Policy Statement

Universal Support Services Group (USSG) Ltd ('the company' and/or 'USSG') is committed to the achievement of a supportive working environment that maintains and promotes the mental health and wellbeing of all its employees.
An employee's mental health and wellbeing can be affected by a number of factors which may or may not be work-related. This Policy sets out USSG's commitment and plans to reduce the impact of work-related concerns on our employee's mental health and wellbeing, and to support those employees affected.

Policy Aims

USSG's aim is to develop a culture where the organisation, its managers and employees are committed to working together to address the occupational causes that can affect and an employee's mental health and wellbeing.
This is also complimented with the company's Employee Fatigue & Stress Management Policy (separate document).
People that feel good about themselves often work productively, interact well with colleagues, and make a valuable contribution to the workplace.
This Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy including Menopause lays down a framework through which we aim to:

- Define Mental Health & Wellbeing including Menopause and the scope of USSG's responsibilities.
- Define responsibilities within USSG for managing occupational health risk/s, through development of good working practices based on Good Practice, Governing Body Guidance (not exhaustive to ACAS, HSE, Etc.) and Legislative Standards.
- Identify and address occupational factors that can contribute to employee's mental health and wellbeing through a process of risk assessment.
- Provide support for those with management and supervisory responsibilities, to enable them to develop their management competence and support employees who experience mental health and wellbeing issues in the workplace.
- Support and help employees to manage their own mental health & wellbeing and support them to return to, and remaining in, work.
- Measure, monitor and review the implementation of this policy, so that we achieve continuous improvement.

As an employer we aim to promote a culture where employees are able to communicate openly about their mental health & wellbeing, and report concerns without fear of discrimination or reprisal.

Definitions: What is Mental Health?

Mental health is how we think, feel, and behave.

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we manage stress, relate to others, and make choices.

Mental ill health can range from feeling 'a bit down' to common disorders such as anxiety and depression to more severe and far less common conditions such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia.

Most people's mental health will not just be continuously good. Usually, it will rise and fall depending on pressures and/or experiences in their life. A person may therefore feel in good mental health generally but also experience stress or anxiety from time to time.

Definitions: What is Menopause?

Menopause is predominantly defined associated with women who have not had (stopped) their menstrual cycle / period for 12 months or more, thus marking the end of their reproductive years.
However, it is also aligned with the life changes / transitional period in a person at, mainly, adult age, as it does not always start as late as usual 50+ age years of pending post reproductive years. Often referred to as being Perimenopause.

The common emotional, physical, psychological, and social well-being affects are:

- irregularity in life changes,
- body temperatures and hydration,,
- moods and general feelings,
- cause of sleep deprivation (insomnia)

The above examples are not exhaustive, as Menopause is personal to the individual.
Similarly, personal management of the condition can vary regarding what suits the person; Be it medication (ingested and/or other remedies), life adaptions / transitions, etc.

Scope of this Policy

USSG has a legal duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations to identify and address the occupational causes of Mental Health and Wellbeing including Menopause in the workplace. Failure to do so could lead to prosecution or civil claims. USSG will also take reasonable steps to support individuals to achieve a good quality of life and work-life balance. This includes providing access to a range of advice and support to help them manage their own Mental Health and Wellbeing including Menopause, whether or not the cause is work-related and regardless of their position in the company. This policy applies equally to all employees.

The implementation of this policy is supported by all other USSG policies, not exhaustive to our Health & Safety, Drugs & Alcohol, Sickness & Absence, and Equality policy documents, etc.

USSG utilises guidance from ACAS, the HSE and qualified business partners, to achieve organisational success and sustainability in achieving its goals pertaining to its company policies.

Responsibilities

Work-related Mental Health and Wellbeing including Menopause is a health and safety issue. USSG's Health & Safety Policy defines the health and safety responsibilities of senior managers, managers and employees, applies to the management of Mental Health and Wellbeing including Menopause. The following additional specific responsibilities should be noted:

Line Managers

Managers and supervisors have the following responsibilities to the employees that they directly line manage.

- Ensure that all employees are aware of this policy.
- Take steps to ensure their management practices and style do not contribute negatively to employee's Mental Health and Wellbeing including Menopause.
- Obtain various resources and training, from USSG, to undertake with regards to managing staff's Mental Health and Wellbeing including Menopause and including active contribution and support to implement and /or review this policy. Also refer to Appendix A, towards the end of this policy for ACAS guidance pertaining to 'Approaching a sensitive conversation regarding mental health'.
- Identify and respond appropriately to mental health and wellbeing issues within their team. This includes:
    * addressing potential causes (e.g., planned changes to working practices)
    * taking action when they notice changes in staff behaviour or sickness absence patterns that may indicate a mental health and wellbeing concern.
- Proactively manage employee absence, to enable early and effective rehabilitation.

- Ensure the managers that they are responsible for are meeting their management responsibilities in relation to Mental Health and Wellbeing including Menopause .

All employees

- Understand this policy and seek clarification from management where required.
- Be aware of the factors that may contribute to their own Mental Health and Wellbeing including Menopause and actions that they can take to improve this and do not affect other people in the workplace.
- Bring to the attention of their manager or any USSG senior staff, any concerns they have about work-related mental health and wellbeing.
- Inform their manager promptly if they feel you are suffering from any issues related to Mental Health and Wellbeing including Menopause, or have concerns about other team members.
- Work with their manager to identify work adjustments to address their personal Mental Health and Wellbeing including Menopause and/or work pressures within the team.

Employees who do not feel able to speak to their manager about Mental Health and Wellbeing including Menopause, or do not feel that their manager is addressing their concerns, can speak to the USSG HR Department or USSG Directors. Employees also have a right to raise issues with their Trade Union.
A flow chart for reporting concerns about Mental Health and Wellbeing including Menopause is included at the end of this policy.

Staff Meeting & HR Department

USSG has a Staff Meeting (SM) that includes Health & Safety, that as may be required, includes a through consultation on health and safety matters that affect USSG. The company's HR Department oversees the implementation of all USSG's Policies & Procedures which include the effectiveness of this Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy including Menopause.

Employees can raise matters relating to USSG's management of mental health and wellbeing through the aforementioned channels or a Trade Union Safety Representative. As necessary, the SM and HR Dept reviews the company's OHSAS Management System, for example to review this policy or support/implement other company policies, practices and procedures deemed necessary.

HSE Management Standards

Well-designed work is generally good for people, and Mental Health and Wellbeing including Menopause concerns often arise from poor management practices. USSG aims to develop a culture and work practices that minimise the risk of work-related mental health and wellbeing issues. We do this by assessing our performance against the legislative standards, and putting into place measures to address areas for improvement.

HSE Guidance defines the characteristics or culture of an organisation where the risks from work-related m Mental Health and Wellbeing including Menopause are being effectively managed and controlled. They cover six key areas of work design that, if not properly managed, can be sources of mental health and wellbeing concern.

The Guidance covers:

- Demands: workload, work patterns and the work environment.
- Control: how much say the person has in the way they do their work.
- Support: the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.
- Relationships: promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- Role: whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles.
- Change: how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

The company's Staff Meeting and HR Dept's procedures may include questions that enable us to assess USSG against the HSE Guidance and identify what more needs to be done by USSG to meet them.

Risk Assessment

USSG has the following systems to ensure work-related causes of mental health and wellbeing are identified and addressed. This is in accordance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

Organisational Risk Assessment
USSG will carry out a regular organisational risk assessment to measure its performance against the HSE's Management Standards. This will normally be included as part of the SM &/or HR Dept's procedures. The findings will be used as a basis for developing an action plan to implement improvements.

Management Level
The findings in the above will also be used to identify "hot spots" where the assessment has indicated significant work-related causes. In addition monitoring of sickness absence and referrals, complaints by employees, or monitoring by the manager may identify employees/teams that are at risk of mental health and wellbeing . Plans to significantly change working practices may also foreseeably cause Mental Health and Wellbeing including Menopause .
In all of the above circumstances a management level [risk] assessment should be carried out to identify measures that can be taken to reduce the risk. This would normally be carried out by the appropriate Company Director, who may be assisted by our HR Dept. The assessment may involve various employees in identifying solutions.

Individual Level
Where a manager is concerned about an employee's mental health and wellbeing levels, the manager should discuss working practices with the employee, to determine what reasonable adjustments can be undertaken to reduce causes. In some cases it may be necessary to refer the employee to the Occupational Health Advisor for further advice.

Where an employee is absent with a mental health and wellbeing-related illness, their manager should make a referral to occupational health, so that appropriate support and guidance can be given to the employee and their manager.

In addition to guidance on carrying out team and individual level assessments at the end of this policy document, further information is available from the company's HR Dept.

Support

Supporting Managers
USSG provides the following resources to support managers:

- Management development training, coaching sessions and mentoring services, available as required.
- Guidance for managers, as required.
- Access to competent occupational health, health and safety and human resource advice.

Supporting Employees
USSG has the following support systems in place to help employees to manage their own stress:

- Training on stress management, time management, assertiveness, dealing with conflict etc., available as required by the Company Directors.
- Appraisal and Personal Development. In addition many managers hold regular one to one and team meetings with their employees.
- HR Policies, covering areas such as flexible working, discretionary leave and harassment, etc.
- Information and resources to support employee who wish to improve their health and wellbeing, as required.

There are the following opportunities to discuss concerns about your personal issues and seek solutions:

- Your Line management / Company Directors & Management support.
- Occupational Health Service to seek advice, available as required by the Company Directors.

Monitoring and Review

USSG will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy document by the following means:

Data on occurrence of m Mental Health and Wellbeing including Menopause
USSG intends to review its arrangements for collecting data on sickness absence, so that the causes can be identified. This will enable us to monitor absences arising from Mental Health and Wellbeing including Menopause or related illnesses. Data on referrals to occupational health or USSG's counselling services will also be used.

Data on work-related causes of mental health and wellbeing
The Working Well employee opinion survey will provide data on work related causes, which can be benchmarked against other similar organisations and compared year by year, to determine whether we are achieving continuous improvement.

Qualitative data
We will encourage employees and their Union appointed representatives to feedback views on how well USSG is meeting its commitment to address the occupational causes of mental health and wellbeing and support the wellbeing of its employees. Feedback will be sought through a variety of means, including focus groups, during training or health and safety audits, via the company's Staff Meeting.

Action Plan
Periodically during the company's operations, the relevant OHSAS requirement/s will be reviewed to address areas for improvement. Information will be provided all USSG staff (as necessary) . Progress on implementation of actions relating to the management of work related Mental Health and Wellbeing including Menopause will be included in the Annual Internal Audit Schedule on Health and Safety Performance, which is presented to the company Directors as appropriate.

Review
This Policy will be reviewed annually and in line with changes in legislations as appropriate.

Communication

Like all USSG policy documents, this policy is available for review from the USSG HR Dept and is part of the Company's Policies List referred to in the Employee Handbook given to all new employees.

We encourage all employee feedback with regards to contributing to this policy and/or advising the company of their own mental health and wellbeing.

The Managing Director shall review this policy annually and/or following significant changes.

This Policy document has been approved by the USSG Managing Director

Mr M M Rashid Baig

Mr M M Rashi Baig
Managing Director

This policy is reviewed as per the Header

Approaching a sensitive conversation regarding Mental Health, Wellbeing and Menopause (ACAS Guidance)

APPENDIX A

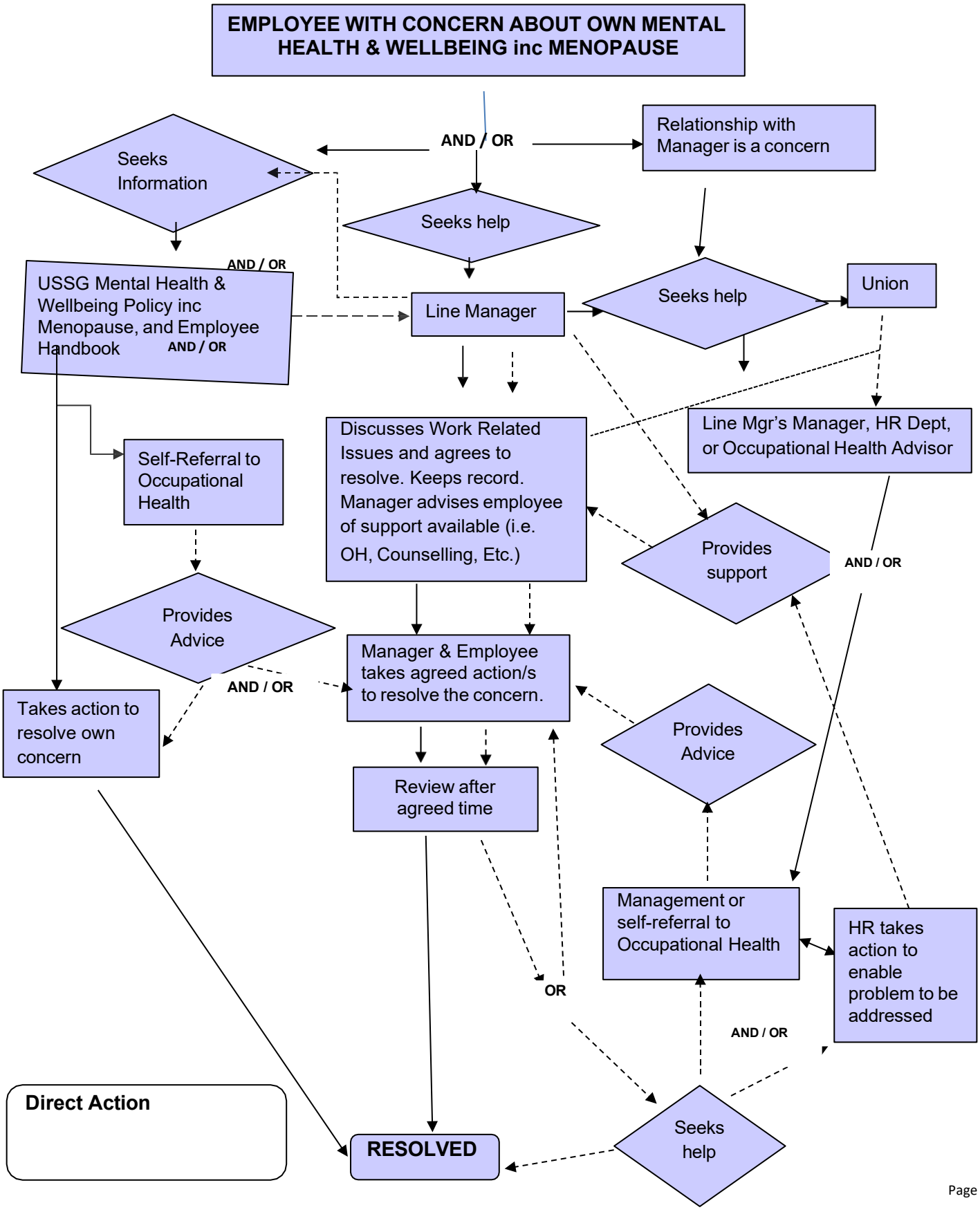
Every conversation a manager has with a team member who may be experiencing mental ill health will be different. Sometimes, a team member may feel able to be open with their manager from the very first meeting.
In other situations, it may be difficult for the team member to open up and might have several conversations.

Below are a few tips and considerations for a manager to think about when approaching a conversation with a team member.

A manager should:

- move the conversation to a private space, where they will not be disturbed (if not already somewhere appropriate)
- thank the team member for coming to talk to them & allow them as much time as they need
- be open minded & focus on what the team member says
- try to identify what the cause is, think about potential solutions, & be prepared for the unexpected
- adjourn the meeting if it is necessary to think through what has been discussed before making a decision.

Before the conversation takes place	• Choose an appropriate place. It should be in private and usually be one-to-one • Consider what you have observed that concerns you and note examples of this • Keep the meeting as informal and relaxed as possible • Make it clear anything discussed will be kept confidential unless agreed otherwise
At the start of the conversation	• Approach the conversation in a sensitive and calm manner, and manage emotions carefully • Ask how they are doing • Explain the reason for the conversation • Remember to ask simple, open, and non-judgmental questions
During the conversation	• Listen carefully and don't make assumptions • Reassure them that you are there to try to help • Be patient and don't try to force them into talking if they do not want to **If they disclose they are experiencing mental ill health:** • Check if they have been to the GP and if so, what they recommended and whether any medication has been prescribed that may affect their performance or make it unsafe for them to perform certain duties • Discuss whether there are any parts of their role they are struggling with or feel unable to do • Adjourn for a break if emotions take over or to think through what has been discussed if the seriously unexpected arises **If they become angry or distressed:** • Stay calm • Reassure them, that you are only trying to help them and as their manager you are responsible for ensuring they are coping • Adjourn for a break if necessary
At the end of the conversation	• Check if they think anything else should be discussed **If they have disclosed they are experiencing mental ill health:** • Encourage the team member to talk to their GP to get an expert opinion (if not done already) • Highlight sources of support within the organisation such as a mental health champion and outside the organisation such as mental health charities • Agree what will happen next, such as whether they will be referred to occupational health or if a further meeting will be arranged to discuss support options **If they have stated that there is no problem**: • Respect their position • Make clear you are available at any time if they ever want to talk **If they are on authorised absence from work:** • Discuss what they would like their colleagues to know about the reason for their absence • Agree what information can be shared and what must stay confidential
After the conversation	**If they have disclosed they are experiencing mental ill health:** • Think about potential support or adaptations that may help • Arrange a further meeting to discuss support options • Document what was discussed and agreed **If they have stated that there is no problem:** • Monitor the situation, and if you still have concerns consider seeking advice from sources such as HR, senior management, and Occupation Health • Be available and approachable in case they want to talk to you at a later point about their health


EMPLOYEE WITH CONCERN ABOUT OWN MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING inc MENOPAUSE
AND / OR
Seeks Information
Relationship with Manager is a concern
Seeks help
AND / OR
USSG Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy inc Menopause, and Employee Handbook
AND / OR
Line Manager
Seeks help
Union
Self-Referral to Occupational Health
Discusses Work Related Issues and agrees to resolve. Keeps record. Manager advises employee of support available (i.e. OH, Counselling, Etc.)
Line Mgr's Manager, HR Dept, or Occupational Health Advisor
Provides support
AND / OR
Provides Advice
AND / OR
Manager & Employee takes agreed action/s to resolve the concern.
Takes action to resolve own concern
Provides Advice
Review after agreed time
Management or self-referral to Occupational Health
HR takes action to enable problem to be addressed
OR
AND / OR
Direct Action
RESOLVED
Seeks help