



# Supporting Menopause in the Workplace

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Menopause is a natural life stage that usually impacts women between the ages of 45-55, but it can also affect men, relationships, families, and workplaces. While the menopausal transition effects everyone differently, there are a number of common yet challenging symptoms that may be experienced. These symptoms result from the ovaries ceasing to release eggs and producing lower levels of estrogen, which can lead to:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Loss of confidence
- Mood changes
- Irritability
- Memory problems, or 'brain fog'
- Palpitations
- Hot flashes
- Chills
- Joint stiffness
- Sleep problems
- Tinnitus
- Weight gain and slowed metabolism
- Thinning hair and dry skin

When experiencing these symptoms in the workplace, women have reported feeling:

- Less able to concentrate (65%)
- Higher levels of stress (58%)
- More impatient when dealing with colleagues or customers (52%)

Despite menopause affecting around 51% of the population, a survey conducted by Bupa found that almost 900,000 women in the UK have left their jobs because of menopausal symptoms. The reason that women feel unable to stay in their roles during this time is likely due to stigma, lack of understanding, or inadequate support systems in the workplace.

**3 out of 5 working women between the ages of 45 and 55 who are experiencing menopause symptoms say it has a negative impact on their professional lives**

But it's not just women who are impacted by the menopause. Because the symptoms of menopause can make people more irritable or emotional, it can be hard to communicate your feelings and resolve conflict in a healthy way. This can create challenges within romantic, professional, or familial relationships, leaving one person or multiple people feeling confused or isolated.

### **Managing the Symptoms of Menopause at Work**

If you're struggling with menopause symptoms in the workplace, it's important to reach out to your line manager for support. Not only will this enable you to make changes that increase your comfort, concentration, and productivity, but it will also help to break down the stigma of menopause and encourage others to

Speak out if they're struggling too. Here are a few small tweaks that can make a big difference to your health and happiness at work:

- Ask your employer to consider flexible working arrangements, like working from home or adjusting your shift patterns
- Request more breaks throughout your working day
- If you're experiencing hot flushes, ask your employer for alternative uniform options such as a short sleeved shirt instead of a long sleeved shirt, or breathable cotton instead of nylon
- Request the use of a desk fan or the option to move to a cooler part of the office
- Keep a cold bottle of water with you during your shift to help you stay cool
- Set reminders and create to-do lists to stay on top of your workload while experiencing the common symptom of brain fog
- Discuss the possibility of introducing a quiet space where staff can take comfort breaks when needed
- If you work at a desk and are experiencing aches and pains, ask your employer if they can provide equipment such as an ergonomic chair, a footrest, or wrist support

### **Further Support**

If your employer offers Vivup's Employee Assistance Programme, there are lots of useful resources around menopause and mental health waiting to be explored. Plus, you can also access a 24-hour telephone helpline for responsive, confidential, and totally independent advice should you or a colleague need mental health support.