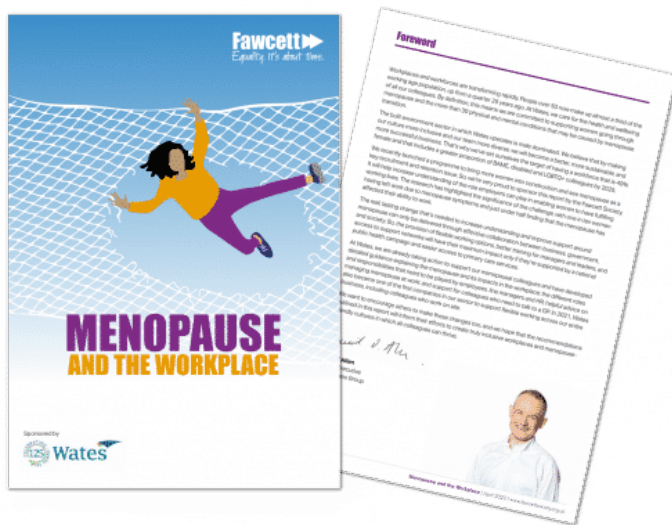


Landmark Study: Menopausal Women Let Down by Employers and Healthcare Providers

3 years ago



The Fawcett Society is today releasing findings of the largest ever survey of menopausal women. [This landmark study](#), sponsored by the Wates Group, reveals a shocking lack of basic support and damaging stigma which mean the needs of menopausal women are being ignored in the workplace and by healthcare providers.

The study shows the majority of women (77%) find at least one menopause symptom 'very difficult' with women most likely to say they find sleeping (84%), brain fog (73%), and anxiety or depression (69%) difficult. 44% of women in employment say their ability to work has been affected and 52% say they have lost confidence.

Despite this, 8 in 10 menopausal women say their workplace has no basic support in place for them no support networks (79%), no absence policies (81%) and no information sharing with staff (79%). The study shows that 10% of menopausal and perimenopausal women who have worked during their menopause have left work due to their symptoms – mapped onto the UK population this represents a shocking 333,000 women leaving jobs due to the menopause.

The report has been sponsored by Wates who has already taken several steps to support its menopausal employees.

This year, [Wates has developed detailed guidance explaining the menopause and its impact on the workplace](#); the different roles and responsibilities for employees, line managers and HR; helpful advice on

managing menopause at work; and support on talking to your GP.

In 2021, Wates also became one of the first construction companies to [support flexible working](#) across its entire business – including employees who work on site – which is a key recommendation of the report.

[DOWNLOAD THE MENOPAUSE IN THE WORKPLACE REPORT](#)

The report contains the findings of a survey of over 4,000 menopausal women carried out for the Channel 4 “Davina McCall: Sex, Mind and the Menopause” documentary.

The large size of the survey means the report can look in detail at the experiences of different kinds of women and it revealed that:

- 22% of disabled women who have been employed during the menopause said they had left a job due to their symptoms compared to 9% for non-disabled women
- 23% of key worker women say that their uniforms are uncomfortable given their menopause symptoms
- 45% of Black and minoritised women say it took many appointments for their GP to realise they were experiencing the menopause, compared to 30% of white women.

Urgent change is needed, and Fawcett is calling on the Government to respond to these findings by:

- requiring employers to have menopause action plans
- make flexible work the default
- implementing a public information campaign and inviting every woman in to speak with her GP about menopause at an appropriate age
- ensuring GPs receive mandatory training to help diagnose menopause earlier.

Jemima Olchawski, Fawcett Society Chief Executive, said: “Menopausal women are experiencing unnecessary misery and it’s a national scandal. From waiting too long for the right care to uniforms that cause unnecessary discomfort women are being badly let down.

“333,000 women have left the workplace as a result of their symptoms. This is a huge loss to those women but also to our economy. Do we really think we can afford to disregard these women with all the talent, potential and experience they bring to our workplaces?

“What’s so frustrating is that this is completely unnecessary. Our research shows that providing flexible working options, training for managers and support networks would hugely benefit women and in turn, encourage them to stay in the workforce.

“The Government needs to make urgent changes, from requiring employers to have menopause action plans, to creating a route into menopause healthcare, to ensuring that GPs are adequately trained to spot menopause symptoms. For too long, menopause has been shrouded in stigma, we need to break the culture of silence and ensure menopausal women are treated with the dignity and support they deserve instead of being expected to just get on with it.”

Carolyn Harris MP, member of Parliament’s Women and Equalities Committee, said:

“Women aren’t asking for a lot – we make up 51% of the population and we all go through the menopause. But too many doctors are still out there prescribing antidepressants instead of HRT because they aren’t getting sufficient training and they haven’t got up to date information. And, whilst there are pockets of really good practice out there, too few employers are providing any form of support for the women who work for them.

“This is a big issue, and we need big solutions – but they don’t need to be expensive or particularly complex. Women, need the right information and support and for them to get that we need to ensure that medical professionals and employees are also getting the right information and support too – it’s not that difficult to do.”

David Allen, Chief Executive, the Wates Group, who have sponsored the report, said:

“At Wates, we care for the health and wellbeing of all our colleagues. By definition, this means we are committed to supporting women going through menopause.

“We are proud to have sponsored this report, which makes a number of important recommendations. The real, lasting change that’s needed to increase understanding and improve support around menopause can only be delivered through effective collaboration between business, government, and society. So, the provision of flexible working options, better training for managers and leaders, and access to support networks will have their maximum impact only if they’re supported by a national public health campaign and easier access to primary care services.”

A full copy of ‘Menopause and the Workplace’ report can be found [here](#).