


# The impact of menopause on careers



 Mike Kocsis

**Here, Mike Kocsis, a hormone specialist at Balance My Hormones, highlights how industries can take meaningful steps to advocate for better workplace policies, fostering an environment where menopause is recognised, understood, and supported.**

**O**ne in four women in the UK have considered leaving their jobs due to a lack of support as they navigate symptoms of menopause, whilst one in ten are reported to have resigned completely.

Menopause often coincides with the peak of a woman's career, typically between the ages of 45 and 55. Its physical, emotional, and cognitive symptoms—such as fatigue, hot flashes, brain fog, and anxiety—can significantly impact workplace performance, leaving many women feeling less confident and capable.

These challenges frequently lead women to reduce their working hours, opt for less demanding roles, or

even leave the workforce entirely. Such outcomes not only hinder individual career progression but also represent a substantial talent and economic drain for businesses.

For women who are primary earners, and 41% of mothers fall into this category, the financial stress of lost income and stalled careers can be particularly devastating, especially as they approach retirement.

In male-dominated industries, the lack of awareness and accommodations for menopause exacerbates these difficulties.

Stigma further silences many women, who fear bias or discrimination if they disclose their experiences, leading to isolation and a lack of necessary support.

## **Normalising menopause in the workplace**

Mike believes the solution lies in breaking the stigma and fostering open, supportive workplace environments. He said: "Women are at the forefront of this movement, driving change through advocacy, awareness, and collaboration."

So how can that happen?



## □ Work



### Why change matters

Mike believes: "Supporting women through menopause isn't just a moral imperative—it's a strategic advantage. Inclusive workplaces report higher employee satisfaction, improved retention rates, and stronger team cohesion. By addressing menopause, businesses align with broader goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion."

#### Advocating for policy changes

**Organizations are increasingly adopting menopause-inclusive policies, offering flexible schedules, wellness programmes, and health resources tailored to women's needs. These measures recognize menopause as a natural life stage, not a professional limitation.**



## How workplaces can lead the way

Employers can take practical steps to create a menopause-friendly workplace:

#### 1. Flexible Working Arrangements

Offer options such as remote work, flexible hours, or reduced workloads to accommodate health needs.

#### 2. Wellness Days and Paid Leave

Provide leave for menopause-related symptoms to prevent burnout.

#### 3. Comprehensive Health Benefits

Ensure insurance plans cover menopause treatments like hormone replacement therapy (HRT).

#### 4. Workplace Training Programmes

Equip teams with knowledge and tools to support colleagues experiencing menopause.

#### 5. Awareness Campaigns

Normalize conversations about menopause through internal newsletters, events, and campaigns.

#### 6. Quiet Rooms

Design private areas for employees to rest or manage symptoms discreetly.

#### 7. Peer Support Groups

Foster mentorship and resource-sharing networks.

#### 8. Anonymous Feedback Channels

Allow employees to voice concerns and suggest improvements without fear of judgment.

#### 9. Leadership Advocacy

Encourage senior leaders to champion menopause awareness by sharing stories or endorsing initiatives.

#### 10. Regular Surveys

Gather feedback to refine policies and culture.

#### 11. Track Metrics

Monitor retention and engagement to measure the effectiveness of menopause initiatives.



A Government estimate suggests that menopause costs the economy 14 million working days every year, due to women taking time off due to their symptoms and around half of women aged between 50 and 64 choose to work extra hours to make up for their perceived loss of productivity.

In addition, 27% of women say menopause has had a negative effect on their career progression.

The Fawcett Society estimated that one in ten women, aged between 40 and 55, working through menopause have left a job because of their symptoms and a further 13% reported that they had considered leaving. Additionally, 14% of women working through menopause reported reducing their hours and a further 14% had gone part-time.

### Building awareness and education

**Training programmes help employees and managers understand menopause-related challenges, emphasizing empathy and practical accommodations.**



### Establishing support networks

**Peer groups and partnerships with external organizations specializing in menopause provide invaluable resources and a sense of community.**

### Building a future without stigma

Breaking the menopause taboo is more than a workplace issue—it's about empowering women to embrace their full potential without fear or stigma.

By adopting inclusive policies, businesses can not only support their employees but also build a culture that values health, well-being, and diversity. This shift is a crucial step toward creating a more equitable and supportive professional world.



### Encouraging open dialogue

**Companies that create safe spaces for discussions about menopause foster a culture of acceptance and empowerment, enabling employees to thrive.**



# What is the Government doing?



**I**n March 2023 Helen Tomlinson was appointed as the Government's first-ever Menopause Employment Champion. Working alongside the Department for Work and Pensions, her brief is to help employers develop policies that empower women who experience menopause to stay and progress in work.

In March 2024, the Department of Work and Pensions and Helen Tomlinson produced a report, *Shattering the Silence About Menopause*, to open the dialogue, tackle the stigma, and increase awareness of menopause in the workplace. Helen said, "Because this is an issue everyone encounters, first-hand or via colleagues, families, and friends, it's essential that we break the taboo and provide support for women in the workplace."

Adam Pavey, a specialist on employment law and a leading voice on menopause discrimination in the workplace said: "My introduction to menopause cases came about when I was instructed by a menopausal woman who had been unfairly dismissed for poor performance. The case really got under my skin; I realised that I wasn't alone in my lack of understanding - her employer didn't understand it and, more

significantly, the law didn't properly recognise it. I studied the subject intensely and found that this lack of awareness was damaging women. I saw women leaving employment who didn't need to. This led to me speaking to the national media on the subject and ultimately led to me appearing at the Women's Equality Select Committee on Menopause, giving evidence on the discrimination faced by women."

## Employer perspectives

Employers comments on the Government's work included supermarket giant Tesco, which said: "As the largest private-sector employer in the UK, we have over 130,000 women working for Tesco, and we are absolutely committed to supporting colleagues going through menopause.

"In 2019, we signed the Menopause Workplace Pledge, committing to helping colleagues understand and talk openly about menopause. Since signing, we have introduced a Menopause Guide, breathable fabric for instore uniforms and updated our Sickness & Absence policies so that if colleagues need to take time off due to menopause-related symptoms, this is not counted as part of their absence review calculation.



“It’s also important that we continue the conversation around menopause, and we do this through quarterly Menopause Awareness Sessions, the Hot@Tesco menopause community as well as line manager upskill training.”

In Swansea, the work done at Gower College demonstrated how investment in women’s health makes business sense.

The average age of Gower college staff is 47, of which 60% are female, with 200 women aged between 45 and 55. In light of these numbers, the college has trained their managers to support staff, providing advice and guidance, including menopause appointments with health consultants.

The strategy received hugely positive feedback and the college said it has seen a 70% reduction in absence for female staff accessing support over a 12-month period.

### Hub for employers and workers

The Government has set up a hub for employers and their workers from large or small organisations, including sole traders, self-employed business owners, and small to medium businesses, who are seeking menopause-related guidance for the workplace. **MM**

<https://helptogrow.campaign.gov.uk/hr/menopause-and-the-workplace/>

**If you would like to share your menopause work related story, that may help others we’d love to hear from you.  
Contact [editor@menopausematters.co.uk](mailto:editor@menopausematters.co.uk)**

#### Helpful Resources for Employers and Employees

[https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/menopause\\_at\\_work.php](https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/menopause_at_work.php)  
<https://menopausefriendly.co.uk/mfea24/>  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/no-time-to-step-back-the-governments-menopause-employment-champion>  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shattering-the-silence-about-menopause-12-month-progress-report>

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