

Women's reproductive health

A workplace issue

15.52 million women in the UK aged 16 and over were in employment in October to December 2021, equating to 153,000 more women in work than the same period a year before and 1.81 million higher than the decade before.

Women and the UK economy 2022

Despite women representing an increasing workforce demographic, stigma and silence around reproductive health remain prevalent, with significant implications for work.

Among people who know they are pregnant, an estimated **1 in 8 pregnancies will end in miscarriage** – and studies suggest the risk of miscarriage for **black women is 43% higher** than for white women.



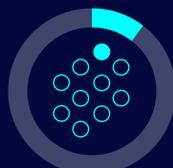
1 in 3 UK women will have an abortion by the age of 45.

The average woman spends a **third of her life post-menopausal.**



Endometriosis is thought to affect about **1 in 10 women** of child-bearing age.

In 2019, almost **53,000 patients had around 69,000 fresh and frozen IVF cycles** – and around 5,700 DI cycles at licensed fertility clinics in the UK.



1 in every 10 women will experience postnatal depression within a year of giving birth.

Not just a woman's issue



“Many women, cis women, have the capacity for pregnancy. Many cis women do not have the capacity for pregnancy. There are also trans men who are capable of pregnancy, as well as non-binary people capable of pregnancy.”
Professor Khiara Bridges discussing the future of abortion rights in America

Viewing reproductive health as solely a women's issue also overlooks the impact upon men. Fathers are only entitled to two weeks of statutory paternity leave at £156.66 per week, provided they have worked for the company for 26 weeks. **Equal parental leave has risen by 201% in the past three years**, but assuming women as the primary caregiver denies men (and therefore women) of equal opportunities.



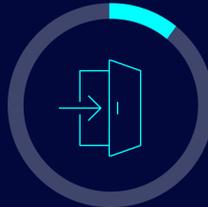
Implications for work and learning



“Nobody at work wants to address it, nobody wants to talk about grief or what the aftermath of that looks like. Everybody's nervous about saying the wrong thing, and nervous about somebody crying if you bring it up.”

73% of women have struggled to do their work in the way they want to because of their period, with the top reasons cited as;

- low energy (83%)
- being in pain (79%)
- less concentration (61%)



1 in 10 women who worked during the menopause have left a job due to their symptoms.

Employees who have lost a pregnancy are more likely to **quit their jobs, change careers and suffer from impaired work performance for months to years.**



When asked what employers could do, **63% said to normalise the conversation around periods in the workplace.**

Jack's Law, introduced in April 2020, provides **statutory parental bereavement leave to employees who have a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy.** This does not cover miscarriages that happen before 24 weeks.



Companies including Capita, are beginning to introduce **new policies allowing employees dealing with pregnancy loss including miscarriages and abortions to take leave**, including their partners and surrogates. **Hear more about our Capita life leave policy here.**

Learning is crucial to breaking the silence and stigma around reproductive health by educating teams and equipping managers with awareness and empathy to drive open discussions.

Channel 4 recently partnered with Floresco Training and Capita to create a digital solution encouraging an inclusive and supportive work environment for people experiencing menopause.

For more information about our work and insights get in touch [here](#).

