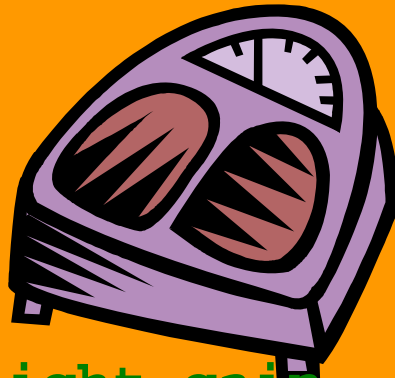


UNITE factsheet

# menopause

women's health,  
safety and workplace issues



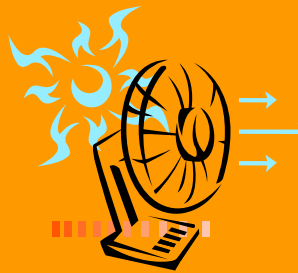
weight gain



insomnia



Irritability



hot flushes !!!!

July 2010

UNITE – the union

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# meeting the menopause: a health, safety and workplace issue

## introduction

UNITE women members will at some time reach the menopause. This is also called "the change" - perhaps more accurately, as this life change is not a sudden, but a gradual, process. It brings with it physical changes to the body and a host of symptoms, many of which are uncomfortable and can seriously affect women both at home and at work. It is also still a "taboo" subject which women may find difficult to raise when they are having difficulties at work because of it. Often women may not even be aware that the symptoms they are experiencing are because of the menopause. So representing menopausal women members at work can also be very difficult.

**This factsheet** aims to raise awareness and help women members and safety reps and shop stewards prevent discrimination and work towards positive attitudes and improvements in the workplace - which can benefit everyone. As well as general guidance on how to tackle this issue, including examples of UNITE women's workplace action, there is a hazards checklist, model agreement and ideas for a bargaining agenda.

**Menopause is a workplace issue.** But employers do not usually recognise this. A 2003 TUC survey of safety reps found that only about one employer in five offers advice and information on the menopause and only one safety rep in 50 said that their health and safety policy dealt with issues related to the menopause. The menopause is not an illness. But it most certainly poses many workplace health and safety issues.

**The menopause is something that happens only to women.** There are about 2.5 million working women in their 50s - and 70% of women of menopausal age currently work - from food factories to bus driving, agriculture to care work, car factories to schools. Women often experience harassment and humiliation at work because of the menopause. But it is an equality issue and the UNITE will not tolerate discriminatory behaviour. It is also something that does not only affect older women - some younger women experience early menopause, for a number of reasons; having a hysterectomy may be one.

**Gender differences must be addressed in health and safety practice at work.** A 2003 report from the European Agency for Safety and Health *Gender issues in safety and health* finds that conventional approaches to health and safety and prevention and control of risks largely ignore gender differences. Job design and equipment mainly relate to male workers. Women and men **are** different and may react differently to work situations and processes, and health and safety practice should be taking this into account - including the menopause.

## what can we do?

**think positive!** Some people may take a pessimistic view and see the menopause as a significant step towards ageing. It is also something that women have little control over. Added to this, society, aided by the media, demonstrates more positive attitudes to youth rather than to age and wisdom. Women often find the menopause difficult to talk about, though it is a natural occurrence in the same way that puberty or pregnancy are. The menopause can also be seen as a positive step into the next phase of women's lives. UNITE wants to help members take a positive and informed attitude to the menopause in the workplace. For example how many UNITE safety reps or managers have had training about the menopause?

### **become a UNITE Safety representative/shop steward**

UNITE women members have a wealth of experience of tackling workplace health issues which can be shared with others - as well as a wide range of legal rights for safety reps. By becoming a UNITE safety rep women members can play an important role in raising workplace standards for all. And often women members prefer to discuss issues with another woman.

### **elect a UNITE equality rep**

The UNITE is strongly supporting union equality reps and campaigning with the government for them to have full rights to training and paid time off. Establishing this role in your workplace can assist in ensuring issues like the menopause are identified and taken forward by the union.

### **Think Healthy!**

A healthy diet and lifestyle can make all the difference in meeting the menopause. Ask your GP for advice

### **UNITE policy on women's health and the menopause**

UNITE is calling for a united workplace agenda for equality backed up by new legal rights to support unions in advancing a positive equality agenda. This means recognising the importance of the health and well-being of older women and campaigning for fairer treatment at work including new rights for women at this time in their lives.

#### **Warning!**

This leaflet is provided as general guidance only. We are all unique and the menopause will affect women in different ways. You should seek advice from your GP if you are worried about your health and the menopause. If members experience problems at work because of the menopause, contact your safety rep/shop steward for advice. If more formal legal advice or action is necessary, remember that there are strict time limits for court or tribunal action to be taken and members should be referred via their full-time officer to union solicitors without delay.

## **what is the menopause?**

The menopause marks the end of menstruation. A woman's periods do not usually stop suddenly, though this can happen. Reaching the menopause means the end of egg production (ovulation) and a reduction in the body's production of the hormone oestrogen. The menopause occurs on average at age 50. Onset is usually between 47-52, though it can occur at 40 or sometimes much earlier, or later. Breast cancer treatment and hysterectomy can cause women to have symptoms of the menopause or may cause an early menopause.

## **what are the symptoms of the menopause?**

Not all women will experience the same symptoms, but the most common are:

- Hot flushes affecting the face and neck
- Night sweats
- Heavier and more irregular periods
- Insomnia
- Headaches
- Weight gain
- General irritability

**Women also complain of other problems** such as short-term memory loss, nausea, need to urinate frequently, aches and pains, mood swings, dry skin and eyes, dizziness, tiredness and lack of energy.

But don't forget, some symptoms may occur for other reasons and you should contact your GP for advice.

**Women will also experience physical changes to their bodies** particularly in their reproductive organs. Many symptoms and physical changes to women's bodies after menopause result from the loss of oestrogen. After the menopause women may be more prone to heart attacks and strokes, acceleration of loss of bone bulk and osteoporosis and bladder trouble.

A TUC report based on a survey of union safety representatives published in 2003, *Working through the Change*, found that the **symptoms most likely to be made worse by work** were hot flushes, headaches, tiredness and lack of energy. These were closely followed by sweating, anxiety attacks, aches and pains, dry skin and eyes and short-term memory loss. *Working through the Change* made a number of other findings and comments, and UNITE acknowledges this as a source for much of the information in this factsheet.

## **health and safety issues for menopausal women in the workplace include**

- toilet access and breaks - often workers have difficulty in getting access to toilets because of strict rules about breaks, because their workstation is a long way away, or, in the case of drivers, because of a shortage of public facilities, or strict schedules

- personal protective equipment or unsuitable or tight fitting clothing or uniforms may aggravate hot flushes and sweating
- workstation design - working in a restricted position for a long period may cause health problems
- workplace temperature – a woman's body temperature may rise by up to 5 degrees during a hot flush
- hot work e.g. in kitchens, furnaces
- ventilation – additional ventilation may be required
- lack of access to natural light (e.g. because of workplace design or shift patterns) may affect the body's ability to absorb calcium and can also affect the mood
- inflexible hours of work and breaks – may add to stress and physical discomfort at work
- pressure to meet impossible deadlines within contractual hours and pressure to work unpaid overtime outside work
- poor indoor air quality and heat – may exacerbate dry skin and eyes
- women having HRT or post-operative treatments may experience symptoms which affect them at work e.g. nausea
- lack of exercise and/or sedentary lifestyles may have adverse effects on health e.g. increased risks of osteoporosis, cancer, diabetes and cardio-vascular disease in women. Always contact your GP for advice
- heavy or unpredictable periods makes easy access to sanitary facilities even more important for women
- standing at work may also be an issue for some women – and research in Europe has shown that the risk of both heart attack and stroke could be increased as a result of prolonged standing
- stress in the workplace

**Negative workplace attitudes to the menopause** will add to stress at work when a woman may be dealing with a whole range of difficult issues at home, too, including lifestyle changes, concerns about health (e.g. if the menopause follows surgery) caring responsibilities etc.

Negative attitudes experienced by women include:

- criticism from management about sick leave related to the menopause
- embarrassment or difficulties in discussing the menopause with employers
- criticism, ridicule and harassment from managers when they raise the subject
- pressure and lack of understanding from colleagues
- humiliation - such as direct comments to women accusing them of poor hygiene

**We can work together** by raising the issue and encouraging discussion of this often taboo subject to change attitudes and make improvements for older women and at the same time for everyone in a workplace. You can refer to the **Bargaining Agenda** below. See also a Model Workplace Policy for the Menopause at Appendix 1

## **what is the law?**

### **health and safety at work etc act 1974**

Employers are required to protect the health, safety and welfare of all their employees. They have a duty to provide a safe workplace and safe systems of work. This is also a common law duty. The employer must also ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the welfare of all their employees while they are at work.

### **safety representatives and safety committees regulations 1977**

These confer a number of rights and functions on trade union elected safety representatives including representation of workers' views on health and safety, raising health and safety concerns with the employer, inspection of the workplace, investigating accidents and dangerous occurrences, consultation, information, to call for the setting up of a safety committee when two request this in writing, facilities to enable them to carry out their functions, and paid time off to carry out their functions and for training.

### **workplace (health, safety and welfare) regulations 1992 as amended**

These regulations are very important in the context of the menopause. They cover a wide range of workplace requirements including maintenance, ventilation, temperature, access and egress, lighting, cleanliness of the workplace, sanitary and washing facilities, eating facilities and restrooms, changing facilities, drinking water, space in workrooms, workstations and seating requirements, employers' duty to protect employees from effects of sunlight and provision relating to disabled workers.

### **health & safety (display screen equipment) regulations 1992 as amended**

Require workstation assessments for "users" of VDUs and risk assessments, provision of breaks or changes of activity for VDU users. Workstation requirements also cover work environment issues including providing sufficient space to change position and vary movements, ensuring that any equipment does not produce excess heat that would cause discomfort to operators and establishing an adequate level of humidity.

### **personal protective equipment (PPE) at work regulations 1992 as amended**

PPE should only be necessary if other methods of controlling the risks are not adequate. If PPE is necessary, then it should offer adequate protection for its intended use, those using it should be trained on its safe use, it should be properly maintained and fit the wearer. The state of health of the wearer should be taken into account and members should, if possible, be given a choice of suitable PPE. It should also be personal to the wearer.

### **the employment equality (age) regulations 2006**

The “age regulations” became law on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006. They outlaw direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation on grounds of age – whether old or young. Consult your Regional Industrial Organiser and Regional Women’s Organiser/Race & Equalities Officer for advice.

### **sex discrimination act 1975 (SDA)**

The SDA prohibits direct and indirect sex discrimination. It may be possible to rely on the SDA to protect women members from unfair treatment or harassment. Consult your Regional Women’s Organiser for advice.

### **disability discrimination act (DDA)**

The menopause is not an illness or a disability. But in some situations it may be possible to rely on the DDA. Seek advice from your Regional Officer for Disability Equality/Regional Women’s Organiser.

### **management of health and safety at work regulations 1999 as amended**

One of the most important health and safety regulations. Among other things they require employers to carry out risk assessments – that is a careful examination of what could cause harm to people at work so that they can consider the precautions to be taken to control and preferably prevent injury.

### **working time regulations 1998**

They cover issues such as holidays, breaks and working hours. They define night workers and require employers to offer free health assessments for night workers.

# risk assessment checklist

## 1. health and safety management

Have managers and supervisors been trained in issues relating to health, safety and welfare and the menopause?	
Does the risk assessment include consideration of menopause and other gender issues?	
Do workers have access to information on the menopause?	
What occupational health arrangements have been made in relation to the menopause?	
Does the sickness absence policy recognise the menopause as a health, safety and welfare issue?	
Can women report sickness to a woman manager?	
What arrangements are in place to deal with related issues such as stress management?	

## 2. sanitary and health issues – frequent urination, heavy periods, irregular periods, nausea and vomiting

Are workstations easily accessible to sanitary and rest facilities?	
Are there private washing and changing facilities?	
Is there access to sanitary products?	
Do rotas, shifts and schedules (eg for drivers) ensure that workers have easy access to sanitary and washing facilities?	

## 3. temperature - hot flushes and perspiration

Is there a policy on workplace maximum (and minimum) temperature and is it implemented?	
How is it implemented?	
Is ventilation available and is it regularly maintained?	
Is additional ventilation eg portable fans provided if necessary?	
Do uniforms and PPE reflect the needs of menopausal women?	
Is loose clothing provided?	
Is it made of natural fibres?	

#### **4. aches and pains, dizziness, lack of energy, headaches**

Have workstation risk assessments been reviewed to take the menopause into account?	
Are there opportunities to switch to lighter or different duties?	
Do manual handling assessments take these issues into account?	
Are sickness absence policies sympathetic?	
Are there flexible working arrangements in place in relation to breaks?	
Do working hours in general take account of these health issues?	

#### **5. reproductive organs; and bone damage**

Is there access to natural light?	
Are there regular and flexible breaks?	
Are uniforms etc made of natural fibres?	
Are work processes considered?	

#### **6. Mood swings, irritability, loss of concentration, insomnia**

Is there flexible working time?	
Are there flexible breaks?	
Is there access to natural light?	

#### **7. Workstations and work environment: skin and eyes**

Have workstations been reviewed?	
Where VDUs are used are there regular breaks?	
Are ventilation systems functioning?	
Are humidifier systems functioning?	

#### **8. Are there any other conditions in your workplace which may be relevant to menopausal women?**

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## **bargaining agenda – what safety reps and shop stewards can do:**

- Make sure your employer is complying with health and safety legislation – for example ensuring a comfortable workplace temperature, and adequate ventilation, consulting with workers, carrying out risk assessments and operating safe systems of work.
- What particular health and safety issues may affect menopausal women in your workplace?
- Could welfare facilities be improved? Ensure that there are good rest facilities and a quiet area, easily accessible cold drinking water and adequate and suitable sanitary facilities for women (and men) which are situated within easy reach of workstations
- Does your health and safety policy cover gender issues such as the menopause? If not, negotiate a policy. Issues that could be covered are listed in Appendix 1
- Are all managers, supervisors and safety reps trained to deal with menopause issues sensitively and fairly in the workplace?
- Are workers (and managers) provided with information, advice and training about the menopause?
- Are there adequate notice boards to enable information to be displayed?
- Ask your employer to help raise awareness and also encourage health promotion in the workplace
- Negotiate improved occupational health provision. A good in house OH department should be concerned about preventing injuries and ill-health, raising health awareness and arranging for health screening. For smaller workplaces without in-house provision, encourage your employer to arrange external occupational health provision.
- Use your rights to ensure that a gender-sensitive approach to the menopause is taken when dealing with risk assessments
- Does your sickness and absence policy treat menopausal workers fairly and provide for paid time off for medical appointments or treatment?
- Will flexible working patterns help menopausal women in your workplace?
- Negotiate flexible rest and toilet breaks
- When considering shift working be aware that there may be health issues that should be considered. Ensure that night workers are offered health assessments as required under the Working Time Regulations 1998 and that canteen, rest and other facilities are all available equally to day and night worker

### what else can members do?

- Raise awareness through your branch: invite a speaker on the menopause and/or other health related issue
- Elect Unite union equality rep(s)
- Raise issues of concern at work with your safety rep and shop steward
- Encourage more women safety reps to offer themselves for election
- Ask for training from the UNITE on tackling the menopause and other health-related and gender issues in the workplace

### model policy checklist (see model policy attached)

The following should be considered:

Consultation agreements	
Representation agreements	
Risk Assessment – consider your health and safety policy	
Employee advice, information and support - agreements	
Sickness absence	
Paid time off for medical appointments and treatment	
Rest and toilet breaks	
Work environment and adjustments	
Paid time off for medical treatment	
Occupational health screening	
Health promotion, advice and support	
Flexible working patterns and rest breaks	
Avoiding discrimination and unfair treatment	
Training and awareness raising for all including managers and supervisors	

## further information

### **UNITE contacts**

UNITE Health and Safety Unit **020 7611 2596**

[susan.murray@unitetheunion.org](mailto:susan.murray@unitetheunion.org)

UNITE Women, Race & Equalities sector **020 7611 2640**

[diana.holland@unitetheunion.org](mailto:diana.holland@unitetheunion.org)

UNITE Women's Organisers (see list on page 12)

### **UNITE Equalities publications**

"Together": UNITE's women's magazine

Women and Work. Your handbook

### **UNITE health and safety publications include:**

Unite Women's health pack including Women's Health and Safety, Health and Safety for Pregnant workers and new mothers, Domestic Violence and TUC Gender and Occupational Safety and Health.

See also Unite website for health and safety resources

[www.unitetheunion.org](http://www.unitetheunion.org)

**Hazards Magazine:** the only magazine especially for safety representatives. Supported by the TUC. For information about special discounts for trade union members contact 0114 978 4505. PO Box 4042, Sheffield S8 2DG email [sub@hazards.org](mailto:sub@hazards.org) Campaigning website [www.hazards.org](http://www.hazards.org)

Hazards Fact sheet 82: Menopause. On Hazards campaigning website [www.hazards.org](http://www.hazards.org)

**Labour Research Department booklets** [www.lrdpublications.org.uk](http://www.lrdpublications.org.uk)

Women's Health and Safety (2004)

Safety, Health and Equality (2008)

Promoting Equality for Older Workers (2008)

Health and Safety Law 2009

**The Age and Employment Network (TAEN)** [www.taen.org.uk](http://www.taen.org.uk)

Older Women, Work and Health (2006)

### **Trades Union Congress (TUC)**

**Working through the change (Report by Jane Paul, 2003)** Available on TUC website [http://www.tuc.org.uk/h\\_and\\_s/tuc-6316-f0.cfm](http://www.tuc.org.uk/h_and_s/tuc-6316-f0.cfm)

TUC Gender and Occupational Safety and Health "gender sensitivity checklist" and guidance notes

TUC health and safety webpage's [www.tuc.org.uk/h\\_and\\_s/](http://www.tuc.org.uk/h_and_s/)

TUC Worksmart [www.worksmart.org.uk/health](http://www.worksmart.org.uk/health)

TUC *Hazards at Work* book: Chapter 42 Women Workers

## **NHS Direct**

24 hour helpline 0845 4647; website [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

## **Occupational Health Provision**

### **NHS Plus**

<http://www.nhsplus.nhs.uk/>

## **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)**

A huge range of advice and guidance booklets and leaflets is available free to download from the HSE website [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

Single copies of many leaflets are free from HSE Books, and printed copies of guidance booklets can also be purchased from HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA

### **Examples of relevant free leaflets and guidance are:**

Consulting workers on health and safety L146

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l146.pdf>

Managing Sickness Absence and Return to Work HSG249

[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg249.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg249.pdf)

A Short Guide to the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992

[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg174.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg174.pdf)

Working with VDUS [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf)

Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg244.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg244.pdf)

Welfare at Work [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg293.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg293.pdf)

Working together to prevent sickness absence becoming job loss

[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/web02.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/web02.pdf)

### **Examples of relevant HSE web-based guidance**

Thermal comfort [www.hse.gov.uk/temperature](http://www.hse.gov.uk/temperature)

Sickness absence [www.hse.gov.uk/sicknessabsence](http://www.hse.gov.uk/sicknessabsence)

Diversity [www.hse.gov.uk/diversity](http://www.hse.gov.uk/diversity)

## **European Agency for Safety and Health <http://agency.osha.eu.int>**

**Factsheet 42** Gender issues in safety and health at work

**Report:** Gender Issues in Safety and Health at Work (2003)

## **British Menopause Society [www.thebms.org.uk](http://www.thebms.org.uk)**

4-6 Eton Place, Marlow, Buckinghamshire SL7 2QA

Telephone: 01628 890199

**Factsheets** and other information.

## Sheffield Occupational Health Advisory Service

Feeling the Heat (leaflet) [www.sohas.co.uk](http://www.sohas.co.uk)

Telephone 0114249 5903

## Equality and Human Rights Commission

### Manchester

Arndale House, The Arndale  
Centre, Manchester, M4 3AQ

Telephone 0161 829 8100 (non  
helpline calls only)

Fax 0161 829 8110

[info@equalityhumanrights.com](mailto:info@equalityhumanrights.com)

### London

3 More London, Riverside,  
Tooley Street, London, SE1 2RG

Telephone 020 3117 0235 (non  
helpline calls only)

Fax 0207 407 7557

[info@equalityhumanrights.com](mailto:info@equalityhumanrights.com)

### Cardiff

3rd floor, 3 Callaghan Square,  
Cardiff, CF10 5BT

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helpline calls only)

Textphone 029 20447713

Fax 02920 447712

[wales@equalityhumanrights.com](mailto:wales@equalityhumanrights.com)

### Glasgow

The Optima Building, 58 Robertson  
Street, Glasgow, G2 8DU

Telephone 0141 228 5910 (non  
helpline calls only)

Fax 0141 228 5912

[scotland@equalityhumanrights.com](mailto:scotland@equalityhumanrights.com)

### Helplines – Great Britain

**England:** 0845 604 6610

textphone 0845 604 6620

**Scotland:** 0845 604 5510

textphone 0845 604 5520

**Wales:** 0845 604 8810

textphone 0845 604 8820

### Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Equality House, 7-9 Shaftesbury  
Square, Belfast, BT2 7DP

Telephone: 028 90 500600

Fax: 028 90 248687

Email : [information@equalityni.org](mailto:information@equalityni.org)

Enquiry Line 028 90 890 890

### Irish Republic

The Equality Authority

2 Clonmel Street

Dublin 2, Ireland

Telephone: 353 1 4173333

Fax: 353 1 4173331

Email: [info@equality.ie](mailto:info@equality.ie)

Public information centre

Local1890 245 545

## UNITE regional women's organisers

### **North West**

Helen Osgood 0161 8480909 [Helen.Osgood@unitetheunion.org](mailto:Helen.Osgood@unitetheunion.org)

### **North East/Yorkshire & Humberside**

Sue Pollard 0113 236 4830 [Su.Pollard@unitetheunion.org](mailto:Su.Pollard@unitetheunion.org)

### **West Midlands**

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### **Midlands East**

Maureen Scott-Douglas 0121 553 6051 [Maureen.ScottDouglas@unitetheunion.org](mailto:Maureen.ScottDouglas@unitetheunion.org)

### **South West**

Karen Cole 0117 923 0555 [Karen.Cole@unitetheunion.org](mailto:Karen.Cole@unitetheunion.org)

### **London & Eastern**

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### **South East**

Mary Sayer 0207 611 2629 [Mary.Sayer@unitetheunion.org](mailto:Mary.Sayer@unitetheunion.org)

### **Ireland**

Taryn Trainor 02890 232381 [Taryn.Trainor@unitetheunion.org](mailto:Taryn.Trainor@unitetheunion.org)

### **Scotland**

Elaine Dougall 0845 3450141 [Elaine.Dougall@unitetheunion.org](mailto:Elaine.Dougall@unitetheunion.org)

### **Wales**

Belinda Robertson 02920 394521 [Belinda.Robertson@unitetheunion.org](mailto:Belinda.Robertson@unitetheunion.org)

# UNITE model agreement: the menopause and working women

This model agreement outlines key areas for negotiating improved rights for menopausal women in the workplace. As with any other model agreement, it should be adapted to reflect the priorities and concerns in each workplace before it is presented to the employer.

## 1. introduction

1.1 The employer and the union recognise that the menopause is a key issue for women in the workplace particularly with regard to:

- Enhancing the equal opportunities of women at work
- Ensuring women's health, safety and welfare whilst at work
- Recognising the talent and contribution of all sections of its workforce
- Ensuring that the employer recruits and retained skilled employees

## 2. scope

This agreement will apply to all employees irrespective of grade, status, sex, race, sexual orientation, disability, age, caring responsibilities, hours worked and length of service.

- 2.1 The employer and the union recognise that health, safety and welfare, sex discrimination, disability discrimination and equal pay for work of equal value are subject to provisions laid down in European and domestic legislation
- 2.2 The employer and union undertake to monitor and review this agreement on a regular basis to ensure that, as a minimum, it meets the requirements of the law
- 2.3 The employer and the union agree that individual grievances shall be subject to the existing grievance procedure

## 3. equal opportunities

- 3.1 The employer opposes all forms of discrimination directly or indirectly related to the menopause, including on the grounds of age, sex, disability, race, religion and sexual orientation and including discrimination in training, promotion and job security
- 3.2 The employer and the union will work in partnership to promote a positive attitude towards employees throughout the menopause and endeavour to create a working environment where work and the health effects of the menopause on women workers can be combined
- 3.2 The employer undertakes to ensure that appropriate training is given to all employees with supervisory and personnel responsibilities to ensure the effective implementation of this equal opportunities commitment. The role of union equality representatives in promoting equality at work is recognised as important and will be supported through paid release and training

## **4. health, safety and welfare**

- 4.1 The employer recognises that the menopause is not an illness
- 4.2 The employer also recognises that the menopause is a workplace health, safety and welfare issue for women in particular but safe and healthy working affects all employees
- 4.3 In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and other legislation and regulations, the employer is committed to ensuring that the jobs, the work environment (including the provision of welfare facilities and maintaining a comfortable workplace temperature) are designed to be safe for all workers, including menopausal women workers
- 4.4 The employer undertakes to carry out appropriate risk assessments in line with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended) and comply with any other regulations that may apply to a particular work situation - including their duty under the Working Time Regulations 1998 to offer health assessments to night workers
- 4.4 The employer undertakes to consult and involve the recognised trade union safety representative(s) in all health and safety matters and decisions
- 4.5 It is recognised that some work may be more hazardous for, or endanger the health of, menopausal women and that job adjustments may need to be made to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all the employees. The woman's right to transfer her duties in these circumstances, including transferring from night shift duties, without loss of pay or status, is recognised
- 4.6 The employer recognises their duty when providing personal protective equipment to take account of the health of those may wear it and undertakes to provide uniforms and personal protective equipment and clothing which are suitably designed for menopausal women
- 4.7 The employer undertakes to ensure that a flexible approach is adopted towards rotas, shifts and the provision of toilet and rest breaks
- 4.8 The employer recognises that providing information and training about the menopause is essential for all managers and supervisors to ensure that menopause issues are handled sensitively and appropriately in the workplace
- 4.9 The employer also recognises that providing information, training and support for all workers is essential, including general health awareness

## **5. medical treatment and screening**

Menopausal women employees will be entitled to take time off in paid work time to attend medical appointments and screening.

## **6. sickness absence**

The employer recognises that the menopause is not an illness and that sickness absence policies will not penalise women who have to take time off from work because of ill-health related to the menopause.