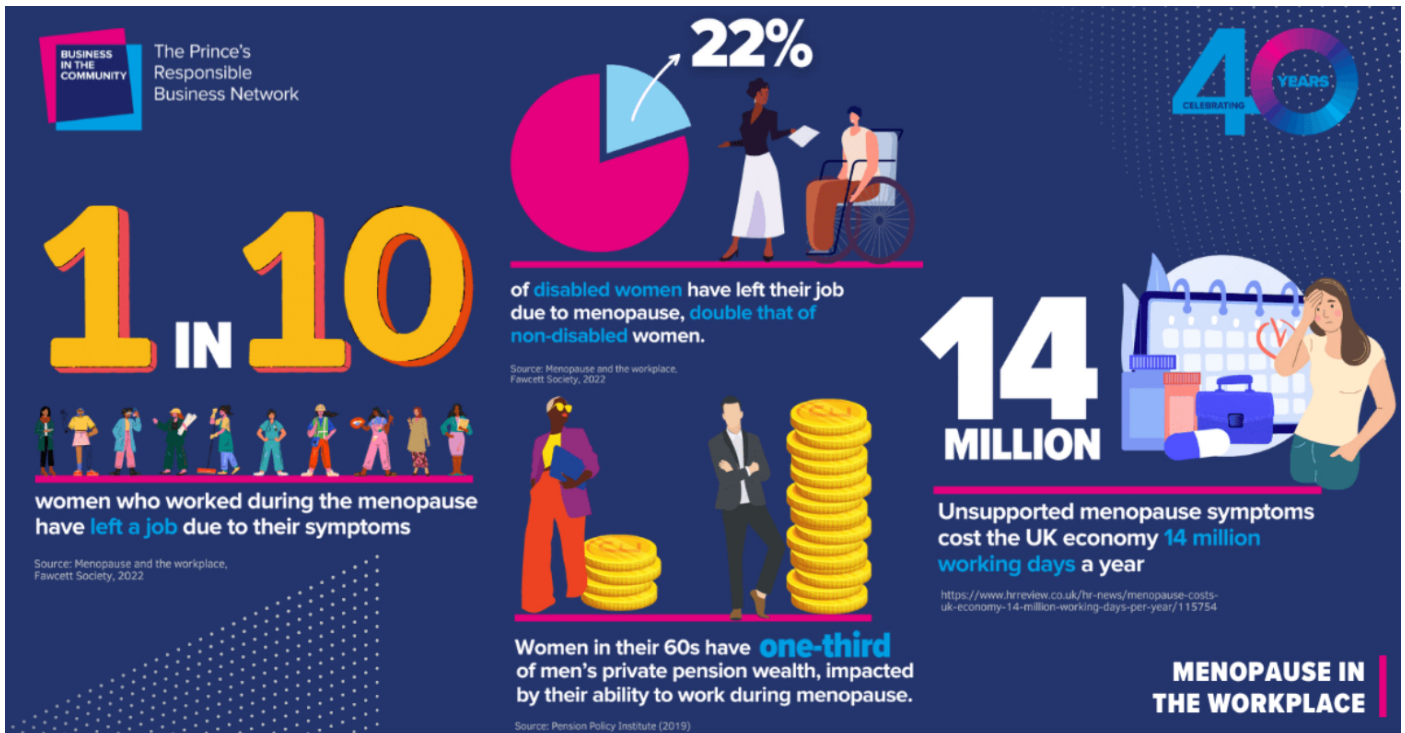


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# Menopause at Work

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Menopause is a natural biological process that marks the end of a woman's reproductive life. It is a significant milestone in a woman's life and can cause significant changes in her body and mind. The transition to menopause can be a challenging time for many women, and it can have a significant impact on their work life.

The menopause typically occurs between the ages of 45 and 55, and it is defined as the time when a woman has not had a menstrual period for 12 consecutive months. During this time, the body goes through a significant hormonal shift as oestrogen and progesterone levels decrease. This shift can cause a range of physical and emotional symptoms that can make working challenging.

One of the most common symptoms of menopause is hot flashes, which can cause intense feelings of heat and sweating. These can be uncomfortable and embarrassing in the workplace, especially if they occur during meetings or presentations. Hot flashes can also disrupt sleep, leading to fatigue and difficulty concentrating, which can impact work performance.

Menopause can also cause changes in mood, including anxiety, irritability, and depression. These can affect a woman's ability to handle stress and can impact her relationships with colleagues and clients. Additionally, women going through menopause may experience memory lapses, which can affect their ability to remember important details and impact their work.

Physical symptoms of menopause can also impact work life. Menopause can cause joint pain, stiffness, and headaches, which can make it difficult to sit at a desk or work on a computer for extended periods. Additionally, vaginal dryness and discomfort can make it difficult to sit for long periods, which can affect job performance.

To manage the effects of menopause while working, women can take steps to prioritize their health and well-being. This may include talking to their healthcare provider about hormone replacement therapy or other medications that can alleviate symptoms. Additionally, women can make lifestyle changes, such as eating a healthy diet, staying hydrated, getting regular exercise, and practicing stress management techniques.

Employers can also take steps to support women going through menopause. This may include providing flexible work arrangements, such as the ability to work from home or adjust work schedules. Employers can also provide resources and education about menopause, including information about workplace policies and accommodations that can support women going through this transition.

In conclusion, menopause is a significant life transition that can have a significant impact on women's work life. By taking steps to prioritise their health and well-being and seeking support from their employer, women can manage the effects of menopause while continuing to be productive and successful in the workplace.

## Summary

As mentioned in a recent GenM report, menopause support must be more than a managerial tick-box training in the workplace. It is vital that it educates the entire workforce on how best to support women during this time.

The report found that 35% of workers said they would report a menopause-related absence as a different illness showing that we aren't yet breaking down these barriers women feel around discussing the menopause and the symptoms they suffer. In fact, in the GenM Opportunity Report: *Why the Menopause is a Catalyst for Ethical Business Growth*, 50% of menopausal workers said they were reluctant to talk about the menopause at work for fear of being marginalised or discriminated against. Without creating a safe environment where workers feel comfortable asking for advice or support, any initiatives put in place by organisations will fail to have the desired impact.

There are calls for workplaces to start placing more importance and publicising menopause policies in the same way as pregnancy and maternity policies. There have also been discussions about whether or not there should be trained leaders like first

aiders or fire marshals in every company to truly ensure there is dedicated support for women, as well as family members who may be supporting someone close to them suffering from menopausal symptoms.

With menopause becoming more widely discussed in the last few years, it could well be that the next wave of women who are entering this phase of life will play a key part in making changes to the way support is provided in the workplace – we sure hope so