



## **HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY STATEMENT**

### **MENOPAUSE POLICY**

## **1. About this policy**

- 1.1 Harlow Council are committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive working environment for all our staff.
- 1.2 We recognise that many members of staff will experience the menopause and that for some the menopause will have an adverse impact on their working lives.
- 1.3 The purpose of this policy is to raise awareness of the menopause and the impact of the menopause in the workplace, and to encourage open conversations between managers and staff. We are committed to supporting staff who are affected by the menopause and to signpost relevant advice and assistance to anyone who needs it.
- 1.4 This policy covers all staff including - employees, casual workers and agency workers.
- 1.5 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at time.

## **2. What is the menopause?**

- 2.1 All women will experience the menopause at some point during their life. The menopause can also impact trans and non-binary people who may not identify as female.
- 2.2 Most of those who experience the menopause will do so between the ages of 45 and 55. However, some start experiencing symptoms much earlier. Often, symptoms last between four to eight years, but they can continue for longer.
- 2.3 Symptoms can include, but are not limited to, sleeplessness, hot flushes, memory loss or poor concentration, headaches, muscle and joint pains, depression and anxiety. Staff may find it helpful to keep a record of their symptoms including the dates, frequency and the impact they are having. If the symptoms are troubling or are being experienced under the age of 45 then advice should be sought from a GP.
- 2.4 The majority of those going through the menopause will experience some symptoms, although everyone is different and symptoms can fluctuate.
- 2.5 The menopause is preceded by the perimenopause, during which the body prepares itself for menopause. The perimenopause can also last several years and can involve similar symptoms to the menopause itself. For the purpose of this policy, any reference to the menopause includes the perimenopause.

### **3. Open conversations**

- 3.1 Menopause is not just an issue for women. All staff should be aware of the menopause so that they can support those going through it or otherwise affected by it.
- 3.2 We encourage an environment in which colleagues can have open conversations about the menopause. We expect all staff to be supportive of colleagues who may be affected by the menopause in the workplace.
- 3.3 Anyone affected by the menopause should feel confident to talk to their line manager or Human Resources about their symptoms and the support they may need to reduce the difficulties the menopause can cause them at work.
- 3.4 Line managers and Human Resources should be ready to have open conversations with staff about the menopause and what support is available. Such conversations should be treated sensitively and any information provided should be handled confidentially.

### **4. Risk assessments**

We are committed to ensuring the health and safety of all our staff and will consider any aspects of the working environment that may worsen menopausal symptoms. This may include identifying and addressing specific risks to the health and well-being of those going through the menopause.

### **5. Support and adjustments**

- 5.1 While many who go through the menopause will be able to carry on their working lives as normal, we recognise that others may benefit from adjustments to their working conditions to mitigate the impact of menopause symptoms on their work.
- 5.2 If you believe that you would benefit from adjustments or other support, you should speak to your line manager in the first instance. Line managers can support employees by discussing with them and undertaking a [risk assessment](#) which will assist with the identification of any potential reasonable adjustments that may be required.
- 5.3 Physical adjustments could include support with temperature control, working near a window that opens. Depending on individual and business needs, adjustments such as flexible working, more frequent rest breaks or changes to work allocation may also be considered. These are examples only and not an exhaustive list.

## **6. Overlap with other policies**

- 6.1 Support needs will vary according to individual circumstances, you may want to discuss [flexible working](#) arrangements with your line manager.
- 6.2 If your attendance at work is impacted by the menopause or menopause symptoms your line manager may also discuss referring you to our occupational health provider to seek medical advice / advice from GP to better understand any adjustments and other support that may help alleviate symptoms affecting you at work. Any request for a medical report or examination will be dealt with as set out in our [Sickness Absence Management Policy.pdf](#).
- 6.3 If you need additional support, you also have access to our confidential employee support resources through Reward Gateway - <https://harlow.rewardgateway.co.uk/SmartHub>. Once you have logged into Reward Gateway you can click on the Employee Assistance Programme link and/or scroll to the bottom of the EAP page and click on the link to access the Wellbeing Portal (you must be logged in to access this).
- 6.4 In addition, Human Resources can be contacted for more support at [human.resources@harlow.gov.uk](mailto:human.resources@harlow.gov.uk). Appendix 1 below details sources of further support and information.

## **7. Equality and Diversity**

- 7.1 We will apply this policy consistently and fairly and will not discriminate against anyone based on any relevant characteristics, including those set out in the Equality Act 2010. The menopause primarily affects women and those who have transitioned as women. However, any experiencing menopause symptoms or supporting colleagues who are experiencing symptoms will be supported through this policy, regardless of gender identity.

## **8. Monitoring and Review**

- 8.1 Human Resources will keep this policy under review every three years.
- 8.2 Menopause Policy February 2023, for implementation March 2023 – next review February 2026.

Policy Author	Natasha Terrell – Assistant Director Governance, HR & Legal
Approved & Authorised	February 2023
Date Authorised	February 2023
Effective Date	March 2023
Review Date	March 2026

## **Appendix 1 – Sources of Further support and Information**

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)	Counsellors and advisors are on-hand <b>24/7, 365 on 0800 028 0199.</b>
Employee Assistance Programme and Wellbeing portal	<p><a href="https://harlow.rewardgateway.co.uk/SmartHub">https://harlow.rewardgateway.co.uk/SmartHub</a></p> <p>Please log into your Reward Gateway and click on Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to access details on the enhanced Employee Wellbeing portal.</p> <p>NB the Wellbeing portal can only be accessed once you are logged into your Reward Gateway account.</p>
NHS	<a href="https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/">https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/</a>
Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for Menopausal Symptoms	<a href="https://www.womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice/factsheets/cognitive-behaviour-therapy-cbt-menopausal-symptoms/">https://www.womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice/factsheets/cognitive-behaviour-therapy-cbt-menopausal-symptoms/</a>
Henpicked – Menopause Hub	<a href="https://henpicked.net/menopause-hub/">https://henpicked.net/menopause-hub/</a>
The <a href="https://thebms.org.uk/">British Menopause Society (BMS)</a>	<a href="https://thebms.org.uk/">https://thebms.org.uk/</a>
Menopause Matters	<a href="https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/">https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/</a>
Women's Health Concern	<a href="https://www.womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice/factsheets/menopause/">https://www.womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice/factsheets/menopause/</a>
Menopause Swings and Roundabouts	<a href="http://www.menopauseswings.org/">http://www.menopauseswings.org/</a>
The Menopause Exchange	<a href="https://www.menopause-exchange.co.uk/">https://www.menopause-exchange.co.uk/</a>