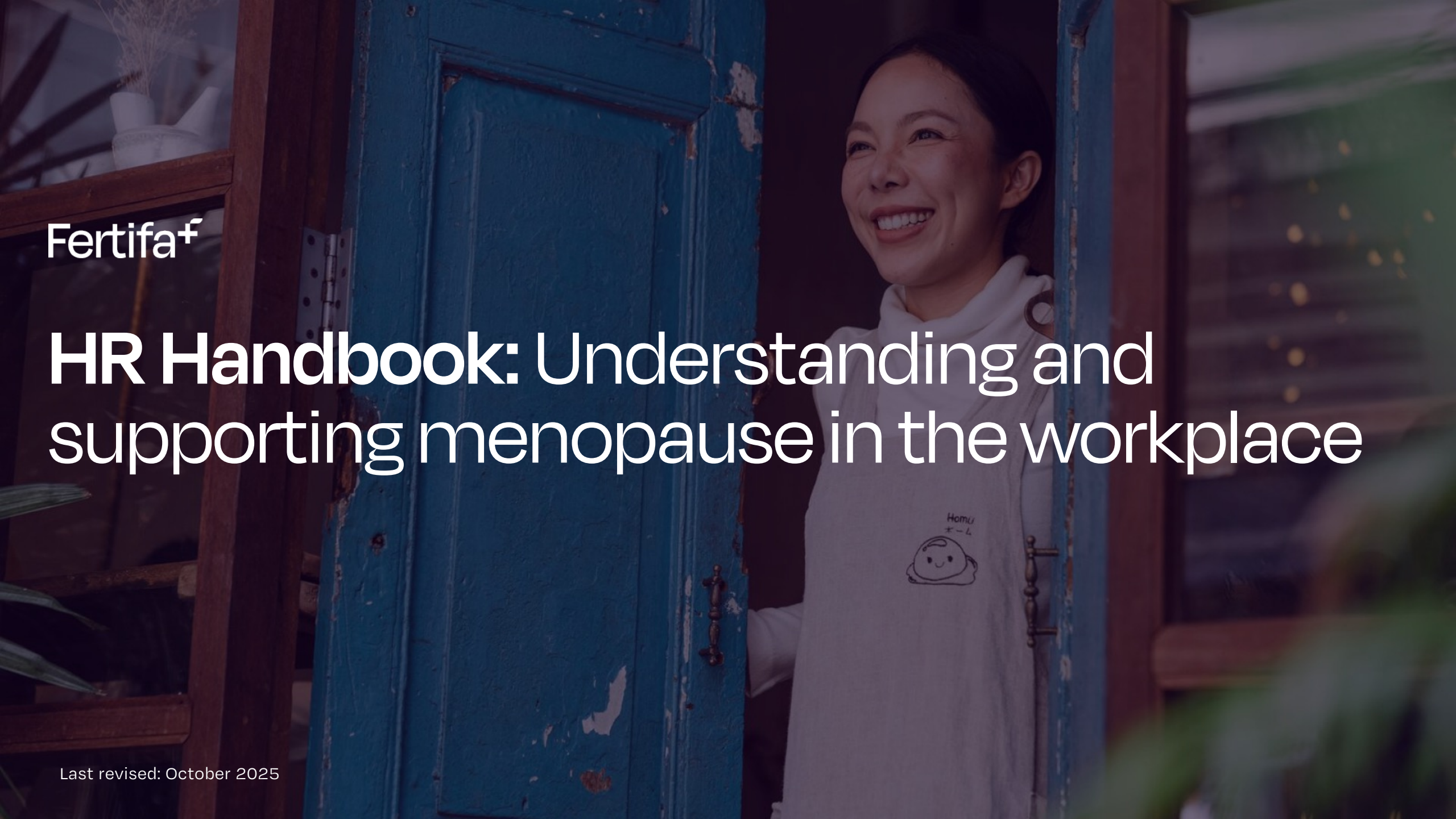


A smiling woman with dark hair, wearing a white apron over a white turtleneck, stands in a doorway. The door is painted a vibrant blue with some peeling paint. To the left, a wooden shelf holds a white vase with dried flowers. The background is softly blurred, showing greenery and a building.

Fertifa⁺

HR Handbook: Understanding and supporting menopause in the workplace

Last revised: October 2025

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Why menopause matters in the workplace and beyond

Why menopause matters in the workplace

As the **fastest growing demographic** in the workplace, more women than ever before will go through menopause, or experience menopausal symptoms, at work.

Despite often being at the peak of their careers, studies have shown that half of menopausal women have decreased job satisfaction and a staggering **42% consider leaving work altogether**. This has to change, first and foremost for the people affected, and also for the UK companies estimated to **lose 14 million working days** every year.

We've seen firsthand how necessary it is for management and HR leaders to recognise the difficulties that can come with menopause. The behaviour of those in leadership positions has the biggest influence on someone's experience at work. By understanding why menopause matters, you can give your team members the support they may need and help build an inclusive work environment with employee wellbeing at the heart of your company.

In this guide, we'll explain the different stages and symptoms of menopause, how it can impact people's lives, and the changes we can make to **better support women and break the taboo** in the workplace and beyond.



How menopause can impact someone at work

- The Future of Workplace Wellbeing, Fertifa 2024 [Download the full report →](#)

48%

say menopause had a negative impact on their wellbeing at work

17%

of women took unexpected and unplanned time off work to manage their symptoms

39%

report a negative impact on performance, productivity, focus and concentration

36%

of women report a reduced enjoyment of work

67%

of women said that menopause symptoms had a negative impact on their work

42%

consider leaving work due to menopause symptoms, and 10% actually do leave their job

Talking about menopause at work is still an uncomfortable topic

Despite so many people being impacted by it, menopause is still a taboo topic in some workplaces.

It's up to senior leadership, HR teams, managers and team leads to help drive that change and to normalise talking openly about menopause.

So many will go through it while continuing to work – it's crucial to create an inclusive working environment.

In 2024, Fertifa organised the UK's largest survey into Menopause in the Workplace.

26% said they were **"too embarrassed"** and **28%** **"feared it may make them look incapable of doing their job properly"**.

Menopause and perimenopause can make life difficult for lots of people, so much so that **42% of people consider leaving work altogether**.

Of course, it's not just work that's affected, but it's **people's home and personal lives too**.

Divorce rates are highest in the perimenopause and menopause years, and **suicide rates** for women are highest from the ages of 45 to 54.



70% of women

didn't speak to their employers about their symptoms

The Future of Workplace Wellbeing, Fertifa

The physical and emotional impact of menopause

The four stages of menopause defined for HR managers

In the UK, the average age of **menopause** is 51, with most people experiencing it between the ages of 45 and 55. **Perimenopause** is the time before a woman's last period when their hormones are fluctuating. If you haven't experienced menopause or perimenopause yourself, it can be hard to understand what each stage means and how it can impact an individual. Knowing what to say or do can feel overwhelming, but the best place to start is with educating yourself. That way, if someone in your company needs support, you'll be better equipped to offer the right help.



Stage 1: Pre-menopause

When is this: The pre-menopause period is the time from someone's first period to their last period.

What is this: Most pre-menopausal people have regular periods, with exceptions like pregnancy, certain contraceptives, hormone therapy, medical interventions and some medications.



Stage 2: Perimenopause

When is this: The time when someone is experiencing menopausal symptoms but still has periods .

What is this: This is the time around the menopause when hormone levels begin to fall, causing menopausal symptoms. In the UK, this usually starts at age 42 to 43, but can start as young as an individual's late thirties. It usually lasts for 5 to 10 years, can be up to 12.



Stage 3: Menopause

When is this: This is medically defined as someone's last natural period.

What is this: We need to wait one full year to be confident this was their last period. So, if somebody's last period was 18 Oct 2024, then we can be confident that they have had a menopause on 18 Oct 2025.



Stage 4: Post-menopause

When is this: Any time after someone's last period.

What is this: Usually by this point, hormone levels have dropped and levelled out. Once someone enters post-menopause, they're in this stage for the rest of their life. Their hormone levels will remain low, and they'll no longer have a monthly period. They can't get pregnant anymore.

Perimenopause and menopause can cause a range of physical and mental health symptoms

50% of women experience perimenopausal symptoms in their 30s. Because menopause is still widely seen as an “older woman’s issue,” many people end up suffering in silence.

Some don’t even realise they’re perimenopausal, struggling with severe symptoms or undiagnosed subfertility without support. Menopause doesn’t only happen to women nearing retirement, it affects women in the prime of their lives and careers.

The lack of awareness and support is causing top female talent, of all ages, to fall through the cracks.

Symptoms commonly include but aren’t limited to:

Anxiety, brain fog, difficulty concentrating, depression or low mood, dry eyes and skin, hot flushes, insomnia, irregular periods, memory loss, sweating, tiredness, heart palpitations, weight gain, irregular periods and heavy periods.

Lots of these symptoms are misunderstood or misdiagnosed. A lack of formal GP training can mean there’s little awareness of how to effectively treat them, meaning many people don’t get the right support when they need it, and symptoms remain or get worse.



50% of women
don't know what perimenopause is until
they start having symptoms.

Statista Research Department

70% of women will experience menopausal symptoms, but only **38%** of women will seek help from a GP. **One quarter** of women who visited a GP with symptoms said they **weren't asked about menopause.**

— Menopause Support UK

How to support someone through menopause challenges in the workplace

How to support your employees through menopause challenges

The role of HR in supporting someone through the menopause is crucial in ensuring **employee wellbeing** and in creating an **inclusive environment**. HR managers are often the first point of contact if someone needs extra support at work for a health condition. So, it's important to be prepared for this. If you've not experienced menopause yourself (or even if you have!), we know it can be difficult to know what to do or how to best support your team. If someone in your team asks you for support, here are **four ways** you can help:



Listen to your people

Managing menopause at work can be tough and isolating, with many losing confidence when symptoms are severe. Your policy should show empathy and recognise these challenges.

Creating a supportive culture starts with addressing all symptoms, both in and out of the workplace. Appointing menopause champions can help normalise the conversation and encourage others to seek support.



Start open conversations

Be clear about flexible working and menopause leave, outlining a simple process for requesting time off and clarifying whether it falls under sick leave or a separate allowance. Long-term menopause-related absences should be treated like other long-term health conditions.

Your policy should also state that menopause support is confidential unless the individual chooses to share. Line managers need to understand and respect this.



Offer a comfortable workplace

Go beyond the basics by considering simple adjustments to help employees manage menopause symptoms. Changes like adjusting office temperature, providing fans, or ensuring access to water can make a big difference.

For those struggling with energy or concentration, offering flexible hours or remote work can help them stay productive. Make sure your policy clearly outlines the support available.



Be inclusive of everyone

Ensure your policy is inclusive by using language that reflects everyone.

Trans and non-binary people can also experience menopause, so make it clear the policy applies to anyone affected, not just women. If your policy isn't inclusive, it suggests your business isn't for everyone.

Why your company should consider a Menopause Policy

Establishing policies is an important practice at any company. By having a menopause policy in place, your employees will feel seen, understood and supported.

It will guide your employees to the right support

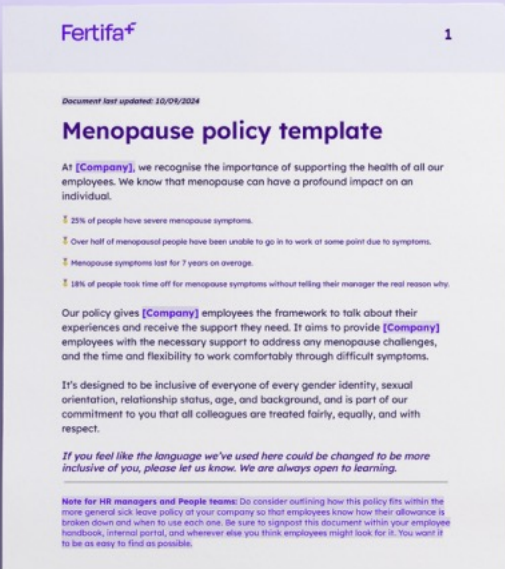
Your employees will know exactly what is available to them and allows you to give direct and clear advice to anyone asking for help or advice. It will outline what they are entitled to in terms of time off, and where to go if they need further support.

It builds a workplace that champions equality

By launching a menopause health policy, you are helping to open the conversation, breaking down taboos that can impact women's careers. By removing barriers you'll empower women to reach their fullest personal and professional potential.

It's essential for employee wellbeing

With a menopause policy, you are signaling to your team that you are here to support them through every stage of life, and it will demonstrate that employee wellbeing is a priority for your company.



The screenshot shows a document titled "Menopause policy template" from Fertifa. It includes a header with the Fertifa logo and the page number "1". Below the title, it states "Document last updated: 10/06/2024". The main text begins with "At [Company], we recognise the importance of supporting the health of all our employees. We know that menopause can have a profound impact on an individual." This is followed by four bullet points: "25% of people have severe menopause symptoms.", "Over half of menopausal people have been unable to go in to work at some point due to symptoms.", "Menopause symptoms last for 7 years on average.", and "18% of people took time off for menopause symptoms without telling their manager the real reason why." The text continues: "Our policy gives [Company] employees the framework to talk about their experiences and receive the support they need. It aims to provide [Company] employees with the necessary support to address any menopause challenges, and the time and flexibility to work comfortably through difficult symptoms." It then states: "It's designed to be inclusive of everyone of every gender identity, sexual orientation, relationship status, age, and background, and is part of our commitment to you that all colleagues are treated fairly, equally, and with respect." A note at the bottom says: "If you feel like the language we've used here could be changed to be more inclusive of you, please let us know. We are always open to learning." At the very bottom, a small note reads: "Note for HR managers and People teams: Do consider outlining how this policy fits within the more general sick leave policy at your company so that employees know how their allowance is broken down and when to use each one. Be sure to signpost this document within your employee handbook, internal portal, and wherever else you think employees might look for it. You want it to be as easy to find as possible."

Download our Menopause Policy Template to get started on your own.

[Free download](#) →

Ensure positive health outcomes, beyond a policy

68% of employees trust their employer to do what is right to address their health concerns, according to a recent Edelman survey. Employees are now, more than ever, turning to their employers for vital health and wellbeing support.



Education and awareness

Consider how you can raise awareness for menopause, and the support you offer for those affected. Think about hosting lunch and learn sessions, launching a menopause ERG, and providing your team with access to reliable health educational resources. Make use of menopause awareness month in October to start the conversation or host events.



Wellbeing support

Make sure everyone in your organisation has access to mental health and wellbeing support. This could be via an EAP, mental health apps, counselling, therapy, or a dedicated menopause support provider such as Fertifa. Mental health concerns are common menopause symptoms, so providing access to mental health support is a key component of comprehensive menopause care.



Clinical care and treatment

To provide a gold-standard menopause support programme, access to clinical care and treatment is vital. Consider working with a menopause provider, such as Fertifa, which can offer your employees access to navigational advice, clinical consultations, and treatment such as HRT prescriptions.

Get in touch with us at enquiries@fertifa.com if you have any questions. We'd love to speak about how we can support your employees through menopause.

Fertifa helps you create a workplace where everyone feels supported, every step of their journey and more.

[Book a call](#)

