

## **ASSESSOR'S PROGRESS REPORT TO THE Lothian VALUATION JOINT BOARD**

5<sup>th</sup> September 2022

### **1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To provide members with an overview of current service delivery, priorities, risks and future direction.
- 1.2 It should be noted that most staff remain working at home at the current time or on a hybrid basis, part home based, part office based.

### **2.0 ELECTORAL REGISTRATION – MAINTENANCE**

- 2.1 Since the last progress report to the Board in June 2022 all maintenance tasks supporting the registration process have continued.
- 2.2 Key processing volumes reflecting the period June to September inclusive are shown below.

	Edinburgh	Midlothian	West Lothian	East Lothian	Totals
Additions	11,626	1,426	1,823	1,572	16,447
Deletions	12,839	1,313	1,497	1,575	17,224
Amendments	453	41	138	79	711

### **3.0 ELECTORAL REGISTRATION – HOUSEHOLD CANVASS 2022**

- 3.1 The annual household canvass has begun. Phone canvass started on the 23<sup>rd</sup> August and door to door canvass started on the 28<sup>th</sup> July. Door to door canvass will be adhere to strict procedures to mitigate as far as possible any risk from Covid-19.
- 3.2 The data matching process has already taken place and the statistics are shown below alongside the 2020 & 2021 figures for comparative purposes.

#### Property Matching Scores

	2020	2021	2022
National Data Matching	58%	58%	58%
Data Matching Post-Local Data	67%	72%	73.80%

#### Elector Matching Scores

Electors Matched	75.50%	75.60%	76.40%
------------------	--------	--------	--------

#### Property Matching Routes

Number of properties in Route 1	293,652	319,564	333,529
Number of properties in Route 2	129,863	108,923	100,459
Number of properties in Route 3	17,787	17,931	17,945
Response to E-Comms	40%	36%	44.90%

#### Current Absent Voter Numbers

	<u>Postal Voters</u>	<u>Proxy Voters</u>	<u>Postal Proxy Voters</u>
<i>City of Edinburgh Council</i>	107,418	1,298	267
<i>East Lothian Council</i>	24,087	202	19
<i>Midlothian Council</i>	19,433	102	20
<i>West Lothian Council</i>	33,330	182	19

## **4.0 ELECTORAL LEGISLATION – ELECTIONS**

4.1 There are currently no by-elections scheduled at the moment.

## **5.0 ELECTORAL REGISTRATION ENGAGEMENT**

5.1 The annual electoral registration household canvass, starting in July, allows a unique engagement opportunity with each residential household across the four constituent council areas. To maximise response rates different communication channels continue to be utilised including eCanvass (email), phone calls, house visits conducted by canvassers and traditional paper canvass communications.

This year, as part of the eCanvass, an additional reminder email was issued to non-responding properties. This resulted in an increased response rate of 45% prior to the issue of paper Canvass Communication A forms. During the 2021 canvass, where no reminder was issued, the eCanvass response rate at this stage was approximately 36%.

The annual household canvass has been further promoted online through social media channels and the LVJB website. Messaging has been focussed on key issue dates, working in partnership with communications departments from the four constituent councils to amplify messaging.

Whilst the focus of engagement in recent months has been the annual household canvass, other engagement activities have taken place including the following: -

- Attendance at citizenship ceremonies to ensure new citizens are given the opportunity to register to vote or update their registration details.
- Registration stalls organised at each of the 4 Universities' Freshers Fairs to promote voter registration in the student population.
- Advertisements taken out in various university publications aimed at Freshers.
- Care homes to be contacted with a bespoke household canvass communication to encourage registration of residents.

## 6.0 VALUATION ROLL – MAINTENANCE

6.1 For the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 25<sup>th</sup> August 2022, 624 changes have been made to the valuation roll with respect to running roll activities. These changes comprised 129 amendments to existing entries, 267 deletions and 228 inserts. There has also been an additional 1,316 name changes.

	Edinburgh	Midlothian	W. Lothian	E. Lothian	Total
Inserts	160	23	29	16	288
Deletions	188	15	45	19	267
Amendments	84	19	15	11	129

## 7.0 VALUATION ROLL – APPEALS

7.1 As previously reported LVJB have c.17,000 outstanding appeals that have been lodged on the basis of Covid 19. The disposal date for these appeals is 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

7.2 It is still unknown how these appeals will eventually be resolved, either by hearing a test case, the withdrawal of appeals by appellants or by settlement. Though legislation covering these appeals has not as yet been passed it is likely that Covid appeals will be valid for a short period of time, potentially 14 days or so.

7.3 It should perhaps be noted that the headline figure of 17,000 will include more than one appeal for the same property. The number of properties appealed will be nearer to 10,000.

## 8.0 COUNCIL TAX – MAINTENANCE

8.1 Over the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 25<sup>th</sup> August 2022, 2,275 new houses have been added to the list. The numbers for each constituent council and the number of properties within each band are shown in the table below.

<b>Band</b>					
	<b>Edinburgh</b>	<b>Midlothian</b>	<b>West Lothian</b>	<b>East Lothian</b>	<b>Total</b>
A	18	7	2	3	<b>30</b>
B	49	2	45	11	<b>107</b>
C	220	13	91	6	<b>330</b>
D	269	23	91	67	<b>450</b>
E	290	75	76	61	<b>502</b>
F	143	110	111	101	<b>465</b>
G	175	43	74	69	<b>361</b>
H	27	2	0	1	<b>30</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,191</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>319</b>	

8.2 There are currently c.200 outstanding Council Tax appeals. Council tax appeals are scheduled to be cited for the next diet of hearings in October/November. Resolution of appeals continues on an uncited basis where possible.

## 9.0 Governance Strategy Group

9.1 A meeting of the Governance Strategy Group has not been held since the recent Local Government Elections. Due to my impending retirement at the end of September it may be that the next meeting should be scheduled after a new Interim Assessor is appointed. However I would be more than happy to attend a Governance Strategy Group meeting before I retire should board members wish to do so.

## 10.0 Budgetary Matters

10.1 The rent for the Board's premises at South Gyle has been under discussion for a number of months. An independent surveyor has been negotiating on the Boards behalf with our landlord the City of Edinburgh Council. The rent payable up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 was £340,000 per annum. The initial rent review proposed by CEC was £462,000 per annum from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022.

10.2 After negotiations the reviewed rent offered is now £387,000 per annum. I am willing to agree this figure but have intimated my wish to present this to the board for their consideration before any formal agreement is reached.

10.3 I would ask the board for their agreement to this adjusted rent review. The next review is due on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2027.

10.4 It is also prudent to point out that the Boards non-domestic rates liability is likely to rise from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 when the 2023 revaluation comes into effect. I would estimate that any additional liability would potentially be in the region of £50,000 to £60,000 per annum. I should point out that the rate in the pound is unknown at this time and the above figures assumes a rate of 50p in the pound.

## **11.0 2022 Staff Pay Award**

11.1 The boards budget for 2022/23 was based on a likely pay award of 3% for all staff. In recent days Unison have been offered a 5% increase which may potentially go higher. Additional funding has been provided by the Scottish Government to facilitate this increased award. I would request that any award over the budgeted 3% is provided to the board as additional requisition and for that funding to be retained in the Board's budget in subsequent years.

## **12.0 Period 4 Financial Statement**

12.1 I note the content of the Treasurer's Period 4 Financial Statement.

## **13.0 HR Policy Updates**

13.1 I have attached at appendix 1, two new policies, one updated policy and a policies cover note for the Board's approval.

13.2 The two new policies have regard to our Caution Premises Register Procedure and a Probation Policy for new employees. The updated policy is in relation to Annual Leave.

## **14.0 Handover Process and Future Budget Strategy**

14.1 I have started the handover process with potential candidates for the position of interim assessor. These discussions have included current budget position, potential longer term budget strategy and tentative discussions regarding the next stage of transformation.

## **15.0 RECOMMENDATION**

15.1 The Board is asked to note the content of this report, agree the rent increase for 17A South Gyle Crescent and approve the HR policy updates, including the Hybrid Working Policy presented at the previous Board meeting in June.

**Gary Elliott**  
**ASSESSOR & ERO**



### LVJB – HR Policy Updates – 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Policy Name	New/Updated	Summary
<b>Annual Leave Policy</b>	Updated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing policy very limited on information, concentrates on calculation of annual leave entitlement.</li> <li>Updated policy provides more comprehensive information on managing annual leave.</li> <li>Proposed automatic carry forward up to 5 days annual leave, borrowing annual leave from the following year in exceptional circumstances and being reimbursed for annual leave if a sickness absence procedure is followed and self-certificate is provided.</li> </ul>
<b>Caution Premises Register Procedure</b>	New	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Caution Premises Register” exists, however, no written procedure in relation to how we validate new additions or how we periodically review the existing records.</li> </ul>
<b>Probation Policy</b>	New	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No existing provision for probation periods.</li> <li>Focus on new employees, up to first 12 months in post.</li> <li>Emphasis on supporting employees, ensuring we are providing appropriate skills, training and guidance early on in order to reach and maintain our required standards.</li> <li>A follow on from induction.</li> <li>Provides employees with more opportunities to have dedicated protected time with the line manager to discuss how things are going and seek focussed support if required.</li> <li>Equally should provide the opportunity to confirm what is going well and commend achievements so far.</li> <li>Supports managers to shape/mould new employees to required realistic standards, so that substandard performance is not condoned or becomes the norm.</li> </ul>



## **Annual Leave Policy**

## ANNUAL LEAVE POLICY

Approved By	Lothian Valuation Joint Board
Date of Approval	TBC
Owner	Hannah Carruthers, HR Manager
Issue	1
Identity	Annual Leave Policy
Location of electronic copy	SharePoint
Location of paper copy	Human Resources
Change Authority	Human Resources, Corporate Leadership Team and Trade Unions
Review Frequency	Annual or as required by legislation
Next Review Date	June 2023

Issue	Author	Date	Details of Change
1	Hannah Carruthers	June 2022	New Policy incorporating “Annual Leave, Broken Periods of Service and Floating Days” document.

## Contents

1.0	Aims and Objectives.....	10
2.0	Scope of the Policy.....	10
3.0	Monitor and Review .....	10
4.0	Equal Opportunities .....	10
5.0	Responsibility for this Policy .....	10
6.0	Principles of Annual Leave .....	11
7.0	Annual Leave Year Dates .....	11
8.0	Annual Leave Entitlements and Accrual .....	11
9.0	Public Holidays .....	12
10.0	Booking Annual Leave.....	12
11.0	Carry Forward of Annual Leave into following Annual Leave Year .....	13
12.0	Using Annual Leave from the following leave year .....	14
13.0	Cancellation of Annual Leave.....	14
14.0	Annual Leave and periods of Sickness Absence .....	15
15.0	Annual Leave and periods of Special Leave .....	16
16.0	Related Policies .....	16
17.0	Local Agreement .....	16
	Appendix 1 – Table for Broken Periods of Service.....	17

## **1.0 Aims and Objectives**

- 1.1 The aim of this policy is to provide managers and employees with guidance on annual leave to ensure that this is applied fairly and consistently across LVJB in accordance with equality and diversity principles.

## **2.0 Scope of the Policy**

- 2.1 This policy relates to all employees of LVJB.

## **3.0 Monitor and Review**

- 3.1 HR is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and supporting procedures and will conduct reviews at appropriate intervals.
- 3.2 Anyone who feels they have been unfairly treated or discriminated against should notify the HR Manager.

## **4.0 Equal Opportunities**

- 4.1 LVJB is committed to equality of opportunity for all its employees and the terms of this policy and its supporting procedures and guidance notes are designed to ensure the fair and transparent treatment for all staff irrespective of age, race, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender or contractual status. An Equality Impact Assessment is undertaken on this policy each time it is reviewed and updated.

## **5.0 Responsibility for this Policy**

- 5.1 Human Resources. Any changes to this policy and supporting procedures will be made in consultation with appropriate bodies.
- 5.2 LVJB reserves the right to update HR Policies in line with new or updated Employment Legislation.

## 6.0 Principles of Annual Leave

- 6.1 Annual leave is vital to enable employees to maintain an appropriate work/life balance allowing employees to rest and recuperate effectively.
- 6.2 LVJB provides employees with holiday provision which exceeds the minimum statutory requirement.

## 7.0 Annual Leave Year Dates

- 7.1 The holiday year at LVJB starts on 1<sup>st</sup> January and finishes on 31<sup>st</sup> December each year.

## 8.0 Annual Leave Entitlements and Accrual

Annual Leave Entitlement				Public Holidays
Category of Staff	Service is less than 5 years	Service is more than 5 years but less than 10 years ★	Service is 10 years or more, continuous with LVJB, or its predecessor authorities ★★	
LVJB Employees	26 days	31 days	34 days	All employee groups are entitled to 12 general or public holidays per leave year.  6 of the 12 days are taken on fixed dates. The remaining 6 days are treated as “floating days” and included in annual leave entitlements.
Chief Officers	33 days	33 days	34 days	

- ★ For the purpose of assessing such service, all previous service with any local authority or public body as defined in the Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government, etc) (Modification) Order 1999, as amended will be reckoned irrespective of the length of any intervening breaks in service.
- ★★ For the purpose of assessing such service, all previous service with Lothian Valuation Joint Board (or its predecessor authorities) will be reckoned, provided there has been no break in service.

- 8.1 Annual leave entitlement can be viewed on [Imperago](#).

- 8.2 Annual leave entitlement is pro-rated for part-time employees in accordance with the number of hours they work per week.
- 8.3 If an employee changes their working hours or pattern then their annual leave entitlement will be re-calculated to take account of the change.
- 8.4 Where an employee's length of service reaches five or ten years, their new increased annual leave entitlement will be effective from the 1<sup>st</sup> January of the following year.
- 8.5 Where an employee starts employment at LVJB part way through the leave year, they will receive a pro-rata entitlement to annual leave. See Appendix 1 – Broken Periods of Service.
- 8.6 Where an employee leaves employment at LVJB part way through the leave year, HR will calculate their entitlement from the start of the leave year to their leaving date. See Appendix 1 – Broken Periods of Service.
- 8.7 In exceptional circumstances, for operational reasons, if an employee who is leaving LVJB is unable to take their remaining annual leave entitlement before their leaving date, then this annual leave will be paid to the employee, via the payroll, in their final pay.
- 8.8 If an employee has taken more leave than the entitlement due to them from the start of the leave year to their termination date, a deduction will be made from the employee's final pay to reconcile this.
- 8.9 Employees continue to accrue annual leave at their normal rate if they are on a period of sick leave, maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave or parental leave.
- 8.10 In cases of maternity leave, adoption leave and additional paternity leave, where employees are prevented from taking their full leave entitlement in the appropriate leave year, the leave may be carried forward. This leave can be taken at any point during the leave year subject to the normal arrangements for authorising annual leave.

## **9.0 Public Holidays**

- 9.1 In addition to annual leave entitlement, LVJB recognises designated non-working days over Christmas (2 days), New Year (2 days), Good Friday and Easter Monday.
- 9.2 The Christmas holidays are determined each year in accordance with when Christmas Day and New Year's Day falls.

## **10.0 Booking Annual Leave**

### **10.1 Notice of Annual Leave**

- 10.1.1 Employees should make requests for annual leave as early as they possibly can to ensure that annual leave will not clash with their workload or that their work can be covered by other team members.

- 10.1.2 As a minimum, employees should provide notice which is twice as long as the period of annual leave they are requesting. For example, if an employee wished to request one week of annual leave, then they should request this two weeks prior to the annual leave start date.
- 10.1.3 It is recognised that, occasionally, employees require to request annual leave at short notice. Line managers should endeavour to accommodate such requests, based on operational needs at the time.
- 10.1.4 Employees should not request to take more than three weeks of annual leave in one continuous block. Where an employee is requesting a period of annual leave which is for longer than three weeks, the decision to approve the annual leave will rest with the line manager and their view on whether or not the employee's workload and service can be maintained for the duration of the leave.

## 10.2 Requesting Annual Leave

- 10.2.1 Annual leave should be requested through [Imperago](#).
- 10.2.2 Line managers should be made aware of any short notice or exceptional requests prior to submission on Imperago.
- 10.2.3 Line managers will approve or decline annual leave requests via their manager login on Imperago. Line Managers should respond to requests as soon as possible.
- 10.2.4 Line managers will decide to approve or decline annual leave based on the business and operational needs of the organisation. Annual Leave requests should be initially dealt with by the line manager on a "first come first served" basis.
- 10.2.5 Where it is necessary for a line manager to decline a request for annual leave, the manager and the employee should discuss alternative dates which may be possible.
- 10.2.6 Whilst there will not normally be a "closed" period for leave (i.e. there will not be imposed a total ban on leave taken by any group of staff during a particular period of the year), the Assessor reserves the right to alter or restrict leave at peak times or in emergency situations should the exigencies of the service require it.

## 11.0 Carry Forward of Annual Leave into following Annual Leave Year

- 11.1 Employees are strongly encouraged to use all of their annual leave within the current annual leave year.
- 11.2 Line managers should regularly review each employee's annual leave balance throughout the year to ensure that employees are consistently using their leave and that they do not

build up an amount that will be impossible to use or unacceptable to carry forward into the next annual leave year.

- 11.3 Employees will normally be permitted to carry over up to five days (pro rata for part time employees) of annual leave into the next annual leave year without authorisation. Employees with less than five years' service will be permitted to carry over up to four days of annual leave, to ensure compliance with the Working Time Directive. Annual leave which is carried forward should normally be used within the first three months of the new annual leave year. Up to five days (pro rata for part time employees and employees with less than five years' service) of outstanding leave entitlement on Imperago will automatically be carried over at the start of the new leave year.
- 11.4 In line with the Working Time Directive, all employees must use 28 days of holiday (or pro rata equivalent) each year. Therefore, when requesting to carry forward annual leave, employees must ensure they have taken this minimum amount over the last year. Line managers must not allow carry forward of annual leave which would be in breach of the Working Time Directive.

## **12.0 Using Annual Leave from the following leave year**

- 12.1 In exceptional circumstances, employees, with the permission of their line manager, are permitted to bring forward up to five days of annual leave from the following year. It must be ensured that the minimum amount of annual leave, as stipulated by the Working Time Directive, is still available to the employee in the following year.
- 12.2 It is recognised that new entrants to LVJB may have an insufficient leave entitlement to cover pre-booked holidays. Annual leave may be authorised by the line manager to take a reasonable period of unpaid leave to cover these arrangements.
- 12.2 Where such arrangements have been made your line manager should inform HR so that Imperago can be updated accordingly.

## **13.0 Cancellation of Annual Leave**

### **13.1 Cancellation by the Employee**

- 13.1.1 Where an employee requests to cancel a period of arranged annual leave, this is normally unproblematic. However, a line manager may choose to refuse such a request if there is no other time in the annual leave year that the employee could be on holiday without seriously affecting the service provision or operational needs.
- 13.1.2 A line manager may also need to refuse a request to cancel a period of annual leave if, for any reason, LVJB would incur costs if the employee did not take their annual leave at the agreed time, for example, if the line manager had already bought in contracted cover for the employee.

## 13.2 Cancellation by the Line Manager

- 13.2.1 Occasionally, in exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary for the line manager to ask an employee to cancel a period of arranged annual leave, for example, where this is a shortage of staff due to sickness absence or where there is pressure to meet an unprecedented deadline.
- 13.2.2 Where a line manager feels it is necessary to ask an employee to cancel a period of annual leave, they will discuss all possible options and alternatives with the employee.

## 14.0 Annual Leave and periods of Sickness Absence

- 14.1 Where an employee becomes unwell during a period of annual leave, they may be able to reclaim their annual leave. The employee should follow the normal reporting and documenting procedure as detailed in the LVJB Sickness Absence Management policy and procedure, reporting to their line manager on day one of their sickness absence. The days on which the employee is unwell will be classified as sickness absence, not as annual leave. The normal Sickness Absence Certificate (or GP Fit Note for absences in excess of 7 days) must be provided. The employee and line manager should discuss arrangements for the employee to take the missed annual leave at a later date.
- 14.2 For the duration of the period of sickness absence, the employee will be paid appropriately, in accordance with their entitlement to occupational sick pay.
- 14.3 Where an employee is unwell on a public holiday, they will not be able to claim this day of leave back into their personal entitlement.
- 14.4 Where an employee is on sickness absence leave, they continue to accrue annual leave at the normal rate. This can lead to a build-up of annual leave which may need to be carried forward into the following annual leave year. The maximum amount of leave that is permitted to be carried over to the next leave year will be subject to the statutory level (currently 20 days per leave year).
- 14.5 In cases of sickness absence over 3 months, an employee's annual leave will be abated, to an amount pro-rated to the period of actual service given during the year, however this should not fall below the statutory minimum figure (currently 28 days, including public holidays).
- 14.6 In the case of significant periods of long-term sickness absence, the outstanding leave can be taken at any point during the leave year subject to the normal arrangements for authorising annual leave.
- 14.7 Where an employee is on annual leave and requires to self-isolate for health reasons under Government legislation, they will not be able to claim the annual leave back, except where

the leave is converted to sickness absence leave. If the employee does not have grounds to certify as on sickness absence, they may discuss with their line manager the possibility of converting the days into working from home and using their annual leave another time. This discussion must take place before the employee commences working from home.

## **15.0 Annual Leave and periods of Special Leave**

- 15.1 Where an employee requires to use Special Leave during a period of annual leave, they may be able to reclaim their annual leave. The employee should follow the normal reporting and documenting procedure as detailed in the Special Leave Policy, reporting to their line manager as early as possible. The relevant days will be recorded as special leave, not as annual leave. The employee and line manager should discuss arrangements for the employee to take the missed annual leave at a later date.

## **16.0 Related Policies**

- [Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Special Leave Policy](#)
- [Working Time Directive](#)

## **17.0 Local Agreement**

- 17.1 This document is a local collective agreement between the Board and the recognised Trade Unions. Every effort will be made by both parties to ensure that this document will be maintained as a local collective agreement and adjusted by agreement to meet changing future needs. In the event of failure to reach agreement, both parties reserve the right to terminate this local agreement by giving four months' notice in writing. In such circumstances the terms of the local agreement will cease to apply to existing and future employees.

### Appendix 1 – Table for Broken Periods of Service

The table below should be to calculate annual leave entitlement for:

- (i) new entrants with less than 1 year’s service;
- (ii) employees leaving LVJB part way through a holiday year.

Completed Months of Continuous Service in Current Leave Year **	Annual Leave – Whole Year Entitlement		
	26 days	31 days	34 days
1	2	3	3
2	4	5	6
3	6	8	8
4	8	10	11
5	11	13	14
6	13	15	17
7	15	18	20
8	17	21	23
9	19	23	25
10	21	26	28
11	24	28	31

\*\* A “complete month” means the period between a date in one month and the immediately preceding date in the following month (for example, 15 February to 14 March inclusive).



## **Caution Premises Register Procedure**



## Caution Premises Register Procedure

At LVJB the Health and Safety of our employees is paramount. Minimising exposure to unnecessary risks and hazards is key to our values and operational effectiveness.

There are a number of premises, within our geographical boundaries of responsibility, where there is potential for either physical or mental harm to LVJB staff who require to approach or visit the property.

To minimise the opportunity for our staff to be exposed to hazards or unwelcome behaviour in the course of their duties, LVJB has developed a “Caution Premises Register” which records the details of any properties which should not be visited by LVJB employees.

The Caution Premises Register can be viewed [here](#). Premises on the register are also flagged on our DVS system and EROS system.

Adding a property to the register must be done via completion of the Caution Premises Register – Registration Form. Details of the property, alongside justification for the registration, must be provided.

LVJB takes a zero-tolerance approach to work-related violence. Any employee who is the victim of assault whilst in the course of their duties or as a result of work must report the violent incident as soon as possible to their line manager. Please contact Hannah Carruthers, HR Manager, if you require any guidance or support.

### Reasons for Registration on the Caution Premises Register:

Generally, a premises should be registered where there is a potential opportunity for any LVJB staff approaching the property to be exposed to risks or hazards. The table below provides some guidance on typical risks; however, this should not be considered to be an exhaustive list:

Known behaviour of occupant:	<p>Occupant is known to display aggressive or violent behaviour towards visitors.</p> <p>Occupant may have personal needs which require that visitors do not approach their property.</p>
Known behaviour of animals:	Premises is known to occupy pets which behave aggressively or dangerously towards visitors.

Known hazards at property:	Property is known to be hazardous. Examples may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of unacceptable and potentially harmful levels of dirt/rubbish;</li> <li>• Presence of potentially harmful items such as used syringes;</li> <li>• Presence of faeces;</li> <li>• Presence of slippery or hazardous ground to access premises;</li> <li>• Inadequate lighting</li> </ul>
Location:	Local environment is known to be dangerous for visitors.

**Annual Review of Registered Premises:**

The reasons for a premises being added to the register should be reviewed every 12 months. The review should consider if any circumstances related to registration on the register have changed. For example, checking if the occupant has changed, or any other relevant information known to us.

When the annual review has been undertaken, the form must be completed and submitted to HR.

**Related Signposting:**

- [Violence to Employees at Work Policy](#)
- Training is available on related subjects such as Conflict Management, Dealing with Difficult Situations and Communicating Effectively. Log into [My PaTH](#) to book onto the waiting list.

**Lothian Valuation Joint Board  
Caution Premises Register – Registration Form**

Please complete the following form providing accurate and factual information and forward it to:  
[Hannah Carruthers](#), HR Manager.

<b>Details of Premises to be added to Caution Premises Register:</b>	
Property Address (inc postcode):	
Reason/s property should be added to register:	Known behaviour of occupant: <input type="checkbox"/> Known behaviour of animals: <input type="checkbox"/> Known hazards at property: <input type="checkbox"/> Location: <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): <input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide further details to substantiate why the property should be added to the Caution Premises Register:	
Could the property be approached with control measures in place, for example (not exhaustive): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canvass only?</li> <li>• Two person visit?</li> <li>• Advance phone call or email?</li> </ul>	

<b>Authorisation:</b>	
Line Manager Name:	
Line Manager Comments:	
Date of Completion:	

<b>HR Use Only:</b>	
Property added to Caution Premises Register:	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Date property added to Caution Premises Register (if applicable):	
Date ICT Informed (add to DVS system):	
Review Due Date (12 months from submission):	

<b>Review of Premises – (To be completed by original submitter)</b>	
Date of Review:	
Are the reasons for inclusion on the Caution Premises Register still relevant?  E.g., does the same occupant still live at the property? Have any of the circumstances changed?	
Should the property remain on the Caution Premises Register:	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please state reason/s property should remain on Caution Premises Register:	Known behaviour of occupant: <input type="checkbox"/> Known behaviour of animals: <input type="checkbox"/> Known hazards at property: <input type="checkbox"/> Location: <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): <input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide further details to substantiate why the property should remain on the Caution Premises Register:	
If not, please provide further details to validate why the property should be removed from the Caution Premises Register:	

<b>Declaration:</b>	
Line Manager Name:	
Line Manager Comments:	
Date of Completion:	

<b>HR Use Only:</b>	
Property retained on Caution Premises Register:	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
ICT Informed as appropriate:	
Review Due Date (12 months):	

**GDPR:** The information provided on this form will be processed in accordance with GDPR regulations and will only be disclosed within LVJB to members of staff who need to know it in order to carry out their duties. Relevant information will be disclosed outside LVJB where it is required by law to do so.



## Probation Policy



## Contents

1.0	Aims and Objectives.....	27
2.0	Scope of the Policy.....	27
3.0	Monitor and Review.....	27
4.0	Equal Opportunities.....	28
5.0	Responsibility for this Policy.....	28
6.0	What is a “Probationary Period”?.....	28
7.0	Procedure.....	30
7.3	Routine Meetings.....	30
7.4	Early Training and Development.....	30
7.6	First Review Meeting.....	31
7.7	Second Review Meeting.....	32
7.8	Final Review Meeting.....	33
7.8.2	Extending the Probationary Period.....	34
8.0	Procedure for Dismissal.....	36
9.0	Early Dismissal.....	36
10.0	Appeals Procedure.....	37
11.0	Absence During the Probation Period.....	38
12.0	Related Policies:.....	38

## **1.0 Aims and Objectives**

- 1.1 Subsequent and supplementary to Induction, the purpose of the Probation Policy is to support new employees to integrate successfully into their new role and LVJB as an organisation.
- 1.2 The probation process provides clarity to new employees in relation to understanding LVJB as an organisation, our culture and ways of working, alongside standards expected of employees in their roles.
- 1.3 The aim of this policy is to provide managers and employees with guidance on probationary periods and to ensure that this process is undertaken fairly and consistently across LVJB in accordance with equality and diversity principles.
- 1.4 LVJB recognises that a supportive and developmental probation process is vital in providing the appropriate level of support and training for new members of staff on commencement of their employment.

## **2.0 Scope of the Policy**

- 2.1 This policy relates to all newly appointed employees, whose terms and conditions of employment state that their appointment is subject to a probationary period. **Add to future Statements of Particular.**
- 2.2 Performance issues which arise beyond the probation period should be raised with the HR Manager.

## **3.0 Monitor and Review**

- 3.1 HR is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and supporting procedures and will conduct reviews at appropriate intervals.
- 3.2 Anyone who feels they have been unfairly treated or discriminated against as part of probationary period process should notify the HR Manager.

3.3 All documentation relating to staff as part of probation will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and related documentation will be subject to the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as appropriate.

#### **4.0 Equal Opportunities**

4.1 LVJB is committed to equality of opportunity for all its employees and the terms of this policy and its supporting procedures and guidance notes are designed to ensure the fair and transparent treatment for all staff irrespective of age, race, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender or contractual status. An Equality Impact Assessment is undertaken on this policy each time it is reviewed and updated.

#### **5.0 Responsibility for this Policy**

5.1 Human Resources. Any changes to this policy and supporting procedures will be made in consultation with appropriate bodies.

5.2 LVJB reserves the right to update HR Policies in line with new or updated Employment Legislation.

#### **6.0 What is a “Probationary Period”?**

6.1 The probationary period provides LVJB with an opportunity for communication and dialogue with the new employee around induction, orientation and performance during the early stages of employment and allows capacity to assess the performance, skills, capability and conduct of a new member of staff during the probation period.

6.2 The purpose of the probationary period is to maximise the support provided to new employees in order to ensure they have the required knowledge, skills and ability to efficiently undertake the role to which they have been appointed. It also gives new employees the opportunity to familiarise themselves with their new role and to assess their suitability to the post and to LVJB.

6.3 The length of the probation period will be stated in the terms and conditions of employment. **Add to future Statements of Particular.**

- 6.4 The probation period maximises opportunity to discuss the new employee’s performance and development by utilising structured meetings alongside informal discussion as required. The length of probation and associated meetings will normally be:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Probation Period</b>	<b>First Review Meeting</b>	<b>Second Review Meeting</b>	<b>Final Review Meeting</b>
GS1 – AP4	6 months	2 months	4 months	6 months
AP5 – PO3	9 months	2 months	6 months	9 months
PO4 – PO7	12 months	2 months	6 months	12 months
Temporary Posts	Dependant on exact contract length and grade. Seek advice from HR Manager.			

- 6.5 When an employee moves jobs within LVJB, and there is a subsequent problem of underperformance, support should be sought from the HR Manager, along with guidance in the Management of Performance procedure.

## **7.0 Procedure**

7.1 All new employees should be fully supported to integrate into LVJB, their team, their working environment and their new role. The probation process should work alongside induction and My PaTH to help create a positive and supportive working environment.

## **7.2 My PaTH**

7.2.1 Line Managers should ensure that new employees are fully aware of the expectations of them in their new role. As part of induction, new employees will liaise with their line managers to outline clear and measurable objectives and performance standards pertaining to the job description. Further guidance on objective setting can be found [here](#).

7.2.2 New employees should be encouraged to record their objectives and development requirements in My PaTH as early as is realistic to do so. It may be appropriate to record objectives up to the end of the scheduled probation period, or to the end of the current annual My PaTH cycle, depending on the employee start date. The objectives set out in My PaTH will ensure that the line manager and the new employee are clear about the key elements and expectations of the role.

7.2.3 The line manager and employee should reflect upon the objectives set at subsequent probation review meetings and routine meetings. Line Managers will regularly provide feedback to the employee to ensure the correct standards are achieved.

## **7.3 Routine Meetings**

7.3.1 Day-to-day discussions are a quick, effective, and informal tool for managers to gauge a new employee's performance whilst offering the opportunity for the new employee to raise any concerns or request any support they might need. Day-to-day discussions should therefore take place as often as required, normally at agreed intervals, to ensure that an appropriate level of support is available.

## **7.4 Early Training and Development**

7.4.1 Support, training and development needs must be identified and fulfilled for all new employees in order to ensure they receive all the relevant training required to support them in carrying out their role.

#### 7.4.2 Mandatory Training Requirements

New employees are required to undertake any training identified as essential to their role, as part of their induction.

Additionally, all new employees are required to successfully complete the e-learning modules listed below within the probationary period, completion of the e-learning modules will be taken into account during probationary reviews.

- GDPR
- Security Awareness
- LVJB Complaints Handling Procedure

#### 7.5 Probation Review Meetings

7.5.1 Line managers are responsible for setting review meetings with the employee and providing feedback on performance to date. The line manager and the employee should discuss elements of the role that are being achieved satisfactorily and also those areas where further support, guidance or training may be required.

7.5.2 Accurate records of review meetings must be kept. The job description and person specification are key documents and, together with the objectives set out in My PaTH, should be referred to during the probationary assessment process.

7.5.3 Employees should be informed that they will be assessed against role specific key objectives and training requirements during their probationary period.

7.5.4 Detailed advice and guidance on dealing with poor performance can be found in the Management of Performance Procedure.

#### 7.6 First Review Meeting

7.6.1 A first review meeting should be scheduled to allow for a discussion to ensure that the employee's understanding of their role has matched their expectations, is settling in and for

feedback on performance so far to be provided. This check in should allow the opportunity for any concerns to be raised by either the employee or line manager and agreement reached on how to address them.

- 7.6.2 Good practice strongly recommends that any form of performance that does not meet an expected level should be addressed early on. This aims to prevent the issue from worsening and also to avoid condoning the level of unacceptable performance. A manager's awareness of a performance issue should be based on solid and objective information.
- 7.6.3 Where concerns are identified at this stage of the probation period, these should be discussed to identify areas where improvement is required, and the expected level of performance should be clearly outlined. Timescales for improvement must be agreed and any supportive measures or adjustments should be recorded and implemented. It may be appropriate to increase the frequency of day-to-day discussions between the line manager and the employee. It may also be appropriate for line managers to outline the risks of the employee's employment not being confirmed after probation, should their performance not improve.
- 7.6.4 In some circumstances, consideration may be given to redeployment within LVJB. Please refer to Appendix 3 – Redeployment Guidelines for further information.
- 7.6.5 Where the line manager and employee identify a medical condition or disability which is affecting performance, advice should be sought from the HR Manager.
- 7.6.6 Following the First Review Meeting, line managers should continue to use day to day discussions to support a high level of performance, or to support the employee to improve their performance if appropriate.

## **7.7 Second Review Meeting**

- 7.7.1 A second review meeting should be arranged, in order to review the employee's performance to date and progress against objectives set.
- 7.7.2 This meeting provides the manager with an opportunity to offer praise and commendation for good or high performance to date.
- 7.7.3 The second review also provides a further opportunity to discuss any concerns which may have arisen and to reflect on any training, development or support requirements. Reviewing

the effectiveness of any support which has been put in place to date should also be undertaken at this stage.

- 7.7.4 Mandatory training, such as “on the job” training, along with GDPR and Security Awareness e-learning modules, should be reviewed at this stage, to ensure that it is completed ahead of the six months review.
- 7.7.5 As before, where concerns are identified at this stage of the probation period, these should be discussed to identify areas where improvement is required, and the expected level of performance should be clearly outlined. Timescales for improvement must be agreed and any supportive measures or adjustments should be recorded and implemented. Where improvement is required at this stage, it may be appropriate to increase the frequency of day-to-day discussions between the line manager and employee or to hold more structured review meetings on a regular basis.
- 7.7.6 It may also be appropriate for line managers to remind the employee of the risk of the employee’s employment not being confirmed after probation, should their performance not improve. Where it is deemed at this stage that dismissal may be a potential outcome of the final review, advice and support should be sought from the HR Manager.
- 7.7.7 In some circumstances, consideration may be given to redeployment within LVJB. Please refer to Appendix 3 – Redeployment Guidelines for further information.
- 7.7.8 Following the Second Review Meeting, line managers should continue to use day to day discussions to support a high level of performance, or to support the employee to improve their performance if appropriate.

## **7.8 Final Review Meeting**

### **7.8.1 Satisfactory Probationary Performance**

- 7.8.1.1 Where satisfactory performance has been demonstrated throughout the probation period, the line manager should review with the employee what has gone well during the first six months and ensure objectives for the remainder of the My PaTH annual cycle are clearly outline and agreed by the employee. The line manager should continue to support the employee and review their performance on an ongoing basis as appropriate.

7.8.1.2 The line manager should record the outcome on the Probation Checklist and forward this to the HR Manager. Consider adding checklist to My PaTH in future.

7.8.1.3 The HR Manager will confirm the successful probation to the employee in writing.

## 7.8.2 Extending the Probationary Period

7.8.2.1 In exceptional circumstances the probationary period may be extended for a further specified period, normally a minimum of three months and not more than six months.

7.8.2.2 When a line manager is considering extending a probation period, they must seek advice and guidance from the HR Manager. The justifiable reasons for extending a probationary period include:

- i. Where there is a good reason why it has not been possible to assess an employee's performance during the initial probation period of 6 months, for example the employee has been absent for a significant proportion of this period, or
- ii. Where the required improvement has not been made, but where further time, for example to attend appropriate training courses, will allow such improvement to happen.

7.8.2.3 Where a probationary period is to be extended, the employee should be informed of this at the final review meeting. During this meeting the employee must be informed of the reasons for the extension and the period of extension should be specified. This must then be confirmed in writing and a copy placed on the employee's personal file.

7.8.2.4 Managers must ensure that any extension to the probationary period is for reasonable and justified reasons.

7.8.2.5 Where a probation period is extended the manager will hold regular, for example weekly or fortnightly, review meetings with the employee to continue to assess their performance. Notes must be made of discussions had at these meetings and retained on the employee's personal file.

### 7.8.3 Unsatisfactory Probationary Performance

7.8.3.1 Where continued poor performance does not improve, despite additional support, within agreed timescales, managers should seek advice from the HR Manager.

7.8.3.2 The employee should be asked to attend a meeting in relation to their performance. This must be in writing and set out the grounds for the meeting. At least five days' notice of the meeting should be provided. The staff member should be informed that a colleague or trade union representative may accompany them to the meeting. The HR Manager should attend the meeting. The meeting should take place in a private and confidential space.

7.8.3.3 At the meeting, the manager should clearly set out:

- The reason for the meeting taking place;
- The performance issues which have been identified and discussed throughout the probation period (including specific examples);
- Where the performance falls short of the required standard;
  
- When the performance issues were first identified and the period of time over which the performance has been assessed;
- The level of consultation which has taken place with the employee throughout their probation period;
- Support measures which were identified, recorded and implemented to aid the employee to improve their performance to a satisfactory standard.
- Any mitigating factors, such as reasons provided by the employee, or required adjustments or advice provided by Occupational Health.
- Dismissal is a possible outcome.

7.8.3.4 The employee should then be given the opportunity to respond.

7.8.3.5 The manager should confirm the timescale required to consider all the available information. This should be no longer than five working days.

7.8.3.6 Consideration may be given to redeployment within LVJB. Please refer to Appendix 3 – Redeployment Guidelines for further information.

## 8.0 Procedure for Dismissal

- 8.1 If the employee is not able to give a reasonable explanation for their continued poor performance, the manager may consider that dismissal is the most appropriate decision. In such circumstances, the manager and HR Manager should refer the case to the Assessor.
- 8.2 The employee should be informed of the decision in writing, including full reasons for the outcome.
- 8.3 Where the employee is dismissed, LVJB standard notice periods apply.

## 9.0 Early Dismissal

- 9.1 Where it is established at an early stage that an employee is unsuitable for the role (and where there is documented evidence that the need for improvement has been discussed) it may be appropriate for the Assessor to consider ending the probation process early (i.e. dismissing the employee), without having to wait until the 6 month point. HR advice must always be sought in these circumstances.
- 9.2 In order to determine how the performance/conduct issue should be dealt with, the following questions need to be considered:
  - what indications are there that the member of staff is not measuring up to the expectations required by the job?
  - are there objective grounds to indicate performance/behaviour/conduct does not meet the expected level?
  - have there been complaints about, or criticisms of, the member of staff's work from stakeholders or staff?
  - does the manager's own observations identify a dissatisfaction with the member of staff's performance?

## 10.0 Appeals Procedure

- 10.1 If an employee wishes to appeal the outcome of the decision taken at their final probation meeting, they should outline the full grounds for appeal and submit this to the HR Manager within five working days of receipt of LVJB's decision.
- 10.2 The appeals procedure should be utilised where the employee regards the outcome as unreasonable and should be reviewed by the Assessor. It is not intended to re-assess the entire case. Grounds for appeal should typically fall within one of the following:
- Procedural error or irregularity.
  - The outcome and recommendations are unreasonable.
  - New information is now available which could not have been reasonably provided within the timeframe of the original outcome being reached. If the employee raises any new matters in their appeal, these may need to be investigated appropriately.
- 10.3 Appeals will be heard by the Assessor. The Assessor will treat all information strictly confidentially.
- 10.4 The employee will be invited to attend an appeal hearing within 10 working days of receiving the written request to appeal and will normally be given at least five working days' notice. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or by a trade union representative to the appeal hearing.
- 10.5 The appeal hearing will be a review of the original decision, considering any new information.
- 10.6 The outcome of the appeal hearing will be given in writing within 5 working days of the date of the appeal.
- 10.7 Where an appeal is upheld and an appellant is reappointed, it may be appropriate for them to return to their role subject to an ongoing probation period if this is appropriate in the circumstances.
- 10.8 If the appeal is not upheld, there is no further right of appeal and dismissal of the employee will stand.

## **11.0 Absence During the Probation Period**

11.1 Sickness absence during the probationary period will be dealt with in line LVJB's Sickness Absence Management policy and procedures.

11.2 Where an employee has a substantial amount of absence due to sickness during the probationary period, the manager may extend the duration of the probation period.

11.3 Where a probationary employee takes maternity, adoption or shared parental leave then their probation period will be extended accordingly on their return from leave. HR advice should be sought in such cases to ensure all appropriate steps are taken to support the employee during their probation period.

## **12.0 Related Policies:**

- Management of Performance Procedure (link TBC)
- [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#)
- [Sickness Absence Management Policy](#)
- [My PaTH information.](#)
- [Disciplinary Procedure](#)

### Appendix 1 - Probation Checklist

This form is intended to support managers and employees in line with the Probation Policy. The form should be used to both guide and record a series of probationary meetings as summarised in the table below. Full details on the process can be found in the Probationary Policy.

<b>Name of Employee:</b>	
<b>Position Title:</b>	
<b>Department:</b>	
<b>Start Date:</b>	
<b>Manager Name:</b>	

Probation Meeting Tracker				
Meeting	Timescale	Date Due	Complete Y/N	Notes
Induction Meeting	First Week			
First Review Meeting				
Second Review Meeting				
Final Review Meeting				

Probation Training Tracker	
E-Learning:	Date Complete:
GDPR	
Security Awareness	
Training Identified as part of induction:	Date Complete:

**Appendix 2 - Template Performance Improvement Plan**

<b>Employee Name:</b>				
<b>Line Manager:</b>				
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Performance Level Required</b>	<b>Performance Shortfall or Gap</b>	<b>Development Plan: To achieve the required standard</b>	<b>Progress Update</b> Such as performance progress update and notes of any interim reviews and dates
<b>Date of Review:</b>				
<b>Employee Signature:</b>				
<b>Date:</b>				
<b>Line Manager Signature:</b>				
<b>Date:</b>				

## Appendix 3 - Redeployment Guidelines

### General Principles

The opportunity for redeployment is dependent on a suitable vacancy being available. A role cannot be created to achieve redeployment for an individual.

Redeployment is made in agreement and will not be imposed on an employee. However, should the employee refuse an opportunity of redeployment the employee will be fully advised of the potential consequences (i.e. potential dismissal).

Employees who wish to pursue redeployment will need to apply for the vacant role in line with the normal recruitment process. Redeployment will be an open recruitment and selection process alongside other candidates who wish to apply.

### Consultation

Working in partnership with the HR Manager, it is the responsibility of the manager to highlight the options available to the employee. This conversation should also include retraining and development needs as well as potential secondment opportunities. Consideration must be given to the individual employee's needs and abilities and managers may wish to consider some of the following areas:

- Gaining a clearer understanding of the employees skills, abilities and strengths. This may be by the use of various assessment tools such as practical exercises or psychometric developmental assessment tools.
- Areas in which the employee is currently effective.
- Skills that have been used in the past and are retained by the employee, even if not currently used.
- Specific areas of interest to the employee.
- Areas of interest outside of work that requires skills and abilities that are not currently in use in the work context.
- Employee personal circumstances, such as those that might affect working hours.
- Training and development requirements and availability.

### Training and Development

In some cases, the employee will require an element of retraining to the new role, and this may require a specific training plan. Retraining should be relevant, appropriate to ability of the individual and their circumstances and focused on the needs of the redeployment role. Ideally any arrangement should be accompanied by coaching or mentoring as well as potentially on the job training.

### Offer of Redeployment

Any offer of alternative employment, or change in terms of employment, will be detailed in writing in a formal offer. This will include a probationary period in the new role. To ensure the employee gets the best start in their new role, a tailored induction plan should be created by the manager.