





What is **WELFARE FIRST?**



*“Caring for the staff
who care for your animals”*

Agenda’s Position Statement on the Use of Animals in Biomedical Research

Agenda supports the research community through the provision of services aimed at facilitating research. Agenda believes that whilst animal research continues to make a valuable contribution to scientific understanding and the development of medical treatments, the animals should be treated with dignity and respect at all times.

Agenda fully supports the Reduction, Refinement and Replacement of the use of animals in research. Until viable alternatives to animals are available for all areas of research, the animals should be cared for by dedicated, professional and well trained individuals who care passionately about animal care and welfare.

WELFARE FIRST is a programme developed by Agenda to recognise the importance of welfare within the life sciences sector and to meet the aims of its position statement. Animal welfare is a priority, but so also is the welfare of the dedicated people working with the animals and also the welfare of the life science sector itself.

WELFARE FIRST - The Six Key Principles



The **WELFARE FIRST** programme is designed to consistently deliver standards of animal care and welfare that meet and exceed the regulatory requirements. The programme puts in place the building blocks that underpin effective care and welfare; it is Agenda’s assertion that caring for the people that care for the animals in turn supports and nurtures a culture of care within the life science sector. The table on the following page describes each of the six key principles in more detail.

WELFARE FIRST

- The Six Key Principles Descriptions

Principle	Description
Welfare Contract 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Is a clear unambiguous statement of Agenda's position■ Makes clear Agenda's animal care and welfare focus■ Specifies behaviours expected of animal carers■ Clarifies reporting of concerns expectations■ Is enshrined in company HR policies■ Signed by staff to show commitment■ Reviewed by the Home Office, ABPI, Understanding Animal Research and a major Pharma company■ Includes element of the 3R's policy and is built upon the Agenda values■ It restates moral and legal responsibilities for animal welfare
Technician Care 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ All Agenda technicians receive a care pack and pre-assignment help sheet■ The head office team provides responsive and helpful support 24/7■ Staff handbooks and induction processes provide easy to understand information■ Agenda staff benefits exceed those provided by competitors■ All staff get a birthday day off and subsidised birthday club■ Staff are provided with support, such as training mentors■ Staff provide post-assignment feedback■ Full occupational health and safety support
Training and Development 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Agenda primarily recruits individuals with animal care qualifications■ An Investor in People, Agenda provides all staff with training opportunities■ An annual training bank account is provided■ Continual Professional Development is encouraged■ All staff are provided membership of the Institute of Animal Technology (IAT), and Animals in Science Education Trust and Understanding Animal Research■ The Tech Talk web resource has learning resources■ Agenda provides e-learning and other training resources■ Funding and encouragement to complete Home Office courses■ Competency training records and roving Training and Compliance Officer
Recognition 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Appraisals and reviews conducted to identify training & development needs■ Agenda receive post assignment feedback from the client which is part of the performance appraisals process■ High performers are nominated for the annual Technician of the Year award■ Agenda Values monthly and annual quality awards■ Awards are provided for attaining IAT and other qualifications■ Invites to formal and social events■ Thank you gifts in pay packets and Christmas gift vouchers■ "Hall of Fame" highlights achievements (see back page for more information)
Communication 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Agenda's monthly e-newsletter reinforces the key values of the organisation■ All technicians have access to the web based Tech Talk and Facebook resources■ Agenda has developed a number of communication channels for staff and clients, these include phone, e-mail and text, a 24/7 helpline, face-to-face meetings and reviews and an anonymous e-suggestion box■ Contract technicians have a weekly call from the head office staff to keep them updated■ The business development team arrange regular social events for the team■ Welfare First e-newsletter specifically for animal technician staff■ Supporting openness, Concordat signatory
Security Assured 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ All staff security screened (22 separate checks) and re-screened at 6 months & annually thereafter■ Confidentiality agreements are signed by all staff■ The Social Media code of conduct is signed by all staff■ All staff undertake security awareness training■ Agenda is externally audited for ISO 27001 (information security), Secured by Design (secure facilities), ISO9001, (quality management), Investors in People (staff development) and ISO14001 (green processes)■ Security advice and guidance provided to staff

What is the **WELFARE CONTRACT?**



The **WELFARE CONTRACT** supports Agenda's position on the use of animals in biomedical research and underpins the belief that professional animal care and welfare are central to the ethical and legal responsibilities of those engaged in biomedical research. Agenda supports the research community through the provision of services aimed at facilitating research. We believe that whilst animal research continues to make a valuable contribution to scientific understanding and the development of medical treatments that the animals should be treated with dignity and respect at all times.

Agenda staff have a moral and legal obligation to ensure the welfare of the animals in their care, good laboratory animal welfare is a vital aspect of good laboratory animal science. In addition to supporting the 3R's Reduction, Refinement and Replacement of animals in research our commitment to welfare is built around the following:

Respect: Respect for animals is the prerequisite of good husbandry and is essential to the welfare required for every aspect of animal well-being.

Reputation: Caring for research animals is a 365 day per year vocation; staff are expected to be reliable and conscientious when conducting their duties. Staff are obliged to familiarise themselves and use appropriately the communication channels within the establishment and its organisational and hierarchical structures. This is particularly important in relation to reporting any welfare concerns.

Responsibility: The understanding and acceptance by staff of their legal obligations is a fundamental ethical requirement. All staff must be committed to observing the laws and regulations relating to animals and to comply with all current codes of practice on animal care. Practical concern for the health and welfare of the animals will always be a priority feature of the animal technician's duties

Agenda staff understand that if they have a welfare concern it **must** be reported and that Agenda has a range of communication channels to enable this to happen. The page opposite shows some of the communication options that are available through the Agenda "Got a Concern?" process.



GOT A QUERY OR CONCERN?



We want to hear from staff and are there to help, no concern is too small or trivial and there are many ways that staff can make contact with us. It is important to us that if something is bothering our staff that they let us know straight away so that we can do something about it. Whether the concerns relate to a placement, an HR issue, occupational health, animal welfare or anything else we encourage and welcome contact.

We actively promote two-way communication and in addition to our monthly head office and Welfare First technician e-newsletters and tech talk web resources, we have developed a range of communication options for staff to use:



Use the confidential and anonymous e-suggestion box in Tech Talk.

E-mail the Agenda contracts team.

Discuss the issue at one of your face-to-face reviews.

Feedback in your post assignment reviews

Send a text to Agenda if you can't call or e-mail.

Use the links in the Welfare First e-newsletter

Out of Hours use the 24/7 helpline.

Feedback at your formal Appraisal

Raise the issue at your weekly call from Agenda.

Speak directly to your client supervisor first.

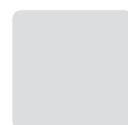
Contact Agenda via our secure Facebook group.

Call the Agenda contracts team at head office.



Agenda Support and Feedback

Whatever the concern, staff can be assured that it will be taken seriously and acted upon. For serious concerns it is important that staff report them promptly, preferably via the facility manager or placement supervisor first as the concern can then be raised in person. Where staff feel unable to do so there are a number of other methods to raise concerns as shown above. Agenda will respond proactively to any concerns raised, will provide full support and advice as required and where necessary will carry out a full investigation and inform the relevant staff member/s of the outcome.



WELFARE FIRST

Hall of Fame



The **WELFARE FIRST** Hall of Fame recognises the success and achievements of the Agenda team. Since Agenda began in 1996 it has supported the continual professional development of its technicians, provided training and educational opportunities, an annual training back account to support vocational and non-vocational development and is a recognised Investor in People.

The Hall of Fame is all about our technicians, supporting their careers in animal technology, recognising their achievements and hopefully inspiring others!





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