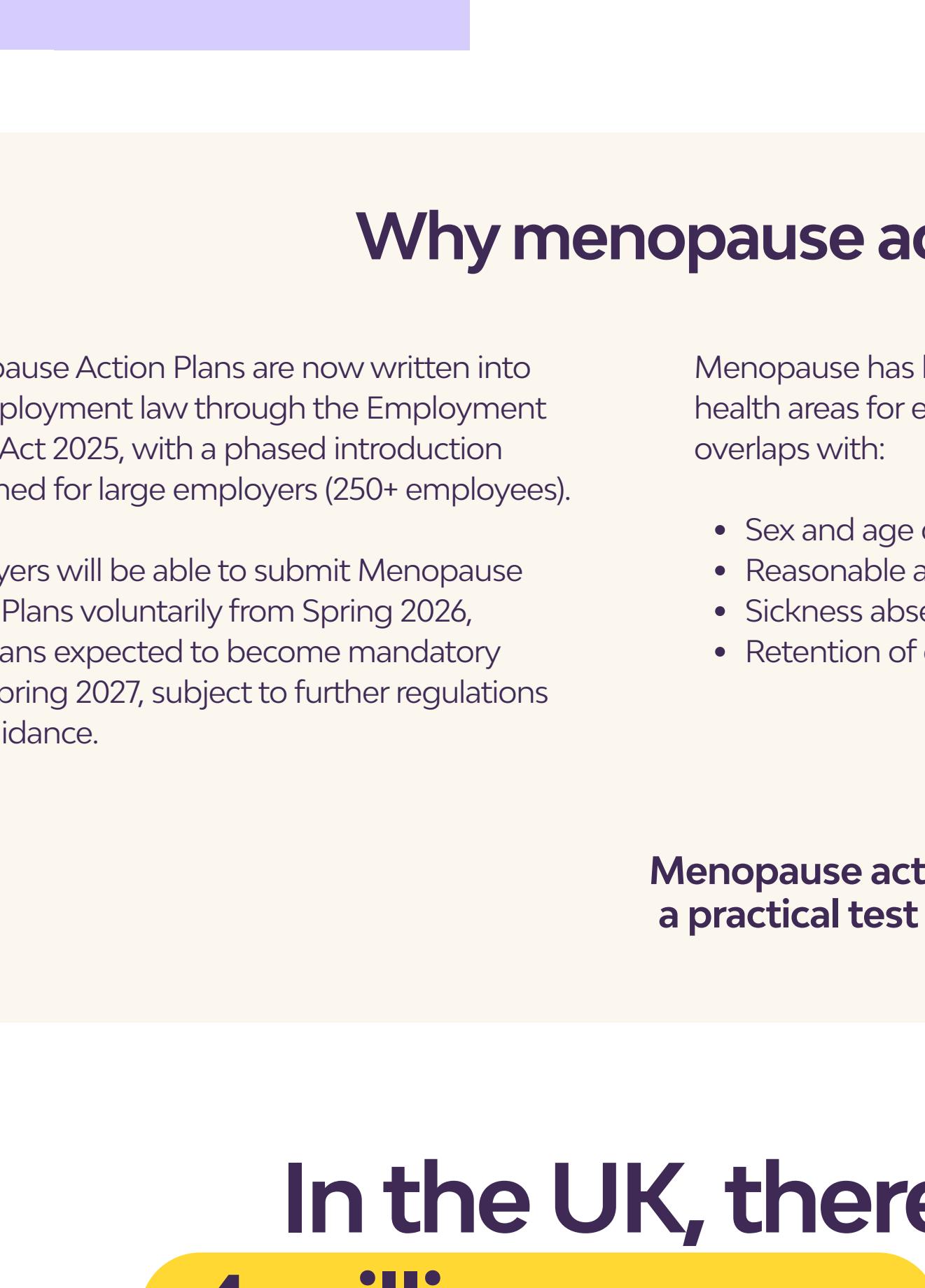


Menopause Action Plans: What employers need to do (and why it matters)

A practical guide for HR & Benefits leaders preparing for the Employment Rights Act

MENOPAUSE



IMPORTANT NOTE:

While detailed regulations are still to follow, large employers will be expected to have menopause action plans in place from 2027. Many organisations are choosing to implement them voluntarily in 2026 to reduce risk, build capability and prepare early.

What is a Menopause Action Plan?

A Menopause Action Plan (MAP) is a clear, written framework that sets out how your organisation supports employees experiencing menopause in day-to-day practice. It moves menopause from an informal, individual issue to a shared organisational responsibility, covering:

- Clear ownership and accountability
- Training and guidance for managers
- Practical, reasonable workplace adjustments
- Access to appropriate health and wellbeing support
- Consistent handling across teams and locations

The purpose is to support employees earlier, reduce escalation, and prevent menopause symptoms from turning into absence, performance issues, grievances or attrition.

Why menopause action plans matter now

Menopause Action Plans are now written into UK employment law through the Employment Rights Act 2025, with a phased introduction confirmed for large employers (250+ employees).

Employers will be able to submit Menopause Action Plans voluntarily from Spring 2026, with plans expected to become mandatory from Spring 2027, subject to further regulations and guidance.

Menopause has become one of the highest-risk health areas for employers because it commonly overlaps with:

- Sex and age discrimination
- Reasonable adjustments
- Sickness absence and performance management
- Retention of experienced employees

As tribunal access expands and scrutiny of employer decisions increases, menopause-related cases are increasingly judged on:

- Whether symptoms were recognised and supported early
- Whether support was visible and accessible
- Whether adjustments were applied fairly and consistently
- Whether delays or informal handling worsened outcomes

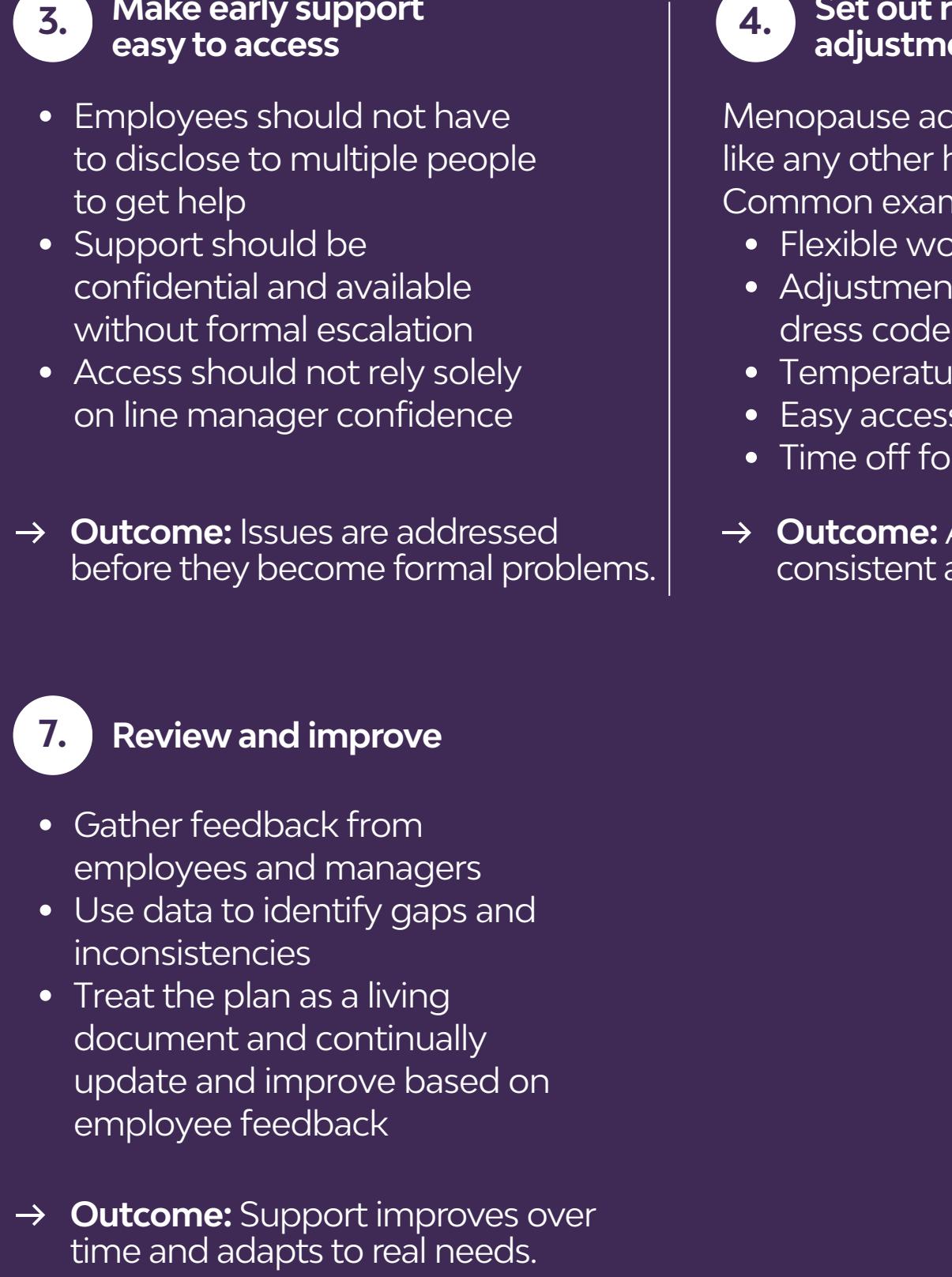
Menopause action plans are fast becoming a practical test of organisational readiness.

In the UK, there are approximately 4 million women aged 45–60 in work, work, the core demographic most likely to be experiencing menopause in the workforce.

What "good" looks like

In practice, a credible menopause action plan will usually mean that:

- ✓ Employees know where to go and how to ask for help
- ✓ Support is available early, not only once absence or performance issues arise
- ✓ Managers are supported and guided, not expected to diagnose or manage symptoms alone
- ✓ Reasonable adjustments are handled fairly, consistently and transparently
- ✓ Menopause is treated as a workplace health issue, not a private matter individuals must navigate alone



Under the Employment Rights Act, employers are more likely to be assessed on whether menopause support was accessible, reasonable and applied consistently in practice when issues arose.

67%

say menopause negatively affects their work

Source

Over half

of women experiencing menopause have not been able to attend work due to their symptoms, with 10 per cent leaving work for good – costing businesses around £1.5 billion every year

Source

1 in 4

women consider leaving their job because of menopause symptoms

Source

3x

Recent employment tribunal data shows claims referencing menopause have more than tripled over the past few years, highlighting how frequently menopause-related issues now surface in formal disputes.

Source

Over 2 in 5

UK employees are uncomfortable talking to anyone at work about menopause

Source

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What employers need to do

The steps below are not a prescriptive legal checklist. They reflect what employers need to have in place to meet upcoming menopause action plan requirements and to reduce legal and employee relations risk under the Employment Rights Act.

1. Understand where menopause risk shows up

Review absence, employee relations and performance cases where menopause may be a factor

- Identify where issues were raised late or handled inconsistently
- Speak to managers about confidence and capability

→ **Outcome:** You know where escalation currently happens.

2. Put clear ownership in place

- Define who is responsible for menopause support (HR, People, Wellbeing)
- Clarify what managers are expected to do and what they are not
- Ensure menopause is covered within wider health and absence frameworks

→ **Outcome:** No ambiguity or "it depends who you speak to" handling.

3. Make early support easy to access

- Employees should not have to disclose to multiple people to get help
- Support should be confidential and available without formal escalation
- Access should not rely solely on line manager confidence

→ **Outcome:** Issues are addressed before they become formal problems.

4. Set out reasonable adjustments clearly

Menopause adjustments should be treated like any other health-related adjustment. Common examples include:

- Flexible working hours or location
- Adjustments to uniforms or dress codes
- Temperature control (fans, fresh air)
- Easy access to water and toilets
- Time off for medical appointments

→ **Outcome:** Adjustments are consistent and defensible.

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