



PROBATIONARY REVIEW POLICY

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The probationary period provides the opportunity for managers to assess the suitability of new members of staff for the position to which they have been appointed. It also provides the opportunity for staff to develop their skills, knowledge and experience, as well as understanding how their role fits in with those of their colleagues and how the Society operates.

This policy outlines the Society's probation process. The policy is designed to provide a clear and simple process to assist managers with the probationary process.

The policy has been designed to maximise flexibility to meet the needs of all stakeholders, and any significant variations should be discussed with the People & Performance Department. All People & Performance Consultants are able to provide professional advice and support at all stages of the process.

A formal probation procedure helps to ensure that:

- The performance, conduct, attendance, timekeeping and training/support needs of all new employees to the Society are assessed fairly, consistently and equally, across the business through regular two-way communication with the line manager.
- Managers provide new employees with the appropriate support, guidance, training, encouragement and feedback.
- Both managers and employees understand the purpose of the probation
- The probationary period will be as outlined in the employee's employment contract. Existing members of staff who are promoted or transferred within the Society will not normally be subject to a probationary period unless their initial probation period is not yet completed. In this case, the probation period will be carried over to the new contract and the appointment will not be confirmed until the original period has been successfully completed.

Responsibilities under this Policy

Employee Responsibilities: All employees have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a professional manner and with consideration for others. To enable this all employees have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with, and adhere to, the Society's rules and procedures which are available at the workplace location, on Sharepoint and on the intranet.

Management Responsibilities: Managers are responsible for supporting, monitoring and reviewing employee performance and conduct, and for addressing problems as soon as they are detected.

People & Performance Department Responsibilities: The People & Performance Department is responsible for providing advice and guidance to managers on the application of the policy and procedure.

Induction for new employees

All new employees are required to complete an induction.

The line manager is responsible for ensuring that the new employee is inducted and given the relevant information necessary to enable him/her to commence work.

The line manager should meet with the new employee during their first week (but ideally on their first day) of employment. During this meeting, the line manager should clarify the duties and responsibilities of the new employee, in line with the job description as well as the following:

- Policy and procedures (e.g. absence reporting) that must be followed.
- Key aspects of role, structure of the store/department and how it fits within the Society's structure
- Skills/competences to be attained
- Standard of work expected (quality and quantity)
- Deadlines to be met
- Behaviour/conduct (including timekeeping and attendance)
- Working relationships
- Working environment
- Training needs including any 'on the job' training
- Any other issues specific to the role

The line manager should set objectives of what should be achieved in the role during the probationary period, which should be clear, specific to the role and measurable.

The line manager shall give the employee the appropriate support/guidance (including training) necessary to help them achieve the set objectives.

Standard Probationary Periods

The probation period for all staff will be 12 weeks.

Probationary Reviews

The line manager must ensure he/she meets regularly with the employee in the early stages of appointment to discuss the employee's progress. In addition, if concerns arise during the probationary period the employee and line manager should discuss these as and when they arise rather than wait for the formal probationary review meeting.

Prior to holding a probationary review meeting the line manager should discuss the probationer's progress with any other relevant member of staff. The People & Performance Department will send out the probationary review form when the 12 week mark is approaching.

The line manager should confirm the agreed date and time of the review with the employee using the invite letter available via Sharepoint. Where a likely outcome of the review meeting could potentially be extension of probation period or termination of employment the employee must be given 3 days notice of the review meeting.

During the formal review, line managers should cover the following:

- Praise good performance/achievements so far
- Review timekeeping/attendance, including sickness absence
- Discuss the employee's performance to date against any objectives set at induction
- Review/agree training/development needs
- Identify aspects of performance/conduct that need improving through constructive feedback
- Explore any problems the employee has encountered in their role
- Provide guidance/support as appropriate
- Introduce/agree any changes to the objectives set

This should be facilitated by the use of the Probationary Review Form, as described below.

Line managers are advised to hold frequent informal meetings with their employee in order to ensure a good working relationship and feedback on the employee's progress.

It is the line manager's responsibility to ensure that reviews are conducted within the timescale described in this policy and that the People & Performance Department is supplied with the appropriate documentation as soon as possible.

Probationary review forms

The forms should be completed to record details of each review (including agreed objectives and set review dates) after each formal meeting. They should be signed by the employee and line manager and then forwarded to the People & Performance Department.

Written documentation is essential to the probation process, as it informs both parties for the forthcoming performance review process, on successful completion of the probationary period. Furthermore it will clearly document why an appointment is not confirmed.

Dealing with unsatisfactory performance

Any difficulties should be addressed as early as possible, it is not necessary to wait for a formal review and line managers should seek advice from their People & Performance Consultant whenever an employee's performance/conduct gives cause

for concern. If appropriate, the People & Performance Consultant may be present at formal reviews.

If an employee has problems meeting the required performance standards, appropriate training and support for improvement will be provided.

The line manager should meet with the employee as soon as possible to:

- discuss any problems identified
- explain what aspect of the work is not considered satisfactory
- explain which objectives/standards are not being met as well as the shortfall between standards and timescales expected of the employee
- offer remedial guidance and training as appropriate
- give clear early warnings of what may happen if required standards are not met (e.g., extension of probationary period, and/or appointment may not be confirmed)
- clearly explain any necessary improvements
- agree an action plan for improvements and timescales
- record the outcome of the meeting in writing and give a copy to the employee
- If a member of staff has a disability, reasonable adjustments should always be considered

Extending the probation period

The line manager may decide to extend the probationary period, if there are performance, conduct, attendance concerns etc and there is evidence that the employee is likely to improve given extra time.

Initially, the probationary period may initially be extended for one month or more, to allow a reasonable amount of time to achieve the actions and standard agreed, however further extensions may be appropriate depending on the circumstances.

The probationary period should never normally be extended for more than a total of three months except in exceptional cases.

Where the probation period is being extended, the following must be discussed between the line manager and employee:

- reasons for the extension
- length of the extension period
- identify any assistance/training to be given during the period of extension
- areas for improvement and indication of how these will be monitored and measured
- appointment will be terminated at the end of extension period if the employee fails to meet standards of performance expected for their role

At the end of the extended period, the line manager and employee should meet to review progress. If progress, performance and/or attendance are satisfactory, the line manager will confirm the appointment.

If, at the end of the extended period, progress is still considered unsatisfactory, the line manager will inform the employee that the appointment is terminated, as detailed below.

Terminating the appointment

In the regrettable situation of a member of staff not performing to the required standard within his/her probationary period (or extended probationary period), despite any support having been given to improve his/her performance, it may be necessary to terminate the member of staff's appointment, either at the end of the original probationary period or the end of the extended probationary period.

In these circumstances, the line manager will meet with the employee giving at least 3 days notice of the meeting in writing, to advise him/her of the reasons for the decision and consider any mitigation put forward by the employee before confirming any decision. The employee must be informed of his/her right to be represented at this meeting by a work colleague or a Trade Union representative.

It should be noted that a member of staff on probation can have his/her appointment terminated earlier than the scheduled end date of his/her probationary period if the performance and/or conduct issue is considered that serious to warrant such action. In this circumstance, the individual will be invited to a meeting as highlighted above.

Notice Periods

Where an employee's appointment has been terminated they are entitled to 1 weeks pay and will not be required to work during this period. Their employment with the Society will end 1 week from the date of termination.

Right of Appeal

An employee, whose employment is terminated during probation, will be given the right to appeal.

He/she should submit in writing to the People & Performance Department, notice of his/her intention to appeal within 7 working days of receiving the letter confirming the termination of employment during the probationary period.

The person who is to hear the appeal will normally be more senior to the original manager or may be from a different department and is hereafter referred to as the Appeal Officer.

Normally within 7 working days of receiving the letter of appeal, the Appeal Officer will give the employee notice in writing calling an appeal meeting. The employee shall be entitled to at least five days prior notice of the date of the appeal meeting.

The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.

The Appeal Officer shall write to the employee as soon as reasonably possible following the appeal meeting with his/her decision, clearly stating the outcome and the reasons for this decision.

This is the final stage in the appeal procedure and the Appeal Officer's decision is final.

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Probationary Review Process Flowchart

