

Written evidence submitted by Mrs Kelly Baker

I am the MOD menopause network co-lead and our membership is open to military colleagues as well as civilian.

I have been made aware of numerous menopause factors for military personnel and them experiencing a detriment for being a woman going through the menopause:

- Uniform – too hot and bulky when experiencing hot flushes.
- CBD oil – is based on marijuana oil but without the bad side effects of marijuana. This is a great aid for menopause symptoms especially when military colleagues cannot take HRT – the worry is that military colleagues take drugs tests and cannot take CBD oil, even though their health would benefit.
- Fitness tests – some colleagues have osteoporosis brought on by the menopause and so cannot perform/pass the normal fitness tests – this could lead to them being dismissed for not being 'combat ready', rather than being given permanent desk jobs.
- Brain fog & anxiety – other serious menopause symptoms – this would not enable a military colleague to hold a firearm and could place other military colleagues in jeopardy if on an operation.

These are some of the things placing women in detriment for going through a natural phase in their life.

Pregnancy is a protected characteristic and therefore covered in the military and a special uniform is provided. However, the menopause causes far more medical symptoms than pregnancy, lasts for many years and is not recognised as a protected characteristic, so not catered for in the military.

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