

A nighttime aerial photograph of Wolverhampton, showing city lights, buildings, and a railway line. A semi-transparent olive-green box is overlaid on the top left.

# Probation Policy

Revised April 2017



**Stronger  
Economy**



**Stronger  
Communities**



**Stronger  
Organisation**

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## **1. Policy Statement**

- 1.1 This policy covers the City of Wolverhampton Council's practice on probationary periods for all employees.
- 1.2 Managers and employees are advised to familiarise themselves with the policy to ensure that they are aware of the expected standards of performance and conduct.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This policy and procedure applies to all employees of the Council including senior managers. It is designed to ensure prompt, reasonable and consistent treatment for all employees.
- 2.2 NJC employees and Teachers employed by Governing Bodies on behalf of the Local Authority are normally covered by Schools HR Policies (Grey Book). Where the Grey Book does not provide a policy or guidance on a particular matter, Schools may choose to adopt the good practice models available from CWC HR which are applicable to NJC employees.
- 2.3 There may be variations to the monitoring periods of employees who have additional professional requirements and who are appointed under terms and conditions for specific roles, such as Newly Qualified Social Workers or Teachers.

## **3. Principles**

- 3.1 All City of Wolverhampton Council's employees are required to satisfactorily complete a six month' probationary period.
- 3.2 The probation period includes employees who have been recruited to posts within the City of Wolverhampton Council or from another local authority.
- 3.3 The probation policy excludes employees appointed following a ring-fenced interview or assimilation as part of a restructure.
- 3.4 The probation policy is intended to help new employees establish their suitability for the appointment and to provide a period for the employees to 'settle in'.
- 3.5 The probation period should be a constructive process that assists managers to determine whether the employee is suitable for their new post. It provides a framework that enables managers to assess the performance of new employees, and to provide any necessary support if needed.

#### **4. Process and Procedure**

- 4.1 The City of Wolverhampton Council's probation policy will work alongside the induction process with relevant support and guidance provided throughout the monitoring period. For further information on Induction refer to the Human Resources Intranet.
- 4.2 All employees must attend the Corporate Induction and complete mandatory training within the probationary period. Employees with contracted hours of less than 15 per week are required to complete the Corporate Induction on the Learning Hub.
- 4.3 Through one to one's and performance reviews managers will assess the employee's knowledge and skills in the new role and provide coaching, support and guidance throughout their probationary period to enable them to reach the required standards.
- 4.4 Managers should keep a record of all one to one meetings and should use the probationary period review form as a checklist to review the standards of performance of their employees (see Appendix A).

#### **5. Probation Review Meetings**

- 5.1 Probation review meetings will need to be carried out when the employee has completed periods of one, three and six months. There may be further review meetings held for employees who have additional professional qualifications such as Newly Qualified Social Workers or Teachers.
- 5.2 During the employee's probation period the manager will provide continuous encouragement, praise, support and guidance, to enable the employee to reach their agreed objectives and performance targets.
- 5.3 The manager is expected to carry out regular one to one meetings throughout the employee's probation period. These meetings are an important part of the probation process as it provides both the manager and employee with the opportunity to meet regularly to discuss the employee's work performance achievements and areas for development.
- 5.4 The employee has the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague at the six month' probationary review meeting. The manager must give the employee a minimum of 5 working days' notice of the requirement to attend a review meeting.

## **6. Probation Review Meeting – One Month**

- 6.1 A review meeting will be held when an employee has been employed in their new post after a period of one month. The manager will write to the employee to invite them to attend the 'One Month' Probationary Review meeting.
- 6.2 The review meeting should be held between the manager and employee. The manager should discuss the following during the review meeting with the employee:
- The requirements of the role of the post
  - The required standards of performance, conduct and attendance
  - The objectives to be achieved
  - The desired outcomes
  - Timescales
  - How performance will be assessed and monitored
  - When the employee will know whether they have successfully passed their probation period.

Employees should be advised at the meeting whether they have met the required standards during this period of probation.

- 6.3 A Probationary Period Review form will need to be completed during the meeting and signed by both the manager and the employee.
- 6.4 If the manager establishes that the employee has not satisfactorily met the required standards a discussion with the employee should be held to:
- Identify the problems
  - Identify what improvements are required
  - Discuss with the employee what support can be given in regards to coaching and training.

The manager should advise the employee that improvement is required and that they will continue to receive support, training and guidance where necessary throughout their probationary period.

- 6.5 The outcome of the review meeting will be confirmed in writing by the manager within five working days of this meeting. The manager should use the appropriate template letter relating to the outcome of the meeting.
- 6.6 The manager must send copies of letters relating to the employee's review meeting and the completed Probationary Period form to the Hub Support Desk. The manager must also complete the Probation Tab on Agresso.

## **7. Probation Review Meeting – Three Months**

- 7.1 A review meeting will be held when an employee has been employed in their new post after a period of three months. The manager will write to the employee to invite them to attend the 'Three Month' Probationary Review meeting. The employee should be notified that they may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague at the meeting.
- 7.2 The review meeting should be held between the manager and employee. The manager should discuss the following during the review meeting with the employee:
- The requirements of the role of the post
  - The expected standards of performance, conduct and attendance
  - The objectives to be achieved
  - The desired outcomes
  - Timescales
  - How performance will be assessed and monitored
  - When the employee will know whether they have successfully passed their probation period.
  - Date for the Final Review Meeting.

Employees should be advised at the meeting whether they have met the required performance standards during the period of probation.

- 7.3 A Probationary Period Review form will need to be completed during the meeting and signed off by both the manager and the employee.
- 7.4 If the manager establishes that the employee has not satisfactorily met the required standards a discussion with the employee should be held to:
- Identify the problems
  - Identify what improvements are required
  - Discuss with the employee what support can be given in regards to coaching and training.

The manager should advise the employee that improvement is required and that they will continue to receive support, training and guidance where necessary throughout their probationary period.

- 7.5 The outcome of the review meeting will be confirmed in writing by the manager within five working days of this meeting. The manager should use the appropriate template letter relating to the outcome of the meeting.
- 7.6 The manager must send copies of letters relating to the employee's review meeting and the completed Probationary Period form to the Hub Support desk. The manager must also complete the Probation Tab on Agresso.

7.7 Performance concerns identified for employees' who have continuous service from a previous post or a different authority will be addressed under the appropriate management procedure i.e. disciplinary or capability process. The probation policy will cease to apply to the individual.

## **8. Final Review Meeting – Six Months**

8.1 The final review meeting must be held when an employee is reaching the end of their 'Six Month' probationary period. The manager will write to the employee to invite them to attend the Final Review Meeting. The employee should be notified that they may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague at the meeting.

8.2 The manager should discuss with the employee whether the employee has met the required standards of the post during the probation period.

8.3 A Probationary Period Review form will need to be completed during the meeting and signed by both the manager and the employee.

8.3 There are three possible outcomes relating to the Final Review Meeting:

- Satisfactory Completion of Probationary Period
- Extension to Probationary Period
- Termination of Employment – Unsuccessful Probationary Period

## **9. Satisfactory Completion of Probation Period**

9.1 The manager will inform the employee that they have satisfactorily met the required standards to complete their probationary period.

9.2 The outcome of the final review meeting will be confirmed in writing by the manager within five working days of this meeting.

9.3 The manager must send copies of letters relating to the employee's final review meeting and the completed Probationary Period form to the Hub Support Desk. The manager must also complete the Probation Tab on Agresso.

9.4 Upon successful completion of the six month probationary period the manager must immediately ensure that an annual performance appraisals is completed, to ensure that employee's performance continues to be appropriately managed, that individual targets are set and met and contribute towards the Council achieving its objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan.

## **10. Extension to Probationary Period**

- 10.1 Where a manager identifies that there has been some improvement in the employee's performance, but has still fallen short of the agreed improvement timescale, a decision will be made on whether to extend the probationary period up to a further three months (but not beyond).
- 10.2 The manager should consult with HR prior to extending the probationary period. Any decision made to extend the probationary period will be at the discretion of the employee's manager.
- 10.3 Where the probationary period has been extended the manager will explain to the employee at the final review meeting the reasons for the extension, agree an action plan and continue to have regular reviews with them detailing the additional support that will be given throughout the review process to enable them to reach the required standard.
- 10.4 A Probationary Period Review form will need to be completed during the meeting and signed off by both the manager and the employee. The employee must be advised that if they fail to improve to the required standards during the extension period, their employment will be terminated.
- 10.5 The outcome of the final review meeting will be confirmed in writing by the manager within five working days of this meeting. The manager should use the appropriate template letter relating to the outcome of the meeting.
- 10.6 The manager must send copies of letters relating to the employee's review meeting and the completed Probationary Review form to the Hub Support Desk. The manager must also complete the Probation Tab on Agresso.

## **11. Termination of Employment – Unsuccessful Probation Period**

- 11.1 The manager will discuss with the employee their performance against the agreed objectives that have been set at the previous review meetings together with the training and support that has been provided through the probationary period.
- 11.2 A Probationary Period Review form will need to be completed during the meeting and signed off by both the manager and the employee.
- 11.3 Where the employee's work performance has remained unsatisfactory and it is considered that further training or support would not lead to them reaching the required standard, the manager will recommend that the employment is terminated. This must be agreed by the Service Director or their nominee.
- 11.4 The outcome of the review meeting will be confirmed in writing by the manager within five working days of this meeting. The manager should use the appropriate template letter relating to the outcome of the meeting.

- 11.5 The employee will be notified of their right to appeal in writing to their Strategic Director / Director.
- 11.6 Employees' who have continuous service from a previous post or a previous authority will need to be reviewed under the capability process.
- 11.7 Employees' who have additional professional or vocational probationary requirements cannot have their employment terminated until they have completed their specified probationary period.
- 11.8 If the manager feels that the employee is unable to reach the required standards at the early stages of the probationary period and they feel that further training will not help, they should seek further advice from Human Resources to determine whether the employees contract can be terminated prior to the completion of their probationary period.

## **12. Eligibility to Appeal**

- 12.1 Employees have the right to appeal against the decision to dismiss. Any notice of intention to appeal against dismissal should be made by the employee in writing to the relevant Strategic Director/ Director within five working days of written confirmation of the dismissal detailing the grounds of their appeal. An appeal panel will be arranged within **15 working days** and shall consist of two senior managers, and a HR representative.

## **13. Roles and Responsibilities of Employees**

- 13.1 During the probationary period the employee must demonstrate their suitability for the post in their conduct and behaviour. Agreed objectives must be met within the specified timescales. It is the employee's responsibility to inform their manager at the earliest opportunity if they are experiencing any difficulties.

## **14. Roles and Responsibilities of Managers**

- 14.1 To establish and communicate the required standards of performance for the post to the employee.
- 14.2 Hold regular one to one meetings with the employee to form a good working relationship and to provide feedback to the employee on their progress.
- 14.3 Arrange and conduct formal Probationary Review Meetings at the required intervals as prescribed in the Probationary Policy.
- 14.4 Provide supervision to monitor progress of the employee or identify difficulties and provide opportunity for resolution by providing training and guidance as necessary.

- 14.5 Advise Human Resources if the intention is to extend an employees' probationary period, prior to the review meeting taking place.
- 14.6 Issue the employee with the relevant invite and outcome letters relating to the review meetings.
- 14.7 Complete a Probationary Period Review form at each of the meetings and ensure that the form is signed off by both the manager and the employee.
- 14.8 Send all letters and the Probationary Period Review forms to the Hub Support Desk.
- 14.9 Update Agresso with the dates and outcomes of Probation Review meetings.

## **15. Roles and Responsibility of Human Resources**

- 15.1 Provide support and guidance to managers and employees on the policy.
- 15.2 Ensure the policy is communicated, reviewed and updated in line with legislation.
- 15.3 Advise on cases of unsatisfactory performance and progress and where appropriate support managers.

## **16. Role of Trade Union**

- 16.1 The trade union will be able to attend the Probation Review Meeting – Three Months and the Final Review Meeting – 6 Months to support their members if requested.
- 16.2 Any review and revisions of this policy will be undertaken by Human Resources and this will be in consultation with the Council's recognised Trade Union.

## **17. Monitoring and Review**

- 17.1 The Probation policy and procedure will be reviewed and updated annually and will be available to managers and employees via the Human Resources intranet.

## **18. Links to other Policies, Procedures and Term and Conditions**

- 18.1 The probation policy cannot be seen in isolation as it is closely linked with the following policies:

- Induction
- Capability
- Grievance
- Appraisals
- Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure
- Disciplinary

## **19. Equality**

19.1 This policy has been subject to an equality analysis.