PORINGLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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Menopause Policy

Policy Reference	PPC 47
Version Number	1
Associated Documents	• PPC8 Code of Conduct – Staff • PPC3 Code of Conduct – Councillors • Staff Handbook • Volunteer Handbook • Councillor Handbook • PPC22 Absence Management Policy • PPC21 Capability Policy • PPC15 Dignity at Work Policy • PPC20 Disciplinary Policy • PPC11 Equality and Diversity Policy • PPC36 Flexible Working Policy • PPC2 Grievance Policy • PPC17 Health and Safety Policy • PPC23 Performance Management and Appraisal Policy • PPC35 Whistleblowing Policy
Last Review Date	October 2025
Frequency of Review	Three Years
Approved by	Full Council
Date for Next Review	October 2028

This is a non-contractual policy that does not require approval from employees before changes are made. Staff will remain bound by amended non-contractual policies.

Menopause Policy

Introduction

Poringland Parish Council is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for everyone.

This menopause policy applies to staff, volunteers and councillors.

Poringland Parish Council recognise that female staff, volunteers and councillors may need support during menopause and other staff/councillors may need advice/support. Poringland Parish Council recognises that menopause is not a widely discussed subject and a positive attitude towards it is essential to support women and those interacting with them.

Poringland Parish Council aspires to develop a culture where issues such as menopause are openly discussed and recognised in a respectful and empathetic manner to ensure all members whether staff, volunteer or councillor feel supported and enabled to carry out their roles.

Whilst not every woman suffers with menopause symptoms, many do and Poringland Parish Council will support those who do to improve their experience at work.

Poringland Parish Council want all employees and members to understand what menopause is and to be able to talk about it openly without embarrassment. Both men and women should be aware.

Poringland Parish Council aims to be a good employer. There are two main strands of law that relate to perimenopause and menopause: -

- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1975

Many women experience few or no symptoms but for others they are more severe and these can be exacerbated by the way we work and working conditions.

This policy sets out guidance for staff, volunteers and councillors on providing the right support for managing menopause symptoms at work.

What is menopause?

The NHS defines menopause and perimenopause as follows: -

Menopause - is when your periods stop due to lower hormone levels. It usually affects women between the ages of 45 and 55, but it can happen earlier or later. It can happen naturally, or for reasons such as surgery to remove the ovaries (oophorectomy) or the uterus (hysterectomy), cancer treatments like chemotherapy, or a genetic reason. Sometimes the reason is unknown.
Perimenopause - is when you have symptoms of menopause but your periods have not stopped. Perimenopause ends and you reach menopause when you have not had a period for 12 months.

Some of the most common symptoms of menopause and perimenopause are: -

- The first sign of the perimenopause is usually, but not always, a change in the normal pattern of your periods, for example they become irregular.
- problems with memory or concentration (brain fog)
- changes to your mood, like low mood, anxiety, mood swings and low self-esteem
- hot flushes, when you have sudden feelings of hot or cold in your face, neck and chest which can make you dizzy
- difficulty sleeping, which may be a result of night sweats and make you feel tired and irritable during the day
- palpitations, when your heartbeats suddenly become more noticeable
- headaches and migraines that are worse than usual
- muscle aches and joint pains
- changed body shape and weight gain
- skin changes including dry and itchy skin This list is not exhaustive.

Some women require medical advice and treatment such as Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT). Seeking medical advice about menopause-related symptoms may mean the requirement for time off work to attend medical appointments and/or treatment.

Self Health
Current health promotion advice to women highlights the importance of lifestyle choices before during and after the menopause and the benefits of:

- Eating healthily and regularly.
- Wearing natural fibres.
- Exercising regularly to maintain aerobic fitness levels.
- Consulting with their GP on the management of the menopause and to ensure that any symptoms are not due to any other causes.
- Contacting Occupational Health about their symptoms in order to obtain advice and support.
- Obtaining support and discussing their symptoms with a trusted manager.
- Drinking plenty of water.
- Not smoking.
- Ensuring alcohol intake is at, or below, recommended levels.
- Having access to natural light.
- Getting adequate rest and relaxation.

These can help with some symptoms of menopause and may also help reduce the risks of other conditions in later life
Women are encouraged to seek external support and the following sources can be useful: -

https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/

https://thebms.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/17-BMS-TfC-What-is-themenopause-AUGUST2023-A.pdf

https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/index.php

How Poringland Parish Council will support menopause

Poringland Parish Council recognises that different levels of support may be needed for women who experience menopause and those who interact with them. As with all longstanding health-related conditions, the Council is aware that sympathetic and appropriate support is required from line management and councillors to help women deal with the issues arising from the menopause and training/support/advice for those working with them.

Adjustments in the workplace may be necessary to support women who are experiencing menopause. Poringland Parish Council commits to the following to support women experiencing menopause in the workplace: -

- A risk assessment will be undertaken in order to consider the particular requirements of menopausal women and ensure that the working environment will not make their symptoms worse. The risk assessment will assist with the identification of any potential adjustments which may be required.
- Working time arrangements should be flexible enough to ensure they meet the needs of menopausal women, who may at times require access to more flexible working in order to deal with their symptoms. This will be agreed with line management.
- Consideration will be given to environmental factors including temperature and ventilation controls, such as the use of fans. Office seating plans could also be reviewed to enable the employee to sit near the window in order for the employee to adjust the temperature of the room accordingly
- Consideration will be given regarding access to chilled drinking water and access to adequate workplace sanitary facilities.
- Adjustments to the employee's duties will be considered as hot flushes can be more difficult to cope with when undertaking high visibility work such as formal presentations and formal meetings for example.

Appendix one sets out a non-exhaustive list of considerations and adjustments that can form the basis of discussions around supporting women with menopause in the workplace.

Managing performance with menopause

- ✓ Poringland Parish Council pledges to ensure that staff, volunteers and council members are not penalised for poor performance related to menopause symptoms.
- ✓ Menopause related performance issues will be dealt with separately. To ensure no person is disadvantaged as a result of menopause symptoms.
- ✓ This will be managed on a one to one basis with the staff member's line manager.
- ✓ Training will be provided for line-managers.

Appendix one – possible adjustments for symptoms

Poor Concentration

- Discuss if there are times of the day when concentration is better or worse and adjust working pattern/practice accordingly.
- Review task allocation and workload.
- Provide note books for lists, action boards, or other memory-assisting equipment.
- Order quiet space to work.
- Order noise-reducing headphones to wear in open o ices.
- Reduce interruptions.
- Have agreements in place in an open o ice that an individual is having 'protected time', so that they are not disturbed.
- Have agreed protected time to catch up with work.

Anxiety

- Identify a 'buddy' for the colleague to talk to outside of their work area.
- 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, without needing to ask for permission.
- Identify a 'buddy' outside of the o ice.
- 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

Difficulty Sleeping

- Ask to be considered for flexible working, particularly suffering from a lack of sleep.

Low Mood

- Agree time out from others, when required, without needing to ask for permission.
- Identify a 'buddy' for the colleague to talk to outside of the work area.
- Identify a 'time out space' to be able to go to 'clear their head'.

Loss of Confidence

- Ensure there are regular Personal Development Discussions.
- Have regular protected time with their manager to discuss any issues.
- Have agreed protected time to catch up with work.

Hot Flushes

- 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.
- Have access to a restroom 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.

Heavy/light Periods

- Have permanent access to washroom facilities.
- Ensure sanitary products are available in washrooms, in order to obtain personal protection.
- Ensure storage space is available for a change of clothing.

Headaches

- Have ease of access to fresh drinking water.
- Offer a quiet space to work.
- Offer noise-reducing headphones to wear in open offices.
- Have time out to take medication if needed.