

# Induction and Probation

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This procedure describes the steps to be taken during an employee's induction and probationary period. The probationary period allows both the employee and manager to objectively assess the employee's capability and suitability for the role.
  - 1.2 The council recognises the need for all employees to undergo a period of planned induction, training and integration into the workforce. This will ensure that employees feel valued, gain an appropriate insight into the workings of the council and the role they are expected to play in order to make an effective contribution to the services the council provides.
  - 1.3 All new employees will be required to demonstrate knowledge in the mandatory induction areas, relevant to their role, by the end of their probation period. This is designed to help employees understand their work environment and integrate into the workforce. The mandatory induction areas are detailed in the 'Mandatory Induction Course Planner' section of Appendix 2.
  - 1.4 With the exception of TUPE transfers and employees on teachers' terms and conditions all new employees, irrespective of the nature of the contract or any continuous local government service will be subject to a probationary period on appointment to a role with the council.
- Note 1: This procedure does not apply to those employees appointed directly by schools with delegated powers.*
- 1.5 Existing employees who transfer within the council will not be subject to a probationary period unless their initial probation period is not completed. Separate procedures apply to those transferring as a result of redeployment; see the council's Redeployment procedure, A.9.
  - 1.6 Subject to the conditions outlined at paragraph 1.4, new appointees to permanent posts and fixed-term posts of one year or more will be subject to a probationary period of up to six months on appointment.
  - 1.7 For fixed-term posts of less than one year the probation period should not normally be greater than half of the duration of the contract.

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- 1.8 The Human Resources (HR) Advisory Service will advise managers if a new employee has to undergo a probationary period.
- 1.9 The employee's Statement of Main Terms of Employment will make clear that the appointment is subject to the satisfactory completion of a probationary period of up to six months and that if the employee does not fully meet the required standards, including demonstrating knowledge in the mandatory induction areas relevant to their role, by the end of the probationary period, their employment will be terminated with notice.

### 2.0 Procedure

- 2.1 Prior to a new employee starting employment with the council the manager should prepare using the Pre-induction Checklist (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 Once the employee starts work, managers must work through the Induction Checklist and Personal Action Plan (Appendix 2) with the employee to ensure that they have an understanding of:
- The councilwide policies and standards they need to adhere to as an employee of the council;
  - the standards of performance and outcomes required in the role;
  - how these will be assessed during the probationary period, and
  - any training requirements necessary to support them.
- This must be undertaken within the first week of employment.

*Note 2: Employees during their probationary period are encouraged to talk to their manager at the earliest opportunity if they are experiencing problems or difficulties in the role.*

- 2.3 Every month throughout the probationary period, the employee will attend a one-to-one review meeting with their manager to discuss their progress and performance. Where there is any unsatisfactory performance, managers must raise any issues and set targets for improvement along with details of necessary support to be provided. The discussions should be recorded on the monthly probation review form (Appendix 3), which should be signed, by both the employee and the manager. The employee must be provided with a copy of the form.

*Note 3: Employees may be requested to attend a review meeting at any time during their probationary period where performance or conduct is a cause for concern. If the employee's conduct is so*

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*detrimental, action may be taken before the end of the probationary period under the council's Disciplinary procedure, C.2.*

- 2.4 Through the ongoing monthly review meetings, managers should be in a position to determine whether the employee's performance is satisfactory or not.

### ***Satisfactory performance***

- 2.5 If the employee's performance is consistently satisfactory in every aspect, including demonstration of the required level of knowledge in the mandatory induction areas relevant to the role, probation may be completed after a minimum period of three months. In any case, the manager should use the final review meeting to discuss and confirm this with the employee

### ***Unsatisfactory performance***

- 2.6 If the employee's performance has not been satisfactory, and/or they have not demonstrated the required level of knowledge in the mandatory induction areas relevant to the role, managers must use the final review meeting to discuss this with the employee. The discussions should be recorded on the final probation review form as detailed below. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or fellow worker of the council.

### ***Final review meeting***

- 2.7 At the end of the induction and probation period, the employee will attend a final review meeting with their manager to:
- Discuss their overall performance;
  - confirm if the required level of knowledge in the mandatory induction areas relevant to their role has been achieved or not, and;
  - confirm whether the probation period has been successfully completed or not
- 2.8 The discussions should be recorded on the Final Probation Review Form (Appendix 4) which should be signed by both the manager and employee.
- 2.9 It is the responsibility of the manager to notify the HR Advisory Service of the outcome of the final review meeting and to send a copy of the form to be recorded on the employee's personal file.

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- 2.10 Where performance is satisfactory, the Personal Action Plan (PAP) should be completed on this form, as well as a record of how any outcomes will be assessed and any training required to support the actions. Monitoring of the PAP will then take place in line with the Employee Performance Management Framework.
- 2.11 Where performance is unsatisfactory, the Director, or nominated officer, in consultation with HR, may extend the probationary period by up to three months where more time is needed to fully assess an employee's capabilities.
- 2.12 If the employee fails to reach the required standard by the end of the probationary period, they will be informed in writing of the issues with their performance, including evidence of unsatisfactory performance and what support has already been provided. These should be documented on previous monthly probation review forms (Appendix 3). They will be invited to a meeting to discuss their performance with their manager. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or fellow worker of the council.
- 2.13 Should the decision be taken to dismiss the employee, appropriate notice will be given and this will be confirmed in writing. Employees who are dismissed will have a right of appeal. The appeal must be made in writing to the Assistant Director - Governance and Partnerships who will arrange for it to be considered by the Appeals Committee. Action to implement decisions to dismiss will not be suspended pending the appeal but should the appeal be upheld, the appellant will be reinstated to their original post without a break in service.

*Note 4: There may be instances where the end of the notice period is after the original expiry date of the probationary period. In such instances it should be made clear that this does not mean that the probationary period has been extended or, by inference, that the employee is deemed to be satisfactory because the probationary period has expired.*

### 3.0 Additional

- 3.1 Employees who go on maternity leave or are absent for an acceptable reason for a large part of the probationary period will have their probationary period suspended until they return to work. Advice should be sought from the HR Advisory Service in these circumstances.
- 3.2 Should the probationary period be extended or suspended, this will be confirmed in writing, including:

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- The length of the extension/suspension;
- the reason for the extension/suspension;
- standards which must be achieved by the end of the extended probationary period (applies to paragraph 2.8 only);
- any support that is to be provided to the employee, such as training;
- that if the employee does not fully meet the required standards by the end of the extended/suspended probationary period their employment will be terminated.

3.3 In exceptional circumstances, where there are concerns that an employee's performance represents a significant risk to themselves, colleagues, service users or the financial/physical resources of the council, suspension on full pay may be considered.

3.4 Advice should be sought from HR prior to contacting the employee where suspension is a possibility. The reason for the suspension will be confirmed in writing to the employee with a copy to the Strategic HR Lead. If the employee is a trade union representative, a senior trade union representative or full time official will also be notified at the same time or as soon as possible thereafter. This should only occur however **with the agreement** of the trade union representative whose performance is in question.

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