Community Counts
Milnbank
Housing Association
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TO:	Governance Sub-Committee
PREPARED BY:	Linda Sichi (Deputy CEO)
SUBJECT:	Review of Menopause at Work Policy
DATE OF MEETING:	26 March 2025
APPROVED BY:	Paul Martin (CEO)

MENOPAUSE AT WORK POLICY

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MENOPAUSE AT WORK POLICY

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1. MILNBANK HOUSING ASSOCIATION (MHA) STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

MHA's mission is to provide excellent homes and services in a thriving community. We believe that people living in the MHA community should:

- Have warm, safe, and affordable homes, and receive excellent services from MHA.
- Live in neighbourhoods that are clean and well cared for, with real community pride.
- Have access to opportunities and services that promote a good quality of life.

2. MHA's VALUES

Working as 'One Milnbank' so that we offer the same quality of services, support and housing to all tenants and residents.

3. LEGAL & REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

The Management Committee leads and directs MHA to ensure good outcomes for its tenants and other service users. MHA adheres to the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework Financial & Regulatory and to all relevant legal employment requirements associated with this policy including the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Equality Act 2010.

4. POLICY INTRODUCTION

This policy has been developed to assist MHA in supporting employees who are experiencing menopause in the workplace. MHA is committed to creating an open and supportive culture where employees feel comfortable talking about how menopause-related symptoms are affecting them at work and can ask for the support they need to help manage their symptoms in the workplace. MHA is committed to supporting its diverse workforce and to prevent discrimination. Where the menopause is referred to it also refers to the perimenopause and postmenopause.

5. PRINCIPLES OF THE MENOPAUSE AT WORK POLICY

- To raise awareness of the menopause, its symptoms and the impact it can have in the workplace.
- To provide guidance to managers regarding assistance and support available for employees affected by menopause symptoms.
- To support employees to remain in work.
- To ensure MHA complies with its responsibilities within employment law, health and safety and best practice.

6. DEFINITIONS

- **Perimenopause** refers to the time during which the body makes the natural transition to menopause which marks the end of the reproductive years. Some individuals notice symptoms or changes in their early 30's and others within their 40's. It is important to remember each employee is unique and will be impacted by this phase of life differently with regards to age and symptoms experienced.

- **Menopause** is a natural stage of life. Menopause is defined as having no menstrual period for a minimum of one year. The symptoms which can be experienced are a result of a decrease in the hormones estrogen and progesterone in the ovaries. Menopause typically occurs between late 40's and early 50's. However, individuals may go through the menopause earlier naturally, or due to medical/surgical intervention.

- **Postmenopause** refers to the time when symptoms of menopause have eased or stopped entirely but some individuals continue to have symptoms for longer. There can be an increased risk of some health conditions postmenopause, such as cardiovascular (heart) disease, osteoporosis (weak bones) and urinary tract infections (UTIs).

7. SYMPTOMS OF MENOPAUSE

MHA acknowledges that there are a wide range of menopause-related symptoms that can be categorised as physical or mental health symptoms - https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/symptoms/. MHA recognises that everyone will experience menopause differently, the impact and symptoms will differ, and symptoms will change as individuals go through this phase of their life.

Employees are encouraged to talk to their line manager, TU representative, Wellbeing Champion about how the menopause is affecting them in the workplace. Line managers will be supportive when discussing menopausal symptoms and the potential impact these are having on an employee in the workplace.

13. RESPONSIBILITIES

MHA acknowledges the importance of all staff understanding what menopause is and talking openly about it without embarrassment. All employees should be aware of the potential impact of menopause not only on those who experience it but also for employees who are supporting someone experiencing symptoms. Employers are responsible for the following

- Having a menopause policy outlining what menopause is, how it affects everyone differently and the support available to employees affected by it.

- Providing training to managers on the menopause to ensure they understand
    - How to hold sensitive and supportive conversations with employees
    - How to encourage employees to raise any menopause concerns
    - What support MHA can offer to employees affected by menopause
    - How the law relates to the menopause and the impact this can have on employees affected by menopause
    - How to deal with employees sensitively and fairly if they are affected by menopause
    - How gender identity links to menopause and why it is important
- Providing information to all employees and signpost them to relevant organisations providing support.
- Creating a culture where employees affected by menopause know it will be handled sensitively with dignity and respect.
- Ensuring that risk assessments are being carried out for those affected by menopause that speak to their manager about their symptoms.

Line managers are responsible for;

- Being familiar with MHA's menopause policy and how menopause can impact employees in the workplace.
- Attending menopause training as requested by MHA.
- Being prepared to have supportive discussionse with employees, appreciating the personal nature of the conversation and treating it sensitively and professionally.
- Conduct a risk assessment of their employees' work and workplace to ensure that menopause symptoms are not being made worse by the workplace or their work practices.
- Considering with the employee, how best they can be supported, including discussing any requests to make changes at work that may assist the employee to manage their symptoms.
- Ensuring ongoing dialogue and review dates are agreed with employees as they experience different stages and types of menopausal symptoms.
- Ensuring that agreed actions with employees are implemented and reviewed as necessary.

All employees are responsible for

- Taking personal responsibility for their own health and wellbeing and seeking medical advice if necessary to support self-management.
- Being open about how the menopause is impacting them in conversations with line managers/Occupational Health to enable appropriate support and guidance to be provided.
- Acting in a manner which contributes to a respectful and productive working environment.
- Being willing to support their colleagues who are impacted by menopause.

9. MENOPAUSE RISK ASSESSMENT

Menopausal symptoms will be unique to each person, can change over time and impact employees differently. MHA acknowledges that they are responsible for the H&S of all employees and will ensure that menopause symptoms or the impact it is having on employees are not made worse by the workplace or its practices.

MHA will carry out a risk assessment for those employees who are open about how the menopause is affecting them. Line managers are also responsible for highlighting any concerns they have with employees in a sensitive manner, if they believe menopause symptoms are having a direct impact on the employee's performance or attendance at work. Line managers will carry out a risk assessment and may refer the employee to Occupational Health if necessary.

Risk assessments should be carried out as frequently as required. This will depend on how menopause is affecting the employee, any agreed adjustments that are made to the employees' workplace or working practices. Risk assessments should be kept under review by the line manager in discussion with the employee (Appendix 1).

10. MALE MENOPAUSE

Male Menopause Some men develop physical and emotional symptoms when they reach their late 40s to early 50s. Symptoms can include mood swings, poor concentration and difficulty sleeping. A further list of symptoms can be found online here – https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/male-menopause/.

The NHS advise that although testosterone falls as men age, this is unlikely to cause any problems. In many cases the symptoms experienced are not related to hormones and instead lifestyle factors or psychological problems can be responsible for many of the symptoms. There is a medical condition called hypogonadism whereby the testes produce few or no hormones. Hypogonadism is sometimes present from birth or can also occasionally develop later in life. This is known as late-onset

hypogonadism and can cause the physical and emotional symptoms mentioned above.

However, this is an uncommon and specific medical condition that's not a normal part of ageing. Further details are available online here – https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/male-menopause/.

As previously noted, any employee concerned about symptoms they are experiencing should be encouraged to speak to their GP as soon as possible to discuss treatment options which may be available to them.

11. EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS

MHA's is committed to equal opportunities, and we will respond to the different needs and service requirements of individuals, and we will not discriminate against any individual for any reason outlined in Equality & Human Rights Legislation.

12. DATA COLLECTION

MHA will manage all personal data in accordance with our obligations under the GDPR regulations and the Association's Policy.

13. POLICY MONITORING & REVIEW

The Menopause at Work Policy will be reviewed by the Governance Sub-Committee every 3 years or in line with EVH updates, or as otherwise deemed necessary.

External resources and further information

ACAS - https://www.acas.org.uk/menopause-at-work/supporting-staff-through-the-menopause

BMA - https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/equality-and-diversity-guidance/gender-equality-in-medicine/menopause-support-in-the-workplace

EHRC - Menopause in the workplace: Guidance for employers | EHRC (equalityhumanrights.com)

Menopause café - https://www.menopausecafe.net/

Menopause Matters - https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/index.php

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

Appendix 1 - Menopause at work risk assessment

Employee Name		Employee Job Title	
Date Risk Assessment Carried Out		Risk Assessment Carried Out By	
Date of Next Review			

To facilitate discussion between an employee and their line manager a risk assessment will be undertaken. Through this we aim to identify any factors at work that may worsen symptoms of the menopause and put in place a plan to address these.

Menopausal symptoms will be unique to each person, can change over time and impact employees differently. MHA acknowledges that they are responsible for the H&S of all employees and will work to ensure that menopause symptoms or the impact it has on employees are not made worse by the workplace or its practices.

MHA understands that menopausal symptoms may change over time therefore, the risk assessment will be reviewed as frequently as required by the line manager in discussion with the employee.

Symptoms	Impact on work/ work practices	Requested adjustment	Actions agreed (discussion to take place with line manager) Who will implement the action and what date it will be implanted	Review Date