

GUIDANCE ON PROBATIONARY PROCESS

This guidance must be read in conjunction with information on [Induction](#).

1. WHAT IS PROBATION

All new employees are subject to a contractual probationary period of up to six months which applies from the first day of employment. However this excludes employees joining from another local authority, whose performance will be assessed and managed according to the Performance Capability Procedure both during and after the first six month of employment in Kingston.

Managers want new employees to become effective in their job at an early stage. In order to achieve this, managers need to have a framework which gives them the opportunity to meet with new employees on a regular basis to review progress and identify any areas for improvement which will enable them to become effective in their job. This is the purpose of this guidance on the probationary process.

2. HOW DOES IT WORK

2.1. Assessment of suitability

During the probationary period, performance, conduct and attendance will be reviewed by the line manager on a regular basis at probationary meetings. Assistance and support will be given to new employees to enable them to undertake the duties of their post to achieve the required performance standards. An employee's suitability can be determined at **any time** during the probationary period. The probationary period will not under normal circumstances be extended beyond six months.

2.2. Links with other procedures

During the probationary period, the Code of Conduct, Whistleblowing Policy and Grievance Procedure (including Anti Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying) apply. Other procedures such as the Staff Reduction Policy, the Ill Health Capability Procedure, the Disciplinary Procedure and the Performance Capability Procedure should not normally apply as related issues are dealt with under the Probationary Procedure. However, on completion of the probationary period, an employee will be subject to all of the Council's standard procedures for employees.

3. REVIEW STAGES

The manager must regularly review the employee's performance, attendance and conduct through one to one meetings and complete a probationary report (using the [Probationary Form - PF1](#)) following probationary review meetings at the end of the **eighth week, sixteenth week and twentieth week** respectively.

During one to one meetings and all three probationary meetings, the manager should give the new employee feedback on his/her performance. The manager should be guiding, supporting,

identifying any areas where the employee may not be meeting the required standards, and agreeing appropriate additional support as well as arranging appropriate learning and development events, whilst setting appropriate timescales. Any action taken, as well as any follow up on progress, should be recorded with relevant dates.

Any failure to achieve the required standard must be raised with the employee and an opportunity given for them to reach the required standard. Managers should provide the employee with the necessary support throughout the probationary period.

Please refer to the table below to check action to take at key stages of the probationary process.

	By the end of... Week 1 ... Week 8 ... Week 16 ... Week 20			
One to one meetings	Manager should have diarised regular one to one meetings with the new employee.	Regular one to one meetings should be taking place	Regular one to one meetings should be taking place	Regular one to one meetings should be taking place
Probationary meeting	Manager should have diarised the three probationary review meetings to review the new employee's performance and conduct against their objectives.	First probationary meeting must have taken place.	Second probationary meeting must have taken place.	Third probationary meeting must have taken place.
Probationary report	Manager should also go through the probationary report form (PF1) and explain how each criterion will be assessed.	First probationary report must have been completed (using PF1), with a copy given to the employee.	Second probationary report must have been completed (using PF1), with a copy given to the employee.	Third probationary report must have been completed (using PF1), with a copy given to the employee.

Standards met?...	---	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If standards are met, simply continue with the review process. ● If not completely met, provide assistance and support to help the employee reach the necessary standard and review at the next probationary meeting. ● If the employee is clearly not meeting the required standard (performance, attendance and conduct) of work and there is no reasonable expectation that they will improve (see 4.), the manager should seek advice from their HR Business Partner to take action to possibly end the contract of employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If the employee meets standards, the manager should take steps to confirm satisfactory completion of probation (using PL1). ● If the employee does not meet required standards (see 4.), the manager should seek advice from their HR Business Partner to take urgent action to end the contract of employment (before the end of the 6th month of employment).
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4. PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR REVIEW MEETINGS

4.1. Planning each meeting

Managers should use the Probationary Form to consider the areas that will be discussed during the meeting. These include:

- Achieving against the requirements of the post
- Conduct
- Attendance (including timekeeping and any sickness absence)
- Identified development needs
- Support and measures to improve performance as needed

Probationary review meetings should focus on supporting employees to achieve the required standards in all above areas. They also provide useful opportunities to give thanks and encouragements where employees are performing well.

Meeting dates should be agreed and diarised in advance and they should take place in a quiet room free from interruptions.

4.2. Conducting the meeting

During the meeting, the manager should go through the areas set out in the Probationary Form and give the employee an opportunity to raise any concerns or suggestions they may have. The form should also be used to take notes of the discussions and to record agreed actions.

4.3. After the meeting Employees should be provided with a copy of the form after each meeting.

<h4>5. MANAGEMENT ACTION</h4>

In some cases and following appropriate support, a manager may remain concerned that the employee is not meeting the required standards of performance, attendance or conduct and the employee may be dismissed. In such cases, the manager should refer the matter to their HR Business Partner for advice on the process and seek approval from their Head of Department.