



MENOPAUSE TOOLKIT

Make the change - for Member
Firms and the wider Investment
and Savings Industry



www.diversityproject.com #MenopauseInTheWorkplace #ImpactThruInclusion

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Employers who demonstrate good understanding of the menopause and who pro-actively provide support and resources allow employees to continue to do their job effectively and confidently and retain their talent and future talent, improving their diversity at senior level roles and reducing the skills gap.



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Introduction

According to the Standard Chartered and Financial Services Skills Commission report last year, 128,000 women, or 1 in 10 employees, working in the financial services sector are currently going through the menopause.

For 25% it is the reason they are more likely to retire early. It is therefore clear that by increasing awareness and supporting those going through menopause will help retain and progress key talent at all levels.

The Diversity Project's mission to accelerate progress towards an inclusive culture in the investment and savings profession; such a culture across all levels supports more effective teamwork, gives wider perspectives, better investment decisions, better results for our clients and ultimately more sustainable businesses.

The Menopause workstream's aims and objectives are:

1. **Raise awareness of menopause and thereby normalise the subject;**
2. **Support individuals going through the menopause or with menopausal symptoms through webinars and resources - creating a safe space for individuals to talk and share;**
3. **Provide education and resources for Diversity Project member firms and for the wider industry.**

Many of our Members and companies throughout the Industry have said that Gender Balance and the Gender Pay Gap are priorities, if this is the case supporting their employees through the menopause should be seen as a business imperative.

Following the successful launch of ['The Diversity Project's Menopause Pledge: Make the Change'](#) in October 2022, this Menopause Toolkit is the next step in providing member firms and the wider industry with a range of resources for them to embed best practice within their organisations in supporting employees going through the menopause or experiencing menopausal symptoms.

What and who is this toolkit for?

The purpose of the Menopause Toolkit is to raise awareness of the menopause and provide practical support and information for employees, line managers, Human Resources and leaders within member organisations and the wider industry.

Why does this matter and how does it impact the workplace?

As per ['The Menopause: A Practical Guide & Support Tips for Business Leaders'](#) published by Hanover, there are approximately 13 million women in the UK who are peri or postmenopausal, and one in four of those women are experiencing severely debilitating symptoms.

This information, coupled with the fact that menopausal women are the fastest-growing demographic in the workplace, yet millions of them are leaving work, should be a clear indicator as to why we need to do more. Women are now working later in life than ever before. In the UK, there are around 4.3 million women aged 50+ in work.

14 million workdays are lost to the UK economy due to women taking time off to manage menopausal symptoms.

The menopause is a health and wellbeing concern for employees and employers. It is important for employers to be aware of how the menopause can affect employees in the workplace (whether this be someone experiencing the menopause or someone supporting a colleague through the menopause).



With the financial services industry comprising of a circa 60:40 male to female ratio considering the current age profile of the sector would suggest approximately 128,000 women are aged between 45 and 55 the age at which women are most likely to experience the menopause.

There is an increased need to improve diversity at the top with demonstrable change required at board and executive committee level. It is important to ensure talent and pipeline talent is supported through all lifecycle changes and the menopause is one of those, but to date rarely spoken about.

Instead, employees often suffer in silence believing they are no longer able to perform in high position roles, suffering with poor mental health, delayed or misdiagnosis of menopause and often feeling and/or fearing the onset of a serious health condition rather than a natural transition.

What is the menopause?

1. The menopause is when the ovaries stop working and period cycles stop.
2. Hormonal changes will take place such as a decrease in oestrogen levels.
3. Menopause will usually take place between the age of 45-55 and on averages lasts between 4 to 8 years.
4. Every person will experience menopause differently.

Key terminology

Menopause
is when a period cycle has not taken place for 12 consecutive months

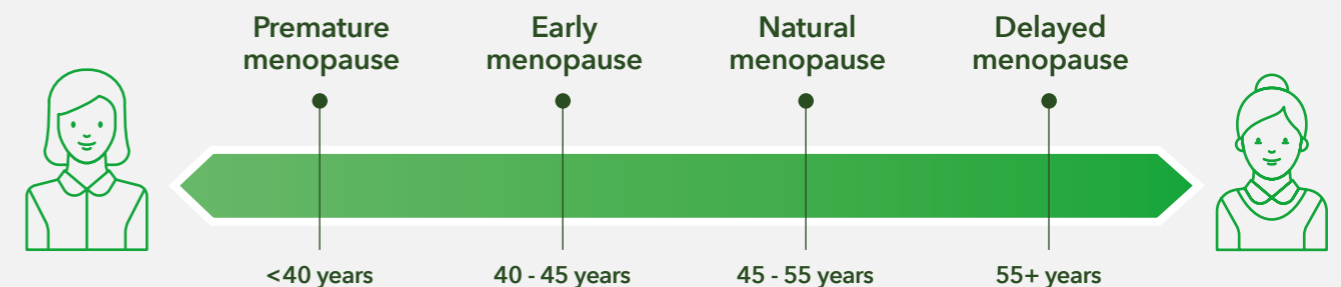
Perimenopause
is the period when symptoms are present and period cycles continue to take place but can be more frequent, less frequent, heavier. This is the stage where the body is preparing for menopause

Premature menopause
can happen naturally or due to illness, surgery or certain medications

Causes of menopause

1. It is a natural part of ageing and happens once the ovaries stop producing eggs.
2. Ovaries also produce the hormone oestrogen so when they stop working there is a drop of this hormone which then disrupts the cycle of periods and causes the symptoms of menopause.

The average age of menopause in the UK is 51, however it can take place at any age.



There can be several reasons leading to premature or early menopause: it could be experienced naturally, due to a hysterectomy, due to certain medicines such as chemotherapy or radiotherapy, due to premature ovarian failure.

There are at least 34 symptoms that are linked to menopause, some of the most typical symptoms include:

Changes to period cycles

(more frequent or further spaced apart, bleed may be heavy, irregular periods can be an early sign of approaching menopause)

Hot flushes & night sweats

Joint & muscle pain or stiffness

Vaginal symptoms

(dryness, pain during sex, itching and irritation)

Urinary symptoms

(including repeated urinary tract infections, leaking urine and needing the toilet more often)

Dizziness & headaches

Fatigue & insomnia

Loss of libido

Palpitations

Behavioural changes

Such as clumsiness, reduced concentration, lack of confidence, mood swings, memory loss, anxiety and depression.

What can I do if I am experiencing menopause symptoms?

What can I do if I am experiencing menopause symptoms or going through the menopause?

At work

Speak to your line manager - if you do not feel comfortable speaking to your manager, speak to someone you trust or Human Resources.

Consider if there is anything that could make your work life easier - e.g., adjusted hours, working environment changes that may assist your symptoms, regular breaks.

Check what resources are in place within your firm - e.g., Employee Assistance Programmes, Menopause support via Private Medical Insurance, internal menopause support groups etc).

How to have a conversation - at work

Plan what do you want to achieve from the conversation - this could just be notifying your line manager, it could be to request for workplace adjustments. Write down your notes so that you can refer to them in the meeting and keep the meeting on track.

Practice the conversation with a loved one or friend.

Ensure you book sufficient time away from the normal place of work - to avoid distractions and ensure privacy.

Your line manager may not have prior experience of this topic - keep this in mind and do not expect them to be knowledgeable in this field or have all the answers you may need immediately.

At home

Speak to your closest family and friends - let them know what you are experiencing, how you feel and what support you need from them.

Exercising regularly can help to protect against heart disease and stroke - Exercise can also help to improve your mood and general feeling of wellbeing. Exercise that puts some pressure on your bones can help strengthen them and reduce your risk of osteoporosis.

Eat healthily - certain foods can trigger hot flushes. The menopause causes a loss of calcium in your bones so increase calcium-rich foods in your diet. Vitamin D is vital for bone health. Cut down on salt and saturated fats. A healthy diet can help if your hair starts to thin after the menopause.

Lose excess weight - some put on weight when going through the menopause which can be linked to lowered oestrogen levels but can also be attributed to general ageing and lifestyle changes. Losing weight will help with hot flushes and night sweats and reduce your risk of heart disease.

Stop smoking - smoking can lead to early menopause and can trigger hot flushes.

Limit alcohol - which can trigger hot flushes.

Look after your skin - which may be affected by the loss of collagen and elasticity. Use moisturisers to hydrate your skin and improve its appearance.

Use layered clothing - so you can add/remove clothing to help regulate your body temperature.

Research local support groups or speak to elder relatives or friends - knowing you are not alone and there is someone you can confide in can be a great help.

Research the menopause using trusted sources (see Resources opposite).

Talking to your GP



Talk to your GP if menopausal symptoms are affecting your day-to-day life - Your GP should be able to tell if you are in perimenopause or menopause based on your age, symptoms and how often you have periods, so you are unlikely to need tests. You may be offered a blood test if you are between 40 and 45 and have menopausal symptoms, including changes to your menstrual cycle or you are under 40 and your GP suspects you are in premature menopause.

Keep a log of your symptoms - this can help with follow up conversations with your GP and at work. This is also beneficial when considering what additional help, you may need at this time.

Complete a menopause symptoms checklist - (see Annex) to help with follow up conversations with your GP.

Section resources

Articles

- [Menopause - how to manage hot flushes | Bupa UK](#) 
- [Hormone Replacement Therapy \(HRT\) | Health Information | Bupa UK](#) 

Websites

- [British Menopause Society](#)  For healthcare professionals and others specialising in post reproductive health (thebms.org.uk)
- [NICE Guidance](#) 
- [Menopause Workplace, Coach & Champion Training | Women of a Certain Stage](#) 
- [Gather to eat cake, drink, and discuss menopause \(menopausecafe.net\)](#) 
- [Perimenopause & Menopause Symptom Checker | Health & Her \(healthandher.com\)](#) 
- [Menopause Symptoms Diary \(bupa.co.uk\)](#) 
- [Charity for Women with POI | The Daisy Network](#) 
- [Transgender and The Menopause - MegsMenopause](#) 

Videos

- <https://youtu.be/027eZ7DUSi0> 

What can employers do?

The menopause is a natural stage of life that in an ideal world would be openly discussed yet people continue to suffer in silence especially within the workplace.



6 in 10 women feel their menopause symptoms have had a negative impact on their work

(CIPD, 2019)



Half of women negate to provide the real reason of menopause as a cause of absence from the workplace

(British Menopause Society)

There are a range of support options that employers can put in place to assist employees going through the menopause and create a culture of support. Different firms will have different budgets but central to making a difference is the need to raise awareness of menopause, how it impacts people and how it can impact the workplace. Normalising conversation, empowering employees to speak about their experiences and equipping managers with the necessary information and skills to support employees.

Create a framework of Support

- Implement a menopause policy, statement, or guidance document.
- Sign up to the Diversity Project's Menopause Pledge: [Make the Change](#)

Create a culture of support

- Provide information and advice.
- Raise awareness and open conversation.
- Provide training across your workforce.
 - Offer to all employees Menopause The Basics FREE training course <https://womenofacertainstage.leadpages.co/free-menopause-the-basics/>
 - Wellbeing/Menopause Line Manager training (at a minimum Menopause The Basics FREE training)
 - Identify, train and appoint Menopause Champions
 - Provide refresher training to your Mental Health First Aiders through Mental Health England including menopause
- Provide specialised coaching.
 - Spark the Change (Spark The Change one to one (womenofacertainstage.leadpages.co)).
- Establish an internal support network.
- Encourage allies

Create a provision of care

- Ensure private medical care provision covers menopause diagnosis, support and guidance.
- Provide mental health first aid refresher training for Mental Health First Aiders including menopause.
- Consider acceptable workplace adjustments such as: working from home, regular breaks throughout the day, altered core hours, part-time working; provide desk fans, sanitary products.
- Space in the office.

How can managers support?

- Apply your active listening skills.
- Be empathetic.
- Ask what you can do to help.
- Ask if they are aware of the support provided within the company.
- Be aware yourself of what support is available within your company. Learn about the menopause and what impact it can have on people.
- Create an environment where menopause can be talked about without embarrassment but do not talk about your employee's menopause experience without their consent. Discuss with your employee how they wish questions from colleagues to be managed.
- If workplace adjustments are requested, think these through carefully and ensure you get back to your employee on any outstanding queries, requests.
- Take guidance from your Human Resources department if you are unsure at any stage.

Managing absence and performance

- In cases where menopause is affecting the employee's ability to work, performance and cases of absence, speak to Human Resources to discuss and agree the appropriate steps to be taken.

Remember:








- As with other health conditions, you have an important role to play ensuring your employee feels supported as they would with any other health issue.
- This is often a deeply personal topic, treat it as such and do not share details with colleagues. Confidentiality must be always respected.
- Different people will feel differently going through the menopause, this could be to do with symptoms being experienced or other emotional impacts brought on by the menopause transition, don't assume how your employee is feeling, ask!
- Good management will improve team morale, retain talent, and reduce sickness incidences.














Section resources




Articles

- [A guide to managing menopause at work: guidance for line managers \(cipd.co.uk\)](#) 
- [Guidance-on-menopause-and-the-workplace-v6.pdf \(fom.ac.uk\)](#) 
- [Menopause support in the workplace_intro_version \(elucidat.com\)](#) 
- [Menopause transition: effects on women's economic participation - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) 
- [Types of Menopause | Diversity Project](#) 
- [What is the Non-Binary Experience of Menopause? – Queer / LGBTQIA+ Menopause \(queermenopause.com\)](#) 
- [Transgender and The Menopause - MegsMenopause](#) 

Websites

- [Menopause and the law: Menopause at work - Acas](#) 
- [What reasonable adjustments are: Reasonable adjustments at work - Acas](#) 
- [Talking with staff about the menopause: Menopause at work - Acas](#) 
- [Challenging conversations and how to manage them \(acas.org.uk\)](#) 
- [The menopause at work: guidance for line managers | CIPD guides](#) 
- [Menopause Workplace, Coach & Champion Training | Women of a Certain Stage](#) 
- [Menopause - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#) 
- [Women and Work APPG call for evidence on 2020 Programme of Work| Policy Consultation| CIPD](#) 
- [Disability Discrimination Cases | CIPD](#) 

Videos

- <https://youtu.be/027eZ7DUSi0> 
- https://soundcloud.com/cipd/podcast-147-menopause-the-ultimatetaboo?utm_source=clipboard&utm_campaign=wtshare&utm_medium=widget&utm_content=https%253A%252F%252Fsoundcloud.com%252Fcipd%252Fpodcast-147-menopause-the-ultimate-taboo 
- <https://youtu.be/gfahjJ5BVV8> 

Employers should help to normalise conversation, empowering employees to speak about their experiences and equipping managers with the necessary information and skills to support employees.

We hope you find this toolkit helpful.

Please do embed this information into your Company practices to ensure that those going through the menopause, those with menopausal symptoms or those managing menopausal individuals have the tools they need.

Below is a link to Diversity Project's Menopause web page which includes useful resources and links to the series of webinars including Menopause for Line Managers, Men in Menopause, Mental Health, Nutrition and Exercise in Menopause and Different types of Menopause and Menopause like symptoms.



For further information, please go to:
www.diversityproject.com/menopause

Or get in contact via:
info@diversityproject.com

Menopause Symptoms Checklist

This checklist can be used to monitor symptoms and is worth completing regularly to assess how symptoms change with time or with treatment. Please indicate the impact of symptoms by placing a tick in the appropriate box:

Symptoms	Not at all 0	A little 1	Quite a bit 2	Extremely 3	Comment
Heart palpitations					
Feeling tense or nervous					
Sleep disturbance					
Memory problems (brain fog)					
Attacks of anxiety, panic					
Difficulty concentrating					
Feeling tired or lacking in energy					
Loss of interest in most things					
Feeling unhappy or depressed					
Crying spells					
Irritability					
Dizziness					
Headaches					
Joint and muscle pain or stiffness					
Pins and needles in any part of the body					
Breathing difficulties					
Hot flushes					
Night sweats					
Irregular periods					
Loss of libido					
Weight gain					
Urinary symptoms including repeated urinary tract infections, leaking urine and needing the toilet more often					
Vaginal symptoms (dryness, pain during sex, itching and irritation)					
Other					
SCORE					

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