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**Royal Mail Group - Menopause - Supporting Menopausal Women At Work through a Suitable and Sufficient Policy, Procedure, Management & Guidance: [Motion 93(2015), Motion 85(2013,) Motion 93(2012), Motion 100(2005)] – Update Report:**

**To: All Branches**

Dear Colleagues,

A number of Motions have been carried at CWU Conference in recent years (copies attached) and the Health, Safety & Environment Department has been actively pursuing the terms of the Motions on supporting women workers through the menopause and this is an update report to Branches and Reps on the outcome and progress of recent meetings and discussions.

Tripartite meetings have taken place with Professor Amanda Griffiths of Nottingham University who is an expert in the field, having undertaken a lot of work and research on the subject. Indeed Professor Griffiths advised the TUC on the production of the TUC Guide on 'Supporting Women Through The Menopause At Work'. Discussions were also held with Jeremy Bevan HSE Leader of the Vulnerable Workers Team, who Branches and Safety Reps will recall was a guest speaker at a CWU Conference Health and Safety Fringe Meeting in the past.

**TUC/University of Nottingham Study by Professor Amanda Griffiths**

After raising the matter and CWU Conference Motions with the TUC, via the National Officer's position on the TUC Union Health and Safety Specialists Committee, a study was commissioned and the TUC Guidance was published in 2011 based on a University of Nottingham Study by Professor Amanda Griffiths, specialist in the area having undertaken a lot of work and research (copy attached).

Professor Amanda Griffiths' study has shown that nearly half of women going through the menopause have difficulty coping with symptoms at work yet two thirds say they would not dream of disclosing their menopausal status to their bosses, male or female. The study points out that there are 3.5 million women over the age of 50 working full-time and the challenge of the menopause is fast becoming an occupational health issue and should be treated as such, with more support from employers, recommends the study. If women don't feel they can speak openly, then they won't get the support they need. The study concludes that support for menopausal women can be increased, through more awareness, more flexible working hours and, crucially, improvements in workplace temperature control and ventilation. If a woman needs to take a break and have a rest they should be able to ask for it. It should be understood that a woman may need a fan, to sit by an open window or have time out

occasionally. The report was shared with the Royal Mail Group Director of Safety, Health, Wellbeing & Sustainability and the Head of Health and fully discussed as a basis for a way forward.

### **Royal Mail Group "Managing Short Term Absence & Informal Absence Review Guide"**

The CWU Health Safety and Environment Department pointed out that line managers need to be trained and informed in order to be aware of how the menopause can affect work and what adjustments may be necessary to support women who are experiencing the menopause.

The Royal Mail Group "Managing Short Term Absence & Informal Absence Review Guide" has a new additional paragraph inserted which should help managers deal with absences relating to the menopause. The paragraph headed "Managing an employee's return to work" states – "Employees may find it difficult to discuss their health concerns particularly for conditions that are of a personal nature, such as irritable bowel syndrome, the menopause or gender related health issues. Managers should allow time and listen to the employee when having these conversations." The emphasis is on the manager to listen and understand that this is a condition to a certain age group of women where they may not be able to perform elements of their duty on a particular day but may be able to perform some other work within the office for example. This is a small but positive step, coupled with the fact that members can ask to be interviewed by someone of the same sex, it is a positive move in the right direction. (Copy attached).

### **Royal Mail Group – Work with King's College London and the University of Nottingham**

Further to our discussions with the RMG Head of Health on CWU Conference Policy and Motions with reference to improving managers' training and understanding of the menopause in the workplace and how to deal with it, recent studies have suggested that menopausal women would like their managers to be more aware of menopause at work and more understanding and sympathetic. Royal Mail Group has agreed to work with a team of researchers from King's College London and the University of Nottingham who are currently conducting a **"Menopause@Work"** Project. The project aims to develop and test a new training brief which is a 30 minute online training for line managers and supervisors to increase their awareness and understanding of the menopause at work and how to support staff.

Royal Mail Group has committed to take part in this research project, identifying and inviting a mixed sample of 100 managers to contribute. Participation is completely voluntary and the details of managers taking part will be kept confidential. The only information is an email address, so that the participant can be sent the training and follow up questionnaire after the training. The survey will be available via an on line link, and will close on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2017. Four weeks after completion, participants will receive a brief follow up survey to provide feedback on training and any increased awareness of the menopause.

The results of the study will be disseminated in various ways to help inform other experts, interested parties, and the general public. For example, this may include an academic journal paper, presentations at conferences, and reports to the funder. It will also be used to improve the training or ways to create a new training program in the future and from this will support the development of Royal Mail's approach, training and guidance.

The link to the survey will be shared via email with 100 managers in the sample this week. A further update report will be provided.

### **Further Research Reports and Guidance**

For your information and reference find attached the following:-

- University of Leicester Research 'Workplace Menopause Study'.
- EIS guidance – "Supporting older women members".
- Wales TUC Report "The menopause: a workplace issue - report of a Wales TUC survey investigating the menopause in the workplace".

All have been shared and discussed with RMG as part of the ongoing joint work (copies attached).

**Attachments:**

1. Motion 93(2015), Motion 85(2013,) Motion 93(2012), Motion 100(2005)
2. TUC Report 'Supporting Women Through The Menopause'
3. RMG Managing Short Term Absence and Informal Absence Review Guide
4. University of Leicester Research 'Workplace Menopause Study'
5. EIS guidance – "Supporting older women members"
6. Wales TUC Report "The menopause: a workplace issue - report of a Wales TUC survey investigating the menopause in the workplace"

Yours sincerely



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