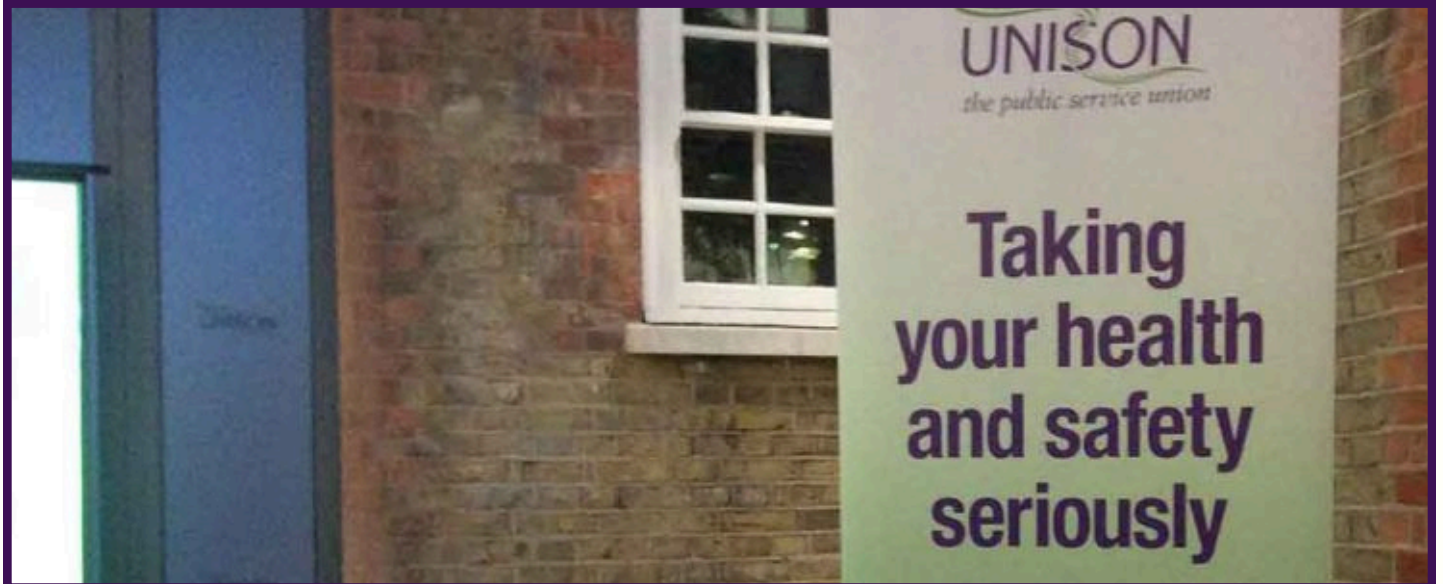




HEALTH & SAFETY SPECIAL BY
JUAN-ANTONIO GARCIA



Studies In Health & Safety

Union safety reps are your best defence against work-related accidents and ill-health. Health and safety is negotiable – It’s just when it comes to our lives and our health, UNISON won’t take **no** for an answer. Sometimes just identifying problems and asking for improvements is enough. Other times it takes more – from hard negotiations to hard-nosed trade union action. This “union safety effect” is very real and very pronounced.

A UK study printed in UK Hazards magazine found: “The proportion of employees who are trade union members has a positive and significant association on both injury and illness rates.” It added unions “lower the odds of injury and illness when compared with arrangements that merely inform employees of OHS [occupational health and safety] issues.” Making work healthier and safer the union way is even good for the economy. A UK government investigation found the savings to society stemming from the activities of union safety reps – fewer sick and injured workers – runs to hundreds of millions of pounds every year.

IN THIS ISSUE

STUDIES IN HEALTH & SAFETY

MENOPAUSE - A HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUE

A WATCHING BRIEF

HEALTH & SAFETY IN THE NEWS



Menopause - A Health & Safety Issue

Is the Menopause a safety issue?

YES - this also has health and safety, and wellbeing considerations.

And whilst everyone experiences it differently, 59% of women say their symptoms have had a negative impact on their work.

UNISON campaigns to help employers understand the effects of the menopause and back this up with policy committing to fostering a workplace where every woman feels valued.

What can I do?

The menopause is an issue for everyone who cares about fairness in the workplace, not only those who experience it directly.

Speak to your colleagues about what would make your workplace more supportive, from smaller practical adjustments to wider cultural change. Join our menopause café and feed your ideas back to your UNISON rep who can help to take them forward with your employer.

Menopause - A Watching Brief

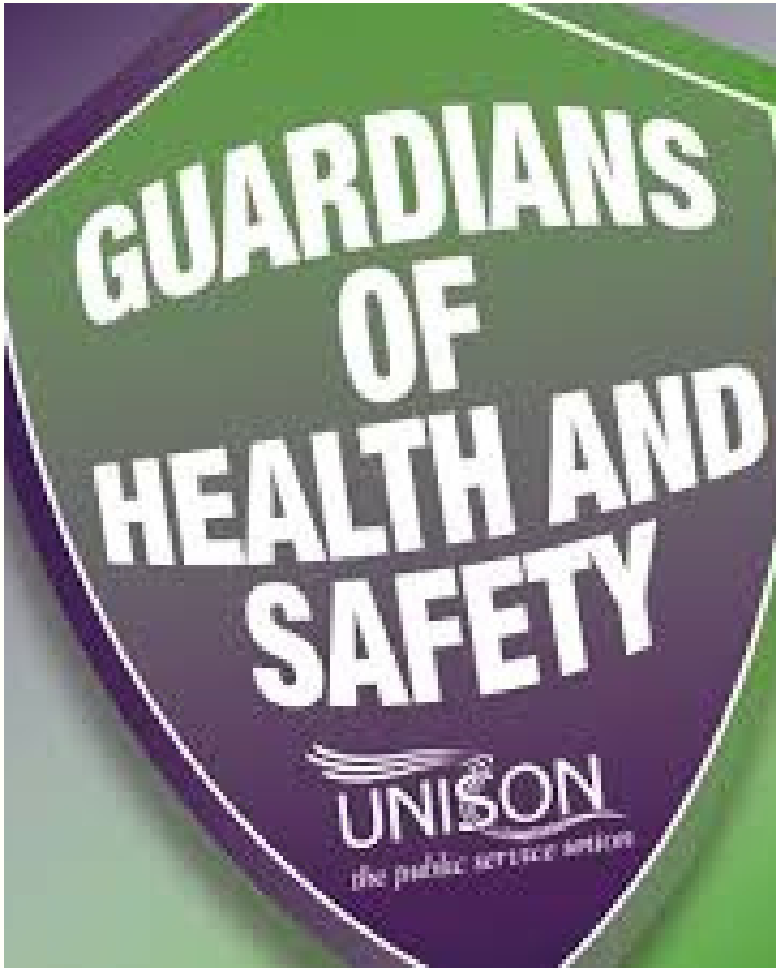
Women going through the menopause could be offered paid time off and uniform changes under Labour plans to support women in the workplace.

The party wants to require larger companies to set out menopausal action plans detailing how they are supporting women with menopause at work.

Last year a survey found 1 in 10 women left their jobs due to menopausal symptoms. Under a policy unveiled before the election, Labour will require large firms to publish and implement menopause action plans.

The action plans could include policies such as paid time off, uniform alterations and temperature-controlled areas in offices to help women manage menopausal symptoms.

Employers will be required to submit their action plans to an existing government portal used for reporting on the gender pay gap.



Health & Safety In The News

A Teacher was awarded £60,000 after a forced move worsened menopause. ([BBC News Story](#))

A teacher who was sacked from Clydesdale Secondary Support Base after her menopause symptoms worsened during a dispute about moving to a different school base has been awarded more than £60,000 for unfair dismissal.

Allison Shearer, who worked with pupils with additional needs, won her employment tribunal in Glasgow against South Lanarkshire Council.

She had told the head teacher she did not want to move to a school with high levels of violence because she feared it would increase her blood pressure and menopause symptoms. The court heard the English teacher's health concerns were ignored and she was later sacked.

The court heard pupils at Kear School in Blantyre, where it was proposed Ms Shearer move to, were those "most likely to exhibit distressed behaviour through violence, causing damage to property or attending under the influence of drugs, alcohol or other substances".

It had more than 20 teachers and support staff and could take 60 full-time secondary students, but attendance was normally between six and 20 pupils, the court said. The judge said that "no reasonable employer would have insisted" that Shearer teach at Kear, given the effect of that proposal on her health.

In awarding Ms Shearer £61,074.55 for unfair dismissal, loss of earnings and compensation for injury to feelings, the court said she was a "talented, experienced and successful teacher of English" who would be able to find another job near her home in East Renfrewshire.

Please contact the Branch Health & Safety Officer Juan-Antonio Garcia for help or more information on 07712540212 or at caerphillyunison@caerphilly.gov.uk

