



Royal College
of Midwives

Important information for all activists

New Legislation Menopause and the Equality Act

These resources are designed to inform RCM workplace representatives of new legislation and to understand the employer's legal obligations in relation to supporting workers experiencing menopausal symptoms.

Change in legislation – 22nd February 2024

The equality watchdog, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), has issued new guidance setting out employers' legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to women experiencing menopausal symptoms in the workplace.

According to research cited by the EHRC, one in ten women who have worked during menopause have left their jobs due to symptoms, while two-thirds of working women between the ages of 40 and 60 with experience of menopausal symptoms said they have had a mostly negative impact on them at work. However, very few workers requested workplace adjustments during this time, often citing concerns about potential reactions.

As the number of women experiencing menopause while in employment increases, the Commission says that it is essential that employers know how to support workers experiencing menopause symptoms. Not only does this ensure they meet their legal responsibilities, but also that women are able to continue to contribute to the workplace.

- The new guidance from the EHRC aims to clarify these legal obligations and provide practical tips for employers on making reasonable adjustments and fostering positive conversations about menopause with their workers.
- Workers are protected under the Equality Act from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation on the basis of protected characteristics including disability, age and sex.
- If menopause symptoms have a long-term and substantial impact on a woman's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, these symptoms could be considered a disability.



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- If menopause symptoms amount to a disability, the employer will be under a legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments.
- They will also be under a legal obligation to not directly or indirectly discriminate because of the disability or subject the woman to discrimination arising from disability.
- Women experiencing menopause symptoms may also be protected from direct and indirect discrimination as well as harassment and victimisation on the grounds of age and sex.
- Under health and safety legislation, employers also have a legal obligation to conduct an assessment of their workplace risks.

Please read the guidance in more detail and view videos [click here.](#)