



Menopause Policy

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POLICY

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. The Governing Body provides an inclusive and supportive working environment and is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of all its employees. The Governing Body recognises that a significant proportion of its workforce will be impacted by the menopause and its symptoms, either individually, working with colleagues or through managing others.
- 1.2 This policy is inclusive of all gender identities, including transgender and non-binary employees. Within this policy references to woman will apply equally to all menopausal people. The Governing Body acknowledges the evolving knowledge and understanding around menopause and the policy will be reviewed and developed accordingly.
- 1.3 Menopause is considered a life event, as people work longer and more menopausal people work, so the likelihood of the menopause impacting on the workplace increase.
- 1.4 The Governing Body is committed to raising awareness and understanding of the menopause and enabling employees to have informed and secure conversations in the workplace therefore, enabling any employee to recognise and understand the symptoms and to consider reasonable working adjustments where appropriate.
- 1.5 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time. Birmingham City Council reserves the right to vary any part of the policy and procedure, including any timeframes. Any changes to the policy and procedure must be meaningfully consulted upon in line with BCC's Consultation Protocol and will be communicated to trade unions and employees.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all BCC employees in school settings.
- 2.2 The purpose of this policy is to raise awareness of the menopause, to develop and foster an understanding of the impact in the workplace that the menopause can have on individuals and to assist employees and designated managers to sources of relevant advice and support. Symptoms can impact on everyday life and happiness, so it is helpful to understand the underlying cause and to consider what can be done to assist and resolve them.
- 2.3 While it is the responsibility of both the employee and the designated manager to follow the policy and seek assistance when necessary, this policy provides the framework to equip, support, encourage and enable conversations between employees and the designated managers. This policy is supported by extensive guidance with supporting appendices.
- 2.4 This policy refers to symptoms of menopause and supports the understanding that most women will experience the menopause at some stage. It can also impact trans and non-binary people who may not identify as female.

- 2.5 Discrimination or bullying/harassment in relation to the menopause will be treated seriously in accordance with the relevant policy.

3.0 Understanding the Menopause

- 3.1 The menopause is defined as the stopping of periods (menstruation) caused by hormonal changes and is preceded by a stage known as the perimenopause. Menopause is a natural part of aging that usually occurs between 45 and 60 years of age, as a person's hormones change, and their oestrogen levels decrease.
- 3.2 Premature or early menopause before the age of 40 can happen naturally as an effect of a medical condition or treatment such as hormone replacement therapy during transition. Transgender, non-binary, and intersex people may also experience menopausal symptoms.
- 3.3 The Governing Body aims to improve understanding and discussion around the menopause and recognise the symptoms. BCC intends to develop a fair, transparent and consistent approach that will support team members and colleagues during this phase of their life.
- 3.4 Menopause related symptoms may also exacerbate pre-existing medical conditions or impairments. Symptoms are varied but a common non-exhaustive list can include tiredness, sleep deprivation, depression, poor concentration, stress and anxiety, hot flushes and office temperature sensitivity, irritability and these could impact on performance and /or interaction with colleagues. The duration and severity of these symptoms varies by individual, for more details on symptoms see the guidance and supporting documents.
- 3.5 Medical treatments and procedures e.g. a hysterectomy can also cause a sudden induced menopause. Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), a treatment for menopausal symptoms may also produce adverse side effects.

4.0 Managing Menopause at Work

- 4.1 The Governing Body encourages an environment in which employees can have open conversations about the menopause and expect all employees and designated managers to be sensitive and supportive of colleagues who may be affected. You do not need to be a menopause expert to support employees who experience menopause symptoms in the workplace and likewise employees should feel supported to talk openly when appropriate. Symptoms associated with menopause can affect an employee's comfort and performance at work.
- 4.2 Anyone affected by the menopause should feel, and be, able to talk to their designated manager or trade union representative as appropriate to discuss any issues relating to their health and/or the workplace in order to explore ways in which support can be discussed and the impact can be minimised. Such conversations should be handled with the same sensitivity and confidentiality that is expected when discussing any other health issue and health and well-being guidance is available.

- 4.3 Where an employee believes that they would benefit from workplace adjustments in order to address menopausal symptoms these should be discussed with their designated manager or trade union representative as appropriate to consider whether a risk assessment may be necessary. Any potential adjustments identified and considered should be proportionate and reasonable based on individual and service need. Examples of adjustments include access to rest or washing facilities, review of clothing, provision of fans or adjustments to work pattern. This is not an exhaustive list and please refer to the guidance and supporting documents.
- 4.4 Any reasonable adjustments and/or risk assessments which are made should be kept under review by the designated manager. Employees may request additional reasonable adjustments over time as symptoms may develop further or change.
- 4.5 Where symptoms are impacting on an employee's health/well-being, or their ability to fulfil their role, a referral via management to Occupational Health may be beneficial for advice and guidance on how best to provide support.
- 4.6 For employees who require emotional support a counselling service is provided for all employees and details are in the guidance. This service is confidential, and employees do not need to inform their designated manager if they have accessed this service.
- 4.7 The Governing Body recognises the subject and related guidance are evolving and as discussion around menopause becomes more frequent and symptoms recognised, then help and support will be easier to determine, and the policy reviewed accordingly.