

Unworkable: how the UK workplace fails women going through the menopause

Daniel Reisel¹, Andrew Bazeley¹, Kate Muir², Rebecca Lewis³, Dr Louise Newson³

¹Fawcett Society, ²Finestripe Productions and Channel 4, ³Newson Health Research and Education

To what extent are women affected by their menopause at work?

Objective:

It is well known that the menopause can be disruptive and detrimental to a woman's quality of life. However, the extent to which the menopause impacts wellbeing at work has not been clearly mapped out.

Method:

We analysed the results of a large-scale panel survey carried out on behalf of the Fawcett Society of women aged 45-55 with current menopausal symptoms. The survey was conducted online between 26 January and 4 February 2022, and included 4,014 female respondents. Data was weighted to be representative of UK women aged 45-55 by age and region.

Results:

Impact of symptoms at work **significant for 44%**

10% left due to workplace being unable to accommodate needs

28% reduced hours or altered working pattern

14% of respondents' employers had developed a menopause support network

9% of respondents' employers had a menopause absence policy

Reduced motivation and confidence most common

Whole spectrum of physical symptoms impacting work

Many women had to use other reasons to apply for sick leave when symptoms were the cause

Workforce attrition >300,000 women aged 45-55 years

Conclusion:

Most women in the UK do not feel supported with their menopause at work. Employers need to ensure staff are provided with a work environment that can adapt to their changing needs.