

Probation Policy



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This policy outlines Derbyshire County Council's approach to providing a probationary period for new employees.

New employees will undergo an induction process into their new role. During the induction period the new employee will be able to:

- Understand the requirements of their new role
- Demonstrate knowledge, skills and experience
- achieve the required standard of performance in respect to duties, attendance and behaviours

2. Scope

This policy applies to all new employees to the Council, including fixed term employees of six months or more. Employees who transfer from another Council will still be subject to a probationary period as they are new to Derbyshire County Council.

This policy does not apply to casual workers or those employees based in schools.

Existing employees who move to a new role will not have a probationary period in their new role. Performance and conduct issues will be managed using the Disciplinary Procedure and Performance Capability Procedures.



3. Key Principles for Managing the Probation Period

Initial Probation Meeting

New employees will have an initial probation meeting shortly after starting their employment. Managers will set objectives and targets to assist in reaching the performance level we expect.

Ongoing Support during the Probation Period

During the probation period, managers will regularly meet the employee to support them and monitor:

- employee's performance
- conduct
- timekeeping and attendance

and will:

- assess employee performance, capability and suitability for the role
- hold monthly probation review meetings throughout the probation period.
- deal with any concerns about work performance or conduct as they arise. Managers must not wait until the probation review meetings. Dealing with problems at an early stage means they are more likely to be dealt with successfully.
- get feedback from supervisors, colleagues or other managers involved in the probation period of the new employee.
- provide regular feedback to employees about their performance and progress. They will discuss any problems as soon as possible.

Extending the Probation Period

In some circumstances we may extend the probation period beyond six months, including, but not limited to:

- we have not been able to fully assess performance due to the employee's sickness or other authorised absence
- there have been concerns regarding performance. However the manager has evidence to suggest that performance is likely to improve with an extension to the probation period.

Managers can extend probation periods for up to a maximum of three months due to an employee's performance. They will make this

decision at the end of the probation review meeting and will advise the employee.

Managers may consider an extension due to absence. They will consider each case on its merits, mainly where the length of absence has been extensive.

Probation hearing

Employees will be invited to attend a probation hearing if:

- their performance, conduct or attendance is unsatisfactory, and
- the manager does not consider an extension to the probation period would sufficiently improve the situation

The meeting will be with a manager with delegated authority to dismiss who will consider termination of employment.

Employees may be accompanied by:

- colleague
- trade union official
- trade union representative

An HR representative will also be present at this meeting.

Where a manager decides to terminate employment, after considering alternatives to dismissal, the employee is usually dismissed with notice, unless an allegation of gross misconduct is upheld, where dismissal will be without notice.

Dismissal Appeals

Employees may appeal against a decision to dismiss, within 10 working days of receipt of the dismissal letter. We will arrange a probation appeal hearing and the appeal will be heard by a different manager. They will be accompanied by a HR representative. The employee has the same right of representation as at the probation hearing.

The probation appeal hearing decision is final with no further internal right of appeal.

Notice Period during Probation

During the probationary period, the notice period to end the contract of employment is one month by either the council or the employee.

Confirming the appointment

Near the end of the probationary period, the manager will hold a final probation review meeting with the employee. There are three possible outcomes, which are to:

- confirm the appointment
- extend the probationary period
- invite the employee to a probation hearing with the possibility of dismissal

The manager will confirm the end of the probation period with the employee. All aspects of the performance review must be satisfactory.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Managers are responsible for:

- welcoming new colleagues into employment and carrying out the initial probation and induction meetings
- supporting new colleagues
- monitoring the performance of new colleagues
- deal with any concerns about work performance or conduct as they arise
- obtain feedback from supervisors, colleagues or other managers about the new colleague.

Human Resources Advice and Support are responsible for:

- providing advice on the operation of the policy.
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