



**Northumberland**  
County Council

**HUMAN RESOURCES  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**Probation Period Policy**

<b>Version</b>	V3
<b>Policy Sub-group &amp; approval date</b>	3 September 2020
<b>Date ratified by Joint Consultative Committee</b>	13 October 2020
<b>Name of policy author</b>	Karen Bowes
<b>Date issued</b>	October 2020
<b>Review Date</b>	September 2023
<b>Target audience</b>	All newly appointed employees (including Apprentices)

### History of previous versions of this document:

Approved Where	Approved When	Version	Issue Date	Review Date	Contact Person
Sub Committee	October 2015	V1	October 2015	October 2018	Paul Brooks
Joint Consultative Committee	October 2018	V2	November 2018	October 2018	Karen Bowes

### Statement of changes made in most recent version:

Version	Date	Description
V3	August 2020	<p>Page 4 - Policy aims and purpose updated to clarify who the policy impacts on.</p> <p>Section 3. 1 - Added more detail around purpose and responsibilities for monitoring against the policy</p> <p>Sections 3, 4 &amp; 6 - References added to include monitoring of progress towards required learning associated to recognised programmes including apprenticeships</p> <p>Section 7.2 - Guidance added around notification period for hearing</p> <p>Section 8 - Updated to provide clarity around the final probation review hearing. Link added to guidance around the hearing and appeals process and associated appendices reworded.</p>

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## HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Title	PROBATION PERIOD POLICY	Reference Number HRP-31-V3
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### Operational Summary

The Council is committed to helping all employees to achieve optimum levels of performance.

The probationary period is a key element in the induction of new employees. It allows new employees to adapt to their new working environment and discuss their performance with their manager. It enables managers to review and assess the employee's progress on a regular basis in the early stages of their appointment.

Good performance should be recognised and praised; and causes of poor performance should be identified so they can be tackled promptly with the appropriate support.

The focus of the probationary period should be to ensure that a new employee has been given the necessary support and training to carry out their role to the required standards. However, if after being given appropriate support employees are unable or unwilling to adapt to the working methods of the Council, their employment may be terminated.

### Policy Aim/Purpose

The policy aims:

- To ensure that the probation process is undertaken for all staff and is applied in a fair and consistent manner, within a supportive framework and in line with employment legislation requirements.
- To ensure the Council is provided with an opportunity to assess the skills, conduct, capability and attendance of new staff before deciding whether or not to confirm their appointment.
- To identify the link between induction, probation and developmental processes and emphasise the need for all to underpin the support and development of a new member of staff.

This policy is aimed at all new employees who will be subject to a minimum probationary period of 6 months. This includes both permanent and temporary employees, including Apprentices. Employees who transfer to a new role within the organisation will not be subject to the policy, unless they are within their first 6 months of employment. This policy will also apply to employees who have transferred from another Local Authority, or any other organisation covered by the Redundancy Protection Modification Order (RPMO).

This policy does not apply to those in Education Establishments with full delegated powers.

Employees who provide care in children's residential units will be subject to separate procedures under the recommendations of the Warner Report – "**Choosing with Care**".

Please note that when an employee who is employed on a temporary contract successfully completes a probation period, they do NOT become a permanent employee by virtue of having completed the probationary period.

## **Policy Summary**

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 if employed on NJC or Soulbury terms and conditions of service, or 1 year if employed on JNC for Youth and Community Workers.

This policy 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, NFRS employees on Grey Book Terms and Conditions, and staff on 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 to the County Council under TUPE arrangements will not be subject to probationary arrangements unless they are already subject to them at the time of transfer.

## **What it means for staff**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure all new entrants 'probationers' are effectively monitored and supported through a probationary period to allow them sufficient opportunity 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 the appropriate and timely action is taken.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for managers to monitor and support the progress of new employees in the early stages of their employment. It will also enable managers to deal promptly and fairly with any apparent shortcomings in a new employee's (probationers') work performance or conduct in accordance with the procedure outlined below.
- 1.2. 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 potential problems that might arise in the crucial early stages of the employment.
- 1.3. In normal circumstances, employees will receive a probation review meeting at the end of the second and fourth months and then a final review at the end of the fifth month; in some circumstances the probationary period may be extended.
- 1.4. However, an employee's employment may be ended at any stage during the probationary period in exceptional circumstances.

1.5. This policy must be applied fairly to all employees irrespective of disability, gender, gender identity or gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, age, sexual orientation or marital/civil partnership status, women who are pregnant or have recently had a baby.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to ensure all new entrant 'probationers' are effectively monitored and supported through a probationary period to allow them sufficient opportunity 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 or identify where resolution is not possible.
- 2.2. The Council aims to secure equality of opportunity in all its activities, and in this respect, the probation process must be objective, clear, transparent and free from discrimination. Managers need to have undertaken equal opportunities training; if in any doubt, the Manager should contact their HR advisor for clarification or advice.
- 2.3. The probation process should work alongside the induction process to help create a positive and supportive working environment, allowing new staff to settle into the organisation and learn the key elements of the job within a reasonable and realistic timescale.
- 2.4. As part of their induction and ongoing supervision, new members of staff will be made aware by their line manager of the performance standards expected of them and will be given support, training and feedback necessary to achieve these standards. Line managers will use the probationary period to monitor the success of the new staff member in reaching these standards.
- 2.5. Clear, comprehensive and accurate records of probation review meetings must be maintained, including how standards are set, what methods are used for measuring them and what timescales are given for reaching them. A Probation Review Form is provided for this purpose and must be signed by the employee and his/her line manager at each review point to provide a formal record of the probationary period and a copy given to the employee. Induction materials may be used to inform the initial probation review meeting i.e. to clarify the duties and responsibilities of the new employee in line with their terms and conditions of employment, their job description and the policies and procedures which must be followed.
- 2.6. In circumstances where problems arise during a period of probation, the line manager should raise these with the member of staff in a timely manner, and the member of staff must be given an opportunity to respond to any concerns. Line Managers should discuss the action required by the member of staff to address the problem and where necessary give clear, unambiguous warnings if standards are not met. The manager should use the Probation Review Form to keep a record of the discussion and any performance improvement objectives set. The manager should ensure that this is signed by both parties (i.e. the line manager and the employee) and a copy given to the employee.
- 2.7. Members of staff have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at any formal meetings held to address serious performance issues that have arisen during probation and where dismissal is a possible outcome. This right will not apply

in the case of informal discussions between the employee and line manager or at the normal probationary review meetings.

2.8. Documentation relating to staff will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and related documentation will be subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018 as appropriate.

### 3. Duties

#### 3.1. 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 Council or school and also a proper induction into the role to which they are appointed. Arrangements for the induction of NCC employees are set out in the [Induction Policy](#). The Line Manager should provide training, instruction, guidance and reasonable assistance in settling into a new job.

##### 3.1.1 Managers need to:

- explain the purpose of the probationary period;
- give clear guidance on expected standards of work and conduct from the outset;
- provide appropriate training and resources;
- review and document progress on a regular basis (at least once a month); and
- confirm when probation has been successfully completed;
- diarise probation reviews in advance.

3.1.2 Review meetings with the employee should be both constructive and supportive, giving the opportunity to discuss the employee's performance so far. Standard letters have been created to help the line manager manage the process and keep the employee informed. If there are any apparent issues, the manager and employee should decide jointly what action might help to resolve them. If agreement cannot be reached, the matter should be referred to Human Resources for advice.

3.1.3 All aspects of performance should be carefully monitored, good work acknowledged, shortcomings highlighted and the need to improve made clear and supported by full documentation.

3.1.4 It is important that the manager makes every effort to help a new employee achieve a satisfactory level of performance. NCC managers should refer to the [Induction Policy](#) and [Learning and Development Policy](#) when considering training, knowledge and skills requirements for new employees.

3.1.5 The probationary process set out in the policy must be followed to ensure that the probation arrangements work effectively. It is the managers' responsibility to ensure that this process is adhered to.

3.1.6 Managers must pay due regard to the need to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees. Adequate support must be provided to ensure disabled employees have an equal opportunity to achieve a satisfactory level of performance.

## **3.2. Role of Authorising Officer**

3.2.1 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.

## **3.3 Role of the Employee**

3.3.1 Demonstrating the standards expected by Northumberland County Council for performance, conduct, timekeeping, sickness absence, attendance and ongoing progress in relation to completion of learning (when required as part of an agreed programme) and to raise any difficulties with the line manager.

3.3.2 Engage positively with the probationary process and use the opportunity to raise any issues, concerns or support and learning needs with their line manager.

## **3.4 Role of Human Resources / Learning & Organisational Development**

3.4.1 It is the responsibility of the HR/OD Team to:

- monitor and ensure compliance with the policy; advising line managers when the requirements of the policy are not being met
- provide advice, support and guidance to all parties on the application of the policy
- ensure that the induction policy and procedures enhance and compliment the probation policy providing clarity of expectations and responsibility
- ensure that the corporate training programme contains courses of suitable content and frequency to enable all new employees to access statutory/mandatory training within the probationary period
- regularly review and monitor the effectiveness of the policy
- ensure that staff affected have the support they require to deal with their situation
- Monitor probation cases to identify trends and ensure that disproportionate impact on any particular group is highlighted and addressed.



## 4. Probation Progress Review Meetings and Report Forms

### 4.1. Progress Review Meetings

- 4.1.1 If a probation period is to be of any value, it must be properly managed. Sample letters and review report forms have been provided to support the line manager in executing this policy.
- 4.1.2 Progress Review meetings must be held **during the second and fourth month** of employment. It is not necessary however or appropriate to delay action until the review meeting where a serious shortcoming/concern has been identified within the 6 months period.
- 4.1.3 The purpose of the meeting is to review performance, conduct, timekeeping, sickness absence, attendance and ongoing progress in relation to completion of learning (when required as part of an agreed programme) and constructive feedback should be given to the employee highlighting both achievements and any areas where they are falling short. Examples must always be provided.
- 4.1.4 Where all aspects are satisfactory, the Line Manager should inform the employee of this fact and set a date for the next progress review meeting. Good performance should be noted, and appropriate praise and positive feedback should be given for achievements to date (Appendix 5 - Letter 2)
- 4.1.5 If there are any shortcomings or difficulties then these should be made clear to the employee along with the appropriate steps needed to improve standards over the remaining probation period.
- 4.1.6 Where there are concerns regarding any aspect of performance, conduct, timekeeping, sickness absence, attendance or ongoing progress in relation to completion of learning (when required as part of an agreed programme), the Line Manager must:
- Discuss the areas of performance that need improvement.
  - Explain the standards required.
  - Devise an improvement plan which sets objectives and targets and identifies any additional support, training or guidance needed.
  - Advise the employee that failure to meet the required standards may result in termination of employment.

### 4.2 Probation Report Forms

- 4.2.1 The Line Manager should complete a probationary report form in detail, at each of the review meetings using the sample templates (Appendices 1, 2 & 3).
- 4.2.2 A copy of the probation report form should be given to the employee and also be sent to Human Resources to be stored on their personal file.

### 4.3 Final Review Meeting

- 4.3.1 The final probation review meeting must be held during the **fifth month** of employment. The purpose of the meeting is to review performance, conduct, timekeeping, sickness absence and attendance and ongoing progress in relation to completion of learning (when required as part of an agreed programme) and constructive feedback should be given to the employee highlighting both achievements and any areas where they are falling short. Examples must always be provided. (Appendix 3).
- 4.3.2 The manager must deal with any unsatisfactory performance as it arises, and not wait until the final review meeting.
- 4.3.3 The manager is responsible for taking action to deal with unsatisfactory performance promptly – dealing with problems at an early stage means that they are more likely to be dealt with successfully.
- 4.3.4 If at this meeting it is evident that the employees' performance, conduct, timekeeping, sickness absence, attendance or ongoing progress in relation to completion of learning (when required as part of an agreed programme) is still causing concern, the line manager must advise the employee that either there will be an extension to the probation period or that they will be invited to attend a hearing meeting to discuss the termination of their employment.
- 4.3.5 Any support or assistance identified will continue to be offered during the whole of the probation period up to the date of confirmation in post or decision to dismiss.
- 4.3.6 At the end of the probation period there are three possible outcomes:
- i. Confirm the appointment (Appendix 10)
  - ii. Extend the probationary period (Appendix 11)
  - iii. Dismiss the employee (Appendix 12)

## 5. Confirming the appointment

- 5.1 If the employee demonstrates that all aspects of their performance are satisfactory the line manager should write and confirm their appointment at or about the six-month date following their appointment (Appendix 10).
- 5.2 Any concerns about conduct or performance must be resolved before permanent employment is confirmed.

## 6. Extending the Probationary Period

- 6.1 The probation period is for 6 months. During this time managers must ensure that feedback is given to employees on a regular basis and that any performance or conduct issues are resolved within this period.

- 6.2 In exceptional circumstances the probationary period may be extended for a further specified period of not more than 3 months. The justifiable reasons for extending a probationary period are:
- i) Where there is a good reason why it has not been possible to assess an employee's performance during the initial probation period of 6 months, for example the employee has been absent for a significant proportion of this period, or
  - ii) Where the required improvement has not been made, but where further time, for example to attend appropriate training and learning, will allow such improvement to happen, or
  - iii) Where insufficient progress has been made in relation to the completion of required coursework and / or learning (when recognised as a requirement of a specific programme e.g. apprenticeship, graduate placement) or a professional qualification required for the role
- 6.3 Where an employee is absent for a substantial part of their probation period, for example, due to sickness, the Line Manager may consider recommending extending the probation period for up to 3 months. This will enable the employee's actual work performance in the job to be assessed over a reasonable length of time. Each case should be considered on its merits where the length of absence is extensive during the probationary period, as this may lead to a potentially difficult situation in assessing and reporting on the employee. (Appendix 14).
- 6.4 If the probationary period is to be extended the employee must be informed of the reasons for the extension and the period of extension should be specified. This must then be confirmed in writing and a copy placed on the employees personal file (Appendix 11).
- 6.5 Where a probation period is extended the manager will hold regular, for example weekly or fortnightly review meetings with the employee to continue to assess their performance. Notes must be made of discussions had at these meetings and retained on the employee's personal file.
- 6.6 Managers must ensure that any extension to the probationary period is for reasonable and justified reasons. Advice from Human Resources must be sought if there is any doubt about the reasonableness of the extension.

## **7. Procedure for Ending Employment in the Probation Period**

- 7.1 If at the final review meeting it is agreed that the employee's performance, conduct, timekeeping, sickness absence or attendance is not satisfactory and the Line Manager does not consider that an extension to the probation period would be beneficial, the employee should be invited to attend a hearing with a manager with delegated authority to dismiss, to discuss the termination of their employment (Appendix 12). In the case of Schools, the manager with delegated authority to dismiss may be the Head Teacher (where the School Governors have awarded delegated authority to the Head Teacher) or it may be the Board of Governors.

- 7.2 The employee concerned will be notified in writing of the requirement that they attend a hearing, and they will be given a minimum of 5 working days' notice of the date and time of the hearing. The employee should be informed that they have the right to be accompanied if so desired a trade union representative or a work colleague. The purpose of the hearing will be to explain the reasons for their proposed dismissal (i.e. unsatisfactory performance) and the employee will have the opportunity to respond if they wish.
- 7.3 The hearing should take place in private, and the manager should have fully prepared for the meeting. For example, have records of probationary review forms, supervision and discussion notes, improvement plans, training courses etc to hand where applicable. The employee's line manager should be in attendance. Copies of this documentation will accompany the notification of hearing letter sent to the employee.
- 7.4 At the hearing, the line manager should clearly state the reason for the hearing taking place and outline their concerns about the employee's performance and the support that has been provided to help the employee achieve an acceptable level of performance.
- 7.5 The employee should then be given the opportunity to respond. If the employee is not able to give a reasonable explanation for their continued poor performance, the manager may take the decision to dismiss.
- 7.6 The decision to dismiss must be confirmed in writing (Appendix 13). The letter should also advise the employee of their right of appeal to the Executive Director of HR and OD.
- 7.7 Where the employee is dismissed Northumberland County Council's standard notice periods apply. Therefore, an employee dismissed during their probationary period would be entitled to one month's notice unless they were SCP 40 or above where a 3 months' notice period would apply.
- 7.8 Employees have the right of appeal against dismissal and appeals should be sent, in writing, within 10 working days to the Executive Director of HR and OD, Northumberland County Council, Morpeth, NE61 2EF.

## **8. Appeals Against Dismissal**

- 8.1 Appeals against dismissal will be heard by a nominated Senior Manager (Procedures for Hearings and Appeals - Appendix 1 Disciplinary Policy).
- 8.2 The employee should be informed that they may be accompanied at this meeting by a trade union representative or a work colleague.
- 8.3 Also present at this meeting will be a HR Adviser and the manager with delegated authority to dismiss.

## 9. Monitoring and Audit

- 9.1 The Council will monitor the application of this policy and has discretion to review it at any time through the appropriate consultation mechanisms.
- 9.2 Responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and development of this policy lies with the Executive Director of HR and OD.

## 10. Training and Support

- 10.1 All managers involved in the operation of the policy will receive the appropriate training, advice and support from their HR Advisor regarding both practical and procedural issues.

## 11. Associated Documentation and References

Reference	Title
HRP-23-V2	Induction Policy (covering NCC employees)
HRP-11-V2	Learning & Development Policy (covering NCC employees)
HRP-09-V2.1	Procedures for Hearings & Appeals (Appendix 1)
Appendix 1	Probationary Report Form 1 (2 Months)
Appendix 2	Probationary Report Form 2 (4 Months)
Appendix 3	Probationary Report Form 3 (Final Review Report)
Appendix 4	Invitation to First Probation Review
Appendix 5	Advising of Outcome of First Formal Review Meeting – Satisfactory Progress
Appendix 6	Advising of Outcome of First Formal Review Meeting – Unsatisfactory Progress
Appendix 7	Progress Review – Improvements Made
Appendix 8	Progress Review – No Improvements Made
Appendix 9	Invite to Final Review Meeting
Appendix 10	Outcome of Final Review – Confirmed in Role
Appendix 11	Outcome of Final Review – Extension of Probationary Period
Appendix 12	Outcome of Final Review – Formal Probation Hearing
Appendix 13	Outcome of Dismissal Meeting
Appendix 14	Extension to Probation Period Due to Absence through Illness



# Northumberland County Council

## PROBATIONARY REPORT 1

### CONFIDENTIAL

#### FIRST FORMAL REVIEW – TWO MONTH PROBATIONARY REPORT

**Employee's Name:** .....

**Position/Job Title:** .....

**Date of appointment:** .....

**Manager's Name:** .....

**Date of 1st Review:** .....

#### Guidance Notes

1. Complete all sections in full.
2. The contents of this report must be discussed in full with the employee.
3. Your comments must be objective and based on fact.
4. Once completed a copy of this form should be filed on the employee's Personal File.
5. The date of the next review should be agreed at the meeting.
6. A copy of this form should be retained by you to refer to at the next review.

# CONFIDENTIAL

## TWO MONTH PROBATIONARY REPORT

### Section 1.

This section gives you the opportunity to review any key points or issues identified during the probationary period. (An action and improvement plan should be completed to help monitor progress).

<b>1. Assess the employee's performance in relation to the duties for the post (use the job description &amp; person specification to compare).</b>
<b>2. Give details of the employee's approach to their work, including motivation, commitment, and their relationships within the work setting and with other agencies.</b>
<b>3. Give details of timekeeping, attendance and sickness.</b>
<b>4. Give details of training already undertaken.</b>
<b>5. What further learning &amp; development needs have been identified? Give full details.</b>
<b>6. Employee comments / feedback to manager</b>

Manager Signature:.....

Date: .....

Employee Signature:.....

Date: .....

A Confidential letter advising of the outcome of the first formal review meeting should be sent to the employee and a copy retained on the employee's personal file.



# Northumberland County Council

## PROBATIONARY REPORT 2

### CONFIDENTIAL

#### PROGRESS REVIEW - FOUR MONTH PROBATIONARY REPORT

**Employee's Name:** .....

**Position/ Job Title:** .....

**Date of appointment:** .....

**Manager's Name:** .....

**Date of 1st Review:** .....

**Date of 2nd Review:** .....

#### Guidance Notes

1. The key points from the last assessment must be identified in section 1 of this form.
2. Complete all sections in full.
2. The contents of this report must be discussed in full with the employee.
3. Your comments must be objective and based on fact.
4. Once completed a copy of this form should be filed on the employee's Personal File.
5. The date of the next review should be agreed at the meeting.
6. A copy of this form should be retained by you to refer to at the next review.



**Section 1.**

**This section gives you the opportunity to review any key points or issues identified at the last review meeting and comment on progress and improvements made.**

Key Points/Issues	Manager Comments	Employee Comments
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

**Section 2.**

**This section gives you the opportunity to identify any outstanding performance issues and detail what action you will take to deal with them (an action and improvement plan should be completed to help monitor progress). If there are no outstanding issues leave blank.**

ISSUE	ACTION

Manager Signature:..... Date: .....

Employee Signature:..... Date: .....

A Confidential letter advising of the outcome of the formal progress review meeting should be sent to the employee and a copy retained on the employee's personal file.





**Northumberland**  
County Council

**PROBATIONARY REPORT 3**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**FINAL REVIEW PROBATIONARY REPORT**

**Employee's Name:** .....

**Position/ Job Title:** .....

**Date of appointment:** .....

**Manager's Name:** .....

**Date of 1st Review:** .....

**Date of 2nd Review:** .....

**Date of Final Review:**.....

**Guidance Notes**

1. Complete all sections in full.
2. The contents of this report must be discussed in full with the employee.
3. Your comments must be objective and based on fact.
4. Evidence must be provided to support the decision
4. Once completed a copy of this form should be filed on the employee's Personal File.



## Section 1 Overall Assessment

This section gives you the opportunity to provide an assessment of the employee's overall performance during their probation period.

### Review Decision

Has the employee successfully completed their probation period? (please delete as appropriate)	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	Yes - Satisfactory Probationary Performance
<i>If Yes, you must arrange for the appropriate letter to be sent to employee confirming the Outcome of Final Review – Confirmed in Role.</i>	
<b>Comments and evidence of satisfactory performance:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> NO	No - Unsatisfactory Probationary Performance (Extension Required) If extending for how long?..... Months Date of planned final review following extension Date...../...../.....
<i>If No and extending the probationary period, you must arrange for the appropriate letter to be sent to employee confirming the Outcome of Final Review – Extension.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> NO	No - Unsatisfactory Probationary Performance (Dismissal Hearing)
<i>If No, you must arrange for the appropriate letter to be sent to employee confirming the Outcome of Final Review and the requirement to attend a Formal Probation Hearing.</i>	
<b>Comments and evidence of unsatisfactory performance:</b>	

Manager Signature:..... Date: .....

A Confidential letter advising of the outcome of the final review meeting should be sent to the employee and a copy retained on the employees personal file.



# Northumberland County Council

## INVITATION TO EMPLOYEE - FIRST PROBATION REVIEW

### STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

On behalf of the Council, I would like to welcome you to the team.

As I explained at our induction meeting, the first 6 months with the Council are your probation period. The purpose of a probation period is to give the Council the opportunity to assess a new employee's suitability in the role they have been appointed to and for the employee to demonstrate their ability to effectively perform their duties and demonstrate the standard of performance, conduct, timekeeping, sickness absence and attendance that we expect.

During your probation period we will meet at 2 months and 4 months to formally review your progress against the requirements of your job and also your conduct, timekeeping, sickness absence and attendance.

Any training and support required will be in place to assist you in reaching the required standard and our review meetings will provide an opportunity to identify any further training or support you may need.

Our first formal review meeting will be held on (*insert date, time, location*) and if there is any further help or assistance either I or the Council can provide in the meantime, please let me know.

Yours sincerely



# Northumberland

## County Council

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### **ADVISING OF OUTCOME OF FIRST FORMAL REVIEW MEETING – SATISFACTORY PROGRESS**

#### **STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL**

Dear

#### **FIRST PROBATION REVIEW MEETING**

I am writing to confirm the discussions of our first Formal Probation Review meeting held on *(insert date, location)*.

At our meeting I advised you that you had achieved the standards I expect you to have reached in performing the duties of your role and for your conduct, timekeeping, sickness absence and attendance.

I am very pleased with your progress to date; however, I do expect you to maintain this standard of performance throughout the remainder of your probation period.

We will meet for a Further Review Meeting on *(date, time, and location)*.

Congratulations on progress so far and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries about the contents of this letter.

Yours sincerely



# Northumberland

## County Council

### ADVISING OF OUTCOME OF FIRST FORMAL REVIEW MEETING – UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS

#### STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

#### FIRST FORMAL PROBATION REVIEW MEETING

I am writing to confirm the discussions of our first formal probation review meeting held on *(date, location)*.

I explained to you at our meeting that your *(performance/conduct/timekeeping/ sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate)* is unsatisfactory and that I have the following concerns:

- *(List areas of concern with specific examples and how this falls short)*

We discussed the level of *(performance/conduct/timekeeping/ sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate)* I expect you to reach and in order to support you to meet the required level, we have agreed the following:

- *(List specific actions agree, e.g., training, extra supervision, what the employee needs to do, how and when you are going to measure performance)*

I am enclosing the action plan to be put in place in order to support you in meeting these expectations.

I am satisfied that having discussed these concerns with you, explained the standards required and having an agreed action plan in place, you have the framework and support to help you achieve the required level of *(performance/conduct/timekeeping/ sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate)*. However, I must remind you that failure to meet the expected standards by our next formal meeting may result in an extension to your probation period or dismissal.

We have agreed to meet to review progress *(at, date, location)*, however, if there is any further help or assistance either I or the Council can provide during this time, you must let me know.

Yours sincerely

Policy Title: Probation Period

Version: V3

Page 24 of 34

Policy Author: Karen Bowes

(Created: August 2020; September 2023)







# Northumberland County Council

## TO EMPLOYEE RE PROGRESS REVIEW – IMPROVEMENTS MADE

### STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

#### PROBATION REVIEW: REVIEW MEETING

Following our meeting held on (*date*) to review progress against the action plan put in place to address concerns regarding your (*performance/conduct/timekeeping/ sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate*) in your role, I am pleased to confirm that you have now achieved the expected level of (*performance/conduct/timekeeping/ sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate*).

We will meet for a Final Probation Review Meeting/Further Review Meeting on (*date, time, and location*) to review your continued progress. I must remind you that failure to maintain your improved performance by our next meeting may result in an extension to your probation period or dismissal.

I am pleased to acknowledge the commitment you have shown in achieving the improvement plan and reiterate that you must consistently continue to perform at this acceptable level.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries about the contents of this letter.

Yours sincerely



# Northumberland

## County Council

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### **TO EMPLOYEE RE INFORMAL STAGE REVIEW – NO IMPROVEMENTS MADE**

#### **STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL**

Dear

#### **PROBATION REVIEW: REVIEW MEETING**

Following our meeting held on (*date*) to review progress against the action plan put in place to address concerns regarding your (*performance/conduct/timekeeping/ sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate*) in your role, I am disappointed that you have failed to make adequate progress against the action plan.

The specific concerns:

- (*list concerns with specific examples of where performance falls short*)

We will continue to review your progress against the action plan and if there are any other areas you have identified where we can offer you additional support or training you must let me know.

We will meet for a Final Probation Review Meeting/Further Review Meeting on (*date, time, and location*) to review your continued progress. I must remind you that failure to have improved your (*performance/conduct/timekeeping/ sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate*) may result in an extension to your probation period or dismissal.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries about the contents of this letter.

Yours sincerely



**Northumberland**  
County Council

**INVITE TO FINAL REVIEW MEETING**

**STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL**

Dear

**FINAL PROBATION REVIEW MEETING**

In line with the Council's Probation Procedure I am writing to invite you to a final Probation Review Meeting to be held (*date, time, location*).

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries about the contents of this letter.

Yours sincerely



# Northumberland County Council

## OUTCOME OF FINAL PROBATION REVIEW – CONFIRMED IN ROLE

### STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

I am writing to confirm the discussions of our final formal probation review meeting held on (*date, location*).

At our meeting I was delighted to advise you that you had attained the standard required in your role. You have therefore satisfactorily completed your six month probation period.

Your performance will now be discussed and monitored as part of regular 1:1s and supervisions in addition to the appraisal processes.

Congratulations once again.

Yours sincerely



Northumberland  
County Council

**OUTCOME OF FINAL PROBATION REVIEW – EXTENSION**

**STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL**

Dear

I am writing to confirm the discussions of our final Formal Probation Review meeting held on *(date, location)*.

At our meeting I advised you that it is a requirement of the Council's Probation Policy that employees meet a satisfactory level of *(performance/conduct/timekeeping/ sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate)* in their role. At the present time you are not meeting the level required in *(performance/conduct/timekeeping/ sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate)* and as a result of this shortfall I am currently unable to confirm you in your post.

I believe that with some additional training/support you will achieve these standards in the near future. I have therefore decided to extend your probation period *(time period - up to three months)*. I will meet with you at the end of the extension period to review progress. If your *(performance/conduct/timekeeping/ sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate)* is acceptable you will be confirmed in your post. If progress is not acceptable, then the potential outcome could be dismissal.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries regarding the contents of this letter and if there is any further help or assistance either I or the Council can provide in the meantime, please let me know.

Yours sincerely



# Northumberland County Council

## OUTCOME OF FINAL PROBATION REVIEW – FORMAL PROBATION HEARING

### STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

I am writing to confirm the discussions of our final Formal Probation Review meeting held on *(date, location)*.

At our meeting I advised you that it is a requirement of the Council's Probation Policy that employees achieve a satisfactory level of performance in *(performance/conduct/timekeeping/sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate)* in their role. As you are aware, I consider your *(performance/conduct/timekeeping/sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate)* as unsatisfactory and as a result of this shortfall I am unable to confirm you in your post.

I am therefore inviting you to a Probation hearing to be held on *(date, location)* with *(manager with authority to dismiss)* to discuss your continued employment. As this is a formal hearing which may result in your dismissal you have the right to be accompanied by a Council work colleague, recognised trade union officer or recognised trade union representative. Also present will be *(name)* HR Adviser. I enclose for your information a copy of the relevant documentation provided by your line manager.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries regarding the contents of this letter.

Yours sincerely



# Northumberland County Council

## OUTCOME OF DISMISSAL MEETING

### STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

### FORMAL PROBATION HEARING

I am writing to confirm the outcome of the Formal Probation Hearing held on *(date)* which I chaired. Also present was *(name)* your representative and *(name)*, HR Adviser.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss your failure to meet the standards necessary to satisfactorily complete your probation period.

- *(outline specific concerns and support provided)*

Having considered the evidence provided at the hearing, I decided that that there is no case to answer and that your *(performance/conduct/timekeeping/ sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate)* in your role meets the standards expected by the Council at this stage in your employment and you will be confirmed in role.

Or

Having considered the evidence provided at the hearing, I decided that I believe that with some additional training/support you will achieve these standards in the near future, we therefore agreed to an extension to your probation period *(time period - up to 3 months)*. I will meet with you at the end of the extension period to review progress; if this is acceptable you will be confirmed in post, if progress is not acceptable, then the potential outcome will be dismissal.

Or

Having considered the evidence provided at the hearing, I decided that you have been given full opportunity to reach the required level of performance and have failed to do so. My decision is therefore that you are dismissed.



In line with the Council's Probation Procedure, you are issued with one month's paid notice from the date of the hearing and therefore your employment with Northumberland County Council will end on *(date)*. You *(are/are not delete as required)* required to work your notice.

You have a right of appeal against the decision of the panel. The grounds for your appeal should be made in writing within 10 working days of receipt of this letter to Kelly Angus, Executive Director of HR/OD & Deputy Chief Executive, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF .

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries about the contents of this letter.

Yours sincerely



# Northumberland

## County Council

### **EXTENSION TO PROBATION PERIOD DUE TO ABSENCE THROUGH ILLNESS**

#### **STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL**

Dear

I am sorry to hear that you are unwell and will be absent from work for some time.

As you know, the Council operates a 6 month probation period in order to ensure that new employees to the Council have the opportunity to become familiar with the main duties and tasks of their post and to demonstrate the standards of performance, conduct, timekeeping, sickness absence and attendance required. It also gives us the opportunity to assess your suitability as a permanent member of staff and for you to demonstrate your ability to effectively and efficiently perform your duties.

As it will be difficult for you to have the opportunity to fully prove your capability during your first 6 months of employment, I am proposing that we extend your probation period for a further 3 months.

I hope that this will alleviate any pressure you might be feeling regarding this element of your employment. I would also like to take this opportunity of wishing you a speedy recovery.

Yours sincerely