

Written evidence from Name Withheld [MEW0021]

My expectation is that, working as I do in a male dominated industry, to mention any difficulty associated with the menopause will lead to yet more barriers for any younger female colleagues - a sample size of one being taken as representative of all women, at any age. Similarly anything and everything that I or other women do to be prejudged as menopause related

From a wider point of view just as I (or some other 50-ish woman) am ready for my dazzling sunset career, along comes the menopause which weighs upon me as heavier than 2 primary school age children and an abusive ex-spouse ever did. Except that now I am working full time instead of part time, and there are no obvious reasons for any drop off.

The economic impact of menopause discrimination is going to be lost productivity, general loss of efficiency. But perhaps not as great a loss (it'll depend) as having all those mediocre white men who might be appointed as the alternative doing my job instead? (I don't imagine anyone has bothered looking at the economic impact of promoting mediocre white men over more diverse and better suited candidates).

From a needs point of view, options for sabbatical or going part time would be nice. But education for all would be better so it's not seen as "special pleading". "reasonable adjustments" will vary from person to person, so not sure what to suggest here. Of course if you don't also level the playing field as regards equalising maternity and paternity leave (on a use it or lose it basis), and if you don't require employers to have as policy equal consideration and granting of part time work for parents of either gender, then any menopause-related adjustments will be seen by the uninformed as "yet more special pleading for (other) women".

Given that one of the effects of menopause is poor memory, we as a nation should be informing and educating men at least as much as women about the effects of menopause. It's all very well including it in the school curriculum but unlikely to be remembered 30+ years later. In particular it needs to be clear that all menopauses are different (YOU get of likely but that won't be the case for everyone. Similar to puberty) and effects can vary between women and over time. ie there's no point telling me I'll forget things as I won't remember.

I am not qualified to comment on how people who experience the menopause but do not identify as women should be supported in relation to menopause and the workplace?, I defer to them. I've seen nothing thus far. Apart from non-disPuberty nowadays happens pre-workplace. Maternity has loads of stuff around it, parenthood in general less so (see comment about paternity leave). Not so aware of anything else.

Further legislation should mandate employers to put in place a workplace menopause policy to protect people going through the menopause whilst at work, in the same way as other non-discriminatory policies. (Not that it seems to be working that well in the case of pregnancy, but it's a start.)

September 2021