

Menopause in the workplace: Breaking the silence.



hoomph[™]

HR done differently

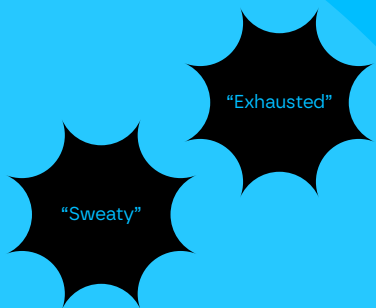
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Executive summary

hoomph surveyed 1,000 women to shed light on the often-overlooked challenge of menopause being insufficiently recognised and supported in the workplace. Drawing on the experiences of women working (or who have worked) across various industries and regions, and in different life stages, our findings reveal that menopause continues to be a silent burden for many, with the overwhelming majority (70%) feeling unsupported by their employers. Despite menopause being a natural part of life, it remains shrouded in stigma and there's a lack of awareness and understanding in the professional environment – resulting in emotional, physical, and career-related challenges for women.





**Menopause
continues to be
a silent burden
for many**

Executive summary

This staggering research uncovers several critical themes, including the impact of menopause on daily working life, its emotional and mental health toll, and the widespread lack of preparedness among women entering this stage of life. These challenges are magnified by a significant gap in workplace support, which has real-world consequences, leading some women (15%) to consider quitting their jobs, particularly in high-pressure fields such as technology, healthcare, and education.

Our report finds that menopause is not only a personal or medical struggle – it's a serious workplace failure. Businesses are falling short in supporting professional women at the peak of their careers, stunting not only the women fighting to perform at their best but also limiting the potential of the business. With women in their 40s and 50s reaching career heights, menopause support is crucial. We're beginning to see the first cases of menopause-related issues in employment tribunals – it's clear addressing this is no longer optional for organisations.

The findings in this report highlight the urgency for employers to raise awareness, encourage open communication, and provide practical support to create inclusive environments where women feel empowered to manage their symptoms without fear of judgment or professional repercussions. By normalising conversations around menopause and its symptoms, businesses can retain valuable talent, improve employee wellbeing, and foster a more inclusive workplace culture.

As well as identifying the challenges, this report also presents a roadmap for change – providing actionable recommendations for employers to develop menopause-friendly policies, foster supportive work cultures, and ensure that every woman, regardless of her age or life stage, can thrive in her professional life.



15%

of women consider
quitting their jobs





“As businesswomen navigating our own journeys with menopause, we understand firsthand the struggles women face in the workplace during this time. At hoomph, we believe that creating awareness around menopause is not just essential for employee wellbeing, but also for fostering truly inclusive workplaces. While we aren’t menopause experts, we are passionate about helping businesses better support women during this life stage. Our mission is to ensure that organisations have the knowledge and tools to make real, meaningful changes that benefit both women and the wider business.”

**Sarah Stevens and Lisa Hallewell,
co-founders and directors of hoomph**

Methodology

Our research, commissioned by Censuswide, surveyed 1,000 women who are either currently experiencing, or have gone through, menopause. Conducted between 29 August 2024 and 5 September 2024, the survey includes a sample of full-time, part-time, and retired women across various industries. The data, collected in accordance with ESOMAR principles, offers a rich and detailed view of the real-world impact of menopause on working women and reveals critical insights into the emotional, physical, and professional toll it takes.



Menopause – The silent workplace challenge

Menopause is an inevitable phase of life for many women, yet its impact in the workplace has long been overlooked. While significant progress has been made in addressing gender equality, mental health, and work-life balance within diversity and inclusion initiatives, menopause remains a quiet, often taboo challenge. Its effects on physical health, emotional stability, and career progression are substantial, but workplaces are unequipped to provide the necessary support for women navigating this life stage.

For many women, menopause coincides with the most crucial point in their careers. Symptoms like fatigue, hot flashes, loss of sleep, back and muscle aches, weight gain, headaches, irritability, reduced concentration, anxiety, depression, and memory lapses can severely disrupt daily productivity and performance. However, many women do not feel comfortable discussing menopause in the workplace, often unsure of how to attribute symptoms like fatigue or anxiety to this phase of life. Concerns about being misunderstood or facing awkward conversations prevent women from bringing the subject to light. This lack of open dialogue and awareness means that menopause remains an under-discussed topic in professional settings, despite the significant impact it can have on daily working life.

The consequences of this silence are real. Women in their 40s and 50s – many of whom hold leadership roles or are at the height of their careers – are the most affected.

Without adequate support, these women may experience reduced productivity, decreased confidence in their own skills and abilities, or even contemplate exiting the workforce altogether. The loss of these experienced, talented professionals represents a significant setback for the individual and the organisation, which depends on their knowledge and contributions. But sadly, most will choose to simply rise to the expectations and plough on with work, despite facing significant emotional and mental health challenges linked to hormonal changes.

Despite its growing awareness in the public, menopause continues to be overlooked in the broader diversity and inclusion agenda. Although there has been significant advocacy for open discussions about menopause, led by organisations and advocates like presenter Davina McCall, this awareness has not yet fully translated into workplace policies. However, change is hopefully on the way with the Labour government's planned legislation requiring companies with over 250 employees to implement a menopause action plan. But what about those working in smaller businesses, where the challenges faced by women experiencing menopause are equally significant?

Addressing this gap is not simply a matter of promoting employee wellbeing – it is a business imperative. The time has come for employers to take proactive steps in developing supportive, menopause-friendly workplaces that meet the needs of a critical segment of their workforce.



The impact of menopause on working women

More than half of the women surveyed (53%) reported that menopause impacts, or impacted, their daily working life, with this figure rising to 70% among women aged 45-54. The challenges of managing symptoms such as hot flashes, fatigue, and brain fog while balancing work responsibilities can be particularly demanding. These symptoms often coincide with critical career stages, adding layers of stress and making it more difficult to meet work expectations. The physical and mental toll of menopause can erode confidence and negatively impact productivity.

The impact of menopause is especially evident in certain sectors. Around two thirds of those working in technology (62%) and healthcare (60%) report some of the highest levels of disruption.

These fields require a high degree of mental agility, precision, and adaptability, yet menopause symptoms, such as brain fog and fatigue, can significantly impair these skills. This highlights the urgent need for tailored support in these sectors.

Regionally, the impact of menopause varies. The East Midlands reports being the most affected, with nearly three in four women (71%) stating that menopause impacts their daily working lives. This raises concerns about whether adequate workplace support and awareness are present in this region. It suggests that local work cultures, industries, or even healthcare access in the East Midlands may not be as responsive to the needs of menopausal women compared to other areas.



53%

said menopause impacts
their daily working lives





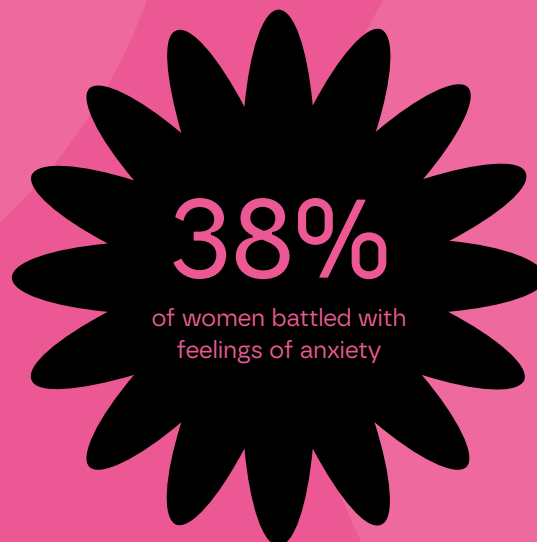
“With 13 million women currently menopausal in the UK, [hoomph’s] statistics don’t surprise me at all. Many may be unaware they are perimenopausal or experiencing menopausal health issues, so these stats could be much higher. Many women I coach find it easier to reduce their hours or leave the workplace rather than face an uncomfortable conversation with their employer. They don’t want to take legal action – they just want to be heard and supported during this natural phase of life.

Often, small changes can make a big difference. For example, could a woman who was up all night with hot flushes start her workday later? Unfortunately, many employers offer lip service around menopause, ticking boxes without taking meaningful action.”

Claire Hattrick, founder,
The Executive Menopause Coach

Emotional toll and mental health

Menopause not only affects physical health but also has a deep emotional impact. Almost two in five (38%) women we surveyed told us they battled with feelings of anxiety, while almost one quarter (24%) admitted to being depressed, and just under one in five (19%), sadly, felt embarrassed. This emotional burden is compounded by a distinct lack of support; only 5% of respondents claim they are supported by their employers, leaving many feeling isolated and alone.





“Eight years ago, at age 47, I realised I was in perimenopause and it was truly frightening. I was anxious, lost ALL my confidence, became incredibly forgetful and was so tired some days that I could hardly function. These symptoms impacted my family and work life massively, so much so, that I ended up moving out of the family home and renting a small house because I could not cope. Everything suffered, my work, my home and my social life. I became reclusive.”

Laura Shuckburgh,
menopause coach / consultant


Emotional toll and mental health

Open responses from the survey highlight the depth of these struggles. Women described feeling “tired” and “exhausted” daily, battling both the physical symptoms of menopause and the pressure to perform at work. Some expressed feelings of anger, with one respondent candidly admitting, “I wanted to kill everyone.” These raw emotions reflect the frustration of navigating menopause in an unsupportive work environment.

Other respondents spoke of feeling “not understood or helped by their employer,” with some describing how they were “ignored” or simply “left to get on with it.”

This isolation reflects a broader issue in the workplace, where the majority of women feel unsupported during menopause, leaving many to silently endure symptoms such as mood swings, hot flashes, and fatigue without the necessary workplace accommodations. The emotional toll can have serious repercussions for mental health, work performance, and overall wellbeing.

These insights reveal the urgent need for workplaces to recognise menopause as not just a medical experience for women but an emotional and mental health concern, requiring more comprehensive support and understanding from employers.



“I wanted to
kill everyone”





“The emotional impact of menopause has been significant. I was working as a senior HR professional in a technology business and I experienced mood swings, fatigue, and memory loss. I thought I had early-onset Alzheimer’s. Worst of all was the anxiety, self-doubt, and feelings of worthlessness. I would cry nearly every day. I had no confidence and believed I wasn’t good enough to do my job. It was a struggle to be positive. But, I had amazing support from family and friends who helped me through some of the darkest days.

I was also one of the lucky ones because I had an amazing male manager, who provided whatever support I needed. It’s so important that businesses are understanding and offer the right support to their employees going through this significant life change.”

Paula Jones, HR consultant



**“Actual menopause
was a relief.
Perimenopause
was horrible.”**

Considering career changes or leaving work

The combined physical and emotional toll of menopause is leading some women to reassess their career paths, with a troubling impact on job retention. Worryingly, over one in 10 women (15%) admitted to considering quitting their jobs because of menopausal symptoms. This statistic alone is concerning, but the matter becomes even more apparent in specific demographics and certain sectors.

One in five (21%) women aged 45-54, and 14% of women aged 55 and over, have contemplated leaving their jobs because of menopause. These figures are particularly alarming given these age groups often encompass individuals who are at the height of their careers, possessing critical experience and skills. The loss of these seasoned professionals would have a significant impact on organisational stability and effectiveness.

Regionally, the East Midlands stands out with the highest percentage of women considering quitting their jobs due to menopause, with over one fifth (22%) reporting this challenge. Those in the East Midlands also reported being the most impacted by menopause in the workplace overall. This dual finding highlights a critical disparity in the support and resources available to menopausal women in this region compared to others.

Sector-specific data further highlights the gravity of the situation. One in five (20%) women in the technology sector, healthcare sector, and education sector have thought about leaving their positions due to menopausal symptoms.

This potential loss of employees in such critical roles has far-reaching implications for organisations. In fields like healthcare, where experience and expertise are crucial, the departure of skilled professionals not only strains the current workforce but also endangers the quality of patient care.

The fact that a substantial portion of women are considering leaving their jobs because of menopause is indicative of deeper systemic issues. It highlights the lack of adequate support and understanding within workplaces. If menopausal symptoms are driving women to contemplate quitting their roles, it would suggest existing workplace policies and support systems are failing to address their needs effectively.



The knowledge gap: Women's lack of preparedness

One of the most notable findings from the research is the widespread lack of awareness about menopause. Nearly 70% of women expressed a desire for better information about menopause before they began experiencing it. This gap in understanding is evident across various sectors, with over three quarters (82%) of women in technology also voicing a wish for more information.

When it comes to sources of information, the majority of women rely on the internet, with nearly half surveyed (46%) citing it as their primary resource. While the internet offers convenient access to a wealth of information, it also carries the risk of misinformation and incomplete guidance. Meanwhile, over one third (38%) said they consulted their GP, indicating that healthcare professionals are a trusted source for medical advice. However, 16% admitted they did not know where to turn for information, and, tellingly, only 2% looked to their employer for support. These statistics highlight a significant challenge: many women feel adrift when seeking reliable and comprehensive information about menopause.

Open responses reveal additional insights into how women seek information. Some reported turning to books as a valuable resource, seeking in-depth, well-researched content.

Others mentioned consulting menopause specialists or clinics, which suggests a preference for expert advice tailored to their specific needs. Some women have attended conferences or lectures to gain a broader understanding of menopause, indicating an active effort to seek out knowledge despite the limited mainstream resources.

These findings highlight the substantial knowledge gap and the resulting confusion among women navigating menopause. The disparity between the sources women use and the comprehensive support they need suggests a critical need for improved education and resources.

Furthermore, the data shows that 20% of women aged 55 and older were unsure where to obtain information about menopause. This lack of clarity during a pivotal time highlights the urgency for more structured and accessible educational resources.

Overall, addressing this knowledge gap is essential for empowering women with the information they need to manage menopause effectively. Employers, healthcare providers, and educational institutions have a crucial role to play in bridging this gap by offering clear, accurate, and easily accessible information, thereby supporting women through this significant life stage.





“Forewarned is forearmed! Like many women, I had no idea what perimenopause was. Without education in our younger years, we often still associate menopause with hot flashes and older ladies.

But everyone’s journey is individual. Keeping an open mind and equipping yourself with as much information as possible for your ‘menopause toolkit’ can make the transition smoother. It’s crucial to educate people so they understand how debilitating menopause can be and how to approach and support a perimenopausal woman.

In the workplace, offering monthly menopause sessions provides much-needed relief and support, especially for those facing long waits for medical appointments.”

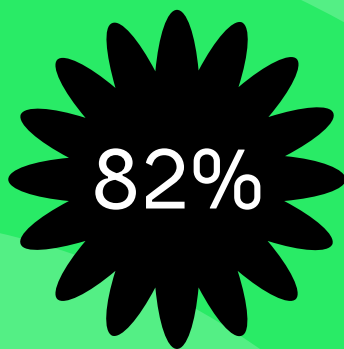
Claire Hattrick, founder,
The Executive Menopause Coach



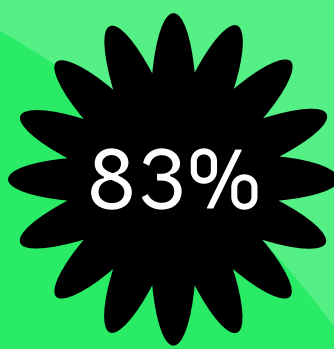
Women may
fear being
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less capable

Workplace support: Where employers are falling short

The survey reveals a significant gap in workplace support for menopausal women, with over two thirds (70%) of respondents indicating they do not/did not feel supported by their employers during this life stage. This challenge is especially pronounced in specific regions and sectors, as our findings revealed:



In the East Midlands, over four in five women reported feeling unsupported by their employers.



Over four in five women in the manufacturing sector shared the same sentiment.



Similarly, almost three quarters of women working in the technology industry also felt a lack of support.



“In spite of many organisations now having their menopause policies in place, the reality is, there is still a lot of stigma and taboo around this subject. So women are still struggling to thrive in environments that will support their symptoms at a time when they need it most.

From our experience, many organisations don't have the budget lines to be able to initiate better training and better education, to support all of us to thrive in mid-life.”

Helen Tite, TheWellnessAnarchist,
founder of iCareiMove

Workplace support: Where employers are falling short

It's clear the technology and manufacturing sectors both present significant challenges for women, particularly during the life transition of menopause. In technology, which remains notably male-dominated, women frequently encounter barriers such as gender bias and limited representation in leadership roles.

The fact nearly three-quarters of women in tech claim to feel unsupported during menopause highlights a deeper systemic issue within the industry. Similarly, in manufacturing, where emphasis is often placed on physical performance and technical skills, menopause-related concerns can be overlooked or stigmatised. The prevailing perception that discussions about health and wellness are inappropriate in high-pressure, results-driven environments can further deter women from seeking the help they need.

In both sectors, the lack of support during menopause can lead to decreased job satisfaction and productivity, ultimately resulting in higher turnover rates. When women feel unsupported in managing their health, they may hesitate to advance their careers or even choose to leave the industry altogether, exacerbating the existing gender gap. This is particularly troubling given the critical importance of retaining female talent, as women bring invaluable perspectives and skills that enhance innovation and problem-solving.

If companies in both technology and manufacturing do not prioritise support for women during menopause, they risk losing not only their top talent but also the diverse viewpoints essential for driving growth and success in these rapidly evolving fields.

Despite growing attention to diversity and inclusion, menopause remains largely overlooked in workplace conversations. Notably, only 2% of women surveyed turned to their employer for information about menopause, reflecting a serious lack of open dialogue and resources.

Women may fear being perceived as less capable or committed if they raise concerns about menopause, which can be misconstrued as a sign of weakness. As a result, they often choose to cope with their symptoms in silence rather than seek help from their employers. This issue is not confined to specific sectors; similar dynamics can affect women across various industries, where the perception of vulnerability discourages open discussions about menopausal symptoms.

Addressing these challenges is essential for creating a more supportive and inclusive workplace for all women.





“The findings of this report shine a crucial light on the challenges faced by menopausal women in professional environments. It’s alarming that despite menopause being discussed more openly now, over half of women still report their work being impacted, and even more disheartening that 70% feel unsupported by their employers.

Women bring invaluable experience and talent to the workforce, and it is essential that we provide the necessary support to ensure menopause doesn’t force them to make the difficult decision of stepping away from their careers. We’ve seen how simply offering menopause support groups can lead to meaningful changes that empower people and create workplaces where everyone can thrive—regardless of life stage.”

Julie Robinson, founder and CEO,
MenoHealth

Building menopause-supportive workplaces

This gap between information-seeking and support highlights the need for businesses to take action on menopause in the workplace – and the time to act is now. Employers have a legal and moral duty, as mandated by the Equality Act 2010, to create supportive environments. In February 2024, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) issued guidance to clarify these responsibilities, particularly when menopausal symptoms significantly impair an employee's ability to work, which may require reasonable adjustments under the law.



Building menopause-supportive workplaces

Furthermore, the Labour government is due to announce its plan to support menopause in the workplace. This is expected to require companies with more than 250 employees to implement a menopause action plan. Once this announcement is made, businesses will need to act swiftly to comply and support their workforce effectively.

While organisations like The Menopause Charity and the British Menopause Society offer valuable resources, embedding education, resources, and practical measures into the workplace ensures that help is readily accessible where employees spend the majority of their time, creating a more inclusive and supportive culture.



“Workplace support should involve having someone that younger women feel they can relate to and make them feel included. They shouldn’t just focus on the ‘midlife woman’ – this lack of representation of younger women only adds to the isolation many feel.

There was no one I felt I could relate to when I was struggling and this prevented me from seeking help.

Sadly, when I hosted Menopause Cafe at work, I was actually told I was too young, even as the host! Therefore, workplaces must offer inclusive language around menopause.

Experiencing menopause early is really not as uncommon as people think – the new statistics of POI suggest 3-4% of women before 40.”

Emily Courtney, founder,
Mothering and the Menopause

Building menopause-supportive workplaces

Employers should also recognise the unique nature of each individual's experience with menopause and avoid a one-size-fits-all approach. Under the [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#), employers are responsible for protecting the wellbeing of all employees, including those going through menopause. Therefore, practical steps could include:

Implementing a comprehensive menopause policy: Develop a policy that incorporates practical adjustments, such as allowing employees to request a desk near an open window to manage hot flashes. This helps normalise the conversation and reduce any awkwardness.

Offering flexible work options: Provide remote work, reduced hours, or flexible scheduling to accommodate severe symptoms and help employees manage their work-life balance. Recognising menopause in company policies: Ensure that menopause is explicitly mentioned in company policies, including separate recording of menopause-related absences from general sickness to avoid unfair penalties.

Normalising discussions: Create peer support networks, offer confidential hotlines, and provide access to specialists to foster an environment where menopause is openly discussed and supported.

Including menopause in the DEI agenda: Highlight menopause in the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) agenda to emphasise its importance in employee wellbeing and inclusivity.

Encouraging open communication around menopause can be achieved through various means:

Education sessions: Facilitate menopause awareness through knowledge sharing with external speakers. Bringing in experts to discuss menopause openly can create a more comfortable environment for employees to learn and engage with the topic.

Lunch and learn sessions: Host informal gatherings where employees can discuss the challenges of menopause and share experiences, helping to build a culture of understanding and support.

But, it's also important to recognise that while some women may feel comfortable openly discussing their experiences with menopause, others may prefer to keep it private. The key is not to force conversations but to ensure that support is readily available for those who need it.

By fostering a workplace environment where menopause is no longer a taboo or embarrassing subject, employers can empower women to seek the help they need without fear of judgment. Ultimately, creating a culture of openness and understanding benefits everyone, ensuring menopause is treated as a natural phase of life, not a barrier to career progression.





“Women are so unprepared for this inevitable life stage that it significantly impacts them at home and in the workplace. More employers and firms need to address the changes that can occur and ensure they have the necessary support to make every woman feel safe in the workplace.”

Kate Rowe-Ham,
founder of Owning Your Menopause

A roadmap to change

Our report has highlighted the substantial challenges working women face during menopause, from managing symptoms that affect or have affected their work performance to navigating the emotional toll it takes on their wellbeing. Despite the growing conversation around diversity and inclusion, menopause is often missing from workplace agendas, leaving women feeling isolated and unsupported during this critical life stage.



A roadmap to change

Employers have both a legal and moral obligation to address this topic. Our findings presented here demonstrate that creating menopause-friendly workplaces is not just an employee welfare initiative – it's a business imperative. Women in their 40s and 50s often represent the most experienced and skilled members of the workforce, and failing to provide the support they need can result in loss of talent, diminished productivity, and a less inclusive organisational culture.

By taking proactive steps – such as offering flexible working options, creating open dialogue, embedding education and resources, and recognising menopause as a workplace issue – businesses can drive meaningful change. Breaking the silence around menopause helps normalise it as a subject of conversation, reducing stigma and creating an environment where all employees feel valued and supported.

Ultimately, fostering a workplace that is inclusive for menopausal women is not only the right thing to do, but it also strengthens the organisation by retaining valuable talent, promoting wellbeing, and enhancing productivity. As the conversation around menopause continues to grow, employers have a unique opportunity to lead the way in driving positive change, ensuring that every woman can thrive in her professional life – regardless of the stage of life she is in.



“Relieved”





“Since knowing more, I have made it my mission to help other women not feel alone. I have retrained as a coach and menopause mentor, and help women to thrive, not just survive, through the menopause transition. I support organisations to become menopause-friendly. It is now something I view as a positive transition and easily managed with the right tools and mindset.”

Laura Shuckburgh,
Menopause coach / consultant



About hoomph

In most businesses, HR is an outsourced stranger. hoomph is not that kind of HR. More than just a service provider or crisis coordinator, we become part of your team, working alongside you to help make the right decisions and grow faster, successfully.

Born from a desire to challenge the status quo, hoomph was founded in 2017 by Sarah Stevens and Lisa Hallewell. With over 50 years of combined experience, their leadership is bolstered by a diverse team, drawing from a wide range of people-focused roles. Our fresh perspectives allow us to deliver HR solutions that go beyond the ordinary, truly transforming the way businesses manage their people.

We've built a solid reputation in sectors like technology, biotech, gaming, and the creative industry. But we're not limited by industry boundaries. If you're a forward-thinking business that aligns with our values, we're here for you. We're all about innovative, people-first solutions that add real, human oomph — no matter your field.

At hoomph, we're powered by people, not processes. Acting as a true extension of your team, we support world-changing companies by helping them scale with the right people. HR can't be distilled into a formula — it's about understanding that people are unique, each and every day. Whether you need strategic HR input for a specific project or hands-on operational support, we're here to help you build the foundation for long-term success.

So when it comes to supporting women through menopause in your organisation, we ensure this crucial life stage is considered within the broader context of workplace wellbeing. Our workplace wellbeing audit examines six key factors — the people team, leadership, work, relationships, culture, and support — to assess how well your organisation is meeting the needs of its employees.

By breaking down how these factors influence wellbeing, we highlight areas where you're excelling and where improvements can be made. This way, menopause isn't an afterthought. Instead, it's an integral part of a company's approach to fostering a supportive, inclusive environment where everyone can thrive.

Get in touch with our team to learn more about the workplace wellbeing audit and how to create a healthier, more supportive environment that empowers your employees — through every stage of their careers.




About the research

The research was conducted by Censuswide among a sample of 1,000 Women who are working full-time, part-time or retired who are going through or have been through menopause (including a minimum of 50 in the technology sector). The data was collected between 29.08.2024 – 05.09.2024.

Censuswide abides by and employs members of the Market Research Society and follows the MRS code of conduct and ESOMAR principles. Censuswide is also a member of the British Polling Council.

hoomph™



Thriving workplaces happen through action, not reaction. Need a little oomph? We're HR pros with years of experience helping companies scale and succeed, and we're happy to help.

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