

Section 1 - Purpose

- 1.1 The Council is committed to providing an effective induction and probation period for employees who are new to the Council or employees transferring into a new role within the Council, either substantively or arising from a secondment arrangement.
- 1.2 Induction activity is designed to support an employee in delivering their new role.
- 1.3 Probation activity is designed to assess an employee's performance in their new role.

Section 2 - Scope

- 2.1 This procedure applies to;
 - all new employees of the Council regardless of previous Local Authority service
 - all employees transferring into a new substantive role within the Council
 - all employees temporarily engaged in a secondment arrangement within the Council, regardless of whether the employee is employed by the Council or another organisation
 - individuals previously engaged through a third party to undertake work for the Council and who have been subsequently engaged as an employee of the Council

Section 3 – Principles

- 3.1 The following principles apply in utilising this procedure;
 - Induction activity will be designed around local needs and location.
 - Induction activity will be planned in advance and relevant to the employee and their role. The line manager is responsible for ensuring all activity directly related to the job role is planned and appropriate.
 - Human Resources is responsible for ensuring all induction activity related to employment with the Council is planned in advance and conducted with the employee as soon as possible after the employee's start date.
 - Management (meaning the relevant line manager, Service Manager, Executive Head, Executive Director or Chief Executive as appropriate) must deal with actions related to probation activity promptly and not unreasonably delay meetings, decisions, or confirmation of those decisions.
 - All concerns arising from an employee's performance, conduct or attendance during their probationary period will be managed under this procedure. The Council's Capability and Disciplinary Procedures will not apply during their probationary period.

- Long term sickness absence during a probation period will be dealt with through the Council's absence management procedure in place at that time.
- Employees leaving the Council as a result of probation activity will be treated fairly and with respect.
- Full written records will be made of probation actions taken under this procedure and these will be kept confidentially and in line with the HR Document Retention Schedule.
- The authority to dismiss an employee rests with the Chief Executive, Executive Director or Executive Head as their delegated authority under the Council's constitution.

Section 4 - Induction Procedure

- 4.1 The recruiting manager will establish the most important items to include in the induction programme which are relevant to the role. The following areas must also be included;
- The critical tasks to be delivered by the employee in their first few months.
 - The business plan for the service and any known future plans.
 - Specific Health and Safety training.
 - Risk assessments as required.
 - Specific IT systems or equipment that the employee will use.
 - Specific training and development needs identified during recruitment stages.
- 4.2 For posts operating within a partnership context, the induction programme must also provide the employee with information on the following;
- The political and legislative framework in which the role, team/Cluster is operating within at that time, and any likely developments.
 - Advice on delivering the role for more than one organisation/working culture.
 - Key contacts including external/political stakeholders in delivering the service.
- 4.3 The line manager should set out an induction plan for the employee which will incorporate as a minimum;

First day:

- Employee meets the line manager at the start of their working day.
- Employee undertakes a Building Induction and receives an ID/access badge.
- Employee is given dates of one to one meetings with their line manager.
- Health & Safety instruction as required on the first day.

First week:

- Employee meets key contacts
- Employee meets with an HR Administration team member

First month:

- Employee attends a face to face Health and Safety Courses, plus any additional training as required for the role.

- Employee undertakes the e-learning mandatory course of the month.

First three months;

- Employee attends a Corporate Induction session

4.4 The HR Administration team is responsible for organising the Building Induction, ID badge, mandatory Health & Safety course attendance, employment induction with the HR Administration team member, access to e-learning and the Corporate Induction session. The line manager is responsible for organising all other induction activity.

Section 5 – Probation Procedure

5.1 All employees will be subject to a probation period in a new role as follows;

- Permanent positions – 6 months
- Fixed term positions and secondments – equivalent to one quarter of the contract length.

5.2 The line manager will meet with the employee at the start of their first day to outline a plan for monitoring performance during their probation period. This will include;

- Setting SMART targets for performance – using the appraisal process and setting targets proportionate to the remainder of the performance year.
- Dates of formal review meetings with the employee during the probation period. The minimum interval is monthly. There is no right for the employee to be accompanied by a representative to these meetings. Notes of the meeting will be taken and kept by the line manager.

Where managers have concerns about the employee's performance, conduct or attendance at any time during the probation period, Human Resources should be contacted to discuss appropriate action.

5.3 Where performance, conduct and attendance are satisfactory during the probation period, the following steps will apply;

- Step 1: The line manager will arrange a meeting with the employee to take place six months from the employee's start date (or at the planned end date of probation if the probation period is shorter than six months).
- Step 2 The line manager will review the formal monthly meeting notes with the employee and confirm that all performance targets have been met and conduct and attendance have been satisfactory.
- Step 3 The line manager and the employee may agree any further development actions where the line manager does not feel performance to date has been unsatisfactory and warrants action under 5.6 (see below).
- Step 4 The line manager will notify Human Resources, who will confirm this in writing to the employee at the end of the probation period.

No further action needs to be taken once the employee is confirmed in post. Normal performance management principles will apply once the probation period has ended.

- 5.4 Human Resources will undertake a feedback exercise with the employee at the end of the probation period, to gather views on the quality and relevance of the induction process and probationary period activities. This will inform the Council's practices in relation to induction and probation.
- 5.6 Where there is evidence of unsatisfactory performance, conduct or attendance, which has not been rectified following feedback at formal review meetings, the following steps will apply;
- Step 1: The line manager will notify Human Resources and the Service Manager (or next level of management).
- Step 2: The line manager will prepare a written report giving details of the following;
- Pre-planned induction activity to support the employee in their new role
 - Dates of and agreed actions arising from formal review meetings during the probationary period
 - Details of the unsatisfactory performance, conduct or attendance
 - Details of support given to the employee to rectify this during the probation period
 - Any other relevant details
- Step 4: The employee will be invited in writing to a formal meeting with the relevant Executive Head giving 5 working days notice and be provided with a copy of the report with the letter at that time. The employee may be accompanied by either an accredited UNISON representative or a fellow colleague.
- Step 5: The line manager will present the report to the Executive Head. A representative from Human Resources will be present to give advice. The Executive Head will make a decision to either;
- Extend the probation period where there are exceptional circumstances for a maximum of 3 months – detailing the length and conditions applicable
 - Terminate the employee's contract of employment
 - If applicable, end the secondment arrangement and return the employee to their substantive post/organisation
- Step 6: Where a probation period is extended and there is continuing evidence of unsatisfactory performance, attendance or conduct, the above steps will be repeated. The line manager will only be required to provide evidence of the relevant issues arising from the extended probationary period.
- Step 7: Where there is evidence of unsatisfactory progress after an extended probation period, the employee will be dismissed from employment unless there are exceptional and extenuating circumstances.
- 5.7 In the event that the contract of employment is ended as a result of this procedure, the employee has a right of appeal in line with the Council's Appeals Procedure.

Section 6 – Agency and Consultants

- 6.1 Staff engaged through a recruitment agency or consultancy are usually placed on a short term basis. Line managers are required to provide an induction programme that is proportionate to the length of the placement. This must include a Building Induction/site induction and Health and Safety instruction as a minimum.
- 6.2 Human Resources will ensure that agency/consultancy contact details and emergency contact details of the individual are held on file for the duration of the placement, to ensure there are emergency contact details available for the individual.
- 6.3 Managers engaging a member of staff temporarily through a recruitment agency **must** advise Human Resources at the start of the placement. Where the placement becomes 12 weeks or longer, Human Resources will advise of any action to be taken in line with the Council's Agency Workers Procedure.

Section 7 - Review

- 7.1 This procedure will be reviewed every 2 years by Human Resources, or at the request of UNISON, or as required to remain consistent with current employment legislation.