



## Human Resources and Organisational Development

### Supporting New Staff Policy & Procedures

July 2026



## Our values

**COLLABORATE**  
PROACTIVELY

**LEAD INCLUSIVELY**

**EMBRACE**  
**CHANGE**

**BE BOLD**  
**AND CURIOUS**

**CELEBRATE AND**  
**SHARE OUR**  
**SUCCESS**

Governance		
Approved by	Approved date	Date of next review
Human Resources & Organisational Development	June 2026	June 2027

## Contents Page

<b>Policy .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Scope .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. General Principles.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4. Responsibilities.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5. Prior to starting employment.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>6. First Day.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>7. First Week.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>8. Week 2 up to 16 weeks.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>9. ASYE social workers.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>10. Support .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Formal Procedure .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.2 Probation Period.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.3 Probation review meetings .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.0 Ongoing management &amp; assessment.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.1 4-week review – initial review .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.2 8 Week Review – Second Review.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.3 14 Week Review – Final Review.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.6 Where expected standards have been met at each probation review meeting ...</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2.7 Where expected standards have not been fully met.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>3.0 Dismissal as a possible outcome .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>4.0 Final review meeting and the consideration of an extension .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>5.0 Final review meeting where dismissal is a consideration.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>6.0 Appeal against dismissal.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Appendix 1 - Guidance on the role of a Buddy .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Appendix 2 - Supporting New Starters – Managers checklist.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Appendix 3 - Supporting New Starters Probation form.....</b>	<b>21</b>

## Policy

### 1. Introduction

This policy sets out the Council's approach to supporting new employees during their initial period of employment. It reflects our commitment to creating a positive, inclusive, and supportive workplace where new colleagues are enabled to succeed, develop and feel a strong sense of belonging from the outset.

Recognising that the vast majority of employees successfully complete their probationary period, the policy focuses on early support, constructive feedback, wellbeing, and development, within a fair, consistent, and legally compliant framework. It provides a structured period for managers to assess, monitor and review performance while encouraging, supporting, and developing employees, enabling them to be successfully integrated into their role and, where appropriate, confirmed into employment.

How someone is treated, managed and supported during their initial period of employment has a major effect on their view of the workplace and this policy will set out what is expected from both manager and new employees to ensure that the experience is positive and rewarding. It is crucial that new recruits are aware of and buy into Brent's [Values and Behaviours](#).

This policy covers both the things that are essential (indicated by **E**) and those which are advisory (indicated by **A**) to have and would make a new recruits first 4 months all the more welcoming. To assist in keeping you on track with the things that are essential, see the Supporting New Staff – Managers Checklist ([Link](#)) and [induction checklist](#). Managers must ensure that this is actioned and completed as a record of the support and guidance provided.

### 2. Scope

#### 2.1 The policy applies to:

- All new employees
- Graduates
- Apprentices
- Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW) in their assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE) (with reference to the AYSE Handbook) – see section 9.

#### 2.2 The policy does not apply to:

- Teachers in schools and school-based non-teaching staff where the schools have separately agreed processes
- Staff not employed by the council e.g. casual workers and workers supplied through an agency.

### 3. General Principles

3.1 The probation review period for new staff is 4 months, with the exception of newly qualified social workers who are in their assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE), for whom the period is 52 weeks (see section 9).

3.2 Employees will not be eligible to apply for other roles within the council until they have successfully completed their probation period.

## **4. Responsibilities**

### **4.1 Employee responsibilities**

- Complete all relevant activities as set out by your line manager as a part of the induction programme.
- Gain an understanding of job duties, accountabilities and objectives and demonstrate skills and knowledge to meet the role requirements at the standard set.
- Use the regular meetings with their manager to discuss performance and well-being and to raise any issues.
- Make their manager aware of any particular training needs not already identified.
- Advise line managers of any support requirements to improve or sustain the level of performance.
- Advise line managers on any support requirements needed to improve or sustain performance, particularly where workplace barriers relate to a disability, long-term health condition, or diagnosis.
- Co-operate with the line manager and agree a performance improvement plan where performance has fallen short of expectations.

### **4.2 Managers responsibilities**

- Hold regular (at least weekly/fortnightly) informal meetings during probation to provide support, training, and constructive feedback.
- Encourage open discussions about performance and wellbeing, including reasonable adjustments where needed.
- Use the disability and workplace adjustment passport to log any reasonable adjustments the employee has requested
- Plan and conduct probation review meetings as scheduled.
- Seek early HR advice, particularly for issues with performance, attendance, conduct, or probation extensions.
- Address concerns promptly—don't wait for formal reviews.
- Consider any personal or underlying factors affecting performance.
- Manage Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWS) in line with standards; explore training/support options and document decisions for formal reviews (see section 9).
- Keep written records of informal discussions and agreed actions.
- Confirm successful probation completion in writing.
- Seek Occupational Health advice where health or disability may affect performance.
- For persistent absence (medical or otherwise), consider dismissal in consultation with HR.

### **4.3 HR**

- Advise and guide line managers throughout the probation period in line with the process.
- Support the Chair at formal review meetings where dismissal is a possible outcome.

## **5. Prior to starting employment**

First impressions count and it is important that we make a lasting positive impression. How we deal with a new recruit before they start is as important as after they join us.

The manager should ensure the following actions are carried out before the new recruit joins us:

- Phone call from manager welcoming individual to the team and letting them know what to expect. **(E)**
- Complete the new starters form to ensure IT access and ID badge is processed **(E)**
- Ensure all required reasonable adjustments or assessments are in place for when the new employee joins **(E)**
- Draw up a clear plan of action covering the new recruit's first 4 months of probation, incorporating the [induction checklist](#) elements and timescales detailed in the rest of this document, ensuring that particular attention is given to regular catch ups via the 121/Check- in process. **(E)**

## 6. First Day

A new recruit's experience on their first day can set the tone for the future employment relationship. We want to ensure that things get off to a good start so following the approach outlined in this section is key to ensuring that happens.

- Allocate a desk for individual where practicable ensure that this desk is as close to their manager as possible. This arrangement regarding the desk is important as it can be very unsettling as a new recruit **(E)**
- Go over the [induction checklist](#) **(E)**
- Check whether the new recruit has disabilities, long term health conditions and diagnosis that may require adjustments to the workplace and if so whether a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is required to ensure safe evacuation from the building. Complete [Disability and Workplace Adjustment Passport](#). **(E)**
- Show individual where the essential areas of the building are (e.g. toilets, kitchens, facilities, reflection room etc.). Remember to think about the basics, how kitchen taps work, entrances and exits to building, dress code, fire exits etc. They may seem minor issues, but they can have a big impact on an individual's comfort level if not clearly explained. **(E)**
- Assign a Buddy to the new recruit – a competent, friendly member of the team to act as a 'confidant' to the new starter. They should undertake that role for the first 4 months of the individual's employment. A guide to the attributes and responsibilities of a buddy is available at Appendix 1. **(A)**
- The new recruit should also be advised that the council works with its recognised trade unions and contact details can be found at [Trade Unions](#) **(E)**
- Introductions – to immediate team and others the individual will work most closely with but don't feel you have to get round everyone on day one. **(E)**
- Do something social, maybe a team lunch or team coffee break. **(A)**
- Identify a real work task for day one – but something straightforward / simple that the employee can deliver on day one. **(A)**
- Short first day – consider whether it is possible for the new starter to leave a little bit early **(A)**

- If you have not been with them throughout the day then make sure you touch base with the new starter at the end of the day to check how they have found their first day. **(E)**

## 7. First Week

It is important to continue the positive feel of the first day into the remainder of the first week by ensuring that the support continues in an appropriate way. By the end of week one the new recruit should have a clear idea of how the team, service and Council work and how they fit in to it.

- Hold first 121 catch up meetings – these must be held weekly/fortnightly for first four months then move to monthly if performance/conduct etc is satisfactory. Ensure meeting invites are sent in advance **(E)**.
- Define goals and set tasks based on the job description using clear statements, to ensure the employee understands their role in relation to departmental and organisational objectives **(E)**.
- Set key specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound (SMART) [goals](#) for the post to avoid misinterpretation **(E)**.
- Explain our culture, values / expectations. Also focus on what makes us exciting and different. This is especially important if the new recruit is not familiar with Brent and local government. **(E)**
- Manager to consider what else might be helpful to enable the individual to settle in such as a Mentor or some form of work shadowing. **(A)**
- At close of first week, Manager to ask for feedback on how the first week has gone. **(E)**

## 8. Week 2 up to 16 weeks

It is important that momentum continues right up to four months to ensure that the new recruit knows they are valued and engaged. It is vital that relevant training is undertaken and that the individual is comfortable and productive in their role. Following the steps below will help determine if that is the case.

- Ensure attendance at Corporate Induction. **(E)**
- Set out a training plan covering on the job training and courses that need to be completed within the first four months. If the individual is a manager ensure that they are booked on the various management training sessions. **(E)**
- Manager to give guidance to new recruit on how they can build their professional network both internally and with other organisations relevant to the role they are undertaking. **(A)**
- Continue with 121's, review objectives and provide honest and constructive feedback while addressing any issues of concern. **(E)**

## 9. ASYE social workers

The ASYE (assessed and supported year in employment) handbook and the Professional Capability Framework should be used to provide regular and focused

support to newly qualified social workers (ASYE) during this time in order to develop their skills, knowledge and capabilities.

Any extension should be determined by the ASYE panel under exceptional circumstances.

## **10. Support**

### **10.1 Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)**

Employees who require support or are impacted by any issues discussed under this policy can access support through the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) using the following:

- Helpline number: 0808 168 2143 anytime
- Access to online/ Lifestyle support: [www.carefirst-lifestyle.co.uk](http://www.carefirst-lifestyle.co.uk)
- Access to online counselling: via chat function at above website
- Username: brent (case sensitive)
- Password: employee (case sensitive)

Employees with hearing and speech difficulties can access the EAP service by using Relay UK via their Minicom or Uniphone or by downloading the Relay UK app on their mobile, tablet or PC. They can then dial in the usual way with 18002 + 0808 168 2143 (the usual Care First number).

### **10.2 Mental Wellbeing Champions**

Mental Wellbeing Champions are available to support colleagues who may be struggling with their mental health or experiencing emotional distress and are there to:

- Recognise signs that a colleague may be experiencing mental ill health and offer initial help.
- Be a non-judgmental person to talk to
- Listen and signpost to sources for professional help.
- Encourage the person to talk to family, colleagues, their manager or to see their GP.

The Mental Wellbeing Champions are available for an informal and confidential chat if you need to reach out to someone. They are not mental health professionals but are there to provide support and to signpost you to sources for professional help.

A list of all the Mental Wellbeing Champions across the council can be found on [Mental Wellbeing Champions](#)

## Formal Procedure

**1.1** The initial 4 months also known as the probation period is where managers should formally assess the new employees performance, conduct and attendance.

Factors to be taken into consideration:

- Work performance (output/quality of work)
- General attitude (conduct/relationships)
- Flexibility (commensurate with the role where relevant)
- Training needs
- Any support needs (e.g. reasonable adjustments)
- Any underlying issue/s or mitigating factors (e.g. disability)

## 1.2 Probation Period

The below outlines the probation review periods and intervals when formal review meetings should be undertaken by line managers.

<b>Probation Period</b>	<b>Applicable to</b>	<b>Formal reviews</b>
<b>16 weeks</b> (or length of contract where this is less)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New employees</li><li>• Graduates</li><li>• Apprentices</li></ul>	4 weeks – 1st review 8 weeks – 2 <sup>nd</sup> review 14 weeks – Final review
<b>52 weeks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Newly qualified social workers in their assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE)</li></ul>	8 weeks – 1 <sup>st</sup> review 20 Weeks – 2 <sup>nd</sup> review 32 Weeks – 2 <sup>nd</sup> review 44 weeks – 4 <sup>th</sup> review 50 week – 5 <sup>th</sup> review

## 1.3 Probation review meetings

Managers should hold the formal supporting new staff review meetings at intervals as outlined in section 1.2 above. Reviews should be set up in advance so that both parties have time to prepare for them.

Where probation review meetings are missed, the line manager should note the reason why on the probation form and the date it was rescheduled to. See appendix 3 for supporting new staff probation form.

## 2.0 Ongoing management & assessment

### 2.1 4-week review – initial review

The 4-week review is an early, supportive check-in focused on helping the employee settle into the role.

This review will:

- Explore how the employee is adjusting to the role and workplace.

- Confirm understanding of role expectations and performance objectives including conduct and attendance.
- Identify any immediate training, support or wellbeing needs.
- Reinforce the Council's Values and expected behaviours.
- Agree priorities and support for the next stage of the probation period.

## 2.2 8 Week Review – Second Review

The 8-week review focuses on progress, development and emerging capability.

This review will:

- Assess progress against agreed performance objectives including conduct and attendance.
- Provide balanced feedback on strengths and development areas.
- Review training, learning and support provided.
- Identify any concerns and agree a clear support plan where required.
- Continue to promote wellbeing and inclusive working practices.

## 2.3 14 Week Review – Final Review

The 14-week review is the final formal review within the 4-month probation period.

This review will:

- Consider overall performance and consistency including conduct and attendance.
- Assess demonstration of the Council's Values and Behaviours
- Review progress made in response to earlier feedback.
- Determine readiness for confirmation in post.

## 2.4 The outcome to be recorded in relation to expected standards after every formal review meeting would be one of the following:

**Met**                    employee progressing well

**Partially met**    The employee has demonstrated progress against some performance targets and standards of conduct and attendance. Further development is required in certain areas, which will be supported through ongoing feedback and guidance.

**Not met**             The employee has not made sufficient progress in meeting required performance targets and/or expected standards of conduct and attendance.

**2.5** At the end of the final probation review meetings, the manager will have the following options available as next steps:

- Confirmation of employment (subject to successful completion of the full probation period and confirmed in writing)
- Extension of probation period
- Termination of employment (see section 3 and 4)

Termination of employment may be at any time before the 14 week review or at any point in the process, where it is clear that confirmation of employment is not likely, that support and development is not likely to improve performance in a timely way or where the performance/ conduct of the employee causes serious concern.

## **2.6 Where expected standards have been met at each probation review meeting**

**2.6.1** The manager should:

- inform the employee of this in the meeting and complete the relevant supporting new staff probation review form.
- set the date for the next formal meeting.
- where standards have been met up to the final review meeting, inform the employee that their employment / successful completion of their probation period will be confirmed, subject to them sustaining current performance levels until the end of their probation period (see section 1.2 Probation periods).

**2.6.2** Where performance levels are not sustained following the final probation review meeting, the employee should be made aware and the reasons for this explored. The manager should also consider whether there is exceptional reason/s to extend the probation period and should take further formal action/ review under this procedure with advice from HR.

## **2.7 Where expected standards have not been fully met.**

**2.7.1** For new staff, where the review meeting is not the final one, the line manager should:

- Explain clearly in the review meeting, any areas of concern/s identified e.g. performance and/ or conduct, ensuring these are included when completing the relevant supporting new staff probation review form.
- Explore any reason/s including whether there are any underlying issue/s impacting on performance.
- Discuss what remedial guidance and training is required.
- Explain the standard required, providing clear targets and when these need to have been achieved by
- Agree and record an action plan for improvement with timescales as appropriate.
- Outline the possible outcome of dismissal should their performance not improve or be sustained to a satisfactory standard with any support.
- Set a review date as appropriate (see section 1.2 Probation periods).

**2.7.2** If an allegation of misconduct is made, it must be put to the employee and their response sought before deciding on the matter.

**2.7.3** Where performance issues or sickness absence is due to certain underlying factors that can be sensitive or difficult to talk about, line managers should encourage a two-way open conversation, and exercise sensitivity and understanding. In addition, they should consider completing any relevant risk assessments, to provide adequate support.

**2.7.4** Following the meeting, the supporting new staff probation review form should be shared with the employee confirming whether performance standards have been met, attaching the action plan.

### **3.0 Dismissal as a possible outcome**

**3.1** Before dismissal is considered, managers must be satisfied that the employee has been given clear feedback, reasonable time and appropriate support to improve, and that these measures have been reviewed and documented.

HR advice must be sought where there is any uncertainty.

**3.2** Where dismissal is being considered at the final review, the manager conducting the meeting and making the decision (the Chair) should be at Head of Service level or above.

### **4.0 Final review meeting and the consideration of an extension**

**4.1** Where there are exceptional reasons for the manager to consider an extension of probation period, the manager should consult HR and where appropriate, use the meeting to discuss this with the employee, in addition to covering the above (section 2.7.1). Any extension will be limited up to 4 weeks.

**4.2** The line manager may extend the probationary period in exceptional circumstances where they have either grounds to believe or to suggest that performance is likely to improve with extension, enabling the employee to adequately perform their role. Such grounds may include:

- Employee's line manager has been absent for an extended period.
- Further training and support where the manager and employee believe this will result in an improvement.
- A change of management leading to there being limited continuity for the purpose of supervision.
- Sickness absence during a substantial part of the probation period e.g. pregnancy or disability related.
- Other authorised absence e.g. Maternity/ Adoption/ Shared parental leave.

**4.3** At the meeting, the manager should discuss:

- Reasons for the extension
- Length of the extension period
- Assistance/training that will be given during the period of extension as appropriate.
- That the action plan will be set in agreement with the employee following their opportunity to explain the reasons for unsatisfactory performance
- How the action plan will be monitored and measured
- The action plan will be used to record details.
- A review date

Following the meeting, the discussion including the extension period agreed should be reflected on the supporting new staff probation review form and shared with the employee in the usual way.

## **5.0 Final review meeting where dismissal is a consideration.**

**5.1** Where the review meeting is the final review and may result in dismissal, the manager presenting at the meeting should submit a brief report in advance to the Final Review Manager (the Chair), who will be at Head of Service level or above, with information showing the actions taken during the probation period. The Chair should:

- Liaise with HR at the earliest opportunity for advice.
- Schedule the meeting to allow for the notice of dismissal to end on or before the end of the probation period, wherever possible
- Invite the employee to the review meeting:
- providing 5 working days' notice in writing to attend
- informing them that they may be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or work colleague and that HR will be present.
- informing them that dismissal is a possible outcome of the meeting.
- asking them to bring any documentation they wish to be considered, to be received at least 3 working days before the final review meeting.
- In the review meeting, explain or ask the line manager to explain and demonstrate clearly the areas of concern identified.
- Provide the employee the opportunity in the meeting to respond to the points raised by management.
- Explore any reason/s provided by the employee, including where there are any underlying issue/s impacting on performance.
- Where it is decided that an extension period is not appropriate, inform the employee that their employment will be terminated with 1 weeks' notice.

**5.2** Considerations in the final review meeting by the Chair

- Issues or concerns have been identified and discussed throughout the probation period.
- Level of discussion which has taken place with the employee across their probation period.
- Level of support offered to aid an improvement.
- Period of time over which performance has been assessed.
- Any mitigating factors
- Ensure that the meeting is conducted fairly, in line with this procedure.

**5.3** Where performance standards have been met at the end of the final probation review the manager should write to the employee to confirm successful completion of the probation period (see section 4).

**5.4** At the end of the final supporting new staff probation review meeting where performance standards have not been met, the manager will have the following options available as next steps:

- Extension of probation period, where the probation period has not previously been extended.
- Dismissal/ termination of employment

**5.5** Any decision made at the meeting involving dismissal will be confirmed in writing. The outcome letter will usually be issued within 5 working days of the final probation review meeting, with full reasons for the decision and the right to appeal in writing, copying in HR.

**5.6** In the case of dismissal, the employee will be given contractual notice of 1 week.

## **6.0 Appeal against dismissal**

**6.1** An appeal may be submitted to the Chair of the final review meeting, in writing outlining the full grounds for appeal within 10 working days of the date of the letter notifying the employee of the decision to dismiss.

**6.2** An appeal will only be considered if the below grounds are covered in the written appeal. There may be one or more of the following grounds showing a detailed basis for each:

- **Procedure** – there was a failure to follow procedure, and this had a material effect on the decision.
- **Decision** – where the decision to opt for dismissal rather than an alternative option was one that would not have been reached by any reasonable manager.
- **New evidence** is available that could not have reasonably been raised earlier during the probation process and the absence of which had a material effect on the decision.

Where the appeal relates to new evidence, the employee should outline the reason/s why this was not available for consideration at the final review meeting.

**6.3** The appeal will be sent to the Appeal Manager when they have been appointed. The Appeal Manager will normally be a more senior manager than the Chair of the final review meeting who considered the case for dismissal, or at the same level.

## **7.0 Appeal meeting**

**7.1** The purpose of the appeal meeting is for the Appeal Manager to review the line manager's decision to not confirm the employee's employment, in light of the grounds of appeal submitted and to hear the views of the employee and the line manager, to make a decision. It is not to re-consider the issues.

**7.2** The Appeal Manager must write to the employee to:

- Acknowledge receipt of the appeal.
- Let the employee know that they will be hearing the appeal.
- Arrange to meet with the employee to discuss the appeal, with 5 working days' notice to attend.
- Inform them that they may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague and that HR will be present.

- Inform them that in cases where new evidence has come to light, they must submit supporting documents and any names of witnesses to be received by at least 3 working days before the meeting and provide reasons why this information was not submitted prior to this stage.
- Inform them that following the appeal, there is no further right of appeal.

- 7.3** If the employee or their chosen representative cannot attend the scheduled meeting and cannot propose a reasonable alternative date and time for the meeting within 5 working days of the original date set for the meeting then the meeting will normally proceed without them. Where appropriate, the employee may elect to bring another representative.
- 7.4** The Appeal Manager will chair the meeting and hear the case including any information which is relevant to the appeal submitted. The chair of the final review meeting will respond to any questions. The employee will also have an opportunity to explain their appeal and will respond to questions.
- 7.5** In order to help clarify any points outside of the meeting or come to a decision, the Appeal Manager may adjourn the meeting at any point.
- 7.6** The Appeal Manager conducting the appeal has the authority to:
1. Uphold/ partially uphold the appeal – in this case, they may extend the probation period or confirm employment.
  2. Not uphold the appeal – in this case the decision to dismiss would still stand.
- 7.7** The Appeal Manager with support from HR, should aim to confirm their decision in writing to the employee with reasons, within 10 working days of the appeal meeting.
- 7.8** The decision of the Appeal Manager is final and there shall be no further right of appeal.

## **Appendix 1 - Guidance on the role of a Buddy**

### **Aim of the buddy**

Having a buddy at work can make a huge difference to the speed at which new recruits manage to settle into the role, the service and the Council. Just knowing there is someone there to listen who is genuinely interested in helping them can make new employees feel supported. At Brent, we recommend allocating an induction buddy for any new member of your team.

### **Who makes a good buddy?**

**A good buddy is someone who is prepared to be:**

- A contact
- A friendly face
- An informal source of information on the team and service
- Someone who knows how things work across the Council and is prepared to share that experience

**Personal attributes of a good buddy include:**

- The ability to listen
- Openness and commitment to being a buddy – it can be a learning experience for both parties
- Good time management and self-management skills
- Relevant knowledge and experience to be able to provide the right level of support
- An honest and considerate approach to giving feedback and asking challenging questions including the ability to give constructive feedback
- Ability to identify learning opportunities
- Ability to use questions to encourage new starters to think for themselves
- A willingness to learn

### **Roles and responsibilities of a buddy**

As a buddy you are not line managing that individual but are there in the role of supportive employee and a friendly face. Your role as a buddy will vary depending on the individual you are working with but could involve some or all of the following:

- Helping your new employee to navigate their way around the service and this could include helping them find their way round the building
- Showing them how to do aspects of their role
- Answering questions – often more than once. Buddies need to be patient as new recruits take in a lot of information, often in a short time, and may need to re-ask questions in the future as events occur
- Provide information, signpost information and provide informal support
- Introducing them to other employees who are important to their role
- Encourage them to ask questions if unsure about any aspects of their role
- Arrange to go for coffee or lunch sometime so they can enjoy the social side of working and feel part of the team.

### **A buddy is not:**

- A line manager
- An advisor or counsellor
- A new best friend
- A confidante

### **Guidelines for approaching the first meeting**

If you have not done this role before it can seem daunting and this is matched by the new recruit feeling a bit overwhelmed possibly by a new role and new environment. The following will help establish your relationship and decide on how you are both going to make use of the buddy scheme.

- Arrange an informal meeting, over coffee is a nice touch but not necessary.
- Outline your role, experience and why you are their buddy
- Find out about their professional background and experience and identify their understanding of the “buddy” relationship and how it will work
- Clarify expectations they can have from you
- Arrange a good time to take them around to understand the layout of the building in which they are based and whilst doing this introduce them to key people relevant to their role.
- Arrange to show them around the office and explain basics like how the phone and photocopier work, where things are stored, where to get stationary, key documents and policies and anything else that will make it easier for them to settle into the role
- Explain any office events such as tea club and make sure they are added to informal contact lists
- Make sure they know they can ask you anything in regards to work and you will be happy to help – it is important to stress this as often new members of the team are reluctant to ask as they don't want to get off on a bad foot with their new employer.

## Appendix 2 - Supporting New Starters – Managers checklist

How you treat, manage and support new employees in their early days has a strong influence on how they experience Brent Council. Your role as a line manager is to help new staff feel welcomed, supported and confident in their role.

You should actively support new employees during their first few weeks, helping them understand their role, settle into the team and become familiar with Brent Council's Values and Behaviours.

Managers are responsible for completing the key actions in the first few weeks of a new starter joining Brent Council. These actions include essential **(E)** requirements and advisory **(A)** actions, all of which contribute to a positive and effective first four months.

Use the checklist to guide you through the essential actions. You are responsible for completing the checklist and keeping it as a record of the support and guidance provided to the new starter.

Use in conjunction with the Supporting New Staff policy and procedures ([link](#))

**Employees Name:**

**Date Joined:**

**Manager completing checklist:**

	Completed	Comments
<b>Prior to starting employment</b> <i>First impressions count and it is important that we make a lasting positive impression. How we deal with a new recruit before they start is as important as after they join us.</i>		
Phone call from manager welcoming individual to the team and letting them know what to expect <b>(E)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Complete the new starters form to ensure IT access and ID badge is processed <b>(E)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ensure all required reasonable adjustments or assessments are in place for when the new employee joins <b>(E)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Draw up a clear plan of action covering the new recruit's first 4 months of probation, incorporating the <a href="#">induction checklist</a> elements and timescales detailed in the Supporting New Staff policy ( <a href="#">Link</a> ) rest of this document, ensuring that particular attention is given to regular catch ups via the 121/Check- in process. <b>(E)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>First Day</b> <i>A new recruit's experience on their first day can set the tone for the future employment relationship. We want to ensure that things get off to a good start so following the approach outlined in this section is key to ensuring that happens.</i>		

Allocate a desk for individual where practicable ensure that this desk is as close to their manager as possible. This arrangement regarding the desk is important as it can be very unsettling as a new recruit <b>(E)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Check whether the new recruit has any disability, long-term health condition, or diagnosis that may require adjustments to the workplace and if so whether a Personal Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is required to ensure safe evacuation from the building. Complete <a href="#">Disability and Workplace Adjustment Passport</a> <b>(E)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Show individual where the essential areas of the building are (e.g. toilets, kitchens, facilities, reflection room etc.). Remember to think about the basics, how kitchen taps work, entrances and exits to building, dress code, fire exits etc. They may seem minor issues, but they can have a big impact on an individual's comfort level if not clearly explained. <b>(E)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Assign a Buddy to the new recruit – a competent, friendly member of the team to act as a 'confidant' to the new starter. They should undertake that role for the first 4 months of the individual's employment. A guide to the attributes and responsibilities of a buddy is available at Appendix 1. <b>(A)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The new recruit should also be advised that the council works with its recognised trade unions and contact details can be found at <a href="#">Trade Unions</a> <b>(E)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Introductions – to immediate team and others the individual will work most closely with but don't feel you have to get round everyone on day one. <b>(E)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do something social, maybe a team lunch or team coffee break. <b>(A)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Identify a real work task for day one – but something straightforward / simple that the employee can deliver on day one. <b>(A)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Short first day – consider whether it is possible for the new starter to leave a little bit early <b>(A)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If you have not been with them throughout the day then make sure you touch base with the new starter at the end of the day to check how they have found their first day. <b>(E)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>First Week</b> <i>It is important to continue the positive feel of the first day into the remainder of the first week by ensuring that the support continues in an appropriate way. By the end of week one the new recruit should have a clear idea of how the team, service and Council work and how they fit into it.</i>		
Hold first 121 catch up meetings – these must be held weekly/fortnightly for first four months then move to monthly if performance/conduct etc is satisfactory. Ensure meeting invites are sent in advance <b>(E)</b> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Define goals and set tasks based on the job description using clear statements, to ensure the employee understands their role in relation to departmental and organisational objectives <b>(E)</b> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Set key specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound (SMART) <a href="#">goals</a> for the post to avoid misinterpretation <b>(E)</b> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Explain our culture, values / expectations. Also focus on what makes us exciting and different. This is especially important if the new recruit is not familiar with Brent and local government. <b>(E)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Manager to consider what else might be helpful to enable the individual to settle in such as a Mentor or some form of work shadowing. <b>(A)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
At close of first week, Manager to ask for feedback on how the first week has gone. <b>(E)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Week 2 up to 16 weeks</b> <i>It is important that momentum continues right up to four months to ensure that the new recruit knows they are valued and engaged. It is vital that relevant training is undertaken and that the individual is comfortable and productive in their role. Following the steps below will help determine if that is the case.</i>		

Ensure attendance at Corporate Induction. <b>(E)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Set out a training plan covering on the job training and courses that need to be completed within the first four months. If the individual is a manager ensure that they are booked on the various management training sessions. <b>(E)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Manager to give guidance to new recruit on how they can build their professional network both internally and with other organisations relevant to the role they are undertaking. <b>(A)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Continue with 121's, review objectives and provide honest and constructive feedback while addressing any issues of concern. <b>(E)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**Once completed save in employees personnel file by emailing [personnelfiling@brent.gov.uk](mailto:personnelfiling@brent.gov.uk)**

### Appendix 3 - Supporting New Staff Probation form

This form is to be used to record the outcome of a formal probation review meeting and should be used with reference to Supporting New Staff Policy and procedures ([Link](#)).

All sections must be completed. Any supporting documentation/ additional sheets must be attached to the form.

A: Details							
Name:							
Job title:		Service area:					
Work Location:		Contact no:					
Date of review meeting:			Date of end of probation period:				
Please indicate below which review meeting the form relates to, under the relevant probationary period							
16 week probation:	4 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	8 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	14 weeks (final)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
52 week probation:	8 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	20 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	32 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				44 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	50 weeks (final)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Date of review meeting if outside above set meetings:			Date of end of probation period:				

B: Please state whether expected standards of performance/ conduct/ behaviour have been met, partially met or not met.			
Met		Partially met	Not met
Where expectations have been <b>met</b> , please use the space below to make notes or highlight any feedback under each applicable factor, including any support offered, then go to section D.			
Where expectations have been <b>partially met</b> or <b>not met</b> please summarise details of this below, providing examples and continuing on a separate sheet if necessary. Please include details of any support/ learning offered:			

**C. Managers must consider how the employee has demonstrated the Council's [Values and Behaviours](#) during the probation period. Evidence provided below should inform whether expectations are assessed as met, partially met or not met.**

**Please provide examples of behaviours demonstrated, feedback given, and any support provided.**

<b>Collaborate proactively</b>	
<b>Lead inclusively</b>	
<b>Embrace change</b>	
<b>Be bold and curious</b>	
<b>Celebrate and share our success</b>	

**D: Please summarise below the areas for development and improvement identified and the plan to improve these, continuing onto a new sheet if necessary:**

<b>Area for improvement/ development</b>	<b>Action to be taken (including any development aims)</b>	<b>Date to be achieved by</b>
<b>Date of next review meeting:</b>		

**E. Employee comments**

--

<b>F: Form completion</b>	
<b>Manager's name:</b>	<b>Position:</b>
<b>Manager's signature</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Employee (name):</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Employee signature/ email:</b>	

Once completed save in employees personnel file by emailing [personnefiling@brent.gov.uk](mailto:personnefiling@brent.gov.uk)

<b>Governance</b>		
Human Resources & Organisational Development	October 2022	November 2023
Human Resources & Organisational Development	1 July 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amended probation period from 6 months to 4 months for all employees inc. graduates and apprentices</li> <li>• Removed probation period for existing employees moving to new roles internally.</li> <li>• Updated links</li> <li>• Added in support for the initial period of employment including buddying</li> <li>• Added in supporting new starters managers checklist</li> <li>• Updated probation review form</li> <li>• Made reference to Disability and Workplace adjustment passport.</li> </ul>

