

Probationary Period Policy

1.3

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The purpose of this document is to ensure a robust probationary period procedure operates across Southern Hampshire Primary Care Alliance (SHPCA).
- 1.2. New employees to SHPCA may be subject to a probationary period of six months as outlined in this policy (please refer to section 2.1 in relation to new employees where this policy will not apply).
- 1.3. A probationary period is a trial period during which the performance, conduct and attendance of the employee will be assessed by the line manager against the particular requirements of the role, SHPCA values and behaviours and expected standards of attendance and punctuality.
- 1.4. All terms and conditions of employment will have continuous service from the first day of employment at the start of the probationary period, not from the end of the probationary period.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. This policy applies to new and returning employees of SHPCA, including part-time and fixed term contracts, but will not apply to:
 - A. Existing (non-probationary) SHPCA employees who take up new posts within SHPCA.
 - B. Employees who join SHPCA due to the application of the Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TUPE) regulations.
- 2.2. Following successful completion of a probationary period any concerns, unsatisfactory performance, misconduct or sickness or other absence will be dealt with under the relevant Policy.

3. POLICY AIM

- 3.1. The aim of this policy is to provide guidance to managers and new employees during the probationary period process, ensuring the necessary information and support is provided to enable successful and continuing employment.
- 3.2. A structured probationary period for new employees to SHPCA (where applicable, see section 2.1), to introduce them to the main duties and responsibilities of their post and to allow the opportunity for both the individual and the line manager to objectively assess whether or not the employee is suitable for the role.

- 3.3. A framework for addressing any concerns, offering support and training to address unsatisfactory performance or conduct at an early stage.
- 3.4. A process to end employment fairly and consistently with SHPCA during, or at the end of the probationary period, at a point where it becomes clear that no further training or support would allow the employee to reach the required standard.

4. PROCEDURE

4.1. Contract of employment and related policies and procedures:

- 4.1.1. During the probationary period the employee will be employed on a contract of employment and subject to SHPCA policies and procedures. However, the procedures regarding the management of sickness absence, performance and discipline will not apply and any areas of concern will be dealt with via the probationary review process. This does not affect any statutory rights.
- 4.1.2. The duration of the probationary period will be clearly set out in the offer of employment letters and contracts of employment and the objectives to follow separately as per managers' responsibilities as per section 4.2.
- 4.1.3. For employees with a fixed term contract end date shorter than the length of the relevant probationary period, the normal probationary process will be followed for the duration of employment. If employment is subsequently extended, the probation period will be extended up to the standard period.
- 4.1.4. During the probationary period the employee will be subject to a notice period as stated in their contract of employment which will normally be paid in lieu.

4.2 Managers responsibilities:

- 4.2.1 The line manager is responsible for making the employee aware of the Probationary Period Policy at induction.
- 4.2.2 The line manager is responsible for monitoring and managing the probationary period.
- 4.2.3 In the first two weeks of joining the line manager will discuss the expectations of the new employee, explain required standards and set objectives for the probation period. The expectations will be based on the job description and the organisational and department objectives.
- 4.2.4 It is the responsibility of the line manager to ensure that the new employee receives regular supervisory support, feedback on their performance and the required standards to be reached.

- 4.2.5** The line manager is responsible for ensuring that the new employee has an effective SHPCA corporate induction as soon as possible after joining the organisation.
- 4.2.6** The line manager is responsible for ensuring that all required training is identified and provided as soon as possible. The line manager is also responsible for ensuring the employee has been booked on to all mandatory training and is made aware of relevant SHPCA policies and procedures.
- 4.2.7** It is the line manager's responsibility to ensure that appropriate review dates are set and adhered to and appropriate records kept at every stage of the probationary period review and assessment process as per section 4.5 of this policy.

4.3 Employees responsibilities

- 4.3.1** Ensuring awareness of the Probationary Period Policy.
- 4.3.2** Adhering to all SHPCA processes.
- 4.3.3** Ensuring required mandatory training is completed and kept up to date. The employee will need to print the screen that confirms that they have completed the training and bring to their review meeting. The completion of mandatory training is a requirement for successful completion of their probationary period.
- 4.3.4** Should a new employee wish to disclose a disability, impairment or other health condition, it is their responsibility to ensure they inform their line manager so that reasonable adjustments can be made.

4.4 SCW HR Responsibilities

- 4.4.1** To ensure that the Probationary Period is highlighted to new employees when issuing the employment contract.
- 4.4.2** To assist managers and employees in the fair and consistent application of the policy.
- 4.4.3** To provide advice to employees and managers concerning individual issues, including advice on the range of options or courses of action that may be taken.
- 4.4.4** To facilitate informal meetings on request.
- 4.4.5** To provide coaching and training on the application of this policy.
- 4.4.6** To provide support in formal meetings.
- 4.4.7** To provide template letters/documents to managers.

4.5 Managing the employee during the probation period

- 4.5.1** It is expected that line managers will hold regular one-to-one meetings with all new employees to provide information, support them in their new role, set standards, provide feedback on performance and progress and to address any concerns from the employee.
- 4.5.2** In addition to one-to-one meetings, three informal probationary meetings are to be held at the following intervals:-
- A. Initial meeting: within the first two weeks of employment.
 - B. First review meeting: At the three month point of the probation period.
 - C. Final review meeting: At least four weeks before the date on which the probationary period ends.
- 4.5.3** During the new employees first two weeks a date will be set for the first review of performance which should take place at the three month point, although support will be given at a normal one-to one at the end of month one and two.
- 4.5.4** Initial meeting - the purpose of the initial meeting is for the line manager, in agreement with the employee, to set the objectives for the probationary period, discuss any training or development requirements identified by the manager or employee and a development plan developed. The Probationary Period Review Form should be completed (refer to Appendix 1).
- 4.5.5** First review meeting - this review is an opportunity for the line manager to review the employee's progress to date, discuss training/development opportunities undertaken, or still required and for both parties to raise any issues or concerns. It is also at this stage that the employee is advised if they are on track to meet their objectives and successfully complete their probation period. The Probationary Period Review Form should be updated (refer to Appendix 1).
- 4.5.6** Final review meeting – this would normally be held at least four weeks before the date on which the probationary period ends. The employees progress during the probationary period will be discussed and the employee will be informed that:-
- A. They have successfully completed their probationary period (refer to 4.8), or
 - B. Their probationary period is being extended (refer to 4.9), or
 - C. They have not satisfactorily completed their probationary period and a further formal meeting will be held.
- 4.5.7** An informal probationary meeting may be held sooner if a line manager has concerns that the employee's performance or conduct is not meeting the required standard (this might be as part of a one-to-one meeting).
- 4.5.8** Notes should be taken and any agreed targets or action will be confirmed in writing within three working days. Evidence would need to demonstrate that appropriate support had been put in place, and the employee was given sufficient opportunity to improve.

4.5.9 Line Managers should seek advice from SCW HR at the earliest sign of a new employee not meeting performance requirements so that they can work together to improve the employee's performance.

4.6 Terminating employment before the probationary period has been completed

4.6.1 It will be usual for new employees to complete the full six months probationary period to allow for the employees to settle into SHPCA, learn the new role and to receive any training required.

4.6.2 If during the course of an employee's probationary period, it is suspected or established that the individual provided inaccurate or misleading information during the recruitment process, this may be considered a sufficient reason to end their employment. This also applies at point 4.10.

4.6.3 In some circumstances it may be evident that there are fundamental difficulties with the new employee being able to fulfil the role early on in the probationary period. After speaking with the employee, the line manager may feel that the difficulties cannot be resolved and regardless of any time frame, support and training the employee is not going to achieve the required standards.

4.6.4 In all cases where there is the possibility of terminating the probationary period early the line manager will contact SCW HR. No decision to terminate employment should be discussed with the employee before this has been discussed with SCW HR and the relevant Senior Manager.

4.6.5 The line manager or appropriate dismissing manager, should confirm in writing that the employee is to be dismissed for failing to satisfactorily complete their probation period (refer to 4.10). An employee termination form will be completed by the line manager and a copy of the letter should be held on the employee's personal file.

4.7 Probationary Pitfalls

4.7.1 Extra caution should be taken and SCW HR advice sought as soon as possible to deal with matters which, although they may cause concern, can become problematic if used as a reason for ending a probationary period. This includes:

- A. Absences relating to a declared or possible disability
- B. Unexpected announcements relating to pregnancy
- C. Unexpected requests for carers or special leave
- D. Request for flexible working
- E. Complaints or grievances about work
- F. Trade Union membership or activity
- G. Grievances relating to dignity at work.

4.7.2 There also remain a number of reasons for terminating employment which are automatically unfair and do not require two years' service in order to make a claim for unfair dismissal. These include issues relating to discrimination on protected characteristics, health and safety or making a protected disclosure. Advice should be sought from SCW HR before any decision to terminate employment is taken.

4.8 Confirming successful completion of the probationary period

4.8.1 Once an employee has successfully completed their probationary period, the line manager will send them a letter confirming this. A copy of this letter (refer to Appendix 2) and a copy of the completed probationary period review form (refer to Appendix 3) should be held on the employee's personal file.

4.8.2 Following successful completion of the probationary period an employee will be managed through regular one to one review meetings and will be set new or continuing objectives in accordance with SHPCA's appraisal Policy

4.8.3 Any future concerns about the employee's performance or conduct should be addressed using the appropriate policy, i.e. Absence Management Policy, Disciplinary and Suspension Policy and Performance Management Policy

4.9 Extension to Probationary Periods

4.9.1 A probation period may be extended in the following circumstances:-

- A. Where the performance, behaviour or conduct of the employee has not met the required standard, and it is believed that these can be addressed during the extended period.
- B. The employee has not completed all mandatory training.
- C. The employee has had a significant amount of time away from work, for example sickness, and this has resulted in an inability to conduct meetings.
- D. The employee has moved to a different role during their probationary period which is very different or in a different department.
- E. Any extension to the probationary period will be for no longer than 9 months in total after the employee commenced employment. In these instances, they will be reviewed on a case by case basis in consultation with SCW HR.

4.9.2 The line manager should confirm in writing to the employee that their probationary period is being extended: the reason why, the length of the extension, any support/training to be provided and any improvements that are required. It will also advise that failure to meet these will result in non-completion of the probationary period and therefore termination. A Probationary Period Extension Review Form should be completed (see Appendix 2). A copy of this letter (see Appendix 4) along with the original completed Probationary Period Review Form should be held on the employee's personal file.

4.10 Termination of employment at the end of the probationary period

4.10.1 Employees should have been made aware of any concerns regarding their performance, behaviour or conduct during the review process.

- 4.10.2** If after regular review meetings, provision of appropriate training and support it becomes evident that no further training or support would allow the employee to reach the required standards then employment may be terminated.
- 4.10.3** Employment may also be terminated where the employee has failed to complete any mandatory training, despite support being given to them to do so.
- 4.10.4** A formal meeting will be held in line with the process of the Disciplinary and Suspension Policy. The employee will be entitled to be accompanied by a workplace colleague or trade union representative if they wish. SCW HR must be notified and will attend the formal meeting to give advice and ensure due process is followed.
- 4.10.5** When the decision is taken to terminate employment, the required period of notice will be given as per the employee's contract and this may be paid in lieu.
- 4.10.6** The line manager or dismissing manager will confirm in writing (with advice from SCW HR) that the employee is to be dismissed for failing to satisfactorily complete their probation period. The decision to dismiss the employee will remain unchanged unless and until it is modified as a result of an appeal. A copy of this letter will be held on the employee's personal file with the completed Probationary Period Extension Review Form.

4.11 Right of appeal

- 4.11.1** An employee has the right to appeal against a decision made to terminate their employment during, or at the end of, their probationary period.
- 4.11.2** An appeal in writing must be submitted to the line manager within five working days of the employee's receipt of the written decision to terminate their employment.
- 4.11.3** The appeal process is to be followed in accordance with SHPCA's Disciplinary and Suspension Policy.

5. POLICY MONITORING

- 5.1** The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by SCW HR to ensure the correct procedures have been followed and timescales met. Any learning points and trends will be identified by SCW HR who will make recommendations to the Chief Operatin Officer about changes which need to be made. The application and impact assessment of this policy will be monitored by SHPCAs Combined Assurance Group.
- 5.2** This policy may be reviewed at any time at the request of either Staff Side or SHPCA but will be reviewed automatically in the event of new legislation or guidance emerging or annually.

- 5.3 Policy monitoring and review will include analysis of the available equality characteristics of people applicants, interviewees and successful candidates, in order to identify and differential treatment or bias during recruitment. The equality characteristics of leavers will also be monitored.

6. POLICY REVIEW

- 6.1 This policy may be reviewed at any time in the event of new legislation or guidance emerging but will automatically be reviewed on a two yearly basis.

1. APPENDIX 1

PROBATIONARY PERIOD REVIEW FORM

This form must be completed in full, and signed by all relevant parties before being placed on the employee's personal file.

The line manager should ensure that the employee is given a copy of this document at each stage of their probation and should retain the original to monitor progress against set objectives at follow-up meetings.

PROBATION RECORD

Employee name:		
Job Title:		
Grade:		
Department:		
Post Start Date:		
Line Manager:		
	Date Due	Please tick when completed
Initial Meeting		
First Review:		
Final Review:		

PART 1: Initial Meeting

This section should be completed by the line manager within two week of the employee commencing their employment.

SECTION A: Objectives

The line manager should identify specific objectives for the employee (for 3 and 6 months, as appropriate) These will be statements of what should be achieved during the probationary period, including indicators of success and timescales for achievement.

SECTION B: Development Plan

To support the employee in achieving these objectives, the line manager should identify any training and development needs and specify how and when these needs will be addressed during the probationary period.

Employee's Signature:	
Manager's Signature:	
Date:	

PART 2 – First review (3 months) - Period From [date] to [date]

To be completed by the Line Manager in discussion with the employee.

<i>(please tick)</i>	Improvement required	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Quality and accuracy of work				
Efficiency				
Attendance				
Time Keeping				
Work relationships (team work and interpersonal communication skills)				
Competency in the role				
<p>If any areas of performance, conduct or attendance require improvement please provide details below.</p> 				
<p>Where concerns have been identified, please summarise how these will be addressed during the remaining period of probation.</p> 				
<p>Summarise the employee’s performance and progress over the period</p> 				

Have the objectives identified for this period of the probation been met?	YES / NO	If NO, what further action is required?	Review Date
Have the training / development needs identified for this period of the probation been addressed?	YES / NO		
Employee's Signature:			
Manager's Signature:			
Date:			

PART 3 – Final Review (5 months) – Period From [date] to [date]

To be completed by Line Manager in discussion with the employee.

<i>(please tick)</i>	Improvement required	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Quality and accuracy of work				
Efficiency				
Attendance				
Time Keeping				
Work relationships (team work and interpersonal communication skills)				
Competency in the role				
Have the objectives identified for the probationary period been met?	YES / NO	If NO, please provide details		

Have the training / development needs identified for the probationary period been addressed?	YES / NO	
Summarise the employee's performance and progress over the period		
Is the employee's appointment to be confirmed?	YES / NO	
If NO, please provide reasons below and summarise what action has been taken to address any difficulties which have arisen during the probationary period.		
The employee may provide any comments about their experience of the probationary process here.		
Should the employee's probationary period be extended?	YES / NO	
If YES, please provide reasons and, where appropriate, specify any areas of improvement required and how these will be monitored.		
Length of the extension (max 3 months):		
New Probation Period completion date:		
Employee's signature:		
Manager's signature:		
Date:		

PLEASE NOTE: At the final review meeting, the line manager should confirm whether or not the employee has successfully completed their probationary period. A letter should be issued by the line manager as per 4.7 or 4.8 of the probationary period policy and a copy of the letter held on the employee's personal file.

2. APPENDIX 2

PROBATIONARY PERIOD EXTENSION REVIEW FORM

PLEASE NOTE:

This form must be completed in full, and signed by all relevant parties before it is placed on the employee's personal file.

The line manager should ensure that the employee is given a copy of this document and should retain the original to monitor progress against set objectives at follow-up meeting.

PROBATION RECORD

Employee name:		
Job Title:		
Grade:		
Department:		
Post Start Date:		
Line Manager:		
	Date Due	Please tick when completed
Final Extension Review		

PART 1: Extension Review

This section should be completed by the line manager at the final review meeting (five months) and a copy sent with the extension to probationary period letter.

SECTION A: Areas not met required standard

The line manager should identify specific areas for improvement for the employee (for 3 months). These will be statements of what needs to be met during the probationary extension period, including indicators of success and timescales for achievement.

SECTION B: Development Plan

To support the employee in achieving these areas, the line manager should identify any training and development needs and specify how and when these needs will be addressed during the probationary extension period.

Employee's Signature:	
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Manager's Signature:	
Date:	

PART 2 – Final Extension Review (9 months) – Period From [date] to [date]

To be completed by Line Manager in discussion with the employee.

<i>(please tick)</i>	Improvement required	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Quality and accuracy of work				
Efficiency				
Attendance				
Time Keeping				
Work relationships (team work and interpersonal communication skills)				
Competency in the role				
Have the objectives identified for the probationary period been met?	YES / NO	If NO, please provide details		
Have the training / development needs identified for the probationary period been addressed?	YES / NO			
Summarise the employee's performance and progress over the period				
Is the employee's appointment to be confirmed?				YES / NO
If NO, please provide reasons below and summarise what action has been taken to address any difficulties which have arisen during the probationary period.				

The employee may provide any comments about their experience of the probationary process here.

Employee's signature:

Manager's signature:

Date:

PLEASE NOTE: At the final extension review meeting, the line manager should confirm whether or not the employee has successfully completed their probationary period. If appointment is to be confirmed a letter should be issued by the line manager as per 4.7 of the probationary period policy and a copy of the letter and completed probation review form to be held on the employee's personal file. **If the employee has not successfully completed the probation extension period the line manager is to contact SCW HR as per 4.8 of the probationary period policy.**

3. APPENDIX 3

4. SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF PROBATIONARY PERIOD

5. LETTER WORDING

Dear [Employee Name]

RE: Completion of Probationary Period

Further to our discussion on [date] regarding your probation period in the role of [role title].

I am writing to confirm that you have successfully completed the six month probationary period.

I will continue to monitor your progress through regular 1:1 meetings and annual appraisal.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you continued success in your current role, and in your future career with Southern Hampshire Primary Care Alliance (SHPCA)

If you have any queries regarding this letter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

[Line Manager]

[Role Title]

6. APPENDIX 4

7. EXTENSION OF PROBATIONARY PERIOD

8. LETTER WORDING

Dear [Employee Name]

RE: Extension to Probation Period

Further to our discussion on [date] regarding your probation period in the role of [role title].

I am writing to confirm the outcome of your final review meeting six month assessment.

As a result of this assessment it has been agreed that your probation period be extended for a period of 3 months from [date] to [date], to allow for you to meet the required standard in the following areas:

[Itemise in relation to part 3 of the probationary period review form].

The extension of your probation period will give you the opportunity to improve in this area. As part of the ongoing probationary process your progress will continue to be monitored and will be reviewed at the end of the probationary period. However, if you fail to make sufficient progress either during or by the end of your extended probationary period you will be invited to attend a formal probationary period meeting, and this may result in your dismissal.

Please do not hesitate to contact either myself on the above telephone number or the SCWE HR Team if you wish to discuss.

Yours sincerely

[Line Manager]

[Role Title]