

Pregnancy and maternity discrimination report ^[1]

Author:

Adams, Lorna; Winterbotham, Mark; Oldfield, Katie; McLeish, Jenny; Stuart, Alasdair; Large, Alice; Murphy, Liz; Rossiter, Helen & Selner, Sam

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AVAILABILITY

Full research report PDF available online ^[2]

Background

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Equality and Human Rights Commission commissioned a programme of research to investigate the prevalence and nature of pregnancy discrimination and disadvantage in the workplace. The Equality Act 2010 legislation prohibits pregnancy and maternity discrimination.

The results in this report are based on interviews with 3,034 employers and 3,254 mothers.

The two surveys cover the views and experiences of employers and mothers on a range of issues related to managing pregnancy, maternity leave and mothers returning to work. The report explored:

- The type and incidence of potential pregnancy and maternity-related discrimination.
- The characteristics of women who experience possible discrimination.
- Availability and effectiveness of advice and support.
- Experiences of women who raise complaints or attempt to enforce their legal rights.
- Employer awareness of and attitudes to their legal rights and responsibilities.
- Employer attitudes towards recruiting and managing women of childbearing age, pregnant women, those on maternity leave and women with children.
- Availability of advice and support for employers (particularly small and medium-sized enterprises).
- Why some employers may possibly discriminate and others are successful in promoting good practice.
- The demand among mothers to breastfeed or express milk in the workplace and employer attitudes, policies and practices in relation to breastfeeding in the workplace.

Main findings

The majority of employers reported that it was in their interests to support pregnant women and those on maternity leave and they agreed that statutory rights relating to pregnancy and maternity are reasonable and easy to implement. However, the research found that:

- Around one in nine mothers (11%) reported that they were either dismissed; made compulsorily redundant, where others in their workplace were not; or treated so poorly they felt they had to leave their job; if scaled up to the general population this could mean as many as 54,000 mothers a year.
- One in five mothers said they had experienced harassment or negative comments related to pregnancy or flexible working from their employer and /or colleagues; if scaled up to the general population this could mean as many as 100,000 mothers a year.
- 10% of mothers said their employer discouraged them from attending antenatal appointments; if scaled up to the general population this could mean up to 53,000 mothers a year.

Region: Europe ^[3]

Tags: equality ^[4]

women's work ^[5]

women ^[6]

mothers ^[7]

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/16/05/pregnancy-and-maternity-discrimination-report> [2]
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/managing-pregnancy-and-maternity-workplace/pregnancy-and-maternity-discrimination-research-findings> [3]
<https://childcarecanada.org/category/region/europe> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/equality> [5]
<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/womens-work> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/women> [7]
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