

Standard Operating Procedure No. 7

Human Resources

I. SCOPE

- 1.1 Agenda Resource Management Ltd is committed to the provision of first class services to its employees. This commitment is underlined by the Investors in People award.
- 1.2 Our values are underpinned by the Hard Work + Care, Commitment, Challenge = Satisfaction, Stability, Success (HW + C³ = S³) formula.
- 1.3 The scope of this SOP is defined as follows:

The provision of human resource management solutions for the biomedical research industry by the provision of first class Human Resource services for all staff employed by Agenda Resource Management Ltd.

2. INTENTION

To provide first class human resource services, which meet current legislation, to all employees by ensuring all the needs of the company and each person are identified and addressed with appropriate management and training processes.

3. RECRUITMENT OF HEAD OFFICE STAFF

3.1 Recruitment Process

- 3.1.1 Hiring Manager to provide Recruitment with a job specification by email. This should include job specification, salary, hours etc.
- 3.1.2 Responsible person within the Permanent Recruitment team to initiate a Candidate Checklist.
- 3.1.3 A Recruitment Consultant, the Hiring Manager and the HR Director if available to discuss the vacancy verbally.
- 3.1.4 Recruitment Consultant to put vacancy details onto Fortuna to create a vacancy number.
- 3.1.5 Recruitment Consultant to create an advert. Hiring Manager to proof read prior to being advertised, also to agree where to be advertised and consider costs and values. Adverts to be placed for a minimum of 1 week or 50 applicants

- 3.1.6 Recruitment Consultant to vet CV's and pass suitable candidates to Hiring Manager and the HR Director for consideration or rejection. Hiring Manager to confirm to Recruitment who to invite for interview. If short-listed for interview an Agenda application form, which includes a the Data Consent and Equal opportunities forms and a health questionnaire, with an envelope addressed to Occupational Health and a pre-paid envelope are sent and should be completed and returned.
- 3.1.7 Recruitment to conduct telephone interviews with chosen candidates and then discuss results of interviews with Hiring Manager and look through completed application forms reviewing notes of questions asked and answers.
- 3.1.8 Hiring Manager, HR Director and Recruitment Consultant to select suitable candidates for face-to-face interviews.
- 3.1.9 Recruitment to arrange interviews and confirm all detail to Hiring Manager and candidate. At this time, Recruitment to send out Interview Confirmation letter, Data Subject Consent Form, Equal Opportunities Form, Declaration of Contact Form, directions to site, company information and sae. Forms to be returned, duly completed, by the candidate by return of post.
- 3.1.10 Recruitment to complete Security Probity Request Form and pass to Security who will carry out a Probity check.
- 3.1.11 On-site interviews must not be held until Probity check carried out successfully, except in exceptional circumstances and with permission from a Director.
- 3.1.12 Recruitment, prior to interview, to collate interview questions, tests, copies of application forms and CVs and pass to the Hiring Manager.
- 3.1.13 Recruitment to book suitable times and venues for interviews and to book in Recruitment Consultant, HR Director's and Hiring Manager's diary.
- 3.1.14 All candidates must be interviewed by Hiring Manager, the HR Director if available and a Recruitment Consultant and complete an Employment General Questionnaire and any other tests, relevant to the vacancy they are applying for.

3.2 Following Interview Process

- 3.2.1 Hiring Manager, HR Director and Recruitment Consultant are to compare scores for candidates and select candidate.
- 3.2.2 Recruitment to contact all unsuccessful candidates by letter and explain why they have not been successful and record this on the Candidate Checklist.
- 3.2.3 Recruitment Consultant, Hiring Manager and HR to discuss offer details, which should then be passed to HR Director for approval.
- 3.2.4 Recruitment to call candidate(s) with verbal offer.

- 3.2.5 If verbal offer accepted, Recruitment to complete a Security Comprehensive Request Form to be passed to the Security Division and a Health Questionnaire to be sent to the Occupational Health Manager.
- 3.2.6 HR to prepare Offer Letter (conditional to receipt of satisfactory references, security check and health questionnaire) and send this, together with 2 copies of the Contract of Employment and Confidentiality Agreement, Staff Handbook, together with an sae. The candidate should return a signed copy of the Contract of Employment and the Confidentiality Agreement in the sae.
- 3.2.7 If the offer is not accepted, second choice candidates will be considered or a new advertising campaign will commence.
- 3.2.8 If the candidate was accessed from the Job Centre, acknowledge the Job Centre and let them know the outcome.
- 3.2.9 On completion of the recruitment process, the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form will be completed.

4. **ON COMMENCEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT**

Upon commencement of employment, the following documents will be made available to the employee during induction:

- Filofax
- Mobile telephone
- BACS details
- Next of Kind contact details
- Programme of induction
- Skills questionnaire
- Training record sheet
- Training bank account request form
- Holiday request form
- Acceptable usage policy (Internet access controls)

5. **INDUCTION & TRAINING**

The Induction Programme is a general training course for all new employees, including re-hires, enabling them to fit easily into their new work environment in the shortest possible time and preparing them for the job as described on the form specific training is described elsewhere in the manual.

5.1 **Induction**

- 5.1.1 The Induction Programme for Head Office based employees is completed over a 4 week period. On commencing employment, new employees are welcomed by the Managing Director or in his absence, one of the other

Directors. The Induction Programme then follows each step described in the New Employee Induction.

- 5.1.2 During the Induction Programme; the specific job-related training requirements of the new recruit are determined.
- 5.1.3 Once the New Employee Induction Programme is completed, it is signed by the employee and a copy is filed in their HR file

5.2 Training

- 5.2.1 The HR Administrator opens a Training Record Sheet for the new employee. The initial training requirements are then specified. Supplementary training can be identified and programmed in for the following year.
- 5.2.2 The Manager and new employee meet at monthly intervals during the 6 month probation period to discuss progress, and the date of completion of each training item is entered onto the sheet and a copy kept in the employee's HR file. New training requirements can be added to the sheet at any time.

5.3 Follow-Up Training

- 5.3.1 It will be necessary, from time to time, to provide additional training. When that need arises, arrangements will be made for skilled personnel to provide the On the Job training under the supervision of an appropriate member of staff.
- 5.3.2 Where a training need arises which cannot be provided on an On the Job basis, a suitable source of training will be sought and made available to those who require the training. Training will be evaluated by management to assess and record the effectiveness

6. USE OF SOP's

The new employee will be asked to study the SOP relevant to their functions and to discuss any points requiring clarification

7 APPRAISAL

7.1 Principles

- 7.1.2 The Line Manager is responsible for carrying out an annual appraisal of each employee (using the Head Office Appraisal Form) with a review every six months.
- 7.1.3 The aim of the appraisal is to ensure the continued development of the employee, and discuss their individual performance. Their job description will be reviewed and updated with any changes.

7.2 **Use of the Appraisal Form**

- 7.2.1 The employee will complete and return to their manager the appraisal form prior to the meeting and the manager will review areas for further discussion.
- 7.2.2 The meeting will take place in a quiet room and any discussions should be recorded on the form.
- 7.2.3 Training needs and developments should be ascertained and documented on the form, and any action points confirmed in writing.

8. **CAPABILITY PROCEDURE**

The capability procedure is detailed in Appendix 'G' attached and will form part of the Staff Handbook when updated.

9. **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

The Grievance Procedure is detailed in Appendix 'A' attached and will form part of the Staff Handbook when updated.

10. **DISCIPLINARY RULES**

The Disciplinary Rules are detailed in Appendix 'B' attached and will form part of the staff handbook when updated.

11. **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

The Disciplinary Procedure is detailed in Appendix 'C' attached and will form part of the staff handbook when updated.

12. **ANTI HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY**

The Anti Harassment and Bullying procedure is detailed in Appendix 'D' attached and will form part of the staff handbook when updated.

13. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN EMPLOYMENT**

- 13.1 Agenda Resource Management Limited confirms its commitment to a comprehensive policy of equal opportunities in employment, in which individuals are selected, trained, appraised, promoted and otherwise treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities and are given equal opportunities within the company.
- 13.2 The law requires that no job applicant or employee will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, sex or marital status.

- 13.3 Where the law does not prescribe, every effort will be made to avoid discrimination on grounds of disability, religion, political belief, socio-economic background, parental status, age (subject to normal retirement conventions).
- 13.4 Agenda Resource Management Limited is committed to a programme of action to ensure that this policy be fully effective.
- 13.5 This statement is considered part of the Employment Application Form appended to this statement.
- 13.6 The Equal Opportunities procedure is detailed in Appendix 'E' attached and will form part of the staff handbook when updated.

14. **MANAGING SICKNESS**

- 14.1 The Managing Sickness procedure is detailed in Appendix 'F' attached and will form part of the staff handbook when updated.
- 14.2 A Return to Work form must be completed on return to work following sickness absence and given to the HR Department for recording on SAGE payroll.

15. **MATERNITY / PATERNITY LEAVE AND PAY (as applicable)**

This information is set out in the Staff handbook

16. **TERMINATION**

The Termination Procedure is detailed in the Staff Handbook

17. **CONSEQUENCES OF TERMINATION**

- 17.1 Upon termination of the employment for whatever reason the Employee shall deliver to the Company all books, files, document, keys, paper, lists of temporary workers, client lists, applicant lists, records, materials and other property of or relating to the Company together with all copies thereof with 2 working days.
- 17.2 An exit interview will be conducted by the Line Manager during the employee's last week.

18. **LIMITS OF AUTHORITY**

- 18.1 The employee is not permitted to authorise any variation to the Company's Terms of Business, agree any discounts on charges or authorise and expenditure for any reason with the authority of a Director of the Company.
- 18.2 The employee is not permitted to entertain any of the Company's clients unless authorised by a senior manager.
- 18.3 The employee is not permitted to divulge his / her private telephone number or by a Director of the Company.

19. **RESPONSIBILITIES & OWNERSHIP**

The H.R Director will assume the responsibility for the recruitment of either replacement or new Head Office staff

20. **DOCUMENTS**

- Agenda Application Form SOP 7.1
- Health Questionnaire SOP 7.2
- Job Specification SOP 7.3
- Statement of terms and conditions SOP 7.4
- Induction letter SOP 7.5
- Filofax SOP 7.6
- Confidentiality Agreement SOP 7.7
- Head office security SOP 7.8
- Induction Checklist SOP 7.9
- Training record sheet SOP 7.10
- Training Bank Account form SOP 7.11
- Head Office Appraisal form SOP 7.12
- Staff Handbook SOP 7.13
- Acceptable usage policy (ISO 27001: 2005 Internet access controls) SOP 7.14
- BACS form SOP 7.15
- Personal details form SOP 7.16
- Holiday form SOP 7.17
- Skills questionnaire SOP 7.18
- Return to work form SOP 7.19
- General knowledge test SOP 7.20
- Starters, leavers and amendment form SOP 7.21
- Appointments form SOP 7.22
- Monthly probation review SOP 7.23
- Company Mobile Letter SOP 7.24
- Employment offer Letter SOP 7.25
- Next of Kind contact details
- Skills questionnaire

Many of these forms need to be updated to the latest version – this will form part of the SOP review and audit during 2010

APPENDIX 'A'

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

1. General principles

- 1.1 It is our policy to ensure that all employees have access to a procedure to help resolve any grievances relating to their employment quickly and fairly.
- 1.2 This grievance procedure is for guidance only and does not form part of your contract of employment.
- 1.3 This procedure applies to all employees regardless of length of service. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors.
- 1.4 Any steps under this procedure should be taken promptly unless there is a good reason for delay. The time limits in this procedure may be extended if it is reasonable to do so.
- 1.5 We may vary this procedure as appropriate to a particular case. The procedure may also be discontinued if it becomes impracticable for either party to continue with it. In any case we will inform you in writing of the final outcome of your grievance.
- 1.6 Written grievances will be placed on your personnel file along with a record of any decisions taken; any appeal notice; the outcome of any appeal; and any notes or other documents compiled during the grievance process.
- 1.7 If you have difficulty at any stage of the grievance procedure because of a disability, you should ask the Human Resources Department for assistance.

2. Raising grievances informally

Most grievances can be resolved quickly and informally through discussion with your manager. If you feel unable to speak to your manager, for example, because the complaint concerns him or her, then you should speak informally to a more senior manager. If this does not resolve the problem you should follow the standard procedure below.

3. Written grievances: standard procedure

- 3.1 You should put your grievance in writing and submit it to your manager. If the grievance concerns your manager you may submit it instead to a Director.
- 3.2 The written grievance should indicate that you are invoking this grievance procedure and contain a brief description of the reasons for your complaint, including any relevant facts, dates, and names of individuals involved. In some situations we may need to ask you to clarify the subject matter of your grievance in advance of the meeting or provide further information.

4. Meetings and investigations: standard procedure

- 4.1 You will be invited to a grievance meeting, which will normally take place no more than two weeks after we have received your written grievance. We may carry out such investigations as we consider appropriate prior to the meeting. This may involve interviewing you and any witnesses if appropriate.
- 4.2 You may bring a companion to any of the meetings under this procedure (see clause **Error! Reference source not found.**).
- 4.3 You must take all reasonable steps to attend any meetings. If you or your companion cannot attend at the time specified for a meeting, you should inform us immediately and we will make reasonable efforts to agree an alternative time.
- 4.4 The purpose of the initial grievance meeting is to enable you to explain your grievance and to discuss it with us. If you have a companion, they may make representations to us and ask questions, but should not answer questions on your behalf. You may confer privately with your companion at any time during the meeting.
- 4.5 After the initial grievance meeting we may carry out such further investigations and/or hold such further grievance meetings as we consider appropriate.
- 4.6 We will inform you of our decision and of your right of appeal within one week of the final grievance meeting. We may hold a meeting to give you this information but in all cases it will be confirmed in writing.

5. Appeals: standard procedure

- 5.1 Should you wish to appeal you should do so in writing to a Director, stating your full grounds of appeal, within two weeks of the date on which the decision was sent or given to you.

- 5.2 We will hold an appeal meeting, normally no more than two weeks after we receive your appeal. Where practicable, this will be held by someone senior to the person who conducted the grievance meeting(s). You may bring a companion to the appeal meeting.
- 5.3 Our final decision will be notified to you within two weeks of the appeal meeting. We may hold a meeting to give you this information but in all cases it will be confirmed in writing.

6. Right to be accompanied

- 6.1 You may bring a companion to any meetings held under this procedure. The companion may be either a trade union official or a fellow employee. You must tell the person holding the meeting who your chosen companion is, in good time before the meeting. Employees are allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay to act as a companion.
- 6.2 In some circumstances your choice of companion may not be allowed: for example, anyone who may have a conflict of interest, or whose presence may prejudice the meeting. Your companion should not normally be an employee working at another site, unless no-one reasonably suitable is available at the site at which you work. We may also ask you to choose someone else if the meeting would have to be delayed for over five working days because your companion is unavailable.
- 6.3 We may, at our discretion, allow you to bring a companion who is not an employee or union official where this will help overcome a particular difficulty caused by a disability, or where you have difficulty understanding English.

7. Grievances after employment has ended: modified procedure

- 7.1 If you wish to raise a grievance after your employment has ended, you should submit it in writing as normal under the standard procedure above.
- 7.2 If you raise a grievance after employment has ended, or if you raise a grievance before employment ends and the standard procedure has not been completed at the termination of employment, we will either:(a) follow the standard procedure set out above; or
- (b) write to ask you whether you would prefer to follow the modified procedure set out below (if you have not already stated your preference in writing). If you do not respond within [one week] we will follow the standard grievance procedure.

- 7.3 The following modified procedure will apply if agreed in writing:
- (a) we will carry out any investigations that we consider appropriate;
 - (b) we will not hold any meetings with you;
 - (c) we will notify you of our decision in writing, normally within [two weeks] of agreeing to use the modified procedure; and
 - (s) there will be no right of appeal.

8. Bullying and harassment

If you have been the victim of bullying or harassment, or wish to report an incident of bullying or harassment, see the separate bullying and anti-harassment policy.

9. Grievances about disciplinary action

- 9.1 This grievance procedure should not usually generally be used to complain about disciplinary action that we have taken against you. If you are dissatisfied with any disciplinary action, you should submit an appeal under the disciplinary procedure or capability procedure, as appropriate.
- 9.2 However, if you believe that disciplinary action has been or is being taken against you for a reason which does not relate to your conduct or capability, or for a reason which is discriminatory on grounds related to sex, sexual orientation, race, religion age or disability, you should submit a grievance in writing to a Director and it will be dealt with as follows:
- (a) If we receive your grievance before the disciplinary appeal hearing takes place, we may deal with your grievance at the appeal meeting.
 - (b) In any other case, we will follow this grievance procedure.

APPENDIX 'B'

DISCIPLINARY RULES

I. General principles

- 1.1 The aim of the disciplinary procedure and disciplinary rules is to provide a framework within which managers can work with employees to maintain satisfactory standards of conduct and to encourage improvement where necessary.
- 1.2 The disciplinary rules should be read in conjunction with our disciplinary procedure. Disciplinary action should only be taken in accordance with that procedure.
- 1.3 If you are in any doubt as to your responsibilities or the standards of conduct expected you should speak to your manager.

2. Rules of conduct

- 2.1 While employed by us you should at all times maintain professional and responsible standards of conduct. In particular you should:
 - (a) observe the terms and conditions of your contract, particularly with regard to:
 - (i) hours of work;
 - (ii) confidentiality;
 - (iii) security;
 - (iv) personal appearance.
 - (b) ensure that you understand and follow our Code of Conduct which is set out in the Staff Handbook or available from the Human Resources Department;
 - (c) observe all policies, procedures and regulations included in the Staff Handbook or notified to you from time to time by means of notice boards, e-mail, the intranet or otherwise;
 - (d) regard as paramount care in respect of the health and safety of employees and third parties and comply with our Health and Safety Policy;

- (e) comply with all reasonable instructions given by your managers; and
- (f) act at all times in good faith and in the best interests of the company, its customers and employees.

2.2 Failure to maintain satisfactory standards of conduct may result in steps being taken under the disciplinary procedure.

3. Misconduct

The following are examples of matters that will normally be regarded as misconduct:

- (a) Minor breaches of company policies including the Sickness and Absence Policy, E-mail and Internet Policy, and Health and Safety Policy;
- (b) Minor breaches of your employment contract;
- (c) Damage to, or unauthorised use of, company property;
- (d) Poor timekeeping;
- (e) Time wasting;
- (f) Unauthorised absence from work;
- (g) Refusal to follow instructions;
- (h) Excessive use of company telephone for personal calls;
- (i) Excessive personal e-mail or internet usage;
- (j) Obscene language or other offensive behaviour;
- (k) Negligence in the performance of your duties; or
- (l) Smoking in non-smoking areas.

This list is intended as a guide and is not exhaustive.

4. Gross misconduct

4.1 Gross misconduct is misconduct which, in our opinion, is serious enough to relationship and trust between employer and employee. It is a serious breach of

contract and may lead to summary dismissal, that is, dismissal without notice or any compensation.

4.2 The following are examples of matters that are normally regarded as gross misconduct:

- (a) Theft or fraud;
- (b) Physical violence or bullying;
- (c) Deliberate and serious damage to property;
- (d) Serious misuse of our property or name;
- (e) Deliberately accessing internet sites containing pornographic, offensive or obscene material;
- (f) Serious insubordination;
- (g) Unlawful discrimination or harassment;
- (h) Bringing the organisation into serious disrepute;
- (i) Serious incapability brought on by alcohol or illegal drugs;
- (j) Causing loss, damage or injury through serious negligence;
- (k) Serious breach of health and safety rules;
- (l) Serious breach of confidence - to include divulging clients names and or information and or association with animal rights activists or imparting confidential information with or without malicious interest;
- (m) Theft, or unauthorised removal of our property or the property of an employee, contractor, customer or member of the public;
- (n) Fraud, forgery or other dishonesty, including fabrication of expense claims and time sheets and misuse of Company credit card;
- (o) Acceptance of bribes or other secret payments arising out of your employment;
- (p) Accepting a gift above the value of £10.00 from a customer, supplier, contractor or other third party in connection with your employment without prior consent from your manager;

- (q) Deliberate damage to our buildings, fittings, property or equipment, or the property of an employee, contractor, customer or member of the public;
- (r) Actual or threatened violence, or behaviour which provokes violence;
- (s) Conviction for a criminal offence that in our opinion may affect our reputation or our relationships with our employees, customers or the public, or otherwise affects your suitability to remain an employee;
- (t) Being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or other substances during working hours;
- (u) Possession, use, supply or attempted supply of illegal drugs;
- (v) Repeated or serious disobedience of instructions, or other serious act of insubordination;
- (w) Serious neglect of duties, or a serious or deliberate breach of your employment contract or operating procedures;
- (x) Serious or repeated breach of health and safety rules or serious misuse of safety equipment;
- (y) Knowing breach of statutory rules affecting your employment;
- (z) Unauthorised use or disclosure of confidential information or failure to ensure that confidential information in your possession is kept secure;
- (aa) Unauthorised use, processing or disclosure of personal data contrary to our Data Protection Policy;
- (bb) Harassment or discrimination against employees, contractors, clients or members of the public on the grounds of sex, marital status, gender reassignment, race, disability, religion, age or sexual orientation contrary to our Equal Opportunities Policy or our Harassment and Bullying Policy;
- (cc) Failure to disclose any of the information required by your employment or any other information that may have a bearing on the performance of your duties;
- (dd) Giving false information as to qualifications or entitlement to work (including immigration status) in order to gain employment or other benefits;
- (ee) Knowingly taking parental, paternity or adoption leave when not eligible to do so or for a purpose other than supporting a child;

- (ff) Making a disclosure of information under the Whistleblowing Policy that is malicious or made for personal gain, or is otherwise in bad faith;
- (gg) Making untrue allegations in bad faith against another employee;
- (hh) Victimising another employee who has raised concerns, made a complaint or given evidence information under the Whistleblowing Policy, Grievance Procedure, Disciplinary Procedure or otherwise;
- (ii) Serious misuse of our information technology systems (including misuse of developed or licensed software, use of unauthorised software and misuse of e-mail and the internet) contrary to our E-mail and Internet policy;
- (jj) Undertaking unauthorised paid or unpaid employment during your working hours;
- (kk) Entering an area of the premises which has been clearly designated as a prohibited area without authorisation.

This list is intended as a guide and is not exhaustive.

APPENDIX 'C'

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

POLICY AND PRINCIPLES

1. Policy statement

- 1.1 The aim of the disciplinary procedure is to provide a framework within which managers can work with employees to maintain satisfactory standards of conduct and to encourage improvement where necessary.
- 1.2 It is our policy to ensure that any disciplinary matter is dealt with fairly and that steps are taken to establish the facts. Employees (including those in their probationary period) should not be dismissed or subjected to disciplinary action without being provided with the following:
 - (a) a written statement of the allegations;
 - (b) a fair hearing before any decision is reached; and
 - (c) the right to an appeal hearing.

2. General principles

- 2.1 This procedure applies to all employees and workers regardless of status or length of service. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors. It is for guidance only and does not form part of your contract of employment.
- 2.2 This procedure does not apply to cases involving:
 - (a) genuine sickness absence;
 - (b) proposed redundancies; or
 - (c) poor performance or capability.

In those cases reference should be made to the appropriate procedure in the Staff Handbook.

- 2.3 Minor conduct issues can normally be resolved informally between you and your manager. These discussions should be held in private and without undue delay whenever there is cause for concern. In some cases an informal verbal warning may be given, which will not appear on your personnel records. Formal steps will be taken under this procedure if the matter is not resolved, or if informal discussion is not appropriate (for example, because of the seriousness of the allegation).
- 2.4 Except in cases of gross misconduct or during your probationary period, you will not normally be dismissed for a first act of misconduct. We will normally give you a warning and a chance to improve.
- 2.5 Where disciplinary allegations are made against a probationary employee we may omit some of the steps set down in this procedure and/or vary some or all of the time limits. We will as a minimum however carry out the three steps outlined in 1.2 above prior to dismissing a probationary employee.
- 2.6 Any steps under this procedure should be taken promptly unless there is a good reason for delay. We may vary any time limits if it is reasonable to do so.
- 2.7 If you have difficulty at any stage of the procedure because of a disability, you should discuss the situation with your manager or a member of the Human Resources department as soon as possible.
- 2.8 If you believe that disciplinary action has been or is being taken against you for a reason which does not relate to your conduct or capability, or for a reason which is discriminatory on grounds related to sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, age or disability, you should submit a grievance in writing under our grievance procedure to a member of the human resources department as soon as possible and before any appeal hearing takes place under this procedure.

3. Confidentiality

- 3.1 Our aim during an investigation or disciplinary procedure is to deal with matters sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of any individuals involved.
- 3.2 All employees must treat as confidential any information communicated to them in connection with an investigation or disciplinary matter.
- 3.3 You are not permitted to make any electronic recordings of any investigative meetings, disciplinary or appeal hearings. Your representative, or any companions or witnesses who accompany you to any meetings or hearings are also forbidden from making electronic recordings.

3.4 You will normally be told the names of any witnesses whose evidence is relevant to disciplinary proceedings against you, unless, in our discretion, we believe that a witness's identity should remain confidential.

3.5 Witnesses must treat as confidential any information given to them in the course of an investigation, including the identity of any employees under investigation.

4. Investigations

4.1 The purpose of an investigation is for us to establish a fair and balanced view of the facts before deciding whether to proceed with a disciplinary hearing. This may involve reviewing any relevant documents, interviewing you and any witnesses, and taking witness statements.

4.2 Investigative interviews are solely for the purpose of fact-finding and no decision on disciplinary action will be taken until after a disciplinary hearing has been held.

4.3 You do not normally have the right to bring anyone to an investigative interview. However, we may allow you to bring a companion if it helps you to overcome a difficulty caused by a disability, or any difficulty in understanding English.

4.4 You must cooperate fully and promptly in any investigation. This will include informing us of the names of any relevant witnesses, disclosing any relevant documents to us and attending any investigative interviews.

4.5 The amount of investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case.

5. Suspension

5.1 In cases of alleged gross misconduct where the employee's continued presence in the office would hinder an investigation we may need to suspend them from work while an investigation or disciplinary procedure is ongoing. The suspension will be for no longer than necessary and we will confirm the arrangements to you in writing. While suspended you should not visit our premises or contact any of our clients, customers, suppliers, contractors or employees, unless you have been authorised to do so by Director.

5.2 Suspension of this kind is not a disciplinary sanction and does not imply that any decision has already been made about your case. You will continue to receive your full basic salary and benefits during the period of suspension.

FORMAL DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

6. Written information

Following any investigation, if we consider there are grounds for disciplinary action, we will inform you in writing of the allegations against you and the basis for those allegations. This will normally include:

- (a) a summary of relevant information gathered during the investigation;
- (b) documents which will be used at the disciplinary hearing; and
- (c) witness statements which will be used at the hearing, except where a witness's identity is to be kept confidential, in which case we will give you as much information as possible while maintaining confidentiality.

You will have a reasonable opportunity to consider this information before the hearing.

7. Disciplinary hearing

- 7.1 We will give you written notice of the date, time and place of the disciplinary hearing, which will normally be held between two days and one week after you receive the written notice.
- 7.2 The hearing will be chaired by a Manager/Director. The Investigating Officer will also be present. You may bring a companion with you to the disciplinary hearing.
- 7.3 You must take all reasonable steps to attend the hearing. Failure to attend a hearing without good reason may be treated as misconduct in itself. If you or your companion cannot attend at the time specified you should inform us immediately and we will seek to agree an alternative time.
- 7.4 The purpose of the disciplinary hearing is to review the evidence and to enable you to respond to any allegations that have been made against you. If you have a companion, he or she may make representations to us and ask questions, but should not answer questions on your behalf. You may confer privately with your companion at any time during the hearing.
- 7.5 The disciplinary hearing may be adjourned if we need to carry out any further investigations. For example, we may decide to re-interview witnesses in the light of any points that have been raised at the hearing. You will be given a reasonable opportunity to consider any new information obtained before the hearing is reconvened.

7.6 Within one week of the disciplinary hearing we will inform you in writing of our decision (including details of any misconduct that we consider you have committed, and the disciplinary sanction to be applied) together with the reasons for our decision. We will also inform you of your right of appeal. Where possible we will also explain this information to you in person.

8. Appeals

8.1 If you wish to appeal you should do so in writing, stating your full grounds of appeal, to a Director within one week of the date on which you were informed of the decision.

8.2 We will give you written notice of the date, time and place of the appeal hearing. This will normally be between two days and one week after you receive the written notice. In cases of dismissal the appeal will be held as soon as possible.

8.3 Where practicable, the appeal hearing will be conducted by a manager who is senior to the person who conducted the disciplinary hearing. The Investigating Officer will also usually be present. You may bring a companion with you to the appeal meeting.

8.4 If you raise any new matters in your appeal we may need to carry out further investigation prior to the appeal hearing. If any new information comes to light we will provide you with the details. You will have a reasonable opportunity to consider this information before the hearing.

8.5 The appeal hearing may be a complete rehearing of the matter or it may be a review of the original decision taking account of any new information. This will be at our discretion depending on your grounds of appeal and the circumstances of your case.

8.6 Following the appeal hearing we may:

- (a) confirm the original decision; or
- (b) revoke the original decision; or
- (c) substitute a different disciplinary sanction.

8.7 We will inform you in writing of our final decision within one week of the appeal hearing. Where possible we will also explain this to you in person. There will be no further right of appeal.

8.8 The date on which any dismissal takes effect will not be delayed pending the outcome of an appeal. However, if the appeal is successful, you will be reinstated with no loss of continuity or pay.

9. Right to be accompanied

9.1 You may bring a companion to any disciplinary or appeal hearings under this procedure. The companion may be either a trade union official or a colleague. You must tell a member of the Human Resources Department who your chosen companion is, in good time before the hearing.

9.2 Acting as a companion is voluntary and employees are under no obligation to do so. Employees will be allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay to act as a companion.

9.3 If your choice of companion is unreasonable we may ask you to choose someone else. For example:

- (a) if in our opinion your companion may have a conflict of interest or may prejudice the hearing; or
- (b) if your companion works at another site and someone reasonably suitable is available at the site at which you work; or
- (c) if your companion is unavailable at the time a hearing is scheduled and will not be available for more than five working days.

9.4 We may, at our discretion, allow you to bring a companion who is not an employee or union official where this will help overcome a particular difficulty caused by a disability, or where you have difficulty understanding English.

DISMISSALS AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION

10. DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

10.1 We aim to treat all employees fairly and consistently. Disciplinary action previously taken against other employees for similar misconduct will usually be taken into account but should not be treated as a precedent. Each case will be assessed on its own merits.

10.2 Depending on the seriousness of the matter any of the following stages may be omitted.

11. Stage 1: verbal warning

- 11.1 You may be given a verbal warning for a minor act of misconduct where you have no other active warnings on your disciplinary record.
- 11.2 The warning will be confirmed in a letter to you which will set out the nature of the misconduct, the change in behaviour required and the likely consequences of further misconduct.
- 11.3 A record of the warning will be placed permanently on your personnel file and will remain active for six months from the date it is given, after which time it will be disregarded in deciding the outcome of future disciplinary proceedings. Your conduct may be reviewed at the end of this period and if it has not improved sufficiently we may decide to extend the active period.
- 11.4 Verbal warnings may be given by a Manager or Director.

12. Stage 2: first written warning

- 12.1 A first written warning will usually be given for:
 - (a) first acts of misconduct where there are no other active warnings on your disciplinary record; or
 - (b) minor misconduct where there is an active verbal warning on your record.
- 12.2 The warning will set out the nature of the misconduct, the change in behaviour required and the likely consequences of further misconduct.
- 12.3 The warning will be placed permanently on your personnel file and will remain active for six months from the date it is given, after which time it will be disregarded in deciding the outcome of future disciplinary proceedings. Your conduct may be reviewed at the end of this period and if it has not improved sufficiently we may decide to extend the active period.
- 12.4 First written warnings may be given by a Manager or Director.

13. Stage 3: final written warning

- 13.1 A final written warning will usually be given for:
 - (a) misconduct where there is already an active written warning on your record; or

- (b) cases where there is no active written warning on file but we consider that the misconduct is sufficiently serious to warrant a final written warning.
- 13.2 The warning will set out the nature of the misconduct, the change in behaviour required and the likely consequences of further misconduct.
- 13.3 The warning will be placed permanently on your personnel file and will normally remain active for 12 months or, if we decide that the matter is more serious, for a longer period. Your conduct may be reviewed at the end of this period and if it has not improved sufficiently we may decide to extend the active period. After the active period it will be disregarded in deciding the result of future disciplinary proceedings. In exceptional cases verging on gross misconduct including a serious breach of confidentiality and/or neglect or animal welfare, a final written warning may state that it will remain active indefinitely.
- 13.4 Final written warnings may be given by a Director.

14. Stage 4: dismissal

- 14.1 We may decide to dismiss you in the following circumstances:
- (a) misconduct during your probationary period; or
 - (b) misconduct where there is an active final written warning on your record; or
 - (c) gross misconduct regardless of whether you have received any previous warnings.
- 14.2 Gross misconduct will usually result in summary dismissal, that is, dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice. In cases not involving gross misconduct you will be given your full contractual notice period, or payment in lieu of notice.
- 14.3 Dismissal may be authorised by a Director.

15. Alternative sanctions short of dismissal

- 15.1 In appropriate cases we may consider some other sanction short of dismissal, such as:
- (a) demotion;

- (b) transfer to another department or job;
- (c) period of suspension without pay;
- (d) loss of seniority;
- (e) reduction in pay;
- (f) loss of future pay increment or bonus;
- (g) loss of overtime.

15.2 These sanctions may be used in conjunction with a written warning.

15.3 These sanctions may be authorised by a Director.

APPENDIX 'D'

ANTI HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

Purpose of policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all Agenda Resource Management's workers are treated with dignity and respect and are free from harassment, intimidation or other forms of bullying at work.

This policy is for guidance only and does not form part of your contract of employment.

Breach of this policy will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal.

Legislative framework

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 we have a duty to provide our workers with a safe place and system of work. This includes a workplace free from harassment, intimidation and bullying.

We also have responsibilities not to harass or discriminate against workers on the grounds of their sex, sexual orientation, marital status, gender reassignment, race, religion, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, HIV positive/AIDS status or age.

In some situations we may also be responsible for the actions of our workers towards each other and towards third parties. In certain circumstances harassment can amount to unlawful discrimination. This policy serves to demonstrate our commitment to identifying and wherever possible eliminating such unlawful behaviour.

Personnel responsible for implementation of policy

Agenda Resource Management's board has overall responsibility for this policy but has delegated day-to-day responsibility for overseeing and implementing action required under it to Heather Sanders. Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the operation of the policy and any recommendations for change to the policy lies with Heather Sanders.

Managers have a specific responsibility to operate within the boundaries of this policy and to facilitate its operation by ensuring that workers understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and by identifying and acting upon behaviour that falls below these standards. Managers will be given training on the relevant legal and operational framework and best practice.

All workers are responsible for treating their colleagues with dignity, and for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it.

Workers should disclose any instances of harassment or bullying of which they become aware to Heather Sanders. Questions about this policy should be directed to Heather Sanders.

Who is covered by the policy

This policy covers all individuals working for Agenda Resource Management at all levels and grades, including senior managers, officers, directors, employees, contractors, trainees, home workers, part-time or fixed-term employees, and agency staff (collectively known as workers in this policy).

What are harassment and bullying?

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct which has the purpose or effect of, affecting a worker's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Such conduct is commonly related to sex, sexual orientation, marital status, gender reassignment, race, religion, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, HIV positive/AIDS status or age.

Harassment generally arises where a worker has made it clear that they find certain behaviour unwelcome and that behaviour has continued unchanged. Harassment can also arise as a result of a single incident provided it is sufficiently serious. It is important to remember that even though the conduct may only be unwanted or offensive to one individual it can still amount to harassment. Employees who believe they are being subjected to harassment should not hesitate to use the procedures set out below. All staff should consider whether their actions could be offensive to others. Examples of harassment might include:

- Unwanted physical contact, ranging from touching or brushing against another employee's body to assault or coercing sexual relations;
- Unwelcome sexual behaviour such as advances, propositions or pressure for sexual activity;
- Continued suggestions for social activity within or outside the workplace after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome; offensive or intimidating comments;

- Suggestions that sexual favours may further an employee's career or that refusal of sexual favours may hinder it;
- The display of pictures, objects or written materials that may be considered pornographic or offensive to particular ethnic or religious groups;
- Unwanted conduct or conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating an individuals' dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment on the grounds of their sex, race, sexual orientation, disability, religion or age including abuse or insults about appearance or dress;
- Insensitive jokes or pranks; and
- Shunning an employee, for example, by deliberately excluding him or her from conversation;

The list is not exhaustive and other behaviour many constitute harassment.

Bullying means offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure a colleague.

Bullying does not include legitimate and constructive criticism of your performance or behaviour, an occasionally raised voice, or an argument. Examples of bullying include ridiculing or demeaning others, particularly junior colleagues, overbearing supervision and unjustifiably excluding colleagues from meetings/communications.

This policy covers harassment or bullying which occurs both in the workplace itself and in settings outside the workplace, such as business trips, events or social functions organised for or on behalf of Agenda Resource Management and on or off our premises.

What to do if you have been bullied or harassed: informal procedure

If you consider that you are being bullied or harassed, you should initially attempt to resolve the problem informally, explaining clearly to the person responsible that the behaviour in question is not welcome and that it offends you or makes you uncomfortable.

If this is too difficult or embarrassing for you to do on your own, you should seek support from a colleague, your line manager or the Human Resources Department.

Managers will provide confidential advice and assistance to workers who have been bullied or harassed and will assist in the resolution of any problems, whether through formal or informal means.

If you are in any doubt as to whether an incident or series of incidents which have occurred constitute bullying or harassment, then in the first instance you should approach your line manager or the Human Resources Department confidentially, on an informal basis. They will be able to advise you as to how the matter should be dealt with.

If the conduct continues or if it is not appropriate to resolve it informally, you should follow the formal procedure set out below.

What to do if you have been bullied or harassed: formal procedure

The informal procedure may not be appropriate due to the nature of the harassment or bullying or because you do not feel able to talk directly to the person creating the problem.

In these cases or where the informal procedure has been unsuccessful, you should raise your complaint in writing with Heather Sanders, whose role is to achieve a solution wherever possible and to respect the confidentiality of all concerned. Details of the information required to be included in your written complaint are included in this policy.. (If the matter concerns the Heather Sanders, you should refer it to another Director.

As a general principle, the decision to progress a complaint rests with you. However, as your employer we have a duty to protect all workers and we may pursue a complaint independently if we consider it is appropriate to do so in all the circumstances.

If you wish to make a formal complaint, you should write to Heather Sanders setting out full details of the unwanted conduct. These details should include the name of the harasser or bully, the nature of the harassment or bullying, the date(s) and time(s) when the harassment or bullying occurred, the names of any witnesses and any action taken so far to attempt to stop the harassment or bullying.

Formal procedure: investigation

Complaints will be managed in a timely and confidential manner via an independent investigation to establish full details of what happened. Your name and the name of the alleged harasser will not be divulged other than on a "need to know" basis to those individuals involved in the investigation.

At the outset, an investigative officer with suitable experience and with no prior involvement in the complaint will be appointed and a timetable will be set down and communicated to all parties. The investigation will be thorough, impartial and objective, and will be carried out with sensitivity and with due respect for the rights of all parties concerned.

Consideration will be given to whether the alleged harasser or bully should be redeployed temporarily, or suspended on full pay or whether reporting lines or other managerial arrangements should be altered pending the outcome of the investigation.

As part of the investigation, the investigative officer will meet with you to hear your account of the events leading to your complaint. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or a trade union official of your choice.

The investigative officer will also meet with the alleged harasser or bully who may also be accompanied by a colleague or trade union official of their choice. It may also be necessary to interview witnesses to any of the incidents mentioned in your complaint. Where it is necessary to interview witnesses, the importance of confidentiality will be emphasised to them.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the investigative officer will submit a report to a senior manager nominated to consider the complaint. The senior manager will usually report their finding back to you within two weeks of your complaint first being reported.

A copy of the investigative officer's report together with the senior manager's findings will be provided to you and to the alleged harasser.

If the senior manager finds that harassment or bullying has occurred, prompt action will be taken to stop the harassment or bullying immediately and prevent its recurrence. The findings will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.

Consideration will be given to whether the harasser or bully should be dismissed and, if not, whether they should remain in their current post or be transferred. Even where a complaint is not upheld, (for example, where evidence is inconclusive), consideration will be given to how the ongoing working relationship between you and the alleged harasser or bully should be managed. This may involve, for example, arranging some form of mediation or counselling or a change in the duties or reporting lines of either party.

Formal procedure: appeal

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, you have the right to appeal the decision within 14 days of being notified of the outcome. You should submit your full written grounds of appeal to Heather Sanders.

Heather Sanders may nominate another person to hear your appeal. Where practicable this will be a manager senior to the manager who originally considered the complaint (see paragraph 0 and paragraph 0). The person hearing your appeal will meet with you to discuss your appeal. You may be accompanied by a colleague or a trade union official of your choice. You will be notified of the outcome of the appeal within seven days of this meeting. This is the final stage of the formal procedure.

Protection for those making complaints or assisting with an investigation

Workers who, in good faith, make complaints under this policy will be protected from intimidation or victimisation in connection with their involvement. If you have been subjected to any such intimidation or victimisation you may raise a complaint in writing under this procedure or the grievance procedure. Workers who, after investigation, are found to have provided information falsely and in bad faith will however be subject to action under the disciplinary procedure.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is very important throughout all parts of this procedure. It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the procedure to respect the high level of confidentiality that is required. Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action under our disciplinary procedure.

Monitoring and review of Policy

This policy reflects the law and Agenda Resource Management's practice as at January 2007. Heather Sanders in conjunction with the board will be responsible for reviewing this policy from a legislative and operational perspective at least annually.

Heather Sanders has responsibility for ensuring that any personnel who may be involved with investigations or administrative tasks carried out under this policy receives regular and appropriate training to assist them with these duties.

Workers are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting Heather Sanders.

APPENDIX 'E'

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Policy statement

It is Agenda Resource Management's policy not to discriminate against its workers on the basis of their gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability or age, pregnancy or trade union membership or the fact that they are a part-time worker or a fixed-term employee. Our workers and applicants for employment shall not be disadvantaged by any policies or conditions of service which cannot be justified as necessary for operational purposes. Agenda Resource Management shall, at all times, strive to work within legislative requirements as well as promoting best practice. The board of Agenda Resource Management's long-term aim is that the composition of our workforce should reflect that of the community and that all workers should be offered equal opportunities to achieve their full potential. This policy, and the measures we take to implement it, have been devised on the basis of advice from the relevant government and professional bodies [as well as in consultation with appropriate union and/or employee representatives]. We are committed to a programme of action to make this policy effective and to bring it to the attention of all workers. The principle of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity applies equally to the treatment of visitors, clients, customers and suppliers by members of our workforce and also, in some circumstances, ex-employees.

The following paragraphs deal with the specific categories of workers and areas of work which we have identified as potentially giving rise to equal opportunities issues and provides more specific guidance on the parameters of our policy and approach to equal opportunities.

This policy is for guidance only and shall be provided to all workers, but does not form part of your contract of employment.

1. To whom does this policy apply?

- 1.1 This policy applies to Agenda Resource Management's employees, whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed-term contracts, to ex-employees, to job applicants and to individuals such as agency staff and consultants and volunteers who are not our employees, but who work at the Agenda Resource Management (collectively workers).
- 1.2 All workers have a duty to act in accordance with this policy, and therefore to treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, whether junior or senior to them. In some situations, Agenda Resource Management may be at risk of being held responsible for the acts of individual members of staff and will not therefore tolerate any discriminatory practices or behaviour.
- 1.3 The policy statement in paragraph **Error! Reference source not found.** applies equally to the treatment of our visitors, clients customers and suppliers by our workers.

2. Personnel responsible for implementation of policy

- 2.1 The board has overall responsibility for the effective operation of Agenda Resource Management's equal opportunities policy (EOP) and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework prohibiting discrimination. The board has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to Heather Sanders.
- 2.2 Those working at a management level have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote the aims and objectives of Agenda Resource Management with regard to equal opportunities. To facilitate this process, managers will be given training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice.
- 2.3 All members of staff are responsible for the success of this policy and must ensure that they familiarise themselves with the policy and act in accordance with its aims and objectives. If you are involved in management or recruitment, or if you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact Heather Sanders to request training or an information pack.

3. Scope and purpose of policy

- 3.1 Agenda Resource Management will not unlawfully discriminate on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment,

race, religion or belief, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability or age, pregnancy, trade union membership, or part-time or fixed-term status.

- 3.2 This policy applies to the advertising of jobs and recruitment and selection, to training and development, opportunities for promotion, to conditions of service, benefits and facilities and pay; to health and safety and to conduct at work, to grievance and disciplinary procedures and to termination of employment, including redundancy.
- 3.3 Agenda Resource Management will take appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of workers' religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities.

4. Forms of discrimination

Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally. Direct discrimination occurs where someone is put at a disadvantage for a reason related to one or more of the grounds. For example, rejecting an applicant of one race because it is considered they would not "fit in" on the grounds of their race could be direct discrimination. Indirect discrimination occurs where an individual is subject to an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a particular disadvantage because of, for example, their sex or race. For example, a height requirement would be likely to eliminate proportionately more women than men. If this criteria cannot be objectively justified for a reason unconnected with sex, it would be indirectly discriminatory on the grounds of sex. Discrimination also includes victimisation (less favourable treatment because of action taken to assert legal rights against discrimination or to assist a colleague in that regard) and harassment (see Agenda Resource Management's anti-harassment policy).

5. Recruitment and selection

- 5.1 Agenda Resource Management aims to ensure that no job applicant receives less favourable treatment on any of the unlawful grounds listed. Recruitment procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities and that sufficiently diverse sectors of the community are reached. Job selection criteria are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds as being essential for the effective performance of the job.
- 5.2 Agenda Resource Management shall take steps to ensure that knowledge of in Agenda Resource Management. Where appropriate, use may be made of lawful exemptions to recruit suitably-qualified people to cater for the special needs of

particular groups. Vacancy advertisements shall include an appropriate short statement on our equal opportunities policy and a copy of this policy shall be sent to those who enquire about vacancies.

- 5.3 To ensure that this policy is operating effectively with respect to recruitment and selection and the other areas identified, and to identify those sections of the local community which may be under-represented in employment, Agenda Resource Management monitors applicants' racial origins, gender, disability, sexual orientation and religion and age as part of the recruitment procedure. We also maintain records of this data in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Ongoing monitoring and regular analysis of the data provide the basis for taking appropriate steps to eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination and implement this policy.

Staff training and promotion and conditions of service

- 6.1 Staff training needs will be identified through regular staff appraisals. All workers will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation. All promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.
- 6.2 The composition and movement of workers at different levels will be regularly monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels of the organisation. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers and to provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or under-represented groups.
- 6.3 Our conditions of service, benefits and facilities will be reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all workers who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them. This includes pay, bonus criteria, policies and all benefits offered.

7. Termination of employment

- 7.1 We will monitor redundancy criteria and procedures to ensure that they are fair and objective and do not directly or indirectly discriminate against employees.
- 7.2 We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures are carried out fairly and uniformly for all workers, whether they result in the giving of disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

8. Disability discrimination

- 8.1 If you are disabled, or become disabled in the course of your employment with us, you are encouraged to tell us about your condition. This is to enable us to support you as much as possible. You may also wish to advise your line manager or the Human Resources Department of any reasonable adjustments to your

working conditions or the duties of your job which you consider to be necessary, or which would assist you in the performance of your duties. Your line manager the Human Resources Department may wish to consult with you and with your medical adviser(s) about possible reasonable adjustments. Careful consideration will be given to any such proposals and they will be accommodated where possible and proportionate to the needs of your job. Nevertheless, there may be circumstances where it will not be reasonable for us to accommodate the suggested adjustments and we will ensure that we provide you with information as to the basis of our decision not to make any adjustments.

- 8.2 Agenda Resource Management carried out an access audit of its premises in advance of Part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 coming into force in October 2004 and will continue to monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether they place disabled workers, job applicants or service users at a substantial disadvantage compared to other workers. Where possible and proportionate, Agenda Resource Management will take steps to improve access for disabled workers and service users.

9. Fixed-term employees and agency and temporary workers

We will monitor our use of fixed-term employees and agency workers, and their conditions of service, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities. We will, where relevant, monitor their progress within Agenda Resource Management to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

10. Part-time workers

Agenda Resource Management will monitor the conditions of service of part-time employees and their progression within Agenda Resource Management to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits and training and promotion opportunities. We will also ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately under the flexible working procedure.

11. Breaches of the policy

- 11.1 If you believe that you may have been disadvantaged on any of the unlawful grounds listed, you are encouraged to raise the matter through Agenda Resource Management's grievance procedure. If you believe that you may have been harassed on any of the unlawful grounds listed, you are encouraged to raise the matter through our anti-harassment policy. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Workers who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False

allegations of a breach in this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.

- 11.2 If, after investigation, you are proven to have harassed any other worker on the grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, race, disability or age or otherwise act in breach of this policy, you will be subject to disciplinary action. In serious cases, such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. Agenda Resource Management will always take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.
- 11.3 As this policy applies equally to Agenda Resource Management workers' relations with visitors, clients, customers and suppliers, if, after investigation, you are proven to have discriminated against or harassed a client or supplier you will also be subject to disciplinary action.

12. Monitoring and revision of policy

- 12.1 This policy is reviewed annually by Heather Sanders in consultation with the Board. Recommendations for any amendments are reported to the audit committee and board.

Policy last updated January 2007.

- 12.2 We will regularly monitor the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving the objectives stated in the EOP statement by monitoring the composition of job applicants and the benefits and career progression of its workers.
- 12.3 Agenda Resource Management is committed to providing relevant training for all staff on their responsibilities and duties under this policy.

APPENDIX 'F'

MANAGING SICKNESS

AGENDA RESOURCE MANAGEMENT		
TITLE: Managing Sickness Absence	STATUS: Non-Contractual	Related policies Sickness benefit
DATE EFFECTIVE: January 2007	APPROVED BY: Heather Sanders	
SUPERSEDES: New	POLICY NUMBER: 1.01	

SCOPE

All Agenda employees including Agency staff that are located either at different client bases around the country or at Agenda HQ to include Cambridge and sales staff.

POLICY

To present a systematic approach to ensure that long term and persistent short term sickness absences are dealt with sympathetically, consistently, and in a fair manner.

The recognised advantages to the company and employees are:-

- Keeping valued staff and avoid unnecessary recruitment and training costs
- Reduce any unnecessary overheads, e.g. saving on lost salary and sick pay costs
- Help meet the Company's legal duties and avoid discriminating against disabled workers
- Maintain and improve workplace relations by working in partnership with your employees and outside clients
- Maintain the Company's competitiveness and productivity
- Minimise staff fatigue and stress levels from needing to cope with reduced staffing levels and increased work loads

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Managers are responsible for responding to absences within their own teams.

To record and monitor all sickness absence, checking for patterns of ill health that could be work related, or underlying domestic issues or onset of a disability. This should record duration, reason, and periods of absence.

Line managers must maintain notes on any discussions and these must be put in the personnel files.

Up to 14 days of sickness absence

- Employee should make contact and inform management why they are absent from work
- Keep in contact with employee
- Upon return to work conduct a simple 'return to work' (RTW) interview, discussing actions that may be required to improve the employees performance at work or underlying issues if short-term absence is frequent. **Appendix 1**

Between 15-28 days of sickness absence

- Keep in touch regularly with employee and identify barriers that prevent returning to work
- Consider if expert advice is required, i.e. contact Occupational Health
- Welcome employee back and conduct RTW interview
- If it seems that the employee is not likely to RTW soon, then discuss the need to consider a return to work plan. **Appendix 2**

After 28 days of sickness absence

- Keep in touch regularly
- Put together a plan of actions and reasonable adjustments to help employee RTW, seek expert advice and consider case conference discussion with all parties concerned
- Welcome employee back and implement plan. **Appendix 2**
- Review employee's progress at least weekly until full duties are resumed.

A personal risk assessment may be required/considered were there have been significant changes to the employee through injury, ill health or disability that may make them vulnerable to additional risk, including the introduction of adjustments that could affect the work and safety of others

Despite good efforts there are times when it will not be possible to return an employee to either full or part time employment. It is important not to jump to conclusions, before alternative solutions have been explored, and to seek expert advice.

Reference

As an employer there are duties under the following legislation.

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. Requires that everyone's health and safety at work is protected, so far as is reasonably practicable
- The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 requires that reasonable adjustments to accommodate employees who are or have become disabled, as defined by the DDA.
- Rights of employees under employment law.

Appendix attached 1-2

I. Guidance notes for frequent and/or persistent/ intermittent short-term sickness absence

2. Guidance notes for long term sickness absence

Guidance notes for managing absence

Frequent and/or persistent /intermittent short-term sickness absence

These types of sickness issues are in the main genuine. The employee may have many unrelated symptoms but no underlying medical problem. However, due to the number, frequency and erratic nature of these absences from work leads to the employee becoming unreliable and commercially disruptive.

Stress

If you are notified that an employee is suffering from a stress-related illness make contact with Occupational Health within a week of notification. Discretion is required until the longer-term prognosis is known.

Initial stage

When management consider that an employee's pattern of absence is likely to lead to, or is already causing difficulties in the work force the line manager should consult the employee to consider the level and reasons for the absence and any practical steps which may be taken to alleviate these. Such steps may involve the manager making arrangements for the employee to be examined by Occupational Health who may seek permission from the employee in order to make contact with their GP.

Preparation prior to the meeting must include information on:-

- Total number of absent work days
- Total number of occasions/patterns i.e. after weekends, annual leave, football matches
- Reasons for the absences
- Self certification forms and any medical certificates

At this interview and through discussion, actions will be agreed and clear attendance targets set. These should be reviewed within a specific time period. It is essential that the employee understands the targets and actions agreed.

There may additionally be a change in the employee's attitude and behaviour which is affecting colleagues which may cause conflict. One way of tackling this is to use workplace mediators. But, talking with your employees to ensure that everyone understands what acceptable behaviour at work means that conflict can normally be avoided.

Notes of this meeting and actions agreed should be produced and filed in personnel file.

Examples of possible reasons behind persistent, intermittent absence

- An underlying medical condition which is undiagnosed
- A problem with work or colleagues or manager
- A family, personal or domestic problem

- A attitude or motivational problem i.e. mere laziness
- A problem with a business or other interest outside work
- A response to a refusal for time off or in response to a particular shift or evening duty

There may be some employees that may be taking time off work to care for sick dependants or because they are disabled themselves.

Second stage

If there is insufficient improvement over the review period, then a further discussion with the next level of management and appropriate HR Representative will need to be arranged.

The discussion will consist of a review of the steps taken to date, an analysis of the employee's sickness absence record and the prospects for improvement in attendance. Once again practical steps which may be taken to improve the employee's attendance record will be considered. This will include consideration of the possibility of job modification or alternative employment if applicable.

In cases where the employee's incidence of self-certified absence is abnormally high, consideration should be given to requiring the employee to attend Occupational Health to seek medical advice on each future period of absence. It may also be necessary to consider withdrawal of self-certification and requirement to submit medical certificates for each future period of sickness absence. If such a requirement is made the Company will reimburse to the employee the cost of such medical certificates and be informed of the period of time for which this requirement will apply.

At this stage the employee should be informed that, if there is no improvement in attendance, termination of employment may result.

A letter should be sent to the employee confirming any action to be taken. This should include the length of the review period, and the improvement required during this period.

Further stage

If, following the discussions above, an employee's absence fails to achieve the required improvement, the employee should again be interviewed by the manager and HR Representative who will give consideration to the future employment position.

Where appropriate, this consideration should include the possibility of further review or alternative employment but if these options are not practicable or appropriate, consideration may have to be given to terminating the employment of the individual concerned on grounds of inability to fulfill the contract due to incapacity. A letter should be sent to the employee confirming any action taken.

Where employment is terminated this will be with pay in lieu of notice.

Guidance notes for managing absence

Long term sickness absence

Initial stage

Where an employee is absent due to sickness, for a prolonged period the manager should keep in contact with the employee during the period of absence to establish whether there is any help or support the Company can provide. *It may also be advisable for Occupational health to also make contact at this stage so that there is overall support together.* The manager will then be aware of the changes in the individual's state of health and will have an idea as to the individual's likely date of return to work.

Depending upon the nature and progress of the individual's illness, it may also be appropriate for arrangements to be made at an early stage for the employee to be examined by Occupational health who may seek permission from the employee to contact their GP

Taking account of the individual circumstances and operational requirements, the employee should be given a reasonable time to recover and, where practicable, until the return to work, arrangements should be made to minimize the operational affects of the absence by example, reorganisation of work or the engagement of a temporary replacement.

Work adjustments considerations

- Consider phased or gradual return to normal duties within a fixed timescale
- Alternative job roles or position
- Empowering the individual to influence their RTW will increase their well being and self confidence

If you or your employee needs assistance with reasonable adjustments, your employee can apply to the nearest jobcentre Plus for help. A Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) will consider the appropriateness of refer to Access to Work Business Centre.

Second stage

Where prolonged absence is operationally unacceptable or where medical advice indicates that the employee will be unable to carry out the duties for which they are employed, the employee should be interviewed by the manager and HR Representative to discuss the future employment position. This discussion would explore, with the employee, the possibilities of return to work, alternative employment or, where these are not practicable, ill-health retirement (if applicable) or termination of employment.

This interview and any actions resulting from it e.g. a further review period or management considerations of alternative employment, should be confirmed in writing to the employee.

Following this meeting an up to-date medical opinion should be sought via Occupational health prior to any decision being taken.

Conduct during long term sickness absence

If an employee is conducting themselves in a manner which is inconsistent with the stated illness or injury, is found to be taking part in activities which may delay recovery or felt to exacerbate the condition, then it is reasonable to advise and warn the employee of what they are not expected to do during any period of sickness absence.

Further stage

Following any actions arising from the second stage and assuming that absence is continuing, the employee should be interviewed again by management and the HR Representative and advised of the outcome of their considerations. This may involve a further review period or alternative employment, but may also include **ill-health retirement**, or termination of employment, with notice, or pay in lieu of notice, on grounds of incapacity.

The employee should be advised in writing of the outcome of the interview.

APPENDIX G

CAPABILITY PROCEDURE

Policy and principles

The primary aim of this procedure is to provide a framework within which managers can work with employees to maintain satisfactory performance standards and to encourage improvement where necessary.

It is our policy to ensure that concerns over performance are dealt with fairly and that steps are taken to establish the facts. Employees should not be dismissed or subjected to formal sanctions for poor performance unless:

they have been given a written statement of the reasons for concern;

a fair hearing has been held; and the employee has been given the right to an appeal hearing unless only a warning has been given.

Employees will not normally be dismissed for performance reasons without previous warnings. However, in serious cases of gross negligence, or in any case involving an employee who has not yet completed their probationary period, dismissal without previous warnings may be appropriate.

This procedure applies to all employees regardless of status or length of service. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors. This procedure is for guidance only and does not form part of your contract of employment. We may vary the procedure including any time limits as appropriate to a particular case.

Disabilities

At each stage, consideration should be given to whether the unsatisfactory performance is related to a disability and if so, whether there are reasonable adjustments that could be made to the requirements of the job or other aspects of the working arrangements.

If you have difficulty at any stage of the procedure because of a disability, or wish to inform us of any medical condition you consider relevant, you should contact a member of the Human Resources Department.

Informal discussions

In the first instance, performance issues should normally be dealt with informally between you and your manager as part of day-to-day management. Informal discussions may be held with a view to (for example):

clarifying the required standards;

identifying areas of concern;

establishing the likely causes of poor performance and identifying any training needs;

setting targets for improvement; and/or

agreeing a time-scale for review.

In some cases an informal verbal warning may be given if the manager deems it appropriate. This will not form part of your personnel record and there is no right of appeal.

The formal procedure should be used for more serious cases, or in any case where informal discussions have not resulted in a satisfactory improvement.

Capability hearings

A capability hearing will be held at each stage of the procedure.

Unless it is impractical to do so, we will give you one week's written notice of the date, time and place of the capability hearing.

We will inform you in writing of our concerns over your performance and the basis for those concerns. You will have a reasonable opportunity to consider this information before the hearing.

The hearing will be held by your manager or a more senior manager. You may bring a companion with you to the hearing (see Right to be accompanied, below).

You must take all reasonable steps to attend the hearing. Failure to attend a hearing without good reason may be treated as misconduct. If you or your companion cannot attend at the time specified you should inform us immediately and we will seek to agree an alternative time.

A hearing may be adjourned if we need to gather any further information or give consideration to matters discussed at the hearing. You will be given a reasonable opportunity to consider any new information obtained before the hearing is reconvened.

We will give you written confirmation of our decision, the reasons for it, and your right of appeal, within one week of a capability hearing (unless this time scale is not practicable, in which case we will confirm this information as soon as is practicable).

Right to be accompanied at hearings

You may bring a companion to any capability or appeal hearings under this procedure. The companion may be either a trade union official or a fellow employee. You must tell the manager conducting the hearing who your chosen companion is, in good time before the hearing.

Employees are allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay to act as a companion. There is no duty on employees to act as a companion if they do not wish to do so.

In some circumstances your choice of companion may not be allowed: for example, anyone who may have a conflict of interest, or whose presence may prejudice the hearing. Your companion should not normally be an employee working at another site, unless no-one reasonably suitable is available at the site at which you work.

We may, at our discretion, allow you to bring a companion who is not an employee or union official, where this will help overcome a particular difficulty caused by a disability, or where you have difficulty understanding English.

Your companion may make representations, ask questions, and sum up your case, but will not be allowed to answer questions on your behalf. You may confer privately with your companion at any time during the hearing.

Stage 1: first capability hearing

Where performance is unsatisfactory, and informal steps have either failed to resolve the situation or are not appropriate, a first capability hearing will be held. This will follow the procedure set out in paragraph 0 and paragraph 0.

The purposes of the first capability hearing include:

setting out the required standards that are considered not to have been met;

establishing the likely causes of poor performance;

allowing you the opportunity to explain the poor performance and ask any relevant questions;

discussing measures, such as additional training or supervision, which may improve performance;

setting targets for improvement; and

setting a time-scale for review.

Following the hearing, if we decide that it is appropriate to do so, we will give you a first written warning setting out:

the areas in which you have not met the required performance standards;

targets for improvement;

any measures, such as additional training or supervision, which will be taken with a view to improving performance;

a time-scale for review;

the consequences of failing to improve within the review period, or of further unsatisfactory performance.

The warning will normally remain active for six months, after which time it will normally be disregarded for the purposes of the capability procedure. A record of the warning will form a permanent part of your personnel record.

Your performance will be monitored and at the end of the review period we will write to inform you of the next step, as follows:

if your manager is satisfied with your performance, no further action will be taken;

if your manager is not satisfied, the matter may be progressed to Stage 2; or

if the manager feels that there has been a substantial but insufficient improvement, the review period may be extended.

Stage 2: second capability hearing

If your performance does not improve within the review period, or if there are further instances of poor performance while your first written warning is still active, we will hold a second capability hearing. This will follow the procedure set out in paragraph 0 and paragraph 0.

The purposes of the second capability hearing include:

setting out the required standards that are considered not to have been met;

establishing the likely causes of poor performance including any reasons why the measures taken so far have not led to the required improvement;

allowing you the opportunity to explain the poor performance and ask any relevant questions;

identifying further measures, such as additional training or supervision, which may improve performance;

setting targets for improvement; and

setting a time-scale for review.

Following the hearing, if we decide that it is appropriate to do so, we will give you a final written warning, setting out:

the areas in which you have not met the required performance standards;

targets for improvement;

any measures, such as additional training or supervision, which will be taken with a view to improving performance;

a further time-scale for review;

the consequences of failing to improve within the time-scale, or of further unsatisfactory performance.

A final written warning will normally remain active for six months, after which time it will be disregarded for the purposes of the capability procedure. A record of the warning will form a permanent part of your personnel record.

Your performance will be monitored and at the end of the review period we will write to inform you of the next step, as follows:

if your manager is satisfied with your performance, no further action will be taken;

if your manager is not satisfied, the matter may be progressed to a stage 3 capability hearing; or

if the manager feels that there has been a substantial but insufficient improvement, the review period may be extended.

Stage 3: dismissal or redeployment

If your performance does not improve within the further review period set out in the final written warning, or if there are further serious instances of poor performance while your final written warning is still active, we will hold a further capability hearing. This will follow the procedure set out in paragraph 0 and paragraph 0.

The purposes of the stage 3 hearing include:

setting out the required standards that are considered not to have been met;

identifying areas in which performance is still unsatisfactory;

allowing you the opportunity to explain the poor performance and ask any relevant questions;

establishing whether there are any further steps that could reasonably be taken to rectify the poor performance;

establishing whether there is any reasonable likelihood of the required standard of performance being met within a reasonable time; and

discussing whether there is any practical alternative to dismissal, such as redeployment to any suitable job that is available at the same or lower grade.

In exceptional cases where we believe that there is a reasonable likelihood of the necessary improvement being made within a reasonable time, a further review period will be set and the final written warning extended.

If performance remains unsatisfactory and there is to be no further review period, we may:

redeploy you into another suitable job at the same or (if your contract permits) a lower grade; or

dismiss you.

Dismissal will normally be with full notice or payment in lieu of notice, unless you are guilty of gross misconduct within the meaning of our disciplinary policy, in which case we may dismiss you without notice or any pay in lieu.

Appeals

You may appeal against the outcome of any stage of the formal capability procedure. If you wish to appeal you should do so in writing, stating your full grounds of appeal, to a Director within one week of the date on which you were informed of the decision.

Unless it is not practicable, we will give you between two days' and one week's written notice of the appeal hearing. In cases of dismissal the appeal will be held as soon as possible.

Where practicable, the appeal hearing will be held by a manager who is senior to the person who conducted the capability hearing. You may bring a companion with you to the appeal meeting (see Right to be accompanied, above).

If you raise any new matters in your appeal we may need to carry out further investigation. If any new information comes to light we will provide you with details in writing. You will have a reasonable opportunity to consider this information before the hearing.

Depending on the grounds for your appeal, the appeal hearing may be a complete rehearing of the matter or a review of the original decision.

Following the appeal we may:

confirm the original decision;

revoke the original decision; or

substitute a different outcome.

Our final decision will be confirmed to you in writing, if possible within one week of the appeal hearing. There will be no further right of appeal.

The date that any dismissal takes effect will not be delayed pending the outcome of an appeal. However, if the appeal is successful, the decision to dismiss you will be revoked with no loss of continuity or pay.