transgender and the Menopause

Transgender is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity does not fully correspond with the sex they were assigned at birth. The Equality Act 2010 says you must not be discriminated against because you are transgender and are undergoing or proposing to undergo 'gender reassignment'. Gender reassignment is a personal, and primarily a social process, you do not have to undergo any treatment or surgery to be protected against discrimination on the basis of 'gender reassignment'.

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Some transgender people who chose to undergo medical or surgical procedures as part of their transition, may experience hormonal fluctuations causing symptoms akin to menopausal symptoms. For example, menopausal symptoms may be experienced by a transgender woman who is undergoing medical transition (a process which can take many years), or by a transgender man who has not medically or surgically transitioned and is going through the menopause. Furthermore, it is often a requirement to stop hormone therapy in advance of surgeries, which again would cause hormonal fluctuation in a transgender person who is in the process of medical transitioning, and this fluctuation can lead to symptoms. It is important to note each transgender person may experience their transition, and any impact of hormonal fluctuation in different ways, and solutions should be tailored to individual needs.

8.0 Absence related to the Menopause

Awareness about the potential symptoms of menopause along with appropriate support and early intervention can reduce absence related to menopausal symptoms and help employees remain in work, however, where it has been identified that the employee is unable to remain at work, the Attendance Management process must be followed to ensure the employee remains adequately supported during their period of sickness absence – refer to the [Attendance Management policy](#).

9.0 Supporting Agencies and Contact Details

Line Managers have a key role in promoting the support mechanisms in place to employees. If Line Managers promote the support and assistance to the team as a whole employees will be more aware of what is available.

9.1 Occupational Health Provision

The Council's Occupational Health provision will be offered as part of the meetings, where appropriate to encourage employees to utilise the assistance available in sustaining wellbeing. This provision will be key in assisting Line Managers in facilitating employees in remaining in/or returning, to work and will be promoted through various methods including the meetings associated with this policy.

Employees also have the opportunity to request to be referred to Occupational Health as a way of managing their wellbeing.

Employees can access Occupational Health by contacting the HR Case Advisers or via their Line Manager who will discuss the information required for the appointment and where appropriate, will arrange a suitable time for employees to attend.

9.2 Employee Assistance Programme

Time for Talking offers a free 24 hour confidential helpline/support service which can be accessed by all employees.

This service offers a wide range of support available to meet individual employee needs including access to self-help resources

In addition to the website, email and telephone counselling employees there is access to live web chat through the website and the password is provided below.

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Face to face counselling can be provided via referral through the HR Case Advisers where criteria is met. In the first instance employees are encouraged to try the telephonic counselling and live web chat. The contact details for employees looking for immediate support are as follows:

Telephone: 0800 9703980

Email: admin@timefortalking.co.uk

Website: www.timefortalking.co.uk

Live Web Chat: Accessed via website. Password: Tftnow (case sensitive)

9.3 Human Resources

Information is also available from your Line Manager, Wellbeing and Attendance Improvement Adviser, HR Case Advisers on this support service who can be contacted at: [Workforce Strategy Contact List](#)

9.4 Sources of Information

Helpful Information can also be found on the following websites:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause

www.menopausematters.co.uk

www.womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice/factsheets/menopause (PDF version available within Appendix 5)

Appendices

Appendix 1: Confidential Colleague Discussion - Template

Confidential Colleague Discussion - Template			
Employee's Name		Job Title	
Strategic Area/ Team		Location of Work	

Line Managers Name and Position:	
Date of discussion:	

Summary of Discussion:

For example (Health Concerns, Impact on role, Work place Risk Assessment, support offered, adjustments considered) etc.

Agreed Actions/Adjustments/Reviews:

Date of next review meeting

Signed (Member of staff)

Signed (Manager)

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Appendix 2: Manager Do's and Don'ts

 Do	 Don't
Support a two way process: Listen to employees.	Assume that employees are coping with work or other pressures.
Resolve issues as they arise or are raised by employees.	Avoid issues and just aim to keep the peace.
Remain transparent and open at all times.	Say one thing then do something different.
Give employees appropriate updates while they are absent.	Make assumptions about an employees' abilities, capability or reasons without engaging with them.
Engage with employees.	Be afraid to ask open questions.
Remain positive: Don't always focus on the negative impact of absence & symptoms	Rely solely on email to communicate with employees.

Appendix 3: How can I support employees?

 Do	 Don't
Focus on the employee early intervention, support and prevention	Focus on costs, resources and pressures in discussions with employees.
Ask for assistance if you are unsure of any action being taken.	Label the person and only look at the condition, issue or related absence.
Treat each case individually.	Don't leave issues until the PDR/PRD. Deal with matters at the right time, as and when they arise.
Be prepared to have difficult conversations and seek support in doing so	

Appendix 4: Positive Management Behaviours

**HSE Management Standard
 Positive Management Behaviours**

Demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Awareness of team member ability and capacity in their role ● Monitoring workload and reacting to change ● Dealing with problems rationally and realistically ● Developing realistic action plans to address problems ● Proactive approach to working ● Reviewing and identifying process improvements
Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Appropriate responsibility to team members ● Coaching employees to empower them ● Listen, consult and seek feedback ● Demonstrating best practice in dealing with and resolving issues with team members
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Respecting privacy and confidentiality ● Promoting a culture of respect and building supportive team relationships
Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identifying issues as early as possible in the change process ● Promoting the benefits, key messages and taking feedback ● Keep teams informed and acknowledge efforts
Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide clarity on objectives of the team and expectations of individual team members ● Communicate clearly and consistently ● Encourage feedback and discuss issues in an open and constructive way
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote an open door policy and encourage employees to raise concerns ● Empower employees through supporting them to take decisions ● Treat mistakes as learning opportunities and review this learning ● Provide coaching and mentoring where employees require learning

Appendix 5: Menopause Fact Sheet

- www.womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice/factsheets/menopause



15-WHC-FACTSHEET
-The-Menopause-DEC

Other Formats & Translations

This document can be provided in large print, Braille or on audio cassette and can be translated into other community languages.

Please contact the Council's Corporate Communications Team at:

East Dunbartonshire Council, 12 Strathkelvin Place, Southbank

Kirkintilloch G66 1TJ Tel: 0300

本文件可按要求翻譯成中文，如有此需要，請電 **0300 123 4510**。

اس دستاویز کا در خواست کرنے پر (اردو) زبان میں ترجمہ کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ براہ مہربانی فون نمبر **0300 123 4510** پر رابطہ کریں۔

ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦਾ ਮੰਗ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਨੁਵਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ **0300 123 4510** ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Gabhaidh an sgriobhainn seo cur gu Gàidhlig ma tha sin a dhith oirbh. Cuiribh fòin gu **0300 123 4510**

अनुरोध करने पर यह दस्तावेज हिन्दी में भाषांतरित किया जा सकता है। कृपया **0300 123 4510** पर फोन कीजिए।