

Probation and Internal Support Policy



1	INTRODUCTION	2
2	SCOPE	2
3	RESPONSIBILITIES.....	3
4	INDUCTION AND ONBOARDING.....	4
5	OVERVIEW OF PROBATION	4
6	PROBATION REVIEW MEETINGS	5
7	PERFORMANCE CONCERNS DURING PROBATION.....	5
8	EXTENSION OF PROBATION	6
9	SICKNESS ABSENCE DURING PROBATION	6
10	IRREGULARITIES DURING PROBATION.....	6
11	SUCCESSFUL PROBATION	6
12	UNSUCCESSFUL PROBATION	7
12.1	Meeting to consider termination.....	7
12.2	Outcome of meeting to consider termination	7
13	TAKING UP A NEW POSITION DURING PROBATION.....	8
14	OVERVIEW OF INTERNAL APPOINTMENT SUPPORT	8
15	INTERNAL APPOINTMENT SUPPORT REVIEW MEETINGS.....	9
16	PERFORMANCE CONCERNS DURING INTERNAL SUPPORT	9
17	SUCCESSFUL INTERNAL APPOINTMENT SUPPORT	10
18	UNSUCCESSFUL INTERNAL APPOINTMENT SUPPORT	10
19	LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.....	10
	APPENDIX 1: PROBATION/INTERNAL APPOINTMENT SUPPORT ACTION PLAN.....	0

1 Introduction

Chelmsford City Council is committed to introducing employees into the organisation or to a changed role in a structured and supportive way through induction and onboarding so they can:

- feel part of the organisation
- understand and fulfil the requirements of their role
- achieve the required standards promptly
- understand their contribution

This Probation / internal appointment support policy recognises that employees require additional support and a formal structure to support performance in their new role. It works alongside induction as part of the onboarding process to help the employee and the City Council to assess if the new role is suitable, giving new employees and existing employees who have changed role, the opportunity to:

- understand the requirements of the new role
- demonstrate their skills, knowledge and experience
- achieve the necessary standard of performance
- deliver what is expected of them in line with OurValues

This policy is mandatory and should be used to support all new employees and existing employees who change roles.

All employees managed through this process will be treated in a non-discriminatory and consistent way and in accordance with the Council's Diversity, Equality and Inclusion policy.

2 Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Chelmsford City Council. It does not apply to casual workers.

3 Responsibilities

Manager

- ensure that the induction / onboarding process is followed
- set objectives for the employee so that they are clear on the standard of work required
- support and guide the employee to meet the requirements of their role
- where reasonable adjustments as a result of a disability or other condition have been agreed, ensure these are in place in good time
- provide clear, specific and constructive feedback to employees as soon as it is seen, recognising good performance and identifying where performance/conduct requires improvement
- complete all relevant reviews and associated documentation in line with the timescales in this policy.

Employee

- carry out their job to the standard that is expected and in line with their job description and OurValues
- engage fully in their probation / internal appointment support, clarifying expectations, standards, tasks, objectives and behaviours with their manager if unclear
- bring all relevant issues which may affect their work and performance to the attention of their manager
- undertake any agreed development activity and strive to improve any aspect of their work, identified as needing improvement.

HR

- advise managers and employees on the induction/on-boarding process and probation /internal appointment support policy and to support both manager and employees
- to collate and retain copies of relevant documents and to issue any formal correspondence on behalf of the City Council.

4 Induction and onboarding

All new employees and those changing role, should have an induction and onboarding plan tailored to their new role. This allows employees to understand their role in the City Council and to perform in line with OurValues.

As part of this, clear objectives should be agreed during the first two weeks in the job. Progress against these objectives should be reviewed between the manager and the employee after four to six weeks and three and five months in post as part of probation/ internal appointment support.

5 Overview of probation

Probation gives managers a structured way to feedback and support a new employee's performance and to assess their suitability for the position. It gives new employees time to demonstrate their abilities and get a feel for the job. This is done through the probation review meetings and any other informal one-to-one meetings.

During probation, managers should ensure they are:

- setting standards and giving clear job instruction and guidance
- supporting the employee and identifying any development needs
- facilitating development opportunities
- giving regular and clear feedback on performance
- highlighting any problem areas and identifying solutions to address them
- monitoring timekeeping and level of attendance

Upon satisfactory completion of Probation, the employee will be confirmed in position.

If an employee does not meet the required standard following appropriate development and support and/or if the employee's conduct is not satisfactory, termination of employment should be considered. This can be at any stage during Probation.

Managers are encouraged to seek advice and support from their HR Business Partner if there are concerns about the new employee's performance or conduct.

6 Probation review meetings

The manager should set objectives and be clear on the standards that are expected, in the first two weeks of the new role.

A progress review meeting should be held with the employee, after 4-6 weeks.

Structured probation review meetings should be held after three and five months of employment.

At these probation review meetings, the manager should assess the employee against key areas including performance against objectives agreed from induction and onboarding and OurValues.

The probation/internal appointment support form is available on the intranet which provides a format and written record of probation review meetings and should be shared with the employee. This allows the manager and the employee to be clear whether performance is satisfactory or requires improvement.

The action plan at Appendix 1 should be used to highlight any areas requiring action or support. A copy should be retained by the manager and the employee.

A copy of the three and five month probation/internal appointment support form from the three and five month review meetings should be sent to their HR Business Partner

7 Performance concerns during probation

If, at any stage during probation, there are concerns about the employee's performance or conduct, the manager must discuss this with the employee. Where necessary this should be confirmed in writing, ensuring the employee is aware that failure to reach the required standard could result in termination of employment.

A decision to terminate employment may be taken at any time during probation. It is not necessary to wait until the end of probation if performance or conduct falls significantly below the standards expected despite feedback and support. Where this is the case, the manager should contact their HR Business Partner to discuss.

8 Extension of probation

In very exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to extend an employee's six-month Probation. This is normally up to a maximum of a further three months. Any decision to extend Probation must be taken only after consulting with their HR Business Partner. The employee should be informed, in writing, of any extension to probation.

9 Sickness absence during probation

The Council's Managing Health and Attendance policy does not apply to employees on probation. Any health/absence issues during probation will be managed fairly and reasonably and in line with equalities legislation.

Unsatisfactory attendance due to sickness may be a reason to terminate employment during probation. For example, where there are frequent absences or where a longer absence is for a reason likely to cause ongoing problems that are not conducive to the employment.

Managers should contact their HR Business Partner at the earliest opportunity where there are sickness absence concerns during probation.

10 Irregularities during probation

If, during probation, it is suspected or established that the employee does not have the qualifications, experience, or knowledge claimed at the time of recruitment, this will be discussed with the employee to establish the facts. If the evidence suggests that the employee misrepresented their abilities in any way, the Council will terminate employment.

11 Successful probation

If, the required standard has been met at the end of Probation, then the manager should communicate this to the employee and HR will send confirmation to the employee in writing.

On successful completion of Probation, the new employee should then be included in regular OurConversations.

12 Unsuccessful probation

12.1 Meeting to consider termination

If, despite support and clear feedback, an employee is unable to achieve a satisfactory level of performance, they should be invited to attend a meeting with the appropriate manager to discuss the termination of their employment. The manager should be at least a Service Manager or above and the matter must be discussed with the relevant HR Business Partner before any decision is considered. A representative from HR will attend the meeting.

The employee must be given seven calendar days' notice of the meeting and may be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work colleague.

The purpose of the meeting is to explain the reasons for their dismissal (i.e. unsatisfactory performance/conduct). The employee should be given the opportunity to respond if they wish.

12.2 Outcome of meeting to consider termination

If the decision has been to terminate employment, this will be confirmed in writing and the employee should be given the appropriate period of notice.

The final decision to terminate employment should be made by the appropriate manager in conjunction with HR. They must ensure that the processes have been reasonable and fair; in line with equalities legislation, that the employee has been communicated with throughout; and they have been given every reasonable opportunity to perform to the required standard.

Termination of employment within the probationary period is excluded from the Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedures, Improving Performance Procedure and Managing Health & Attendance Policy There is no internal right of appeal.

13 Taking up a new position during probation

If a new employee moves to a new position within the Council, before completing probation, the employee's outgoing and new managers will work together to update the probation/internal appointment support form.

This will be concurrent with induction training in the new position. When probation is completed satisfactorily, it will be followed by internal appointment support for the balance of the first six months in the new position.

14 Overview of internal appointment support

Internal appointment support gives managers a structured way to feedback and support an employee who has changed role at the Council, with their performance and to assess their suitability for the position. It gives employees who have changed role, time to demonstrate their abilities and get a feel for the job. This is done through the internal appointment support review meetings and informal one-to-one meetings.

During internal appointment support, managers should ensure they are:

- setting standards and giving clear job instruction and guidance
- supporting the employee and identifying any development needs
- facilitating development opportunities
- giving regular and clear feedback on performance
- highlighting any problem areas and identifying solutions to address them
- monitoring timekeeping and level of attendance

Upon satisfactory completion of internal appointment support, the employee will be confirmed in position.

If, despite encouragement and assistance, the employee has not met the required standard following appropriate development and support then the employee's performance must be managed using the relevant HR policy.

Managers are encouraged to seek advice and support from their HR Business Partner should there be concerns about the employee's performance or conduct in the new role.

15 Internal appointment support review meetings

The manager should set objectives and be clear on the standards that are expected, in the first two weeks of the new role.

A progress review meeting should be held with the employee, after 4-6 weeks

Structured internal support review meetings should be held after three and five months of employment.

At these internal support review meetings, the manager should assess the employee against key areas including performance against objectives agreed from induction and onboarding and OurValues.

The probation/internal appointment support form, available on the intranet, provides a format and written record of internal support review meetings and must be shared with the employee. This allows the manager and the employee to be clear whether performance is satisfactory or requires improvement.

The action plan at Appendix 1 should be used to highlight any areas requiring action / support. A copy should be retained by the manager and the employee.

A copy of the three and five month probation/internal appointment support forms from the three and five month review meetings should be sent to their HR Business Partner.

16 Performance concerns during internal support

If, at any stage during Internal Support there are concerns about the employee's performance or conduct, the manager must discuss this with the employee. Where necessary confirming the discussion in writing.

It is not necessary to wait until the end of internal support before taking any further action, if performance or conduct falls significantly below the standards expected despite feedback and support. Where this is the case, the manager should contact their HR Business Partner to discuss.

17 Successful internal appointment support

If, the required standard has been met at the end of internal appointment support, then this should be confirmed to the employee by the manager and will be followed up in writing by HR.

On successful completion of internal appointment support, the employee should then be included in regular OurConversations.

18 Unsuccessful internal appointment support

If, despite support and clear feedback, an employee is unable to achieve a satisfactory level of performance, or other difficulties are encountered. The situation should be managed using the relevant HR policy including the Improving Performance Policy., Management of Ill Health and Sickness Absence Procedure or the Disciplinary Procedure.

In such circumstances, internal appointment support can be used alongside any other HR policies.

19 Links to Other Policies and Procedures

1. Induction and Onboarding Managers Guide
2. Code of Conduct

Appendix 1: Probation/Internal Appointment Support Action Plan

Name

Manager.....

Date.....

What needs to improve?	How does it need to improve?	When does it need to improve by?	What additional actions need to be taken to support the improvement (if applicable)	Progress

