

Women being let down by “glacial” Government progress on menopause

2 years ago



The Government response to the Women and Equalities Committee report on menopause and the workplace is a “missed opportunity to protect vast numbers of talented and experienced women from leaving the workforce.”

- [Read the special report \[HTML\]](#)
- [Download the report \[PDF\]](#)
- [Inquiry: Menopause and the workplace](#)
- [Women and Equalities Committee](#)

Published today, the Government’s response rejects five of the Committee’s recommendations outright, including the recommendation to consult on making menopause a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 and pilot a specific menopause leave policy.

In a letter to Health Minister Maria Caulfield, the Chair of the Committee Caroline Nokes expressed concern that the Government has “ignored the significant evidence base” for equality law reform and called on the Government to review its position. The Committee also highlights the low cost but high impact opportunities for model workplace menopause policies and menopause leave, which the Government has dismissed.

In the letter, the Committee highlighted it was “extremely disappointing that the Menopause Taskforce has not met since prior to the summer recess, and that the industry roundtable on HRT supplies has been delayed a number of times.”

The Committee’s report, published in July 2022, argued that the overlooked impact of menopause is

causing the UK economy to 'haemorrhage talent'. It also argued that the current law does not sufficiently protect women experiencing menopause and does not offer proper redress to those who suffer menopause related discrimination, with evidence that many women have to demonstrate their menopausal symptoms amount to a disability to get redress.

Though the Government said it has accepted, partly accepted or accepted in principle six of the recommendations, it comes under criticism from the Committee for not actually committing to any new work in response to the report.

Chair of the Women and Equalities Committee, Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP, said: "This belated response to our report is a missed opportunity to protect vast numbers of talented and experienced women from leaving the workforce, and leaves me unconvinced that menopause is a Government priority.

"For too long women have faced stigma, shame and dismissive attitudes when it comes to menopause. The evidence to our inquiry was crystal clear that urgent action was needed across healthcare and work settings to properly address women's needs, yet Government progress has been glacial and its response complacent.

"Its refusal to even consult on reforming equalities law doesn't make sense and we urge it to look again."