

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

FIRE SERVICE ORDER

PERSONNEL

SECTION 29 – PROCEDURE FOR MANAGING THE PERFORMANCE OF PROBATIONARY FIREFIGHTERS

1.0 Policy

- 1.1 South Yorkshire Fire and Civil Defence Authority, through the Brigade, will at all times endeavour to ensure that Probationary Firefighters achieve and maintain a high standard of performance in their work. To this end, the Brigade will ensure that standards are established, performance is monitored and Probationary Firefighters are given appropriate training and support to meet these standards.

2.0 Procedure

- 2.1 Where an Instructor/Officer first establishes that a Probationary Firefighter's performance is unacceptable, an informal discussion will be held with the individual to try to establish the reason. Should this discussion result in a decision that the established standards are not reasonably attainable, the standards will be reviewed.
- 2.2 Should the interview establish that the performance problems are related to the individual's personal life, the necessary counselling/support will be offered. This may include direction to the support facilities provided by the Occupational Health Unit.
- 2.3 If it is decided that the poor performance is caused by a change in the Brigade's standards, those standards will be explained to the Probationary Firefighter and help will be offered to help achieve the standards.
- 2.4 The Instructor/Officer will interview the Probationary Firefighter and confirm that his/her performance is not acceptable. A reasonable review period will be agreed, including the action necessary to remedy the situation, and the Senior Instructor or Station Manager will present the Probationary Firefighter with a verbal warning. The written confirmation that a verbal warning has been presented will remain on the individual's PRF until they have successfully completed their probationary period.

2.5 Should the Probationary Firefighter display no, or insufficient, improvement over the duration of the review period, a formal interview will be arranged between the Probationary Firefighter (together with a representative if so desired) and the Head of Workforce Development or Group Manager as appropriate. The aims of this interview will be to:

- (a) identify the cause(s) of the poor performance and to determine what, if any, remedial action (e.g. training, support, etc.) can be offered.
- (b) explain clearly the shortfall between the individual's performance and the required standard
- (c) obtain the employee's commitment to reaching that standard
- (d) set an agreed reasonable period for the employee to reach the standard and agree on a monitoring system during that period

And

- (e) inform the employee what will happen if that standard is not met.

2.6 The outcome of this interview will be recorded in writing, including, where appropriate, confirmation of a written warning having been presented and the appropriate remedial action having been discussed with the individual. Copies of the report will be given to the employee and placed on the individual's PRF for a period of two years.

2.7 A copy of the report will be made available to the Probationary Firefighter's trade union representative should the individual so wish.

2.8 At the end of the review period a further formal interview will be held, at which time:

- (a) If the required improvement has been made, the Probationary Firefighter will be told of this and encouraged to maintain the improvement. This will be confirmed in writing and a copy placed on the individual's PRF
- (b) If some improvement has been made but the standard has not yet been met, the review period may be extended by a reasonable period of time
- (c) If there has been no discernible improvement, the Head of Workforce Development or Group Manager will explain to the Probationary Firefighter that he or she has failed to improve

(d) If this is the case, the Probationary Firefighter will receive a second, and final, written warning. This will be presented by either the Director of Human Resources.

2.9 The presentation of a final written warning to the Probationary Firefighter will include a further report detailing the individual's shortfall in performance and the action necessary to resolve the issue.

Furthermore, the warning will include confirmation that in the event of the Probationary Firefighter failing to meet the required standards at the conclusion of the extended review period, the case will be referred to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer with a recommendation that consideration be given to the dismissal of the Probationary Firefighter.

2.10 In the event of a case being so referred, the Probationary Firefighter will be requested to attend an interview with the Deputy Chief Fire Officer during which he/she will be afforded the opportunity to respond to the recommendation to dismiss. The Probationary Firefighter may arrange to have his/her trade union representative present should he/she so wish.

2.11 Having considered the case the Deputy Chief Fire Officer will inform the Probationary Firefighter of his decision. This may be to either extend the review period for a further designated period, or to dismiss.

2.12 In the event of dismissal, the Probationary Firefighter will be informed that confirmation of the decision will be in writing, within three working days. Furthermore, the Probationary Firefighter will be notified that he/she retains a right of appeal to the Fire Authority for the case to be reconsidered.

2.13 Any subsequent appeal should be submitted to the Chair of the Fire and Civil Defence Authority, in writing, no later than 7 working days following the receipt of the decision to dismiss, with a statement containing the grounds and reasons for the appeal.