

## Kirklees Council Case Study

### How did you start the menopause conversation?

Inclusion and wellbeing are integral to our organisational culture and getting our people talking about menopause seemed a natural fit. It was important to raise awareness across the whole organisation so our first step was to share a blog on World Menopause Day in October 2018. The response was very positive and we decided to run a “Let’s talk about Menopause” session for all Kirklees employees in December 2018.

Over 100 employees attended the December session which was opened by Deborah Lucas our Head of People Services. Julie followed with a talk to the group about menopause symptoms, the impact at work and shared ideas for managing and normalising menopause.

One of the highlights of the session was hearing a range of personal stories from Kirklees employees about their own experiences of menopause. These included:

- Midlife female employee talking about the emotional and physical symptoms such as bad sleep, poor memory and low concentration levels which had affected her confidence at work.
- Midlife male employee discussing the challenges of being in a relationship with a woman experiencing menopause symptoms.
- 27 year old female employee sharing her early diagnosis of menopause and the impact that had on her personal relationships.

It was both useful and inspiring to get some very different perspectives on menopause, building our collective understanding of the impact it has on people at work and home. A consistent theme that emerged was the importance of talking about menopause and how this can make such a difference – a great reminder of the power of conversations.

### How did your employees respond?

We saw a real shift in the feelings in the room from “tired”, “scared” and “hot” at the beginning of the session to “hopeful”, “informed” and “normal” at the end as demonstrated by these wordclouds captured at the opening and close of the event.

What word best describes how you feel about the menopause right now (at start of event)?

0 5 7



What word best describes how you feel about the menopause now (at end of event)?

0 4 6



## **How do you plan to continue the menopause conversation?**

We set up table discussions and asked employees five key questions with regards to menopause at work and are using the responses to help inform our strategy going forward:

- What helps you?
- What hinders you?
- What could we do to support you?
- What one thing would you like the council to do?
- How can you take responsibility with your future actions?

We have added another blog to our intranet plus a suite of resources that all employees can access to help support ongoing conversations around menopause. Additionally, we are reviewing our HR policies and guidelines to see how thinking around menopause might be more explicitly incorporated eg in the context of flexible, mobile and agile ways of working.

Finally, we are encouraging employees to think about what they can do as individuals to promote a menopause friendly culture and anticipate 'menopause socials' being organised as a way of getting people together to talk and share their experiences.

## **What would you say to other organisations who currently do not have a support system in place with regards to menopause?**

Talking is really important and the more we do this the more it will help to 'normalise' menopause. It should not be 'taboo' and it is definitely ok to talk about menopause and the impact this can have at work – both to your manager and to your colleagues.

Working with Julie has helped us to quickly engage our workforce with this topic and promote a menopause friendly environment strengthened by the right policies, training and support.