

Probation and Internal Support Policy



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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 policy recognises that employees may require support and a formal structure to help them perform effectively in their new role. It works alongside induction as part of the onboarding process to help the employee and the 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 must 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 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

2 Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the Council who commence employment on or after 1 August 2026. Employees who commenced employment before 1 August 2026 will continue to be covered by the previous version of the policy, which is available from HR. This policy 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
- ensure any agreed reasonable adjustments relating to disability or other condition are in place in good time.
- provide clear, specific and constructive feedback to employees 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 role 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 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 Council and to perform in line with OurValues.

As part of this, clear objectives should be agreed during the first week in the job. Progress against these objectives should be reviewed between the manager and the employee at the one and three-month points in position, 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 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 the probation period.

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 week of the new role.

Structured probation review meetings should be held at the one and three-month points 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 one and three-month probation/internal appointment support form ([available on the intranet](#)) from one and three-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 three-month probation. This is normally up to a maximum of a further one month. Any decision to extend probation must be taken only after consulting with their HR Business Partner. The HR Business Partner will write to the employee regarding the reasons for extension.

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 employee is unable to achieve a satisfactory level of performance, they must be invited to attend a meeting with the appropriate manager to discuss the termination of their employment. The manager holding the meeting should be a Service Manager or above.

A representative from HR will attend the meeting and the matter must be discussed with the relevant HR Business Partner before any decision is considered.

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

Management needs to 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.

13. Appeals Process against dismissal

13.1 An employee who wishes to appeal the decision to terminate their employment during the probationary period must submit their appeal in writing to the

Council's HR Services Manager within seven calendar days of the date of the letter confirming the outcome of the probation review.

13.3 In the case of dismissals, appeals will be held by a member of Management team. A member of HR will be present.

13.4 Employee's will be given 7 calendar days' notice of the appeal hearing in writing and will have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or a trade union representative or an official employed by a trade union.

13.5 The employee will be notified of the outcome of the appeal hearing in writing within 7 calendar days. All decisions reached at the appeal hearing will be final.

13.6 Where an employee is unable to attend the date originally fixed for the appeal hearing because their chosen companion cannot attend, efforts will be made to agree an alternative date and within 7 calendar days of the original date. Any other requests for adjournment will be considered having regard as to the reasons for the request and the circumstances of the case. Other than in exceptional circumstances, no more than one adjournment will be permitted.

13.7 Where an employee who has been given notice of an appeal meeting in accordance with this policy fails, without good reason to attend the hearing, the Council will treat the appeal as having been withdrawn.

14 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 three months in the new position.

15 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.

16 Internal appointment support review meetings

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

Structured internal support review meetings should be held after one and three 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 one and three-month probation/internal appointment support forms from these meetings should be sent to their HR Business Partner.

17 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.

18 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.

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

19 Unsuccessful internal appointment support

If, despite support 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.

20 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

Appendix Two – Appeal Proforma

NOTIFICATION OF APPEAL AGAINST PROBATION DISMISSAL

Important Note:

You should only use this form if you wish to appeal against a probationary dismissal following probation hearing.

Please send, deliver or email the completed form to the HR Services Manager at Chelmsford City Council, Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1JE.

The form **MUST** reach the HR **within 7 calendar days of the date of the letter confirming the outcome of the probation hearing.**

Upon receipt of the completed form, HR will arrange an appeal hearing, where appropriate, and will notify you in writing of the details of your hearing.

I, [insert full name]

.....
wish to appeal against the outcome of the probation hearing conducted by:

..... [insert name of conducting officer]

on20.. [insert date of hearing].

Reason(s) for appeal

Please indicate which of the following grounds your appeal is based upon:

- ☐ The procedure – failure to follow procedure had a material effect on the decision.
- ☐ The decision – the facts/evidence did not support the conclusion reached.
- ☐ The sanction – too severe in all the circumstances.

My reason(s) for appealing are as follows:

[Please provide details of whether you intend to contest any of the facts, and of the grounds on which you rely.]

.....Continue over as necessary

I intend/do not intend* to be represented at the Appeal hearing. * delete as applicable.

Name and address of representative [if applicable]:

.....
.....
.....

Should further documentation/correspondence relating to this appeal be sent direct to your representative, or to you?

Representative/Me ** delete as applicable.

I understand that if a hearing is convened to hear my appeal and, without good reason, I fail to attend that hearing, then my appeal may be treated as having been withdrawn.

Signed:

Dated:.....

Version Control

Version Number	Creation Date	Changes Made	Changes Made By:	Authorised/Checked?	Date of Changes
1.6	July 2026	Updated length of the probation, added appeal process	J Aviziute		09/07/2026
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1.4	April 2015	Amended Disability Confident logo	HR Team	Y	05/12/2016
1.3	April 2014	Inclusion of Safeguarding on form	A Cartwright	Y	08/01/2016
1.2	April 2014	Scoring key added 6.4 Further information added regarding sickness absence management during probation period	M Kettles 9/4/2015	Y	M Kettles 9/4/2015
1.1	April 2014	Removed reference to 6.5	A Whitehead	Y	13/01/2015
1.0	April 2014	-	HR Team	Y	22/04/2014