



Everyone Matters Guide to **Menopause**

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Network Rail Menopause Project



What is the Menopause?

- The menopause is when a woman **stops** having periods and is no longer able to get pregnant.
- The menopause is a **natural part of ageing** that usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age, as a woman's oestrogen levels decline. In the UK, the average age for a woman to reach the menopause is 51.
- **Transition or 'Peri-menopause'** is the period that leads to the menopause when many women may experience symptoms.
- Around **1 in 100** women experience the menopause before 40 years of age.
- Often the menopause **is brought on early** by those who have undergone cancer treatment or surgery for example hysterectomy.

Some numbers



Approximately half (15M) of the UK 32M workers are women, all of whom will experience the menopause to varying degrees.

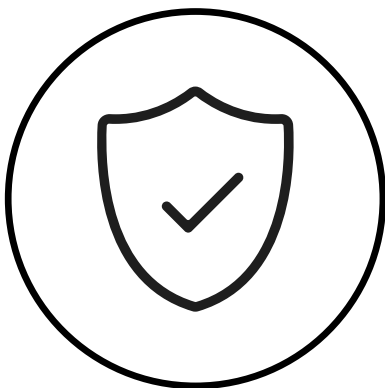
There are currently **3.5 million women workers** over the age of 50 in the UK, which is almost half (45%) of the over-50 workforce.

Although it is rarely discussed at work, the menopause is a natural stage of life that **millions of women workers** are either going through now or will experience in the future.

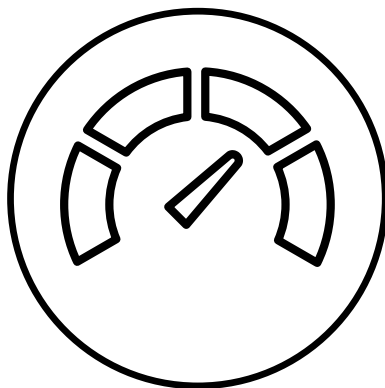
Symptoms can typically last between 4-8 years but can be longer.

Around **1 in 100 women** experience the menopause before 40 years of age.

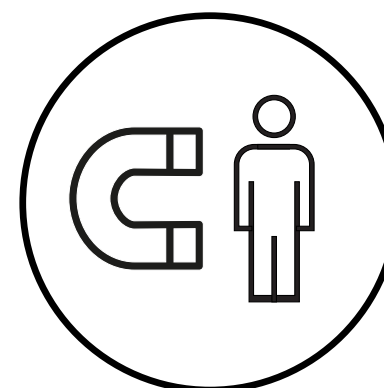
The benefits case for changing the way we think



Safety and
Wellbeing



Performance



Talent attraction
and retention

Menopause is a natural life stage for a woman

However:

- Many line managers are **male**
- Many colleagues are **male**
- Some colleagues **male** and female, will have a close family member who may be affected
- Some **men** do experience similar symptoms as a result of other medical conditions



Why is menopause Business relevant?



In the 1900s
the average
life expectancy
was

59

The average age
that a woman
experienced
menopause was

57

Today the
average life
expectancy for
women is

81

The average age
that a women
experiences
menopause is

51

In terms of the relationship between menopause transition and economic participation, these symptoms can pose a series of difficulties for women in the workplace.

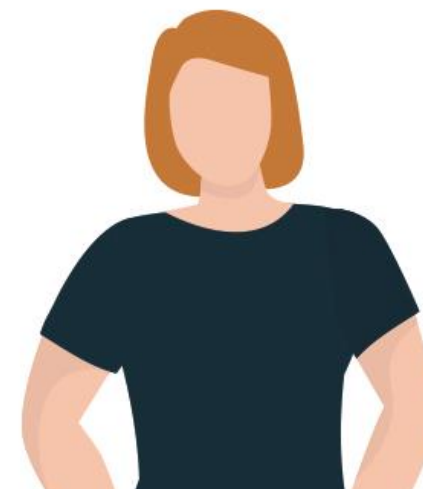
Typical symptoms:

Menopause is a personal experience

- Night sweats
- Menstruation changes
- Weight gain
- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Fatigue
- Palpitations & panic attacks
- Sleep disturbance/insomnia
- Skin irritation
- Mood disturbances
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Poor concentration & cognitive function
- Loss of confidence
- Irritability
- The need for more toilet breaks

..and many more.

Menopause is a personal experience.



More menopause friendly workplaces

A recent Government report (July 2017) has called for more menopause friendly workplaces

- The Government report commissioned by the Equalities office and undertaken by the University of Leicester: “The effects of menopause transition in the workplace”
- The report found that many (78% of respondents) are reluctant to speak up about this gender specific subject at work
- Many women worry about a possible effect upon likelihood of being selected for redundancy, promotion or negative judgements being made about their capability at work.



Menopause importance for Network Rail



- Females represent **17%** of our workforce
- NR are committed to active strategies to increase the overall number of women in our organisation: **20 by 20 strategy**
- By the 2020s **1 in 3** British workers will be over the **age of 50**
- Women's economic participation is important. Attraction, recruitment and retention of **Talent** will become an increasing business challenge in the UK where fewer will be entering the workforce
- Menopause symptoms often pose a series of difficulties which may require **reasonable adjustments** in our workplace

Dashboard (October 2018)



17.1%

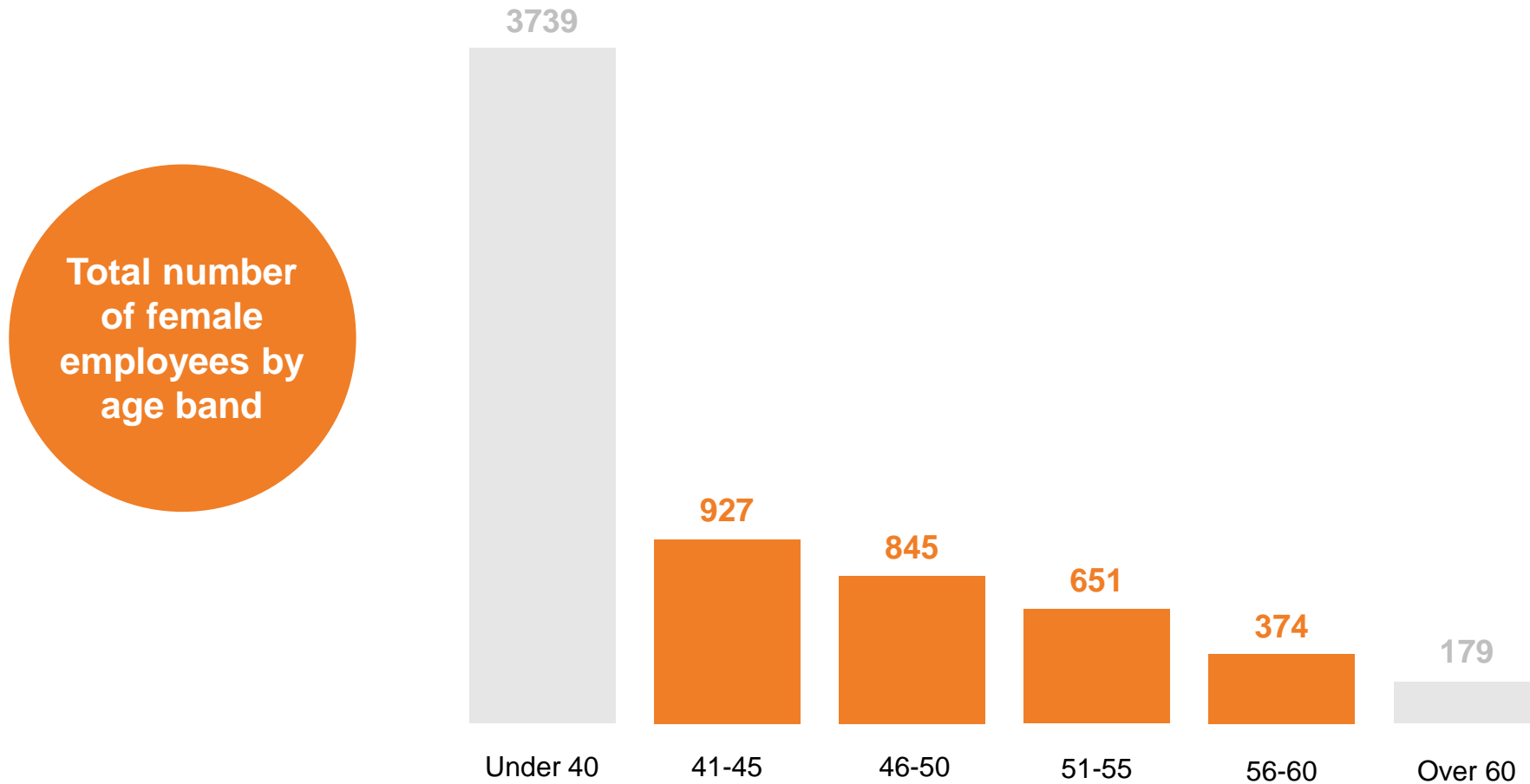
Of Network Rail
workforce are females

Network Rail currently
employ a total of
6,695
females

36.8%

Of all female leavers
were aged 40-60
years old

Dashboard (April 2018)



Women at Network Rail are saying...



“The lack of sleep changes your mood: I became very irritable, very impatient with my colleagues at work and also in my private life”



“I’ve always been considered to have a sharp mind but I felt like I had lost my thinking ability and people would think I was past it”



“Eventually, I told my colleagues in a team meeting that I was going through the menopause. My line manager thanked me as it was a difficult subject for people to talk about and by disclosure I had put everyone at ease”



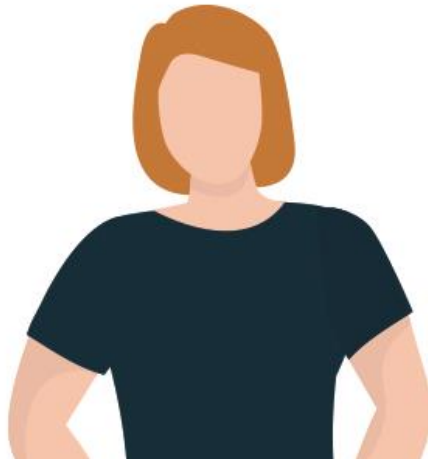
Women at Network Rail are saying...



"This is difficult to discuss with others at work especially when you have a male boss"



"Hot flushes are difficult to deal with in work as there is limited ability to actually open windows in offices"



"Sanitary challenges were a particular issue sometimes I would have to leave work because I required the toilets more frequently".



"Some think that they can get 'a miracle pill' to stop some of the effects of the changes. Whereas I've learned that eating a very balance diet and exercising helps to alleviate some physical symptoms"




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Published on 23 October 2017 [30 Comments](#)

'A roller-coaster ride'

Eva Almada shares her experience of perimenopause



Eva Almada

"Every woman will experience different things. It's very much a roller-coaster ride," said Eva Almada, project commercial support.

Eva's perimenopause started last April – the pre-menopausal stage which can last up to two years.

"The night sweats woke me up 10 times a night. I feel like I had no or very little sleep between April and October last year. The lack of sleep changed my mood; I became very irritable and impatient with my colleagues at work.

"I've had various conversations with my line manager and we put plans in place to ensure I can carry out my duties in the best possible way when I'm struggling. My boss is very understanding and I feel very lucky to work for him.

See also
[In the media](#)
[Deep clean](#)
[Love train](#)
[Bags of shops](#)
[CP6 plan published](#)

<http://connect/content/news/2017/Oct/-A-roller-coaster-ride'.aspx>

Workplace Scenarios:

Support for conversations

Beata you've asked me the same question nearly everyday! Do you not understand? Are you struggling to do the tasks I asked for?

Team Lead
Tunde



I keep forgetting!
(How do I tell him I can do the job but my memory is so poor at the moment. My brain seems all fuzzy and I just can't concentrate)

Team Organiser
Beata

Workplace Scenarios:

Support for conversations

...she's late **again** for the team meeting 2 months on the trot. If we can all get in for 9 I can't see why she has trouble?

Tiffany



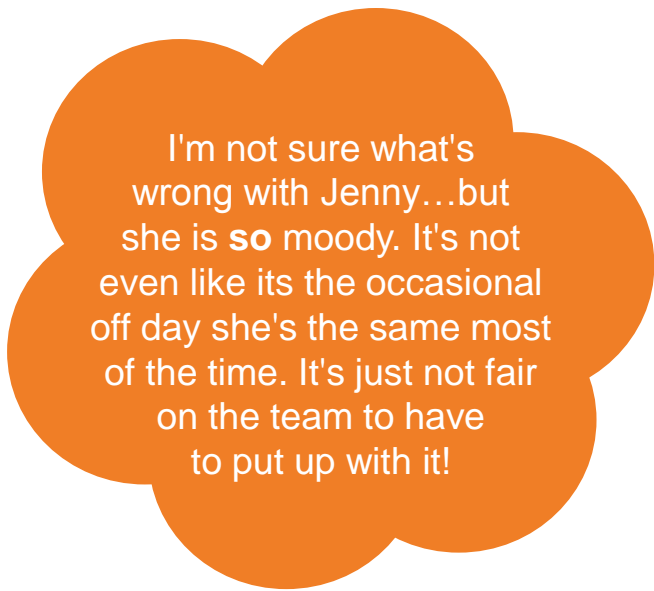
Morning everyone!
So sorry I'm late but we can start now. My alarm didn't go off again. (How do I tell them I barely sleep because of the night sweats and getting in for 9 is such a challenge.)

Kiran



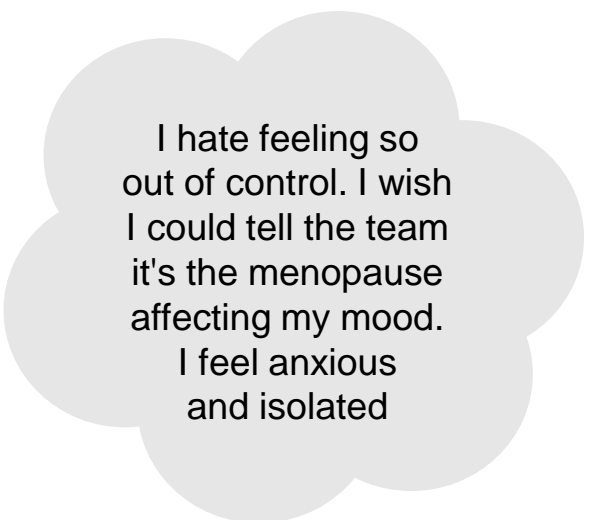
Workplace Scenarios:

Support for conversations

A large orange thought bubble with a smaller orange circle above it, connected by a line.

I'm not sure what's wrong with Jenny...but she is **so** moody. It's not even like its the occasional off day she's the same most of the time. It's just not fair on the team to have to put up with it!

Colleague
Jarek

A large grey thought bubble with a smaller grey circle above it, connected by a line.

I hate feeling so out of control. I wish I could tell the team it's the menopause affecting my mood. I feel anxious and isolated

Colleague
Jenny

Workplace Scenarios:

Support for conversations

Kemi is everything ok? You seem to be very flustered lately. Is it because you're still finding your feet and settling into your new role?

Line Manager
Aman



Kemi

Aman thanks for asking... but actually it's nothing to do with work. I need regular access to toilet facilities and I'm getting hot flushes in the office, it's very uncomfortable and embarrassing!

Temporary Reasonable Adjustments

- Considerations to lighting, ventilation and temperature control (for example provision of USB fan)
- Work space and environment
- Use of flexible and agile working
- Easy access to appropriate toilet facilities
- Suitable changing facilities
- Dress code – consideration to uniform may be a factor e.g. a natural material like cotton is preferable to synthetic materials if an employee is experiencing hot flushes Additional uniform
- Review of the way their job role is carried out/specific tasks (depending upon the job)
- OH review may be relevant

Discuss don't prescribe:

a woman needs to make her own mind up about what's right for her

HR Direct can support line managers

- Provide case management: Coach managers to have a conversation mindful that every woman's experience is different
- Signpost managers and employees:
 - The Network Rail Everyone guide
 - The Network Rail Reasonable Adjustment toolkit
 - Vallidium
 - Occupational Health (where relevant)



Recent Cases

Tiffin v Chief Constable of Surrey

Posted on **Wednesday, July 26th, 2017**

Reading ET handed down judgment yesterday in the much publicised case of Tiffin v Chief Constable of Surrey dismissing all claims. [Ben Uddage](#) acted for the Chief Constable.

Overweight policewoman quits the force 'after being pressured to pass a bleep test'

AN OVERWEIGHT policewoman was forced to resign following pressure on her to pass a "bleep test" fitness exam, an employment tribunal was told today. Detective constable Rebecca Tiffin said she felt she was being "over-scrutinised" by Surrey Police which she is suing for disability and sex discrimination. The detective – known to colleagues as "Blue ... Continue reading



Tiffin **vs** Chief
Constable of Surrey

FAILURE TO ADDRESS MENOPAUSE AMOUNTED TO SEX DISCRIMINATION

ARTICLE BY: [Viola Lloyd](#) | Published: 18 APRIL 2012

In Merchant v British Telecommunications plc a tribunal held that direct sex discrimination had occurred when an employer had failed to treat an employee's menopause in the same way as other medical conditions when applying its performance management policy.

Merchant **vs** BT

£19,000 tribunal win for court officer dismissed over medication muddle

Judge allows claim for disability discrimination against woman going through menopause
under appeal

Ms M Davies **vs**
Scottish Courts and
Tribunals Service

Summary



The benefits case for changing the way we think:

- Safety & Wellbeing
- Performance: Great People, great teams
- Talent attraction and retention

At Network rail we wish to create an inclusive environment where everyone can talk about menopause openly

Managers, colleagues and employees can access guidance:

- The Network Rail Everyone guide
- The Network Rail Reasonable Adjustment toolkit
- Validium
- Occupational Health (if relevant)