

CIPD


A woman with short, curly grey hair, wearing a black top and a silver necklace, is pointing with a blue marker at a whiteboard. She is looking towards the right. In the background, two men are looking at the whiteboard. One man has glasses and a beard, and the other has a beard and is looking at the whiteboard. The whiteboard has some handwritten notes and diagrams. The overall scene is a professional meeting.

Manifesto for
menopause at work

The ultimate taboo...

The menopause is a natural stage of life, yet it remains a taboo subject in many workplaces.

CIPD research shows that only 22% of women who had been unable to go into work due to menopausal symptoms felt able to tell their manager their absence was due to menopause or its symptoms. The result is that many people suffer in silence while often a few small practical adjustments at work could make a world of difference to someone experiencing menopause transition.



"With the right support, there's no need for anyone to press pause on their career during this natural transition. But many will continue to suffer in silence unless we break the taboo and start talking openly about the menopause at work."

Peter Cheese, Chief Executive, CIPD



A public policy imperative

Supporting employees through menopause transition strikes at the heart of a number of high-profile and pressing public policy issues – employee health and wellbeing at work, the economic participation of women, and gender equality and inclusion in the workplace. Women in the age bracket typically experiencing menopause transition are the fastest-growing employee group in the labour market. They are also typically at the peak of their careers, representing a highly skilled and experienced talent pool.

That is why we are calling on the UK Government to:

1. Reference all stages of menopause transition as a priority issue in the UK Government's public policy agenda on work, equality, diversity and inclusion.
2. Develop a methodology to quantify the cost of menopause on the individual, businesses and the UK economy.
3. Launch a collaborative and government-backed employer-led campaign to raise awareness of the importance of menopause as a workplace issue, working in conjunction with the Menopause Employment Champion.



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.



Time to build momentum to build inclusion and productivity

As a nation we face the twin challenges of improving productivity and international competitiveness. We need to invest in the skills we need now and for the future to drive innovation and encourage more agile and responsive businesses that look to the long term. How organisations manage people, and the attention they pay to their health, wellbeing and inclusion, is pivotal to creating working environments that engage people and enhance performance.

The menopause is also a key equalities issue that aligns with the government's priority of creating good and fair work. Improving the support provided to employees experiencing menopause transition can also lead to improvements in productivity and keep women in work for longer, which can help to reduce the gender pay gap. The risks to business of not acting on the menopause include higher sickness absence, lower engagement and performance, increased staff turnover and reduced productivity.



The impact at work

CIPD research¹ shows that:

- Most working women (aged 40 to 60) have experienced symptoms related to menopause transition and over half have been unable to go into work at some point due to menopause symptoms.
- 73% of employees surveyed have experienced symptoms related to menopause transition.
- The most common symptoms reported are psychological such as mood disturbances, anxiety, depression, memory loss, panic attacks, loss of confidence and reduced concentration. These are reported by two-thirds (67%).
- Two-thirds (67%) of women (aged 40 to 60 in employment) with experience of menopausal symptoms say they have had a mostly negative effect on them at work.

By taking the menopause seriously and treating it as an occupational health and people management issue, organisations can help to mitigate the potential negative impact of symptoms on the individual and the organisation.



“Two in three menopausal women say their symptoms have had a negative impact on their work.”

¹ <https://www.cipd.org/en/knowledge/reports/menopause-workplace-experiences>

Why is the menopause a workplace issue?

The average age of the menopause is 51. For years there has been a steady increase in the employment rate of women over 50 in the UK, and this trend is likely to continue given the ageing population. There are over 7 million women aged 40–60 in work in the UK,² and most will go through the menopause transition during their working lives. There are very few workplaces, therefore, where menopause is not an issue. The potential to support the continued employment of women in the perimenopausal and menopausal age bracket, for the benefit of those individuals and organisations, as well as the wider economy, is considerable. At the same time, the quality of working life for women experiencing the menopause could be improved for millions now and in the future.

“Menopause is an entirely natural but sometimes difficult period affecting 51% of the population. But this is not a time to step down, step back, or step out of their working life.

I am therefore delighted to be collaborating with the CIPD and I look forward to working with them to amplify and advocate the great work being done to support women and people experiencing perimenopause or menopause.”

Helen Tomlinson, Menopause Employment Champion

² Figure obtained by applying survey proportion to population using figures from the annual population survey January–December 2022, showing 9,310,888 women aged 40–60 in the UK. Percentage and number that are experiencing or have experienced symptoms of the menopause = 73% or 6,788,213. Percentage and number that said symptoms had a negative impact on career progression = 27% or 1,832,817.



Our recent menopause policy work

We continue to build momentum around creating menopause-friendly workplaces. In October 2021 we attended a Wellbeing of Women roundtable with the Countess of Wessex to help launch the [Menopause Workplace Pledge](#). We signed the pledge and promoted it through various blog posts to our membership. In May 2022 we were also invited to the Speaker's Rooms in Westminster, to mark the House of Commons signing the Menopause Workplace Pledge.

The CIPD was also invited to give evidence to two [parliamentary inquiries](#) on the menopause, one by the [All-Party Parliamentary Group on Menopause](#) and the second launched by the Women and Equalities Select Committee. It's very encouraging to see the parliamentary spotlight on this issue.



The CIPD also played a leading role in working with a range of organisations on a Ministerial 50 Plus Choices Task and Finish Group on the Menopause. The Group's report made recommendations to society, employers and policy-makers on improving menopause support. Many of the policy recommendations echoed the calls we made in our CIPD Menopause Manifesto, first launched in 2019.

While our focus relates to the improvement of policy and practice in employment, we know that we need change across all aspects of society to achieve the necessary shift in attitudes and support for women experiencing the menopause. This includes the medical profession, for example, the training and education of GPs so that women can access appropriate understanding, advice and treatment.

In terms of the latter, we supported Carolyn Harris MP's [Private Members Bill](#) calling for Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) to be exempt from NHS prescription charges in England and continue to support the campaign of the [All-Party Parliamentary Group on Menopause](#) for a #menopauserevolution. The Bill and the work of the APPG aim to drive through much broader change in society, including better support for women experiencing the menopause transition in the workplace. We are also working with a far reaching NHS Steering Group to improve menopause support in NHS England, including a Task and Finish group to introduce better menopause support and education to all those working in the NHS. This included a webinar for health and wellbeing champions across the NHS in England. More recently we have joined forces with the [UK Menopause Employment Champion](#), Helen Tomlinson to reach as many organisations of different sizes and sectors as possible with the message that menopause supportive work cultures are essential to attracting and retaining valuable talent for UK workforces.



About the CIPD

At the CIPD, our purpose is to champion better work and working lives – for the benefit of individuals, organisations, economies and society as a whole. We believe work can and should be a force for good that helps society to flourish and prosper. As the professional body for experts in people and work, our 160,000 members are responsible for recruiting, managing and developing a large proportion of the UK workforce. Creating menopause-friendly workplaces is part of this vision, and we welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with the UK Government and other stakeholders to make it a reality.

CIPD resources for employers

The CIPD has worked with a wide range of experts, organisations and practitioners to create a suite of free downloadable and printable resources to help employers develop menopause-friendly workplaces, including guides for HR professionals and managers, practical tips to make reasonable adjustments, posters and leaflets

cipd.org/en/topics/menopause/

CIPD

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