



# SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

## Induction and Probation Policy

### AIMS OF THE POLICY

This policy outlines details of the probation period for all new staff joining Shrewsbury Town Council. It also provides details on the induction process. This is applicable to all those who are new to or take up a new position within the Town Council.

### INTRODUCTION

The probation and induction period is a time for both managers and new employees to settle into their new role. During this period, managers have the responsibility of providing the necessary information and training that will equip the individual to undertake all aspects of their role effectively. Managers must therefore ensure systems are in place to support and monitor an individual's performance throughout the induction and probation period. This will guarantee that they receive assistance that is reasonable and allows them to fulfil the duties and responsibilities of the post. The individual must also demonstrate their suitability and capability for the post.

Joint working is essential and review meetings within the induction process will provide opportunities for two-way discussions to take place, including topics such as progress and where necessary whether additional support or training is required.

### PROBATIONARY PROCEDURE

It is a requirement that all staff who join Shrewsbury Town Council successfully complete a probationary period.

Probationary periods normally last for six months for all roles, however in some circumstances this can be extended up to a further two months (criteria for extension detailed below).

During this time if the probation period is not successfully completed, the Town Council will issue one month's notice of intention to terminate the employee's contract.

The induction process must be undertaken during this period. In order for the probation period to be confirmed, a completed checklist must be forwarded to the HR team at the end of this period.

### EXTENSION OF PROBATIONARY PERIOD

It may be appropriate to extend the probationary period if:

- Through the probationer's sickness or other authorised absence, it has not been possible to assess performance.
- The probationer has not performed satisfactorily, but the line manager has evidence to suggest that further formal training scheduled within the next two months will improve performance and therefore warrant an extension to the probation period.

In all cases where probation is to be extended, the following must be discussed between the line manager and the probationer and confirmed in writing:

- The reasons for the extension.
- Withdrawal of six months increment (if applicable), until such time as the performance standards are met.

- Any assistance/training that will be given in the extension period.
- The period of the extension, the performance standards expected and the way in which performance will be monitored.
- That if performance still fails to meet expectations at the end of the period of extension, employment will be terminated.

Probationary periods should not normally be extended by more than two months.

If the probationary period does need to be extended, the individual must be informed of this before the six months period has elapsed.

## **PROBATION PERIOD AND DISCIPLINE**

The Town Council's Disciplinary Procedure applies to all staff, including those who have not yet completed their probationary period. Any case of misconduct during the probationary period may lead to dismissal and gross misconduct may lead to summary dismissal without notice. The probationer will be informed of their right to appeal against a decision to dismiss them on the basis of misconduct and a member of senior management would consider any appeal.

## **INDUCTION PROCESS**

The induction process applies to **all** individuals who enter into a new job role within the Town Council. It must be undertaken by all staff, including permanent employees, casual staff and those on traineeships.

When joining a new organisation or department it is essential that individuals are provided with all information necessary to enable them to undertake their new job. It is also vital that new colleagues are made to feel welcome, therefore the manager should use the attached Induction Checklist to ensure all the relevant areas are covered.

A computer access form should be provided to the HR team to ensure they are able to access the relevant databases etc.

In addition, line managers must brief and provide access to all relevant employment policies and procedures; this must include appropriate departmental procedures relevant to the individual's work.

On being issued with their contract of employment individuals will receive the Town Council's Code of Conduct, Grievance Procedure, Disciplinary Procedure and Termination of Employment Procedure, along with relevant documentation as detailed in the recruitment and selection procedure.

To guarantee a systematic and consistent approach to the induction process being undertaken, a checklist has been produced. This is highlighted in Appendix 3 and will be forwarded to managers prior to the individual commencing their new job. **This includes showing the individual appropriate facilities/fire escapes/Health and Safety Matters on their first day.**

On joining the Town Council/new department, it is essential that the job's requirements and management expectations are explained to the new employee within the first week of being in post.

Here line managers must make clear any additional service standards relevant to the area in which the employee works; for example, deadlines that must be met, working relationships that are key to the job role etc. Aims and objectives **must** be clarified here.

This process allows individuals to receive clarification as to how their role links in with departmental and organisational aims and objectives. Performance standards expected of them can also be clarified here and when transfers are not inter-departmental, introductions to their new colleagues can take place.

This will provide a benchmark for individuals to be assessed against in future meetings and will also ensure new employees understand what is expected of them.

The induction process should also be based over a six month period. If the employee is new to the Town Council, this will tie in with their probation period.

It is important that this period is utilised and performance is managed appropriately, therefore during initial discussions the relevant manager must explain how such standards will be monitored both during the probationary period and beyond.

**It is important at this stage to highlight the frequency that the individual's performance will be reviewed.**

The induction period should be used as a period where both management and the individual can discuss concerns issues and progress. Therefore it is essential that a review meeting is scheduled two months from the individual's start date.

A review must be arranged after four months. Here discussions can take place regarding development within the post and satisfaction surrounding completion of duties etc. A meeting will be held at the fifth month to advise whether the individual has been confirmed into appointment.

**However, it is essential that if either party has concerns surrounding their ability to perform the job role to the standard required, further performance management meetings must be arranged within this period.**

These meetings should then identify areas that require additional training/support. Action points should be put in place. This will allow progress to be monitored in subsequent meetings. When necessary managers should seek guidance from the Town Clerk.

Line Managers will be required to schedule/diary the impending two and four months review meeting for those individuals on a six months probationary period to ensure that they are undertaken.

If someone is employed on a fixed term contract that lasts fewer than six months, reviews should be altered proportionately. For example, a contract that is to last for five months should have review meetings carried out at 1 month and 3 months.

A final review meeting should be held at the fifth month of the probation period. Here the line manager must advise the individual of their decision as to whether they have been confirmed into appointment.

If at this time the individual is not confirmed into appointment, the termination of employment process is invoked and the individual will be given the minimum notice period to terminate their employment.

## **REVIEW MEETING**

A key element of performance management is that managers continually have informal discussions with colleagues regarding their performance and feelings etc.

If performance and conduct have been satisfactory within the first two months, the first review will take place at this stage.

If issues with performance arise before this stage, a review meeting should take place at this time.

In this meeting the manager will formally discuss the individual's performance. The aims and objectives that were discussed and documented within the first week of employment should be used as a tool to monitor this. The conversation should be summarised and documented on the relevant form (Appendix 1). A copy of this should then be retained on their personal file.

If this first review highlights unsatisfactory performance in any way the manager must discuss with the individual the aspects of performance that need improvement, and should set clear objectives and timescales in which they will be reviewed. To ensure that these points are clear the attached form allows action points to be documented.

The individual should be asked whether they consider any further assistance and/or training is necessary to enable them to complete these action points to the standards that are expected of them.

Again this must be documented on the above-mentioned form. It is essential that this performance is duly monitored.

Here line managers must highlight the consequences of under-performance/unsuitable conduct during this time, ie if the individual is on their probation period, this will not be confirmed and the contract of employment will be terminated. If the individual is not performing to the required standard and is not on a probation period, the manager must use this opportunity to highlight that if the SMART objectives are not met in the specified timeframe (eg 2 months) and performance does not improve, the disciplinary process will be invoked.

Where unsatisfactory performance is an issue it may be appropriate for the next meeting to be held one week after the first meeting. Improvement in performance can then be assessed, feedback given, guidance provided and where necessary new action points made. This must again be documented on a review form as seen in Appendix 1.

If performance has not been to an adequate standard during the first five months of the induction and probation period, despite continual review meetings, it may be necessary to terminate the appointment. Following consultation with the Town Clerk (so as to ensure consistency throughout the Town Council) both the line manager and a senior member of management should attend the final review meeting with the individual. Here, as stated in the Termination of Employment Procedure, the individual must be advised of the reasons for the termination of employment.

Probationers will have the right to appeal against a decision to terminate their employment for failure to satisfactorily complete their probation period as stated in Shrewsbury Town Council's Termination of Employment procedure.

If, following the first review meeting, performance is to a satisfactory standard, a second review will take place at the fourth month. The individual's aims and objectives should be discussed and performance since the last review meeting evaluated. Again the relevant form (Appendix 2) must be completed and returned to Personnel.

A final review meeting should be held at the fifth month of the probation period. Here the manager must advise the individual of their decision as to whether they have been confirmed into appointment.

The induction process is an effective tool to ensure staff receive all relevant information and have the opportunity to fit into the Town Council. It also plays a key tool within performance management.

Where required, service specific training should also be arranged.

For those individuals who are required to pass a probationary period, it is essential that all the relevant sections of the induction process are completed/achieved. These are detailed in the induction checklist (Appendix 3). Successful demonstration of IT Competencies form part of the induction process. These are detailed in Appendix 4.

The checklist must be signed off and the appropriate completion of probation letter issued. If the individual has undergone an internal transfer, please ensure the checklist is completed within three months of their start date. Section 1 of the checklist named 'administration' will not need to be completed for such individuals.

## **EQUALITY**

The Town Council is committed to equality and ensures that employees are treated fairly regardless of sex, ethnic origin, age or sexual orientation, family responsibilities, religion, Trade Union involvement or political beliefs, and

dedicated to the promotion of racial equality. To ensure this, the Council will monitor the effective use of this policy.

<b>Approved by Personnel Committee</b>	<b>3 August 2022</b>
<b>Adopted by Council</b>	
<b>Review Date</b>	<b>August 2023</b>



## SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

### PROBATION REVIEW FORM

**PLEASE NOTE:**

*The line manager should ensure that the employee is given a copy of this document at each stage of their probation and should retain the original to monitor progress against set objectives at follow-up meetings.*

**Probation Record**

<b>Employee Name:</b>		
<b>Job Title:</b>		
<b>Department / Section:</b>		
<b>Start Date:</b>		
<b>Line Manager:</b>		
<b>Reviews</b>	<b>Date Due</b>	<b>Please tick when completed</b>
<b>Initial Meeting</b>		
<b>3-month review:</b>		
<b>6-month review:</b>		

**PART 1: Initial meeting**

This section should be completed by the line manager within a week of the employee commencing their employment.

**SECTION A: Objectives**

*The line manager should identify specific objectives for the employee (for 3, 6 and 9 months, as appropriate.) These will be statements of what should be achieved during the probationary period, including indicators of success and timescales for achievement.*

**SECTION B: Development Plan**

*To support the employee in achieving these objectives, the line manager should identify any training and development needs and specify how and when these needs will be addressed during the probationary period.*

<b>Employee's Signature:</b>	
<b>Manager's Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

**PART 2 – First review (3 months)**

To be completed by the Line Manager in discussion with the employee.

<i>(please tick)</i>	<b>Improvement required</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>Quality and accuracy of work</b>				
<b>Efficiency</b>				
<b>Attendance</b>				
<b>Time Keeping</b>				
<b>Work relationships (team work and interpersonal communication skills)</b>				
<b>Competency in the role</b>				
<b>If any areas of performance, conduct or attendance require improvement please provide details below.</b>				
<b>Where concerns have been identified, please summarise how these will be addressed during the remaining period of probation.</b>				
<b>Summarise the employee’s performance and progress over the period</b>				

<b>Have the objectives identified for this period of the probation been met?</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>If NO, what further action is required?</b>	<b>Review Date</b>
<b>Have the training / development needs identified for this period of the probation been addressed?</b>	<b>YES</b>		
<b>Employee’s Signature:</b>			
<b>Manager’s Signature:</b>			
<b>Date:</b>			

**PART 3 – Final Review (6 months)**

To be completed by Line Manager in discussion with the employee.

<i>(please tick)</i>	<b>Improvement required</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>Quality and accuracy of work</b>				
<b>Efficiency</b>				
<b>Attendance</b>				
<b>Time Keeping</b>				
<b>Work relationships (team work and interpersonal communication skills)</b>				
<b>Competency in the role</b>				
<b>Have the objectives identified for the probationary period been met?</b>	<b>YES / NO</b>	<b>If NO, please provide details</b>		
<b>Have the training / development needs identified for the probationary period been addressed?</b>	<b>YES / NO</b>			
<b>Summarise the employee’s performance and progress over the period</b>				
<b>Is the employee’s appointment to be confirmed? (confirmed at meeting)</b>				<b>YES / NO</b>
<b>If NO, please provide reasons below and summarise what action has been taken to address any difficulties which have arisen during the probationary period.</b>				
<b>The employee may provide any comments about their experience of the probationary process here.</b>				
<b>Should the employee’s probationary period be extended?</b>				<b>YES / NO</b>
<b>If YES, please provide reasons and, where appropriate, specify any areas of improvement required and how these will be monitored.</b>				
<b>Length of the extension (max 3 months):</b>				
<b>New Probation Period completion date:</b>				
<b>Employee’s signature:</b>				
<b>Manager’s signature:</b>				
<b>Date:</b>				



<b>INDUCTION CHECKLIST</b>
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The induction process is broken down into the following sections:

All staff need training on fraud. The RFO/Town Clerk could give formal training and service/line managers can tell their staff what procedure there are to prevent fraud.

The level of training on financial procedures depends on the responsibilities of each job. Again service/line managers with help from the RFO/Town Clerk.

All Employees:

- 1. Induction from your line manager within one week of your start date**
- 2. Undertake Assessment of IT Competencies within the first three months of your start date where applicable**
- 3. Line manager to brief individuals on STC's fraud policy**
- 4. Book and attend Equality & Diversity Training within 6 months of your start date**
- 5. Book and attend Health and Safety training within 6 months of your start date**
- 6. Book and attend Stress Management training within 6 months of your start date**

Line Managers (in addition to the above):

- 7. Book and attend Handling Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures within 6 months of your start date**
- 8. Book and attend Recruitment & Selection training within 6 months of your start date**
- 9. Performance Management – including Managing Sickness absence and Personal Development Reviews etc**

Below is a list of all the varying areas that the induction process must cover:

For those individuals who are new to the Town Council or who have transferred from a technical job to managerial role, and are required to pass a probationary period, it is essential that all the relevant sections are completed/achieved. Following this the checklist must be signed off and a completion of probation letter issued.

If a probationary period has not been applied, the checklist must be completed, ideally within the first week on the transfer/starting of the new role. Some elements may not be applicable if transfers are internal, for example reviewing their contract, however in such incidences managers should use their discretion.

## INDUCTION FORM

<b>Name:</b> _____	<b>Dept/Section:</b> _____
<b>Job Title &amp; Post Number:</b> _____	<b>Manager:</b> _____

### Section 1 – New starter to the Town Council

- **Administration** (Ensure following have been returned to the office responsible for payroll and pensions) ✓

Personal Details Questionnaire	
P45/P46	
Pensions Form (options/explanation/completion of option form)	
Signed contract acceptance slip	

### Section 2 – All Employees

- **Facilities** ✓

Tour of Building/toilets	
Tea/coffee facilities	
Arrangements for lunch and other breaks	
Fire Alarm points/means of escape/relevant risk assessments	

- **Health and Safety** ✓

Accident procedure	
Fire/emergency procedure	
Identity of first Aider(s)	
Identify of Trade Union Health and Safety representative	
Personal Safety	
Eyesight tests (if 50% computer time)	

- **Information relevant to the job** ✓

Purpose, duties, additional duties, level of responsibility, hours etc explained	
Set the individual aims and objectives and clarify performance levels required on PDS	
Discuss and explain the department's performance targets, aims and objectives	
Highlight how this job links in with STC's aims and objectives	
Highlight Core Values	
Provide Information on how individual and team performance will be monitored and when it will be reviewed formally and informally	
Highlight any agreed Customer Service Standards	
Clarify probationary reviews (where relevant) and schedule one after first 2 months	
Go through contract and clarify any questions	
Discuss sickness reporting procedures	
Working relationships (who direct colleagues are, regular meetings, open door policy etc)	
Issue and explain leave card/Flexi-system (where appropriate) and rules, eg 4 weeks flexi period and maximum accrual and how to book flexi and annual leave	

First pay day/system of payment/receipt of pay slip explained	
Pay increases/cost of living/spinal points explained	
Arrange for ID cards if required	
Issue Name Badge if required	
Confirm whether entitled to a casual OR designated casual car (allocated posts therefore entitled to car loan etc) user allowance/system of claiming	

• **Policies to highlight**

✓

All those found in the new starter pack issued with the contract, ie Grievance, Disciplinary, Termination of Employment policies and the Code of Conduct

• **People to get to know**

✓

Staff who share office/adjacent offices

Manager/immediate Supervisor

• **Office Equipment/Work Station**

✓

Desk/equipment/stationery

Office/building security

Printing services

Telephones (internal/external calls/directory, custom surrounding personal use)

Mail systems (internal/external)

E-mail/internet/fax machine details

• **Training – All employees if not undertaken in the last 4 years**

✓

Personal Development Scheme – Agree Development Plan / Aims and Objectives

Highlight Learning and Development Programme

Arrange assessment of IT competencies where applicable

Book place and attend Equality and Diversity training session – Date:

Book place and attend Health and Safety training session - Date:

Summary of fraud policy and financial procedures

IT Training

• **Training (in addition to above) – Management if not undertaken in the last 4 years**

✓

Book place and attend Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures training – Date:

Book place and attend Recruitment & Selection training – Date:

Book place and attend Performance Management training – Date:

<b>Employee's Signature:</b>	
<b>Manager's Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	