



Essential Reference Paper 'B'

East Herts Council

Probationary Policy

Policy Statement

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy outlines the probationary procedure for all employees commencing employment at the council including those with continuous local government service.
- 1.2 The policy includes employees who are employed on permanent contracts, temporary and fixed term contracts.
- 1.3 An employee's performance, attendance and conduct will be monitored throughout the probationary period to ensure that the requirements of the role are met. The manager will ensure that the employee is properly supported and effectively trained to enable them to become an effective member of the service.
- 1.4 New employees will be subject to a 6 months probationary period. Fixed term contracts employees will be subject to a 3 months probationary period.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all new employees except for Chief Officer level and above; and statutory roles, where it should be used in conjunction with procedures set out in the Constitution.
- 2.2 All new employees (with or without continuous local government service) are subject to a probationary period and should follow the review process as a good practice guide.
- 2.3 The probationary period may be extended in exceptional circumstances.

3.0 Review Timeline

- 3.1 The following should be agreed as part of the probation period between the employee and their manager:
 - Role specific objectives
 - Identification of any learning and development opportunities
 - Any appropriate tools or support required for the role
 - Whether the employee would benefit from coaching; mentoring; job shadowing
 - The induction checklist – including attending corporate induction programme

- The council's corporate priorities, service plans and major projects
- The council's values and behaviours and PDR process

- 3.2 The initial review meeting should be held in the first six weeks (3 if on a fixed term contract) between the manager and the employee. At this meeting the individual's objectives would be set, any learning and development needs would be identified and other support would be discussed to ensure the employee is enabled to carry out their new role. Regular 1-2-1 meetings should be diarised.
- 3.3 The manager will then arrange regular review meetings at 12 weeks (6 weeks if fixed term) and 20 weeks (10 weeks if fixed term). The outcome of these reviews should be recorded on the appropriate progress review form and sent to Human Resources.
- 3.4 For the probationary period to be effective, it must have the active and positive involvement of both the manager and employee. This will allow any areas of concern to be raised by either party and appropriate action to be taken to resolve any concerns or development requirements before the end of the probationary period.

4.0 Regular review meetings

- 4.1 A progress review form should be completed at every review meeting. A completed form should be sent to Human Resources signed by both the manager and employee.
- 4.2 At the review meeting the manager should consider the progress the employee has made against the initial objectives set and check the objectives are still appropriate. The manager should confirm that the employee has attended the corporate induction and read the induction pages on the intranet. Attendance and personal conduct can also be discussed if any concerns have arisen.
- 4.3 If the employee has taken part in any development opportunities this meeting provides an opportunity to evaluate the learning, discuss how it can be applied and identify any further development or learning opportunities that would support the employee to performance their role.
- 4.4 Any issues identified by either party should be discussed at the review meetings and an improvement plan agreed. Human Resources should be contacted for advice and support.

5.0 Completion of Satisfactory Probation

5.1 Human Resources will write to the manager one month before the probation period is due to end. If the employee has satisfactorily completed the probation period the manager should sign off the probation process and Human Resources will write to the employee confirming their employment at the end of the probation period.

6.0 Unsatisfactory Probation - Formal Review Meeting

6.1 If the manager has identified that there are issues relating to the employee's performance, attendance or conduct these issues should be discussed with the employee at the earliest possible opportunity and a Formal Review Meeting should be arranged.

6.2 The manager must inform the employee, giving at least 5 working days' notice, that they are required to attend a formal review meeting. The employee must be informed of the date, time and location of the meeting. The employee will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague. Human Resources will attend this meeting.

6.3 The formal review meeting will consider:

- The performance, conduct/behaviour or absence that is below the standard required
- Details of any action taken to assist and support the employee to reach the required standards, including any identified training
- The employee's response/explanation to all issues raised by the manager

6.4 If the outcome of the meeting finds that the employee is working at a satisfactory level the manager should inform the employee no further action will be taken. This will be confirmed in writing within 5 days and a copy will be placed on the employee's personal file.

6.5 If the meeting finds the employee is not working to a satisfactory level the manager will issue a written warning within 5 days of the meeting. An improvement plan will be agreed which will include a clear set of targets for the employee to work to within a given time frame and details of the training and support that was discussed. The improvement targets should be concise and clear and giving the member of staff a realistic

time scale to show improvement e.g. one month. The probationary period may have to be extended at this point to enable the employee to improve within the target deadlines set. A copy of the outcome will be placed on the employee's personal file. The written warning will be kept on the employee's file for six months.

7.0 Final Review Meeting

- 7.1 If the employee's performance does not improve within the agreed timeframe a final review meeting will be arranged, chaired by the Head of Service.
- 7.2 The manager must inform the employee, giving at least 5 working days' notice, that they are required to attend a formal meeting. The employee must be informed of the date, time and location of the meeting. The employee will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague. Human Resources will attend this meeting, which would be chaired by the Head of Service.
- 7.3 The manager should summarise the position and explain the actions taken to support the employee during their probation period. The employee should then comment on their progression.
- 7.4 The Head of Service should decide if the employee has been able to achieve the objectives set for their post and their performance and behaviour meets the required level and standards of the council.
- 7.5 If it is deemed that the employee has reached a satisfactory level, the Head of Service will write to the employee to confirm they have achieved the expected level and the final warning will remain on their personal file for 12 months. Performance will continue to be monitored at 121 and through the PDRS process.
- 7.6 If the employee has not reached the appropriate level of performance to meet their set objectives; the Head of Service may agree another review period and an extension to the probation period or may recommend to the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development that they are dismissed. Should the employee be dismissed then the employee will be given one month's notice period while in their probation period. This will be confirmed in writing.

8.0 Extension to Probationary Period

8.1 The probationary period may be extended to allow employees the opportunity to improve their performance/conduct/behaviour. The extension should reflect the appropriate training need or timeframe of the targets set at the formal review meeting.

8.2 Managers will seek advice from Human Resources prior to extending the probationary period

9.0 Appeal

9.1 All employees have the right to appeal against any formal action of this procedure in accordance with the Council's Appeals Policy.

10.0 Policy Review and Amendment

10.1 This Policy shall be reviewed after three years or sooner in line with legislation and best practice to reflect the best possible level of support and management.



PROBATIONARY REVIEW MEETING

This form should be completed in accordance with the Probation Policy and forwarded to HR after review each meeting.

Employee Name: _____	Job Title: _____
Manager: _____	Date of Meeting: _____
Review period: 6 / 3 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> 12 / 6 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> 20 / 10 weeks <input type="checkbox"/>	

Managers should review & discuss the following areas with the employee

	Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Needs Development
Reliability / Timekeeping				
Working with colleagues/partners				
Attendance record				
Customer service				
Values and behaviours				

Objectives should be set in line with the PDR Scheme during the employee's first week. This section should be used to review and discuss each objective

Objective (corresponds to PDR form)	Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Needs Development
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

Record of good practice / performance delivered

Areas that need consideration before the next review meeting

Learning and development agreed

Agreement – both employee and manager must sign this form to agree points raised

Employee: _____ Manager: _____