

Menopause and the workplace

24 January 2023  Dawn Loble

In July 2022, the Women and Equalities Committee published a report titled [Menopause and the workplace](#). Within this report, twelve recommendations were made and, whilst some of these recommendations were specific to health and legal reform, four of these recommendations proposed changes within the workplace. The Government's [response](#) to these recommendations has now been published:

The appointment of a Menopause Ambassador

This has been approved in principle with key elements of the role (titled Menopause Employment Champion) being to give a voice to menopausal women, to promote their economic contribution, and to work with employers to keep people experiencing menopausal symptoms in work and progressing.

To make the right to request flexible working a day-one right

This has been accepted and there is currently a private member's bill going through Parliament in respect of this.

The production of model menopause policies

This has not been accepted, with the Government believing that a model policy is not necessary.

Piloting a specific 'menopause leave' policy

This has not been accepted on the grounds that it is not believed to be necessary and may be counterproductive to the aims of supporting people experiencing menopausal symptoms to remain in work.

There were also significant legal reforms recommended including creating a new protected characteristic of menopause and commencing section 14 of the Equality Act 2010 which would allow claims to be brought because of a combination of two relevant protected characteristics. Both of these recommendations have been rejected by the Government.

In a British Menopause Society National Survey in 2016, 45% of women indicated that they felt their menopause symptoms had a negative impact on their work, and 47% of those who needed to take a day off work due to menopause symptoms indicated that they would not tell their employer the real reason for their absence. Whilst progress has been made in raising awareness of the impact that menopause symptoms can have – due in large part to high profile campaigners such those involved with Menopause Mandate – there is clearly still a long way to go and the Government's rejection of a number of the recommendations made will leave some querying whether menopause is a government priority.

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