

Southwark Council sets a first in England as the first local authority to become an Endometriosis Friendly Employer

11 months ago



[Southwark Council](#) is proud to commit to creating a supportive work environment for those impacted by endometriosis, by joining the Endometriosis Friendly Employer scheme.

Southwark is the first council in England to sign up – following East Ayrshire Council in Scotland, and Powys County Council in Wales, both of whom joined in the past year.

Through the scheme, in collaboration with Southwark-based charity [Endometriosis UK](#), Southwark Council will improve its support for those in the workplace affected by this common disease, as well as breaking down taboos and stigmas around menstrual health.

As part of this work, the council will appoint Endometriosis Champions to serve as a point of support and information for colleagues and management, in addition to updating HR policies to provide adequate support to colleagues with gynaecological health conditions.

Endometriosis is a chronic disease that impacts the physical and mental health of 1 in 10 women and those assigned female at birth from puberty to menopause, although the impact may be felt for life. Symptoms associated with endometriosis include chronic pelvic pain, abdominal bloating, nausea, fatigue, depression, anxiety, infertility, and severe life-impacting pain during menstruation, sexual intercourse, bowel movements and/or urination.

Despite being so common, it [takes an average of eight years and 10 months](#) to get diagnosed in the UK, for reasons including limited research and lack of understanding of the disease.

Julia Parris is an executive assistant at Southwark Council. She says: “From my experience with endometriosis, it is a debilitating condition which can affect women in so many different ways; physically, emotionally and mentally. Whilst it is a condition that most women learn to live with and navigate on a day to day basis, it is important to acknowledge that it can have a profoundly detrimental effect on the world

of work and study.

“Working for an organisation that has committed to recognising and supporting staff with endometriosis, having open discussions with employees to raise awareness of the condition, and how we can be supported in the workplace, is so important to me. This makes me very proud to work for Southwark Council.”

[Cllr Stephanie Cryan](#), cabinet member for equalities, democracy and finance, said: “We want every single employee at the council to have the support in place that enables them to thrive. That’s why we are proud to join the Endometriosis Friendly Employer scheme as the first council in England to do so. We are committed to supporting those in the workplace with endometriosis, as well as breaking down taboos about menstrual health. We look forward to working with Endometriosis UK, and hope that other local councils will join the scheme as well.”

Emma Cox, CEO of Endometriosis UK, said: “I’m delighted to welcome Southwark Council to the diverse range of organisations tackling taboos around menstrual health and endometriosis through the Endometriosis Friendly Employer scheme. By showing its team that they are valued and can expect support and reasonable adjustments to help those with endometriosis and menstrual conditions succeed at work, they will be increasing engagement across the whole of their workforce, ultimately making the organisation more successful.”

Althea Loderick, CEO of Southwark Council, said: “I’m delighted that we are the first council in England to become an Endometriosis Friendly Employer, helping drive positive change in the workplace for those with the disease. It is so important that we show our staff that they are valued and can always expect support and reasonable adjustments to help them reach their full potential to succeed at work. In joining the Endometriosis Friendly Employer scheme, we have committed to ensuring that those with the disease can contribute to the best of their ability and pursue the career of their choice.”

She added: “I would also like to thank Maddie O’Connor, one of our National Graduate scheme trainees, for pushing this forward and making this happen for Southwark.”

Maddie said: “Women’s health issues so often go ignored, and Southwark is making bold strides in inclusion and equity for its staff living with endometriosis. I am proud to work for an organisation that takes the wellbeing of its staff seriously, and that goes above and beyond to create a working environment where everyone is valued and can thrive.”