

Probationary Period Policy

1. Introduction and Policy Statement

- 1.1 During probation both parties to the employment contract are considering the validity of their decisions and it is important from all points of view that if performance is not satisfactory, or a mistake has been made, it should be speedily rectified.
- 1.2 All new Breckland Council employees (not including those with continuous employment) are subject to a six month probationary period. The purpose of this is to:
 - Enable Breckland Council to manage and assess performance, and also assess the future potential of the employee before making a decision whether to confirm the appointment;
 - Enable employees to establish their suitability for the post to which they have been appointed;
 - Help identify the employees' training and development needs.

2. General Principles

- 2.1 During the probationary period the line manager is responsible for ensuring that the following process takes place:
 - The new employee receives a full employee-manager **induction**; a corporate induction takes place on a quarterly basis and therefore cannot be guaranteed during this time.
 - Any appropriate **learning and development** takes place at the earliest opportunity;
 - Management **expectations and performance targets** are made explicit and are understood by the new employee;
 - Monthly probation reviews

3. Employees Covered by the Agreement

- 3.1 All new employees of Breckland Council are covered by this agreement. This policy will not be applicable to those employees who bring previous continuous service from another authority. Existing staff that apply for and are appointed to positions totally unrelated to their existing role may be monitored for a period of time under Breckland's Performance Management policy.
- 3.2 Employees appointed to short-term temporary posts (3 months and under) are not normally required to undergo a formal probationary period. They will however be monitored during this period to ensure they comply with Breckland's principles and practices. If a longer term position (including permanent) is offered, employees must undergo a probationary period, unless:-

- They have already been subject to a formal probationary period.
- They have satisfactorily completed a period of regular performance monitoring and review,
- The role is the same or similar to that which the post holder has already undertaken for a reasonable period and their performance is deemed satisfactory by the employing department.

4. The Probationary Review Meeting

- 4.1 The aim of the interview is to provide an open and honest channel of communication which enables two way feedback on what is going well and what can be done to improve individual performance and job satisfaction.
- 4.2 Regular reviews should take place on a monthly basis. HR.Net sends line managers monthly reminders. The employee will be given a copy of the performance review form a few days before the meeting. The employee and manager should both prepare their responses to each question in preparation for the meeting (Appendix A).
- 4.3 During the review, constructive feedback is given to the employee highlighting both achievements and areas of weakness using suitable examples. The employee is encouraged to identify areas of difficulty and ways of resolving these are clearly defined and agreed;
- 4.4 A copy of the completed form should be sent to Human Resources to be placed on the employee's personal file. A copy should also be retained by the employee and line manager.
- 4.5 Upon satisfactory completion of the probationary period, employees will be transferred to permanent establishment. The line manager will inform Human Resources, who will send out the required correspondence to the employee.

5. Performance Issues

- 5.1 Performance issues should be highlighted to the employee as soon as possible, and at the latest, the next review meeting.. Copies of review forms are available from Human Resources. Standards of performance should be outlined with quantifiable measures identified. Additional learning and development if necessary, should be arranged.
- 5.2 If at the 5th month review there are continuing problems with the employees' performance, a HR Advisor should attend the review meeting. At the review meeting, the manager should outline the standards of performance expected and arrange a follow-up meeting for a month later. If necessary the probationary period will be extended to coincide with the follow-up meeting.

The manager should point out that if there is no improvement and he/she fails to successfully complete the probationary period, their employment may be terminated.

- 5.3 At the final review meeting the employee will be entitled to be accompanied by a work colleague or Trade Union Representative if there are still performance issues that have not been resolved. Human Resources will also be present. There should be a discussion about the employee's performance and he/she must be given an opportunity to comment and explain and mitigating circumstances. There are then 2 options:-
1. If the employee's performance has improved but there are still some concerns, or the mitigating circumstances are such that the employee is to be given a second chance, the probationary period can be extended for a period of 1 month.

However, at the end of this period, the employee will need to either be confirmed in their post or have their contract terminated.

2. If the employee's performance has not improved to the required standard and the probationary period has shown that this position is not suitable for the employee then their contract of employment will be terminated. They will be entitled to one month notice plus any outstanding annual leave. They will not be required to work out the notice.

Under the New Constitution, the dismissal of any employee at any time during the probationary period, within the law needs authorisation from the appropriate Chief Officer in consultation with the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive

6. Disciplinary issues during the probationary period

- 6.1 Any disciplinary issues which arise during the probationary period will be dealt with under the Council's disciplinary procedure. If disciplinary action is taken, this will be taken into account at the final assessment. This procedure will not apply to capability issues which will be handled according to the guidelines in section 5 above.

7. Other

- 7.1 During the probationary period the period of notice will be 1 month on either side

Name of Employee

Portfolio

Post Title & Number

1st/2nd/3rd [4th/5th/6th] Review

Date of Discussion

If any of the following categories have been completed in previous appraisals and have not changed please mark with N/A

1. Has/Is the Induction procedure being/been carried out.

2. Job satisfaction

3. Levels of supervision provided (or required).

4. Performance assessment (Good/satisfactory/requiring improvement)

5. Personality (job fit).

6. Expectations/ambitions.

7. Any activities in the job description with which the employee is still not acquainted.

8. Any activities being carried out that are not in the job description.

9. Does either 7 or 8 above call for additional training.

10. Identify any other training need (specify).

Manager's Signature

Employee's Signature

Date

Date

Strictly Confidential

1 Copy for Employee
1 Copy for Manager
1 Copy for Human Resources

**Breckland Council
Recruitment
Probation Review Form
Discussion Summary Form and Action Plan**

Name of Employee

Portfolio

Post Title & Number

1st/2nd/3rd [4th/5th/6th] Review

Manager's General Review

Manager's Signature

Signed

Dated

Employee's comments

If the above is an acceptably accurate interpretation of this appraisal inclusive of previously agreed action having been carried out, please sign below:-

Employee's Signature

Signed

Dated

**To discuss further, do not hesitate to contact
Human Resources at Dereham**

