



# SHANKLEA PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Probationary Period Policy

Policy Control Details			
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Prepared by:	Helen Brown	Signature	Date
Approved for issue by:	Gareth Pearson	Signature	Date
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## **INTRODUCTION**

This document sets out Northumberland County Council's and Shanklea Primary School's Probationary Period Policy.

The purpose of a probationary period is to enable a manager to objectively assess the conduct, performance and attendance of a new employee to establish whether an employee is suitable for confirmation of appointment in a post.

A probationary period includes a series of one to one meetings to ensure regular two-way communication between the line manager and the new employee, allowing timely action to be taken on any problems that might arise in the crucial early stages of the employment.

This policy must be applied fairly to all employees irrespective of disability, sex, gender, race, religion or belief, age, sexual orientation or marital/civil partnership status.

## **SCOPE OF POLICY**

All new employees to the County Council including those with continuous previous local government service who are joining from another Local Authority, or re-entering Local Government, will be subject to a probationary period of 6 months. This also applies to community and voluntary controlled schools and is recommended for adoption by the governing bodies of voluntary aided and foundation schools. However, staff employed under Teachers' Pay and Conditions of Service, Uniformed Firefighters on Grey Book Terms and Conditions and JNC Chief Officer terms and conditions of service have their own schemes that are different and this policy does not apply to them. In addition, those transferred by TUPE will not be subject to probationary arrangements. Those employed on apprenticeship schemes will not be subject to probationary periods.

### **Aim**

All new entrants as identified above need to serve a probationary period to demonstrate that they are suitable to be confirmed in their appointment. They need to be supported and objectively assessed from commencement so that any problems are resolved within the first 6 months and where resolution is not possible, capability or disciplinary action may be taken. Special arrangements exist within the Capability & Disciplinary Procedures to manage probationary employees.

### **Role of Line Manager**

The probationary period must be properly planned and managed in order that it is effective. The Line Manager must ensure that new employees are given a proper induction to the County Council or school and also a proper induction into the role to which they are appointed. The Line Manager should provide training, instruction, guidance and reasonable assistance in settling into a new job.

The employee should be clear about the expected standards of attendance, conduct and performance. The Line Manager should clearly explain the standards expected.

All aspects should be carefully monitored, shortcomings highlighted and the need to improve made clear, and supported by full documentation.

The Line Manager needs to ensure the employee is aware that two-way communication must take place throughout the probationary period.

If either the manager or the employee identifies any issues, they must be highlighted, discussed and documented with appropriate support put in to place which will be monitored and reviewed.

The Line Manager is responsible for arranging probationary interview sessions, and for ensuring they are conducted in a confidential environment.

### **Role of Authorising Officer**

The Authorising Officer (the Line Manager's Line Manager) or Head Teacher should ensure that any probationary periods within their service are correctly adhered to and that new employees receive adequate guidance and training to perform the role to which they have been appointed.

### **Procedure**

During the 6 months probationary period, objective assessments should be conducted after 12 weeks service and again after not less than 16 weeks or more than 20 weeks service. The line manager should meet with the employee to discuss the assessments. It is not necessary or appropriate to delay action until the review periods, or the end of the probationary period where a serious shortcoming/concern has been identified within the 6 months period. Failure to undertake assessments could mean that an unsatisfactory probationary period could default to confirmation of the employee's appointment.

### **The Assessment Form**

The Line Manager should complete an assessment (Appendix A), in detail, at each of the 2 review meetings.

Any aspects of conduct or performance which may need improvement must be highlighted and discussed with the employee.

Timekeeping and attendance, including sickness absence should be reviewed, any problems identified and any improvements needed highlighted.

Appropriate advice, assistance and any future training requirements must be identified.

Good performance should be noted and praise given for achievements to date.

### **After 12 weeks service**

At this meeting, the manager should discuss progress to date and highlight any areas of work where there appears to be a need for improvement. Deadlines, goals and general timescales should be explained and understood by the employee. This should be recorded by the Line Manager on the assessment form and signed by both the Line Manager and the employee. The form should then be sent to the Line Manager's Line Manager (the Authorising Officer) or Head Teacher for authorisation.

### **Final review meeting after not less than 16 weeks and no more than 20 weeks service**

Before the end of the 20 week period, a further review meeting should take place between the Line Manager and the employee.

Having concluded the review the Line Manager should make recommendations to the Authorising Officer or Head Teacher as to whether or not the employee is confirmed in post.

### **Extensions to probationary periods**

Only in exceptional circumstances should an extension to the 6 months period be considered. This would be when an employee has not been performing satisfactorily but it is considered that a further short period of probation may enable them to reach a satisfactory standard, or genuine absence of a specific period of time, or lack of support and guidance is identified. This should be done with the agreement of both parties and the Line Manager should complete the appropriate form (Appendix B). If the employee does not agree to an extension, it is likely that an investigation would be considered under the Capability and Disciplinary Procedure.

Any extension to a probationary period should not exceed a period of a further 8 weeks and must be approved by the Authorising Officer or Head Teacher. During an extension period further review meetings with the employee and the line manager must take place on a monthly basis and be reported on to the Authorising Officer or Head Teacher.

### **Outcomes of final review meeting**

Subject to satisfactory reviews, and satisfactory extensions where appropriate, the employee should be confirmed in post and notified of such in writing. The completed Assessment Form should be sent to Employee Services who will write to the employee as provided in the exemplar letter at Appendix C. The letter and form will then be retained on the employee's personal file.

Where an employee's progress is not satisfactory, advice should be sought from the HR Service as it will be necessary to take formal action. This will require an Investigating Officer's report and a capability hearing under the County Council's Capability and Disciplinary Procedure, or in the case of schools, in accordance with the model adopted by the school.

**ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE DURING PROBATIONARY AND INDUCTION PERIOD – 6 weeks**

NAME: .....

DESIGNATION: .....

PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT: .....

DATE OF APPOINTMENT: .....

The above named person's appointment is subject to a satisfactory induction and probation report during a period after 12 weeks service and again after not less than 16 weeks and no more than 20 weeks service. You are responsible for monitoring his/her performance during this period and you must complete this form at the required times and forward it to your Line Manager or Head Teacher for approval.

1. To be completed after 12 weeks service

I have today interviewed the above named employee and certify that:

\*(a) the employee's performance is satisfactory in all respects at this stage

\*(b) the employee's performance is unsatisfactory in the following areas (please detail areas below):

\*delete as appropriate

I have outlined the areas of unsatisfactory performance to the employee and have informed him/her that failure to improve these areas may lead to action under the Capability or Disciplinary Procedure. Training and/or direct supervision will be given if necessary and his/her future progress will be closely monitored. A further interview will take place and a final report will be prepared after not less than 16 and no more than 20 weeks service.

Any additional comments: (please use additional sheets if necessary)

(a) Signed: .....  
Line Manager

Designation: .....

Date: .....

(b) Signed: .....  
Employee

Date: .....

Line Manager should now forward this form to their Line Manager or Head Teacher for authorisation.

**AUTHORISING OFFICER/HEADTEACHER**

I approve the Line Manager's recommendation

(c) Signed: .....

Please forward this form in an envelope marked CONFIDENTIAL to the Signatory at (a).

2. To be completed after not less than 16 weeks and no more than 20 weeks service

I have today interviewed the employee named overleaf and certify that:

\*(a) the employee's performance has been satisfactory in all respects during his/her probationary period and I recommend that his/her appointment be confirmed. The employee also has a satisfactory Induction report (NB Induction does not apply to school staff).

\*(b) The employee's performance has been unsatisfactory despite previous warnings and/or training/supervision and I recommend that a report be compiled under the County Council's Capability/Disciplinary Procedure or in the case of schools, in accordance with the model adopted by the school.

\* Delete as appropriate

I have informed the employee of my recommendations.

Any further comments:

(a) Signed: .....  
Name Print Line Manager  
Name  
below

Designation: .....  
Date

Date: .....

(b) Signed: .....  
Print Name  
below

Date: .....

Employee

Line Manager should now forward this form to their Line Manager or Head Teacher for authorisation.

**AUTHORISING OFFICER**

Insert Name

I approve the Line Manager's recommendation.

Signed ..... Date .....

Please forward this form in an envelope marked CONFIDENTIAL to Employee Services Financial Services, Performance Group, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF

**APPENDIX B EXTENSION TO PROBATIONARY PERIOD FORM**

Employee Name

Post Designation

Line Manager Name

Post Designation

It is agreed by both parties that the probationary period in respect of *(Insert Employee Name)* be extended by up to a maximum of 8 weeks until *specify date* due to

*Specify reason*

(a) Signed: ..... Designation: .....  
Print Name Line Manager  
Below

Date: .....

(b) Signed: ..... Date: .....  
Print Name Employee  
Below

**AUTHORISING OFFICER**

Insert Name

I approve the Appointing Officer's recommendation.

Signed ..... Date .....

Appendix C **Letter confirming satisfactory probation period**

**Private and Confidential**

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

Contact:

Direct Line:

Fax:

E – mail address

Dear

APPOINTMENT AS:

ORGANISATION:

Further to my letter dated the \*\*\*\* regarding your appointment to the above named post, I am pleased to inform you that you have satisfactorily completed your probation period. I can now confirm your appointment to the post of \*\*\*\* within the \*\*\*\* service.

I look forward to your continued good service within the \*\*\*\* service.

Yours sincerely

Administrator  
Employee Services

cc Line Manager