



Menopausal at work? Time to normalise the conversation

In the past, menopause support was rightly encouraged by government but not mandated. However, from 2027, employers with a head count in excess of 250 will now be legally bound to put steps in places to address gender equality. And—seeing as results from 2023 show that figures for women in England and Wales even outnumbered men 51% to 49%¹—this of course includes supporting employees through the pivotal transition that is the menopause.

But what is the menopause?

The term is used to describe the natural end of a woman's reproductive years, generally occurring between ages 45 and 55 years. Though previously a 'do not discuss' topic, menopause and its precursor perimenopause, are taking stage as the massive midlife transition in women's lives that they are and are finally being discussed as such.

The law update, as part of the Employment Rights Bill is all about keeping people in jobs for longer. This in turn, will lower employee turnover and reduce recruitment costs for employers to support the growth of the economy. Visibility for an important shift in every woman's life and better outcomes for business, it's a win win.

A smoother perimenopause—the hormone rollercoaster leading up to menopause—will inevitably lead to better outcomes. Think a reduction in absenteeism, improved efficiency and better staff output. Not to mention the mental health benefit of the 'unspoken' being acknowledged within a professional, caring and understanding environment. And even financial wellbeing gets a boost, by lowering the likelihood of extending leave periods staff can ensure they stay on full pay throughout and avoid a dip in their pension contributions.

So, with World Menopause Day on Saturday 18th October 2025 we've outlined just a few of the ways you can support your people going through this pivotal transition in life.

Recognise the signs and approach with empathy

With many of us working from home, the physical signs of menopause are becoming harder to spot. Though common symptoms include: hot flushes, challenges in maintaining concentration, brain fog/memory recall, mood swings and irritability, anxiety and low self-esteem, weight gain typically in line with a loss of muscle mass, and even sensitive teeth and gums. From a visual perspective, dry and itchy skin can be quite common. Whereas from a behavioural perspective look for decreased productivity,

¹ [Population estimates for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)



frequent absenteeism or lateness, as well as irritability and mood swings. However, always avoid assumptions or accusations and approach with care.

The Channel 4 documentary led by Davina McCall, has significantly raised public awareness in recently years. Followed on by many celebrity and public figure testimonials. As such, the taboo is slowly being washed away and a friendly ear could also be a welcome support.

Educate your line managers

We've likely all heard about menopause. We might even know the basics. But full training is vital to properly support staff. Replace "Oh yeah, my mum had hot flushes too" with informed and compassionate insight and advice.

A line manager training programme is essential to help them to identify, adequately assist and signpost employees to the right support. In addition having a line management and senior leadership culture which doesn't avoid the topic and is seen to be supportive, helps women who are undergoing the menopause look out for it and feel more comfortable sharing what they are going through.

Promote the tools you already offer

A lot of mainstream Group Risk policies such as Group Life, Group Income Protection and even Group Critical Illness policies have access to an Employee Assistance Programme. It's worth promoting them across the business and placing posters in areas of high footfall such as toilets and kitchens to promote this specifically from a menopause perspective.

Some Private Medical Insurance providers have Menopause support related add-on's. None currently have Hormone Related Therapy (HRT) included within their standard offering which is typically the most expensive element of menopause support. However employers can choose to upgrade the cover to include it or pay the provider for that treatment separately.

Update your company menopause policy

It's time to create and regularly update a company menopause policy. If you already have one, look at your policy with fresh eyes to make sure it answers any questions or queries. Make sure it also includes procedures for what happens if a staff member is struggling. Double-check your tone of voice in the document: policies can often feel intimidating. A comprehensive yet supportive policy will reassure staff of your approach. Most importantly but often forgotten, make sure it's shared with staff regularly and easily accessible.

Advocate for lifestyle medicine

Whilst Hormone Related Therapy would typically be the go to treatment to help with Menopause the theme for this year's World Menopause Day is 'Lifestyle Medicine'. In this, the focus is on how making adjustments to diet, stress, physical activity and sleep can help relieve some of the symptoms.



As such, for staff in need of it, time off for medical or counselling appointments can be a huge benefit in itself. Whilst adjusting workloads or schedules during down days is also a great support. This is where appropriately training managers is vital. Ensure they have the right support and resources to deal with any changes in a sensitive and confidential way.

The male menopause (andropause)

Whilst the female menopause is something that has had a lot of focus placed upon it, and rightly so, there is also the male menopause to be aware of for your employees. This affects men in their late 40's/early 50's and shares a lot of the mental related health problems that women encounter.

These symptoms include:

- Mood Swings and Irritability
- Loss of sex drive/Erectile dysfunction
- Loss of Muscle Mass and reduced physical ability to exercise
- Fat redistribution on torso for example 'man boobs' and the development of a large belly
- General lack of enthusiasm
- Difficulty in sleeping and increased tiredness
- General lack of enthusiasm or energy
- Poor short-term memory and lack of concentration

To help manage this, CBT (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy) and also Testosterone replacement may be prescribed by a doctor to help remedy some of these symptoms.

Final thoughts

Today there are over 4.6 million women aged 50–64 active in the UK workforce, many inevitably experiencing menopause and many more with the andropause.² With law change imminent, and social and cultural norms changing on the subject, now is a brilliant time for workplaces to stand out from the crowd and lead the way in menopause support.

With all of this, let's keep the conversation going to encourage the insurance industry to evolve to and help cater for these very natural conditions as a standard part of their cover.

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² [Menopause at work: reflecting on progress and what's next - Business in the Community](#)