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STATEMENT AND PURPOSE OF POLICY

Data Tech Holdings Ltd are committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment to all staff throughout their employment and to ensure that they feel confident raising any issues they may have due to their menopausal symptoms, and in requesting reasonable adjustments at work.

The Company recognises that staff experiencing the menopause, whether before, during or after the period of hormonal change may need additional consideration, support and adjustments to their working environment.

The Company further recognises that the menopause and menopausal symptoms may not only affect women but also non-binary, transgender and intersex people.

This policy forms part of the company's commitment to ensuring the health, safety and well-being of its workforce and is designed to prevent menopausal symptoms being exacerbated in or by the workplace.

The Company fully understands its obligations in connection with the Equality act, the Employment Rights Bill and the Health and Safety at Work Act and other pertinent legislation.

AIMS OF THIS POLICY

This Policy aims to:

- Make managers aware of the menopause, its symptoms and how it may affect staff and make managers aware of how they can support them experiencing the menopause at work.
- Raise awareness and understanding about the menopause, its symptoms and potential effects among all Staff Members.
- Create and maintain a positive and supportive working environment, where staff feel able to speak freely and openly about the menopause in a respectful and supportive manner.
- Enable Staff Members experiencing the menopause to continue to work effectively in their role, understanding what support and reasonable adjustments are available to staff.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Company understands that the menopause can be a stressful and challenging time and will treat issues related to the menopause with the utmost confidentiality. The company will not disclose any information about a Staff Member's health, including the effects of their menopausal symptoms, without their consent.

In the event that staff agree to such a disclosure, the Company will in advance agree with the member of staff what information may and may not be disclosed to colleagues; and who will be given this information and by whom.

WHAT IS THE MENOPAUSE?

The menopause occurs when the body's oestrogen levels fall and the body no longer releases eggs. This is part of the normal ageing process and usually affects those between the ages of 45 and 55. However, the menopause may also occur early, (before age 40 (known as 'premature menopause') or be brought on suddenly through medical or surgical intervention (medical/surgical menopause') e.g. where ovaries are damaged or removed or due to an underlying health condition.

The menopause can be divided into different phases:

Perimenopause - the period leading up to the menopause, where symptoms may be experienced. This can begin several years before the menopause.

Menopause - when someone's period stops altogether. This phase is considered to have started when someone hasn't had a period for 12 months.

Post-menopause - the period after the menopause. Menopause symptoms tend to continue for a while during post-menopause.

Throughout this Policy, the term 'menopause' refers to all phases of the menopause.

**SYMPTOMS OF THE MENOPAUSE**

The menopause can result in various physical, mental and emotional symptoms, including:

- Hot flushes;
- Heart palpitations;
- Headaches and migraines;
- Muscle aches and joint pains;
- Difficulty concentrating, "Brain fog";
- Memory problems;
- Mood swings;
- Difficulty sleeping.

More information on symptoms may be found on (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/symptoms>).

The Company recognises and acknowledges that the menopause may not be an easy process for everyone and can affect physical, psychological and emotional health and may, as a result, significantly impact affected staff in their ability to work and their relationships with colleagues.

Everyone's menopausal symptoms are different and staff may have unique experiences with the menopause.

DISABILITY AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

The menopause in itself is not a disability under the Equality Act 2010. However, if menopausal symptoms have a long-term adverse effect on the ability of a Staff Member to carry out normal day-to-day activities, it may be considered one. The Company therefore has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by the disability.

Even where menopausal symptoms do not amount to a disability, the Company will consider making adjustments to support the member of staff and enable them to fulfil their role.

Examples of reasonable adjustments the Employer may consider include, but are not limited to:

- Ventilation/provision of fans;
- Workplace temperature;
- Access to toilet and washing facilities;
- Access to sanitary products;
- Access to drinking water;
- Workforce working and break times.

RESPONSIBILITIES**Staff Members**

Staff have various workplace responsibilities, including:

- Ensuring their own health and well-being, including raising specific issues or concerns related to the menopause that they have, with their line manager and/or the HR Manager;
- Being open and honest when having conversations with their line managers and/or the HR Manager if they need support with menopausal symptoms;
- Seeking advice from their GPs and the Company medical advice should any menopause symptoms affect their ability to carry out their job function;
- Treating others with respect and being willing to help and support their colleagues;
- Understanding any necessary adjustments their colleagues are receiving due to any menopause symptoms they may be experiencing;
- Reporting any instances of harassment, bullying, victimisation or discrimination experienced because of issues related to the menopause in accordance with the Employer's Equal Opportunities Policy.

**MANAGERS**

Managers have various workplace responsibilities, including;

Understanding the menopause, its symptoms and how it can affect Staff Members and the workplace;

Making Staff aware of the Company Menopause Policy;

Attending all training provided by the Employer;

Fostering an open, supportive work environment where Staff Members are able to discuss how the menopause is affecting them, including by ensuring that Staff feel able to ask for help and support;

Speaking openly to their staff about the menopause in a sensitive, respectful and supportive way;

Familiarising themselves with and understanding what changes to the workplace or reasonable adjustments may be considered to support Staff Members;

Considering any communication and requests for support or adjustments from Staff they manage in a sympathetic and confidential manner;

Ensuring and facilitating an ongoing dialogue on and regular review of any agreed changes to the workplace or reasonable adjustments for Staff they manage;

Seeking further advice.

HR MANAGER

The HR Manager has various workplace responsibilities, including:

- Providing clear guidance and support to managers on menopause related issues;
- Providing training for managers and staff on the menopause, including what it is and common symptoms;
- How to have an open dialogue about concerns related to the menopause;
- How to discuss reasonable adjustments;
- Identifying what support is available, within the business and from external sources;
- Providing support, advice and guidance to managers on how to handle and address absence and performance issues related to the menopause.

ABSENCES FROM WORK AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Absences from work which are related to the menopause will be handled under the Employer's Sickness Policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Bob Jacobs
Managing Director