



## **GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

The Town Hall, School Road, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4QR

# **Menopause Policy**

## **Introduction**

Gillingham Town Council is committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive working environment for all our staff.

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.

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.

## **Scope**

This policy covers all staff.

This policy does not form part of the contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

## **What is the Menopause?**

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.

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.

Symptoms can include, but are not limited to, sleeplessness, hot flushes, memory loss or poor concentration, headaches, muscle and joint pains, depression and anxiety.

The majority of those going through the menopause will experience some symptoms, although everyone is different and symptoms can fluctuate.

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 purposes of this policy, any reference to the menopause includes the perimenopause.

## **Open Conversations**

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.

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.

Anyone affected by the menopause should feel confident to talk to their line manager, the Town Clerk or the Chairman of the HR Committee about their symptoms and the support they may need to reduce the difficulties the menopause can cause them at work. Such conversations should be treated sensitively and any information provided should be handled confidentially.

### **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 wellbeing of those going through the menopause.

### **Support and Adjustments**

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.

If you believe that you would benefit from adjustments or other support, you should speak to your line manager in the first instance. If you feel unable to do so, you can speak to the Town Clerk or Chairman of the HR Committee.

Physical adjustments could include temperature control, the provision of electric fans or access to rest facilities. 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.

We may refer you to our Occupational Health provider and/or a doctor nominated by us or seek medical advice from your GP to better understand any adjustments and other support that may help alleviate symptoms affecting you at work.

### **Policy Review**

This Menopause Policy was reviewed by the Finance and Policy Committee on 20 March 2023 Minute no 507e and ratified by Full Council on 27 March 2023.

This policy will be reviewed by the Finance and Policy Committee biennially or when there are changes to legislation, whichever is the sooner.

Signed by

The Mayor of Gillingham: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_