

Menopause: beyond the symptoms

Exploring the impact on health, work,
finances and relationships



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Please note: due to the physiological nature of this research, when we refer to ‘women/females’, this is defined as anyone who was assigned female at birth.





Executive summary

Menopause is increasingly recognised as a major health event, but for many it can also be one of the most significant financial events in a woman's life.

This report draws on research with women and their partners across the UK to reveal how menopause isn't just affecting health; it's reshaping careers, household finances and long-term wealth.

For many, symptoms such as poor sleep, brain fog and low mood disrupt daily life and undermine confidence. These effects often compound: **seven in ten** perimenopausal women say their mental health has suffered. At work, symptoms can be misread as performance issues, prompting women to scale back rather than speak up. **Almost one in five** post-menopausal women have left an employer as a result.

This is happening at a critical life stage. **Around nine million women** aged 35-64 are navigating menopause while managing careers, raising families and carrying major financial responsibilities. **Nearly half (45%)** of perimenopausal women say menopause has affected their income, savings or pension. Among those whose earnings have fallen, **one in four** estimates losing **£10,000 or more a year**.

Despite this, menopause is rarely recognised or planned for as a financial life stage. Instead, career and money decisions such as reducing hours, stepping down or leaving work are often made reactively in response to immediate challenges, rather than with long-term financial implications in mind.

The findings point to a clear gap: menopause is widely experienced, but not widely understood, planned for, or supported.

This highlights the importance of reviewing finances throughout life and recognising menopause as a life stage that can have significant financial implications, rather than viewing it as just a health event to be managed alone.



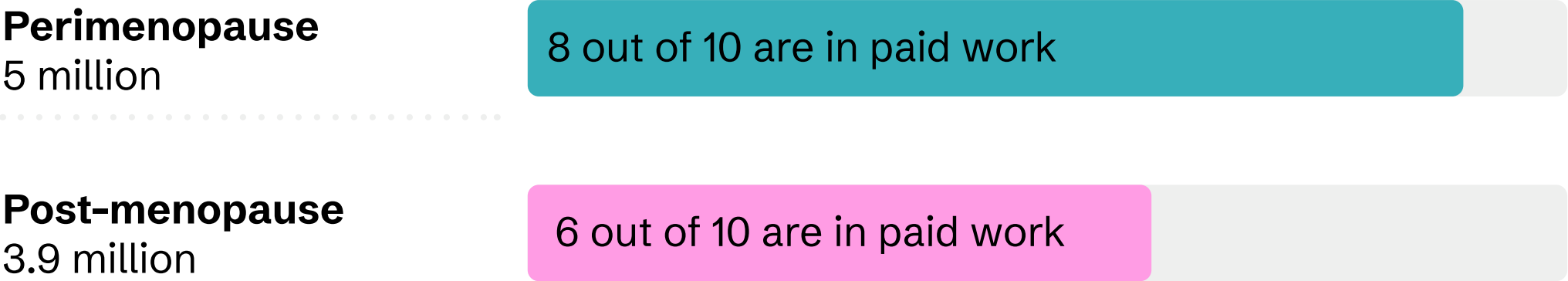


Introduction

Menopause is one of the most significant transitions in a woman’s life, and its health impacts can be wide-ranging. Symptoms such as sleep disruption, anxiety, cognitive changes, and shifts in energy levels and overall wellbeing, can affect daily life. Yet some women don’t immediately recognise these experiences as being linked to menopause.

At the same time, this transition often coincides with a particularly demanding stage of life. Many women are balancing careers, raising families, supporting ageing parents and carrying major financial responsibilities. Despite its impact, menopause remains under-discussed and under-supported.

Nearly 9m UK women are working during menopause





As an organisation committed to improving financial wellbeing and supporting people through key life moments, we commissioned Truth in October 2025 to hear directly from women and their partners and build an evidence-based understanding of how menopause shapes identity, careers, household finances, and long-term wealth across the UK.

We carried out a nationally representative survey of **2,436** women aged 35–64 in the UK (balanced by age, income, region and working status). This told us how many women are in perimenopause or post-menopause, how many have symptoms, and how many of those with symptoms are in paid work. We then surveyed **2,000** women in more detail, across three groups: **400** in pre-menopause, **800** in perimenopause and **800** in post-menopause. We also surveyed **400** partners of women aged 35–64, evenly split between those whose partners are perimenopausal and post-menopausal.

What emerged is a picture of menopause as a major health event that can influence far more than physical wellbeing. For many women, it represents a significant life transition, affecting confidence, career decisions, earning potential and financial resilience. The impact extends beyond the individual, shaping households, relationships and workplaces more than many people realise.





1. Symptoms, diagnosis and support

While menopause is an inevitable life stage for women, awareness of when it begins is still low, with **seven in ten** pre-menopausal women unsure when perimenopause will start. This lack of understanding is reflected across the data: **64%** of perimenopausal women say they did not feel prepared for perimenopause and were unsure what to do, suggesting many are entering this transition without prior awareness or preparation.

Without a clear diagnosis, many women describe feeling isolated and question what's happening to them. Some women told us how symptoms can be misinterpreted as stress or depression, and in some cases even dementia, due to a low understanding of menopause-related cognitive changes.

This is reflected in how women first recognise perimenopause. Most do so outside of a formal healthcare setting: **Almost half (46%)** say they only realised they were experiencing perimenopause after symptoms had already taken hold, while a further **13%** recognised symptoms through conversations with friends and family. By contrast, just **9%** were formally diagnosed by a healthcare professional.

Although awareness of menopause-related information is relatively high, confidence in accessing the right health support is lower. While **65%** of perimenopausal women say they know where to find information, **only half** say they have access to the right health support.

46%

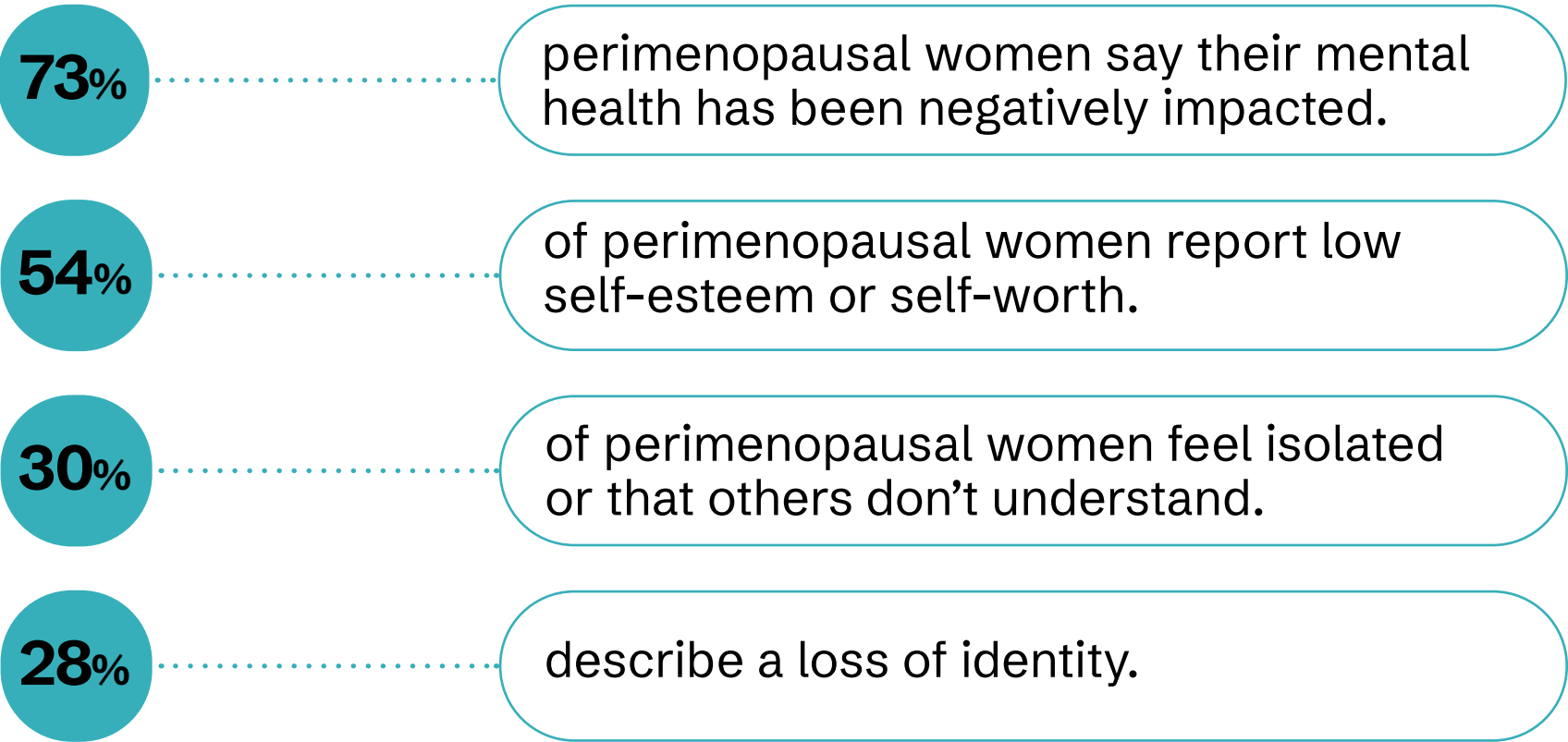
of perimenopausal women only realised they were in perimenopause after symptoms had taken hold.





2. Impact on wellbeing

The biggest impact of menopause is psychological



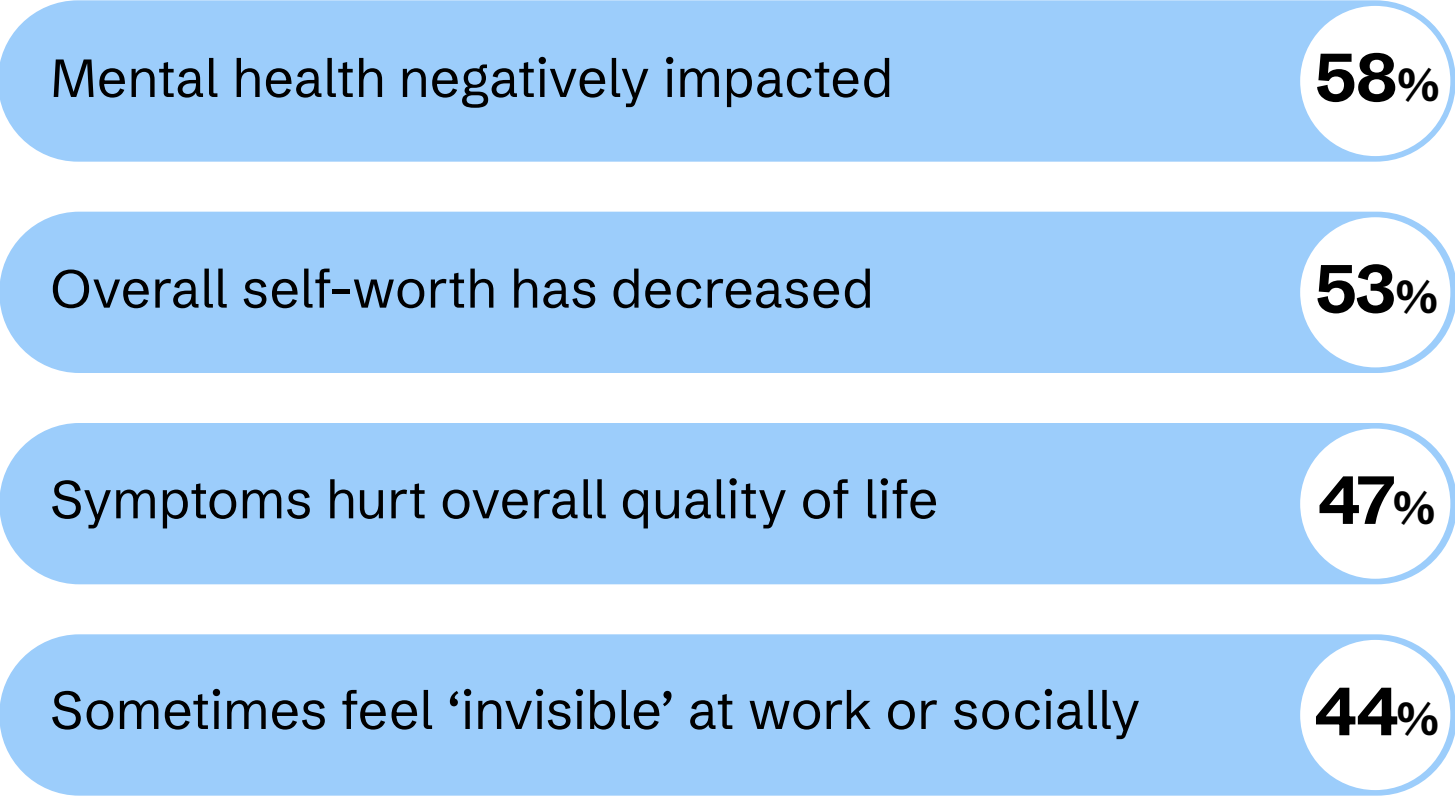
Menopause can affect how women feel about themselves. Some no longer feel like the competent, organised person they once were, and many talk about feeling worthless or not good enough. Others withdraw from their home life, work and relationships because they are worried they'll cry, snap, or forget words in front of people.

Our research shows that when women begin to lose trust in their own judgement and sense of self-worth, they are less likely to put themselves forward for leadership roles at work. Symptoms such as brain fog and forgetfulness can affect day-to-day life and reduce confidence, while night sweats and broken sleep can drain energy levels and make other symptoms feel more difficult to manage.

This is often carried alone. Women hide symptoms because they don't want to be judged as weak, dramatic or no longer capable.

Wellbeing does not fully recover post-menopause

In post-menopause, while symptoms can start to ease, the challenges remain. The career choices, financial decisions and changes in relationships that happened during menopause have lasting effects well beyond it.





Finding a new sense of confidence

However, there is another side that is important to recognise. **30%** of perimenopausal women say menopause unlocked a new sense of personal power, and **69%** feel less alone after discovering others share their experience.

For some women, once they understand what's happening and get support, menopause becomes a turning point. Some describe it as the moment they stopped trying to please everyone and started setting boundaries. Others talk about finding their voice at work, joining forums, or becoming advocates.

Understanding menopause changed everything. I stopped blaming myself, started speaking up and began HRT – it's been lifesaving. What began as survival became a quiet crusade to help other women too.

Post-menopausal woman, aged 59

With the right information and support, menopause can move from being misunderstood and unprepared for to an inevitable life stage women can plan for and manage. These impacts on wellbeing do not exist in isolation; they can carry through into the workplace, influencing confidence, performance and career progression.





3. Impact on careers

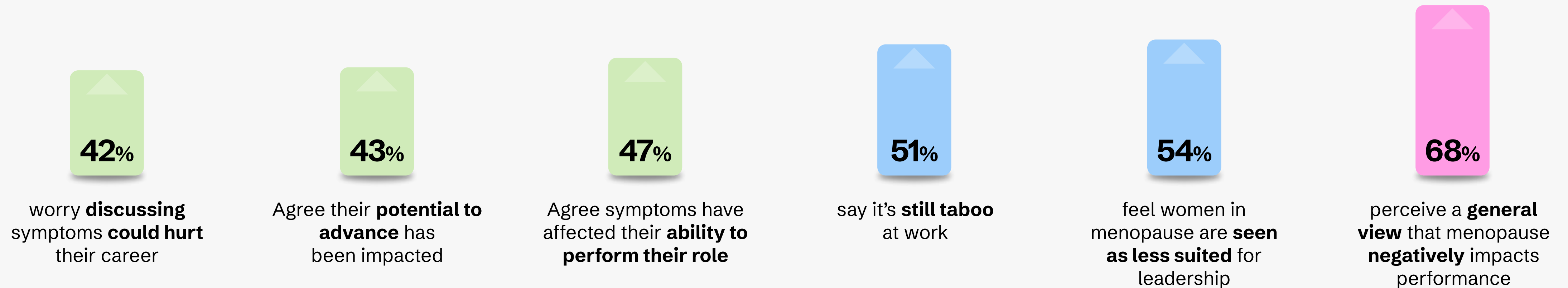
3.1 Impact on performance

Menopause hits hardest at the height of women's careers

Many women say their symptoms have affected their ability to perform their role at work effectively. The most common symptoms are the ones workplaces can misread as capability issues: focus, memory, mood, resilience.

Internally, many women report not feeling as 'sharp' and worry their potential to advance has stalled. Externally, they fear being judged.

Perimenopausal women face both performance pressures and workplace stigma





Menopause can shape women’s experience at work

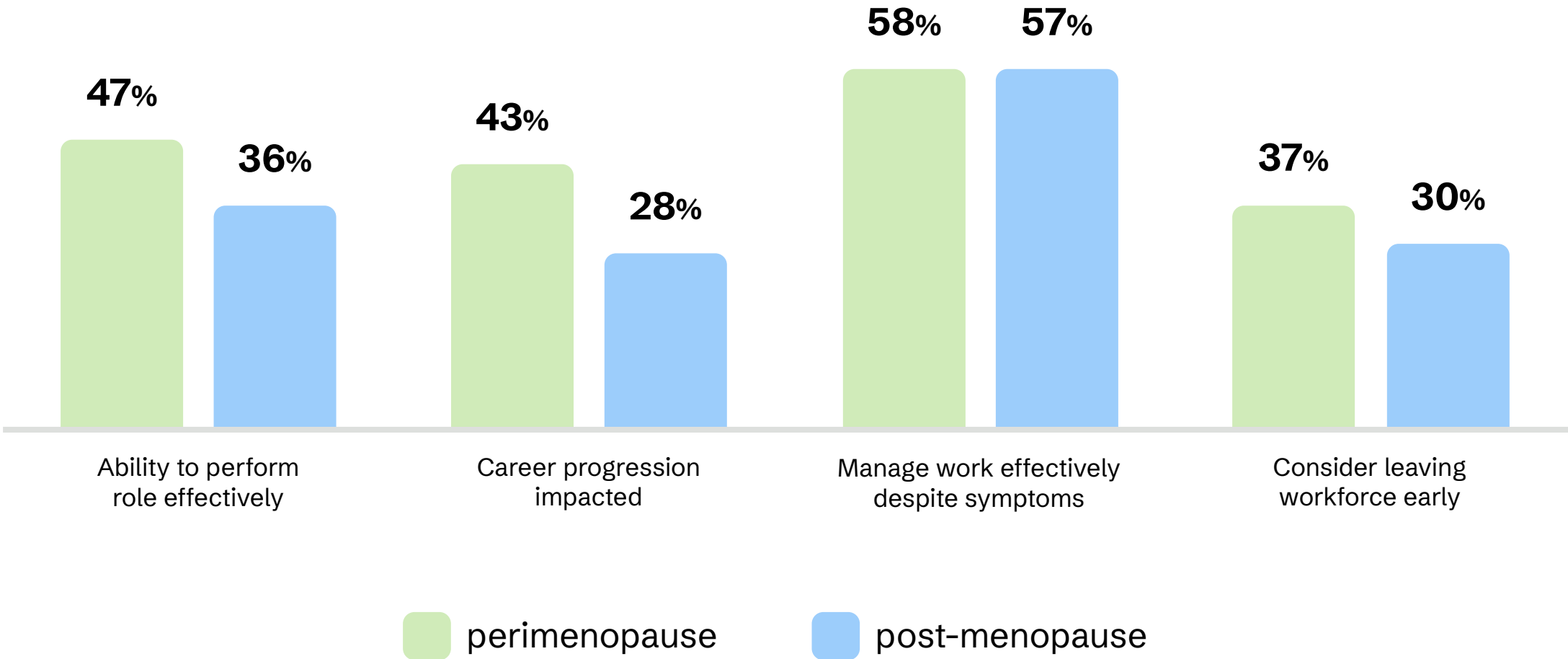
Women told us clearly how this shows up day to day:

- 1. **Cognitive ‘slips’:** forgetting what they were about to say in a meeting, losing trains of thought, struggling to find words, all of which dent self-confidence and ambition.
- 2. **Emotional volatility:** mood swings, anxiety and irritability strain relationships at work, pushing women to hide what’s really going on.
- 3. **Forced retreat:** exhaustion and physical symptoms make the daily demands of work feel impossible, so women scale back.

If none of this is attributed to experiences of menopause, it can look like underperformance, reduced capability, or a choice to step down.

Many women stop going for promotions, or don’t put themselves forward. Some say they’ve stopped seeing themselves as leadership material.

Some workplace impacts ease over time, but concerns remain



“ My confidence has been shaken by brain fog and fatigue. I have had to adjust my career ambitions. Previously, I was focused on promotion and leadership. Now, my goal is to maintain my competence. ”

Perimenopausal woman, aged 48



The quiet-quitting career tax

For most women, menopause doesn't trigger a dramatic resignation. It shows up as a slow reshaping of work so they can keep going. **More than half** of working women have already changed something about their job due to symptoms including working from home more often, taking paid leave, moving to part-time hours or changing roles.

The findings indicate that women are more likely to manage quietly on their own, finding ways to lighten the load rather than ask for more help. By post-menopause, those temporary workarounds often become reductions in hours and responsibility: **23%** have moved from full-time to part-time work.

For some, these adjustments can turn into exits. **One in ten** perimenopausal women and **almost one in six** post-menopausal women have changed role or jobs because of menopause. **Around one in twenty** in both groups have left the workforce entirely.

The data points to a hidden career tax associated with menopause: **42%** of perimenopausal women mention emotional strain at work, **34%** describe a collapse in confidence, **17%** point to a lack of flexible working and **17%** say they feel less respected or taken seriously. Post-menopausal women looking back often describe this as a particularly challenging period with lasting effects.

over 50%

*have changed something
about their job due to
symptoms*





3.2 The importance of workplace support

Menopause remains difficult to raise at work

Only half of women feel their workplace is somewhere sensitive health topics can be talked about openly. **Fewer than half** feel comfortable discussing their menopause symptoms with their manager, while **65%** of perimenopausal women would confide in a trusted colleague.

This suggests that, even where workplaces appear open, confidence to speak up remains low. Stigma is more noticeable in senior and higher-paid roles. Among women earning over £78k, **61%** of those in perimenopause say there is still stigma around discussing menopause at work, rising to **73%** among post-menopausal women. Even in seemingly open cultures, fear of judgement and career penalty stays high.

The power of peer support

Peer networks often play a critical role. **Seven in ten** perimenopausal women say hearing other women's stories helps them feel less alone. These informal conversations can be a lifeline: swapping tips, sharing solutions, and helping colleagues prepare.

“When I found out my manager was also perimenopausal we had a moment of bonding exchanging funny stories about brain fog. It made me feel like if she can cope with this and do a great job, so can I.”

Perimenopausal woman, aged 54

Need for support is clear, but awareness is mixed

Across every stage of menopause, **around three-quarters** of women would like employers to offer more support. Yet over **one in ten (13%)** perimenopausal women and **one in five** in post-menopause don't know what support their current workplace offers. Where support is needed, women consistently highlight:

Flexibility	the top priority across all groups
Trained managers	who are equipped to provide support tailored to individual needs
A supportive culture	changes to workload, workspace and expectations
Access to proper health advice	especially among lower and middle earners
Easy-to-access support	simple pathways to help when they need it



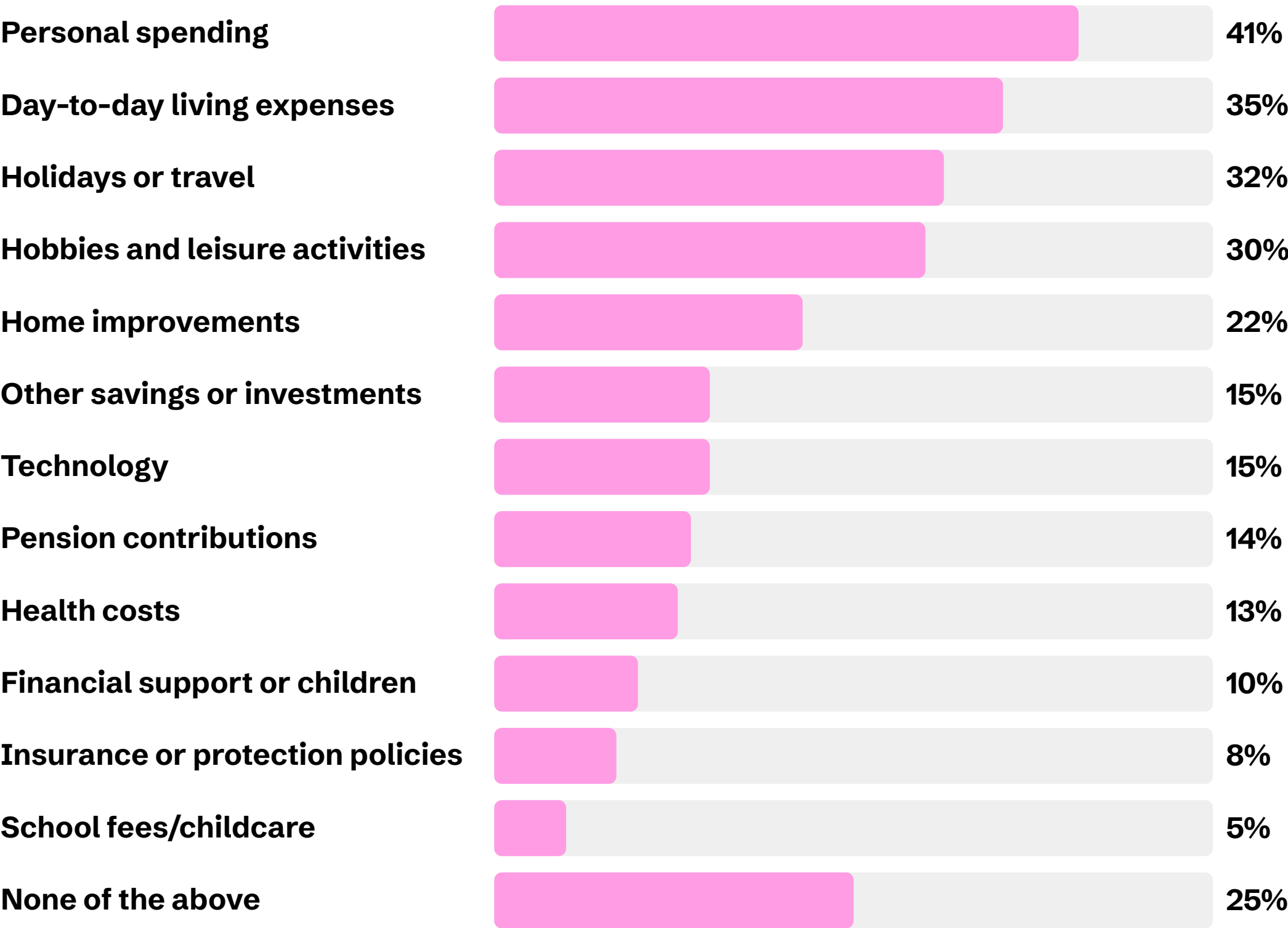
4. Impact on finances

Many pre-menopausal women already recognise the potential financial consequences of menopause. **Around four in ten** believe it could affect their finances and feel more anxious about their long-term security. **Nearly one in five** expect to use savings for day-to-day expenses or symptom management, while **12%** anticipate reducing or pausing other savings or investments. A further **11%** expect to reduce or pause pension contributions. Mid-income women are more likely to anticipate taking on debt, with **12%** expecting to do so compared with **3%** of lower earners.

But at the same time, **43%** of pre-menopausal women have never considered the financial impact of menopause at all, suggesting menopause is not yet widely viewed as a financial life stage.

The experiences of women already going through menopause suggest these concerns are well founded. **Almost half (45%)** of perimenopausal women say menopause has negatively affected their finances, including their income, savings or pension contributions. The findings suggest that because menopause is rarely recognised as a financial life stage, career decisions such as stepping down, reducing hours, changing roles or leaving work, are more likely to be made in response to immediate challenges rather than proactive planning.

The areas women cut back on to manage the costs of perimenopause





Visible costs conceal a deeper financial strain

When asked, women could easily point to visible costs: private specialist appointments, HRT prescriptions, vitamins, supplements and therapies. Around **one third** of perimenopausal women have used their savings to pay for these, and **one in six** spend **£100 or more each month** on symptom management.

But the more serious costs are the ones that compound over time: lost earnings from reducing hours or moving to lower-paid roles, stalled progression, reduced pension contributions and lower long-term compound growth. A decade of ‘just coping’ decisions can erode earnings, pensions and savings. Among women whose income has fallen, **one in four** perimenopausal women and around **one in five** post-menopausal women estimate losing **£10,000 or more** a year.

Almost half (46%) of perimenopausal women say managing symptoms better would improve their confidence around money. This points to how physical and psychological symptoms, such as poor sleep, fatigue, anxiety and reduced concentration, can affect day-to-day decision-making and make long-term financial planning more challenging. In turn, the evidence shows that improved care is associated with steadier, less crisis-driven financial choices, which then supports long-term security.





Women want practical support, not just awareness

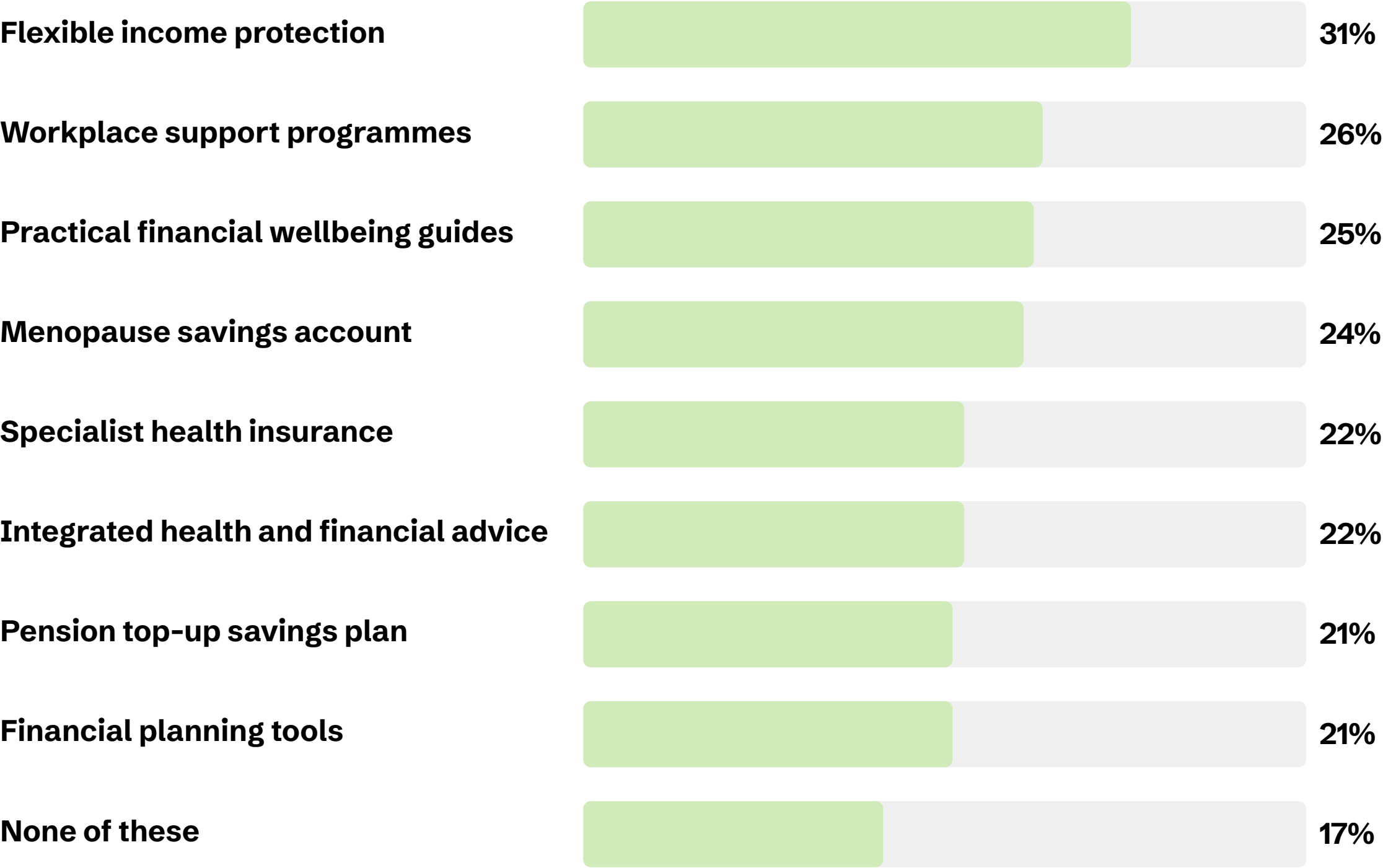
Rather than focusing solely on symptoms, women are looking for practical help to manage the financial consequences of menopause. The need is particularly strong among perimenopausal women.

- **52%** want guidance on managing finances if work hours or income change
- **39%** want tools to help them plan beyond menopause
- **36%** want access to advisers who understand menopause
- **32%** want support to identify and repair pension gaps

These findings suggest that women are looking for support that connects symptoms, career choices and long-term financial security, helping them make more informed financial decisions earlier.



Products and financial tools most valued by perimenopausal women from financial service providers



For many women, the financial impact of menopause only becomes visible in hindsight. Post-menopausal women often say they didn't need support. But their stories reveal something different: they made financial decisions without realising their decisions were linked to menopause and never thought to ask for help. This blind spot is where financial brands can make the biggest difference.

It's not just women themselves looking for more support. Menopause also impacts relationships and households.



5. Impact on households and relationships

Menopause is a shared experience

Women told us that, for some, menopause symptoms had a big impact on their relationships, including reduced libido, increased strain, and in some cases, led to a separation.

While menopause is often perceived as an individual experience, these emotional effects frequently extend across households and can have wider implications. **One in two** partners of women during this life stage say menopause-related decisions have weakened their financial resilience.

Around a quarter of partners report an impact on household finances, while **19%** say pension contributions have been affected. **24%** believe they made financial decisions that could have been avoided with better support, and the same proportion say the experience has increased their anxiety about long-term security.

Partners are willing, but under-supported

- **55%** have asked how they can help
- **49%** say they actively listen
- **45%** have taken on more household responsibilities
- **40%** have encouraged their partner to seek medical help
- **20%** have absorbed more of the financial load.

But despite stepping up, only **54%** feel equipped to support their partner. The intent is high, but the guidance is missing.





There is a need for clear, accessible guidance

Partners want straightforward, reliable support to help them understand what's happening and how to respond.

- **81%** want an online guide explaining the symptoms
- **61%** want articles or videos of other partners' experiences
- **56%** want tools to help start conversations about menopause
- **50%** want information on the financial impact of menopause

Partners expect employers to step up

Around **70%** of partners believe employers should offer more support to employees experiencing menopause. There is a clear opportunity to build partner-inclusive support that brings together accessible information on symptoms, tools to help start open, constructive conversations, simple explainers on the financial implications, and employer resources that recognise partners as part of the support system.

Menopause is a shared experience. Support needs to reflect that.



6. Opportunities to make a difference

This report has examined the scale of menopause, its toll on mental health, and its cumulative impact on careers, finances, relationships and households. These are not side effects; they shape women's identities, working lives, and long-term security, demonstrating that menopause is not just a health event, but a life stage that can have whole-of-life impacts. The research findings point to clear opportunities to intervene earlier and more effectively.

Below are thought starters on what can make a meaningful difference.

Recognise menopause as a driver of the gender wealth gap

The research shows menopause affects women's finances differently by income, with those on lower incomes more likely to experience lasting financial setbacks. This indicates the menopause-related wealth gap is not inevitable. With timely, targeted support, the financial impact of menopause can be reduced.

Treat menopause as a financial life stage, not only a health event

As the findings show, menopause, like parenthood and retirement comes with predictable financial pinch points. Yet many women reduce hours, step back or leave roles without a clear plan; only realising the financial consequences once earnings, savings and pension contributions have already been affected. Menopause-aware financial planning can help women prepare proactively, rather than respond in crisis.

Treat menopause as a critical moment for sustaining women's career progression

The research shows that at work, menopause symptoms often show up as 'performance issues' or 'not coping'. In response, many women adopt workarounds: stepping down, reducing hours or responsibilities, or moving into lower-paid roles. This represents a loss of deep expertise and leadership potential. The findings suggest menopause should be treated as a retention point, keeping women at the height of their careers, not losing them.

Understand what menopause-inclusive really means

The research points to a need for trained managers, practical adjustments, access to reliable medical guidance, and a workplace culture where menopause is openly acknowledged. This highlights a need for clearer, more consistent approaches to what 'menopause-inclusive' looks like in practice, going beyond flexibility alone to better meet women's needs.

Make menopause a household planning moment

The findings also show that many big decisions are made at household level: who reduces hours, who takes on extra responsibilities, whose pension contributions are paused. Providing couples with simple tools, shared language, and future-looking guidance, could help those decisions be made with a fuller understanding of long-term implications. Couple-focused financial journeys, grounded in this insight, have the potential to make a meaningful difference.



Final Remarks

Our research shows that menopause is not experienced as a health issue alone, but as a turning point that shapes women's confidence, careers, household decisions and long-term financial security. While experiences vary, the cumulative impact is clear and often goes unrecognised until the consequences are already felt.

These findings are intended to contribute to a wider public conversation. They highlight gaps in understanding, support and planning, particularly at work and in financial decision-making, at a time when many women are carrying peak professional and personal responsibility.

By making these experiences visible, the aim is not to prescribe solutions, but to provide evidence that can inform employers, policymakers, financial service providers, and partners as they consider how menopause is understood and supported. Greater awareness is a necessary first step, and without it, the long-term effects identified in this research are likely to continue unnoticed.

Finding information and support

Those looking for further information may find support through employers, healthcare providers or financial services organisations.

As part of our commitment to supporting customers through key life stages, Aviva provides information and resources to help individuals understand menopause and the potential impact it may have on wellbeing, work and financial planning.

