

Supported Introduction to Employment Policy



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Document summary

This policy sets out the process to be used for new employees to the County Council and for existing employees who change posts within the organisation.

Enquiries

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Supported Introduction to Employment Policy

Key points

- This policy should be used to introduce all new employees to the County Council, except those employed on teachers' terms and conditions (including Newly Qualified Teachers). For further detail regarding induction for Newly Qualified Teachers, see the NQT Induction pages on Czone.
- It should also be used to support current employees who change posts within the organisation.
- It sets out the expectation of the County Council that all employees will have a formal induction period as well as the relevant review periods and the responsibilities of both the line manager and the newly appointed member of staff.
- It also sets out the process for dealing with employees whose conduct or work performance is not judged to be satisfactory during the supported introduction to employment period.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The County Council recognises the importance of introducing employees effectively into the organisation. We appreciate that learning a new job is a challenging experience for most people and that it takes time to adjust to new people and surroundings.
- 1.2. There is a separate [Professional Capabilities Framework for Social Workers](#) against which Newly Qualified Social Workers will be assessed. That assessment will run alongside the provisions of this policy. Further details can be found in the [Assessed and Supported Year in Employment](#) procedural document available on the intranet.

2. The One Year Supported Introduction to Employment - Definitions

- 2.1. For all employees new to the County Council, the first twelve months employment is known as the probationary period during which the employee's suitability for the post is assessed.
- 2.2. For employees changing jobs within the County Council the first twelve months in the new post is known as the appointment support period.
- 2.3. Contracts of employment state whether an appointment is subject to a probationary period or the appointment support period.
- 2.4. Induction period
 - 2.4.1. At the start of the first year in the new post, whether it is a probationary period or an appointment support period, there will be a formal induction period, normally lasting for three months, during which the new appointee receives a formal introduction to the relevant department, their work and the various policies and procedures applicable to them. The induction period will run concurrently with the first three months of the probationary period or appointment support period, as appropriate. Further details about the induction process are set out in [Section 3](#) below.

2.5. Probationary period

- 2.5.1. Probation is a twelve month introductory period, which applies to all new employees of the County Council, regardless of the length of their contract, whether they are appointed on a temporary or permanent basis and their previous experience prior to joining the County Council.
- 2.5.2. The probationary process allows line managers to provide feedback on an individual's performance and assess their suitability for the post. It also gives the employee time to demonstrate their abilities and get a feel for the job.
- 2.5.3. Formal reviews are held at set intervals throughout this time to assess the employee's progress.
- 2.5.4. Upon satisfactory completion of the probationary period the employee is confirmed in post. After this:
 - Non-LMG staff will be entitled to the full range of employment benefits previously suspended during the probationary period.
 - LMG staff and Chief Officers will be entitled to receive immediate incremental progression, unless the date of appointment falls between January and March (inclusive) when the increment will be awarded from April the following year.
- 2.5.5. Dismissal should be considered where the employee does not meet the required standard following appropriate training and supervisory support or where the employee's conduct is not satisfactory. This can be at any stage during the probation period. (See [Section 4](#) and [Appendix 1](#)).
- 2.5.6. Employees who transfer from the service of another Local Authority or organisation covered by the Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government, etc.) (Modification) Order 1999, will also be subject to probation for the first year of employment and the probationary review procedure will apply.
- 2.5.7. As these employees will have had previous continuous service with a recognised organisation, the suspension of specific benefits (e.g. occupational sick pay) will not apply, provided they have completed a full one year probationary period with that organisation.

2.6. Continuity of probationary period on transfer

- 2.6.1. When an employee transfers to a new post within the County Council, before completing their probationary period, the employee's continued employment remains subject to the satisfactory completion of the twelve month probationary period.
- 2.6.2. The employee's outgoing manager must liaise with the new manager to ensure that:
 - the employee's new line manager is aware of the need for the employee to complete their initial twelve month probationary period satisfactorily;
 - the new line manager is aware of any issues that have been identified in the formal probationary reviews conducted to date; and
 - appropriate support is given, to enable the employee to complete their probationary period in the new post.
- 2.6.3. This will be concurrent with induction training in the new post and, if the probationary period is completed satisfactorily, will be followed by an additional period of appointment support for the balance of the first twelve months in the new post.

2.7. Appointment Support Period

- 2.7.1. Existing employees who have already completed a probationary period and are subsequently appointed or transferred to a new post within the County Council will be subject to the Appointment Support Period for the first twelve months of employment in their new post.
 - 2.7.2. As with the probationary period, this allows line managers to feedback on an individual's performance and assess their suitability for the post. It also gives the employee time to demonstrate their abilities and get a feel for the job.
 - 2.7.3. Where the individual does not meet the required standard, with the provision of necessary training and supervisory support, the situation will be considered within the context of the relevant policies including the [Attendance Management Policy](#), [Procedure for the Management of Unacceptable Performance](#), the [Managing Change Policy](#) and the [Redeployment Policy](#).
- ## 2.8. Continuity of appointment support on transfer

- 2.8.1. Where an employee transfers to a new post before completing the twelve month appointment support period in their current one, the appointment support period will start again in the new post. Therefore, in these circumstances, it is possible for an employee to be on a period of appointment support for longer than twelve months.

3. Induction

- 3.1. Induction is the start of an important learning and development period for every new employee, irrespective of their previous employment background. Being promoted, or transferred to another post within the organisation, also requires new learning and development to take place and therefore induction is also applicable to employees in this position.
- 3.2. Line managers are responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are made for the induction of all new appointees. Whilst some line managers may wish to take full responsibility for the planning and delivery of the induction training, others may wish to delegate all or part of this to another colleague. Line managers should ensure that the person to whom this responsibility is given has the necessary time, skills and knowledge to carry it out effectively.
- 3.3. It is also the line manager's responsibility to ensure that key areas are covered, and that regular formal reviews of the new employee's progress are carried out, particularly if the new employee is in their probationary period. This part of the probationary or appointment support process should not be delegated.
- 3.4. A [Corporate Induction Checklist](#) has been designed to provide a framework within which the first stage of induction training can be delivered, having regard to the previous experience and personal attributes of the new employee, as well as the complexity of the job and the nature of the services provided.
- 3.5. Staff appointed to work in Adult Social Care settings may also be required to complete the [Adult Social Care Common Induction Standards](#) within the first twelve weeks of appointment, subject to the nature of their responsibilities.

3.6. It is recognised that the manner and timing of the delivery of the induction training will vary between departments. However, using the [Corporate Induction Checklist](#) will enable line managers to ensure that all new employees, and those appointed to a new post within the organisation, are:

- given the information they need;
- at the appropriate time;
- in a manner which meets their own development needs;
- and supports them in settling into their new role and becoming an effective member of the team.

For these reasons use of the [Corporate Induction Checklist](#) to design the induction programme is compulsory.

3.7. The [Corporate Induction Checklist](#) provides a place for the person(s) having responsibility for different aspects of the induction programme to sign their name(s) to indicate when these have been completed.

3.8. The induction process will also apply to individuals seconded to another post within the County Council and will be designed according to the nature and length of the secondment.

4. Probationary Period

4.1. The purpose of the Probationary Period

4.1.1. When an employee is newly appointed to the County Council, they may or may not have similar work experience related to their new appointment. It is important, for both the Council and the employee, to ensure that there is an initial period during which a formal assessment can be made of the employee's progress in meeting the requirements of the new post, and an opportunity for both parties to discuss and review progress.

4.1.2. The supervisor/ line manager has a vital role to play throughout this period, because it is their responsibility to ensure that appropriate support and assistance is given to help the employee to complete their probationary period. Whilst the probationary review period is one year, it is recognised that the length of time taken by new employees to establish their suitability for continued employment is not the same for all jobs and supervisors/ line managers should aim to tailor the training, development and support to the complexity of the work.

4.1.3. Supervisors/ line managers should ensure that the probationary period focuses on the following key elements:

- giving clear job instruction and guidance on the activities of the team;
- giving people support in their new role and identifying training needs;
- training to support the induction process and achievement of job targets;
- setting standards for the job;
- regular and clear feedback on job performance;
- highlighting any problem areas and looking at ways to resolve them;
- monitoring the effectiveness of the induction process;
- monitoring timekeeping and level of attendance.

4.1.4. The probation review process will enable the supervisor/ line manager to decide whether the employee can satisfactorily carry out their duties.

4.1.5. Probation is a two-way process and the employee should be encouraged to participate fully in discussions with their immediate supervisor/ line manager. The emphasis should be on developing a good working relationship between the individual employee and their supervisor/ line manager, with both parties working together to contribute to the effectiveness of the process.

4.2. Probationary Reviews

4.2.1. The process outlined in paragraphs [4.2.2](#) to [4.2.11](#) should be adhered to rigorously.

4.2.2. Probationary reviews should take place according to the following timescales:

3 months	6 months	10 months
1 st review	2 nd review	3 rd (and final) review

4.2.3. The dates of all formal review meetings should be arranged by the supervisor/ line manager during the employee's first few weeks in their new post.

4.2.4. A written record should be kept of all discussions, using the [Probationary/ Appointment Support Review Form](#), which should be shared with the employee. The written document must give details of the employee's current standard of work and conduct. If the employee's performance or standards are satisfactory, this should be explicitly stated. Where aspects of performance or conduct in the role are considered unsatisfactory or require further development, the proposed measures to facilitate improvement and the consequences of continued unsatisfactory probationary employment should be clearly stated.

4.2.5. Supervisors/ line managers conducting probationary period and/or supported introduction to appointment formal reviews need to bear in mind that the information entered on the [Probationary/ Appointment Support Review Form](#) could, in certain circumstances, be subject to scrutiny in a formal setting such as a probationary dismissal or Employment Tribunal hearing. Consequently, it is important that all fields on the form are completed fully, with meaningful and relevant detail at each of the formal review meetings. For this reason, the use of phrases such as "see previous form", "ditto" or "not applicable" is not acceptable as they do not convey the scope and content of the discussion conducted with the employee.

- 4.2.6. It is important that the supervisor/ line manager begins setting work targets and explains the standards that are expected to the new employee at an early stage of their employment. If at any stage during the probationary period there are concerns about the employee's performance or conduct, the supervisor/ line manager should be identifying the reasons for this, and planning a remedial training/ development programme to improve conduct and/ or performance. In doing this, the supervisor/ line manager should focus on the following key elements:
- reminding the employee of the standards that are expected and confirming them in writing;
 - explaining how performance or conduct is falling short;
 - identifying training needs and taking action to meet those needs;
 - providing additional supervision/monitoring of work if appropriate;
 - reviewing levels of sickness or other unauthorised absence, its impact on performance and actions to minimise future unauthorised absences;
 - ensuring that regular reviews take place;
 - keeping written records of discussions, actions and progress.
- 4.2.7. Where conduct or performance is falling short of the required standard at any stage during the probationary period, or where issues of attendance are causing concern, the supervisor or line manager should contact the HR Advisory Team for advice and support in dealing with the situation.
- 4.2.8. The probationary review procedure set out in this policy takes precedence over the County Council's corporate employment policies and procedures during an employee's first year with the County Council. The procedure is the appropriate mechanism for the management of attendance, unacceptable performance and disciplinary issues should they arise in an employee's probationary year, whilst having regard to the spirit and principles expressed in the corporate policies for management of these issues.
- 4.2.9. Where the required improvement in conduct, work performance or level of attendance is not being achieved, the employee should be advised as soon as possible that their performance is not satisfactory and of the likely consequence if there is no improvement (which could be termination of employment). It would also be appropriate at this stage for the employee to be accompanied at their formal review meetings by their trade union representative or a work colleague should they wish.
- 4.2.10. . In circumstances where the employee has not met the required standard of performance or conduct for their post, managers need to give consideration to dismissal. Further information about probationary dismissals is outlined in paragraphs [4.3.1](#) and [4.3.2](#) and the procedure for conducting probationary dismissals is attached at [Appendix 1](#).
- 4.2.11. In addition to the formal probationary review meetings outlined above, supervisors/ line managers should hold supervisory sessions to discuss work related issues at 4-6 week intervals. Regular supervision sessions are beneficial for all employees, especially for those in their Probationary or Appointment Support Period. These sessions provide an opportunity to discuss and resolve, at an early stage, any issues or concerns that may arise between the formal reviews..

4.3. Probationary Dismissals

- 4.3.1. In circumstances where it is clear that an employee's conduct and/or work performance will not improve sufficiently to meet the required standard, it is not necessary to wait for the full twelve month probationary period to be completed before taking action. It may be more helpful for both the employee and the County Council to terminate employment at an earlier stage. The process for dealing with dismissals can be found in [Appendix 1](#).
- 4.3.2. Non-LMG staff in their probationary period are entitled to receive one week's notice of termination of employment. LMG staff in their probationary period are entitled to receive one month's notice of termination of employment.
- 4.3.3. On termination of employment, any outstanding annual leave and/or entitlement to notice will be paid in lieu.
- 4.3.4. Where an employee is dismissed summarily, for example for reasons of gross misconduct, there will be no entitlement to notice.
- 4.3.5. Managers should therefore ensure that:
 - a) employees in their probationary period use up their annual leave appropriately; and
 - b) all formal reviews, particularly the final Probationary Review, are conducted promptly in accordance with the schedule in paragraphs [4.2.2](#) and [4.3.2](#).

5. Appointment Support Procedure

5.1. The purpose of the Appointment Support Procedure

- 5.1.1. Appointment Support is designed to support an existing employee through the first twelve months of employment in a new post within the County Council following promotion, change in duties, internal restructuring or similar change.
- 5.1.2. As with the probationary period, the Appointment Support Procedure offers a structured approach, within which supervisors or line managers can give feedback on performance and assess the employee's suitability for the post, as well as being a way of:
 - giving clear job instruction and guidance on the activities of the team;
 - giving staff support in their new role and identifying training needs;
 - training to support the induction process and achievement of job targets;
 - setting standards for the job;
 - giving regular and clear feedback on job performance;
 - highlighting any problem areas and looking at ways to resolve them;
 - monitoring the effectiveness of the induction process;
 - monitoring timekeeping and level of attendance.
- 5.1.3. The supervisor/ line manager has a vital role to play throughout this period because it is their responsibility to ensure that appropriate support and assistance is given to the employee to enable them to adjust to their new role and responsibilities.

5.2. The Appointment Support Procedure

- 5.2.1. Formal reviews should take place at set intervals throughout the first year of employment in accordance with the timescales for the probation review process (see paragraph [4.2.2](#)) and using the same [Probationary/ Appointment Support Review Form](#). Reviews should consist of an open and honest discussion about the employee's performance. The employee should be fully involved in the review process and given ample opportunity to express their own views.
- 5.2.2. Notes of the discussions held at the review meeting should be recorded in writing on the [Probationary/ Appointment Support Review Form](#) and should be signed by both the supervisor/ line manager and the employee. The guidance in paragraphs [4.2.4](#) and [4.2.5](#) should be followed when completing the form at the formal review meetings.
- 5.2.3. If at any time during the appointment support period there are concerns about the employee's performance or conduct, the supervisor/ line manager should ensure that the employee is made aware of the discrepancy between the required and actual performance or conduct as soon as possible. Specific examples of unacceptable work/ behaviour should be identified and the improvements that are required should be clearly explained. There should be joint discussions between the supervisor/ line manager and the employee to develop arrangements to overcome any difficulties identified. Timescales for improvement should be clearly defined and additional support or training offered, as appropriate.
- 5.2.4. Supervisors/ line managers are encouraged to seek advice and support from the HR Advisory Team should there be concerns about an employee's performance or conduct.

5.3. Redeployment

- 5.3.1. If particular difficulties are encountered, which cannot be overcome by additional training or supervision, the employee's performance should be dealt with within the context of the relevant corporate employment policies including the [Attendance Management Policy](#), [Procedure for the Management of Unacceptable Performance](#), the [Managing Change Policy](#) and the [Redeployment Policy](#) in consultation with a representative from the HR Advisory Team.
- 5.3.2. In such circumstances, the Appointment Support Procedure can run alongside the provisions of other policies such as those listed in 5.3.1. Diarised Appointment Support Procedure review meetings can be used to consider progress/actions under the provisions of the relevant policies.
- 5.3.3. It is not necessary to wait for the full twelve months' appointment support period to be completed before making a decision about an employee's suitability in the post. However, it is important that a reasonable period is given for the effects of the additional training and supervision to be seen.

Appendix 1 Procedure for conducting a Probationary Dismissal

1. Where the supervisor/ line manager has made the decision that the employee's work performance or conduct is unsatisfactory s/he should first contact the HR Advisory Team.
2. A meeting should be arranged to inform the employee of the decision to recommend dismissal and to allow them the opportunity to present their views.
3. The meeting should be chaired by a senior manager (LMG 4 or above, in accordance with the [Scheme of Personnel Delegations](#)) who is more senior than the line manager. The employee should be given the opportunity to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work colleague. A representative from the HR Advisory Team will only be present in exceptional circumstances.
4. At the meeting all the relevant paperwork should be reviewed and the reasons for the decision to recommend dismissal should be given by the line manager. It is not anticipated that any witnesses will be required to attend.
5. The employee should then be given the opportunity to state their views.
6. The chairing manager should decide whether to dismiss the employee or to continue with their employment. This decision should be conveyed to the member of staff at the meeting and confirmed in writing as soon as practicable afterwards.
7. Once the decision is reached the employee has no right of appeal.