

# MANAGING MENOPAUSE IN YOUR WORKPLACE

AN INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT GUIDE BY  
AAI EMPLOYABILITY



In recent years, many companies have begun investing more heavily in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives, working with **specialist recruiters** to connect with talent from a range of industries and environments.

However, there's still a portion of the growing workforce that's often overlooked.

Although the Government is encouraging people over the age of 50 to transition back into the workplace, many organisations still don't accommodate the needs of older employees. With age comes new challenges, one of the most common for women being menopause.

Approximately **75 to 80% of all women** at menopausal age are still at work, and I'm one of them! Yet few organisations have specific policies and strategies in place to assist menopausal individuals in managing their symptoms, both physical and mental.

In an age of significant skill shortages, companies can't afford to overlook the benefits of making their environment welcoming and accessible to all employees, including those of menopausal age.

In this report, we'll be demystifying menopause and looking at what you should be doing to support.

**Joy Lewis**  
**CEO**  
**AAI EmployAbility**



## MENOPAUSE: WHAT EVERY MANAGER NEEDS TO KNOW

Menopause is a completely natural occurrence that happens after a woman has her last period. Usually, it begins between the ages of 45 and 55. However, some people will experience menopause earlier than most as a result of surgery, medical conditions and other factors.

Menopause and perimenopause symptoms can have a significant impact on a person's life, influencing their mood, cognition and overall wellness. Common issues like hot flashes, caused by a decrease in oestrogen levels, can prompt migraines, anxiety and irregular body temperature. Around 75% of women experience this during menopause.

Notably, while most studies and reports on menopause symptoms and experiences focus on women, it's worth noting it can be a far more wide-ranging issue. Men can be affected by "male menopause", known as andropause. Additionally, menopause can also influence the quality of life of non-binary and trans people.



**Around 75% of women experience hot flashes during menopause.**

# MENOPAUSE SYMPTOMS

While menopause is a common and natural occurrence, it's also something still not fully understood in the scientific world. Every individual can experience the process differently. Some may treat symptoms with hormone replacement therapy, while others rely largely on lifestyle changes to ease discomfort.

The symptoms of this transition can influence people on both a physical and psychological level and common issues include:

- **Hot flashes**
- **Night sweats and insomnia**
- **Weight gain**
- **Joint stiffness and mobility issues**
- **Irregular periods**
- **Headaches or migraines**
- **Mood changes**
- **Memory problems or loss of concentration**

In women, the decrease of oestrogen associated with menopause can also lead to a higher risk of other health issues, including heart attacks, stroke and osteoporosis.



# HOW CAN MENOPAUSE IMPACT AN EMPLOYEE'S WORK?

Managers need to be aware of the issues linked to menopause as it can have a significant impact on a person's performance in the workplace. Additionally, it's worth noting that the number of menopausal individuals in the workforce is growing. Currently, menopausal women are one of the **fastest-growing workforce** demographics, a recent UK Government report found.

Sometimes menopause will have very little impact on a person, aside from the occasional hot flush or moment of "brain fog". However, the transitional period can have a significant impact on a person's productivity, concentration and performance levels.

Employees experiencing menopause may be more withdrawn in the workplace or may feel embarrassed dealing with regular sweating and hot flushes around other staff members.

Studies have even found that one in 10 women have quit work completely because of menopause symptoms that became unbearable.

Side effects of menopause can also make it harder for employees to work safely in any environment. They may need more support than other employees from time to time, may struggle to focus during certain episodes, and could even need to make changes to their working environment.

# WHAT CAN MANAGERS DO TO SUPPORT MENOPAUSAL EMPLOYEES?

As a manager, you can take steps to make the workplace a more welcoming and comfortable place for individuals experiencing menopause. Making changes to your company culture, policies and approach to dealing with menopausal staff can mean they'll be more likely to stick with your business for longer.



## 1. PROVIDE GUIDANCE AND INFORMATION

First, to truly support staff members going through menopause, business leaders need to adjust their approach to discussing the topic. Many women don't immediately recognise they're going through menopause because it's often something people don't discuss.

Putting the information out there for employees to access via a knowledge base or intranet is an excellent way to educate and support your staff members. Ensuring employees know who they can talk to when they're experiencing changes in their health can also make your workplace a more comfortable and inclusive environment for every employee.



## 2. TRAIN MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS

Managers and supervisors should be able to offer support, empathy and guidance to employees dealing with menopausal symptoms. Business leaders can assist in making the workplace a more welcoming environment by training managers to listen sensitively to employee issues and respond accordingly to requests.

Employers should train all team leaders to ensure they know how menopause can affect individuals in the workplace and what support and guidance the organisation can offer. Managers and supervisors should also know how to deal with menopause issues sensitively and fairly. They should be able to work with each employee to customise workflow to their needs.



### **3. CONDUCT HEALTH AND SAFETY CHECKS**

Many people are unaware menopause can impact the safety of employees in the workplace. By law, employers are responsible for preserving the health and safety of all of their staff – including those working from home. As such, business leaders should be prepared to conduct risk assessments of their staff's workplace and working processes.

For staff going through menopause, it's important to ensure symptoms aren't worsened by work practices or the workplace itself. Risk assessments could include examining the temperature and ventilation of the workplace and their access to toilets and suitable rest locations.

Risk and safety assessments should be regularly reviewed to ensure the workplace remains healthy and supportive for all employees.



### **4. FIND PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS TO ISSUES**

Since all employees can experience menopause differently, the best way to address the issues each team member is facing is with a dedicated discussion. Managers and other business leaders should sit down with employees and discuss their most concerning symptoms. Together, they can come up with practical solutions to common problems.

For instance, it might be necessary to provide employees with new, more breathable uniforms to help with hot flashes or ensure they always have access to cold water and ventilation. For some staff members, it may be a good idea to consider more flexible working hours or remote and hybrid working strategies.



## 5. DEVELOP POLICIES

To ensure staff feels fully supported, managers and business leaders should ensure policies are in place related to menopause. These policies should be shared throughout the entire organisation and be regularly reviewed and updated.

The policies you develop may vary but they should highlight insights into how managers should deal with employees experiencing menopausal symptoms and how they can offer support. The policies could also outline who will be responsible for ensuring the safety of employees dealing with menopausal symptoms.

Crucially, managers should also plan how to handle time-off requests and absences caused by menopause. For instance, employees may need to adjust their hours from time to time to ensure they can go to appointments and get the right treatment for their symptoms.



## 6. CREATE MENOPAUSE AND WELLBEING CHAMPIONS

As demand for wellbeing in the workplace continues to grow, creating champions and individuals responsible for assisting others in protecting their physical and psychological health could be extremely helpful. Having a wellbeing champion at work, with in-depth knowledge of menopause and its symptoms, ensures staff members have someone to reach out to when they're encountering problems caused by menopause.

With support from these champions, employers, HR and managers can run workshops to raise awareness, monitor health and safety risks, and even set up a support network for staff affected by the menopause transition.





**CREATING A WORKPLACE THAT'S SUPPORTIVE AND COMFORTABLE FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING MENOPAUSE CAN BE EXTREMELY BENEFICIAL.**

## **HOW CAN YOU ATTRACT AND RETAIN VALUABLE TALENT?**

Research in the [current employment landscape](#) indicates that menopausal symptoms have forced countless employees out of the workforce. People suffering from menopause have delayed applying for promotions and even avoided going back to work later in life.

In a skills-short environment, creating a workplace that's supportive and comfortable for people experiencing menopause ensures business leaders can access a wider range of talented professionals and improve their reputation.

Attracting and retaining valuable talent in an aging workforce will require business leaders to:

- **Rethink company policies:** Allowing for flexible working, remote working and other forms of employment will ensure menopausal individuals can manage their careers around their symptoms without having to leave the workplace.
- **Improve company culture:** A company culture that's supportive, open and inclusive will ensure every member of staff feels respected and cared for, regardless of their physical or psychological symptoms.
- **Listen to staff members:** Employers and business leaders will need to listen more carefully to the issues staff members are facing during menopause and look for new ways to improve their working experiences.

## GETTING THE RIGHT HELP

Working with an ethical recruitment specialist will also ensure your opportunities are attractive to people from all backgrounds and of all ages. AAI's recruitment experts will ensure job descriptions are designed with the needs of menopausal employees in mind and that any new opportunities will reach high quality, underrepresented talent networks.

In an era where ethical approaches can make or break your business, choose to recruit through an organisation that cares. If you would like to find out how we help our clients thrive through innovative recruiting methods, get in touch at [team@aai-employability.org.uk](mailto:team@aai-employability.org.uk).

**Joy Lewis**  
**CEO**  
**AAI EmployAbility**

### YOUR NEXT ACTIONS

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR SERVICES, CONTACT US  
TODAY AT  
[AAI-EMPLOYABILITY.ORG.UK](http://AAI-EMPLOYABILITY.ORG.UK)

GET IN TOUCH WITH THE TEAM: [TEAM@AAI-EMPLOYABILITY.ORG.UK](mailto:TEAM@AAI-EMPLOYABILITY.ORG.UK)

GET IN TOUCH WITH THE CEO: [JOY@AAI-EMPLOYABILITY.ORG.UK](mailto:JOY@AAI-EMPLOYABILITY.ORG.UK)

# ABOUT AAI EMPLOYABILITY



AAI is an award-winning social enterprise that supports organisations in the fast, easy recruitment of talent of all ages, skillsets and backgrounds. It also helps businesses to better attract and retain diversity through Diversity and Inclusion Training.

We create a level playing field for all jobseekers and help businesses better attract and retain diversity.

We have a huge social impact and are passionate about inclusion and social mobility.

We believe in building lasting relationships through transparency of process and, above all, establishing equality of opportunity in the job market.

We have worked with over 1100+ growing businesses of all sizes, including Scottish Government, the NHS, Phoenix, SMEs and an array of startups and charities.

AAI also works with private-sector businesses offering tailored social-impact projects around the themes of gender and racial diversity, disability and supporting the third/voluntary sector. These projects are aimed at improving attraction and retention of staff as well as providing tangible and reportable social and financial impact.

## ABOUT JOY LEWIS



Joy joined the Centre for Scottish Public Policy in January 2009 and spun out AAI EmployAbility (then, Adopt an Intern) a year later. The company has since gone from strength to strength, placing over 1800 graduates and returners into valuable paid work across the UK.

She served for 20 years in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and has lived and worked in Brazil, Argentina and Germany. Joy also worked for many years in fashion retail where she recruited, trained and mentored women for Sales Manager posts, culminating in a successful business in Germany.

After addressing their first employment injustice of unpaid graduate internships, Joy and the AAI team have widened their scope of inclusive employment to include diversity and inclusion services to help more businesses to grow and more talented people to access opportunity.

