

Written evidence from Name Withheld [MEW0014]

Having worked for the same company for nearly 20 years, I have in the last 5 years constantly been discriminated (I am now 57)! I had a total abdominal hysterectomy at 50 years of age (so 7 years ago), prior to my return to work I asked to have an occupational health referral before returning, this never materialised, this resulted in my line manager implementing a phased return to work on the business need, which extended my driving area which I had not prepared for, this resulted in me getting a hernia and going back off of work on sick leave. I had to wait over 3 years to have my hernia repaired, this could have been avoided if somebody was qualified to manage my phased return to work, managers are not qualified to say what I can and cannot do. I would like to see that it is mandatory to conduct Occupational Health return to work assessments following any surgical operation to be carried out by somebody qualified to do them. Employers will not offer them as they have to pay for them.

Women are very much discriminated in the workplace where I work which impacts the wider community. As women are continuing to work longer due to the pension age changes, we are struggling very much to keep up, more and more work are being placed on us in order to try to manage us older women out of the workforce. Men are still paid more than women.

As a housing officer, I was employed to work in my local area, however my employers believe that they can change my working area as they see fit for a business need, they try to get us to drive for a minimum of 2 hours to get to one appointment. Not only is this harder for menopausal women to do, it is also not taking into account the environmental impact on polluting air quality. I would like to see a human need and protection come ahead of a business need for larger organisations. It is clear that many menopausal women struggle with anxiety which increases vastly whilst driving (more so for long distance and unknown areas/roads). Anxiety is very hard to deal with.

Every workforce should have a menopausal policy to protect the business and the staff member. The company I work for does not have one and it is a very grey area within the workforce. Expectant mothers get a whole document to protect them in the workforce, older women are definitely discriminated by not having a robust policy in place to assist and protect them. New mothers get 9 months paid time off with their new baby, menopausal women get a warning if they are off more than 3 times within 1 year for their menopause menopause is not a life choice for women but having a baby is.

Businesses need to bring in more awareness within the workforce on menopausal women, after all us that are going through it do not understand it either, our Drs rarely understand as they are either male or not trained in this field.

Yes current legislation needs to be amended to protect menopausal women more, I have been placed on improvement plans for a letter my manager authorised, I have been refused flexible working requests to reduce my working hours so I can also work and care for my 84 year old mother who has dementia, however younger women get theirs approved to care for their children.

As a 60's born woman I believe I have been discriminated in the extension of the retirement age. It was implemented in 2011 at 47 years of age – I left school in 1980 believing that I would retire at 60! I was not prepared to work an additional 7 years and am still not. I like many 50's and 60's born women had to stay at home to care for children, I was not permitted to work by my husband. We divorced and he got 50% of everything we owned despite me having the children. I had to retrain as an older woman to get qualifications to work. Twenty years notice for a pension increase is not sufficient time to save for my older years when I have a mortgage and family.

With the menopause comes many other health conditions which we also struggle with in the work place. I feel totally let down by this Government.

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