

The menopause at work: a guide for employers





The menopause at work

Menopause. How often are you talking to your employees about menopause? If the answer is never, you're not alone. But supporting any employees going through the menopause is more important than ever for employers.

Recent data shows the number of UK employment tribunal cases citing menopause has **soared in the last few years**.

Number of tribunal cases referencing menopause:



That's a **300%** increase in just **two years**

This sharp rise reflects two things:

Greater awareness – employees are more likely to recognise when menopause symptoms aren't being supported at work.

Clearer legal protection – tribunal rulings have confirmed that severe menopause symptoms can be classed as a **disability under the Equality Act 2010**.

Most menopause-related claims fall under **disability, sex, or age discrimination**, often alongside unfair or constructive dismissal. It's a clear signal that employers must be proactive when it comes to menopause support.

So, what can employers do to protect their people and their business?

Our experts have put together this guide to help you understand why menopause matters at work, the employment law implications, and how to create a positive, supportive workplace culture that makes a real difference.

What is the menopause?

The menopause is a natural stage in life when a person's periods permanently stop.

The typical age range for the menopause is usually between 40 and 60. The average age at which a person reaches menopause is 51. On average, symptoms last for four years, but can continue for up to 12 years.

Some people might experience menopause earlier or go through surgical menopause.

According to Acas, it's important for employers to be aware of the fact that menopause and its symptoms can affect any of their employees. This extends to those personally going through the menopause (including trans and intersex people) and relatives, colleagues and carers of those going through the menopause.



Did you know?

According to the **Government Report on Menopause**, menopausal employees are the fastest growing workplace demographic.



What should you be looking out for?

Menopause affects every individual differently. Some may have no symptoms at all, or they might be brief and short lived. For others, they can be severe and distressing. Examples of the symptoms that may affect employees include:

- Hot flushes and night sweats
- Feeling the heart racing and palpitations
- Difficulty sleeping
- Changes in mood, such as feeling tired, irritable, depressed or anxious
- Poor memory
- Urinary problems, such as recurrent urinary tract infections and loss of bladder control
- Difficulty concentrating

Such wide-ranging symptoms can in turn have a knock-on effect on an employee's confidence in their skills, abilities and their belief in their ability to do their job. Sometimes these symptoms can leave people feeling like they need to take more time off work or even leave their job.

Why is it important for employers to understand the menopause?

With menopause age employees becoming the fastest-growing workplace demographic and economically active group in the UK, amounting to millions of people, it's important to retain these employees, their knowledge and skills in your teams.

And it's not just in employment tribunals that the issue of better understanding and support of the effects of menopause has arisen; it's also being pushed to the forefront of people's minds in the media – through documentaries and dedicated awareness days – as well as in legislation reviews.

"It is in employers' interests to retain these women: many older women are at the peak of their careers, with research proving that the most diverse companies are more likely to make a greater profit than less diverse peers."

Dee Murray,
Chief Executive of Menopause Experts



Did you know?

According to the CIPD, **60%** of women experiencing menopausal symptoms say it has a negative impact on their work.





What can employers do to support employees impacted by menopausal symptoms?

It's important to have a strategy in place that can provide support to menopausal employees at every stage of the menopause. Here are a few essential questions to ask yourself to help get you started:



Have you considered developing and implementing a menopause policy?

This can help everyone understand:

- How menopause affects people
- What support is available to staff
- What your business' stance is on issues such as taking time off because of menopause symptoms
- Flexible working arrangements available to menopausal employees



Have you carried out important Health & Safety checks for menopausal employees?

This includes:

- assessing whether any symptoms are made worse by the workplace or work practices
- what changes you can make to help people manage their symptoms
- including these findings in a risk assessment



What changes can you make in the workplace to support menopausal individuals?

Things to consider include office temperatures, ensuring cold drinking water is available, supplying desk fans, access to quiet breakout areas.



Is flexible working – either on a temporary or permanent basis - something you can support in your workplace?

If someone experiencing menopausal symptoms can change their working pattern to suit when they're at their best, this will not only help them, but enable your business to retain their skills and input into the business.

In its manifesto, the Labour Party promised to require more support for people going through the menopause, with employers with 250 plus employees required to produce Menopause Action Plans setting out how they will support employees and to provide guidance for small employers on measures they should consider in areas such as recording menopause related absences, flexible working, uniforms and workplace temperature. We don't have much further information on how this will work, but they'll be introduced on a voluntary basis from April 2026 and then on a mandatory basis sometime in 2027.



Appoint a workplace menopause champion

It may be worth nominating a single point of contact if someone needs advice, further support, or just a friendly ear to listen sensitively is a great way to proactively open up the conversation around menopause in the workplace. Workplace champions could be responsible for:

- Running awareness-raising workshops
- Providing vital information, support and further resources
- Checking the appropriate Health & Safety risk assessments have been carried out and recorded



Have you trained your managers in supporting menopausal team members?

Managers need to be aware of what the signs and symptoms of the menopause are. Plus, it can add an extra level of comfort for staff knowing that their managers are trained to listen and point them in the direction of more support. Equally managers need to be trained not to make assumptions, for example about how the menopause could be affecting an employee or that a woman of a certain age must be going through the menopause

Need help with your policies and procedures?

If you're thinking about creating and implementing a menopause policy in your workplace and would like the advice and guidance of our HR & Employment Law experts, simply give us a call today on **0345 844 1111** to discuss your business' needs

What are the risks of not having policies, procedures and support in place for menopausal employees

With an increase in menopause-related employment tribunal cases, it's essential for employers to understand what kind of risks they open themselves up to by not addressing this topic directly in the workplace.

Harassment and victimisation

What seem like harmless jokes or workplace 'banter' about topics such as hot flushes, could be construed as victimisation or bullying on the basis of age, sex or disability.

Unfair dismissal

If you've not properly investigated the circumstances of a menopausal employee's dismissal, or you've not followed a fair process, there's a risk to your business of unfair dismissal claims.

Discrimination under the Equality Act 2010

While the menopause is not a specifically protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, in 2023 an Employment Tribunal found the woman's symptoms in that case meant it amounted to a disability.

If an employee is put at a disadvantage because of their menopause symptoms, there could be a risk of discrimination related to a protected characteristic:

- Age discrimination
- Sex discrimination
- Gender reassignment discrimination
- Disability discrimination

How Citation can help

Menopause isn't a topic many employers are used to discussing with their employees, but now is the time to proactively address an issue that will affect half the population and a significant number of your employees.

If you'd like the help and support of our HR & Employment Law experts, who can help with everything from drafting and implementing a menopause policy, to providing advice on our 24/7 advice line, just give us a call on **0345 844 1111** to chat through your business' needs.