

Probation Policy

Council from SELCP Logo here

Policy Title	Probation Policy
Policy Author	HR Team - PSPS
Policy Issue date	April 2022
Policy Review date	January 2024, or earlier if required due to one of the specific reasons as set out in the HR Policy Governance Framework
Policy Consultation	Trade Unions recognised by the Council Council Reader Panel
Policy Sign-off	Check with James Gilbert – Assistant Director Corporate who will sign off policy in each client Council of the SELCP

Table of Contents

1. Responsibilities	4
1.1 Colleague Responsibilities	4
1.2 People Manager Responsibilities	4
2. Principles.....	5
3. Probation Process	6
3.1 The Probationary Reviews.....	6
4. Objective Setting & Induction	6
5. First Probation Review – Two Months	7
6. Mid-Probation Review – Four Months	7
7. Final Probation Review – Six Months	7
8. Probationary Period Outcomes	8
9. Probation Hearing and Termination of Employment	8
10. Appeal Process	9
11. The Appeal Hearing.....	10
12. Following the Appeal Hearing.....	10
4.1 This is the subheading – Heading 2.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Glossary of Terms	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Probation Policy

Introduction

The probationary period is intended to allow the People Manager to objectively assess whether or not the employee is suitable for the role. It is also an opportunity for the colleague joining to assess whether or not the role is suitable for them.

The probationary period is important to ensure that the colleague:

- Understands and fulfils the requirements of their role.
- Makes a valued contribution.
- Achieves the required standards promptly.

This policy sets out the process for dealing with probationary periods.

Scope

The Probation Policy aims to support new colleagues joining the council, except those with confirmed continuous local government service. Those joining the council will undertake a 6-month probationary period, irrespective of working hours. It includes temporary and fixed-term contracts of six months or more. Where a contract of employment is shorter than the length of the probationary period, then the probationary period will be for the length of time the individual is employed.

1. Responsibilities

1.1 Colleague Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all colleagues to:

- Ensure that they are clear on what is expected of them during any probationary period, for example, the required job outputs or standards of performance.
- To complete the required corporate induction training and read/accept key policy documents (within the first 2 weeks), which are recorded on First4HR.
- Ensure that they document timely evidence for their objectives during the probationary period on the First4HR system.
- Ensure their People Manager is notified of any support or training which they require to perform their duties effectively.

1.2 People Manager Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all People Managers to:

- Monitor a colleague's performance and progress during the probationary period and record this through the First4HR system at the appropriate intervals.
- Ensure that the colleague has time to complete their induction & probationary corporate training and policy acceptance on F4HR.
- Ensure that the colleague is properly informed at the start of their employment about what is expected of them during the probationary period. For example, the required job outputs or standards of performance. This includes setting the colleagues probation objectives on the F4HR system.
- Plan regular 1:1 meetings and provide regular feedback to colleagues about their performance and progress. They should also discuss and document any concerns as soon as they arise.
- Ensure that the colleague receives the support and training required to perform their role effectively.
- Identify and appoint a colleague from within the team to act as an informal buddy/mentor, to provide support to the probationary colleague.
- Seek support from the HR or L&D Team where needed.

2. Principles

- 2.1 During the probationary period, People Managers will provide training, support and tools to help new colleagues to learn and develop in their roles to the required standard.
- 2.2 People Managers will monitor performance and conduct and will meet regularly on a 1:1 basis with the colleague to provide feedback and guidance (at least every 4-6 weeks).
- 2.3 The council has a standard probationary period of six months. People Managers are able to extend the standard probationary period by a maximum of three months where a colleague has partially met the required standard for whatever reason.
- 2.4 All new colleagues to the Council are subject to a probationary period except those joining the Council with confirmed continuous local government service.
- 2.5 Existing members of staff who are promoted, re-graded or transferred within the Council or another Authority with continuous service will not normally be subject to a formal probationary period unless their initial probationary period is not yet completed. In this case, the probationary period will be carried over to the new contract and the appointment will not be confirmed until the original period has been successfully completed.
- 2.6 If, during the probationary period, it is suspected or established that an individual does not have the qualifications, experience or knowledge that they claimed to have at the time of recruitment, the matter will be discussed with the individual to establish the facts. HR support and advice should be taken. If this situation arises where the employee is an existing colleague who has been internally transferred, promoted into a different role or is not subject to a probationary period due to continuous service then the matter will be dealt with under the PSPS Disciplinary Policy
- 2.7 **(BBC Council Policy Only)** Once colleagues have successfully completed the probation period they will be incremented to the standard pay point as outlined in the Pay Policy.

3. Probation Process

3.1 The Probationary Reviews

<u>Review</u>	<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
Induction & Objective Setting	Week 1 and 2	People Managers will set objectives for their new colleagues and the new colleague will begin to undertake the corporate induction, training and policy acceptance.
First Probation Review	2 months	The first formal probation review will be held by the People Manager to undertake an initial review and progress against objectives.
Mid-Probation Review	4 months	The formal mid-probation review to have a more in-depth discussion and, if necessary, notification of probation extension.
Final Probation Review	6 months	The final formal review and, if successful, confirmation in post.

3.2 Throughout the probationary period, People Managers will monitor:

- The colleague's performance including the quality of their work, progress with training, and building relationships
- Conduct
- Timekeeping
- Sickness absence and overall attendance
- Demonstration of the council's values and behaviours

3.3 Regular 1:1 meetings should take place throughout the probation review period. People Managers should not wait until the probation review meetings to deal with any concerns or issues. 1-1 meeting notes should be documented by digital means.

3.4 Supporting colleagues with under-performance at an early stage helps ensure that expectations are met within the required timeframe.

4. Objective Setting & Induction

4.1 People Managers will invite the new colleague to a welcome meeting during the first week. During this meeting the People Manager will set clear SMART objectives and

targets to assist the new colleague in reaching the performance levels expected within the role during the first 6 months.

5. First Probation Review – Two Months

- 5.1 The First Probation Review should take place after two months and it is the first opportunity to undertake an initial review of the progression towards the set objectives and a discussion of the colleague's performance in the role.
- 5.2 A minimum of one 1:1 meeting should have taken place prior to this meeting. The People Manager can discuss any initial concerns they have, or that the colleague has, at this early stage to support progression towards the objectives and expected standards of performance.

6. Mid-Probation Review – Four Months

- 6.1 The Mid Probation Review should take place at four months and is an opportunity for the colleagues and People Manager to have a more in-depth discussion and review the objectives.
- 6.2 Consideration should be given to the relevance and progress of the current objectives and changes agreed if required. Regular 1:1 meetings should have taken place throughout the 4-month period.
- 6.3 During the Mid Probation Review People Managers will ensure that they:
 - Provide feedback from team leaders, colleagues or other managers who work alongside the colleague.
 - Assess the colleague's performance, capability and suitability for the role.
 - Discuss any concerns about the individual's work performance or conduct.
 - Amend or update objectives where necessary.
 - Discuss extending the colleagues probation period if necessary (HR advice should be sought).

7. Final Probation Review – Six Months

- 7.1 The Probation Review meeting is an opportunity to look back and review individual performance and effectiveness during the probation period.

- 7.2 Colleagues will evidence that their objectives have been met and this will be used by People Managers to facilitate the discussions during the meeting.
- 7.3 During the Probation Review People Managers will ensure that they:
- Provide feedback from team leaders, colleagues or other managers who work alongside the colleague.
 - Asses the colleague's performance, capability and suitability for the role.
 - Discuss any concerns about the individuals work performance or conduct.
 - Inform the individual of the outcome of the Probation Review.
- 7.4 Where an employee has been successful during probation period, the People Manager will set new Annual Appraisal/PDR objectives. These should be proportionate and achievable by the next Annual Appraisal/PDR review period (April) i.e. if the probation is successfully completed in October, 50% of the usual amount of objectives should be set to be achieved within the six months until the next Annual Appraisal/PDR review period in April.

8. Probationary Period Outcomes

- 8.1 There are three possible outcomes from the Final Probation Review Meeting:
- The individual has met the expectations during the probation period, and their appointment is confirmed.
 - The individual has partially met the expectations during the probation period leading to an extension of the probationary period up to a maximum of 3 months, with agreed objectives.
 - The individual has not met the expectations during the probation period and will be invited to a Probation Hearing Meeting to consider the possible termination of employment.

9. Probation Hearing and Termination of Employment

- 9.1 Where an individual has not met the expectations during the probation period, then the individual will be invited to a Probation Hearing with their People Manager to consider the possible termination of employment.

- 9.2 At the Probation Hearing the colleague has the right to be supported at the meeting by either a Trade Union Official or a workplace colleague.
- 9.3 During the Probation Hearing the People Manager will consider the individuals performance, capability and suitability for the role and will discuss with the individual where the expectations have not been met.
- 9.4 People Managers should consider if the individual has partially met the expectations and if an extension to the Probation Period would be suitable.
- 9.5 Where the outcome is Termination of Employment the employee will be informed as soon as is reasonably practicable and notified in writing.
- 9.6 The confirmation of Termination of employment letter will include the following information:
- The reasons for the termination of employment.
 - The date on which the employment will terminate.
 - The right to appeal.
- 9.7 If the dismissal is 'with notice', the notice period will be as stated in the employee's contract of employment.

10. Appeal Process

- 10.1 An employee has the right to appeal against the outcome of the Probation Hearing.
- 10.2 An appeal can be submitted by opening an 'Appeal – Other' case which is available on the First4HR Employee Relations area. The employee will need to state their grounds of appeal.
- 10.3 The Appeal should be submitted within 10 working days from receipt of the decision letter confirming the outcome.
- 10.4 The appeal procedure will normally be carried out as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 10.5 An appeal will be heard by an Appeal Panel that has not previously been involved in the matter, comprising:
- Usually, a more senior manager who will act as the Chair and decision maker about the Appeal;
 - A representative from HR to provide advice and guidance to the Chair.

- 10.6 The purpose of the Appeal Hearing is not to reinvestigate the case but to establish the grounds for appeal and ensure:
- The original decision was reached in a procedurally correct way.
 - The action taken was reasonable.
 - Ensure consideration of any new relevant evidence or mitigating circumstances that may not have been previously disclosed.
- 10.7 The Appeal Panel will consider the findings from the Probation Review Meeting.
- 10.8 The Chair of the Appeal Panel will write to the employee notifying them of the time and date of the Appeal Hearing.
- 10.9 The Chair of the Appeal Panel will send, without undue delay, copies of any written submissions and documentary evidence to all parties prior to the meeting.

11. The Appeal Hearing

- 11.1 The purpose of the Appeal Hearing is for the Appeal Panel to: listen to the employee's concerns and determine whether the outcome of Probation Hearing was procedurally correct and to decide whether the outcome of the Probation Hearing was appropriate to the facts of the case.
- 11.2 The Appeal Hearing should proceed in a formal, polite and respectful manner. The employee will have the right to be accompanied by a Trade Union Representative or workplace colleague.
- 11.3 Members of the Appeal Panel may put questions to the employee. The employee should present their final submission to the Appeal Panel.
- 11.4 The Appeal Panel will consider its decision in private. The Chair will notify the outcome to the employee on behalf of the Panel, as soon as possible after the Appeal Hearing.

12. Following the Appeal Hearing

- 12.1 Notification of the outcome of the Appeal Hearing will be sent by recorded delivery to the employee's home address. A certificate of recorded delivery will constitute evidence of receipt.

- 12.2 The decision of the Appeal Panel will also be conveyed to employee's People Manager.
- 12.3 Where an appeal against an outcome is successful and the decision is not to terminate the employment, then reference to the action concerned will be removed from the employee's file and the employee will be notified accordingly in writing by the Chair of the Appeal Panel.
- 12.4 Where an appeal against an outcome is not successful, there will be no change in the level of action previously decided upon at the conclusion of the Probation Hearing.
- 12.5 The person who appealed will be notified accordingly in writing by the Chair of the Appeal Panel.