



Menopause Leave Policy and Procedure

Introduction

West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

WODC is committed to creating an open and supportive culture. We want you to feel comfortable speaking about how menopause-related symptoms may be affecting you at work and be able to ask for the support that you need to help you manage your symptoms.

This policy sets out the rights of employees experiencing menopausal symptoms and explains the support available to them.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

Scope

This policy applies to anyone working for us. This includes employees, contractors, volunteers, interns and apprentices.

In this policy, where we refer to the menopause, we also mean the perimenopause.

Symptoms of Menopause

The menopause is a natural event during which a person stops having periods and experiences hormonal changes such as a decrease in oestrogen levels.

For some it will be medically induced. For others, it usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 and typically lasts between four and eight years.

However, each person's experience will differ, and menopausal symptoms can occasionally begin before the age of 40. Perimenopause, or menopause transition, begins several years before menopause. A person may start to experience menopausal symptoms during the final two years of perimenopause.

Symptoms vary greatly and can be both physical and psychological. For around a quarter of women, they are severely debilitating. Each woman will be affected in different ways and to different degrees over different periods of time. Menopausal symptoms can often indirectly affect their partners, families and colleagues as well.

Symptoms can include:

- hot flushes
- night sweats
- anxiety
- dizziness
- fatigue
- memory loss
- depression
- headaches
- recurrent urinary tract infections
- joint stiffness, aches and pains
- reduced concentration and
- heavy periods.

Our Commitment to You

We are committed to ensuring that all line managers and statutory officers are provided with adequate training so that they are able to support individuals experiencing adverse menopausal symptoms.

Additionally, it is the responsibility of everyone throughout the business to familiarise themselves with this policy and to play a part to ensure its successful implementation.

Requesting Support

If you are finding it difficult to cope at work because of menopausal symptoms, you are encouraged to speak to your line manager. If for any reason you are unable to approach your line manager, you can speak to a statutory officer.

We urge you to be as open as possible about any particular issues that you are experiencing or adjustments that you need to ensure that you are provided with the right level of support.

Any health-related information disclosed by you during discussions with your line manager or statutory officer will be treated sensitively and in confidence.

Working Flexibly on a Temporary Basis

For employees eligible to request flexible working, who require a permanent change to working arrangements, they can make such a request through their line manager.

However, we recognise that for individuals affected by menopausal symptoms, the option to work flexibly on a temporary (rather than permanent) basis may be appropriate. For example, this could include working from home, changing your start and finish times, changes to your work allocation or taking more frequent breaks. This is not a definitive list.

If you feel that you would benefit from a temporary change to your working arrangement on an ad hoc basis because of sleep deprivation or other symptoms that may be impacting on your performance, you should discuss and agree these with your line manager supported by the HR Business Partner.

We will try to facilitate temporary flexible working arrangements wherever this is possible and will continue to review these to ensure that they meet your needs.

Working Environment

If you feel that your working environment is exacerbating your menopausal symptoms, you should raise this with your line manager or director.

There are a range of practical adjustments that we can implement to make your working life easier, such as moving your workstation to a cooler area or providing you with a fan. If you are required to wear a uniform, we will allow flexibility where reasonable.

Quiet Place to Work

If you need time out to relax, a short break to manage any symptoms or take medication, or a quiet space to work, you should speak to your line manager who will try their best to accommodate this.

Sanitary Products

We will ensure that sanitary products are available in toilet and shower facilities.

Sickness

There is no expectation on you to work if you are unwell because of menopausal symptoms.

Unless otherwise set out in your contract, if you are sick and unable to work, you should follow the procedure set out in our sickness absence policies.

You do not have to disclose that your absence is related to the menopause if you wish to keep this private. However, we want you to feel that you can be open about the reason for your leave.

Occupational Health

In some cases, we may refer you to occupational health so that they can advise on how your symptoms are impacted at work and make recommendations on the types of adjustments that may be appropriate. Occupational health may also signpost you to external sources of help and advice.

External Sources of Help

There are various organisations that provide help and support on the menopause, including:

- [Menopause matters](#), which provides information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options
- the [Daisy Network](#) charity, which provides support for people experiencing premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency and
- the [Menopause Café](#), which provides information about events where strangers gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss the menopause.
- NHS information <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>
- My Menopause Doctor - empowering women with the necessary information to make informed decisions regarding the treatment options that are available. <https://www.menopausedoctor.co.uk>
- The Menopause Charity - a charity on a mission to bust myths, overcome ignorance and make menopause symptoms history. Supporting women and healthcare professionals with fact-based menopause research and access to the safest treatments. <https://www.themenopausecharity.org>

Version Control:	
Document Name:	Menopause Policy and Procedure
Version:	1.0
Responsible Officer:	
Approved by:	
Date First Approved:	
Next Review Date	
Retention Period:	