

#KuToo Campaign

adapted from an article by Matthew Weaver

- 1 A group of Japanese women have submitted a protest petition to the government. The KuToo Campaign – a play on words from the Japanese kutsu, meaning shoes, and kutsuu, meaning pain – was launched by the actor and freelance writer Yumi Ishikawa and quickly won support online. A tweet by Ishikawa about having to wear high heels for a hotel job earlier this year went viral, prompting her to launch the campaign. Campaigners said forcing women to wear high-heeled shoes was asking them to suffer unnecessarily. Others also urged that dress codes such as the business suits for men be loosened in the Japanese workplace.
- 2 A similar petition against high heels at work was signed by more than 150,000 people in the UK in support of the receptionist Nicola Thorp, who was sent home from work for wearing flat shoes. She was told to go home by an accountancy firm on her first day as a temporary receptionist in May 2016 for refusing to wear high heels.
- 3 The case prompted an inquiry on workplace dress codes, which highlighted other cases in the UK where women were required to wear heels, even for jobs that included climbing ladders, carrying heavy luggage, carrying food and drink up and down stairs and walking long distances. However, the government refused to change the law, claiming the Equality Act 2010 already made it possible to settle cases like this.
- 4 In 2017, Canada legally banned companies from forcing female employees to wear high heels, saying the practice was dangerous and discriminatory. And earlier this year, Norwegian Air was widely criticised for requiring female cabin crew to carry a doctor's note if they wanted to wear flat shoes.



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