



Menopause in the workplace

- This briefing provides South West business leaders and partners with an overview of Menopause in the workplace and expectations of employers as set out in the [Employment Rights Bill](#) Implementation Roadmap.

Context

- There are an estimated [1,702,800](#) women of employment age (16-64yrs) in the South West and the current employment rate is [77.9%](#) (July 24-June 25)/ Of those in employment approximately 1.2m are working for an employer and a third of these are aged over 50yrs.
- Menopause is a natural part of ageing for women and each year across the UK around 400,000 women enter the menopause and of these around 75% will experience symptoms, many symptoms can be alleviated or mitigated with the right support.
- On 1st July 2025 Government published the [Employment Rights Bill Implementation Roadmap](#), which introduced new obligations for large employers to create Menopause Action Plans as part of their gender equality action plans from 2027.
- In the Southwest, this will mean that at least [780 businesses](#) will need to have a Menopause Action plan in place by 2027, but all employers should be encouraged to be Menopause aware and support women in the workplace.

What is menopause?

- [Menopause](#) is a change in women's lives, when periods stop due to lower hormone levels. It usually affects women between the ages of 45 and 55, but it can happen earlier.
- Menopause can happen naturally, or for reasons such as surgery to remove the ovaries (oophorectomy), or the uterus (hysterectomy), cancer treatments like chemotherapy, or a genetic reason. Sometimes the reason is unknown.
- Symptoms of menopause can include changes in mood, problems with memory or concentration, hot flushes, difficulty sleeping, palpitations, headaches and migraines, muscle aches and joint pains, changed body shape and weight gain, skin changes including dry and itchy skin and reduced sex drive. A full list can be found [here](#)
- Around a quarter of women report their symptoms as having a severe impact on their daily life.
- Perimenopause is when an individual has symptoms of menopause, but their periods have not stopped. Perimenopause ends and the individual reaches menopause when they have not had a period for 12 months.
- Whilst we refer to women, or use female pronouns throughout this document, we understand that there may be other people that also experience menopausal-type symptoms, including transgender people, non-binary and intersex employees.

Menopause in the Workplace

- Employers must ensure employee wellbeing, and avoid discrimination based on sex, age, or disability.
- Three out of five workers say menopause negatively affects their work, yet only a quarter feel comfortable telling employers when symptoms lead to an [absence](#).

- Most individuals experiencing the menopause have symptoms that impact their quality of life and work. With appropriate awareness and support, these symptoms can be managed, allowing individuals to continue sharing their skills and experience and remain in work.
- Though it can impact all colleagues directly or indirectly, there remains a significant taboo about discussing menopause in the workplace. This is why approaches are needed to increase awareness across the entire workforce regardless of age and gender to help educate and disrupt this stigma.

Employment Rights Bill

- The Government is revising the [Employment Rights Bill](#) to expand access to flexible working. These changes will require employers to accept flexible working requests unless it is not reasonably feasible, and if rejecting, explain why that is reasonable.
- The [bill](#) will help individuals experiencing menopause and their employers, find solutions that support both sides, with the intention of keeping people in jobs for longer.

Workplace Menopause Action Plans

- By 2027, employers with 250+ employees will be required to develop and publish Menopause Action Plans. Plans must detail evidence-based actions to support employees. Actions may include:
 - Developing corporate policy and/or guidelines to support staff developed in collaboration with staff networks.
 - Raising awareness of menopause in the workplace, including sharing stories of menopause experiences. For example using World Menopause Day (18th October 2025) to share stories and raise awareness.
 - Supporting reasonable adjustments for menopausal symptoms.
 - Encouraging and enabling staff to attend their NHS Health Check appointments which from 2026 will include support around the menopause.
- Smaller businesses will be encouraged to implement similar support measures voluntarily.
- Menopause Action Plans can be nested within wider employee health and wellbeing strategies. Employers should ensure these reflect women's needs and preferences holistically and consider providing specific support for women's reproductive health e.g. wider aspects of menstruation and miscarriage.

Summary

- Establishing a proactive and inclusive approach to menopause support can help organisations comply with the Employment Rights Bill, with the development of Menopause Action Plans helping employers identify and address the challenges experienced by women, in addition to facilitating broader discussions about women's health in the workplace.
- Although full guidance won't be published until 2026, employers are encouraged to start preparing now to support their employees, with a number of resources already available to start including those below.

Links and resources

- [ACAS - Managing the menopause](#)
- [BiTC - Menopause in the Workplace - Toolkit](#)
- [BMA - Menopause support in the workplace](#)
- [CIPD - Menopause Resources](#)