

Your Guide to the Employment Rights Bill

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What is the Employment Rights Bill?

The Employment Rights Bill was introduced into Parliament on 10 October 2024 and proposes some big changes to Employment Law across the UK. The Bill aims to end unfair employment practices that we hope will be of benefit to those with endometriosis in the workplace.

Before becoming law, the bill must undergo five steps in each House of Parliament (The House of Commons and the House of Lords) including a first reading, second reading, committee stage, report stage and third reading – before the two Houses agree on amendments, before it finally can become law. This can take months, sometimes years, before it comes into practice. Much of the Bill will apply across the UK, although some parts will need to go through different processes to become law in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

There are also opportunities throughout the stages of the Bill for Endometriosis UK to call for changes that we want to see in the Bill and call for it to be strengthened to include greater measures to support those with menstrual health conditions.

What might the Employment Rights Bill mean for employees with endometriosis?

The Bill currently commits to:

- Ensuring employers with more than 250 employees produce menopause action plans
- Strengthening the rights of flexible working, and making it harder for employers to refuse Flexible Working Requests
- Offering new 'guaranteed hours' contracts for some workers currently on zero hours contracts. The detail on how these could work in practice is still being agreed
- Those earning less than £123 per week would be able to access Statutory Sick Pay
- Everyone would be able to access Statutory Sick Pay from day 1 rather than day 4

Menopause action plans

The Bill introduces the requirement for larger employers (over 250 employees) to produce equality action plans. Endometriosis UK strongly supports that the plans will cover matters related to gender equality, and specifically includes “supporting employees going through the menopause.”

We would like to highlight that going through medical menopause can be part of the treatment for endometriosis and seeks reassurance that menopause action plans will include all those experiencing menopause including a medically induced menopause.

We would also like to see this clause amended so the plans must cover all those impacted by menstrual health conditions, a significant proportion of the working age population.

Flexible working

Endometriosis UK supports these measures which should increase the availability of flexible working arrangements. Those with endometriosis often use flexible working arrangements to manage symptoms and time off for appointments.

We often hear from employees with endometriosis that there have been many benefits to both them and their employers from agreeing flexible working arrangements. This has allowed many to remain in work, manage their condition and be productive employees.

What Endometriosis UK is calling for

Endometriosis UK welcomes the Employment Rights Bill as it offers important measures to support those with endometriosis in the workplace.

We particularly welcome the introduction of menopause action plans as we know that many with endometriosis may go through the menopause as part of their treatment. It's vital that the menopause action plans include measures for those who go through the menopause at any point in their life, and that these **Action Plans are extended to also cover all those affected by menstrual health conditions.**

We also want to see an end to unfair automated HR attendance systems that penalise those with menstrual health conditions, and risk them facing disciplinary procedures. These often apply a relative weighting to employee absences based on the principle that short, frequent absences have a greater operational impact and are therefore considered worse than longer absences. This sometimes means that employees with endometriosis are being penalised, and in some cases, losing their jobs.

We would like to see legislation to ensure workers with menstrual health conditions are treated fairly if they need short but intermittent time off work, as a result of their condition. Menstrual health conditions due to long-term conditions such as endometriosis should not count towards absence triggers.