

*Prepared for: Stakeholder review — Northbridge Advisory Partners Date: 2026-04-07 Audience: Non-specialist stakeholders (practice heads, managers, employee representatives) Classification: Internal Confidential*

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## How to Read This Document

Each entry below summarises one proposed policy change in plain language. Technical compliance references and case identifiers have been removed. This document is designed for stakeholders who need to understand what is changing and why, without reviewing the full redlined policy text.

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### Change 1: Grievance Investigation Overrun Notification

- **Section:** 2.3 — Investigation Timeline
  - **What changed:** Added a requirement to notify the employee in writing if the investigation will exceed 15 working days. The notification must include a revised estimated completion date. Investigations exceeding 30 working days (twice the stated timeline) escalate one severity level.
  - **Why:** A recent grievance case remained open past the stated timeline with no communication to the grievant. The policy was silent on overrun handling, leaving both the employee and the case manager without a clear process.
  - **Impact:** HR case managers must now issue a written notification when an investigation will exceed the timeline. Employees gain visibility into delay reasons and expected resolution dates.
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### Change 2: Right to Be Accompanied at Grievance Hearing

- **Section:** 2.4 — Hearing and Outcome
  - **What changed:** Added an explicit statement that employees have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or representative at a grievance hearing.
  - **Why:** This right is established in compliance guidance but was not stated in the firm's policy. Omitting it created a risk that employees would not be informed of their entitlement.
  - **Impact:** Grievance hearing invitations must now inform employees of their right to bring a companion. No change to hearing procedures beyond this notification.
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### Change 3: Mandatory Pre-PIP Documentation

- **Section:** 3.2 — Performance Improvement Process
- **What changed:** Requires a minimum of two documented feedback conversations before a PIP can be initiated. Documentation must use a standardised template recording the date, attendees, concerns raised, and agreed actions. A minimum of four weeks must elapse between the first documented conversation and PIP initiation.
- **Why:** A recent case involved a manager attempting to initiate a PIP with no prior documented conversations. The previous policy had no minimum documentation requirement, allowing PIPs to be initiated without evidence of prior feedback.
- **Impact:** Managers must now hold and document at least two feedback conversations before escalating to a PIP. HR will provide a standardised feedback documentation template.

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#### Change 4: PIP Communication and HR Approval

- **Section:** 3.4 — PIP Procedure
- **What changed:** PIPs must now be communicated in writing (verbal-only communication removed as an option). The PIP document must be reviewed and approved by the Employee Relations Specialist before delivery to the employee.
- **Why:** A recent case involved a PIP communicated via instant message without HR knowledge or approval, creating a remediation burden. Compliance guidance confirms that verbal-only PIP communication is insufficient and may be challenged.
- **Impact:** Managers can no longer initiate a PIP independently. The Employee Relations Specialist must approve the PIP document before it reaches the employee. This adds a review step but prevents procedurally invalid PIPs.

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#### Change 5: Standardised Probation Reviews

- **Section:** 3.5 — Probation Reviews
- **What changed:** Added a requirement for a standardised probation review form and a deadline of no later than 5 working days before the probation end date. If no review is conducted, the line manager's manager must be notified.
- **Why:** A recent case involved a new employee whose probation review was never conducted. The previous policy left the format and timing to manager discretion with no escalation mechanism.
- **Impact:** Managers must use a standard form and complete probation reviews on time. HR will track completion via the HRIS and escalate missed reviews.

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#### Change 6: Manager Intervention Obligation in Workplace Conflict

- **Section:** 5.2 — Informal Resolution
- **What changed:** Replaced "Managers should support informal resolution where appropriate" with a requirement to take documented action within 5 working days of becoming aware of a workplace conflict, regardless of whether a formal complaint has been filed.
- **Why:** Compliance guidance confirms that managers have a duty to intervene in workplace conflict proactively. The previous wording was advisory rather than mandatory, creating ambiguity about when action was required.
- **Impact:** Managers must now document their response to workplace conflict within 5 working days. This applies to conflicts they observe or are informed of, not only those raised formally.

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#### Change 7: Post-Acquisition Team Integration Protocol

- **Section:** 5.4 — Post-Acquisition Team Integration
- **What changed:** Replaced the existing section (which contained no actionable requirements) with a mandatory integration protocol. The protocol covers reporting structure clarification, project allocation principles, shared team norms documentation, and a monthly check-in schedule for the first 12 months post-acquisition.
- **Why:** A workplace conflict case in a practice with mixed legacy and acquired employees had no integration framework to reference. The engagement survey flagged cultural fragmentation in the same practice. The Meridian acquisition was completed over 12 months ago with no documented protocol.
- **Impact:** All practices with acquired employees must implement the integration protocol. For existing mixed teams (including retrospective application to teams formed since the Meridian acquisition), the protocol must be completed within 90 days of policy approval. New acquisitions must implement the protocol within 30 days of close.

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#### Change 8: Escalation Process Cross-Reference

- **Section:** 5.5 — Escalation
- **What changed:** Added an explicit cross-reference to the firm's Escalation & Severity Criteria, including the multi-complaint trigger, overdue response escalation, and engagement survey correlation trigger. Removed the "managers should use their judgement" language.
- **Why:** The Escalation & Severity Criteria were updated in January 2026 but the policy section they govern was not amended. Managers following only the policy text would not know about escalation triggers the firm has already adopted.
- **Impact:** Managers and HR staff reviewing the Workplace Conflict policy will now see the escalation criteria directly. No new criteria are introduced — this change surfaces existing rules.

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## Change 9: Salary Protection Expiry Procedure

- **Section:** 6.3 — Acquired Employee Salary Protections
- **What changed:** Added a documented expiry procedure covering: 60-day advance notification to affected employees, pay equity gap analysis before transition, three transition options (alignment to band midpoint, phased adjustment over two cycles, or retention of current salary with documented justification), and a 15-working-day appeals window.
- **Why:** An active pay equity grievance revealed an 18% pay gap between same-grade employees caused by acquisition salary protections with no documented expiry process. The Meridian protection clause expires at the July 2026 review cycle — approximately 3 months away.
- **Impact:** The Compensation Analyst and HR Director must execute the expiry procedure before the July 2026 cycle. Affected employees will receive written notification and can appeal transition decisions.

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## Change 10: Pay Equity Audit Requirements

- **Section:** 6.4 — Pay Equity Audits
- **What changed:** Added a requirement for annual pay equity audits covering all grade levels and practices. Defined the audit scope (base salary, variable pay, and total compensation), methodology (comparison within grade and job family), and reporting requirement (results reported to the HR Director with action plan for gaps exceeding 5%).
- **Why:** A pay equity grievance was raised with no prior audit to reference. Compliance guidance confirms that employers must demonstrate a review was conducted when a concern is raised. The current policy left audit frequency, scope, and methodology undefined.
- **Impact:** The Compensation Analyst must conduct an annual audit and report results to the HR Director. Practices with gaps exceeding 5% will require documented action plans.

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## Change 11: Engagement Survey Correlation Trigger Formalisation

- **Section:** Escalation & Severity Criteria (cross-referenced in Sections 2, 3, 5)
- **What changed:** Formalised the engagement survey correlation trigger with a defined threshold: a case theme matches a survey risk flag when they share the same practice, the same issue category, and the flag is rated High or Critical. When triggered, the case must be flagged for policy-level review and the HR Director notified.
- **Why:** The trigger was added informally in January 2026 but never formally adopted. Three of four current cases have engagement flag correlations, but the threshold for "correlation" was undefined and no action workflow existed.
- **Impact:** The Employee Relations Specialist will apply the trigger to all active and future cases. Cases meeting the threshold will be routed to the HR Director for policy-level review. This formalises a practice that was already intended but not operational.

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AGASI AiOS — Sample material. For illustrative purposes. All data is fictional.