

BLOOM

The Bloom Menofesto

Created by **BLOOM** | mpower



Supporting women in our industry
through the peri/menopause

In partnership with

**MAJOR
PLAYERS**

July 2022

A word from Caroline Mastoras, Bloom President 2022

It is with great enthusiasm that I write this introduction to the Bloom Menofesto, created by Bloom Mpower, and I feel super privileged that I am here to observe and participate in this much-awaited launch. At Bloom, we believe in truth as a force for change and sharing real stories that lift us up and give us the strength to overcome the challenges we face; this is how we are committed to paying it forward to the industry. According to research by Forth with Life (2019), 90% of women say their workplace doesn't offer any help to menopausal women and only 3% of managers are given relevant training.

One of Bloom's key aims is to offer the industry practical advice and initiatives that can be implemented at no cost, empowering managers, employers, and colleagues to create positive action and spearhead change within their communities. So much time, energy and teamwork goes into putting these together and from sitting on the side line, I am so proud to witness the dedication and collaboration amongst such inspiring woman to produce such an influential piece of work. You are truly remarkable women.

The Bloom Mpower team that has spearheaded the Bloom Menofesto have worked tirelessly as volunteers to ensure that the policies, research, and real-life stories will be used over the coming years to future proof women's careers during a time where the industry needs to commit to supporting women across all ages and life stages. This issue is long overdue being tackled by the industry and I am immensely proud that at Bloom we are leading this conversation.

**Congratulations, Mpower team
You have made all Bloomers
very proud.**

"Clarity and amplification of the reality of menopause throughout the organisation – should be shared with men as readily as women."



A welcome from Samantha Frankel, Founder Bloom Mpower, Bloom CSO 2022

This is our Menofesto for change: change in the language, support and understanding given to women* in the communications industry in the lead up to, during and after their menopause.

Backed by our own research and with input from our members, it's a starting point to encourage an open dialogue within your organisation to destigmatise & normalise something that 51% of the UK population will experience in their life. It talks about what menopause means, and how to

help and support those navigating this stage at work, we've also included a blueprint policy to adapt for use in your own organisation.

So, whether you're a business leader looking to retain your talent & create a supportive working environment, a woman looking to share new ideas with your colleagues on how best they can support you, or are simply interested to learn more, this Menofesto is written for you. We hope it will be a benefit to all who read it.

*and anyone who experiences symptoms as a result of hormonal changes

As I write this in July 2022, the mainstreaming of the menopause continues apace in the UK led by a glittering array of celebrities, medical experts and writers, intent on smashing the taboos that still surround this most natural phase of a woman's life and securing adequate medical support and advice for women countrywide. Menopause has been put front and centre in government by an All-Party Parliamentary Group set up to create a 'menopause revolution' and it's starting to appear on our screens in both factual & fictional content and some advertising too. The progress over the past couple of years in long-overdue conversation around this alone has been truly incredible.

This is a far cry from the situation in 2020, when, together with a handful of Bloom women each with their own discriminatory menopause or age-related story, I set up our inclusion group Bloom Mpower and the idea for this Menofesto was born.

It's hard to believe that only a few years ago the word menopause was still whispered in embarrassment by women themselves and the word perimenopause was met almost universally with blank confusion, but this really was the case!

Borne out of very real personal frustrations and experiences, Mpower was set up to empower midlife and beyond – to lift the lid on the changes and challenges women start to face towards the end of their thirties, focussing on how to prepare for and invest in the future and the everyday actions to adopt now that will pay dividends down the line: what to expect, what to consider and ultimately how to take control of this second phase.

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BLOOM | mpower Strategic Objectives

→ Change the narrative

tirelessly destigmatize menopause and midlife and reframe attitudes through regular, positive, empowering conversation

→ Increase awareness & understanding

demystify the stages, symptoms and treatments available for perimenopause signpost the challenges of midlife across Bloom network

→ Create action

highlight & celebrate best practise workplace policies, spearhead best practise in the industry and lead policy change

If 2020 was about starting the conversation around this within Bloom and without,

with many Mpower members bravely sharing their personal stories, 2021 became about increasing understanding, busting some myths, and offering practical advice culminating in the launch of the industry's first 'understanding menopause survey' at the close of 2021 (the results of which we share inside).

Despite undeniable progress and greater awareness, workplace menopause support and policies remain the exception rather than the rule in the communications industry and change is stubbornly slow. The challenge of course is that the industry is still so young. The Allin census (March 2021) shows the industry skews heavily towards the 25-34 age bracket and there is a considerable drop off for women as their age increases (just 15% of any gender over the age of 45 dropping to 4.2% 55+). So, the question gets begged: why have a policy when only a small number of people are affected?

Well, although the average age for menopause in this country is 51, the time leading up to the 'one and done' moment can begin as many as 10 years prior.

This means some women will start to experience symptoms not long after their 40th birthday with symptoms affecting most between the ages of 45-55. Despite having potentially already experienced a career (and pay) slip as a result of having children, most women of this age will be at a career high, many raising kids & starting to care for parents, juggling admirably when, without much warning, a tsunami of symptoms can hit that will shake their confidence and rock their foundations. It is no surprise that some, many, decide to leave.

At any one time there are thought to be an estimated 18 million peri and post-menopausal working women in the UK. Around 80% of these women will experience any number of 48 physical and psychological symptoms to a greater or lesser extent and it will sadly take a hefty toll on 1 in 4, seriously affecting their career, confidence, ambition & progression. 1 in 4 will consider leaving their jobs, 1 in 10 will eventually quit, and tragically, 1 in 10 will feel suicidal.¹

The simple fact is that when you are experiencing the symptoms, it is difficult to function as normal. From a workplace perspective women need compassion, support

& understanding to navigate this stage and, without a more inclusive approach to this, the industry will continue to lose its female talent – already a visible trend from mid-level on. Having decent support in place then is not only the right thing to do, it also makes good business sense.

We believe it is time for the industry to change so, this year, we have created the Bloom Menofesto specifically to help companies build better conversations around menopause and to provide the right support for their staff. Over the pages that follow we aim to:

• Inform

with research and useful resources to learn more

• Inspire

with stories of businesses who have pioneered in this space

• Support

with a menopause policy blueprint for you to adapt and own

We certainly don't have all the answers, but we hope this provides some of them and we encourage you to take some steps, no matter how small, to make our industry that bit better for all.

The Bloom Mpower team



In partnership with MAJOR PLAYERS

In the face of huge demand for skilled workers, employers are having to fast-track their processes and policies to ensure they can attract, engage, and retain talent.

Data from Major Player's recent 2022 Salary Survey suggests that representation of those aged 45+ makes up approximately only 10% of the creative industries. This lack of representation is predominantly caused by businesses failing to support those through mid-life changes, including maternity leave and the menopause. With female representation growing across the Creative Industries to 63%, it's important that businesses invest and implement initiatives that support women as they enter and progress through their careers.

Over the years Major Players have championed initiatives that facilitate positive representation and equality, including Bloom's recent Maternity Leave Playbook, and Creative Equals Creative Comeback programme. These activations are important in achieving gender equality, as they will support workplaces in becoming stronger, happier, and ultimately more effective; with businesses outputting better work, and with greater success in attracting and retaining talent.

¹Forth of Life survey 2019

The current state of play

An executive summary of Bloom UK's Understanding Menopause Survey 2021



To coincide with World Menopause Day October 2021 Bloom Mpower launched the industry's first 'understanding menopause' survey. We wanted to:

- understand how the general uptick in interest in menopause in the mainstream media had translated within the communications industry and to understand if rising awareness was also translating into policy changes
- gauge the level of understanding and support that existed and
- to identify what more needed to happen to bring this important topic to the fore
- Ultimately, we wanted to understand how much work was needed to push the topic of menopause workplace support further up the DIB agenda in the communications industry where we have seen great strides in terms of D & I, cultural change, candid conversations, and policy implementation

We conducted a survey amongst Bloom members and supporters to establish awareness, experience and attitudes towards the menopause, perimenopause, and menopause policy. With 120 responses from a range of organisations this gives us a good read of the status of this topic in our workplaces. Organisations who participated ranged from media and creative agencies to ad tech companies, PR specialists and media owners. The sample is, as you would expect for a Bloom source and the topic matter, female biased at 88% women. We did however speak to a range of ages, with 68% aged between 35 and 54.

We discovered that whilst there are very high levels of awareness of the term menopause at 98%, perimenopause is less understood at 77%. A third of our sample were experiencing symptoms, although it's worth noting that 13% weren't sure, which is likely down to lack of understanding and support. Indeed only 45% agreed that they had had the stages of menopause or perimenopause explained to them. And only 18% of people who agreed they had experienced symptoms felt that they fully understood what was happening to them at the time. It's worth noting that 13% of our sample were postmenopausal.

The symptoms of the menopause and perimenopause are wide ranging and easily confused with other health issues. However, within this mix of experiences one thing is common - 70% agree that the symptoms had a great deal or fair amount of impact, with only 3% getting away with no impact at all.

The top five symptoms associated with this stage of life beyond the obvious effects on your period include **hot flushes, night sweats, brain fog, mood changes and broken sleep.**

Less well recognised symptoms include **aching joints and muscles (31%), chills (26%), dizziness (27%), migraines (41%), heart palpitations (16%) and bladder problems (27%)**



Universal awareness of menopause, only 77% awareness of perimenopause



33% of respondents have started to experience symptoms although 13% weren't sure



13% are post menopause



Only 18% who experienced symptoms felt they understood what was happening

Symptoms our sample recognised as associated with menopause:

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- 90% hot flashes
- 56% panic attacks/anxiety
- 80% brain fog/memory loss
- 72% broken sleep
- 66% depression and sadness
- 18% suicidal thoughts
- 22% dizziness
- 25% chills
- 65% fatigue
- 77% irregular or stopped periods
- 78% mood change
- 80% night sweats
- 40% migraines
- 29% sense of loss
- 68% loss of libido
- 30% aching joints
- 56% vaginal dryness
- 26% bladder problems
- 65% weight gain
- 55% thinning hair

“Having policies that recognise the pressure that menopause can cause, will hopefully ease that pressure, and allow people to continue to thrive at work and be happy in the long term.”



67% feel comfortable hearing others talk about the menopause

Sadly, despite this being an experience that affects many women significantly it remains a taboo topic with only 29% of people feeling comfortable with talking to their colleagues about it, falling to 24% if it's your boss. Encouragingly 67% of people agree that they are comfortable with others talking about it, so perhaps we just need to get this conversation started in our workplaces! The biggest barrier to conversation is that it is not understood well enough and also very tellingly, for our youth biased industry, that it relates to getting old. There is certainly a collision of issues here with regards to ageism in the workplace and age and inclusion is lagging sadly behind other topics within the D&I agenda.

In terms of perceptions of menopause many of our respondents were able to correctly identify statements as true or false. For example, the majority knew that individual experiences can be varied (96%), that every woman goes through it (79%) as well as transgender men, and that 1 in 4 will have such severe symptoms they will be prompted to leave the workforce (70%). Less well recognised was that 1 in 10 women will feel suicidal during menopause, with only 38% thinking this was true.

With this level of impact now being recognised, has workplace provision caught up to serve these needs? Our survey revealed that only 18% believe their company has a policy or strategy in place to support perimenopausal or menopausal women. Encouragingly 21% say 'no not yet but it is in discussion'. However, these levels are not good enough when you consider that 94% believe that having such a policy is important and that no one in the survey agreed they had received a great deal of support at work whilst going through menopause and only 4% said they got a fair amount of support. Menopause policy has some ground to cover to catch up with other similar policies such as maternity policy, with 92% coverage, mental health (82%) and flexible working (75%).

So, what do companies need to do to support women? Well, we asked, and these were the top responses: flexible working, confidential access to health professionals and tailored absence policies. However, it's not just about supporting these women directly, it's also about raising awareness and providing education in the wider business, 59% agree that there should be training on the menopause across the business.

63% feel comfortable talking to their partner about the menopause.

29% This drops to 29% when asked if you feel comfortable talking about the menopause to colleagues.

23% Just 24% feel comfortable talking to their boss about the menopause.

38% Only 38% recognised the 1 in 10 women will feel suicidal during menopause

No-one in the survey agreed they had received a great deal of support whilst going through menopause at work and only 4% said they got a fair amount of support.

Looking for inspiration?

Let's hear from some of the trailblazers, the pioneers who got the ball rolling, implemented policy, and have worked to make the journey a little easier for their female talent.

For many women, menopause happens at the peak of their career



"Empowering. Conversations. Menopause. Launched by then Chief People Officer Helen Matthews on World Menopause Day 2019 Ogilvy were one of the first agencies to create a supportive policy"

Elaine Grell, Chief People Officer, Ogilvy UK

"For many women, menopause happens at the peak of their career or when significant changes are happening in family life and it doesn't just affect women – it affects their partners and families too, at home and at work. With around 1 in 3 women currently perimenopausal or menopausal, we at Ogilvy are committed to ensuring that we have the support available for our people to manage this stage of life.

We are working towards achieving our accreditation as a Menopause Friendly Employer which will demonstrate that despite this being a topic that many people still find taboo; we will be recognised for the supportive guidelines, medical support and educational tools and resources that we have put in place. With around 8 in 10 women experiencing noticeable symptoms and with 45% finding their symptoms hard to deal with, I'm thrilled that our thriving and active peer network group is available for those experiencing (peri) menopause to share experiences, hear from leading experts and have access to additional resources.

Menopausal women are the fastest growing demographic in the workforce and we want to help more people to understand the challenges and help anyone who is affected to feel supported so that they can be the best that they can be. Not all women want to talk about the menopause but for those that do we can be educated and ready to have the conversation that they need."

*Please note that we sometimes use the terms 'women', 'female' and 'her'. However, we want to be clear that this is inclusive of everyone who goes through the menopause or menopausal symptoms as a result of hormonal changes, for example trans men, and the language used is purely for the flow of the guidance



Channel 4 launched its menopause policy in October 2019

4Women co-chairs, Landy Slattery, Jane English and Navene Alim set about removing the stigma around menopause. 4Women decided to publish the policy publicly after being inundated with requests for the template.

"It's broken down this massive taboo so that women, as well as men, are having lightbulb moments and being able to talk about the menopause."

Research carried out by 4Women found that 78% of staff feel better about Channel 4 as a place to work since the policy launched, while 10% of female employees have used or plan to use the policy. This is significant given 13% of Channel 4 staff are women over the age of 45.

We've seen that the policy also has an impact on talent attraction with candidates referencing how ground-breaking the policy is when applying for roles at Channel 4.

Our menopause policy has a massive positive impact on how we represent women on the other side of the camera, because if you're developing a campaign and a key part of the target audience is women in the 40s, 50s and 60s, you'll do a much better job of developing something that's on brief when you have that audience working for you.

This is Channel 4 living its remit, normalising a taboo subject by making it more visible and we hope that 4Women's fantastic work will inspire more in the industry to support women in their workplaces transitioning through the menopause."



"The first thing businesses need to do is to start to acknowledge the challenges women are facing and swiftly follow it up with ways they can be supported,"

"It's so important that women don't feel they need to hide their symptoms and that any discussions will be met with empathy and support."

"I think the more we talk about the menopause, the more it will be normalised. In the same way we can and must talk about mental health, it's only in doing that that it stops being such a taboo."

Melissa Robertson, Chief Executive Officer, Dark Horses



"Boots has long been a business that is grounded in care. Customers and patients are at the heart of what we do and we are committed to providing exceptional care to them. This also extends to our team members, and with 51,000 of them across the UK, made up of 80% women, it is important that we support an inclusive and open workplace culture.

Earlier this year, we announced that we will cover the cost of team members' prescriptions for those able and wanting to take HRT. Research shows that symptoms such as hot flushes, fatigue, and low moods can affect home life and relationships, as well as careers, to the extent that some women leave the employment market altogether because they don't get the support they need. With women making up the majority of our workforce, it is really important that we help as they navigate this important life transition.

Alongside offering to pay for HRT prescriptions, Boots has introduced a series of initiatives and support packages all aimed at breaking down barriers, raising awareness and supporting team members. These include dedicated training modules, the development of a menopause network to encourage team members to learn from each other and share experiences, and access to counselling sessions for any team members going through difficulties resulting from the menopause or other health issues. We hope that by offering activities such as these, we create a culture whereby women feel empowered to talk about the menopause transition and get the support they need."

Pete Markey, CMO, Boots.

DIAGEO

At Diageo we are committed to creating an inclusive workplace and culture, this includes raising awareness and understanding of subjects that can often be taboo, such as menopause. Last year, we introduced our Thriving Through Menopause Guidelines to help employees understand how menopause can impact women at work and home and we are proud that these guidelines are now live in over 40 countries.

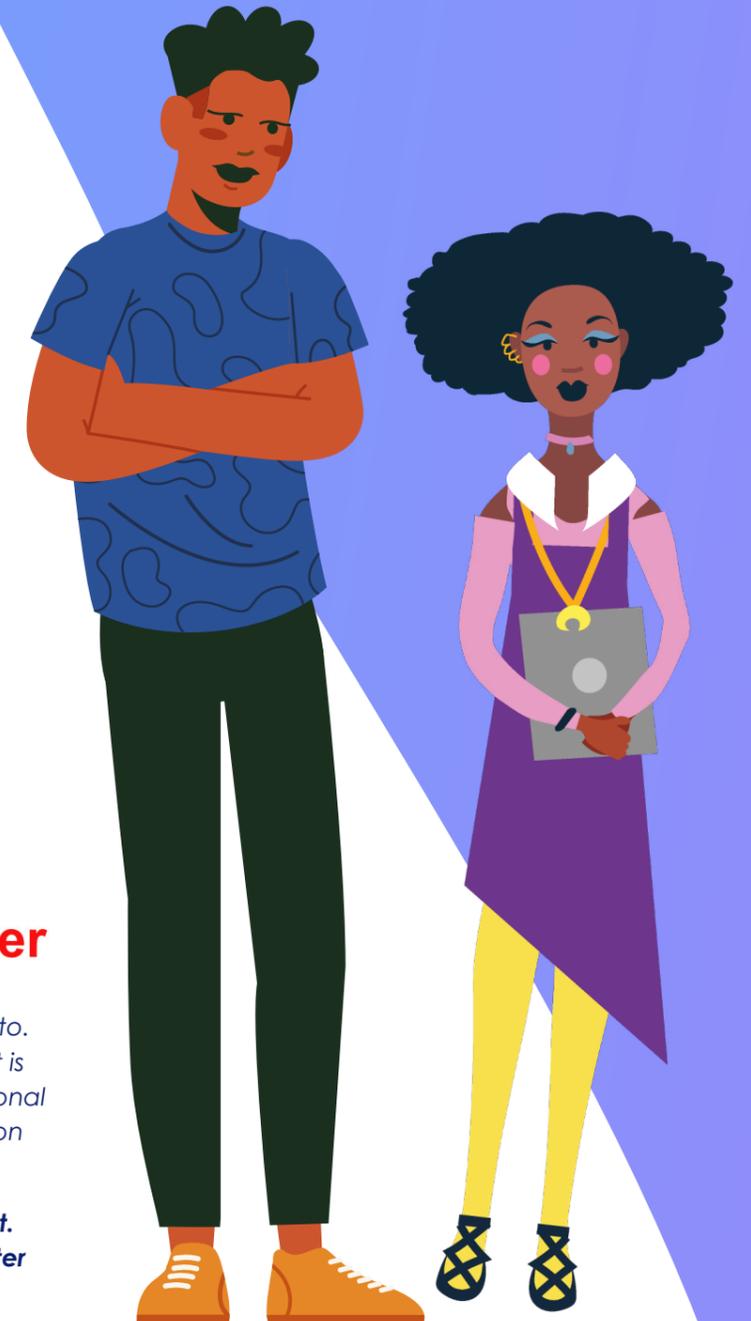
"However, we want to go beyond just raising awareness which is why we have recently launched the balance+ menopause app to all our employees worldwide. Balance+ is the world's first medically approved menopause health and wellbeing companion for perimenopausal and menopausal women and it has been designed to put the power into women's hands, allowing them to go to their doctor for treatment armed with the right knowledge.

"As well as equipping our people with leading medical advice, support and diagnosis, we are continuing to encourage open and trusted conversations across Diageo and we have trained over 40 male and female menopause advocates who will work with their teams over the coming months to help build their teams knowledge in this field."

Caroline Rhodes, Global Inclusion and Diversity Director at Diageo

"Breaking the stigma of age in the industry and ensuring women have support and backing regardless of life stage. If men went through this there would have been policies 50 years ago!"

"I was relatively young, so no one knew, I got sweaty sometimes but that was it."



#MakeMenopauseMatter

"I am delighted to support the Bloom Menofesto. Improving menopause awareness and support is vital for us all in both our professional and personal relationships. Quite simply, it is a win-win situation for everybody in all areas of our lives."

Diane Danzebrink, Founder menopausesupport.co.uk and the national #MakeMenopauseMatter campaign

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OUR POLICY BLUEPRINT



Feeling inspired to design and implement a menopause policy for your people?

We've created a blueprint framework for you to review with your team and adapt, so that it feels true to your organisational values. These are recommendations that we've taken from best practice policies; feel free to build on it with ideas from within your business.

Who is this for?

This is for any organisation of any size who is either looking to update their existing policy or who wants to implement one for the first time. The content in this policy is relevant for all employees, managers, and leaders regardless of age or gender.

The majority of women who experience symptoms will do so between the ages of **45-55**

Why is it important to have your own policy?

Put simply, when nearly a million women in the UK feel forced to leave their jobs or reduce their hours because of the detrimental effect of the symptoms they are experiencing and the lack of support or understanding they receive at work it's time for us all to take notice.

The majority of women who experience symptoms will do so between the ages of 45 - 55 – which also just happens to be the fastest growing demographic of the UK workforce. Employers have an obligation to these individuals to not only educate staff and start conversations around this still-taboo topic but to put meaningful measures in place to ensure that the people struggling are supported and not ostracized or penalized. With an aging workforce and more women in the workplace than ever before, implementing a menopause policy is an investment in future generations for firms, and then the next bastion of a safe and inclusive workplace.

The goal of this policy is to help you to create an informed environment where women feel safe and empowered to raise issues about their symptoms and to request workplace adjustments without embarrassment or concern.

Let's talk menopause

Perimenopause

The phase leading up to the menopause when the female body makes its natural transition to menopause – literally the pause of menstruation – also sometimes referred to as 'menopausal transition'. During this phase the levels of hormones oestrogen, progesterone & testosterone change & decline giving rise to any number of 48* possible physical & psychological symptoms. Not every woman will experience every symptom, and some don't experience any at all! There is no one-size-fits-all and everyone's experience is individual. Perimenopause is a transitional phase that can last anywhere between 4 - 12 years with most women starting to notice signs such as more irregular periods in their forties.

Premature menopause

Also known as 'early' menopause, is a natural but quite rare (1%) phenomenon when a woman experiences her menopause much earlier than average. This can be extremely distressing and even more 'othering' in a work environment for those who experience it. Early menopause or surgical menopause can also be a by-product of other procedures such as fibroids, hysterectomy and cancer.

Menopause

The menopause marks the end of a woman's reproductive years (which also means the end of their monthly periods) and is medically defined as 12 consecutive months without menstruating. All women, some trans and some non-binary people will go through the menopause. Although trans women do not go through the menopause they may also experience similar symptoms to perimenopause as a result of withdrawing from hormones.

HRT

Hormone replacement therapy. An effective treatment for many of the symptoms of perimenopause particularly when combined with other diet & lifestyle changes, and a game changer for most who take it. Bio-identical hormones are available on the NHS on prescription and more effort is being placed on ensuring their availability to all for whom they are suitable and to increase the level of knowledge and training on menopause for doctors in the UK (although this is still far from perfect). Although it is helpful to do your own research, it is extremely important to seek proper medical advice and discuss any medication or lifestyle changes with your GP.

Hot flush

This is the symptom most people think of when they think of the menopause (which points to the lack of education and awareness as there are many more!) It is one of the more common symptoms experienced. As the name sounds this is a physical symptom triggered by changes in hormone levels and can be both distressing and embarrassing in a work context.

Just
24% feel
comfortable
talking to
their boss
about the
menopause

Brain Fog

Another common and even more distressing symptom, particularly if you are unaware of its existence, is brain fog which is exactly what it says on the tin and manifests as an inability to concentrate and remember basic things – which is far from welcome when at work!

Other symptoms

Night sweats, dizziness, headaches, joint stiffness, aches and pains, dry eyes, anxiety, recurring UTIs, heavy and/or painful periods, insomnia/difficulty sleeping, panic attacks, loss of confidence

Don't panic!

Whilst this far from exhaustive list might sound daunting there are many safe and effective treatments that can help and help quickly. That's the point! The silence and age-related stigma that has surrounded the menopause for so long has left far too many working women suffering alone. The key to a smoother transition is feeling fully informed, understood, and supported. It's a natural phase of life!

And let's not forget the end of periods signals the start of the next phase of a woman's life, no longer defined by her reproductive ability. It's freeing and it's empowering.

Let's change the narrative once and for all!

*Perimenopausal symptoms are very wide-ranging and various sources currently list various amounts. Please refer to our resources list within this Blueprint policy

How to use this policy

This is a template for you to use and adapt for your company. The most successful policies have been developed with people within the organisation so that there is a strong sense of ownership and adherence.

We invite you to use the template on the following pages as a conversation starter, building on it and shaping it in your distinct organisational tone of voice. To help signpost you to further information, we've added links to additional resources in the following pages.

"I have been fortunate and have had mild symptoms, which are now happening less and less. For a year I had hot flushes, hair loss. Now I sometimes have broken sleep and brain fog."



OPEN THE DIALOGUE

We'd encourage you to start the discussion with your teams, creating a safe space for women and men to share what they believe is important in terms of support in whatever way makes them feel comfortable. Normalising conversation around the menopause is key to creating a more comfortable environment for all.

THE SMALLEST CHANGES CAN MAKE A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE!

Some simple adjustments to the working day:

For office-based employees:

- Desk fans
- A quiet/cool room
- Flexibility to work in other areas of the building when in the office
- Earlier start times and finish times to avoid peak travel times when commuting
- A relaxed, comfortable dress code
- Access to cold drinking water

For those working from home you can order the menopause pack to help alleviate some symptoms, these include:

- Desk fan
- Cool pack

For employees based in either location:

- More breaks and time away from their computer
- More flexible working, reduced hours, or varied start times to cope with sleep disturbances
- Cameras off when on a call if this is preferred
- Walking meetings if helpful

These are some starter ideas. Other adjustments may be helpful to an individual in which case they should discuss these with their line manager, or if this feels in any way uncomfortable or awkward then a member of the HR team, one of the management team or a trusted colleague within the business can help these discussions. What is important is that any individual experiencing symptoms feels safe to express how they are feeling and what support they need.

TIP: appoint an in-office advocate or allyship team fully versed in your policies, allowances, wellness programmes etc. and who can liaise with senior management on support and change. They may be more approachable than an immediate line-manager or HR

SICKNESS/PAID LEAVE

An employee may feel unwell and unfit for work due to menopausal symptoms and if so, <our company> will support them. This includes the sudden onset of symptoms during the working day. Details of our Sickness Absence Policy can be found <here>. This entitles an employee to take paid leave for up to <X> days. Whilst an employee can simply inform their line manager, they are unfit for work, they should also feel they can be open about the reason for their menopause-related leave with their line manager without fear of being discriminated against. In addition to our standard paid leave for sick days, <our company> also offers up to 5 menopause leave days that can be taken in half or whole days for severe symptoms.

TIP: revisit absence management policies that reward or incentivise not taking sick days and ensure your policy recognizes absences that are directly related to the menopause

PRIVATE HEALTHCARE, COUNSELLING, AND SUPPORT

In this section you add any resources you offer that could help someone suffering from menopausal symptoms. Examples include free counselling, an Employee Assistance Programme, private health care, internal support groups, mental health first aiders and so on. We recommend appointing a menopause champion in HR and one or several in the business so that employees have someone to turn to for advice

WHAT ARE ALL OUR RESPONSIBILITIES?

All employees and colleagues will:

- Educate themselves about the menopause and become familiar with the terms of this policy
- Contribute to a respectful and productive working environment, by treating colleagues who may be experiencing the menopause with respect, and being willing to help and support them, and understanding to any adjustments that they may need
- Take personal responsibility for looking after their own health and seek support from their GP and <our company> in relation to menopause symptoms
- Talk openly and honestly with their line manager, a member of the HR team or alternatively a female manager within <our company> if they need support with menopausal symptoms. Keep their line manager and <our company> informed to ensure that the right support is being provided

All line managers will:

- Educate themselves about the menopause and become familiar with the terms of this policy and ensure that their team members are also familiar with the terms of this policy
- Attend the mandatory training provided by <our company>
- Encourage employees to discuss the impact of their menopausal symptoms on their work and to access the support offered, including possible adjustments
- Work together with the employee to provide the right support that satisfies both <our company> and the employee's needs
- Undertake an ongoing dialogue and regular review of any agreed changes to the workplace or reasonable adjustments. This is especially important with remote employees
- Be prepared and available to talk openly about the menopause with any <our company> employee in a sensitive and supportive way

Our company and HR will:

- Ensure it reviews its health and wellbeing policies and practices on a regular basis
- Provide guidance and support to line managers on related issues
- Provide training for all staff on the menopause and common symptoms
- Ensure its health offerings <add any benefits here> have provisions to support employees experiencing the menopause
- Appoint menopause champions and create a support group
- Support employee-requested changes in relation to the menopause

BRINGING THE POLICY OFF THE PAGE

Policies are next to useless if they languish in a handbook on a dusty shelf and normalising this topic so that everyone in the business feels comfortable and included requires active participation. Some ideas to create a more active policy are:

- Invite engaging experts and speakers into your business to give everyone of any level the opportunity to learn more
- Make sure menopause is part of the discussion and activities of any wellness week
- Encourage women in your organisation to join an employee support group where people can truly be open about what they are experiencing, offer mutual support and share. Bloom Mpower is a great example of this within Bloom!
- Keep the conversation going – not as a one-off but as part of your company's DNA

FURTHER RESOURCES

- **NHS: Menopause:** nhs.uk/conditions/menopause
- **NHS: Early menopause:** nhs.uk/conditions/early-menopause
- **Acas: Menopause at work:** acas.org.uk/menopause-at-work
- **CIPD: Let's talk menopause:** cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being/menopause
- **The Daisy Network:** daisynetwork.org
- **British Menopause Society:** thebms.org.uk
- **Menopause Exchange:** menopause-exchange.co.uk
- **Henpicked's menopause hub:** henpicked.net/menopause-hub
- **Talking Menopause:** talkingmenopause.co.uk
- **Menopause Matters:** menopausematters.co.uk
- **My menopause centre:** mymenopausecentre.com
- **Gen M:** gen-m.com

Tip: Feel free to include Bloom's very own Naked Truths podcast: The Storm Before the Calm, which includes a discussion of workplace menopause provision and menopause myth-busting from menopause expert Dr Stephanie Goodwin. Find our podcast episode at bloomnetwork.uk. Or listen here spoti.fi/3OGT5sT

The logo for Bloom, featuring the word "BLOOM" in a bold, sans-serif font. The letters "B", "L", "O", and "M" are in a dark blue color, while the letter "O" is in a light purple color. The logo is centered within a white circle.

Thank you to all those who completed the survey, your experiences have been invaluable in writing the menofesto ...

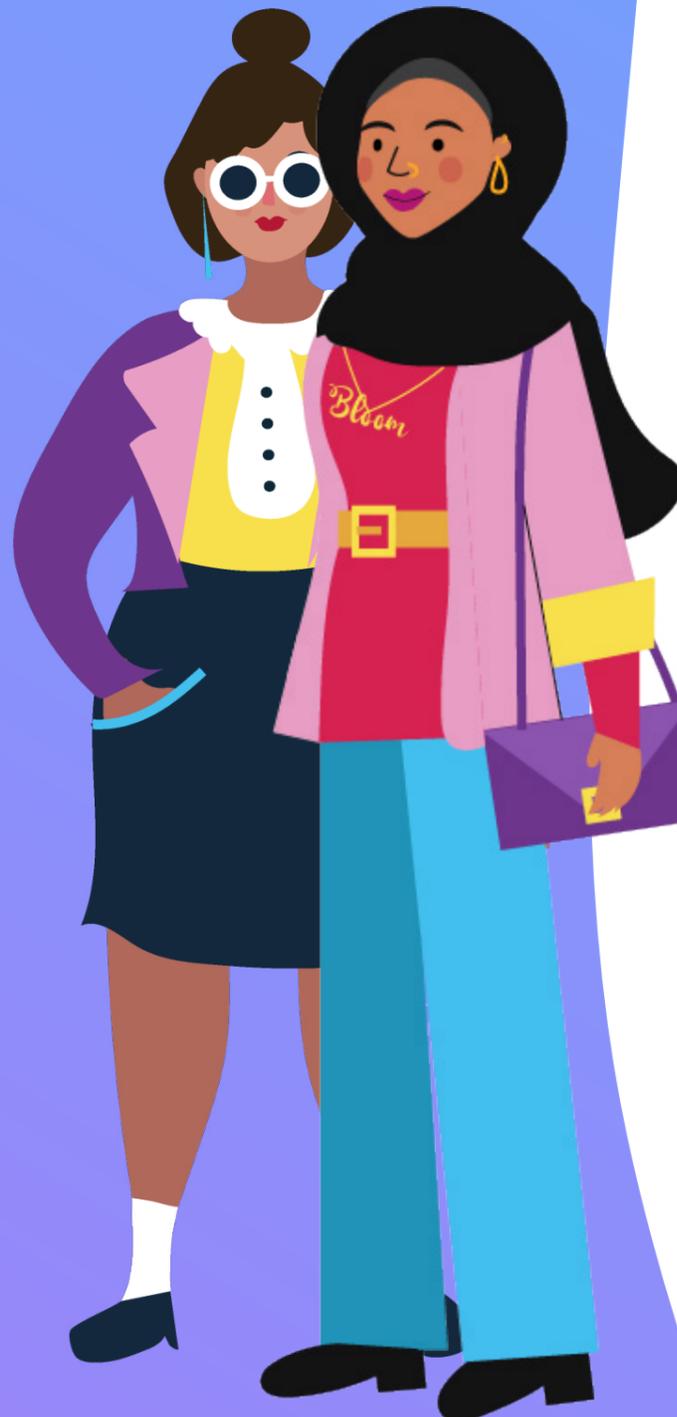
"Poor memory, brain fog and lack of concentration led to a dip in my confidence at work. I don't think I made the best of potential career opportunities as a consequence. Having gone through this experience I raised this and with lots of HR support we now have a Menopause policy, and I can talk openly in the business about Menopause. I am fortunate to work for a very inclusive and motivated employer."

"It crashed my self-worth, made me doubt my intelligence, resilience, resourcefulness, my parenting, my relationship, my connection to living. I still wonder how to live well but I have made enormous progress in the last year."

"My mum was treated for depression and left her job – it was the menopause, but we didn't realise until a lot later. She had lots of other symptoms too which now on reflection was to do with the menopause. But she wasn't treated for the menopause. Her confidence and anxiety have been severely triggered by this."

"Mum has had a myriad of symptoms and not pleasant to see her anguish as her mood swings were bad. My own symptoms are starting, and I am worried. I have a mix of thinning hair, mood swings, painful breasts and tingling into my armpits."

"Sleep deprivation is a major factor and I also get brain fog and memory loss. Prior to taking HRT I also suffered from aggressive mood swings, depression, and suicidal thoughts. I also had hot flushes and night sweats but alongside the other emotions these were the least of my worries!"



"I experienced mood swings and became very emotional at times. With the benefit of hindsight, I now see that rather than not being able to cope with changes to my job and increased stress, was not a failure but a symptom of the menopause. I thought I was useless at my job and genuinely thought that my younger colleagues were better at coping. The reality is that I was not coping as well because of hormones and not because I was a failure."

"I fear that the high-profile reports of the debilitating nature of menopause symptoms is making older women even less attractive to employers."

"It's something employees at every company go through, and there needs to be acceptance and policy to tackle the stigma that drives silent suffering."

"We need to remove the stigma of menopause, support women who go through it and make it a healthy transition as much as possible."

"The company I work for has a high proportion of female employees plus aspirations to develop more women into senior leadership roles. If women are leaving jobs due to menopausal symptoms or not feeling supported this is unlikely to be achievable. A Menopause Awareness Session this week generated more interest and discussion than similar sessions held for other topic areas highlighting the significance of Menopause to a large proportion of our employees."

"It shows that the company is understanding, opens up conversations and that it's a safe place for women to work and talk about these things."

"Impacted on ability to keep going particularly in a very demanding job, can be exhausting, feel like you'll be perceived as over the hill, sweats in meetings are embarrassing, lack of sleep playing havoc with productivity."

"Secret, stigmatised, relates to ageing and (wrongly) associated with loss of attractiveness and sexuality as well as value for older women."

"I think it is not talked about because it is a taboo subject – the same way periods are. Menopause represents getting old / past your prime and that is uncomfortable and shameful for many women."

"I try and dodge the conversation of age as I am considerably older than most of the people I work with. I also find myself feeling massively uncomfortable when people younger than me start discussing the menopause as if it's a medical condition. My menopausal rage surfaces and I feel patronised and slightly othered, so I move the conversation on and hope no-one goes back to it."

"There has been a 'joke/banter' for many years, that when a woman expresses herself in a certain way at a certain age she must be 'going through the change' – I've heard this many times in the office. It's associated with negative comments about 'her time of life' and there is a lack of understanding through a lack of knowledge. I think perhaps linked to ageism, the perception that it's something older women go through, and it has a defining label."

"Menopause is connected to being old and we work in a young industry where older people are already discriminated enough. Also, as it affects your functioning there is a concern that people will see you as less valuable."

"Not too badly at the moment, but moods of others around me have been affected."

"Most of our workforce are younger and not of the age where the menopause is relevant."

"We don't have many women of menopausal age as we skew young, but we need to make it a more inclusive environment that allows women to succeed at any age"



A Closing Note

Thank you for taking the time to read our Bloom Menofesto, we hope you have found it useful and that you will be able to make use of our blueprint within your own organisations.

We as an industry clearly have a long way to go to provide the support that is needed not only to retain our female talent but also to attract back the talent we have already lost. Bloom Mpower is committed to pushing the discussion of age discrimination further up the D & I agenda to protect the longevity of women's careers and is working now on plans to engage more of the industry in our quest!

We hope we can count on you to join our Bloom Menofesto movement and be part of the change we need to see. Please let us know how we can support you further? Bloom Mpower are here to share best practise with you and would also encourage organisations to publish their menopause support policies to inspire others to act.

We would love to hear your thoughts and feedback and are keen to understand if something not already included here has worked particularly well for you or your organisation at bloom.mpower@gmail.com

Thank you for taking the time to make our industry that bit better.



About us

Founded in 2010, Bloom is a professional network for women in communications. It is on a mission to ensure women have equal opportunity in the communications industry. By harnessing the power of their real voices, Bloom strives to future-proof women's careers, spearhead industry change and pay it forward to the next generation.

Today Bloom UK has over 550 members and continues to grow. Bloom members are active in a mix of events and initiatives, with skill-sharing, mentoring, and working to drive real change in the industry, all part of the Bloom world.



Bloom is a proud partner of Women's Aid

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About Major Players

Major Players is the UK's leading digital, marketing, and creative talent agency; helping transform businesses, from trailblazing start-ups through to household names.

Major Players are committed to creating a fairer and more equitable future for all and for the last 29 years has been a passionate change leader for progressive places of work. Tapping into their extensive network of over 1000+ businesses and 400,000+ candidates, they have unrivalled access into the Creative Industries; influencing real, positive change through ground-breaking initiatives including Earn Your Worth which is aimed at tackling pay disparity across marginalised groups.

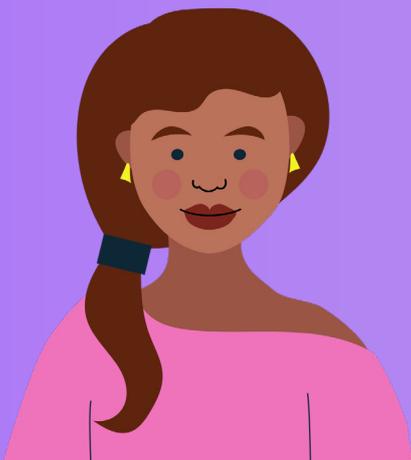
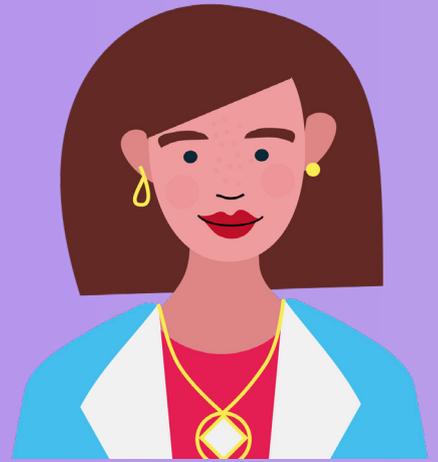
Major Players are a proud partner and supporter of Bloom UK.

To download further copies of the Bloom Menofesto please visit

bloomnetwork.uk/our-initiatives

or majorplayers.co.uk/news-events/downloads/bloom-menofesto/

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