

# Civil Service becomes largest organisation to sign Menopause Workplace Pledge

- Senior ministers and civil servants endorse the Menopause Workplace Pledge at special event to highlight the government's ongoing commitment to support women in the workplace
- The Civil Service becomes the biggest organisation to sign the Pledge, joining more than 1000 organisations who have already done so
- First ever government-led Women's Health Strategy for England will be published shortly, with the appointment of a new Women's Health Ambassador to raise the profile of women's health issues

The Civil Service signed the Menopause Workplace pledge today (7 June), committing to recognise the impact of menopause and actively support women who are affected.

The pledge, organised by the Wellbeing of Women charity, calls on signatories to recognise the impact that menopause can have, create open environments to talk about the issue and provide active support for staff.

Ministers and senior civil servants endorsed the pledge at a special event to show the Civil Service's ongoing commitment to support women in the workplace. The Civil Service is now the largest organisation to signal its support.

262,670 women work in the Civil Service, making up more than half of the Civil Service (54%). 48% of the Senior Civil Service is made up of women, up from 35% in 2011. The median age of civil servants is 45 years and this often when women will be going through the perimenopause or menopause.

Becoming a signatory of the Wellbeing of Women 'Menopause Workplace Pledge' demonstrates the government's ongoing commitment to support women in the workplace, including by helping to generate more conversations between managers and employees, and creating a more inclusive workplace which enables women of all ages to thrive.

It builds on the Civil Service's existing support, including the Menopause in the Workplace Policy launched in December 2021, which identifies ways that departments can support employees such as by offering workplace adjustments.

**Parliamentary Secretary in the Cabinet Office, Heather Wheeler said:**

Women must feel able to talk about their health issues and know that they will be supported.

By recognising the impact that menopause can have, and creating an open culture free from embarrassment, we can ensure those women feel

comfortable in the workplace and prevent the brightest from leaving the Civil Service.

Signing this pledge, alongside our ongoing commitment to supporting women in the workplace and the new Women's Health Strategy, takes us one step closer to that goal, meaning better government and better public services for everyone.

**Health and Social Care Secretary, Sajid Javid, said:**

For some women, the symptoms of the menopause can be extremely debilitating and it's absolutely crucial they feel confident asking for support at work.

This pledge will ensure women working across the civil service feel supported. I encourage other businesses to do the same – big companies, such as Asda and Thames Water, are already joining us with this pledge to make sure their workplaces have menopause strategies in place.

Women's health is a priority for this government and plans to level up women's health will be set out in the first ever government-led Women's Health Strategy for England shortly. The government will appoint a Women's Health Ambassador to raise the profile of women's health, increase awareness about taboo topics and support the government in implementing the strategy.

Underpinned by analysis from almost 100,000 responses to the call for evidence from women across the country, the strategy will reflect the government's ambition for a healthcare system that prioritises care on the basis of clinical need, not gender – of which menopause will form a central part.

The government has also set up a Menopause Taskforce, chaired by Minister for Women's Health, Maria Caulfield and Carolyn Harris MP, to consider the role that education and training, workplace policies and peer groups for menopausal women can play in supporting women through what can be a mentally and physically challenging time.

**Cross Government Menopause Network Sponsor and Deputy Permanent Secretary at HMRC, Angela MacDonald said:**

Women make up half the UK workplace and make extremely valuable contributions day in, day out.

I'm very proud of the work being done across the Civil Service to ensure that we enable colleagues to receive the support that they need to flourish. Our new workplace policies and the signing of this pledge signals our visible commitment as an employer.

Last year, the Minister for Employment, Mims Davies, commissioned an independent report into menopause in the workplace which produced a series of recommendations, and a government response outlining its plan for increasing menopausal women's participation in the labour market will be issued in the coming months.

This builds on the work the Department for Work and Pensions has been doing to engage employers across the country to improve working conditions for women transitioning through the menopause, including amplifying examples of best practices, and providing advice through their nationwide 50 Plus Champions network in Jobcentres, so more businesses are able to recruit and retain women experiencing the menopause.

**Minister for Employment, Mims Davies said:**

We're absolutely committed to ensuring we have the support in place to recruit and retain women experiencing the menopause, including in the Civil Service, and last month we saw the number of women in the UK workforce rise by more than 58,000.

Menopause is still a leading cause for women leaving the workforce, which is why I'm working with employers, and across government to improve the support in place for women in the workplace.

**Minister for Women's Health, Maria Caulfield said:**

The menopause affects hundreds of thousands of women every year, but for some the symptoms of the menopause can seriously affect their daily lives, impacting them while at work.

Women are a vital part of the workforce and this pledge by the civil service shows what can be done by an employer to help women going through the menopause.

We're continuing to level up women's health and we have already launched a grant fund to support women in the workplace, set up the menopause taskforce and we will publish the first ever government-led Women's Health Strategy.

**Chair of Wellbeing of Women, Professor Dame Lesley Regan said:**

The Civil Service is sending a powerful message – that women both need and deserve our support in the workplace. Women are often at their most productive and successful at this stage in their lives. Many are the breadwinners for their family and make essential contributions. It makes complete sense to provide simple, practical support to help keep them in the workplace.

## **Notes to editors**

In signing the Menopause Workplace Pledge, the Civil Service commits to:

- Recognising that the menopause can be an issue in the workplace and women need support
- Talking openly, positively and respectfully about the menopause
- Actively supporting and informing your employees affected by the menopause

## **About the Menopause Workplace Pledge**

- The Menopause Workplace Pledge was launched in 2021 by Wellbeing of Women, in collaboration with Hello! Magazine and Bupa. The campaign is calling on every employer to take the Menopause Workplace Pledge and commit to providing menopause support.
- Over 1000 employers including the BBC, AstraZeneca, Royal Mail, Co-op, Tesco, John Lewis, and many hospitals, schools, universities, and other organisations have signed up, covering over 11 million workers across the country. Many organisations are introducing menopause policies, guidance, advice, training, workshops and peer-to-peer support groups.
- The Women's and inequalities Committee survey showed that 99% of 2,000 women polled experienced at least one menopausal symptom which also negatively affected them at work. Difficulty sleeping was the most reported (81%), followed by memory problems and/or concentration (75%) and hot flushes (72%). These led to a loss of ability to concentrate (72%), increased stress (70%) and a loss of confidence (67%).
- A report from the Chartered Institute of Personal Development (CIPD) refers to research from Bupa which estimates that nearly 1 million women in the UK have quit their jobs due to the menopause.