

Question 2.2.1 (Weighting – 10%) 1500 word count

Tenderers must provide a statement which demonstrates a clear understanding of the public sector landscape in Scotland and the Framework Public Bodies who will use these services. You must demonstrate you understand the demand Framework Public Bodies have for the services and how public bodies will use those services.

ASA Response

The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Bill aims to create a national legislative framework for public procurement in Scotland.

Public procurement in Scotland is governed by a detailed and complex framework of European law and the Bill is necessarily framed within this existing EU legislation. It is being developed in order that it complements existing EU legislation. The Scottish Government also places the Bill within the wider reform of public procurement in Scotland which has been ongoing since the 2006 publication of the McClelland Report.

The Policy Memorandum sets out the broad intention of the Bill;

“It aims to establish a national legislative framework for public procurement that supports Scotland’s economic growth by delivering social and environmental benefits, supporting innovation and promoting public procurement processes and systems which are transparent, streamlined, standardised, proportionate, fair and business friendly. The Bill will focus on a small number of general duties on contracting authorities regarding their procurement activities and some specific measures aimed at promoting good practice. These measures should help encourage local action within organisations with the aim of building procurement capability and capacity and maximising public procurement’s contributions to wider socio-economic and environmental policy objectives.”

This Policy Memorandum states that the Bill will not be a replacement for existing EU legislation, but rather, in the main, will apply to two separate levels of procurement. The Bill in part will create a legal framework for contracts below the EU thresholds. However, certain elements of the Bill will apply to all public procurement at any level above the thresholds set in the Bill (therefore including contracts above the EU Thresholds).

Part 1 of the Bill defines a range of key concepts, including that the Bill should only apply to those contracting authorities already subject to the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations and provisions on contracts that can be excluded from the scope of the Bill. Part 1 also defines a new level of thresholds to which many of the Bill’s provisions apply.

Part 2 contains a number of general duties on contracting authorities. In addition to setting out that they must comply with EU treaty principles even below the EU thresholds (as is the case at present), contracting authorities must fulfil the terms of a “sustainable procurement duty”. Provision is also made for certain contracting authorities to publish procurement strategies and annual reports.

Part 3 places a number of specific duties on contracting authorities, including

- that all regulated contracts must be published on the Public Contracts Scotland website
- That community benefit requirements must apply to all contracts at or above £4,000,000
- A number of other measures designed to offer benefits to potential bidders in terms of greater transparency, and ensuring that processes are proportionate.

For those regulated contracts with a value between those set out in the Bill, and the EU thresholds, Part 4 of the Bill provides remedies for suppliers, similar (but not identical) to those in place for above-EU threshold procurement at present.

ASA understand that Scottish Procurement is an organisation which has been set up to act in an “umbrella capacity” across the public and third sector bodies to deliver best value across those bodies, fully implementing the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Bill whilst ensuring the delivery of innovative strategies and strong supplier relationships. This will facilitate a collaborative procurement strategy delivering a sustainable procurement platform to reach the objectives of European, UK and Scottish Governments.

This framework provides the opportunity to deliver better labour market involvement which in turn assists in stronger economic growth. In particular, for groups of people facing barriers to entering the jobs market, this strategy will go some way to ensuring that the future of these groups is enhanced by ensuring they are encouraged to engage in the work environment

The second phase of the Public Procurement Reform Programme was set up to accelerate the change required and embed new initiatives and structures to provide benefits from the agreements. The focus on

- Efficiency and collaboration
- Delivering and highlighting real cash savings
- Improving access to public sector contacts (SMEs)
- Making sustainable procurement business as usual

Scottish Procurement and the Public Bodies all have a vested in the above 4 points at a local level but also a at a central Government level to ensure value for money (cost, quality and sustainability) is achieved from the agreements awarded throughout the Country.

Performance Management and Reporting is key to achieving the desired results and this is an approach ASA welcomes. Our company structure has been set up to enable us to deliver, report and manage this agreement at a local level and also a central level for the overarching agreement. The local level management is carried out via Account Teams based in our 4 offices throughout Scotland and the central team based in our head office producing overall reports on spend and performance of the agreements overall.

We anticipate that the demand for this framework will vary greatly between each public body. The framework will operate with maximum 4 suppliers on a tiered/mini competition basis.

Demand will be determined by factors such as sickness, maternity/paternity, holidays, permanent staff shortage, additional projects, service from other agency suppliers on the framework and public policy at the time. It is our responsibility to review demand on an ongoing basis with the public bodies and develop our candidate pools accordingly in order that we provide value for money and sustainable service to each public body. Even within each public body the demand will vary for example, an Infrastructure Project Manager may be required for 6 months or more whereas a Service Desk Support may only be required for a few weeks. It is our responsibility to understand the demands and build resources around demand and peak demands to meet requirements. Having worked with the public bodies across Scotland for the last 4 years we already have an understanding of the sector, budget constraints and ways of working and have developed our processes and Account Teams to ensure we can service public bodies across Scotland.

As a current supplier to the public bodies below as well as many others nationally we already have a strong understanding of the sector and demands within public bodies.

(REDACTED)

Having offices based in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Kirkcaldy means we can easily attract, interview and carry out employer's checks locally and already have an established pool of candidates to meet demands. The Account Teams responsible for this Framework are based locally in each office and are currently recruiting under public sector Frameworks therefore have a strong understanding of public sector needs and processes.

Depending on where the candidates work there may be extra compliance required such as PVG/Disclosure Scotland, BPSS, and other security checks. This is discussed with the public body at the time and temporary workers have all the necessary checks in place prior to being assigned any work with the organisation. Our in-house Compliance Team carries out these checks and audits regularly to ensure they are up to date.

ASA is a Scottish SME, operated by owners who are all active in the business and involved in local communities. We have made it our business to know the Scottish regions intimately, as excellent service delivery relies on strong local knowledge. Decisions are made locally and quickly for the benefit of those organisations with which we trade. ASA operate a professional, ethical and efficient business in order to maintain our reputation and add value both to the economy generally, and local communities in which we operate.

Question 2.3.1 (Weighting – 30%) 1500 words

Tenderers must provide details of how they will deliver the services under this Framework Agreement, including their organisational structure, details of key staff (and their roles) with designated responsibilities for ensuring successful delivery throughout the Framework period, and the minimum experience levels (not CV) and a job specification for the designated Account Manager(s). Tenderers must also provide details of the number of key personnel to be dedicated nationally (to the whole of Scotland), how this number is calculated to be sufficient and set out procedures for how any changes to these key personnel will be managed.

ASA Response

Having worked on similar public sector frameworks for the previous 4 years and similar agreements previously, ASA have built processes and controls easily adaptable to changing market conditions. This strategy is deployed throughout our service, from initial recruitment stage to invoicing, purchase orders and management information providing public bodies cost savings.

Below is a copy of our Organisational structure. The highlighted sections make up the areas which will be directly involved in this framework delivery.

(REDACTED)

Our established Corporate Accounts division will be responsible for service delivery of the framework, supported by our Finance/Payroll, HR, IT and Compliance departments.

Account Management

Key Staff – Contracts Manager, (REDACTED)

(REDACTED) has worked with ASA for (REDACTED) and (REDACTED) remit ranges from responding to the tender to implementation and overseeing the framework during its lifetime. (REDACTED)

Responsibilities include:

- (REDACTED)

Key Staff – (REDACTED)

The Managers have been with ASA for an average of (REDACTED) and managed previous Public Sector Frameworks over the last 4 years. Based in our Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen offices all have extensive recruitment experience running operations, managing teams and ensuring high standard service delivery. They have a wealth of knowledge of the market conditions in the each of their regions and share this with the Account Teams and our clients.

Responsibilities include;

- (REDACTED)

Below is a job spec for the Account Manager:

- 1 Role Title:** Account Manager
- 2 Responsible To:** Managing Director
- 3 Purpose of the Role:**

- ❑ Management of volume accounts, including developing ongoing positive client relationships and attraction of candidates, matching them to jobs within the client accounts.

4 Key Accountabilities:

- ❑ Measurement of the quality of service we deliver,
- ❑ Ensuring all vacancies are actioned and that the database is kept up to date enabling the sourcing of candidates from the Company's database, including the drafting of adverts and other promotional material as appropriate.
- ❑ Ensuring accurate processing of all payroll administration and invoicing is accurate and timeous.
- ❑ To ensure KPIs are set, monitored and achieved, meeting fill rate requirements from clients
- ❑ To ensure team's full adherence to all compliance requirements in line with regulatory bodies.
- ❑ Staff management, development and performance monitoring:
 - Responsible for monitoring account controllers' performance by means of weekly meetings
 - Responsible for continued staff training and development
 - Carry out on-going staff appraisal
- ❑ Quality control issues:
 - Adherence to all processes as outlined in our ISO Quality Manual
 - Maintain and develop professional image of self, team and company.
 - Be first point of contact for any complaints affecting the division; these to be resolved with reference to a Director/HR as appropriate.
- ❑ Communication:
 - Communicate all significant operational issues and progress to Directors
 - Internal communication of all significant operational issues to team

5 Key Outputs:

- ❑ Meet or exceed objectives set

6 Skills, Knowledge, Qualification and Experience:

- ❑ A balance of previous relevant skills & experience; personal attributes; along with a range of educational backgrounds are required for this position
 - ❑ Good leadership skills
 - ❑ Excellent communication skills
 - ❑ Good administration skills
 - ❑ Good customer service skills
 - ❑ Background knowledge in a specific market sector
- ❑ Personal attributes include:
 - ❑ Management/leadership experience
 - ❑ Adaptable
 - ❑ IT literate

Account Team

The Managers are already supported by a team of (REDACTED) to work on this framework. The team has a thorough understanding of the market conditions, candidate availability for particular skills and know the geographical areas. They understand the importance of being able to fulfil our customer requirements and provide continuous improvements throughout the lifetime of the framework.

The team is already recruiting under the public sector frameworks for numerous public bodies such as (REDACTED) therefore have a high understanding of processes, requirements and compliance such as BPSS, Disclosure requirements, types of assignments and have an established candidate pool in place to meet requirements.

The ASA Account Team has responsibility for:

(REDACTED)

Account Team Capacity

The account team's role involves placing and maintaining candidates in their respective positions. The placing of people in the role is more time critical initially and takes the majority of their time. One member of the team has the ability to place (REDACTED) people per day. Once the person is working on assignment, the maintenance follows strict timelines to process wages, deal with attendance and any issues arising. Efficiencies improve as the Account Team build knowledge of the Public Body requirements and processes.

Given ASA's extensive experience in working with the public sector on frameworks of this nature we will effectively manage the framework on a ratio of (REDACTED).

As stated in our Organisation Structure above our Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen offices not only have the Corporate Account Division where this framework will operate from but we have divisions such as Professional Services divisions who are continually recruiting and servicing other clients we work with, (REDACTED).

Changes or additions to key personnel will be managed by ASA's Contract Manager and Account Managers. Should ASA have a staff change the new member of staff will be fully inducted and trained on the framework and the public body requirements. Changes are communicated to the public bodies and a meeting organised to introduce the new member of the ASA Account Team. The ASA Account Manager is responsible for inducting and ensuring service delivery to the public body is not interrupted. Should there be any changes to the ASA Contracts Manager or Account Manager this will be managed by ASA's Managing Director and the public bodies and Scottish Procurement will be advised and informed of ASA's contingency plan.

Question 2.3.2 (Weighting – 20%) 1500 words

Tenderers must provide details of their procedures to ensure compliance with Disclosure Scotland and Baseline Personnel Security Standard – BPSS, (or other standard as may be defined by Framework Public Bodies) including details of the effective management of any third party to be used in this process, and the measures they will take to match security pre-cleared candidates to Framework Public Body requirements. Tenderers must also describe the measures they will take to ensure that temporary/interim workers understand and adhere to confidentiality requirements, particularly in relation to sensitive roles.

ASA Response

Disclosure Scotland

Disclosure Scotland checks are carried out for every temporary worker who comes into contact with vulnerable people, such as children, elderly or the handicapped and also for posts involving particular risk, such as national security, administration of justice or financial services. Disclosure forms are completed and sent (REDACTED).

(REDACTED). All compliance will be carried out by the compliance team providing consistency and quality of service to the Public Bodies. Should this situation ever (REDACTED), ASA will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the organisation on whose behalf we are acting complies with the Code of Practice, and in full accordance with our policy. We will take all reasonable steps to satisfy ourselves that they will handle, use, store, retain and dispose of Disclosure information complying fully with the Code of Practice, and in full accordance with our policy. We would ensure that any body or individual at whose request applications for Disclosures are countersigned, has such a written policy. If necessary, ASA will provide a model policy for that body or individual to use.

ASA complies fully with the Code of Practice issued by Scottish Ministers, in connection with the use of information provided to registered persons, their nominees and other recipients of information by Disclosure Scotland under Part V of the Police Act, for the purposes of assessing applicants' suitability for employment purposes, voluntary positions, licensing and other relevant purposes. We undertake to treat all applicants for positions fairly and not to discriminate unfairly against the subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

We will request a Disclosure only where this is considered proportionate and relevant to the particular position. This will be based on a thorough risk assessment of that position and having considered the relevant legislation which determines whether or not a Disclosure is available to the position in question. Where a Disclosure is deemed necessary for a post or position, all applicants will be made aware at the initial recruitment stage that the position will be subject to a Disclosure and that ASA will request the individual being offered the position to undergo an appropriate Disclosure check.

Where a Disclosure forms part of the recruitment process, ASA encourages all applicants selected for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. Applicants will be requested to complete a criminal records self declaration form. We ask that this information be sent under separate, confidential cover, to a designated person within ASA and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, ASA will only ask about convictions which are defined as "unspent" in terms of that Act, unless the nature of the position is such that we are entitled to ask questions about an individual's entire criminal record.

At interview, or under separate discussion, we undertake to ensure an open and measured discussion on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be considered relevant

for the position concerned. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought, could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure Certificate with the subject of that Disclosure before considering withdrawing a conditional offer of employment. (We are only able to discuss what is contained on a Disclosure Certificate and not what may have been sent under separate cover by a police force)

We ensure that all those in ASA who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of Disclosure information. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to employment of ex-offenders (e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974).

Baseline Personnel Security Standards

Having worked with Scottish Government previously we are aware of the BPSS process and the importance of candidates having this prior to commencing work. The ASA Account Team are aware of the process and which public sector bodies are likely to require BPSS checks. The process is communicated to the Account Team centrally through the ASA Contracts Manager to ensure continuity of knowledge and any changes to the process are implemented and adhered to.

Once the BPSS checks and documents have been completed by the temporary worker and the ASA Account Team, this is logged against the worker's file and sent to the relevant security contact within Scottish Government. Once we receive clearance from the security department only then will the worker be able to commence work. The clearance confirmation and date will be logged against the worker's record to ensure compliance and is visible should the candidate be assigned to another role within a public body requiring BPSS clearance (adhering to BPSS timescales). (REDACTED).

The BPSS and Disclosure guidelines form part of our recruitment process as standard. In order to ensure full compliance and assist with the time taken for (REDACTED) to process applications, chase references from previous employers, check ID's for example passports, birth certificates and eligibility to work in UK.

Matching Security Cleared Candidates

ASA's Account Team is already aware of the types of roles where a disclosure check is required and also which public bodies require BPSS clearance. As part of our implementation plan this will also be discussed with the public body in order that both parties are fully aware of the process and requirements. When the ASA Account Team receives a role, further checks will be made with the public body to reconfirm whether additional recruitment checks are required such as disclosure or BPSS. (REDACTED), ensuring the applicant has the appropriate disclosure clearance prior to commencing work.

Induction

All temporary workers are also inducted by our account team which consists of the following:

- What is expected when working with the relevant Public Body
- ASA absence procedure
- Confidentiality requirements
- Payroll processes
- Basic code of conduct
- Healthy and safety
- Complying with the Public Body policies

All temporary workers will have read to them but also be required to sign a Contract with ASA which forms part of our recruitment process. One of the key clauses in this contract deals with confidentiality. This contract states that they must not at any time divulge to any person, nor use for his or her own or any other person's benefit, any Confidential Information relating to

the Hirer's or the Employment Business' employees, business affairs, transactions or finances.

Should there be additional specific confidentiality requirements for certain roles, ASA will incorporate this as part of the induction process.

Having worked with Scottish Government's Core and Main Agencies and with other public bodies, our Account Teams already have a thorough understanding of the recruitment requirements and have an already established process in place to ensure compliance with the framework. This provides confidence to Public Bodies that the necessary checks are in place and only compliant agency workers are submitted to assignments.

Question 2.3.3 (Weighting – 30%) 2000 words

Tenderers must provide details of their approach to ensure the recruitment, retention and matching of suitable candidates nationally (whole of Scotland). Your response must relate to both rural and urban nationally (whole of Scotland) and demonstrate your proposed presence to meet the requirement and how you will gain and take advantage of knowledge regarding local job markets to meet Framework demand. (Note - “presence” does not necessarily mean a physical full-time office). Your response must also detail how you will ensure consistency of service and delivery across Framework Public Bodies and your procedures for delivery during periods of high demand.

ASA Response

Presence in region

From ASA’s office in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Kirkcaldy, we supply to (REDACTED) and many other organisations across Scotland. Having offices based in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen we can easily attract, interview and carry out employer’s checks locally and already have an established pool of candidates to meet demands. We access other offices for outlying areas should this be required to attract and interview candidates who cannot come into our offices.

The Account Teams and Account Managers (with over (REDACTED) experience working in recruitment in Scotland) are based locally and have a strong understanding of the public bodies, the market conditions and geographical areas. This knowledge allows us to provide strong advice and assistance to public bodies.

Each of our office currently recruit for public and private organisations within the local authority areas:

- **(REDACTED)**

Consistency of Service

Consistency of service is vital. Our Contracts Manager, (REDACTED) ensures service levels are met and compliance to framework is adhered to. Pricing and recruitment processes are standardised, resulting in quality candidates being provided throughout Scotland. Our local Account Team ensures the local knowledge is maintained delivering a strong understanding of that market. A centralised Senior Management team ensures our service delivery is consistent throughout each public body.

Framework requirements are communicated centrally from the Contracts Manager and Account Managers ensuring the Account Teams are aware of any new processes.

To ensure consistency across the framework the ASA Account Team is measured using:

(REDACTED)

Review meetings take place providing a consistent high performance service delivery:

Monthly/Quarterly performance review

Meetings between ASA’s Account Manager and the Public Body further enhance continual improvement. (REDACTED). Management information reports will be discussed and any required actions as a result of the review, taken immediately.

Quarterly or Bi-annual contract review meetings

Quarterly review meetings review management information and key performance indicators identifying areas of development. ASA's Account Manager and Contracts Manager attend these meetings along with Public Body representatives. A strategic overview is gained regarding the service levels and the relationship between the Public Body and ASA.

Periods of High Demand

We understand there may still be times where there is an unexpected peak in requirements. The key to being able to service these unexpected peaks is to have a presence in the region and constant recruitment taking place keeping a pool of candidates to accommodate periods of high demand. We have a large database of candidates looking for work within local areas and having over 4 years' experience working with public bodies across Scotland we have a picture of when peaks in demand are required, for example multiple candidates were required for (REDACTED). We work closely with Public Bodies to ascertain when peak demands are likely to occur and we adapt our recruitment strategies to accommodate these. We are aware of market pay rates, skills shortages and remote areas and have the processes and knowledge in place to be able to recruit workers in the local area.

Please see below a recent Case Study where we recently recruited high numbers of professional staff for (REDACTED).

(REDACTED)

Recruitment Process

Candidates required to complete application forms establishing personal details, previous places of employment, qualifications and declarations of convictions pursuant to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

Evaluated during interview:

- (REDACTED)

Compliance Checks are:

- (REDACTED)

Shortlisting

The following is discussed with the candidate:

- (REDACTED)

Benefits of Using the Candidate Recruitment Process

1. Recruited in same format, providing benchmarks for spotting quality workers.
2. Robust recruitment process highlights quality candidates.
3. Fully compliant e.g. eligibility to work in UK, compliance to framework.
4. Assessed in same way - promotes open and fair competition.
5. Process can be adapted to accommodate specific requirements relevant to framework.

Retention of Agency Workers

ASA understands the importance of getting the right person for the job and retaining the person for as long as they are required. We support and motivate candidates throughout the duration of their assignment. (REDACTED)

ASA has operated across Scotland for over 40 years. We currently supply (REDACTED). Being established in all areas throughout Scotland greatly assists with retention of candidates. ASA can offer regular work, meaning candidates are more likely to stay with us. Retaining candidates provides the public bodies with people who may have been with them previously. Continuity of service reduces training time and cost for public bodies.

Matching System

ASA establishes all necessary information required ensuring we source the correct person for the job. Details such as; position, location of work, hours of work, full job and person specification, additional recruitment checks required, environment and team they will be working within. Length of assignment will be logged within a vacancy record against the relevant public body. (REDACTED). The ASA Account Team always ensure they have the workers permission prior to submitting their details to the public body. When discussing the vacancy with the worker all details will be discussed such as pay rates, prior holiday arrangements, location of work. We establish they are available for the duration of the assignment and the environment is suitable for them.

(REDACTED)

Question 2.3.4 (Weighting – 10%) 1500 words

Tenderers must provide details of how they will carry out pre-employment occupational health checks prior to placing a candidate to an assignment, how they will assess and implement reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants both during the interview process and in assigning individuals to work placements and how they will ensure robust diversity and equality policies are implemented throughout the Framework duration.

ASA Response

Candidate Pre-Employment Health Checks

Where necessary, ASA asks candidates to complete (REDACTED) specific to role prior to submission of their details to the public body. ASA (REDACTED) who would investigate any concerns that were highlighted on (REDACTED). The results of the more detailed investigation is taken into consideration when assigning the individual to work. Any reasonable adjustments which may be required will be discussed with the public body at the time.

(REDACTED). ASA would also be happy for the public body to carry out their own assessments if the candidate is already working on their premises in-line with their own health & safety requirements.

Should the public body have specific health check requirements, we tailor this questionnaire accordingly. Further, should the public body require candidates to undertake a physical assessment, (REDACTED).

We recognise that information relating to an individual's health condition is sensitive personal data. As such, we fully explain to the worker why we need this information, what it will be used for and who we will share this information with, in line with legislative requirements (REDACTED).

We would be happy to use any existing public body health check forms as part of our service delivery should you feel this would be more efficient to do so and may indeed be required to improve consistency of across the framework.

Diversity and Equality

ASA has a robust equal opportunities policy in place forming part of our ISO 9001:2008 procedure. (REDACTED).

ASA avoids unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy. Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job, for both internal ASA roles and roles which are being advertised on behalf of the public bodies.

Candidates will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for workers with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

(REDACTED) obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations. ASA will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

ASA cannot lawfully discriminate in the selection of employees for recruitment, but may use appropriate lawful methods, including lawful positive action, to address the under-representation of any groups which are identified as being underrepresented in particular types of job.

ASA will not discriminate unlawfully against public bodies using or seeking to use facilities or services provided by ASA.

(REDACTED)

Question 2.3.5 (Weighting – 10%) 1500 words

Tenderers must provide details of their proposals to manage temporary/interim worker sickness absence and absenteeism, the process for replacement of temporary/interim workers where they are deemed unsuitable for the role, and how they will ensure that the Framework Public Body is protected from employment relationship claims/employment law risks.

ASA Response

Managing Temporary/Interim Workers

(REDACTED) In the unlikely event that the worker is unable to attend, we have a bank of workers on standby ready to undertake the assignment.

ASA operates an early warning system by contacting the relevant person at the public body at the commencement of the assignment to confirm that the agency worker has arrived for work. The Line Manager at the public body is provided with contact details for the ASA Account Team in order that should there be any issue relating to the absence of non-attendance of a worker, they notify us immediately and ASA can action this and provide a replacement.

If a worker proves to be unreliable on a consistent basis, (REDACTED).

Full explanation is provided to workers from the outset that any absences will be closely monitored and that absence due to sickness must be supported by relevant documentation.

ASA takes every possible step to ensure that the disruption to the Line Manager is minimised by the non-attendance of a worker. ASA has a pool of workers available to utilise should this be necessary and we can replace the worker with someone who has had previous experience of the particular office or indeed the role. (REDACTED).

Employment Relationship

All workers will be made aware that under no circumstances will they be deemed as employees of the public body.

(REDACTED)

During the recruitment and induction process ASA explains to the temporary/interim worker the process for reporting absences, holidays, sickness and any issues will be dealt with by ASA and not the public body. ASA will inform the hiring manager at the public body that all performance related issues regarding a temporary/interim worker will be dealt with by ASA (REDACTED). The public body is protected at all times from employment relationships/employment law risks. This will also be explained in the Day 1 document which is provided to Hiring Managers at the commencement of an assignment.

Question 2.4.1 (Weighting – 40%) 1500 words

Tenderers must describe their management processes and agreed ways of working to maintain a consistently high service level. Your response should cover, but not be limited to, performance monitoring, managing communications, problem solving and dispute resolution, achieving value for money in relation to your staff (including supply chain sub-contractors or consortia members, where appropriate) and internal and external stakeholders.

ASA Response

ASA Account Teams focus on fill rates, quality and longevity of temporary/interim workers, invoice accuracy and new ways to improve service delivery. We understand the importance of

fulfilling requirements and providing continuous improvement throughout the lifetime of the framework. The Account Teams are based at our Edinburgh, Glasgow, Kirkcaldy and Aberdeen offices and currently operate under public sector frameworks for public bodies such as (REDACTED) and therefore have a tried and tested structure, processes, candidate pool, and local knowledge, already in place.

Performance Monitoring

ASA Account Teams will establish the preferred way of working on the framework and ensure this is operated incorporating our service level agreement which then forms part of review meetings and performance measurements.

The dedicated ASA Account Team performance is measure using:

(REDACTED)

The value ASA's Accounts Team add to service delivery is immense as by focussing on the performance criteria above, they ensure that the right candidate is in the right place, at the right time. These candidates, wherever possible will have been there before so save time in induction and training. It is also imperative that when candidates work for us, they must be paid correctly, first time, every time or they will not present for work. (REDACTED).

Legislation surrounding temporary/interim work has moved substantially in recent years. ASA's systems are constantly upgraded ensuring total compliance therefore delivering peace of mind to public bodies.

Managing Communications

Communication is key to managing customer relationships. Communication is on 2 levels, directly with the hiring manager and at strategic levels involving Procurement, Compliance and HR.

To deliver high quality communication we recommend;

- (REDACTED)

Each public body is introduced to key members of the Account Team to ensure they are aware of who is looking after them and who to contact as they require. Generic email addresses will be set and all communication is sent to the entire Account Team this negates any loss in communications should one of the Account Team be on holiday.

Management Processes

Having worked on similar frameworks ASA recognises the need for efficient and cost effective transaction processes. The time consuming elements in using services such as this, is the order processing, managing orders and receiving management information. To this end ASA has developed a secure on-line portal (REDACTED) a central point to operate the framework. (REDACTED). This system is already in operation within (REDACTED). We have received excellent feedback in terms of its functionality and improvements this has made to the framework by reducing workload to public bodies.

Vacancy Management

(REDACTED)

Previous Workers

(REDACTED)

Timesheets

(REDACTED) enables Hiring Managers to view timesheets for their area. Authorisation is electronic, reducing time and omitting paper copy timesheets. This is a major time saver for all public bodies.

Management Information

A suite of MI reports are available through (REDACTED). These are beneficial for raising PO's, matching hours worked, budget control, performance monitoring and reason for order.

Reports available:

- (REDACTED)

Invoicing

Our systems are flexible offering bespoke invoice processes. Invoices are backed up by an on-line timesheet for reference. Our knowledge of working with the public sector has delivered invoice efficiencies across frameworks. (REDACTED). ASA accepts payment by electronic transfer and works with public bodies to achieve payment schedules set.

Problem Solving

(REDACTED)

ASA takes any issue seriously. The management of complaints is a key performance indicator on all our contracts. They are reviewed at quarterly meetings with the Public Bodies and learning outcomes discussed and applied.

- (REDACTED)

Value for money

- (REDACTED)

Question 2.4.2 (Weighting – 40%) 2000 words

Tenderers must provide a statement to clearly demonstrate their proposals for regular and effective communication with Framework Public Bodies throughout the Framework duration, including reporting mechanisms for the provision of management information, out of hours procedures, complaints management (including escalation), and order cancellation processes.

ASA Response

Communication

In managing customer relationships. Communication is on 2 levels, directly with the hiring manager and at strategic levels involving Procurement, Compliance and HR ensuring we provide quality agency workers and assist public bodies to achieve overall goals.

To deliver high quality communication we recommend;

- (REDACTED)

Each public body is introduced to key members of the Account Team to ensure they are aware of who is looking after them and who to contact as they require. Generic email addresses will be set and all communication is sent to the entire Account Team this negates any loss in communications should one of the Account Team be on holiday.

Having a dedicated Account Team assigned to this framework not only assists greatly with communication but also ensures the team are fully aware of public bodies requirements, recruitment checks and procedures therefore delivery an efficient and high level service.

Service Levels

Set and agreed at the commencement of the framework forming the basis of monitoring and reporting the performance of the framework. Adapted as the agreement developments including any improvements or changes in processes.

Audits – (REDACTED)

Management Reporting

Having worked on similar frameworks ASA recognises the need for efficient and cost effective transaction processes. The time consuming elements in using services such as this, is the order processing, managing orders and receiving management information. To this end ASA has developed a secure on-line portal (eCruit), accessible 24/7 providing a central point to operate the framework. (REDACTED). This system is already in operation within (REDACTED). We have received excellent feedback in terms of its functionality and improvements this has made to the framework by reducing workload to public bodies.

A suite of management information reports are available through (REDACTED). These are beneficial for raising PO's matching hours worked, budget control, performance monitoring and reason for use of worker.

The reports we provide are:

(REDACTED)

Fill Rate

Informs on vacancies ASA has received and filled, (REDACTED). This report can be monthly / quarterly / bi-annually.

Planned v's Unplanned Fill Rate

This details the fill rate i.e (REDACTED) This allows you to see our performance against requirements that are given in advance as opposed to last minute requirements. (REDACTED). This report can be monthly / quarterly / bi-annually.

ASA Contracts Manager will be responsible for ensuring the standard Monthly/Quarterly MI returns are provided on time and accurately to Scottish Procurement and the Public Bodies in-line with service level agreements.

Out of Hours

ASA's Account Teams are available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Our core hours are 8.00am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday and out of hour's mobile numbers are used to contact the Account Team who have access to our system remotely to accept bookings and email contact to conclude issues and complete orders. The out of hour's service will be dealt with specifically by members of the local Account Teams rather than a national call centre. This is important as they have strong local knowledge and can get agency workers to the public body efficiently, providing information on transport options and directions during out of hours periods. Providing local cover means all members of staff who are providing the out of hours service are fully aware of specific local requirements. They know the agency workers and know the framework requirements. This will reduce no shows and increase continuity of service.

Escalation Process

Complaints are logged and managed according to ASA's ISO9001 Procedure QP-06. They are managed at specific levels depending on the severity of the complaint. ASA has a non compliance system and an escalation process in operation.

Non Compliance

(REDACTED)

Escalation Process

If escalation is required, our escalation procedure is deployed. (REDACTED).

Stage 1

Complaint reported/logged with Contracts Manager

Contracts Manager discusses with Account Manager the complaint raised. A decision is made as to whether this can be resolved at ASA Account team level.

If yes, action is taken and issue is resolved. If not, Contracts Manager refers to Stage 2 and informs HR Manager.

Once concluded, outcome is fed back to public body.

Stage 2

HR Manager

Contracts Manager discusses issue with HR Manager. Investigation is carried out assessing whether the issue can be resolved at this level. We would utilise informal HR procedures/Interviews before any official disciplinary processes are deployed. If the issue can be resolved via this route then informal procedures are utilised and problem is resolved. Otherwise, the complaint is raised with ASA Account Director.

Once concluded, outcome is fed back to the public body.

Stage 3

Account Director

HR discusses issue with ASA Account Director and a plan to deploy official HR procedures is set. Account Director advises the public body re plan of action with agreed timescales to conclude the issue. HR Manages this process.

Stage 4

HR Manager/Operations Director

HR Manager advises Account Director of the procedural outcome. Account Director discusses with the public body and once completed, advises ASA Account Managers of actions taken to provide lessons learned.

Stage 5

Account Director

ASA Account Director informs ASA Operational Executive of the situation and actions taken. Summary is provided to ASA Board Members. ASA Board of Directors agrees a timescale for review to ensure any actions set are implemented in order that the complaint does not arise again.

Stage 6

Account Director/Board of Directors

New procedure is audited to establish it is active and fully implemented. Public Body is informed the changes are successful by Account Director and changes now enter the standard monitoring and review process. This completes the escalation procedure.

ASA takes any complaint seriously and the management of complaints is a key performance indicator in all our contracts. They are reviewed at quarterly meetings and learning outcomes discussed and applied.

By recruiting high calibre temporary workers we minimise the volume of non compliances. This ultimately reduces complaints, reducing workload.

- (REDACTED)

Order cancellation process

We understand that very occasionally circumstances change which could causes an order to be cancelled before the worker starts. Unfortunately this is a difficult situation which can affect the reputations of both the public body and the agency, particularly if the worker has turned down work elsewhere and faces being out of work for a period of time. Actions that will need to be undertaken include:-

- Timely, formal notification of the cancellation from the public body to ASA (ideally including an explanation in order that we can fully appraise the worker)
- Establish whether the situation is a delay or complete cancellation – if it is merely a delay, ASA will try and secure the workers commitment to start on the revised date
- If the worker is happy to delay the start date, a revised contract will be issued detailing new start date
- (REDACTED)
- Should the public body have revised the start date and the original worker is unable (REDACTED)
- Management reports will be updated to show cancellation times and reasons by each public body - this is used for analyses between ASA, the public body and Scottish Procurement and action plans will be discussed and implemented to improve performance and cost effectiveness of the framework.
- (REDACTED)
- Highlight any recurring incident details in scheduled report to Scottish Procurement.

Question 2.4.3 (Weighting – 20%) 1500 words

Tenderers must provide a mobilisation plan including key team members and stakeholders roles and responsibilities, tasks for completion by your staff, key dates and deadlines, proposals for marketing the new Framework nationally (whole of Scotland) in both rural and urban areas. The mobilisation plan must clearly describe how they will ensure by the commencement date, sufficient numbers of suitably qualified candidates to meet order fulfilment rates for the Framework and how you will ensure the authenticity of candidate qualifications and manage this on an on-going basis.

ASA Response

Once framework award is announced, ASA works Scottish Procurement and Public Bodies putting in place the mobilisation plan and a commencement date to work to.

The structure below is delivered in a way which suits the framework organisations. This will be flexible to either meet individual stakeholders or presented in a “town hall” environment when representative groups of stakeholders are present.

Where possible, we will meet related groups with common interests maximising efficiency for all concerned.

- (REDACTED)

This framework will be run from our Edinburgh, Glasgow, Kirkcaldy and Aberdeen offices.

Marketing the Framework

The following marketing process is put in place to assist with the uptake of the framework and to realise cost savings to public bodies.

- (REDACTED)
- Attendance at supplier events set up by Scottish Procurement or Public Bodies.

ASA has a vested interest in sharing with all eligible users of this Framework, the value for money it can deliver, the efficiencies, the success of collaborative working and operating a less complex interface between all parties.

Candidate Provision

Having offices based in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Kirkcaldy means we can easily attract, interview and carry out employer’s checks locally and already have an established pool of candidates to meet demands. The Account Teams are currently recruiting under public sector Frameworks therefore have a strong understanding of public sector needs and processes.

Below is a list of public bodies we have supplied to over the last 4 years.

- (REDACTED)

ASA operates in the IT market across Scotland, below are examples of placements made:

- (REDACTED)

ASA works closely with clients so we are aware of demands and trends in requirements, e.g. there may be a larger requirement for temporary staff due to holiday year end, a project such as

(REDACTED) or a traditionally busy time of year. ASA reports on temporary/interim worker usage and trends to assist our clients to analyse why temporary workers are required, allowing them to look at internal headcount structures avoiding unnecessary spend.

We are continually recruiting to meet our client's requirements. Due to the nature of temporary/interim work there is a constant turnover of candidates we must ensure we replenish and grow our pool to service client requirements to cover increase in workload.

To meet demand (REDACTED). This speeds up the process for registering workers with ASA and also ensures candidates are recruited in-line with framework requirements.

Please see below the numbers of IT candidates we currently have available for this framework:

Interim IT Staff

- (REDACTED)

Authenticity of Qualifications

During the interview process with each potential worker, questioning identifies the worker's knowledge of the subject, the body who awarded the qualification and the length of time it has taken to gain the qualification, all factors in determining the authenticity.

Workers must provide original certificates of qualifications gained. Certificates are scanned and saved in the worker's file for future reference along with expiry dates requiring follow-up.

ASA checks online, calls or writes to the awarding body verifying authenticity of qualifications. Reference numbers and confirmations are recorded on the recruitment database. Examples of services we will utilise include:

- (REDACTED)

All qualification and renewal dates are logged on our database. When a role is requesting a worker with specific qualifications the ASA Account Team are able (REDACTED). This minimises the time taken to search for workers to fill a role, ensures they have the correct criteria enabling them to do the job. This results in a quicker response time to the public body. Strict quality control procedures are in place to ensure all data is rigorously checked for accuracy.

(REDACTED)

Question 2.5.1 (Weighting - 5%) 1500 words

Tenderers must provide details of how they will deliver continuous improvement throughout the duration of the Framework. Your response must describe details of any measures to achieve greater efficiencies, simplify processes, and minimise errors and generally improve quality of service for the Framework duration.

ASA Response

Service delivery is key to the success of the framework. It is important to continually review our service as the framework develops. ASA uses the following improvement cycle process.

(REDACTED)

Recruitment Trends

The key added value benefit a supplier can add is to reduce the cost and administration in the delivery of the service we are contracted to undertake. (REDACTED)

Reporting systems provide information on general recruitment, (REDACTED) If this is happening we report our findings in our regular review meetings with the client.

(REDACTED)

Performance Management

Performance management is key to the success of any agreement. We further enhance performance management via the implementation of the following.

Relationship Management:

- Accessibility & responsiveness of Account Managers - providing easy access to senior staff members at ASA who have the authority to implement change, make decisions on behalf of organisations speeding up the process
- Accuracy, content & timeliness of communication
- All complaints are handled centrally through our Contracts Manager and are recorded and analysed for any trends to improve our service. This is discussed at review meetings and both parties have the most up to date information to act upon.
- Feedback information is under constant review to ensure what and how we provide information is of benefit to our customer.

Strategic Value:

- Continuous Improvement and Best Value in Service Provision
- Benchmarking & Identification of Best Practice
- Improved Labour Market Participation
- Sharing of Strategic Market Knowledge

Capability and Quality:

- Legislative compliance – (REDACTED)
- Efficiency of candidate conversion
- Service delivery within project timelines

Financial Value:

- Implementation of cost reduction initiatives e.g. (REDACTED)
- Financial spend analysis created and used to improve efficiencies

The above process will test the trust and openness of all parties involved. For the process to be operating properly some subject matters may be uncomfortable to discuss. (REDACTED)

Simplifying and Effective Transaction Processes.

Having worked on frameworks previously ASA recognises the need for efficient and cost effective transaction processes. The time consuming elements for public bodies in using services such as this, is within the order processing, managing orders and receiving management information. (REDACTED) providing a central point to operate the framework. (REDACTED). This system is already in operation within (REDACTED). We have received excellent feedback regarding functionality and improvements this has made to the current framework, reducing workload to public bodies.

Vacancy Management

(REDACTED)

Previous Workers

(REDACTED)

Timesheets

Enables Hiring Managers to view timesheets for their area. Electronic authorisation reduces time and effort completing and sending paper copy timesheets.

Management Information

A suite of management information reports are available through (REDACTED). These are beneficial for raising PO's to match hours worked, budget control, performance monitoring and reason for use of worker.

The reports available are:

- (REDACTED)

Invoicing

Our systems are flexible and offer bespoke invoice processes. Invoices are backed up by an on-line timesheet for reference. (REDACTED).

Continuous Improvement Suggestions

- (REDACTED)

We understand good service delivery is not just about placing staff, its an overall consultancy service from supplying staff, identifying efficiencies, advising on trends and legislation, assisting with analysing usage, providing valuable MI, assisting communities with our CSR projects and assisting organisations to meeting goals and strategies.

Question 2.6.1 (Weighting 10%) 2000 Words

Tenderers should describe their procedures for storing, retaining and transmitting data between the Contractor, the Framework Public Bodies (& sub-contractors where applicable) to ensure compliance with the Statement of Requirements (Schedule 1) & to ensure continuity of service and protection against cyber-attacks. Answers should include (as a minimum):

- Details of where data will be stored & how it will be secured including processes, software & standards & must include measures put in place with sub-contractors (where applicable);
- Details of how data will be securely transmitted between the Framework Public Body, the Contractor (& sub-contractors where applicable) including processes, software & standards;
- Details of how the data will be secured at rest (end point security) both at the Contractor's premises (& their sub-contractors premises where applicable);
- Details of processes followed including those for assessing future risks;
- Testing of Disaster Recovery policies & procedures, including the dates, duration and frequency;
- Methods for the back-up & continuity to deliver services should an incident occur including manpower & access to equipment;
- Methods & processes in place to mitigate against cyber-attack & crime using online technologies including processes, software & standards;
- Destruction policies & processes including policies, processes & software. This should include the measures put in place with sub-contractors where applicable;
- Tenderers should also provide details of any standards applicable in this area (e.g. ISO 27001, ISO 22301, ISO/IEC 20000, Cyber Essentials/Cyber Essentials Plus or their equivalents);

If the Tenderer does not currently hold certifications they should advise of any plans they have for achieving any relevant certifications.

Tenderers should refer to the UK Governments Cyber Essentials Scheme and consider the information included within the scheme when providing their response to this section.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cyber-essentials-scheme-overview>

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00489206.pdf>

Please note your response to this question is restricted to a maximum word limit of 2000 words. Tenderers should note that any words exceeding the 2000 limit will not be considered for evaluation purposes.

Tenderers must achieve a moderated average score of "2" or more against this question. Tenderers who fail to achieve a moderated average score of "2" or more against this question will not have their tender considered further and will not proceed to the Price/Quality ratio calculation.

ASA's Response

(REDACTED)

Question 2.7.1 (Weighting 5%) 1500 words

The Public Sector in Scotland is committed to the delivery of high quality public services, and recognises that this is critically dependent on a workforce that is well-rewarded, well-motivated, well-led, has access to appropriate opportunities for training and skills development, are diverse and is engaged in decision making. These factors are also important for workforce recruitment and retention, and thus continuity of service. Public Bodies in Scotland are adopting fair work practices, which include a fair and equal pay policy that includes a commitment to supporting the Living Wage, including, for example being a Living Wage Accredited Employer; clear managerial responsibility to nurture talent and help individuals fulfil their potential, including for example, a strong commitment to Modern Apprenticeships and the development of Scotland's young workforce; promoting equality of opportunity and developing a workforce which reflects the population of Scotland in terms of characteristics such as age, gender, religion or belief, race, sexual orientation and disability; support for learning and development; stability of employment and hours of work, and avoiding exploitative employment practices, including for example no inappropriate use of zero-hours contracts; flexible working (including for example practices such as flexi-time and career breaks) and support for family friendly working and wider work life balance; support progressive workforce engagement, for example Trade Union recognition and representation where possible, otherwise alternative arrangements to give staff an effective voice.

In order to ensure the highest standards of service quality in this Framework Agreement we expect contractors to take a similarly positive approach to fair work practices as part of a fair and equitable employment and reward package.

Tenderers must describe how they will commit to fair work practices for workers (including any agency, sub-contractor workers) engaged in the delivery of this Framework. Responses need not be constrained to, or be reflective of any of examples given above. However, good answers will reassure evaluators that your company takes a positive approach to rewarding staff at a level that helps tackle inequality (e.g. through a commitment to paying at least the Living Wage); improves the wider diversity of your staff; provide skills and training, and opportunities to use skills which help staff fulfil their potential; avoids exploitative employment practices (e.g. in relation to matters such as the inappropriate use of zero-hours contracts); takes the engagement and empowerment of staff engaged on this contract seriously, including having arrangements in place to ensure trade union representation where possible; otherwise alternative arrangements to give staff an effective voice and that your company will demonstrate organisational integrity with regards to the delivery of those policies. This reassurance can include a variety of practices which demonstrate your approach to fair work and should be tangible and measurable examples that can be monitored and reported during contract management procedures.

ASA Response

Living Wage

ASA is an accredited Living Wage Service Provider. The Living Wage Foundation understands that service providers cannot stipulate to pay the Living Wage for all contracts

they operate as some public and private sector organisations prefer not to pay living wage. (REDACTED).

The link below provides further explanation and confirms ASA's accreditation.

<https://www.livingwage.org.uk/recognised-service-providers>

ASA pays Living Wage to all our internal staff and our internal staff also have a permanent contract of employment providing stability and agreed hours of work.

Flexible Working

ASA's internal staff have flexibility to work varying hours and hours vary across the organisation. Currently the flexible hours of work accommodate individuals with family commitments, those wishing to condense hours of work to allow time off during the week for various commitments and ad-hoc requests for time off to complete studies, attend appointments.

We have also set up secure remote access to accommodate times when it is easier for individuals to work from home rather than in the office.

(REDACTED)

Staff Development and Engagement

ASA prides itself on developing staff to fulfil their potential. ASA's internal HR Manager, reports directly to our Managing Director. She drives the process to ensure the development of staff. (REDACTED)

New employees to ASA are appraised by their Line Manager and the HR Manager at months 3 and 6 ensuring they receive the knowledge, skills and support required in their new role.

In March 2018 ASA undertook a company feedback project initiated by HR, supported by our MD and driven by an independent external party (The Great Place to Work Institute).

<http://www.greatplacetowork.co.uk>.

Please see below the survey feedback received from Great Places to Work:

- 80% Response Rate to Survey – 10% above Great Places to Work average response rate.
- 71% Trust Index – 14 points above UK National Average
- 78% Engagement – 17 points above UK National Average
- 64% Wellbeing - 11 points above UK National Average
- 93% Diversity – 25 points above UK National Average

ASA has since put a project team in place to further enhance our people strategy acting upon the feedback gained from the survey.

ASA invests heavily providing Agency Staff free training and refresher courses to ensure they have the most up to date skills required to gain employment and to develop new skills and progress their careers.

Diversity

Our diversity policy plays an important role in our core business. We consider diversity across the business, internally and externally (our temporary workers). Whether recruiting agency workers or internal staff, our diversity policy forms part of the induction training delivered by our HR Manager and is reviewed at our Operational Executive Meetings.

- (REDACTED)

Equal Pay

Our latest Gender Pay Gap information which includes ASA internal staff and agency workers, shows a pay (REDACTED).

These stats above remain under constant review bi-annually.

Wage payment methods are continually under scrutiny. ASA has a tight policy on how we pay agency staff, managed by our internal Finance Director. ASA works hard with clients to have agency staff paid via PAYE if IR35 applies and if individual operates under Ltd Company where IR35 does not apply they are engaged on an intermediaries contract in-line with REC guidelines, not via a third party Umbrella organisation. This provides a fair and transparent pay process.

All internal ASA staff are paid PAYE.

ASA's Diversity policy is set out below

ASA International Ltd is committed to encouraging equality and diversity among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and our customers, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

The organisation - in providing goods and/or services and/or facilities - is also committed against unlawful discrimination of customers or the public

The policy's purpose is to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time
- not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation
- Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

The organisation commits to:

- encourage equality and diversity in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense
- create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued
- This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination

- All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public
- take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence

- make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation
- decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act)
- review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law
- monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality and diversity, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality policy
- Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality policy, and any sporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues

Use of the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

Question 2.8.1 (Weighting 0% - Not Scored) 1500 Words

Tenderers must confirm that, where appropriate, they will support the Scottish Ministers policies on Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility in delivering the services required.

Please provide a statement which explains your sustainability policy and demonstrates how you will proactively support the delivery of the Framework Public Body(s) respective Sustainability (Social and Ethical) and Environmental Policies. This should include any measures you have in place to ensure, monitor and report sustainability across your supply chain.

Further details on Scottish Government's Sustainable Procurement Policy are available at:

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/03/8410/3> and

<https://www.procurementjourney.scot/route-3/route-3-develop-strategy-profiling-commodity-sustainable-procurement>

ASA Response

ASA is aware the Scottish Government has set itself a clear purpose. "To focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth."

ASA support this purpose and the requirement to deliver our services in a way which aligns our business and the services we provide with this purpose. We must deliver this in an environmentally friendly way.

Our organisation exists by operating in markets presenting and experiencing skills shortages. By providing people work in roles where skills are hard to find, we add to the productivity of the country. Providing opportunities, training and support to introduce people to these markets, allows the person who has perhaps been inactive or never considered such career options, an opportunity to better their lives and those of their families.

ASA's activities add value to the procurement spend of the local authorities. We create the opportunity for candidates to become or continue to be economically active. In so doing, we are delivering on Scotland's Economic Strategy. ASA feel our core activity, the supply of labour to contracts throughout the nation, aligns itself naturally with the sustainable procurement model of the Scottish Ministers.

ASA are an office based provider of services and do not manufacture products resulting in increased carbon deposits or hazardous materials. Nor do we require scarce or innovative materials in the delivery of our activities. Despite this we must ensure that at all times we have a focus on how we pass the sustainability test in the delivery of our services.

Carbon/Energy consumption

We minimise consumption by:

Encouraging staff to walk or use public transport to visit any of our client's premises, monitored by management team explaining the importance of using public transport, it also monitored via expense claims.

When booking candidates into an assignment/arranging interviews we provide bus routes and timetable information to candidates on the most efficient way to get to Client's premises.

When matching candidates we carry out postcode searches so we can identify candidates who live close to the client.

ASA offices are situated near main train routes, within 15 minutes' walk from train stations, staff are encouraged to travel by train if commuting between offices and train tickets are available in our offices for ease of use, to promote use of public transport.

Use of conference calling or webinars are encouraged to avoid unnecessary travel. Where possible, multiple meetings are arranged and held on the same day to avoid duplication of travel for another meeting at the same location on a different day.

Vehicle emissions

ASA has low emission pool cars at each of our offices for staff to use when visiting clients premises, if public transport is not an option. Cars are available at each of our offices for staff to book as required, a log book is completed for each journey and information is analysed and where necessary flagged to Management team.

Waste Production and Prevention

Where it is efficient to do so we extend the life of products/materials when possible but consider first the benefit of more efficient, new IT equipment as part of our purchasing strategy. Our old IT equipment is removed by an organisation who break the items into their component parts to be recycled.

We review paper spend across our business each year and target a maximum spend in each year to 2020 of 22% less than the previous years. This annual spend reduction will bring us to a 90% reduction, leaving a max spend in 2020 of 10%.

LED lighting has been installed in all our offices and we can track energy expenditure via our metered usage as reported via our utility bills. In previous years ASA used approx. 176159 units of electricity and with the introduction of efficiencies we now use approx. 141308 on annual basis providing a savings of 20% on electricity usage

In addition metered water usage can be assessed in the same way.

Employment – skills and training

Where it is possible for us to do so we will ask clients to accept people low on the skills required for the roles we are filling. We work with individuals with positive outcome on disclosures checks to get them into suitable work and return to economic activity.

Fair work – workforce matters

We are a Living Wage Service Provider and do not operate any unfair working practices, evidenced by our registration with the Gangmasters Licencing Programme and Care Inspectorate and recent project working with the organisation Great Places to Work.

Fairly and ethically traded

ASA has no exploitation of our worker rights and conditions. We ensure our supply chain mirrors this stance. We are open in our pricing and terms with our customers and workers. ASA recognise this area as the area with highest risk of bad practice in our market and wish to set the standards to which others in our industry aspire.

Physical/mental health and wellbeing

ASA's service provides the individual worker with a means of earning income which enhances their position in life and that of those around them. We feel this provides purpose and pride for the individual and it has a positive impact.

Security and crime impacts

Our industry is known for and is open to risk from gangmaster exploitation. ASA became a member of the Gangmaster licencing organisation as soon as it was formed and will remain a member.

Security and crime improvement

By creating work opportunities for those who may have strayed into the world of crime, we can provide income and give the opportunity for them to return to economic activity, removing barriers to entering the world of work we align our services with that of the Government

Reducing underemployment

Many people working for ASA have at some point been in receipt of benefits. Some still are and are working to increase their hours worked per week. Our training and efforts to get them work helps self-confidence and ultimately we work to get them off benefits and into full employment. Many people during the year, move from working with us to permanent employment with our clients.

Reducing the proportion of employees earning less than the Living Wage

Through our accreditation as a Living Wage Service Provider we push the current living wage as the minimum to be paid. Our tenders are priced to cover the payment of wages at the living wage level.

Reducing the pay gap

ASA's gender pay gaps are – (REDACTED). We search for the right person with the right skills/talent and attitude. These are the key qualities we look for.

Increase the proportion of young people in learning, training or work

We continually assess our workforce diversity to ensure we are balanced in our approach. We work with Education establishments to engage those moving into the workplace. Visiting these organisations, presenting to people studying Care/Hospitality/Engineering/Finance is key for the future. We operate CV writing, job interviewing and presentation skills courses which will provide lifelong benefit to those having attended.

Improving Scotland's Reputation

By providing the individuals with a means of earning income which enhances their position in life and that of those around them, improving the economy. Scotland's image will be improved and come to be known as a progressive and fair country to live. This is a long term strategy and will be achieved by providing fair pay, equality, good working conditions and career enhancement to the population of Scotland.

Improve the skill profile of the population

Training provision by ASA allows candidates to enter the world of work with an enhanced suite of skills. This is relevant for those coming to the workplace for the first time having a long career ahead of them. It could be that they are either returning to work or wishing a change of occupation. Whatever the situation, ASA welcome them, provide training and supply work for them to continue their development.

Improve support for people with care needs

Although not related to this framework ASA has a care division supporting the Government strategy in improving support for people with care needs. We spend over £100,000 per annum on training in our organisation, purely focussed on Care. This is done in order that we have people working in this market who are going to represent us and themselves well but ultimately so that the service provider the candidate is working with has the best possible experience during their later years.

Question 2.9.1 (Weighting 0% - Not Scored) 1500 words

The Scottish Government is committed to contributing to the social, economic & environmental well-being of the people of Scotland. The Government has five objectives that underpin its core purpose - to create a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.

Tenderers must provide details of their proposals to support Scottish Procurement to meet SG overall community benefits policy through this Framework Agreement.

Accordingly, while the following community benefit objectives will not be evaluated as part of the tender process, the successful contractor will be expected to consider the following Community Benefit themes in the delivery of their services, for example:

- targeted recruitment & and training for “disadvantaged” persons unemployed for over 6 months;
- generate employment and training opportunities for priority groups;
- up-skill the existing workforce;
- equality and diversity initiatives;
- make any proposed sub-contracting opportunities available to SMEs, the third sector and supported businesses;
- build capacity in community organisations.

ASA Response

ASA is aware of and has read the draft Culture Strategy for Scotland document (June 18). We support this commitment to long term strategy to improve our country. We see that if public money is being spent, it ought to be done in a way which creates actions for the greater good, improving culture and communities as we go.

ASA have a small part to play in this ambitious plan. Our activities create income and careers, freeing families from a history of economic inactivity. They improve their present lives and the lives of future generations. We therefore assist in the improvement of a positive culture, improving health & wellbeing, economic activity, education (via training) and reducing inequality as a living wage service provider.

We provide other supplementary benefits which also assist in the improvement of our country.

Improving Scotland’s Reputation

Providing the individuals with a means of earning income enhances their position in life and that of those around them, improving the economy. Scotland’s image improves and comes to be known as a progressive and fair country to live. This long term strategy will be achieved by providing fair pay, equality, good working conditions and career enhancement to the population of Scotland.

Improve the skill profile of the population

Training provision by ASA allows candidates to enter the world of work with an enhanced suite of skills. This is relevant for those coming to the workplace for the first time having a long career ahead of them. It could be that they are either returning to work or wishing a change of occupation. Whatever the situation, ASA welcomes them, provide training and supply work for them to continue their development.

Reduce underemployment

Many people working for ASA have at some point been in receipt of benefits. Some still are and are working to increase their hours worked per week. Our training and efforts to get them work helps self-confidence and ultimately we work to get them off benefits and into full employment. Many people during the year, move from working with us to permanent employment with our clients.

Reduce the proportion of employees earning less than the Living Wage

Through our accreditation as a Living Wage Service Provider we push the current living wage as the minimum to be paid. Our tenders are priced to cover the payment of wages at the living wage level.

Reduce the pay gap

ASA's gender pay gaps are – (REDACTED). We search for the right person with the right skills/talent and attitude. These are the key qualities we look for.

Increase the proportion of young people in learning, training or work

We continually assess our workforce diversity to ensure we are balanced in our approach. We work with Education establishments to engage those moving into the workplace. Visiting these organisations, presenting to people studying Care/Hospitality/Engineering/Finance is key for the future. We operate CV writing, job interviewing and presentation skills courses which will provide lifelong benefit to those having attended. ASA is currently in discussion with Prince's Trust to establish whether we can work in partnership to support young people achieve their potential via work placements, direct employment and starting own business. We are potentially looking at Mentoring programme where we can meet young people and assist with employment opportunities, improve interview, CV skills and advising on options of work.

Along with the above factors ASA's aim is to create an environment that encourages and values diversity within its workforce and builds on the differences individuals bring, enabling ASA's continued success. We aim to draw upon the widest possible range of views and experiences in order to meet the changing needs of our staff, clients and partners.

We seek to promote diversity and respond to the needs of all individuals in a fair and equitable manner, whilst observing our commitment and responsibility to current legislation.

To achieve this, we will:

- Fulfil our social responsibility towards our employees, temporary workers and the communities in which we operate
- Recognise all of our legal obligations
- Make all opportunities (including advertising, interview and selection processes, promotion and training) as accessible as possible to under-represented and protected characteristic groups
- Conduct monitoring and analysis (with groups of employees within the company, jobseekers in the local community and the demographic of the broader labour market) to ensure processes are fair, equitable and accessible and to identify any significant under-representation
- Endeavour to attain a workforce that is representative of the communities from which it is drawn to secure the widest pool of talent possible
- Recruit, train and promote the best person for the job, to make full use of the talents and resources of all our employees
- Create a working environment free from unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment in which all employees are treated with dignity and respect

- Periodically review our selection criteria and procedures to ensure that they remain compliant and maintain a system that ensures fairness
- Distribute and continuously publicise our Equality & Diversity Policy throughout the company, to employees, temporary workers, clients, partners, visitors to the company, in advertising, and elsewhere as appropriate
- Provide the facilities and opportunity for any employee who believes that they have been treated inequitably within the scope of this policy to raise the matter through the appropriate grievance or complaints procedure

(REDACTED)

Question 2.10.1 (Weighting 0% Not Scored) 1500 words

Tenderers must include a statement on their full consideration of whether the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 will apply in respect of this framework, including details of any perceived implications and/or risks and how these will be mitigated.

ASA Response

(REDACTED)