

 Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers – Agreement No.14

**Process for Supporting Probationers Reviewed August 2022**

**Agreed at Committee on 12th December 2022**

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## **Introduction:**

## West Dunbartonshire Council is committed to providing effective support to probationers to assist them to work towards and achieve the Standard for Full Registration (SFR). As part of this commitment we will ensure that appropriate arrangements have been developed to support probationers during their induction year and the flexible route provision. This structured approach will mean that concerns about progress can be dealt with at an early stage and also as part of an ongoing process.

## At times some probationers experience difficulties, or concerns may arise through the induction period, and this agreement provides guidance as to how this should be managed.

## Concerns about progress should be addressed at an early stage to ensure that the appropriate support is provided to the individual to assist them to achieve and attain the professional Standard for Full Registration where possible.

## Where it appears likely that attainment of the Standard for Full Registration is not achievable this process outlines the support provided through informal and formal mechanisms including the recommendations made to the GTCS.

1. **Ongoing Support within the Teacher Induction Scheme**
2. All probationers will be provided with a named “Supporter” within their assigned school which will be a teacher or member of the management team. In secondary, this will be a teacher within the curricular department, where possible. This person will support the Probationer to identify and follow a structured process to enable them to complete their induction year. This will include drawing up a Professional Development Action Plan (PDAP) and will follow a cycle of supporter meetings, classroom observation and feedback.
3. West Dunbartonshire Council Professional Learning Team provide probationer teachers with a programme of professional learning opportunities to build upon ITE programmes and ensure opportunities for deepening knowledge and understanding, reflection and collaboration, and learning through professional enquiry. This comprises a range of Core and Opt-In experiences in order for teachers to personalise their learning to meet their own professional learning needs. An annual calendar outlining these opportunities is provided when the probationer commences in August.
4. At any stage, in line with the Equality Act 2010 if any probationer advises of particular requirements to support a disability these will be considered and reasonable adjustments made. Head Teachers / Managers must seek advice from HR and Occupational Health to ensure the appropriate supports are provided and assessments carried out.
5. **Action Planning and Self-Evaluation**
6. The probationary year is a year of learning and development with a view to achieving the Standard for Full Registration and support is continual and ongoing.
7. It is also acknowledged that the requirement for support will vary from person to person depending on successful progress. The underlying ethos with regards to probationers requiring support is to consider what can be reasonably done to enable them to achieve Full Registration and discussions cover the following points:
* Identify clearly the areas of concern, the specific areas of SFR which need to be addressed, and reflection against an action plan which details clear targets and timescales.
* Using processes of self-reflection (i.e. coaching wheels, self-evaluation logs) the probationer should be encouraged to suggest forms of support which would be helpful to their development.
* Further professional development activities should be provided to meet the probationers’ specific needs. Where appropriate adjustments may be made to timetables in order to support the probationer.
1. A written record should be kept by all involved, including the probationer, indicating the improvement to be made, support to be made available, and confirmation of the review dates. Records should include:
* dates of review meetings to discuss progress,
* agendas and notes from supporter meetings,
* records of observed sessions
1. **GTCS Profiles**
2. All probationer teachers are required to comply with the GTCS requirements for recording their professional development and performance (see Appendix 1) and a flow chart is also available which details the process through the teachers induction scheme (Appendix 2).
3. The GTCS Early Progress Report will be completed jointly by the Probationer and Supporter in October. This will be submitted to The Professional Learning Team. Additional support will then be provided to address concerns at an early stage. All the information and evidence gathered from August to December will form the basis of the Interim Profile. The Interim Profile will be submitted to GTCS in December with one of the following recommendations (see flowchart):
* Satisfactory
* Unsatisfactory (leading to Cancellation of Provision Registration)
* Cause for Concern
1. Following a recommendation of Cause for Concern, an Interim 2 Profile will be completed between January and March. During this profile period, processes of action planning, additional support and regular review will continue. The probationer will continue to have supporter meetings, observed teaching sessions and take part in professional learning opportunities. This will be considered as the Support Stage of Formalised Support, and at this stage the probationer should be made aware of their right to Trade Union representation.
2. During the Interim 2 Profile period, classroom observations should have a limited and specific focus directly linked to the targets that were set at the end of the Interim profile. These should be reflected in the action plan within the online GTCS profile, and any additional action plans that are used.
3. Where the progress of the probationer is still causing concern, a professional judgement will be made by the Head Teacher considering all the information and evidence gathered. Dependent on circumstances, the following recommendations will be made on the Interim 2 Profile:
* Satisfactory
* Unsatisfactory (recommend Cancellation of Provisional Registration)
* Cause for Concern
1. Following the Interim and Interim 2 Profiles, a Final Profile must be completed, covering the period from March to June for those who have completed an Interim 2 Profile, and January to June for those who have made satisfactory progress through the Scheme. During the Final Profile period, the probationer should continue to have support meetings, observed teaching session and take part in professional learning experiences.
2. Where recommendation at Interim 2 was Cause for Concern, support will continue using action planning, additional professional learning, and additional supporter meetings and observations where appropriate. For these probationer teachers, class contact time will be maintained at a maximum of 0.82.
3. Where recommendation at the end of Interim or Interim 2 profiles was satisfactory, the Probationer should continue with observations on a three weekly cycle and be encouraged to take sole responsibility for their professional learning and development. These probationers may wish to increase their contact time in the final term.
4. At the end of the Final Profile period a further recommendation will be made to the GTCS. This recommendation should take into account all available evidence relating to the probationer’s progress over the course of the induction year. Dependent on circumstances, the following recommendations will be made:
5. Satisfactory (the probationer meets the Standard for Full Registration)
6. Extension to provisional registration (normally 12 week extension). (This recommendation should not be seen as an automatic step and only considered where there is clear evidence to support the belief that the Probationer is likely to reach the SFR by the conclusion of the extension period. If there has been insufficient progress during the year then it may be unlikely that a further 12 weeks would result in required standards being met).

Or,

1. Recommend cancellation of registration. (This recommendation would be made would be where, despite assistance provided and even if support were to continue, the Authority holds the belief that the Probationer is unlikely to achieve the SFR).
2. **Supporting probationer performance / capability**
3. Where concerns are identified by the Supporter in relation to performance or competence, the following steps should be followed.
* Informal support through Supporter meetings. The probationer should be made aware of concerns at an early stage and informal discussions would provide them with an opportunity to address concerns. The Supporter should keep a record of when the concern was raised with the probationer.
* Additional support. The Supporter should provide additional support to the probationer and a detailed checklist of additional support has been attached in Appendix 3. At this stage an action plan in addition to the online GTCS profile should be developed to ensure that the concerns and supports are recorded with clear timelines and expectations.
* Further support from Head Teacher and Professional Learning Team. Where the informal approach (detailed above) does not resolve the concerns the Supporter should involve the Head Teacher/Education Support Officer (Professional Learning) and the support will become more formalised. This step is to allow the concerns to be escalated to the Head teacher and the support to date to be reviewed to enable further support mechanisms to be identified and implemented. It is at this stage that the HR section should be notified due to the potential for termination of the probationer contract. It is important that the probationer is fully aware of the concerns and the associated implications and this should be clearly communicated to them and confirmed in writing. At this stage the probationer should be invited to a meeting to discuss the concerns, the supports to date and the progress being made and also set out another review period and an updated action plan. The probationer should be made aware of their right to representation from a colleague or Trade Union representative. At this meeting a date will be agreed to review progress and this will inform any future meetings.
* Review of ability to continue with the Induction Scheme / recommendation for Extension / recommendation for cancellation. Where concerns are significant and the above supports are not achieving the desired improvements it will be necessary to move to a further formal meeting where the additional support and action planning used to support the probationer to date will once again be reviewed and a decision made about the feasibility of the probationer meeting the requirements of the Standards for Full Registration. As before, a meeting should be convened and this should be clearly communicated in writing and the probationer should be clear on the process and potential outcomes. They should also be made aware of their right to representation and the HR Business Partner should be informed.
1. **Recommendation for Extension**
2. When an extension to Provisional Registration is recommended, the Head Teacher responsible for the probationer will need to provide evidence supporting the recommendation for extension. The Education Support Officer – Professional Learning would also provide information as required. A Case Overview for Extension may be completed as required by the GTCS.
3. If a Case Overview is required the probationer will be provided with a copy.
4. **Recommendation for Cancellation**
5. When a recommendation is made for the cancellation of Provisional Registration, the Head Teacher responsible for the probationer will need to provide evidence supporting the decision. The Education Support Officer – Professional Learning would also provide information as required. A Case Overview for Extension will be completed and submitted to the GTCS.
6. The probationer will be provided with a copy of the Case Overview.
7. Whilst a recommendation for Cancellation of Provisional Registration will usually be made at the Review points (December, March, June) it is important to recognise that, where significant concerns regarding Fitness to Teach are identified, the Headteacher and ESO Professional Learning may deem it necessary to recommend immediate cancellation of Provisional Registration. This is in line with the GTCS Framework for Teacher Competence.
8. In line with terms of the Training Agreement, where the recommendation is for cancellation of Provisional registration, this will result in the Probationer Training placement being terminated with relevant contractual notice.
9. In line with the Termination of the Training agreement (termination of a fixed term contract) the probationer will have the right to appeal this decision. This appeal must be made in writing to the Senior Education Officer responsible for CLPL within 14 days of the decision to terminate.
10. **Clearly Evidencing Rationale for Decisions**
11. Where recommendations of Unsatisfactory, Cause for Concern, Extension or Cancellation are made, every effort must be made to clearly evidence the rationale for the decision.
12. In addition to the normal information gathered for Probationers, the following detailed evidence will be required:
* Supporter meetings notes, the contents of which are agreed, dated and signed by the probationer and Supporter.
* Observed session notes, the contents of which are agreed, dated and signed by the probationer and Supporter – there must be a balance between good practices and aspects of the SFR. The observation feedback must give the reasons why the recommendation for cancellation was made. If the issue was not apparent from the start, make sure there is a reference to when the issue arose.
* Records of self-reflection related to professional learning and development experiences – does the probationer know what his/her development needs are? Examples would include coaching wheels, self-evaluation logs, and notes from professional dialogue.
* Records of minutes of additional meetings, the contents of which are agreed, dated and signed by the probationer and Supporter.
* Record of additional support measures put into place by the school and/or local authority, dated and signed.
* Details of action planning that have been implemented.
* Information on how the school tried to support the probationer.
* Additional relevant information.
1. There should also be clear evidence in the above to demonstrate:
* When issues were raised, and how they were raised.
* What observations were carried out and by whom.
* What remedial action was taken; support measures put in place, what guidance was given by the Supporter as to what to do to address targets.
* What professional development experiences were recommended and implemented.
* That the probationers personal Professional Learning matches the needs identified in the action plan.
1. All information provided above must be shared with the probationer, signed and dated. If for example, there are phone calls from parents, these would be recorded and shared.
2. The Professional Learning Team will keep records detailing additional help and support that has been given by the Local Authority.
3. In accordance with the Training Agreement and the General Data Protection Regulations, information relevant to the progress of probationer teachers will be shared between West Dunbartonshire Council (the employer) and the General Teaching Council for Scotland.
4. **Support within the Flexible Route to Full Registration**
5. The processes outlined above refer to those probationer teachers who are following the Teacher Induction Scheme programme. Where possible, these processes should be provided for those teachers who are undertaking the Flexible Route to Full Registration, being cognisant of their different working patterns and the needs of the Service.
6. Where possible, and when undertaking longer term contracts, Flexible Route Probationers should be given the following support:
* an assigned Supporter within the school or department
* regular meetings to discuss progress
* regular classroom observations and feedback (at least one observation for every period of service of more than 19 days, and at least one a term for those on longer term contracts)
* opportunities for professional dialogue
* opportunities to participate in relevant and appropriate professional learning
1. Flexible Route Probationers will be supported at local authority level by the Principal Teacher (Early Phase and Supply) and the Education Support Officer (Professional Learning).
2. A calendar of professional learning opportunities will be provided to all Flexible Route probationers. Schools should encourage attendance where the needs of the Service allow.
3. Concerns regarding the progress of a Flexible Route Probationer should be shared with the ESO (Professional Learning) and support should follow the above processes where possible.
4. Where concerns about the performance and capability of a flexible route probationer are significant this can result in terms being introduced to allow them to remain on the supply list.
5. In circumstances where concerns are significant and / or previous supports have not resulted in the desired improvement it may be appropriate to recommend cancellation and remove a Flexible Route probationer from the supply list.
6. In this instance a meeting should take place with the probationer outlining the concerns, the support to date and the reason for recommendation for cancellation and removal from supply list. The probationer should be allowed to respond to this and feed in any additional information.
7. If the decision is made to remove from the supply list the probationer should be given the right to appeal to the Senior Education Officer responsible for Professional Learning.
8. **Transfer from Induction scheme to Flexible route**
9. In some circumstances a probationer who commences on the Induction Scheme will request to transfer to the Flexible Route. If this is supported and they are allowed to join the supply list support, monitoring and management will continue using the same frameworks. It is important that all probationers are supported to achieve the Standard for Full Registration.

**Supporting Documents:**

Appendix 1: Recommendations and Review Points

Appendix 2: Completion of Profile Requirements

Appendix 3: Support within the Induction Scheme