



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Menopause in the Workplace

Department for Work and Pensions, UK Government

16th meeting of Standing Working Group on Ageing, 20-22 November 2023 | Geneva

Agenda Item 5: Implementing the goals of the 2022 Rome Ministerial Declaration, scheduled for 15:00-16:45 on Monday 20 November.

Goal 1: Promoting active and healthy ageing throughout life.

UK Approach to Menopause in the Workplace

- Menopause is a **recruitment and retention issue** that **limits economic growth**. We want to support people experiencing the menopause **to stay and thrive in work** by building awareness, changing attitudes and encouraging the adoption of better workplace policies.
 - ✓ There are close to four million women aged 45-55 employed in the UK and **women over 50 represent the fastest growing segment of the workforce**.
 - ✓ The female rate of inactivity is 25.0%. This compares to 17.0% for men. **Women aged 50-64 make up 41% of all female inactivity**.
- This work is being led by the **Minister for Social Mobility, Youth and Progression**. The DWP's approach is targeted at both **employers**, (through direct engagement, events and free resources), and **workers**, (via our 50+ Champions who work across all Jobcentres advocating for older people and the menopause).
- **Helen Tomlinson** was appointed as Government's Menopause Employment Champion on **6 March 2023**, to focus on matters specifically affecting employers, and women in the workplace. Helen's four-point action plan is:
 1. *Sharing of employer best practice (within sectors) online via gov.uk, free of charge*
 2. *A national sector-specific allyship programme to ensure everyone has someone available to talk to*
 3. *Encourage employers to sign up to the Menopause-friendly pledge*
 4. *A sector-specific communications plan, amplified by strategic partners*

Data and evidence to support the design of UK menopause policy

Working with UK Government analysts to assess the reliability of external research studies, we use data from a range of trusted sources to inform policy making.

- These include other government Departments and agencies – e.g. information from the NHS, Department for Health and Social Care, and Government Equalities Office...
- ...And external stakeholders such as the British Menopause Society, The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, and The British Standards Institution.

Some key statistics regarding the impact of menopause:

- Multiple studies suggest that 10% of women have left their jobs directly due to menopause symptoms. (1)
- 21% of women mentioned health issues relating to menopause is a barrier to remaining in work (2)
- Menopause related productivity losses can amount per annum to a cost towards the economy of around \$150 billion globally. (3)
- The British menopause society found that 45% of women believed that menopausal symptoms negatively affected their work (4)
- In 2019 nearly 900,000 women in the UK left their jobs due to challenges posted by menopausal symptoms (5)
- 47% of women who took a day off work due to menopausal symptoms were reluctant to disclose the real reason to their employers (6)
- A longitudinal study of over 3000 women in Southampton found that those who reported at least one disruptive menopausal symptom at the age of 50 were 43% more likely to have left their jobs by the age of 55 (7)

Design and implementation of UK Menopause Policy

What lessons from the design and implementation may be relevant for other countries?

- Use influencers, champions and advocates and grow early adopters – equip others to have the conversation.
- Collaboration with business has been critical to engagement, building on wider social interest and celebrity endorsement. We believe business-to-business, regular and repeated communication to share good practice is most persuasive.
- Working across UK Government has also been key to the success of menopause policy design and implementation. In particular, we work closely with the Department for Health and Social Care, the Department for Business and Trade, and Government Equalities Office – all of whom provide a unique angle and insights on this important subject.

How are older people involved in the design and implementation of the policy?

- The Department for Work & Pensions 50PLUS champions play a key role in the delivery of policy to help older workers to remain and return to work. Conversely these frontline colleagues provide crucial ‘on the ground’ insights during the policy design stages to ensure policy is feasible and impactful.
- The views of stakeholders and partners such as the Government’s Business Champion for Older Workers, Andy Briggs, also feed into policy design and promote the interests of older people.