

“Women who are victims of pregnancy discrimination don’t want to talk about it publicly” (Joanna Robson, Principal Solicitor of Babylaw. Panellist guest on Women & Money, Share Radio FM)

Is pregnancy discrimination a taboo subject? Some would agree, some not. It would not be inaccurate to say that pregnant women are vulnerable. They need to avoid health and safety risks, they need to avoid stressful situations. So, what about work? A recent study carried out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission revealed that less than 3% of women come forward and speak up against their employer’s mistreatment of them. That is an alarmingly low rate, meaning that the remaining 97% may be exposing themselves to undue stress and risk of harm, but why?

Well, some women simply don’t know their employer is doing anything wrong. Others clearly do but fear for the future security of their jobs, and rightly so, especially when there may be a lucrative maternity pay package on offer when the time comes to start their maternity leave.

It would be accurate to report that pregnancy discrimination, in most cases, is subtle. There aren’t many employers who will outlandishly harass their pregnant employee as soon as the P word has been announced. It is usually much more subtle than that. Some have reported their employer’s treatment of them as being comparable to “crazy making behaviour”; causing the woman to feel that she might be the cause of it somehow or her sudden poor performance is as a result of her “baby brain”.

This is a sad reality for some whereas others simply say or do nothing for fear of financial insecurity or career carnage.



Stand EA8, Family Expert Area