

CIPD

*Championing better
work and working lives*

MANIFESTO FOR MENOPAUSE AT WORK



The ultimate taboo...

The menopause is a natural stage of life experienced by most women, yet it remains a taboo subject in many workplaces. CIPD research shows that only a quarter of women who had been unable to go into work due to menopausal symptoms had felt able to tell their line manager the real reason for their absence. The result is that many women 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 women to press pause on their career during this natural transition. But many women 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 women through menopause transition strikes at the heart of a number of high-profile and pressing public policy issues – employee health and well-being 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 Government to:

- **Ensure that menopause is referenced as a priority issue in its public policy agenda on work and diversity and inclusion. Menopause has been largely neglected as an economic, workplace, and diversity and inclusion issue.**
- **Nominate a Menopause Ambassador to represent the interests of women experiencing menopause transition across government departments.**
- **Support an employer-led campaign to raise awareness of the menopause as a workplace issue.**



‘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, well-being and inclusion, is pivotal to creating working environments that engage people and enhance performance.



‘For every ten women experiencing menopausal symptoms, six say it has a negative impact on their work.’

The impact at work

CIPD research¹ shows that:

- three in five (59%) working women between the ages of 45 and 55 who are experiencing menopause symptoms say it has a negative impact on them at work
- nearly two-thirds (65%) said they were less able to concentrate
- more than half (58%) said they experience more stress
- more than half (52%) said they felt less patient with clients and colleagues
- three in ten (30%) said they had been unable to go into work because of their symptoms, but only a quarter of them felt able to tell their manager the real reason for their absence.

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.

¹ CIPD and YouGov surveyed 1,409 working women experiencing menopause symptoms in March 2019.

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 women 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.



‘Menopause will happen to half of the population at some stage and affect almost everyone by association, and yet this is a neglected area of public policy. Policymakers must ensure menopause is a priority issue across departments and work with excellent organisations like the CIPD to break this ultimate taboo.’

Rachel Maclean MP

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 now around 4.4 million women aged 50–64 in work,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 affecting female employees. 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.

² Office for National Statistics. (2019) *Employment, unemployment and economic inactivity by age group (seasonally adjusted) [online]*. Newport: ONS. Available at: www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/employmentunemploymentandeconomicinactivitybyagegroupseasonallyadjusted [Accessed 8 March 2019].

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.

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 line managers, practical tips to make reasonable adjustments, posters and leaflets:

cipd.co.uk/menopause



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