



Menopause Policy

October 2025

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1. Introduction

Spilsby Town Council is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for everyone who works here. This policy sets out the rights of employees experiencing menopausal symptoms and explains the support available to them.

This policy is adapted from the Local Government Association (LGA) model document.

For ease of understanding, the term employee refers to volunteers, staff members, contractors' staff and Councillors.

Menopause is a natural part of every woman's life, during which they stop having periods and experience hormonal changes such as a decrease in oestrogen levels.

Menopause isn't always an easy transition and can be a significant issue in the workplace for those affected, but, with the right support, it can be much better. Not every woman will suffer with symptoms related to menopause, but supporting those who do will improve their experience at work.

2. The Law

This Policy is constructed in line with and regard to the Equality Act 2010, which protects workers against discrimination and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (as amended) that states an employer must, where reasonably practical, ensure everyone's health, safety and welfare at work.

3. Definition

Menopause is the time during a woman's life when menstruation periods permanently stop. It is defined as occurring when the individual has experienced no periods for 12 consecutive months and no other biological or psychological cause can be identified.

Menopause usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 and typically lasts between four and eight years. However, each employee's experience will differ, and menopausal symptoms can sometimes begin before the age of 40.

Perimenopause, or menopause transition, begins several years before menopause and individuals may start to experience menopausal symptoms during the final two years of perimenopause.

While symptoms related to menopause vary greatly, they commonly include:

- Hot Flashes
- Night Sweats
- Anxiety
- Dizziness
- Fatigue
- Memory Loss
- Depression
- Mood Swings
- Panic Attacks
- Insomnia
- Skin Irritation
- Headaches
- Recurrent Urinary Tract Infections
- Joint Stiffness, Aches and Pains
- Reduced Concentration
- Heavy Periods/Pain

Each of these symptoms has the potential to affect an employee or volunteers' comfort and performance.

4. Employee and Volunteer Support

Employees and Volunteers are encouraged to speak to their line manager/lead volunteer if they experience menopausal symptoms to ensure that symptoms are treated as an ongoing health issue rather than as individual instances of ill health.

Line managers will maintain an open-door policy so that employees feel comfortable in approaching them. Employees who do not wish to discuss this matter with their line manager may find it helpful to have an initial discussion with a trusted colleague or another manager instead. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

Spilsby Town Council can offer a variety of initiatives to support women experiencing menopausal symptoms, including:

- Issuing small USB fans to be used on desks and workstations;
- Use of larger PAT tested fans in and around the workspaces;
- Relocation of desk(s) nearer to fresh air sources/airconditioned areas;
- Access to trained Mental Health First Aiders;
- Providing a safe space in which emotions can be discussed in a non-judgemental environment;
- Providing access to sanitary products in the toilets to help eliminate period poverty;
- Time off for health appointments, up to 6 appointments a year; and
- Ability to leave the office environment to access fresh air for extended periods of time.

A confidential risk assessment to identify any areas that are a detriment to individuals going through the menopause will be undertaken.

External support and help for individuals and those responsible for line management can be found at: Menopause Matters www.menopausematters.co.uk which provides information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options. The NHS www.nhs.uk which provides information and treatment options; and The Daisy Network www.daisynetwork.org a charity which provides support for people experiencing premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency.

5. Reasonable Adjustments

Spilsby Town Council has a duty, written in law to provide a safe working environment for all employees and commits to ensuring that suitable adjustments and additional support are available to individuals experiencing menopausal symptoms. Spilsby Town Council acknowledges that the menopause affects individuals in different ways and so no adjustment will be made without fully discussing it first. Examples of adjustments include:

- Conducting a risk assessment to identify any areas that are a detriment to individuals going through the menopause;
- Changing the location of the employee so they are away from hot and cold spots in the Office;
- Implementing temperature control, such as access to a fan;
- Allowing flexibility within the dress code where reasonable;
- Assessing how work is allocated;

- Considering flexible working patterns, e.g. changes to the pattern of hours worked, working from home or a reduction in working hours.

Once the adjustments are agreed, they will be regularly reviewed.

6. Data Protection

Spilsby Town Council will process personal data in accordance with its Data Protection Policy. Data is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of providing the necessary support to employees.