



Lack of support for employees during the menopause

Menopausal women are the fastest growing demographic in the workplace. Despite this, our research found that many women feel unsupported by their employer when going through the menopause.

Menopause symptoms vary, impacting each woman differently. 3.5 million of Britain's female workforce are already experiencing menopausal symptoms in the workplace. Whilst menopause has become a key topic within the media, the taboo around discussing this at work is still an issue faced by many.

Our employment law experts have fought alongside women who've experienced unfair treatment at work due to the effect that menopausal symptoms have had on their performance. We wanted to delve deeper into the issues women in the UK are experiencing and share advice on how to tackle menopause discrimination in the workplace.

20%

of women feel isolated when dealing with menopause at work.

Which menopause symptoms are impacting women at work?

Our research shows that the three symptoms of menopause that impact women most in the workplace are hot flushes (60%), fatigue (53%) and mood swings (45%). When it comes to how they feel at work, women are left to feel isolated (20%) unable to complete their role (15%), and paranoid (13%). 8% of women surveyed even felt threatened they might lose their job.

To help try and manage their symptoms, 34% took time off from work, with 27% confessing they didn't but wish they could have. Of those that did take time off, 30% took it as unpaid sick leave/unpaid leave. In more extreme cases, over one third admitted they wanted to leave their job due to lack of support whilst they went through the menopause at work. The issues women in the UK are experiencing and share advice on how to tackle menopause discrimination in the workplace.

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Why do women feel unsupported whilst going through the menopause?

Failing to help women manage their menopausal symptoms can be one thing, though when discriminatory, offensive comments are also ignored by employers, the workplace can become an unbearable and upsetting environment.

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Shockingly, 13% of women said they had been subjected to jokes, ridicule and/or unwanted “banter” about their menopause at work and 6% had their employer either terminate their employment or place them on an improvement plan due to their menopause symptoms.

The research indicates how many employers have failed to recognise the menopause as a significant factor affecting the wellbeing of female employees, and how some managers have downplayed its significance or impact.

Doreen Reeves, Senior Associate Solicitor in our employment team at Slater and Gordon, said:

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The menopause is currently not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. However, if you have been put at a disadvantage due to your menopausal symptoms, this could be discrimination if it is related to a protected characteristic such as age, disability or sex. We have been successful in bringing such claims for women suffering menopausal symptoms, and it is an evolving area of law.

It is crucial that women experiencing the menopause are aware of the rights they have and are not simply putting up with unlawful behaviour. If you have been a victim of discrimination and you believe this is due to the menopause, contact an employment solicitor who will be able to advise you on your rights.

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Why choose Slater and Gordon?

Slater and Gordon have a long history working with the Police Federation, providing us with the experience and understanding needed to best support you.

We have an in-depth understanding of police work and the wider issues that affect police officers at work. Our specially trained employment lawyers are on hand to help and provide practical advice on all employment issues.

To speak to one of our expert employment lawyers, please contact us on 0808 175 7710 and we'll be happy to help.

If you're looking for advice, contact us on 0808 175 7710 or visit our website to speak in confidence with a specialist employment lawyer who will help guide you through your options and choose your next steps with confidence.

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