

Probation

Introduction

We recognise all new employees need a supportive probation process when they start their employment with Westminster City Council. The probationary period is a positive two-way process, designed to assist you to integrate into your new role, with an emphasis on support and development.

The probation process will work alongside the induction process, to help create a supportive working environment, allowing new staff to settle into the organisation and learn the key elements of their job. It provides the opportunity to learn how your role fits within the council and your team, get to know our values and aspirations and how these fit into the expected standards of performance. It will also provide the council with an opportunity to assess the skills, conduct, capability and attendance of new staff members. This policy provides a framework so any areas of concern can be identified, addressed and resolved.

All new staff starting employment with the council will be subject to a six-month probationary review period, regardless of any previous local government service. This will include employees who have previously worked for the council as an employee or contractor. Trainee Accountants are subject to a twelve-month probation period as six months of their first year of employment is college based.

Managers role

During probationary period managers will:

- provide a comprehensive induction so you understand your role in the organisation, the standards expected and how your performance will be monitored and assessed throughout the probation period
- ensure you have the tools and equipment necessary to do your job, and that you receive help and support when you need it
- hold regular 1-1 meetings with you to see how you are getting on, how you feel about the job and provide feedback on your performance
- hold formal probationary review meetings during the 3rd and 5th months of employment, to assess your performance progress (managers are advised to set reminders when the review is due)
- discuss areas that require improvement and provide any assistance or training that you may need
- share records of your reviews with you and retain copies on your electronic personnel file
- confirm in writing the outcome of your probationary review

Employees Role

During the probationary period you should:

- ensure you understand what is required of you in your role and strive to achieve this
- make sure you understand and follow the council's values and behaviours
- clarify with your manager any standards or expectations which are not clear
- discuss with your manager any help or support that you need
- attend/complete any training courses that have been arranged for you

Probation Process

The probation period is 6 months unless otherwise stated in your contract. As well as regular 1-1 meetings, your manager will hold formal probationary review meetings during the 3rd and 5th months to assess your performance progress. If there are areas that need improvement these will be discussed with you along with any support that might help. If necessary, the probation period can be extended where:

- you have not been performing satisfactorily but your manager considers that a further period of probation may improve performance
- due to sickness it has not been possible to assess performance
- an adjustment in the workplace is introduced (as a result of medical advice to comply with H&S requirements or reasonable adjustments)
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Any extension to the probation period will not normally exceed 3 months.

At the end of any extension period your manager will:

- meet and discuss performance with you
- consider the progress you have made
- determine whether or not performance is satisfactory

If you have met the standards required your employment will be confirmed.

If your performance is still unsatisfactory at the end of probation period, you will be invited to attend a formal meeting. Your manager will explain how your performance, attendance or conduct is unsatisfactory and you have the opportunity to give an explanation. As dismissal will be considered, you have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.

If a decision is made to terminate your employment, you will be given 1 weeks' notice. You have the right of appeal against the decision to terminate your employment.

Appeal Process

You should outline the grounds of your appeal and send them to the Head of Unit within 5 working days. They will invite you to a formal meeting. The Head of Unit will consider the grounds of appeal and will take into account the 3 and 5 month assessment reports. They may seek additional information from you or the line manager who conducted the dismissal. Any additional information should be confirmed in writing.

You have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague and will be advised of the outcome in writing within 5 working days of the decision being made (unless agreed otherwise).

Matters of misconduct during probationary period

Where any misconduct occurs during the probationary period, it will be dealt under the Probation Policy. Managers will carry out a fair process to investigate the alleged misconduct and will provide you with the opportunity to respond. Where it is decided that dismissal is appropriate action, you will be informed of the reasons for dismissal and given a right to appeal.

Supporting documents and letters

The probation extension letter template is available [here](#).

The 5 month successful probation letter template is available [here](#).

The 3 month successful probation letter template is available [here](#).

The 5 month unsuccessful probation letter template is available [here](#).

The 3 month unsuccessful probation letter template is available [here](#).