

PROBATIONARY PROCEDURE

1. THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROCEDURE

- 1.1 This procedure is to provide support for new employees and identify any training needs, development opportunities or other management action that is required to get the individual's employment with the Council off to a good start. It applies during the first six months' service, and can be extended if necessary.
- 1.2 The procedure will enable managers to:
- be clear and consistent about the standards and level of performance the Council requires of new employees
 - review performance openly and systematically
 - provide every encouragement and assistance to the new employee to meet the Council's requirements
 - handle fairly any cases where the employee is not suited to the post.
- 1.3 The procedure applies to all new (not existing) employees of the Council, regardless of previous local government service, except
- school-based staff where the school is covered by a scheme of financial delegation,
 - where the employment is on a limited-duration contract which makes the procedure inoperable in practice, and
 - chief officers.

2. THE PROBATIONARY PROCESS

- 2.1 At the start of employment the manager will outline the purpose and key steps of this procedure to the employee, and set a programme of review meetings with the employee – to be confirmed in writing with a copy of the probationary procedure provided at the commencement of employment.
- 2.2 As an absolute minimum, three meetings should be scheduled, regardless of post. These should be as follows:
- the first meeting should be no later than four weeks of employment commencing
 - the second meeting should be no later than the end of the third month
 - the final meeting to be no later than the end of the fifth month.
- 2.3 Managers should set more meetings if appropriate, given the nature of the work, either at the start of the employment or during the probationary period. In cases where it appears at an early stage that the employee is unsuitable, the final review meeting can be brought forward.
- 2.4 At each meeting, the employee's performance, conduct and attendance will be assessed following an open discussion. The manager needs to ensure that a record of the meeting is kept with key points being recorded. Any concerns identified will be clearly stated in order that the employee is made aware of

the required standards. Where the manager is of the view that the employee does not reach the requirements of the post at any of the review meetings, the manager will identify what further support or training e.g. additional supervision is required in order for the employee to reach the required standard within the normal probationary period. This discussion to be confirmed in writing by the manager to the employee identifying the following:

- problem work areas, including evidence
- standards required
- additional support and training offered
- monitoring timescale

2.5 After the final meeting, and subject to a satisfactory report by the manager, the employee will be confirmed in post in writing, and the probationary period will then be regarded as having been successfully concluded.

2.6 Where the manager is concerned about the ability of the employee to complete the probationary period satisfactorily, the final meeting will be the point at which the manager makes the decision either

- to terminate the employment, or
- to extend the probationary period if it is felt that this extension will assist a satisfactory level to be attained and maintained.

In these circumstances, the employee must be told in writing at least five working days before the final meeting that this is to be the case in order that they will be aware of the implications of the meeting, and be given the right to bring a work colleague or trade union representative with them to the meeting.

If the manager's decision is to dismiss the employee, the employee must be informed in the dismissal letter of the reasons, and allowed an appeal to the next senior manager. This appeal must be made within ten days, and a meeting to hear the appeal will be convened promptly (normally within five working days). The decision at the end of this appeal is final.

3. NOTICE PERIODS

3.1 Where either the employee or the Council wishes to terminate the employment during the probationary period, the following notice period is required:

Up to 17 weeks	2 weeks
18 to 26 weeks inclusive	1 month
Extended probation	1 month

- 3.2 This period of notice should apply until the employee has been confirmed in post at the conclusion of the probationary process.

Upon commencement of employment, the line manager will meet with the employee to state clearly the required standards of performance



