



Probation Policy

March 2024



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CONTROL SHEET FOR PROBATION POLICY

<u>Policy Details</u>	<u>Comments / Confirmation</u> (To be updated as the document progresses)
<u>Policy title</u>	<u>Probation Policy</u>
<u>Current status – i.e. first draft, version 2 or final version</u> <u>Policy author (post title only)</u>	<u>Final version</u> <u>HR Business Partner</u>
<u>Location of policy (whilst in development) – i.e. L-drive, shared drive</u> <u>Relevant Cabinet Member (if applicable)</u> <u>Equality Impact Assessment approval date</u> <u>Partnership involvement (if applicable)</u> <u>N/A</u> <u>Final policy approval route i.e. Joint Strategic Alliance Committee, Cabinet/Executive/Council</u> <u>SAMT</u> <u>UECC</u> <u>Council</u>	<u>S Drive HR folder</u> <u>Councillor Clive Moesby</u> <u>SAMT</u> <u>UECC</u> <u>Council</u>
<u>Date policy approved</u>	<u>March 2014</u> (Reviewed – August 2023)
<u>Date policy due for review (maximum three years)</u>	<u>August 2026</u>
<u>Date policy forwarded to Improvement (to include on Intranet and Internet if applicable to the public)</u>	<u>To be determined</u>

PROBATION POLICY

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Probation policy is designed to ensure new employees are given the support, encouragement, development and guidance they need to achieve the levels of performance and behaviour required in their job role. The policy ensures a fair and consistent process is followed for all employees.

2. Scope

2.1 The Probation Policy applies to:

- ☐ New employees and Apprentices joining Bolsover District Council
- ☐ ~~New employees and Apprentices joining NE Derbyshire District Council~~
- ☐ ~~Any employee who transfers employment between the above two Councils~~

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2.2 The duration of the probation period is six months, with the possibility of an extension for a further two months, but only in very exceptional circumstances.

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2.3 This policy pays due regard to the principles of the Equality Act 2010 covering age, disability, gender, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. It excludes agency workers, volunteers and Elected Members who are covered under separate policies.

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3. Principles

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3.1 Purpose of the Probation Policy:

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- ☐ To provide support to the new employee and welcome them to the Council
- ☐ To inform the new employee of expected standards of behaviour and
 - performance and to assist employees to achieve these standards.
- ☐ To provide the new employee the opportunity to demonstrate they are
 - suitable for the role

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4. Statement

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4.1 Responsibilities

- ☐ Manager – responsible for implementing, managing, monitoring and assessing the new employee in accordance with this policy and ensuring the
 - Induction and Probation Meetings take place.
- ☐ Employee – responsible for their own performance and fully engaging with and co-operating with the application of this policy
- ☐ HR – responsible for supporting the manager and employee including monitoring that Induction and Probation Meetings take place. Providing advice on the implementation of this policy in practice

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4.2 Probation Process

Stage and Timescales

Corporate Induction/ Service Induction First week of employment

- First Interview - End of first month of employment (4 weeks)
- Second Interview - End of third month of employment (12 weeks)
- Third Interview - End of sixth month of employment (24 weeks)

Potential Outcomes include:

- Confirmation of successful probation.
Extension Granted and warning issued by Assistant Director/Director/Head of Service in very exceptional circumstances for up to a further one month.
- Dismissal by Assistant Director/Director prior to completion of Probation Period in very exceptional circumstances. This only applies where the employee's performance in the role and/or attendance record is very poor and they have been given every opportunity and available support to improve and the previous months demonstrates there is very little prospect of improvement. In the above instance HR advice should be sought in advance of any action being taken.

The objective of the interview meetings are as follows:

- To establish, discuss and monitor performance, behaviour and attendance
- To identify short-term development and support needs
- To identify any concerns on either side and ways of resolving these
- To provide an opportunity for positive feedback on both sides
- To establish a two-way communication process

It is considered good practice for the manager to keep written notes at all stages of the probationary process.

4.3 The manager will also schedule regular meetings in addition to the above employee's during the probation period. The frequency and format of the meetings will vary from one service to another due to the difference in nature of these services.

4.4 The manager will explain how the probation process aligns with the Council's performance review process and how the employee's performance will be assessed.

4.5 It is important to note the probation process can be twin tracked with other associated policies and procedures such as:

- Induction
- Sickness Absence Management
- Disciplinary Process

NB The above is not an exhaustive list

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Attendance at work and levels of sickness absence are factors that will be taken into consideration when assessing an employee during their Probation period.

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4.6 If a new employee has demonstrated their suitability for the role and met the standards of behaviour and performance required, then at the end of the six month probation period, the employee will be confirmed in the post to which they have been appointed.

4.7 What happens if a new employee is not meeting requirements?

- The manager has responsibility for addressing any concerns with the new employee as soon as reasonably practicable.
- The manager has the discretion to bring forward interviews/meetings if appropriate and following consultation with HR
- An Employee Support Plan should be put in place by the manager for the employee (see Appendix One)
- Alternatively, a Corporate Work Tracker can be used in lieu of the above (see Appendix Two)
- Regular meetings must be arranged by the manager with the employee to review and monitor the position
- The employee will be informed by the manager that failure to demonstrate improvement will result in a warning being issued. If a warning is to be issued the manager must notify the employee of their right to be accompanied at the meeting by a Trade Union Rep or other representative
- Advice should be sought from HR by the manager at the earliest opportunity

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4.8 If an employee fails to co-operate with the policy, the manager can escalate the process and bring forward the meeting with the ~~Head of Service~~Assistant Director/Director. If an employee fails to attend any meetings held in accordance with this policy without good reason, the meeting will proceed in their absence.

4.9 Issuing a Probation Warning

A probation warning is issued by the manager to the employee when issues of concern have been raised with the employee and at the next review meeting subsequent to this no improvement has been achieved. The employee will be informed that failure to improve will place their ongoing employment with the Council at risk. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a Trade Union or other representative at the meeting, if a warning is likely to be issued.

4.10 Meeting Convened with ~~Assistant Director~~ Head of Service or Director

A meeting is convened with the ~~Head of Service~~Assistant Director/Director to consider the new employee's ongoing employment with the Council in cases where the employee has clearly failed to

either:

- ~~□~~ Demonstrate their suitability for the role
- ~~□~~ Meet expected performance requirements
- ~~□~~ Meet expected standards of behaviour
- ~~□~~ OR a probation warning has previously been issued

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The manager will consult with HR prior to proceeding to this stage. The meeting with the ~~Head of Service~~Assistant Director/Director may be convened at any stage during the Probation Period subject to one or several of the above criteria being met.

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4.11 The meeting with the ~~Head of Service~~Assistant Director/Director will provide the opportunity for the manager to present their case and for the employee to present any information they wish to be considered relevant to the process. The ~~Head of Service~~Assistant Director/Director will consider all the information presented and make a decision.

The possible outcomes of the meeting will be:

- ~~□~~ Dismissal with notice or pay in lieu of notice
- ~~□~~ Extension of the Probation Period for up to a further one month

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4.12 The employee will be given 5 working days notice of the meeting and offered the right to be accompanied at the meeting by a Trade Union or other Representative. The meeting can be held sooner at the agreement of both parties. A representative from HR will be present at the meeting in an advisory capacity.

4.13 The employee will receive written notification of the outcome of the meeting within three working days and if dismissed will be offered the right to Appeal in accordance with

the relevant Council's Appeals Procedure.

NB: The decision to dismiss an employee may occur prior to the completion of the sixth

month Probation Period or extended period.

5. Appendices (if applicable)

Appendix One - Employee Support Plan

Appendix Two - Corporate Work Tracker