

REPORT

MENOPAUSE AT WORK: BEST PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

Business in the Community (BITC) has been supporting members on their menopause journeys for a number of years. In this booklet, we will share insights and case study examples of best practice to help you take action on this important workplace issue and provide effective support for those transitioning through menopause.

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Menopause at work

Menopause is a transition experienced by all women, including trans and non-binary people assigned female gender at birth and whose female biological characteristics persist.

Symptoms vary hugely between individuals, but the majority find that their quality of life is affected. A quarter describe their symptoms as severe.¹ Certain health issues can cause early onset menopause, which brings another aspect of stigma.

Women are likely to be in the peak of their careers when symptoms start, usually between 45 and 55, and the potential impact on work is clear. While

less than half of women disclose their menopause status at work, a quarter of women in menopause have considered giving up work² and one million are thought to have done so.³

But symptoms impact on family and social lives too. So, menopause is an issue which impacts society as a whole, and it is important to understand the perspectives of younger women and men.

BITC has been supporting its members on menopause for a number of years, including via our [employer toolkit](#) and advisory support. However, interest is now increasing, and trailblazer



companies are making significant progress in what has for so long been a taboo subject.

Feedback from BITC's members highlight a range of actions that are now being taken:

- Developing a definition, policy and/or guidance on menopause.
- Recognising the business case for menopause support. For our members, the most significant business benefit is building the retention of women in the organisation.
- Raising awareness of menopause as a workplace issue. BITC members have sought to use awareness-raising campaigns to break down stigma, holding webinars and other events, and sharing information and resources on intranet and wellbeing hubs.
- Disclosure processes are challenging, but some BITC members have added menopause issues as a reason for sickness absence.
- The most common reasonable adjustments reported by BITC members to support women experiencing menopause are changes to the work environment and job design, especially flexible working.
- Training and awareness-raising with line managers is also identified as a priority, including training on how to have difficult or sensitive conversations.
- BITC members have also developed support networks including menopause ambassadors, champions and employee groups.

In this booklet, we will share case studies from a number of BITC members who are leading in taking action on menopause at work.



Aviva

Aviva wants a world where people can thrive in later life. As members of our Age Taskforce, the organisation has been working with BITC to help its people work for longer too.

Why Aviva is supporting menopause in the workplace

Employees aged 45 and over are Aviva's fastest growing employee population by age, including 2,165 female colleagues. So, the number of employees experiencing menopause is growing too. Menopause support is built into Aviva's wellbeing strategy, supporting colleagues and managers to co-create a psychologically safe workplace. Support for action on menopause starts at the top, with Board level engagement including senior leaders and the Chief People officer speaking at menopause engagement events.

Action Aviva is taking on menopause

Awareness-raising: Aviva runs regular menopause awareness-raising campaigns, timed to align with wider campaigns such as World Menopause Day. Activities, including information sharing, seminars and showcasing of employee stories, aim to break the taboo of talking about menopause in the workplace. Drawing on a consultation with its Pride network, Aviva has implemented inclusive language for all menopause engagement and, unless data is gender specific, refer throughout to people who are experiencing menopause.

Support for individuals: Aviva offers a menopause support app, run by women's health experts Peppy. It provides one-to-one phone consultations and personalised live support from a menopause expert. 30% of female colleagues over 45 have used the menopause app service in its first year of operation and, as a result of this success, the service has been extended to cover partners of Aviva employees as well.

Training: Aviva provides menopause awareness training as part of its 'Aviva University' offering. Led by experienced professionals and aimed primarily at line managers, trainings are available to all

employees, and look at the what, why and how on supporting those experiencing menopausal symptoms. Over 150 leaders have completed the training, and awareness-raising campaigns are regularly used to encourage more people to take part.

Menopause guidance and workplace

adjustments: Aviva's training resources also form the core of its advice and guidance on menopause, allowing support via workplace conversations rather than a policy manual.

Training equips leaders and line managers to have conversations successfully and identify necessary support and adjustments. A workplace adjustments 'passport' is available to record details of conversations and adjustments agreed and this is transferable to a new job, so avoiding repeated conversations on a sensitive issue.

Absence policy: Aviva includes menopause as a reason for sickness absence. It has found that the incidence of reporting menopause as a reason for absence has increased since launching its menopause support, which the firm sees as a positive development indicating people are prepared and confident to be open about their experience of menopause.

Employee support groups and wider menopause support: Menopause support cafes are fully inclusive groups led by employees. They welcome anyone experiencing menopause, including transgender, non-binary and gender fluid colleagues, plus younger people and men. There is also an on-line menopause community where people can connect and share experiences. Aviva also offers menopause support to its wider value chain via a wellbeing hub for its brokers, and employer guidance for corporate clients.



Santander

Santander is a member of BITC's Gender and Wellbeing Leadership Teams. It started its menopause journey in 2019 and since then, with help from BITC, has developed a range of support for colleagues and actively shared its experiences with other businesses.

Why Santander are supporting menopause in the workplace

Santander realised that over a quarter of female colleagues, over 3,000 people, were of menopausal age. At the same time, over 50% of managers were male. In 2019, nearly 15% of absence was taken by women aged 45 to 55, and 10% of branch banking leavers were women in the same age group. A survey showed almost half of respondents were not comfortable talking to their manager about menopause and only one in three felt supported at work.

Santander has now developed a range of menopause support focused on four priorities.

Action Santander is taking on menopause

Building awareness and understanding:

Santander started its menopause journey with an awareness-raising campaign, launched on World Menopause Day in 2019. This included a colleague survey, awareness sessions to accompany the launch of a new menopause website, 'Let's Talk About Menopause', a series of webinars and podcasts, information leaflets, and a relaunch of its menopause guidelines.

Enabling employees to speak up: Santander built inclusion and a speak-up culture into its

menopause messaging from the start. The company gained senior sponsorship, an important element of success, and onboarded menopause champions. Safe spaces have been created where colleagues can engage and get support, including an online site and a private chat group. It has also specified menopause as a reason for absence.

Leadership and management support: a programme of training and awareness-raising is offered to develop leadership and management support for menopause at work. Line managers have access to e-learning which covers the key facts about menopause, how to discuss and support team members through menopause, including workplace adjustments and the sources of support available.

Guidance and practical support: a range of resources are offered via the online site, and menopause guidelines have been created and kept up to date. Expert clinical advice is provided via a partnership with specialist Peppy Health, and trained Menopause Advocates provide support and raise awareness. The impact has been significant. In the six months from June 2020, Peppy service users show a 39% increase in confidence in talking to their manager about menopause, a 29% increase in commitment to them as an employer, a 39% increase in job satisfaction, and a 55% increase in the likelihood of recommending Santander as an employer.

Looking ahead, Santander is planning another colleague survey to gather insight for future planning, delivering expert masterclasses to support those going through menopause, enhancing its online site to provide more resources, and training additional Menopause Advocates to signpost individuals to support and run awareness sessions.

Theresa Winters, Senior HR Manager, Employee Experience Proposition, offers these top tips:

1. Talk to your employees; menopause is a topic for all.
2. Embed activity and engagement within your wider wellbeing or diversity and inclusion strategy.

3. Personal stories are powerful; use them in your awareness-raising.
4. Not everyone wants to talk about menopause, and not everyone wants to speak to their manager, so have different channels of communication available.



South Wales Police

South Wales Police started its menopause journey in 2015, working through its Gender Equality Network.

Why South Wales Police are supporting menopause in the workplace

The issue was highlighted by a practical problem. A Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) reported that she was struggling to drink enough during the day to offset the impact of menopause-related dehydration and headaches. A utility belt hook to attach to a water bottle has now been introduced, highlighting how workplace adjustments may be possible with an adaptation of existing workplace practices. Action is important as a South Wales Police survey found that one in five respondents had considered leaving the force due to the menopause.

Action South Wales Police is taking on menopause

South Wales Police now have a range of options available to support women during menopause.

Menopause guidance: a series of guidance documents have been published, highlighting menopause symptoms and support available, as well as how supervisors can better support those experiencing menopause-related symptoms through reasonable adjustments. A Menopause Toolkit brings this advice and support into one

document. Colleagues are encouraged to download a Health & Hers app which allows users to track symptoms and find appropriate support.

Intranet site: The Gender Equality Network intranet page provides resources and signposting to health-related support and guidance and risk assessments can be easily accessed. Work is currently underway to publish a series of VLOGs by colleagues who wish to share their experience via video on the intranet.

Menopause Champions: The force currently has 13 Menopause Champions who are situated in each division and department, providing one-to-one advice and guidance on menopause. The organisation is currently working with He for She Champions to encourage male colleagues to become Menopause Champions too, and to help raise awareness with supervisors of the impact menopause can have for those in the workplace.

Awareness Raising: The Gender Equality Network (GEN) undertakes regular awareness raising sessions in collaboration with HR and engages with regional forces to share resources and best practice. For Menopause Awareness Month, the GEN Chair will host a webinar featuring key speakers including specialist GPs, HR advisors and colleagues with lived experience of the challenges faced by those in menopause.

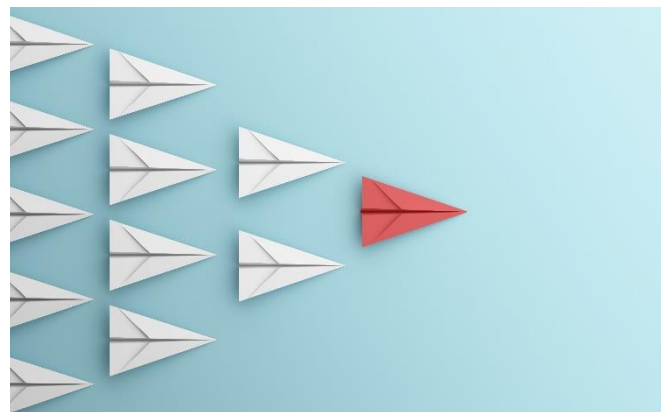
Next steps for South Wales Police

South Wales Police is continuing to take action on their menopause journey:

1. It is collaborating with a national initiative to establish unified guidance on menopause across all the UK police forces. This initiative includes the National Police Chiefs Council, the College of Policing and the Police Federation, and is supported by a Menopause Action Group with representatives drawn from all 43 UK police forces.
2. As a result of the pandemic, new workplace adjustments have been implemented, such as an increased use of flexible working, and these

are being built into menopause support, along with a regular review of uniform and kit.

3. It is collaborating with external training providers to create continuous professional development opportunities for line managers on menopause, to ensure front line supervisors are aware of requirements on them to support colleagues and what they can do to help.
4. Work is underway to increase the number of Menopause Champions and ensure widespread access to localised support.



Support available from BITC

BITC has a range of resources and support to help you provide support to employees in your workforce experiencing menopause.

We have produced a menopause toolkit, which includes practical advice, together with insights from leading academics. This is available, together with an accompanying webinar, [via our website](#).

Our expert Advisory Services Team provides a range of support to BITC members in this area, including a workshop on menopause and ideas to support HR staff and line managers. For more information, please contact advisory@bitc.org.uk

Wider advice on age inclusive approaches can be found in BITC's toolkit [Becoming an Age Friendly Employer](#).

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Talk to one of our expert team [today](#) to learn how membership of BITC can help you take your responsible business journey further and drive lasting global change.

REFERENCES

¹ TUC (2017) Menopause at work <https://www.tuc.org.uk/menopause-work>

² ITV (2016) Quarter of women going through menopause 'considered leaving work' <https://www.itv.com/news/2016-11-23/quarter-of-women-going-through-menopause-considered-leaving-work>

³ HR Review (2021) Almost a million women have left the workplace due to menopausal symptoms <https://www.hrreview.co.uk/hr-news/almost-a-million-women-have-left-the-workplace-due-to-menopausal-symptoms/135691>