



Menopause@Work: Empowering SME'S



The programme was supported by the **Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Health and Wellbeing Fund** to support projects that improve health and wellbeing.

The 2022-2025 funding round focused on **women's reproductive wellbeing in the workplace**, aligning with the **Women's Health Strategy for England**.



The Menopause@Work programme was designed to support SMEs in improving menopause awareness, workplace policies, and individual confidence to discuss menopause-related issues. It offered a blend of online learning, online events, and in-person events.

Over £1.97 million was awarded to a range of projects, including the Menopause@Work programme, led by **Here and Brighton & Hove City Council**.

Here and Brighton & Hove City Council designed and delivered an **online platform** comprising **18 modules** targeted at both SMEs and people experiencing menopause.

Social Qual worked closely with the programme team to understand how the programme creates change and to explore what difference it has made.



Reach and Engagement.

Around **490** people engaged with the programme, either by registering for the online platform or attending events.

- SMEs comprised the majority of participants (74%), with 250 from the target SME audience having a meaningful engagement by completing an online module or attending an event.
- Events had a greater depth of engagement than the online platform 200 people attended an event, while only 62 completed an online module, challenging the initial assumption that the online platform would have the biggest engagement.



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Impact on people: awareness, confidence & action

Events significantly contributed to programme outcomes:

- ✓ 98% of attendees found events relevant to their workplace
- ✓ 94% reported increased confidence in discussing menopause.
- ✓ 85% improved their understanding of menopause.

The Impact

The programme - mostly through its events - successfully achieved its intended short-term outcomes of increasing awareness about menopause, how it affects people and inspiring individuals to take action in their workplace.

The impact of the online platform for individuals experiencing menopause transition was modest, with relatively low module completion rates and limited participant feedback.



Impact for workplaces: seeds of change, slow to grow

Events significantly influenced workplace change intentions:

93% of attendees better understood how to support people experiencing menopause.

89% planned to take action based on what they learned.

The Workplace Certification module increased participants' knowledge, with an average 0.9-point improvement in feeling informed (on a 1–5 scale).

Some SMEs implemented changes like menopause-friendly policies, flexible work, and awareness sessions. However, systemic change was limited due to costs and lack of leadership support.

A few participants extended their learning into other professions, such as healthcare and fitness.



What should future programmes do differently?

1. **Engage entire workplaces.** Individual participation alone does not create systemic change. Engage HR, management, and leadership through team-based approaches or consultancy models.
2. **Prioritise interactive sessions.** Participants prefer live, discussion-based content over self-paced online content.
3. **Allocate sufficient resources.** Dedicate adequate staffing time; minimal allocations are insufficient.
4. **Focus on impactful activities.** Identify and prioritise activities early, discontinuing activities that are less effective. Empower grantees to let go of their things in their initial application and plans if they are not gaining traction.
5. **Implement proactive marketing.** Allocate resources for marketing to build strong business networks. Recognise that third sector organisations will need to take time to build their visibility in the business community.

Advice for funders who wish to support similar work

Allow flexibility. Enable grantees to adjust target audiences based on evolving needs.

Clarify reporting purpose. Ensure grantee monitoring reports have clear, meaningful usage.

Maintain peer learning. Learning and sharing sessions between grantees would be well received throughout the programme duration. Grantees are working on similar themes and there may be opportunities for shared learning and joint problem-solving.

Support community building. Recognise and facilitate the strong demand for safe spaces and peer support around menopause in the workplace.



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What people have told us

“

It really kickstarted the process for us. We're now actively working on a menopause policy, and looking at practical ways to support staff, like uniform adjustments and flexible breaks.

“

The training has given me the confidence and knowledge to have conversations with staff about menopause. As a team, we're having more of these conversations – I think staff feel more confident to approach me now, knowing I have a good understanding.

“

Investing in menopausal staff isn't just the right thing to do. It makes financial sense. Small changes, like lighter uniforms or flexible breaks, can have a big impact on keeping people in work.

