# Two Parliamentary inquiries launched into menopause and the workplace

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**Davina McCall's recent high-profile documentary, Sex Myths and**

**the Menopause, helped normalise conversations about the menopause in our living rooms. Since then, the movement to bring the menopause out into the open – including in the workplace – has gathered momentum, with two new Parliamentary inquiries launched in the last few weeks. In this briefing we explain what the inquiries are about and how you can submit your views.**

**Women and Equalities Committee – Inquiry into menopause and the workplace**

On 23 July 2021, the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee opened an inquiry into the impact of the menopause in the workplace. Essentially, the purpose of the inquiry is to receive evidence on current workplace practices and views on whether existing discrimination legislation protects workers going through the menopause, or whether more needs to be done.

Currently, discrimination against workers going through the menopause is only covered by the Equality Act 2010 if it is connected to one of the existing protected characteristics such as age, sex and disability. The Chair of the Committee, Caroline Nokes MP, has not ruled out the possibility of recommending that the law be changed to make menopause a standalone protected characteristic. The inquiry will also look at whether employers should be compelled to put in place workplace menopause policies.

The specific questions raised in the inquiry are as follows:

- What is the nature and the extent of discrimination faced by women experiencing the menopause? How does this impact wider society?
- What is the economic impact of menopause discrimination?
- How can businesses factor in the needs of employees going through the menopause?
- How can practices addressing workplace

discrimination relating to menopause be implemented? For example, through guidance, advice, adjustments, or enforcement. What are examples of best or most inclusive practices?

- How should people who experience the menopause but do not identify as women be supported in relation to menopause and the workplace?
- How well does current legislation protect women from discrimination in the workplace associated with the menopause? Should current legislation be amended?
- What further legislation is required to enable employers to put in place a workplace menopause policy to protect people going through the menopause whilst at work?
- How effective has Government action been at addressing workplace discrimination related to the menopause, and what more can the Government do to address this issue?
- How effectively is the Government Equalities Office working across Government to embed a strategic approach to addressing the impact of menopause in the workplace?

The inquiry closes on 17 September 2021. The Committee will present their findings and recommendations to the Government, with a view to shaping policies addressing gender equality and women's health.

You can contribute to the inquiry directly via this link. Alternatively, Amanda Steadman, Principal Knowledge Lawyer at BDBF, is a member of the Employment Lawyers Association Working Party responding to this inquiry. If you prefer, you can feedback your views to her by 2 September 2021.

Women and Equalities Committee – Menopause and the Workplace Inquiry

**All-Party Parliamentary Group on Menopause – Inquiry into the impacts of the menopause and the case for reform**

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Menopause (**Menopause APPG**) is a politically neutral cross-party group of Parliamentarians concerned about the menopause and is chaired by Carolyn Harris MP. The Menopause APPG has regular meetings within Parliament to discuss the challenges and impact of menopause, as well as listening to the thoughts of anybody with experience and interest on the issue.

On 6 July 2021, the Menopause APPG opened an inquiry into the impacts of menopause on women and families and the case for policy reform. This inquiry will examine a wide range of issues surrounding menopause and seeks written submissions on the following issues:

- Evidence on current workplace attitudes, policy or initiatives towards menopause and detail on further workplace action that should be taken.
- Information on current menopause education in schools – how it works in practice and what more could be done to educate people on menopause.
- Information on how medical professionals and the NHS deal with menopause in terms of treatment and the development of treatment. What specific policy change would better help the NHS treat women going through menopause?
- Detail on personal experiences of menopause, the impact this may have had on daily activity and wider family impacts.
- Information on current products that are available for women going through menopause and information on this market.
- Any further detail or suggested policy recommendations that the Menopause APPG should consider around menopause.

As part of its inquiry, the Menopause APPG will also be undertaking a number of live evidence sessions. On 23 September 2021, the group will hold a session to hear evidence

on menopause and the workplace, looking specifically at what employers can do and what legislative changes are required.

The inquiry closes on 30 September 2021. The evidence collected will contribute to the Menopause APPG's final recommendations for policy change which will be presented to the Government.

You can contribute to the inquiry directly by emailing: sarina.kiayani@interelgroup.com.

Menopause APPG – Inquiry into the impacts of the menopause and the case for reform

If you would like to know more about the menopause and the workplace, and the steps employers can take to help workers, you can read our briefing from March 2021 which looked at these issues.

**If you would like to discuss how your organisation can support staff though the menopause, please contact Amanda Steadman (amandasteadman@bdbf.co.uk) or your usual BDBF contact.**

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