

Most Employers Unprepared for Menopause Compliance Deadline, as 3 in 4 Say the Law Does Not Go Far Enough

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A poll of 276 HR, health and safety and compliance professionals has found that just under a third (29%) of organisations have committed to publishing a menopause action plan in 2026 or 2027, while most remain uncertain or unprepared. At the same time, almost three-quarters (74%) of those surveyed believe menopause needs stronger legal protection at work – a striking verdict from an audience whose job it is to manage legal risk.

The research, carried out by DEI and compliance eLearning provider [VinciWorks](#), points to a significant disconnect between where menopause legislation is heading and how prepared most organisations are to meet it.

The compliance deadline most organisations are not ready for

Under the Employment Rights Act, organisations with over 250 employees will be required to publish a menopause action plan from 2027. Voluntary publication begins in April 2026. Interestingly, however, when questioned, only 3% of respondents said they already publish one annually. Nearly four in ten (39%) said they were not sure when or whether they would publish, and a further 8% said they had no plans to do so at all.

The compliance stakes are significant. Once published, a menopause action plan becomes a public document that employees can rely on in litigation. If the commitments it contains are not followed through, the plan can become evidence against the employer rather than for them. Organisations that

treat it as a formality are likely to find it works against them when it matters most.

Sara Henna Dahan, compliance manager at VinciWorks, said: “Menopause action plans are a really important step in building trust that women can see their future with an employer. Menopause and perimenopause can affect women from their thirties onwards, and knowing what support could be available, and the attitude of the employer towards menopause, should be basic.”

The professionals managing legal risk think the law needs to go further

Perhaps the most telling finding is this: almost three-quarters (74%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that menopause needs stronger legal protection. Only 6% disagreed.

The survey questioned HR, health and safety, and compliance professionals, the people inside organisations whose job it is to identify legal exposure and manage it. This professional assessment that the Employment Rights Act is a missed opportunity to support older women at work comes as a host of new rules come into force to extend paternity leave and trade union rights, while menopause support seems lacking.

A separate question on menopause leave found that six in ten (61%) supported it becoming a legal right, though 28% remained undecided. The Employment Rights Act extended a range of new leave categories, including carer’s leave and bereavement leave, but menopause leave was not included. For many in this survey, that omission is becoming harder to justify.

Naomi Grossman, compliance specialist at VinciWorks, said: “The stories older women are telling us highlight the gaps in law and practice. This is something that will affect all women, often right at the peak of their careers, and companies risk losing out on talent, as well as exposing themselves to regulatory risk, if they can’t provide basic support.”

The human cost behind the governance gap

The governance picture does not exist in isolation. According to research by [The Menopause Charity](#) and the [Fawcett Society](#), nine out of ten women will experience menopause symptoms, and 44% say it affects their ability to work. One in ten leave their jobs due to menopause. These are not edge cases.

Employment tribunals involving menopause discrimination have awarded claimants tens of thousands of pounds in recent years. In one recent case, *Ms G Platukyte v Secretary of State for Justice*, a Ministry of Justice employee was awarded £29,000 after her previously agreed remote working arrangements were withdrawn during a period of debilitating symptoms. She was subsequently given an attendance warning for the sick leave that followed.

One in five (21%) of those surveyed still said they did not feel comfortable discussing menopause at work, and only 18% believed their organisation’s menopause training was effective. Among organisations with training in place, more than a third (34%) said it was not working. Four in ten (40%) said their organisation provided no training at all, but would like to.

For many organisations, the cultural foundations needed to support a credible action plan are not yet in place. A governance document built on top of a culture that still cannot openly discuss the issue it is meant to address is unlikely to hold up under scrutiny.

What needs to happen now

For organisations trying to get ahead of the April 2026 voluntary deadline, the evidence from this poll points in one direction. A menopause action plan needs a named owner, a governance structure and a review process. Training is a starting point, not an endpoint. A policy that sits in a handbook unread is not a policy; it is a risk.

The nine out of ten women who will experience menopause symptoms, and the 44% who say it affects their ability to work, are not going anywhere.