



**PR.46 14/15**

**Policy & Resources  
Committee**

**Date 19 February 2015**

**Subject: Employee Policy – Induction & Probation Policy Review**

Report by:

Director of Resources

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Purpose / Summary:

The current Induction and Probation Policy has been reviewed and updated and it is proposed that the new procedure is adopted.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

1. That Policy and Resources committee approve the changes to the Induction & Probation Policy and the reviewed policy is adopted for all employees of the council.
2. That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Resources to make minor housekeeping amendments to the policy in the future in consultation with the chairmen of JSCC & Policy and Resources.

**IMPLICATIONS**

**Legal:**

**Financial : FIN/120/15**

**Staffing :**

**Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :**  
This policy has been reviewed and will apply equally to all employees of the council regardless of employment status or hours worked and should not therefore disadvantage any individual employee or group of employees.

**Risk Assessment :**

**Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :**

**Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

**Yes**

**No**

**Key Decision:**

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

**Yes**

**No**

### **Introduction:**

The purpose of the report is to present to P&R a reviewed and updated version of the council's induction and probation policy.

The current policy was last updated in 2007. It has been updated in line with current legislation and best practice.

Consultation and research took place with all team managers, unison, some recent new starters, the CIPD and Acas and other organisations policies.

### **The main changes are:**

The old induction and probationary guidance sections have been combined into one document to provide a clearer process.

The appendices have been updated and formatted so they are easier to complete.

We have removed the corporate induction as this no longer takes place due to the lower number of new starters. However we have added a sentence to the policy on page 2 para 1 as requested by Unison, that we may run them in future if appropriate.

The Accountabilities section – page 2 and 3 has been added to provide clear guidance on who is responsible for what.

Clearer guidance has been provided for managers on what to cover when completing a probationary review meeting and details of how to provide supportive action if necessary.

There is also a new section detailing how employees can appeal a dismissal decision.

### **Recommendation:**

1. That Policy & Resources committee approve the changes to the Induction and Probation Policy and the reviewed Policy is adopted for all employees of the council.
2. That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Resources to make minor housekeeping amendments to the policy in the future in consultation with the chairmen of JSCC and Policy and Resources.

# Induction & Probationary Policy

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## Appendix

1. Induction Checklist
2. New Employee Assessment Form
3. Confirmation in post letter

## **Purpose**

The purpose of Induction is to ensure the effective integration of new employees into West Lindsey District Council (WLDC). The induction should provide a variety of useful information to the new starter. Information should be supplied in a planned and logical way to avoid information overload and to ensure that they are able to absorb it. An effective induction programme will take place over a period of weeks to ensure the employee settles into the Council and is confident carrying out the full scope of their duties. A corporate induction programme may also be run if it is deemed appropriate in the future.

The Probation is a period of time where the employee must demonstrate their suitability to carry out the role. A correctly managed probation period gives the employer the opportunity to instil good practice and performance and encourage the achievement and maintenance of high standards. Where performance is not to the required standard, the manager should attempt to correct it through further support and guidance. Failing this, the employee's employment will be terminated.

Confirmation of appointment is dependent upon the satisfactory completion of the probationary period.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all new employees of WLDC, whether permanent or temporary, full-time or part-time appointments.

The appointment of every new starter shall be subject to a probation period of six months and all new employees should be properly inducted into working for the Council.

Where staff are employed for a period shorter than six months, then the probation process will be followed for the period during which the individual is employed. If they subsequently secure a further contract with the Council, then the new contract will commence on the basis of a continuation of probation period, the total of which shall not exceed six months. Copies of previous probation records should be forwarded to the new Line Manager.

The rule of probation shall not apply to an officer transferred from the service of another authority, or from any other service accepted by WLDC as appropriate for the post to be filled.

## **Accountabilities**

### **Line Manager**

Responsibility for ensuring that a new employee is properly inducted into the role lies with the relevant Line Manager.

Line Managers are responsible for regularly reviewing the new employee's performance, conduct, timekeeping and attendance and dealing with any problems within the probationary period.

Line Managers are responsible for identifying any specific training needs in order to equip the employee with any new skills necessary to perform the job, and organise any training through the Human Resources team.

### **Human Resources**

The overall responsibility for ensuring that the Induction and Probation Policy is communicated effectively throughout the Council lies with the Human Resources team. Human Resources are also responsible for advising and supporting Managers in the application of this policy.

### **Health & Safety**

The Health & Safety Officer or the relevant team's Safety Champion is responsible for ensuring the new employee understands any health and safety issues associated with their place of work.

### **ICT**

Once authorisation has been given, ICT are responsible for setting up the new employee on any relevant IT systems. ICT also issue new starters with any equipment they need and give instructions on its use and security.

### **Employees**

The new employee is responsible for demonstrating the standards expected of West Lindsey District Council for performance, conduct, timekeeping and attendance and to raise any difficulties with their Line Manager.

## **Stage 1: Pre-Employment**

Once the employees suitability has been confirmed and a start date organised, the Line Manager should also complete the following to ensure the first day runs as smoothly as possible:

- For those new starters who require IT access, Line Managers should complete a CRF form to instruct ICT to set up the new starter on the system and give access to the correct software on their tablet.
- The Line Manager should set aside time on the first day to go through the "Day 1" part of the Induction Checklist (Appendix 1) with the new starter, think about what initial targets to set and organise future appointments for Probationary Reviews.

- Line Manager's should arrange appointments for the new starter to meet the Health & Safety representative and if necessary, a member of the ICT team to collect their equipment.
- Organise for door entry fob and locker keys to be ready on the first day.

Human Resources will notify the Line Manager if any workplace adjustments are required due to disability and the Line Manager will be responsible for making arrangements.

## **Stage 2: Induction Checklist (Start of Employment)**

The Manager will use the Induction Checklist (Appendix 1) to ensure the new employee has been provided with a range of information and training about their new job and becomes familiar with many aspects of the Council and its practices.

The induction checklist has three sections and information should be provided to the new employee on their first day, within two weeks and within one month. This prevents information overload and enables the new starter to absorb important information at a reasonable pace.

## **Stage 3: Probation Review Meetings**

At the end of the new employee's first month, a review meeting will be held with their Line Manager. The opportunity will be taken to:

- Review the employee's job description
- Answer any queries from the new employee
- Set initial targets and objectives for review throughout the probationary period
- Review performance, conduct, timekeeping and attendance
- Provide constructive feedback and highlight achievements
- If falling short of expectations, provide specific examples and take supportive action
- Identify gaps in the induction and act to rectify.

The Induction Checklist should be completed and signed by both the new employee and their Line Manager, then returned to Human Resources for their record. This is to confirm that the induction has been carried out in full.

Further Probationary Review meetings should take place on a monthly basis.



## **Supportive Action**

Where the new employee does not meet expectations during the probationary period, action should be taken promptly. Dealing with problems at an early stage means they are more likely to be dealt with successfully. Line Managers should:

- Discuss the areas of performance, conduct, timekeeping or attendance that needs improvement.
- Explain the standards required.
- Create an action plan which sets objectives, expectations and timescales, and identifies any additional support, training or guidance needed.
- Set the next probationary review meeting for a month's time.
- Advise the employee that failure to meet the required standards may result in termination of employment.

All of the above should be recorded clearly within the Probation Review form and signed off by both the employee and Line Manager.

Managers can contact the Human Resources team for assistance if necessary.

## **Final Review Meeting - Month 5**

The purpose of this meeting is to finally review the new employee's performance, conduct, timekeeping and attendance.

If, at this meeting, the employee is still falling short of expectations the Line Manager must advise the employee that they will be invited to attend a meeting with a Strategic Lead to discuss an extension to their probationary period or the termination of their employment.

Any support or assistance identified will continue to be offered during the whole of the probation period up to the date of confirmation in post or decision to dismiss.

## **Confirmation of Appointment**

Where the Line Manager has decided that the employee's performance, conduct, timekeeping and attendance throughout their probationary period has been successful, HR will draft a letter from the Line Manager confirming the employee's appointment at the end of the six month period.

## **Extending the Probation Period**

It may be necessary to extend the probation period beyond six months in some circumstances, such as:

- Due to sickness or other authorised absence, it has not been possible to fully assess performance.
- There have been concerns regarding performance, but the manager has evidence to suggest that performance is likely to improve with an extension to the probation period.

A meeting will be held with the Line Manager, where the probation period and any concerns will be discussed. A decision will be made regarding whether to extend the probationary period. Each case should be considered upon its merits.

Probation periods are normally extended for no longer than three months. If performance fails to meet the required standards at the end of the extension, then employment will be terminated. Decisions will be confirmed in writing.

### **Termination of employment**

Where a new starters performance, conduct, timekeeping or attendance is not satisfactory, and the Line Manager does not consider that an extension to the probation period would be beneficial, or there has been unsatisfactory improvement during an extension period, then the employee should be invited to attend a meeting with the Strategic Lead to discuss the termination of their employment. The employee will be given five working days' notice of this meeting and they have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or Trade Union representative if they wish. The purpose of the meeting will be to explain the reasons for their proposed dismissal, and the employee will have the opportunity to respond. A member of the Human Resources team will be present at this meeting.

The decision to dismiss will be confirmed in writing and the employee will be given the correct contractual notice. They may not be required to work their notice period, but will receive pay in lieu of notice. Employees will have the option to appeal.

### **Probation and Discipline**

Probation assessments are not appropriate for dealing with instances of misconduct or gross misconduct. If a probationary employee commits an act of misconduct or gross misconduct, the disciplinary procedure should be applied in the usual way. When a final decision is being made as to the suitability of the new starter in a probation assessment, any disciplinary action should be taken into account.

## **Appeals**

If an employee wishes to appeal about a dismissal decision, they should put their reasons for appeal in writing to Human Resources within five working days of receiving the dismissal letter.

Appeals against dismissal will be heard by another Strategic Lead (that hasn't been involved in the process) or a Director.

Employees have the right to be accompanied at the meeting by a work colleague or trade union representative if they wish.

A member of the Human Resources team will also be present at the meeting.