

THE MENOPAUSE AT WORK

top priorities for
people professionals



Future-proof your business by breaking the stigma around the menopause

Women over the age of 50 are the fastest growing segment of the workforce, and most will go through the menopause transition during their working lives. But many won't be able to meet their full potential at work unless they get the right support from their employer.

Why act now?

- Employers that support women through the menopause will reap the benefits in terms of increased engagement and loyalty, as well as lower sickness absence and employee turnover.
- Fostering age- and gender-inclusive workplaces can help employers to tap into the valuable skills and talent this fast-growing segment of the workforce has to offer.
- Employers have a legal duty to ensure that working conditions do not exacerbate someone's symptoms and that employees do not face discrimination.
- Removing barriers to progression for women could help employers close their gender pay gap.

Why this matters to the CIPD

The CIPD's purpose is to champion better work and working lives – we believe work can and should be a force for good. It should benefit workers, the organisations they work for, and the communities and societies they live in. This starts with valuing people – both our contribution to business success and our fundamental right to lead a fulfilling and healthy working life. Find out more at cipd.co.uk/about

About the menopause

- Most women experience the menopause between the age of 45 and 55 – but some start experiencing symptoms much earlier.
- Symptoms can include sleeplessness, memory loss, headaches, depression and anxiety.
- Around half find it difficult to cope with work during the menopause.

Find out more at cipd.co.uk/menopause





Why is the menopause a workplace issue?

Some women go through the menopause with little impact on their daily life. But others experience symptoms that can last for several years and have a negative impact on their performance and attendance at work. A bad night's sleep can affect concentration, for example, while heavy periods or hot flashes can be physically distressing and embarrassing. The psychological effects can also impact relationships at work. For some, the symptoms are so severe that women are forced to leave their job altogether.

What can you do?

1 Review existing policies and frameworks

If you've already got effective policies or frameworks covering health and well-being, flexible working and performance management, it's likely people in your organisation will already feel well supported and able to speak up about any issue they're facing. Nevertheless, it's still worth looking for opportunities to specifically highlight the menopause within these policies, to help raise awareness of the challenges it can cause and the simple actions that can help women thrive in the workplace. In some cases, it might be worth developing a specific policy outlining your organisation's commitment to supporting women through the menopause.

Read our full guide for more advice on how to develop a menopause policy:

[cipd.co.uk/menopauseforHR](https://www.cipd.co.uk/menopauseforHR)

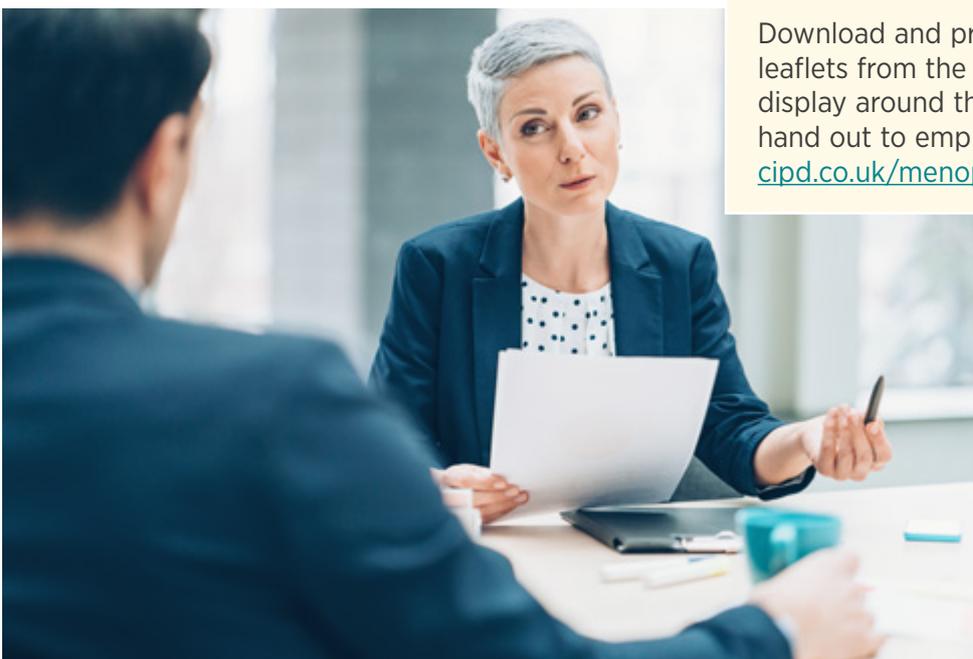


2 Help to break through the silence

Even just talking about the menopause can make a world of difference to a woman's ability to achieve her full potential. But in most workplaces, it remains a taboo subject, so many women don't get the support they need.

So what's your role in breaking the stigma?

- Gauge awareness and understanding among employees, and plan your communications accordingly – don't assume every woman wants to talk about the menopause or that men won't be interested.
- Promote awareness of the typical symptoms and the simple changes that can support women through the transition to all employees. Use gender-neutral language where possible, to help get male employees on board.
- Provide information on how women experiencing the menopause can get the support they need.
- Balance personal stories with strong messages about the benefits of an inclusive organisation – wider efforts to foster an open and supportive culture will help to normalise the conversation.



Download and print posters or leaflets from the CIPD website to display around the workplace and hand out to employees:
cipd.co.uk/menopauseresources

3 Identify reasonable adjustments

Someone with menopausal symptoms should be supported in the same way as an employee with any ongoing health condition. Small adjustments to someone's job or working pattern can help people manage their symptoms and continue to perform well in their role. The individual is usually best placed to recognise what might help them, so encourage managers to have open conversations with members of their teams.

It's also your responsibility to ensure all employees undergo a risk assessment. You have a legal duty to ensure working conditions don't exacerbate a person's symptoms, but this approach could also identify adjustments that could help an employee perform to their full potential.

Adjustments might include:

- **moving someone's desk or work station away from a heat source**
- **flexible working arrangements**
- **adapting uniforms or providing more spares**
- **providing fans and access to cool drinking water.**

4 Enable line managers to support their teams

Educate managers about the menopause, who it can affect, and how they can support colleagues going through it.

Give them adequate training and development to confidently manage attendance in their team – a robust yet flexible absence management framework that highlights the menopause as a potential long-term and fluctuating health condition will help managers take the right approach to suit individual circumstances.

Download the guide for people managers:
cipd.co.uk/menopauseformanagers

Train managers to take a proactive and positive approach to performance management that takes on board any health issues.

5 Get your senior leadership team on board

Make support for the menopause a key part of your strategy to attract, retain and develop female talent. Show what you can achieve at no cost before seeking further investment. Present a persuasive vision for change and a strong case for future-proofing your business.

You can read how other people professionals have achieved this in our full guide:
cipd.co.uk/menopauseforHR

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