

Best practice within the industry



Normalising menopause at work does not require complex infrastructure. It requires intent.

CASE STUDY 1

Harbour Energy: tackling menopause as a retention issue



“Normalising menopause at work does not require complex infrastructure. It requires intent, leadership visibility, and a sustained focus on making support practical, accessible and stigma-free.” - Harbour Energy team

Embedding awareness, support and leadership sponsorship to drive cultural change

Menopause remains one of the least openly discussed, yet most widely experienced, stages of many women’s working lives. At Harbour Energy, the organisation recognised that without deliberate action, stigma and silence could directly impact retention, progression and day-to-day experience for women across the business.

What began as a series of awareness and education sessions has evolved into a structured, multi-layered menopause programme embedded within Harbour Energy’s UK operations. Early efforts focused on building foundational understanding: introducing menopause networks, launching a centralised SharePoint hub with curated resources, and developing formal menopause guidance for employees and managers. Over time, this has expanded into a more comprehensive support ecosystem.

Today, the programme includes a network of trained menopause ambassadors positioned across the business, ensuring that support is both visible and accessible. These ambassadors manage “menopause care kits”, discreetly available to employees, which include practical items such as clothing, period products and hygiene essentials. Alongside this, all managers have access to dedicated menopause training, equipping them with the confidence and language to have informed, supportive conversations with their teams.

A defining feature of Harbour Energy’s approach has been the role of senior leadership sponsorship – particularly the visible involvement of its Chief Legal Counsel, who sponsors the menopause subgroup. His participation in awareness sessions, including those targeted at leadership teams, has helped shift perceptions and legitimise menopause as a workplace topic. This has not only broadened the audience engaging with the issue but has also contributed to a measurable change in management behaviour - with leaders demonstrating greater emotional intelligence and employees feeling increasingly confident to request flexibility or support where needed.

While cultural change can be difficult to quantify, Harbour Energy tracks a range of indicators to understand engagement and impact. These include participation in awareness sessions, completion rates for manager training, internal social engagement, and membership of menopause networks. More informally, rising demand for workplace adjustments, e.g., portable desk fans, even in winter months – signals both increased awareness and a growing willingness among employees to articulate their needs.

The next phase of the programme is global expansion. Building on early engagement in Norway and Indonesia, Harbour Energy is working to replicate its UK model across business units, adapting delivery to local cultural and regulatory contexts. While implementation will vary by geography, the underlying principle remains consistent: creating an environment where menopause can be discussed openly and support accessed without stigma.

For organisations looking to take action, Harbour Energy’s experience underscores a clear starting point; creating psychological safety. As the team emphasises, many employees remain reluctant to speak about menopause due to embarrassment or fear of not being understood. Equipping managers with the skills and confidence to have supportive, informed conversations is therefore foundational. From there, relatively simple interventions (e.g., awareness sessions, clear guidance, and visible support networks) can begin to shift culture meaningfully.

Harbour Energy’s approach demonstrates that normalising menopause at work does not require complex infrastructure - but it does require intent, leadership visibility, and a sustained focus on making support practical, accessible and stigma-free.