

NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting:	HR COMMITTEE	
Date and Time:	THURSDAY, 11 AUGUST 2022, AT 10.00 AM*	
Place:	BRADBURY ROOM - APPLETREE COURT, BEAULIEU ROAD, LYNDHURST, SO43 7PA	
Enquiries to:	Email: andy.rogers@nfdc.gov.uk Tel: 023 8028 5070	

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Members of the public may watch this meeting live on the Council's website.

*Members of the public may speak in accordance with the Council's public participation scheme:

- (a) immediately before the meeting starts on items within the HR Committee's terms of reference which are not on the public agenda; and/or
- (b) on individual items on the public agenda, when the Chairman calls that item. Speeches may not exceed three minutes.

Anyone wishing to speak should contact the name and number shown above no later than <u>12.00 noon on Monday</u>, 8 August 2022.

Kate Ryan Chief Executive

Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, Hampshire. SO43 7PA www.newforest.gov.uk

This Agenda is also available on audio tape, in Braille, large print and digital format

AGENDA

Apologies

1. MINUTES

To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on 16 May and 9 June 2022 as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To note any declarations of interest made by members in connection with an agenda item. The nature of the interest must also be specified.

Members are asked to discuss any possible interests with Democratic Services

prior to the meeting.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To note any issues raised during the public participation period.

4. LEADERSHIP REVIEW PAPER (Pages 3 - 10)

To consider proposals following a review of the senior officer leadership structure.

5. HR UPDATE REPORT (Pages 11 - 14)

To receive an update on the work of the Council's Human Resources service.

6. ESLP DRAFT MINUTES (Pages 15 - 20)

To receive the notes of the meeting of the Employee Side Liaison Panel held on 18 July 2022.

7. EXTENSION TO MARKET SUPPLEMENTS (Pages 21 - 24)

To consider proposed changes to the Council's Market Supplements Policy.

8. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS PAPER (Pages 25 - 32)

To consider proposals for the procurement of the Crown Commercial Service employee benefits framework.

9. MENOPAUSE POLICY (Pages 33 - 42)

To consider a proposed Menopause Policy for Council employees.

10. DATE FOR ADDITIONAL MEETING

RECOMMENDATION:

That the date of 20 September 2022 at 11am be agreed for an additional meeting of the HR Committee.

11. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

Councillors

Edward Heron (Chairman) Jill Cleary (Vice-Chairman) Hilary Brand Mark Clark Keith Craze Kate Crisell Michael Harris Maureen Holding

Agenda Item 4

HR COMMITTEE – 11 AUGUST 2022

LEADERSHIP REVIEW OUTCOME REPORT

1. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1. That HR Ctte note and agree the contents of this report with a view to making recommendations to council on the recruitment of a Strategic Director of Place, Operations and Sustainability.
- 1.2 That HR Ctte accept the recommendations from the independent pay consultant and recommend to council to adopt the revised pay banding.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Chief Executive has established that the leadership of the organisation includes her role as Chief Executive (Tier 1), the Executive Heads (Tier 2) and Service Managers (Tier 3). Regular leadership meetings have been established and a development programme is underway to build strategic leadership including understanding of best practice, leading change, and working collaboratively.
- 2.2 The Chief Executive is now in a position to review the current structure and a proposal has been put forward which reviews Tier 2 of the authority. The proposal means moving from the existing four Executive Heads to a position of three Strategic Directors. See Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The report also indicates that once the Strategic Directors are in place it would be reasonable to review the current structures below them. This may include introducing Assistant Directors where appropriate given a range of factors including proposed structure for the Directorate, scope of service and level of responsibility.
- 2.4 The report takes into account the recommendations of an independent pay consultant in terms of where the Strategic Director posts should be positioned within the council's current pay structure. Appendix 2

3. CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 3.1 A comprehensive consultation process has been undertaken. This included one to one sessions for those directly affected and briefing sessions for those indirectly affected.
- 3.2 The report was also shared with Employee Side as part of our agreed consultation process.

4. CONSULTATION OUTCOME

4.1 The comments that relate directly to the move to three strategic Directors and the introduction of Assistant Directors have all been shared with Employee Side as part of our normal consultation process. All the comments received were positive and there were no negative comments received.

- 4.3 There were some individual comments about where the Assistant Director posts may sit within the structure and these will be considered by the Strategic Management Team once the team is in place.
- 4.3 The positive focus of the comments in general were:
 - The proposed structure was welcomed and would enable the council to deliver its priorities.
 - Agreement that this would give renewed focus to the strategic leadership.
 - Greater clarity of roles to enable a greater steer and develop a clear corporate direction
 - The critical need for the right skills and understanding at a senior level to ensure the Council realises the opportunities available.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 There have been no objections raised through the consultation process to the move to having three Strategic Directors and no objections raised to the introduction of Assistant Directors.
- 5.2 It is proposed that we to move to a Tier 2 structure with 3 strategic positions:

Strategic Director – Housing, Communities and Governance

Strategic Director – Corporate Resource and Transformation

Strategic Director – Place, Operations and Sustainability.

- 5.3 Under our existing policies and based on the suggested groupings there would be two natural successors for the posts above; Strategic Director Housing Communities and Governance and Strategic Director Corporate Resource and Transformation.
- 5.4 There is no natural successor to the post of Strategic Director Place, Operations and Sustainability. It is recommended that we engage the services of an Executive Search Agency to ensure that we attract the best candidates from the widest possible field for this post.
- 5.5 To take account of the recommendation of the independent pay consultant it is proposed to reposition the grade of Strategic Director within the councils pay structure as set out in 6.3 below. The consultant's report is attached as Appendix 2.
- 5.6 An appropriate selection process and Appointment panel would need to be established and approved. The recommendation for the appointment panel is likely to be Leader, Deputy Leader, two relevant Portfolio Holders, Leader of the Oppositions and the Chief Executive. The panel will be supported by a member of the Executive Search agency and the Service Manager Human Resources.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The proposed restructure, going from four Executive Heads to three Strategic Directors, will result in an estimated saving in the region of £113,000 per annum.
- 6.2 The job descriptions for the new Strategic Director posts are based largely on the current job descriptions for existing Executive Heads. (with some repositioning of services) However there is a requirement to operate at a more strategic level, playing a

greater role in the collective leadership of the organisation including wider partnership working across Hampshire, and the transformation of the Council and its services.

- 6.3 An independent review of the job description for the Strategic Director-Place has indicated the lower and upper limits of an appropriate pay range. This placed the market median rate at £94,500 with the lower limit being £88,830 and the upper limit being £100,171. Translating that into the council's current pay scale it would make the appropriate pay range for tier 2 roles from SCP 74 (being £89,216) to SCP 76 (being £94,584) with the two performance points being SCP 77 (£97,437) and SCP 78 (£100,358). This revised placement within the pay spine will result in additional costs in the region of £33,000 per annum. Therefore, the net saving at tier 2 is £80,000 per annum.
- 6.4 It is anticipated that the tier 3 structure will be reviewed, and this will include the ability to appoint to new Assistant Director positions which would be at Grade 12. Any additional capacity at this level will be targeted to ensure that we continue to meet the Council's priorities.
- 6.5 The investment in senior leadership through this review will require funding of up to £200,000 per annum to be included within the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. The wider leadership team of the Council will all be clear on the role they will play in delivering a modern and transformed Council, including the delivery of necessary savings and income required to balance the Council's budget over the medium term. Any one-off redundancy costs arising as a result of this review will be funded by accrued reserves.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

8. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None

9. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report
- 9.2 Any Executive Search Agency that we use will follow strict codes of practice in relation to equality legislation.

10. EMPLOYEE SIDE COMMENTS

10.1 No comments received

For further information contact:

Name: Heleana Aylett Title: Service Manager HR Tel: 02380 285662 E-mail: Heleana.aylett@nfdc.gov.uk Background Papers Appendix 1 – Proposed Structure Appendix 2 – Pay Report

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APPENDIX 1

Business Improvement Elections Communications

Strategic Director Housing, Communities & Governance

Housing incl HRA, strategy, development & housing options Communities Health & wellbeing Environment & Regulation Legal & information governance Democratic

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Strategic Director Place, Operations and Sustainability

Chief Executive

Development mgt Building control Planning policy Regeneration Economic development Waste & Transport Grounds, streetscene Climate & sustainability Coastal & Engineering Parking Strategic Director Corporate Resource and Transformation

> Revenue & Benefits Customer services & information offices Finance Contract management ICT and digital Human Resources Estates & Valuation





APPENDIX 2

Pay Benchmarking of Executive Head/Strategic Director roles

1. The departure of the Deputy Chief Executive and the previous changes to Tier 3 within New Forest District Council (NFDC) have caused some revision of roles and responsibilities at Tier 2 level, resulting in key corporate services being distributed across different roles (and without a clear lead). In addition, the pay levels of these roles have not been reviewed for some time – so NFDC asked Reward Connected to conduct a pay benchmarking exercise.

2. NFDC provided us with job descriptions for the Tier 2 roles and our light-touch evaluation of these roles confirmed that they were all broadly equivalent to each other e.g. each was responsible for one or more service areas, each managed staff numbers between 40 and 500, each had a corporate strategic role, each reported to the Chief Executive, etc. NFDC's Annual Financial accounts confirm that the organisation is classified as a large organisation, based in the public sector, and the current pay structure for Tier 2 roles shows that their pay range is from **£79,491** (SCP 70) to £89,216 (SCP 74) including the 2 Performance Points.

3. Comparing these roles (and their pay levels) to others in the wider public sector (Charities, Civil Service, Government, Health, Third Sector, etc.) using only large organisations that are based in the South-West of the country gave us a pay database that produced an average level of base pay for NFDC's roles. Using this as the current market median, we cast down by 6% (being half of the current pay range width in NFDC) and up by 6% to identify the lower and upper limits of a pay range that reflects the current market amongst NFDC's comparators. This placed the market median rate at **£94,500** with the lower limit being £88,830 and the upper limit being £100,171.

4. Translating this to NFDC's spinal column points system, our market research shows that the appropriate pay range for Tier 2 roles is from SCP 74 (being £89,216) to SCP 76 (being £94,584) with the two performance points being SCP 77 (£97,437) and SCP 78 (£100,358).

5. As a sense-check, we then compared our researched market median for these roles to the middle SCP of the role immediately above Tier 2 i.e. the Chief Executive. This comparison showed that £94,500 was £24,997 below SCP CX2 of £119,497 and this translates to a step difference of 26%. As we typically expect this difference to be between 25% and 35% in the public sector, we were reassured that the market median of £94,500 was appropriate.

Michelle Buckley. March 2022

Agenda Item 5

HR COMMITTEE – 11 AUGUST 2022

HR UPDATE

1.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 That the Committee note the contents of this report.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report gives an update on HR matters since the last HR Committee. These matters are in addition to the reactive caseload which includes job evaluations, restructuring advice, grievances, disciplinaries and sickness absence matters.
- 2.2 We also continue to provide Payroll and HR Advisory services to the National Park Authority.

3.0 ITRENT

- 3.1 We have now completed the renewal with ITrent for another four years.
- 3.2 The Performance Management aspect of the system is now working correctly. The new 22/23 form has been launched successfully, and a report can be run from October each year to show progress.
- 3.3 The password and memorable word logins are often raised as a downside to the system by users, and we had over 450 requests to reset within the last 6 months. We are working with ICT to enable 'single sign-on' for all users. We are in the process of testing the software and establishing a process for this to work for us. We had hoped that this would be in place during July, but this has now been rescheduled to later in the year.
- 3.4 We are embarking on a project with ICT to procure an up-to-date intuitive Learning Management System, which we hope to have in place by April 2023 if possible.

4.0 RECRUITMENT

- 4.1 As of 21st July, we had 14 live vacancies.
- 4.2 From 20th May to 21st July, we had 39 vacancies, and 26 new starters. 3 vacancies during this period were not filled first time (all 3 have gone back out and we have successfully recruited Performance & Business Improvement Officer, Democratic Services Officer and Cleaner.

4.3 We also participated in the Ukrainian event in Brockenhurst, which was attended by over 60 people. The HR Admin team enjoyed taking part and had many enquiries, especially in our apprenticeship opportunities. We have some great ideas to develop our recruitment publicity further and will build on this during the next six months, with a view to being able to attend a wide range of events to promote ourselves as an employer of choice.

5.0 APPRENTICESHIPS & T-LEVEL PLACEMENTS

- 5.1 We have run a series of presentations for all services on apprenticeship opportunities and how these can work within services. We have looked at new apprentice opportunities, apprenticeships as a route of training for current employees, and using apprenticeships for trainee roles.
- 5.2 Feedback from the sessions was shared with EMT.
- 5.3 Since the presentations, we are now in the process of advertising for Groundworker and Human Resource apprenticeships, as well as our Accountancy Apprenticeship opportunity which has recently closed and had a very good range of candidates – interviews will take place during August. We also have a current employee who will be starting the Chartered Manager Degree apprenticeship through Solent University in the Spring. Additionally, we are recruiting to a trainee role - Junior ICT analyst – this is a two-year fixed term role and will be underpinned by Level three apprenticeship study.
- 5.4 We have investigated T-level placements and registered our interest. To date, no colleges within 25 miles are undertaking T-Level courses in relevant subject areas during the 22/23 academic year. We will continue to review this situation.

6.0 ADDITIONAL VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS (AVC'S)

- 6.1 A contract to AVC Wise has been awarded enabling Shared Cost AVCs (Additional Voluntary Contributions) to be rolled out to our employees. This went live on 01 August 2022
- 6.2 AVC Wise host webinars to introduce the benefits of Shared Cost AVCs to employees. This enables employees to make an informed choice if the benefit is right for them. 5 webinars are being hosted by AVC wise during August and September for all employees.
- 6.3 These webinars have been advertised to all staff through email, forestnet and posters at the depots.

7.0 REVIEW OF HYBRID WORKING

7.1 When the council introduced its' hybrid working policy 'Worksmart' last year it was always with the intention of reviewing it this year.

- 7.2 At the time of writing, we are in the middle of a consultation with the staff to gain their feedback on the initiative.
- 7.3 A series of questions are being asked including:
 - Does it work for you?
 - How do you believe it impacts effective delivery of Council Services?
 - What would you like to see changed, if anything?
 - Does it help with your work-life balance?
 - Do you believe it impacts on team and collaborative working?
 - Do you have any thoughts on the way in which space is now utilised at ATC?
 - Do you feel having this flexibility helps the Council to achieve its' aim of being an employer of choice?
- 7.4 Staff have a variety of methods to give feedback. Flipcharts and forms have been provided, face to face sessions have been arranged and some staff are responding directly to the notification email.
- 7.5 Once the results are collated a further report will be provided to the HR Ctte.

For further information contact:

Name: Heleana Aylett Title: HR Service Manager Tel: 02380 285662 E-mail: Heleana.aylett@nfdc.gov.uk

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Agenda Item 6

Employee Side Liaison Panel 18 July 2022 at 9.30am via Teams

MINUTES

Employer Side Attendees:

Employee Side Representative Attendees:

Steve Drodge

Cllr Jeremy Heron Cllr Jill Cleary

Officers Attending

Kate Ryan (KR) Alan Bethune (AB) Heleana Aylett (HA) Elaine Olden

Advisors to Employee Side Attending:

Neil Duncan-Jordan– Unison (ND)

Apologies:

Alan Durrant Kevin Beckett Cllr Edward Heron

Not in attendance:

Cllr Hilary Brand Richard White – Unite Bertie Russell

Cllr Jill Cleary lead the meeting in the absence of Cllr Edward Heron.

Kate Ryan took the opportunity of mentioning the changes implemented in respect of the recent heat wave:-

Waste Staff were starting earlier than normal – 5.30am start rather than 6am.

It was also agreed that a trial of sun protection cream was given to staff during the summer months. This would then be reviewed to see if this would be implemented as a longer term arrangement.

1 Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes were supplied of the previous meeting. HA went through the minutes briefly. Minutes were agreed.

ND raised the Mileage Allowance which was previously discussed. He felt it raised problems for some staff using their vehicles for work purposes. He commented that breaking the HMRC guidelines did not make the staff worse off. Did NFDC have any data on who this affected, how many etc.

HA said that they were looking in this matter, also making sure that all staff using their vehicles did have correct insurance etc. Spencer was also looking at this from a Health and Safety Prospective. They would get back in due course with a report reflecting the information on this subject.

2 Work Programme

HA went through the Work Programme. The Menopause item had been added and there was a report later in the meeting. Hybrid Working – on this subject NFDC were asking staff over a couple of weeks for feedback on the system and were happy to say that the response was good. In the light of this they are hoping to bring a report to the next meeting. Cllr Jeremy Heron did ask if some of the questions were about team building and productivity? It was confirmed that managers were being asked specific questions on their views on this subject. ND asked if this scheme was contractual or temporary at the moment and HA advised it was temporary. ND said it would be good to see how the scheme was being used in all grades and understood that certain staff unfortunately could not use this scheme due to their jobs within the Council. HA said that when recruiting it was certainly a plus to some candidates.

3 Outcome of Leadership Review.

Report shared with the Panel and other documents (Outcome report, Consultation feedback, proposed structure and pay report) supplied for information purposes. The report covered all aspects of the review procedures and staff briefings etc.

ND was on leave last week and has not been able to review the report and asked to send HA any comments he has in the next week or so.

KR said that the employees were being fully supported and believed that this move was necessary. It would mean that there would be redundancies, maybe 2 but there are other opportunities if anyone wished to take these up.

ND asked of NFDC ran a Pay Protection Scheme and HA said that there was a scheme which protected for 6 months and if a candidate wished to move to another position, at the end of the 6 months they would be placed at the top of the grade they moved to. The staff would be fully supported and advised.

This was to go to Council in September to get the interview process and panel agreed and decision were set for December.

4 Health and Safety Issues – standing item No Matters raised within the Agenda.

No item for this meeting as it was too early for the next quarterly report due to the meeting being brought forward. This means that there will be two reports in the next meeting.

ND raised the issue of the heatwave over Monday and Tuesday and what the Council had set up. KR confirmed that the offices were not closing but general guidance had been given and the measures that Kate discussed at the start of the meeting would also be in hand. KR agreed that this matter needed to be looked at as there was no temperature threshold. HA said that all staff had different situations as some needed to be in work to carry out their jobs but others could work from home. Any staff at risk should do everything they need to be safe. Cllr Jill Cleary said that this heatwave was a learning curve which needed planning for in the future.

5 Menopause Policy

HA introduced the Policy. Within the report there are references to a number of websites for help and support in this matter. It was all about raising awareness with all staff and about being able to discuss the situation freely. While personal experiences may differ it was important to provide a supportive environment where staff could raise their concerns and issues.

ND welcomed the policy and again said that he had not had time to read the policy through and would like to come back to HA with his comments in due course. This was agreed.

Cllr Jill Cleary commented that she was fully supportive of the policy

6 Market Supplement Report – HA – Appendix 7 attached

HA discussed the report supplied to the Panel. NFDC have been finding that recruiting had been difficult in some areas and they have needed to use the market supplement. They now are finding that it is also affecting the bands 11/12 and this report explained the need for NFDC to have more flexibility over these areas. The market supplement could be from 10% to 15% but this has to be justified and supported by Chief Executive, the 151 Officer and the Portfolio Holder and these are then reviewed after 12 Months. At present there is approx. 80 positions with market supplements and approx. 50 of these are drivers and the others are in various other areas.

There will be more of a breakdown in the HR Metric Report in future showing the service areas where market supplements are being used, the number of positions, etc. NFDC have had feedback from agencies that pay was not sufficient in the market for some posts to attract the right employees and NFDC are taking this on board.

KR commented that this is needed as it is challenging times and are mindful that the use of market supplements is not the long-term solution.

7 Staff Benefits Report

The Report was explained by HA and supplied to the Panel. Explained there were three schemes that the Council wished to introduce later in the year as at present they were

introducing AVC's. To continue with the Childcare Vouchers and add the Cycle Scheme and Staff Benefits. There were a number of other benefit schemes available on the framework but at present these were the ones of interest.

8 Issues raised by Employee Side

1. Update on Pay Banding – NDJ

ND said that this matter was raised previously and wanted to know the position in respect of Bands 1-8. AB explained that at the moment the matter stays the same and that the first employer offer is expected to be made shortly after an NJC meeting to be held on Monday (25/07), and that NFDC will be able to update them on the matter then.

2. Potential redundancies at Freedom Leisure – NDJ

ND said that Freedom do meet with them on occasions and at the last meeting announced the need for redundancies due to the reduction in membership at the leisure centres. NFDC said that they were aware and that they were expecting a meeting in the next few weeks.

AB said they were aware that Freedom were having consultations with staff next week and it was up to Freedom to deal with this process. Nothing further had been received from Freedom.

Cllr Jeremy Heron said that NFDC were keeping an eye on the matter but at the end of the day Freedom Leisure had to act.

3 Staffing Shortages (particularly at the depots) and Recruitment

ND explained that he had been told that there were regular shortages causing problems with crews. He wondered what the reason was sickness or not enough staff and how NFDC were dealing with the issue.

HA displayed a slide of some details that had been supplied for the Waste Area (a copy to be forwarded to ND). This showed that services were running with the sack delivery being intermittent to enable the crews to fill shortages and other plans were shown on the slides of how the staff were redeployed to different areas if required. Advertising for new staff is ongoing with a new driver and 2 new loaders. 5 existing staff were being trained as loaders.

ND asked about the longer term issue and he said that NFDC were at the lower end of the pay and that they needed to change this in order to attract new staff.

This was being monitored, and the recruitment of additional loaders to the garden waste rounds would give another indication of the labour market at this end of the pay scale. In other areas there were vacancies too.

9 Any Other Business

1. Casual Contracts

HA stated that where possible staff were moved to fixed contracts rather than casual. Approx 18 were left as casual. If these were to establish more of a pattern in their employment, then these could be move to fixed contract. ND asked for a further discussion with HA to discuss the matter.

No further business was raised by the Panel members and so the Chairman closed the meeting.

Agenda Item 7

HR COMMITTEE – 11TH AUGUST 2022

EXTENSION TO MARKET SUPPLEMENTS

1. **RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 That it be a recommendation to the Council that the proposed changes to market supplements as set out in the report be approved.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The council already has a Market Supplement Policy however there is a need to review certain aspects of it.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Changes were made to the councils' market supplement policy in 2021 as part of the Senior Pay Review Report. At that point the use of them was available up to and including Band 10 as evidenced below:

Future use of Market Supplements

It is recognised that, even with market related pay scales, there will be difficulties in attracting certain skills into employment during times of particular shortage. The Council's Pay and Reward strategy therefore provides, under delegated authority, for market supplements to be paid in exceptional circumstances. The current policy is based on reflecting a market supplement in an appointment scale point above the band (applicable up to and including band 9).

Going forward the market supplement will be based on a maximum of 10% above the highest recruitment point available in the band and will be available up to and including the new band 10. The resultant market supplement salary will be fixed (i.e. not subject to annual pay award) until such a time that the top scale point within the band overtakes the market adjusted salary.

	Highest Recruitment	Max 10% Market	Maximum Fixed
	Point	Supplement	Remuneration
Band 9	£48,683	£4,868	£53,551
Band 10	£54,338	£5,434	£59,772

4. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 It has become very clear that the ability to recruit to posts higher than Band 10 has become increasingly difficult due to wider market circumstances as evidenced by recent recruitment campaigns.

- 4.2 Ultimately this will impact on the council's ability to deliver on the corporate priorities and for some roles may impact statutory service delivery.
- 4.3 Feedback from recruitment agencies is that with an increasingly competitive market and some people choosing to opt for consultancy day rates rather than a permanent position means that at times we are not able to compete with the market.
- 4.4 There is also the potential given the current market, that in exceptional circumstances, we may need to have greater flexibility than the current limit of 10% as a maximum market supplement.
- 4.5 The alternative if we are unable to recruit to essential positions is that we would need to consider alternatives such as the use of interim support to deliver our agenda which would come at a much greater cost.

5. PROPOSED CHANGES

- 5.1 It is proposed that the use of the current Market Supplement policy should be extended to include Bands 11 and 12.
- 5.2 It is proposed that in exceptional circumstances and only where evidenced, that the Chief Executive in conjunction with the S151 Officer and in discussion with the relevant Portfolio Holder can agree to an increased percentage over and above the agreed 10% limit in the current policy. This increased percentage would not exceed 15%. This would apply to all posts up to and including band 12.
- 5.3 Where market supplements are implemented, this should be done as a short-term solution. Any that are given should be reviewed after 12 months, annually, by the manager to see if the situation has changed and whether the market supplement should now be removed.
- 5.4 Information relating to market supplements will be included in the annual HR Metrics report.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The use of Market Supplements will be closely managed to ensure the overall financial implications to the Council remain marginal.

7. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None

9. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The policy will apply equally to all staff who are recruited within the rules of the Market Supplement Policy.

10. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None

11. EMT COMMENTS

- 11.1 EMT were happy to support the overall proposals noting the following points:
 - 1. The review of the Market Supplements should be undertaken by the manager on an annual basis.
 - 2. The HR Metrics paper would provide more detailed information on the use of Market Supplements including the service areas.

12. EMPLOYEE SIDE COMMENTS

12.1 No comments received.

For further information contact:

Background Papers:

Heleana Aylett Service Manager - HR 023 8028 5662 Heleana.aylett@nfdc.gov.uk Senior Pay Report

Agenda Item 8

HR COMMITTEE – 11th AUGUST 2022

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS – CROWN COMMERCIAL SERVICE (CCS) FRAMEWORK

1. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 That HR Committee note and support the procurement of the CCS Employee Benefits Framework including;
 - 1. The continuation of childcare vouchers;
 - 2. The introduction of a cycle to work scheme; and
 - 3. The introduction of employee discounts.

Further benefits would be subject to review within 12 months of the implementation of the benefits as above.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Employee Benefits CCS (crowncommercial.gov.uk) offers a range of employee benefits that are available through a co-branded (to NFDC) online employee benefits platform to access the benefits offered.
- 2.2 It is designed for and available to government departments and all UK public sector bodies.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Our current employee benefits package (outside of annual leave and hybrid/flexible working) includes an Employee Assistance Programme, KAARP Benefits (offers a range of deals including egift cards and special offers to meals outs and attractions), discounted membership to Freedom Leisure Centres and access to join the Civil Service Sports Council (CSSC): Staff benefits
- 3.2 AVC Wise have been procured to provide Salary Sacrifice AVC's (Additional Voluntary Contributions to pension) to our employees. This is in the process of being rolled out to employees during summer 2022.
- 3.3 The historic employer supported childcare voucher scheme closed to new entrants in 2018. This continues to be facilitated by Edenred Ltd for NFDC because existing members can continue in this scheme. This was replaced by the Government Tax-Free Childcare scheme and is available to our employees.
- 3.4 Employees in operational teams (up to band 6) can buy one weeks leave or sell their long service leave (if they have more than 5 years service): Buy Sell Leave
- 3.5 The CCS Employee Benefits Framework can widen our benefits offering across the breadth of the workforce.

4. FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

4.1 The CCS Employee Benefits Framework has one supplier, Edenred Ltd.

- 4.2 The framework offers 9 core benefits. To access the framework at no cost to NFDC, including the online employee benefits platform, a minimum of 3 benefits must be taken up by the employer.
- 4.3 The 9 core benefits, explained in more detail in sections 5 13 of this report, are:
 - 1. Childcare voucher scheme (historic employer scheme that closed to new entrants in 2018)
 - 2. Cycle to work scheme
 - 3. Reward and recognition scheme
 - 4. Payroll giving scheme
 - 5. Employee discounts scheme
 - 6. Discounted gym membership scheme
 - 7. Technology and smartphone discount scheme
 - 8. Financial wellbeing scheme
 - 9. Green car scheme
- 4.4 Appendix 1 details the benefits offered in more detail. The Edenred brochure is available here: Edenred-MyLifestyle-Crown-Commercial-Services-Framework-Brochure.pdf
- 4.5 Childcare voucher, cycle to work, payroll giving, technology and smartphone discount and green car scheme are a salary sacrifice arrangement. If NFDC chose to implement one or more of these benefits, it would result in tax and national insurance contribution savings for the employee, and national insurance savings for the employer (depending on employee take up of the benefit).
- 4.6 The framework supplier has processes and checks to ensure compliance with National Minimum/Living Wage and Lower Earning Levels.
- 4.7 The most popular benefits on the framework are the employee discount, cycle to work, green car and reward and recognition schemes.
- 4.8 The secure online platform can be accessed with a single login by the employee. The platform can be co-branded with our logo as well as Edenreds 'My Lifestyle'. There is the ability for it to be used to promote our other existing benefits, such as our Employee Assistance Programme.
- 4.9 The framework includes a free promotion service as part of implementation and ongoing management of the scheme. This includes promotional material, digital launch communication package, roadshows and promotional events and discount scheme onboarding and ongoing email promotions of discounts available.
- 4.10 The employer can choose to add further benefits to their initial employee offering once the benefits platform is live should they wish.
- 4.11 Edenred Ltd provide a customer service team to support employees, whilst the employer is provided a relationship management and client support team during implementation and life of the contract. This would initially be procured on a 3 year contract, with ability to extend by a further year, as per the CCS Framework.

5. EDENRED UK CHILDCARE VOUCHERS

- 5.1 The Council currently uses Edenred Ltd to facilitate the deduction of existing employees who are still using the historic Childcare voucher scheme. NFDC are charged £159.60 per month to facilitate this by Edenred Ltd. This would be continued to be charged until all existing members cease in the scheme.
- 5.2 If the Council chose to procure the CCS Employee Benefits Framework, one of our chosen benefits would be childcare vouchers because it is part of our existing offering. Because this benefit is free under the CCS Employee Benefits Framework and Edenred Ltd are the sole supplier, this would result in an immediate saving of this monthly fee.

6. CYCLE TO WORK SCHEME

- 6.1 The scheme offers a comprehensive, salary sacrifice arrangement to purchase a bike (electric, road, mountain, folding and hybrid) and cycling safety equipment.
- 6.2 The scheme would be provided by one of the following subcontractors: Cycle Solutions Ltd (Cycle to Work), Halfords or Evans cycles. Bikes can be purchased both online and at many cycle outlets nationwide.
- 6.3 The scheme provider will ensure it is fully compliant with legislation, administer it on our behalf, advice the Council on salary sacrifice arrangements and help promote the benefits of the scheme.
- 6.4 The employer agrees a limit for the maximum purchase of a cycle across the workforce. Most employers normally set this within the region of £1500 £2000.
- 6.5 The employee enters two agreements:
 - i. Hire Agreement: This is managed between the provider and employee. It is a 12 month minimum agreement and is required because this is a tax saving salary sacrifice agreement
 - ii. Salary Sacrifice Agreement: Between employer and employee, sets out the rate of repayment of the bike, normally over 12 months.
- 6.6 At the end of the hire agreement, the supplier will communicate with the employee offering them three options:
 - i. Return the bike
 - ii. Extend the hire agreement at zero cost until the bike can be transferred to their name when it reaches nil cost according to HMRC rules
 - iii. Buy the cycle immediately in their name, paying the percentage of fair market value
- 6.7 This scheme is also available as 'net deduction', so that employees earning below the lower earning limits can enter the scheme
- 6.8 Should an employee leave employment part way through the agreement, it is the employers responsibility to recoup the remaining balance from the employees final net pay. If there is not enough net pay to cover the balance, the employer is potentially liable for this cost.

6.9 Scheme protection can be offered by the supplier. This is a 5% admin charge on the gross cost of the cycle.

7. REWARD AND RECOGNITION SCHEME

- 7.1 Provides access to a range of multi choice, branded reward and recognition vouchers and gift cards to nominated employees.
- 7.2 On instruction from management, HR can administer the award of a voucher and personalised email delivered to the employee.
- 7.3 On receipt the employee can log in to the portal and choose from a wide range of national retail and leisure outlets where they wish to redeem their voucher. This can be from one or multiple retailers and expires within a 12-month period.
- 7.4 A minimum and maximum cap can be put on the amount that can be awarded to employees.
- 7.5 The Council will be invoiced monthly, costing no more than the reward itself. For example if the Council issued £100 in rewards, a £100 invoice will be received.

8. PAYROLL GIVING SCHEME

- 8.1 Under a salary sacrifice arrangement, employees can donate part of their salary either on a one-off basis or regularly to UK registered charities of their choice.
- 8.2 The employee can choose to hold their payroll deductions on-account until they wish to distribute all or part of their funds to one or more nominated charities. Or the employee may wish to make a regular monthly deduction to a specified charity.
- 8.3 The deduction is taken from the employees pay after national insurance deductions but before tax. This means that it costs employee less to give more, whilst meaning there is no tax for the charity to claim back because it was never deducted.
- 8.4 This scheme is administered by the subcontractor Charities Trust.

9. EMPLOYEE DISCOUNTS SCHEME

- 9.1 A website/app offering meaningful discounts on a range of national and local retailers and service providers. This includes retail and food, entertainment and leisure, health and wellbeing, holiday and travel, retail vouchers, cashback and discount cards.
- 9.2 Offers include instant access codes, reloadable (e)gift cards and cashback. Any cashback savings can be used against purchases on the discount site or to transfer the funds into their personal bank account.
- 9.3 New offers are regularly added and promoted to employees.
- 9.4 Employees can pay for discounts by debit card or credit card. Any charges for using a credit card are clearly displayed to the employee.
- 9.5 The website is available as an app, this is a link to their promotional video: Introducing the Edenred Savings App Edenred UK YouTube

10. DISCOUNTED GYM MEMBERSHIP SCHEME

10.1 Employees can have access to discounts at over 3700 nationwide gyms/leisure centres.

10.2 Discounted gym membership may be unsuitable for the Council based on existing arrangements through Freedom Leisure.

11. TECHNOLOGY AND SMARPHONE DISCOUNT SCHEME

- 11.1 Employees are offered discount on the most up to date consumer technology and smartphones.
- 11.2 This is available as either salary sacrifice, net pay deduction or as an employee discount.

12. FINANCIAL WELLBEING SCHEME

- 12.1 The aim is to educate and help employees take control of their finances to assist employee wellbeing.
- 12.2 The scheme would cover:
 - i. Financial education and planning resources
 - ii. Debt management products and services
 - iii. Affordable, low-cost borrowing
 - iv. Savings and investment products and services
- 12.3 Financial education and sign posting is only provided, financial advice is outside the scope of this agreement.
- 12.4 Borrowing repayments and savings contributions can be processed by Net Pay deductions through Payroll.
- 12.5 To be eligible to apply for borrowing products employees must be over 18, have at least 6 months service and earn over £6000 per annum. Other products on this service do not require a minimum income or tenure.
- 12.6 A debt consolidation service is offered with access to affordable borrowing options.

13. GREEN CAR SCHEME

- 13.1 The scheme supplier is Tusker and is available to employees through Salary Sacrifice.
- 13.2 The scheme provides a car benefit scheme that promotes low emission vehicles to employees with rates that are better than the rates that can be achieve by individuals on the retail market.
- 13.3 Tusker make available access to the car benefit scheme provided through the CCS Vehicle Lease and Fleet Management Framework.
- 13.4 The scheme includes insurance, service, maintenance and repair and breakdown cover.
- 13.5 The employee can purchase the vehicle at the end of the lease agreement if they wish. There is provision for early termination or interruption of employment through Tusker, so that there shall be a nil cost to the employer.

14. IMPLEMENTATION, PROMOTION AND EMPLOYEE AND HR SUPPORT

- 14.1 An implementation manager is provided and plan includes:
 - i. Configuration of the Online Employee Benefits Platform (including branding, employee registration and log-on)
 - ii. Testing the digital service with employees and repeating the service in line with employee needs
 - iii. Data security requirements
 - iv. Implementation plans for each benefit
 - v. Customer on-boarding and transition (including engagement with payroll, communications and ICT security)
 - vi. Launch and promotion of the service
- 14.2 Edenred will work proactively with NFDC and subcontractors operating third party benefits to promote the services at implementation and throughout the life of the agreement. This includes marketing and promotion at no cost to the council.
- 14.3 Promotion will be regular and via paper and electronic means to ensure our full workforce are aware of benefits, this includes newsletters, posters, leaflets and emails. Site visits are also available.
- 14.4 The Benefits platform will provide useful employee information on how to navigate, what is available to employees, eligibility criteria etc. There is also a telephone line available Monday Friday for employee queries.

15. OTHER AVAILABLE FRAMEWORKS

- 15.1 ESPO offer a Staff Benefits (espo.org) framework. This has 7 available benefits: Managed Service (develop a total benefits package including portal), cycle to work, financial wellbeing, technology products, leisure and retail, car leasing and childcare vouchers.
- 15.2 Most benefits are chargeable to the employer on this framework, based on employee headcount.
- 15.3 On the basis it is chargeable and offers a reduced benefits package in comparison to the CCS Framework, the ESPO framework is not considered viable.

16. NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITY PACKAGES

- 16.1 In November 2021 South East Employers conducted a small benefits survey of neighbouring authorities.
- 16.2 The results showed of 9 responses:
 - i. 7 authorities offer bike purchase, 4 authorities offer car leasing, 3 authorities offer IT equipment/phone purchase and 3 authorities offer shopping discounts
- 16.3 In May 2022 neighbouring authorities were asked about their benefits package. The results are below:

Framework Benefit	Number of Authorities	Other Benefits Offered (Number of Authorities)
Childcare Vouchers	8	Microsoft Home User (1)
Cycle to Work	8	Annual Leave Purchase (8)
Reward and Recognition	1	Voluntary Health Cash Plan (2)
Payroll Giving	3	Shared Cost AVC (4)
Employee Discounts	8	2/3 days paid volunteering leave (3)
Discounted Gym Membership		Employer paid health care cash plan (1)
Technology and Smartphone		Interest free public transport loans (1)
Financial Wellbeing	1	Interest free car loan internally provided (1)
Green Car Scheme	2	Health and Wellbeing Support (MHFAs eg) (8)

- 16.4 Of the 8 respondees, 1 used the ESPO Employee Benefits framework and 1 used the CCS framework. All others had procured their benefits on an individual supplier basis.
- 16.5 According to Edenred, just under 250 organisations use the CCS Framework. 20 of these are local authorities, including Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council.

17. RECOMMENDED BENEFITS

- 17.1 This report has summarised each benefit, more detailed benefit information can be provided on request. All benefits offer different advantages to our workforce.
- 17.2 The minimum number of benefits required at implementation is three if the CCS Framework is procured. Based on the information collated from other authorities and our current arrangements with Edenred Ltd we recommend these are initially;
 - 1. childcare vouchers;
 - 2. cycle to work; and
 - 3. employee discounts.
- 17.3 Implementing an initial three will ensure the HR team can successfully implement the portal and offering to employees.
- 17.4 Once these are successfully implemented and take up can be analysed, we will review the other benefits and consider them for implementation.
- 17.5 This review will take place within 12 months of the initial implementation.
- 17.6 Other benefits that will be considered outside the framework include: extending the offering of buying/selling leave, a review of the internal car loan scheme and an extension of flu vaccination vouchers and health checks amongst a wider pool of

employees. These reviews will take place within 6 months of the implementation of the framework benefits.

18. CONCLUSIONS

- 18.1 The CCS framework offers an array of benefits to employees not currently available, using a crown commercial framework which is designed for public sector employers.
- 18.2 This will improve our benefits package and support us in being an employer of choice. An Improved benefits package will help us to remain competitive in attracting new employees whilst supporting us to retain our current workforce. This framework would also potentially provide a cost saving to employees and NFDC, should salary sacrifice benefits be procured and taken up.

19. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 19.1 This would result in a cost saving to the Council by removal of the monthly fee to Edenred Ltd for historic childcare voucher scheme administration.
- 19.2 The introduction of further salary sacrifice benefits will result in tax and national insurance contribution savings to the employee and reduce national insurance and apprenticeship levy contributions to NFDC. The amount of this saving will depend on the uptake of salary sacrifice benefits.

20. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

20.1 Each benefit is available to the full workforce and will be promoted in a way to ensure all employees are aware with the support of the supplier.

21. EMT COMMENTS

21.1 EMT supported the procurement of the benefits as set out in the recommendations at 1.1.

22. EMPLOYEE SIDE COMMENTS

22.1 Employee Side look forward to feeding into the process as it moves forward.

For further information contact:

Sophie Thompson HR Advisor 023 8028 5670 Sophie.thompson@nfdc.gov.uk

Agenda Item 9

HR COMMITTEE – 11TH AUGUST 2022

INTRODUCING A MENOPAUSE POLICY

1. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1.1 That HR Ctte support the proposed policy put forward.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The council takes the menopause very seriously and wants to support its' employees in this regard.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Discussions have already taken place with the unions with a view to agreeing a council policy through the Employee Side Liaison Panel.
- 3.2 The council wants to be clear as to the ways in which support can be given to those who are experiencing menopausal symptoms.

4. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 The impact of the menopause on people is gradually being recognised. More studies have been conducted which show the true extent of the symptoms which people may experience which can include depression and anxiety.
- 4.2 In some cases, the symptoms can be so severe that they have been classed as a disability under the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.3 A range of reasonable adjustments are available, and managers are encouraged to have open discussions to support employees during this difficult time.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 No direct financial implications

6. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None

8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The policy will apply equally to all staff who are experiencing menopausal symptoms.

9. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Any information provided by an employee will be treated in the strictest confidence.

10. EMT COMMENTS

10.1 EMT were pleased to support the introduction of a menopause policy.

11 EMPLOYEE SIDE COMMENTS

11.1 Employee Side would like the following additions/changes made to the wording of the policy:

Policy Statement - To add the following

New Forest District Council is committed to ensuring the health and safety and wellbeing of all the workforce, and will ensure the workplace does not make the menopausal symptoms of employees worse.

This policy is part of New Forest District Council's commitment to equality and diversity. We are committed to creating a workplace that respects and values each other's differences, that promotes dignity and combats prejudice, discrimination and harassment. This policy seeks to benefit the welfare of individual members of staff; retain valued employees; improve morale and performance and enhance the reputation of New Forest District Council as an employer of choice.

New Forest District Council recognises that many of the changes to workplace culture and adjustments offered here may not only be of benefit to workers experiencing the menopause, but to all staff

Introduction – To replace the first 3 paragraphs with the following:

The menopause is a natural transition stage in most women's lives. For some it will be medically induced. It is marked by changes in the hormones and the woman stops having periods. Women may have a wide range of physical and psychological symptoms whilst experiencing the menopause and peri-menopause and may often encounter difficulties at work as a result of their symptoms.

They will be affected in different ways and to different degrees over different periods of time, and menopausal symptoms can often indirectly affect their partners, families and colleagues as well.

Managers should also be aware that trans men non-binary people and intersex people or people with variations in sex characteristics may also experience menopause.-and non-binary employees may also experience menopause-related symptoms.

To add these two issues to the list of symptoms, and this statement

- vaginal dryness or pain
- Osteoporosis

Menopausal symptoms may also exacerbate existing impairments and conditions that those affected may already be struggling to cope with.

Internal Support

Managers should make allowances should there be an additional need for sickness absence by employees experiencing the menopause in order to manage their menopausal symptoms. Absence will be recorded as related to menopausal symptoms and managers will consider such absence as an ongoing condition requiring the consideration of reasonable adjustments and flexibility in absence procedure triggers. Further details can be found in the 'Sickness absence policy and procedure' [include a link or signpost to the appropriate policy].

All policies and procedures should take account of the effects of the menopausal symptoms to ensure that employees experiencing the menopause are not disadvantaged as a result of their symptoms.

All requests for support or adjustments must be dealt with confidentially and in accordance with the data protection policy.

External support - to add these two links to NHS information

- www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause
- www.nhs.uk/conditions/early-menopause

For further information contact:	Background Papers:
Heleana Aylett	Menopause Policy
Service Manager - HR	
023 8028 5662	Appendix 1
Heleana.aylett@nfdc.gov.uk	

Supporting employees experiencing the menopause

Policy Statement

New Forest District Council is committed to supporting employees who are experiencing menopausal symptoms.

This policy defines the way in which the Council will support and respond to employees in this regard.

Policy Aims

This policy sets out the rights of employees experiencing menopausal symptoms and explains the support available to them.

To ensure that all employees are aware of the Council's policy, it's implications and where to get advice.

To provide easily accessible information for employees.

To provide guidance to managers on how to support and assist employees.

Introduction

The menopause is a natural event in most women's lives during which they stop having periods and experience hormonal changes such as a decrease in oestrogen levels. It 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 occasionally begin before the age of 40.

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

Managers should also be aware that trans men and non-binary employees may also experience menopause related symptoms.

Although most people will associate the menopause with changes related to a women's period cycle, many women will experience issues such as changes in mood or poor concentration. It has now been scientifically proven that during the menopause there are changes that occur within the brain, which explains some of the symptoms listed below.

While symptoms vary greatly, they commonly include:

• hot flushes.

- night sweats.
- anxiety.
- dizziness.
- fatigue.
- memory loss.
- depression.
- headaches.
- recurrent urinary tract infections.
- joint stiffness, aches and pains.
- reduced concentration; and
- heavy periods.

Each of these symptoms can affect an employee's comfort and performance at work and may significantly impact on an employee's attendance. The council has a duty to provide a safe working environment for all employees and therefore commits to ensuring that adjustments and additional support are available to those experiencing menopausal symptoms.

Internal support

We aim to facilitate an open, understanding working environment. The HR team have developed a Brief Bite training session called Managing the Menopause, and this will be available to all staff to increase awareness. Managers are particularly encouraged to attend this session.

Employees are encouraged to inform their line manager that they are experiencing menopausal symptoms at an early stage to ensure that symptoms are treated as an ongoing health issue rather than as individual instances of ill health. Early notification will also help line managers to determine the most appropriate course of action to support an employee's individual needs.

Employees who do not wish to discuss the issue with their direct line manager may find it helpful to have an initial discussion with a trusted colleague or another manager instead. The council also has a number of trained Mental Health First Aiders. Further details of these are set out on the intranet. They can also raise the issue with a member of the HR advisory team if they need support or with their Union Representative.

External Support

There are also other avenues of support including the Employee Assistance programme the details of which are on Forestnet.

Forestnet signposts external sources of help and support for employees and managers, including information on:

- <u>Menopause matters</u>, which provides information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options.
- the <u>Daisy Network</u> charity, which provides support for people experiencing premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency; and
- the <u>Menopause Café</u>, which provides information about events where strangers gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss the menopause.
- Or try <u>Balance Homepage (balance-menopause.com)</u> this gives you further information on HRT, wellbeing and Nutrition, and includes information for those who have had or are currently dealing with cancer and how this may affect you during the menopause.

Supporting an employee experiencing the Menopause

Temperature control

The council will strive to achieve a comfortable working temperature for employees. We will allow flexibility within our dress code where reasonable. Chilled water is provided in regular places around our buildings, and desk fans will be provided upon request.

Flexible working

The council recognises that difficulty sleeping is a common symptom of the menopause. To reflect this, as well as the impact of other common symptoms, we aim to facilitate flexible working wherever possible. Requests for flexible working could include asking for:

- a change to the pattern of hours worked.
- permission to perform work from home.
- a reduction in working hours; or
- more frequent breaks.

Employees should discuss such requests with their line manager. Depending on the circumstances, requests may be approved on a temporary basis.

Reasonable adjustments:

The menopause can, depending on the severity of the symptoms, amount to a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010. Therefore, we must ensure that we do not treat employees less favourably than others as a result of a disability and must also make reasonable adjustments as required to ensure that disabled employees are not disadvantaged as a result of their disability.

If in doubt, please speak to a member of the HR Advisory team who can offer advice and assistance in these matters.

Risk Assessments.

We have a duty to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees. Managers should consider whether a risk assessment is necessary to identify how working conditions could affect those experiencing the menopause in the workplace.

Discrimination:

Managers must also ensure that employees experiencing the menopause are not directly or indirectly discriminated against. For example, a requirement to wear a uniform made of uncomfortable, synthetic fabric could indirectly discriminate against an employee experiencing regular menopausal hot flushes on grounds of disability, sex and age.

Further Help and Support

If you require any further help or advice relating to this policy please contact a member of the HR Advisory Team