

**Surrey Heath Borough Council
Human Resources**

Probation Policy and Procedure



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1. Purpose & Definition

- 1.1 This procedure provides guidance on the probation period for newly appointed members of staff.
- 1.2 The purpose of the probation period is to:
- make sure members of staff are given the opportunity to demonstrate the required skills, knowledge and experience to perform their role effectively
 - provide an opportunity for SHBC to assess the members of staff's capability, reliability, and future potential before deciding whether to confirm their appointment
 - identify the members' of staff training needs and for SHBC to provide guidance and development opportunities to support employees during their probation period
- 1.3 This procedure applies to all SHBC members of staff, including those on fixed term contracts.
- 1.4 This procedure does not apply to Agency Staff. Issues that occur during the employment of temporary agency workers should be raised directly and immediately with the worker's agency.

2. Procedure Principles

2.1. Probation Period

- 2.1.1. All newly recruited members of staff are subject to a probation period to make sure they meet and maintain the following requirements:
- Job performance
 - Behaviour and attitude in accordance
 - Conduct
 - Attendance
 - Time keeping
- 2.1.2. Confirmation of appointment is dependent upon the satisfactory completion of a probation period.
- 2.1.3. Members of staff who are already employed by SHBC, and undertake an additional role under a new set of terms and conditions as a dual contract are subject to a probationary period in their new role, regardless whether they are competent in their existing role.
- 2.1.4. Staff transferring to a different team or department will be required to undertake a probation period unless it is as a result of a transformation.. Line Manager's will be responsible for monitoring performance, and assessing their suitability for the role against their new objectives and responsibilities. Any issues regarding performance or capability should be managed under the appropriate procedure.
- 2.1.5. If at any time during the probation period, the member of staff feels they are not suitable for the role, they must give SHBC one week's notice to terminate their employment.

2.2. **Length of Probation Periods**

2.2.1. The length of the probation period is six months.

2.3. **Extension to Probation Periods**

2.3.1. In exceptional circumstances, an extension of up to three months may be added to the probation period. An extension of probation will be allowed only if:

- there is evidence that the member of staff will achieve the required standards given further time to improve
- through the members of staff's sickness or other authorised absence, it has not been possible to assess performance

2.3.2. Any extension of probation must be discussed with HR before being put in place.

2.4. **Probation Review Meetings**

2.4.1. There will be a series of regular Probation Review meetings between the member of staff and their line manager throughout the probation period. These will be held as follows:

- within the first week of employment to clarify expectations
- one-month review meeting
- three-month review meeting
- six-month review meeting

2.4.2. A written record must be made of any points raised and to review agreed actions which will be signed by the member of staff and given to them at the end of their review meeting.

2.4.3. The probation review should be conducted by the Line Manager.

2.4.4. The Probation Review meetings are a two-way process allowing both the member of staff and the line manager to discuss progress made, any training or support needed and to provide and receive constructive feedback.

2.4.5. Line managers will use the Probation Review Form (see appendix 1 and link to intranet page <https://intranet.surreyheathonline.gov.uk/node/3080>) to:

- discuss performance, conduct, timekeeping and attendance to date
- highlight examples of good performance, behaviours and achievements
- discuss any issues that need improving, and identify any training /support that is needed to address the issues
- set clear objectives/improvements that need to be achieved by the next review meeting.

2.4.6. The member of staff should sign the Probation Review Form confirming that they have been made aware of their objectives and targets and to confirm they know what they are required to achieve by the next meeting.

2.4.7. The line manager should give the member of staff at least seven calendar days' notice of a probation review meeting to allow both parties enough time to prepare.

- 2.4.8. In between Probation Review Meetings, line managers should keep notes of the member of staff's achievements, development points, training requirements and any advice or warnings given to be used at the next review meeting.
- 2.4.9. A copy should be sent to Human Resources to be placed on their Staff file following each review.

2.5. **Dismissal**

- 2.5.1. If at any time during the probation period, the member of staff fails to meet the required standard and it is evident that the required standards will not be reached by the end of the probationary period, SHBC has the right to dismiss the staff member with one week's notice or one week's pay in lieu of notice.
- 2.5.2. SHBC will not dismiss a member of staff without giving them the opportunity to improve as part of the Probation Review Meetings, except in the case of gross misconduct or capabilities.
- 2.5.3. The member of staff has the right to appeal against a decision to terminate their employment.
- 2.5.4. An appeal must be lodged in writing to Executive Head of Transformation within seven working days of the notification of termination of employment.

2.6. **Keeping Records**

- 2.6.1. Line managers should keep a clear, comprehensive and accurate written record during the probation period.
- 2.6.2. If a member of staff does not reach the required standards, it is essential that SHBC has evidence to support a dismissal decision.
- 2.6.3. Notes must reflect the facts of the situation and must be a true representation of the discussion and the outcomes including any agreed dates.
- 2.6.4. Copies of meeting notes must be sent to HR to be stored on the member of staff's file and treated as confidential.

3. **Responsibilities**

3.1. **Members of staff**

3.1.1. Members of staff will:

- attend probation review meetings as required as detailed in 2.4.1
- raise any issues with the Line Manager or HR and seek action to resolve these issues
- make improvements where identified in probation reviews, in accordance with any relevant action
- seek training and support if they have any concerns about the requirements of their role or capability to perform it
- attend mandatory training courses, Data Protection Essentials, Diversity, Equality and Discrimination, Information Management, Information Security, Introduction to Health and Safety and Safeguarding Children and Adults. Plus, any additional training that is directed.

- Have the right appeal against any decision made to terminate their employment.

3.2. **Line Managers**

3.2.1. Line Managers will:

- plan an induction for the staff member into SHBC
- provide a Job Description and make sure the member of staff fully understands the standards expected in their role
- raise awareness of the probation period with the member of staff within the first week of employment
- hold probation review meetings at the times detailed and identify any issues, providing appropriate support to make sure the member of staff is clear on areas where improvement is required and clearly set out the required improvement actions to review progress at the following review meeting
- provide appropriate support and training to staff throughout the probation period including coaching and mentoring and discuss any further training needs with HR
- maintain clear, comprehensive and accurate written records using the Probation Review Form (<https://intranet.surreyheathonline.gov.uk/node/3080>) and provide the member of staff and HR with a copy of any documentation
- make sure the staff member has completed their probation training
- confirm appointment at the final Probation Review Meeting if satisfied that performance, attendance and conduct are satisfactory. HR should be advised of this using the six-month Probation Review Form
- provide evidence to support a request for an extension to a member of staff's probation period. Consult with HR prior to agreeing an extension
- notify HR of any failure to improve during the initial (no later than month 3 review) or extended period of probation
- continue to monitor staff performance at the completion of the probation period through additional work and behaviour targets. This will be measured during mid-year and end of year reviews.

3.3. **Human Resources**

3.3.1. HR will:

- advise new staff on appointment of the requirement to complete the probation period
- confirm the member of staff's appointment in writing on the satisfactory completion of the probation period
- monitor the receipt of probation forms and file all associated paperwork on the member of staff's personnel file
- advise line manager's if extension periods are to be permitted, and confirm any agreed extension to probation in writing
- provide advice and guidance to line managers and members of staff during

the probation period

- provide guidance for staff transferring from a team or department to a new role to identify if a probation period is required
- attend meetings regarding termination of employment as required

Appendix 1

1. Probation Review Form

Employee's name:				
Job title:				
Department:				
Date of engagement:				
Manager:				
Date:				
Specify review - 1 month, 3 month or final 6 month review				
Please return this form to the HR department within 14 days of the review date.				
Complete the following sections also considering SHBC Staff and Managers Competencies found on the intranet https://intranet.surreyheathonline.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Documents/hr/Staff%20and%20Manager%20Competencies%20-%20202a.pdf				
	Improvement required	Average	Good	Excellent
Job Performance				
Behaviour and Attitude				
Conduct				
Attendance				
Timekeeping				

Where any areas require improvement give details below

Outline any plans to improve performance

Outline the employee's views on the job, work environment and working conditions

Summary of employee's overall performance

Is the employee's appointment to be confirmed (if final probation meeting)?

Yes

No

If no, give details of the problems below

Should the employee's probationary period be extended to allow time for improvement (if final probation meeting)?	Yes	No
If yes, please specify the date on which the employee will complete the extended period and specify the improvement required and how this will be achieved		
New probation period completion date (if applicable):		
Employee's signature:		
Manager's signature:		
Date:		