

# 'Keeping people safe' & the menopause: evidence from female police officers in the PSNI

POLICE FEDERATION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND



# Respondent Characteristics

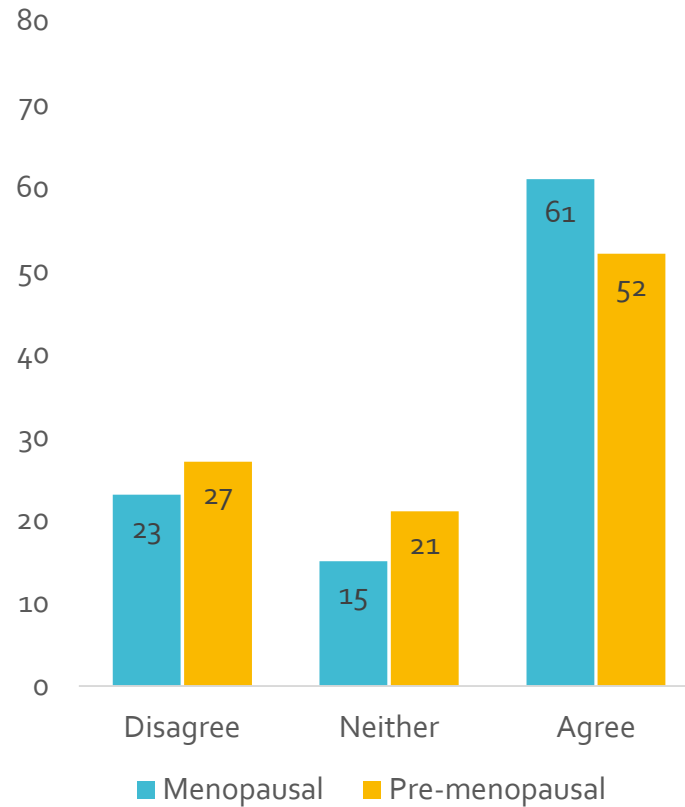
Characteristics	Menopausal group	Pre-menopausal group
Average age (years)	51	41
Average length of service (years)	21	15
Majority rank	Constable (76%)	Constable (73%)
Majority working-patterns	Full-time (92%)	Full-time (90%)
Majority policing role	Crime operations (40%)	Crime operations (43%)
Majority marital status	Married / civil partnership (50%)	Married / civil partnership (60%)
Percentage with caring responsibilities	70%	74%
Highest educational qualification	Degree or higher (31%)	Degree or higher (49%)

# Attitudes towards the menopause

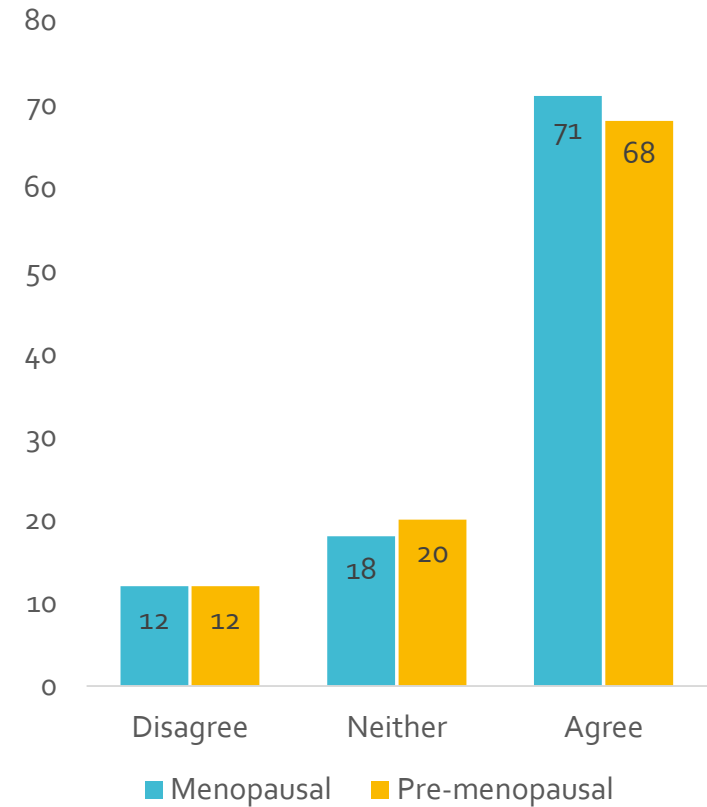
61% of menopausal females agree or strongly agree that the menopause is a **medical condition**, declining to 52% of pre-menopausal women

71% of respondents in the menopausal group and 68% in the pre-menopausal group agree or strongly agree that the menopause is an **occupational health issue**

## The menopause is a medical condition (%)



## The menopause is an occupational health issue (%)

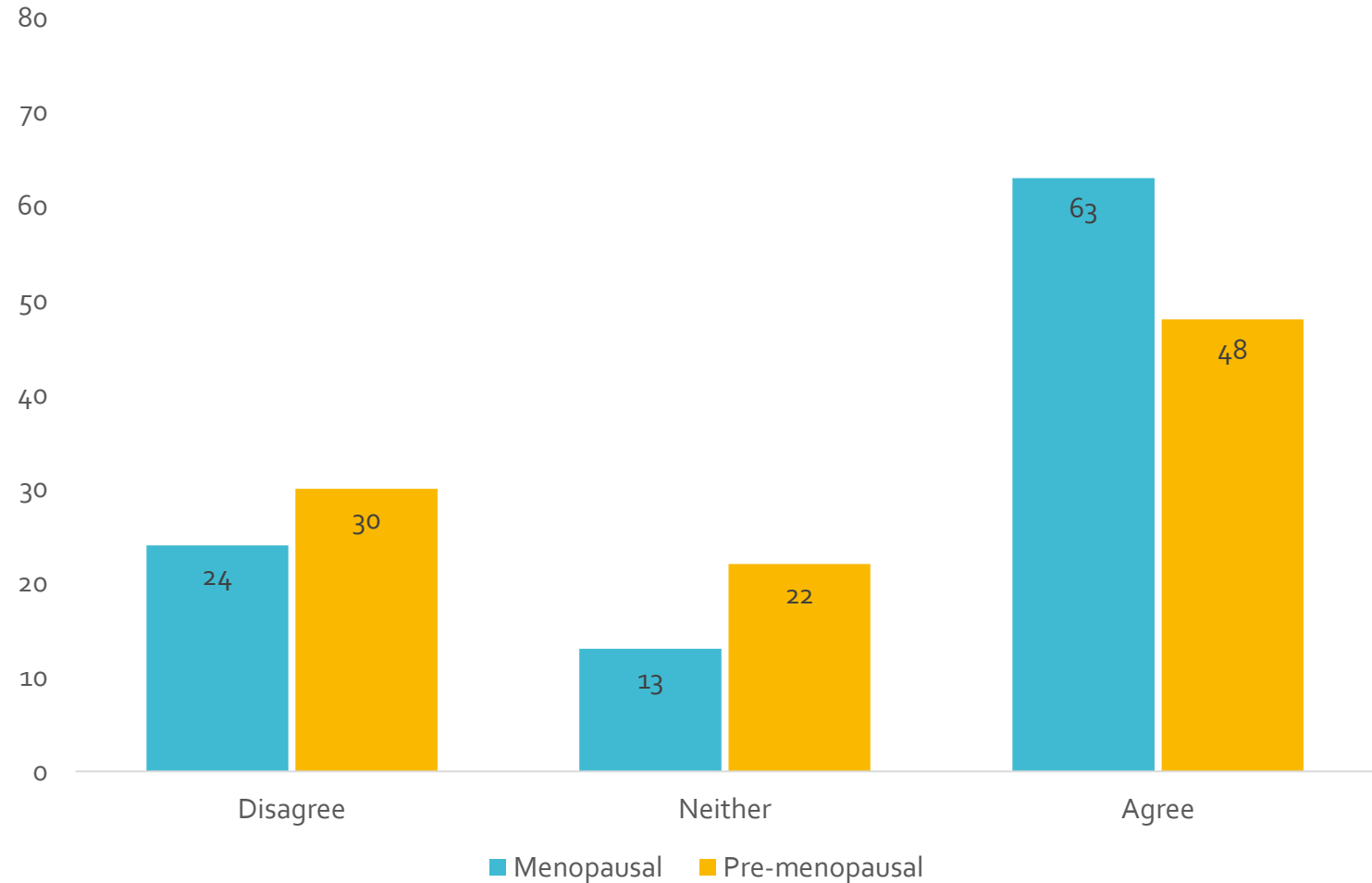


# Attitudes towards the menopause

Almost half of the respondents in the pre-menopausal group agree or strongly agree that the menopause is **not something you talk about at work**.

This rises to 63% of respondents from the menopausal group

## The menopause is not something you talk about at work (%)

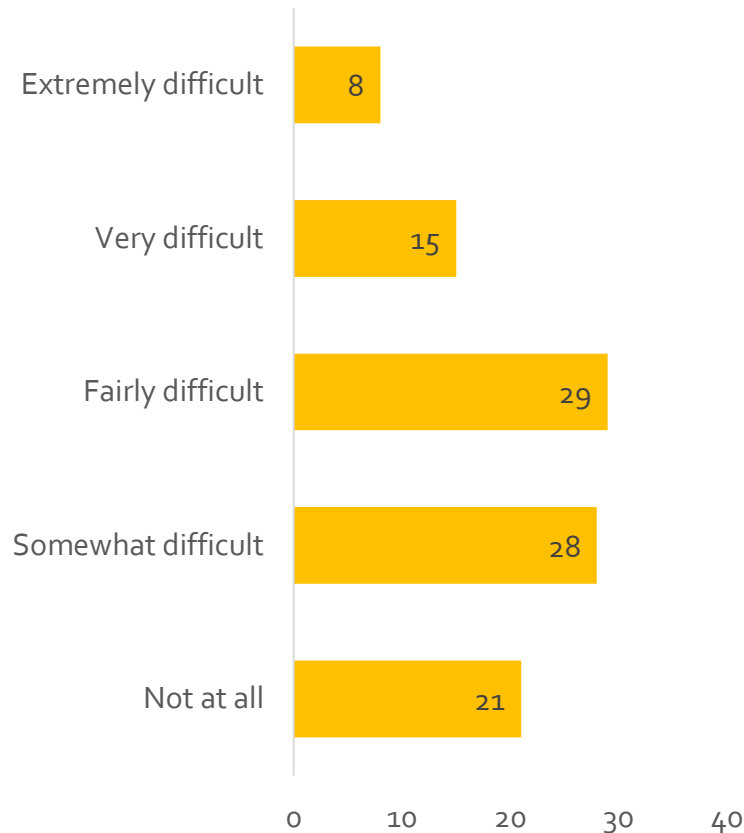


# Menopause and the workplace: experience

79% of menopausal women reported some level of difficulty in managing at work, including 15% who said it was very difficult and 8% who said it was extremely difficult.

The top 3 most problematic symptoms in the workplace were **tiredness**, **poor concentration** and **poor memory**

## How difficult was it / is it for you in managing work? (%)



## Symptoms deemed problematic at work

Top 10 problematic menopausal symptoms in the workplace	Menopausal Group (%)	Rank
Tiredness	88	1
Poor concentration	82	2
Poor memory	82	2
Sleep disturbances	71	3
Lowered confidence	70	4
Hot flushes	69	5
Joint and muscular aches and discomfort	65	6
Frequent visits to toilet	64	7
Irritability	63	8
Heavy periods / flooding	63	8
Feeling low / depressed	59	9
Anxiety / panic attacks	58	10

# Menopause and the workplace: experience

The top 3 aspects of the working environment which menopausal women reported as adversely affecting their menopausal symptoms were **recalling detailed information, shift work** and **the temperature of the working environment**

## Aspects of the working environment which adversely affect menopausal symptoms

	Menopausal group (%)	Rank
Recalling detailed information	70	1
Shift work	61	2
Temperature of working environment	58	3
Inadequate ventilation	54	4
Physical demands	49	5
Design of uniforms (material/fit)	47	6
Male dominated environment	44	7
Pressure of tight deadlines	43	8
Workload	42	9
Not being office based	38	10
Making difficult decisions	35	11
Ridicule from colleagues / management	29	12
The security risk	13	13

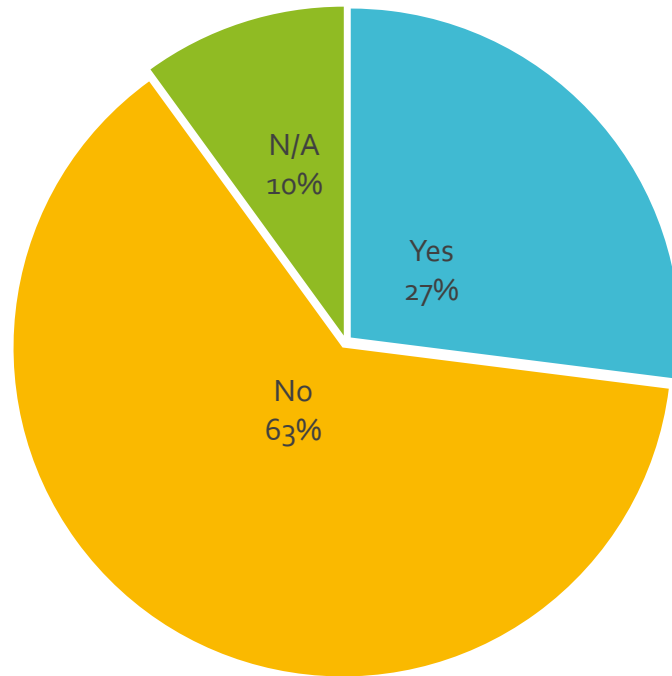
The top 3 changes which could be made in the workplace to make things better for women going through the menopause were: **greater awareness among managers, better control over temperature** and **flexible working hours**

# Menopause and the workplace: disclosure

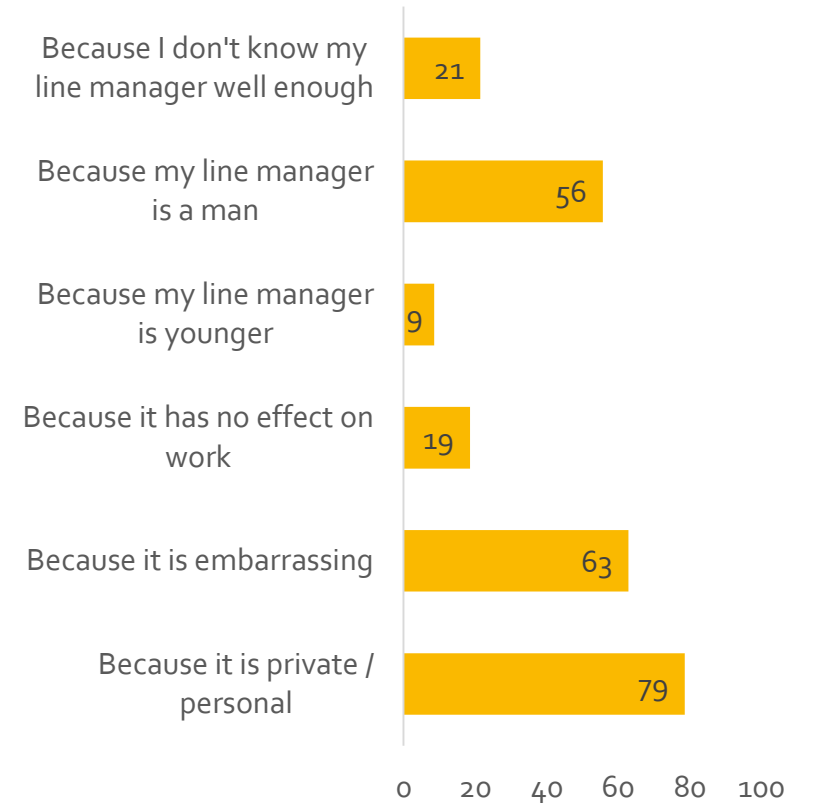
Almost 2/3rds of menopausal women reported that they had not told their line manager that they are / were experiencing symptoms of the menopause

The top 3 reasons for non-disclosure were because it is **private / personal**, because it is **embarrassing** and having a **male line manager**

## Have you told your line manager you are / were experiencing symptoms of the menopause?



## Why have you not told your line manager? (%)

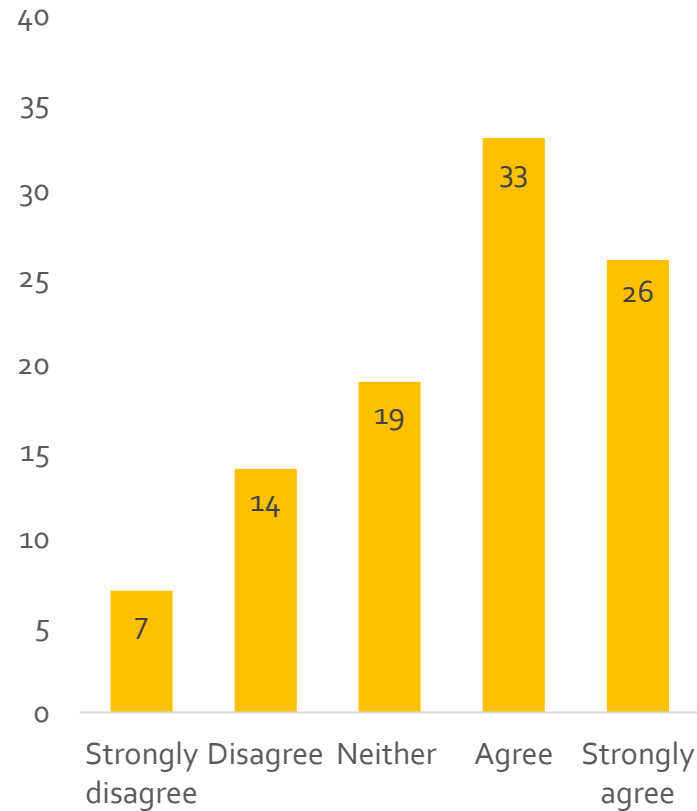


# Menopause and the workplace: performance

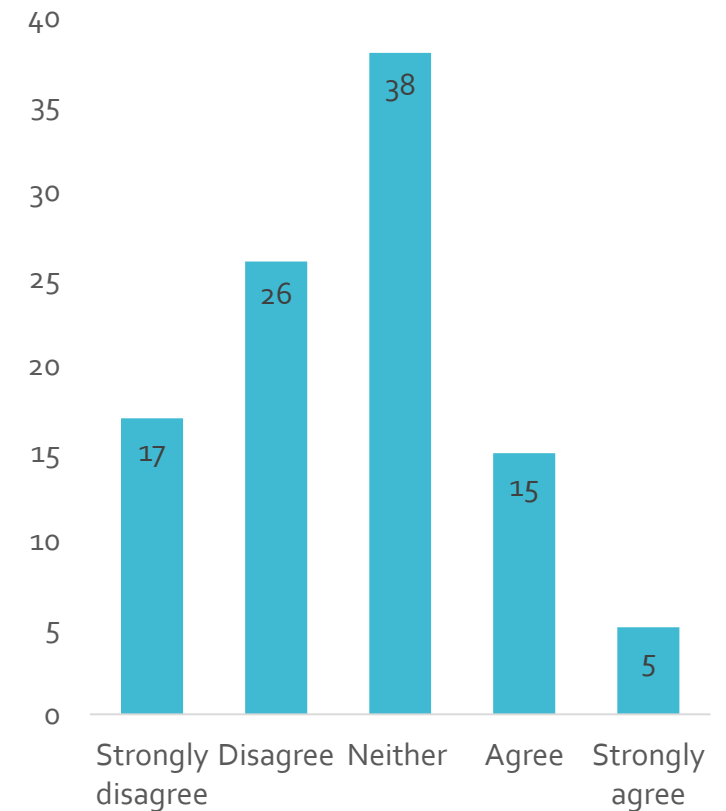
59% of menopausal women agreed or strongly agreed that their **job performance had been negatively affected** by their menopausal symptoms

1/5<sup>th</sup> agreed or strongly agreed that the menopause had negatively affected the way in which **colleges / managers view their competence**

I feel my job performance has been negatively affected by my menopausal symptoms (%)



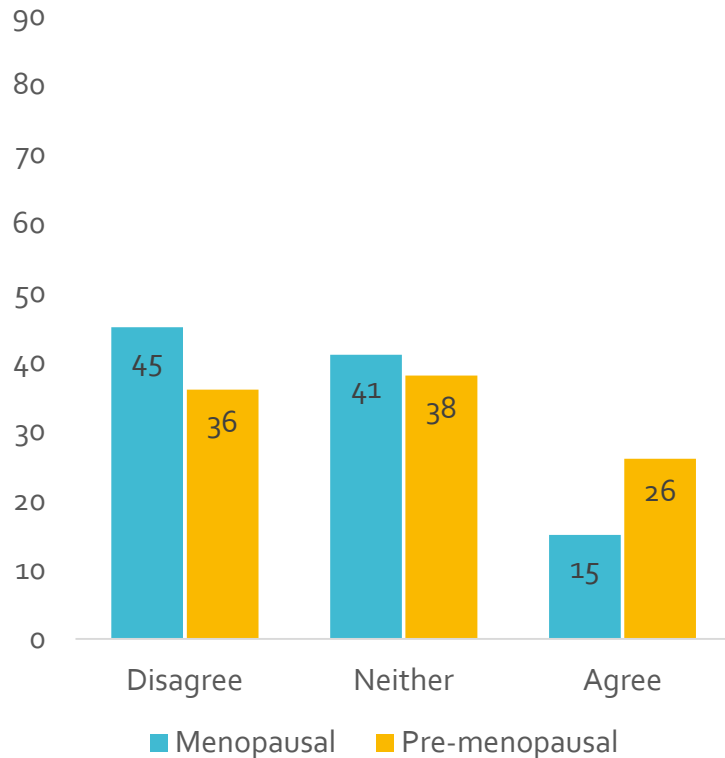
I feel the menopause has negatively affected my managers and colleagues views of my competence at work (%)



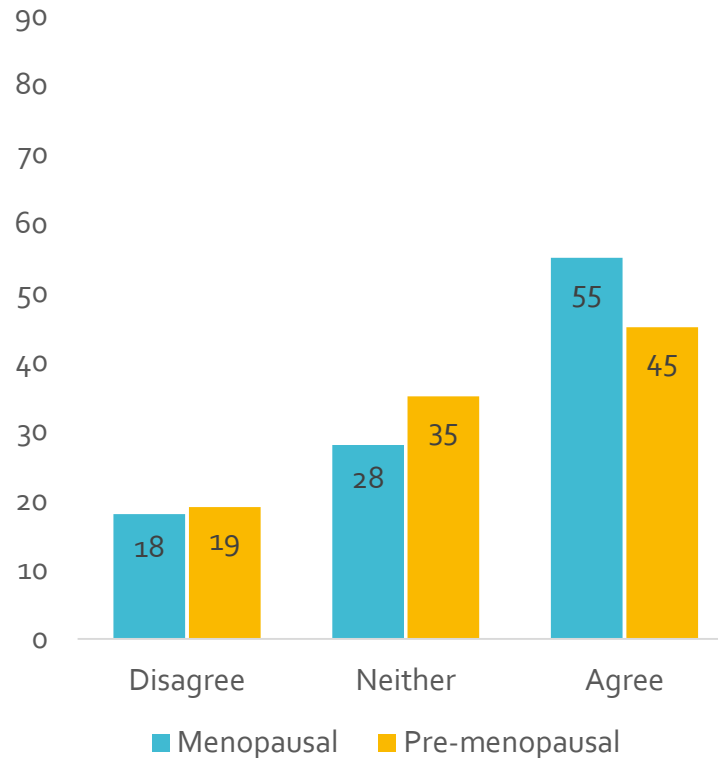


# The value of older workers

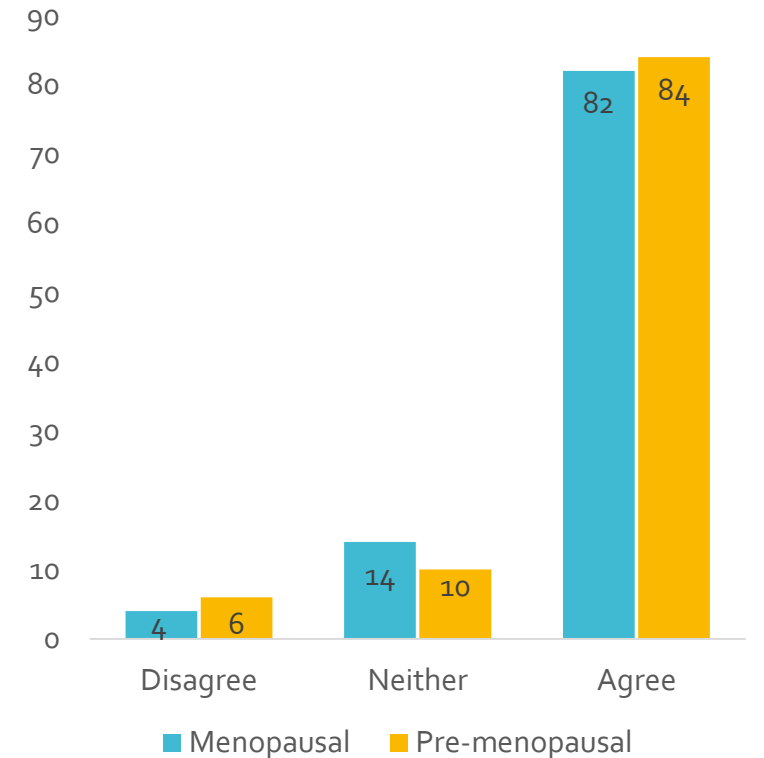
## The PSNI values the contribution of older workers



## Ageist attitudes and jokes are a part of police culture



## The PSNI has the same expectations of the physical capabilities of younger and older officers



# 'Keeping people safe & the menopause': recommendations



- 1. Conversation, discussion & awareness raising:** enhanced workplace support (including the creation & implementation of a formal policy) alongside a wider engagement programme seeking to empower all members of staff to engage in conversation, raise awareness and normalise the menopause in the workplace
- 2. Information provision:** awareness training should be provided for all line; managers, including information on symptoms, the potential impact of symptoms and the practical application of any formal menopause policy;
- 3. Workplace wellbeing:** an informal wellbeing strand which focusses specifically on the wellbeing of menopausal women – act as informal support network, incorporating wellbeing activities / therapies;
- 4. Temperature & ventilation:** where possible, menopausal women should be provided with some control over the temperature of their working environment;
- 5. Flexibility:** improved flexibility in the workplace for women experiencing troublesome menopausal symptoms. Should be central to any formal menopause policy and should incorporate flexibility in working hours and working practices.