

Written evidence submitted by A Member of the Public [MEW0005]

Please note: The information given below is my personal opinion based on my experiences as a Senior Leader going through the menopause.

I began to experience the symptoms of menopause around the age of 52 (I am currently 56).

Symptoms included mood swings, poor sleep and weight gain.

In 2018 I was prescribed HRT but due to a shortage of HRT patches it was 7 months before I could start treatment. This was more than 'frustrating', my symptoms were getting worse, I was only sleeping a few hours a night and working full time. Eventually I got HRT but the side effects for me included severe and sudden menstrual bleeding. I could not cope with this as I would be in a meeting and suddenly feel a major bleed come on.

I contacted my GP several times but each time they were unsympathetic. I was even told by a female GP that it couldn't be that bad because I was 'functioning'. I have no choice but to 'function'!!

I have access to Private Health Care but I soon learnt that such policies do not cover the menopause.

I truly believe that women are being discriminated against. Can you imagine a Private Health Care policy not covering prostrate issues? GP's lack knowledge mainly because most menopausal women do 'function' we have no choice to run a home, care for our families, work etc. I feel very badly let down by the NHS and the Private Health sector simply because I'm a woman. We should have some protection including:

- Better GP training/awareness
- Menopause being included as a protected characteristic in law
- Private Health Policies required to include menopause in their cover

Improved care for menopausal women makes economic sense. I'm a 40% tax payer so keeping me in work is good for the Governments purse.

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