

SCRUTINY

16 AUGUST 2021

MENOPAUSE UPDATE

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Nikki Woollatt, Cabinet Member for Working Environment and Support Services

Responsible Officer: Matthew Page, Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste

Reason for Report: Scrutiny requested a follow up to the presentation of a report in February 2021 on work regarding the menopause that was recommended to advance the organisation's ability to both raise awareness and provide support to the workforce.

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee is asked to note the information below

Financial Implications: No financial risk.

Budget and Policy Framework: This report sits within the current budget and policy framework.

Legal Implications: No legal implications.

Risk Assessment: It is important that the Council can effectively address issues relating to the menopause.

Equality Impact Assessment: No equality issues highlighted in this report. Arguably Age?

Relationship to Corporate Plan: This work is in addition to the Corporate Plan.

Impact on Climate Change: No climate change issues highlighted in this report.

1.0 Introduction/Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to give an update on how the organisation has advanced recommendations detailed in a report regarding the menopause that was approved by Scrutiny in February 2021.
- 1.2 These items included communication and raising awareness around the menopause, creating a pool of wellbeing ambassadors that can signpost and provide practical advice and support to colleagues, the provision of training and the running of an independent staff survey this autumn (to ask about communication and effectiveness of methods used to raise awareness).

2.0 Communication and Raising Awareness around the Menopause

- 2.1 Chris Hodgson has written articles for both the internal staff electronic newsletter the Link (and WIS) on the subject of the menopause and the work we are planning to do to raise awareness of the subject and provide better

practical support. This has included providing key information and subject matter for reading, the highlighting of practical points, tips and advice for staff and the dissemination of further guidance and advice to the all staff consultative group Impact and the Union.

- 2.2 A combined Union and Impact meeting was recently run to give clear messaging and education on the menopause and to encourage practical tips and advice to be effectively disseminated to staff.
- 2.3 Other immediate priorities have seen a focus on raising awareness of the employee assistance scheme which offers telephone counselling and other services as well as the coaching of line managers on the importance of open and informal conversations through the recent Appraisal/PDR scheme.

3.0 Setting up a Wellbeing Ambassadors Pool to provide Support

- 3.1 During the above combined Impact and Union meetings a pool of wellbeing ambassadors was established with the aim of educating and raising awareness amongst the workforce of key subjects including the menopause. There are three key priorities which the ambassadors have agreed to implement. These are;

- To raise awareness of the menopause amongst colleagues.
- To signpost support and help provide/highlight practical tips.
- To provide direct support to colleagues where it is appropriate to do so.

- 3.2 This approach recognises that peers can often help educate their colleagues better than a management (top down) approach but especially where the subject matter is sensitive and/or personal in nature. It also helps give employees confidence that they can share issues in a safe environment.
- 3.3 The ambassadors will be further mobilised to raise awareness and signpost support around key related subjects including mental health and wellbeing, reasonable adjustments and other equality related issues.

4.0 Learning and Development/Staff Survey

- 4.1 A package of learning and development is being designed and taken forwards by our Learning and Development Specialist Helen Duke to be accessed by all staff.
- 4.2 A recent line manager survey has explored how we may move to greater mobile, hybrid working and some of the changes that we may need to make as an employer to allow such a change to happen. The wider support we can offer the workforce around issues like the menopause is a key consideration of this work.
- 4.3 This autumn we will be running a staff survey to gauge feedback and opinion on key issues including the menopause. The results of the survey will be available to see before Christmas.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 5.1 There are a number of priorities to focus on in progressing our work around the menopause and the implementation of an effective work programme.
- 5.2 It is important that we roll out a full programme of learning and development for line managers so they can deal with arising issues around the menopause effectively and in a way which gives confidence to the workforce.
- 5.3 The results of this autumn's staff survey will be important in shaping our future people management priorities. It will be interesting to gauge the views of the wider workforce on the issue of the menopause and the best approach to take.
- 5.4 All of the above will inform the writing of a menopause policy which will outline the approach of the Council to addressing issues related to the menopause and the support that can be accessed by the workforce.
- 5.5 I have asked Catherine Yandle to take the above programme of work forwards which she has agreed to do.

Contact for more Information: Matthew Page, Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste (MPage@middevon.gov.uk)

Circulation of the Report: Cabinet Member seen and approved Yes – Cllr Nikki Woollatt, Leadership Team seen and approved Yes.

List of Background Papers: Menopause Paper submitted to Scrutiny February 2021.