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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Trust recognises the importance of introducing employees effectively into a new role. For this reason, appointees are subject to a formal induction period as detailed in the Induction Policy.
- 1.2 Employees who are new to the Trust and issued Support or Senior Management Contracts are subject to a probation period. This is a period of time where both the employee and the manager are able to assess suitability for a role prior to adopting the full employment terms and conditions. This does not apply to teachers.
- 1.3 Employees who are internally redeployed, transferred or promoted and have already successfully completed a probation period are subject to an equivalent Appointment Support period. Whilst this mirrors the purpose of a probation period, full contractual entitlements prevail.
- 1.4 Hereafter the term probation is used to encompass both probation and appointment support unless stated otherwise.
- 1.5 The length of the probation period as detailed in individual contracts of employment is 6 months or as specified in individual contracts of employment. The probation period applies to all new appointees regardless of contract type, duration or prior experience.

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1 Probation is a two-way process where both the employee and their manager are actively involved in related responsibilities.
- 2.2 Employee Responsibilities

The employee is responsible for taking ownership of their own performance and development. During their probation period, they are expected to:

- Strive towards achieving the expectations of their role and the Trust
- Taking responsibility for their own learning and development
- Engaging fully in the probation review process
- Raise any concerns with their line manager in a timely manner

2.3 Line Manager Responsibilities

The line manager has responsibility for monitoring a new employee's performance and progress during a probation period. This includes:

- Ensuring the employee is properly informed about the criteria that suitability will be assessed
- Providing clear job instruction and guidance
- Providing support and responding to identified development needs
- Giving regular and clear feedback on performance
- Highlighting any problem areas in a timely manner and seeking ways to resolve them
- Monitoring timekeeping, attendance and professional conduct
- Maintaining accurate and comprehensive records of the employee's performance

2.4 HR Responsibilities

HR is responsible for:

- Communicating probation period and review dates
- Providing forms and supporting documentation to be used during the probation review process
- Providing advice and support on the implementation of this policy
- Documenting and storing probation review forms
- Maintaining and updating the probation review policy and procedures

3 Principles

- 3.1 The initial period of probation runs concurrent to, and is complemented by, the induction process.
- 3.2 Employees and managers are encouraged to maintain open and honest communication regarding performance and conduct.
- 3.3 Probation reviews provide an opportunity for staff to give and receive feedback during their initial stages of employment. This will be a supportive process that notes progress as well as identifying areas for improvement.
- 3.4 Staff who are on probation will not be subject to the Trust's appraisal process until such a point that their probation is successfully complete.
- 3.5 Where performance concerns arise, managers are required to address them and seek remedial intervention in a timely manner. This will seek to support the employee to be able to achieve the required standards. It is not appropriate to wait until a scheduled review meeting and/or the expiry of the probation period.
- 3.6 If performance concerns are unresolved, the employee should be advised that the performance is unsatisfactory and the likely consequence if there is no improvement.
- 3.7 If it is suspected or established during probation that the employee does not have the qualifications, experience or knowledge that they claimed to have at the time of recruitment, the matter will be discussed with the employee to establish the facts. If the evidence suggests that the employee misrepresented their abilities in any way, the Trust reserves the right to terminate employment.
- 3.8 The Trust reserves the right to extend an employee's period of probation at reasonable discretion. This will be necessary where concerns are not yet satisfied, and it is thought that an extension may lead to improvement, or where there is an extended period of absence during probation. This is limited to one extension and the total period of probation will be no longer than 20% of the initial duration of probation.

- 3.9 In circumstances where a final probation review is delayed beyond the initial period, the probation period will be extended accordingly. Employees are not considered to have successfully passed their probation in the absence of a review.
- 3.10 If either party decides to terminate the employment during the probation period, they are required to provide appropriate notice as stated in their contract of employment.
- 3.11 Staff have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or workplace colleague for all formal meetings where serious performance issues have arisen, and dismissal is a possible outcome.
- 3.12 For new employees only, the Probation Policy overrides the Trust's employment policies and procedures during the probation period. The probation review procedure is the appropriate mechanism for the management of attendance, unacceptable performance and disciplinary issues that arise, whilst having regard to the principles of related Trust policies.
- 3.13 For internal appointments, the appointment support procedure runs alongside the provisions of other Trust policies including but not exclusively attendance management, capability and disciplinary. Scheduled appointment support meetings can be used to consider progress/actions under the provision of other policies.
- 3.14 Employees and HR should receive a written record of all probation review meetings. If there is a decision to extend probation or terminate employment, the reasons for this must be clearly documented. All probation records will be filed securely in accordance with GDPR requirements.

4. Probation Review Procedure

- 4.1 Probation reviews should take place according to the following timescales:

| 6 weeks | 12 weeks | 20 weeks |
|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 st Review | 2 nd Review | 3 rd (and final) Review |

- 4.2 The meetings should be pre-arranged and held in an appropriate setting that is free from distractions and/or interruptions.
- 4.3 There will be an informed performance conversation that includes:
- Progress against targets/actions
 - Notable strengths and achievements
 - Identified areas for development, including if/how performance is falling short of the required standards
 - Professional conduct including attendance and punctuality
 - Revised targets/actions
 - Required support and development
- 4.4 Following the conversation, the line manager will conclude whether:
- The employee is on track to successfully complete their probation, or in the case of a final review has been successful
 - Performance concerns exist, and additional support is needed, or in the case of a final review:
 - An extension is necessary
 - Dismissal is a possible outcome (probation only)
 - Other Trust policies and procedures apply (appointment support only) – see 3.13. This may include considering redeployment.
- 4.5 The line manager will conduct and record the conversation in accordance with the Trust's proforma. A copy of this will be sent to both the employee and HR promptly following the meeting.

5. Dismissal Arising from Probation

- 5.1 If dismissal is a possible outcome of probation, a formal probation meeting should be arranged. This will be chaired by a Senior Manager in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, as well as the employee's line manager. A representative from HR will be present to record the meeting and advise where required.
- 5.2 At the meeting the line manager will outline their concerns. They will bring any relevant paperwork including:
- Evidence of poor performance
 - Details of previous related discussions including previous probation review records
 - Details of action taken to address the concerns including training and support
- 5.3 The employee should then be given the opportunity to state their views and respond to the concerns.
- 5.4 The chairing manager should consider all information available and make a judgement of the most appropriate outcome, up to and including dismissal. This decision should be conveyed to the member of staff at the meeting and confirmed in writing within 5 working days.
- 5.5 Once the decision is reached the employee has no right of appeal.

6. Policy Status and Review

| | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|
| Written by | HR Manager | | |
| Owner | HR Director | | |
| Version | V2/2019 | Status | Approved |
| Equality Impact Assessment | Initial Impact Assessment | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Full Impact Assessment | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| JCC Consultation date | 09/10/2018 – 31/10/2018 | | |
| Approval date | 18/03/2019 – Technical correction 27/11/2018 - Executive Team | | |
| Review date | 26/11/2021 | | |
| Comments | This policy supersedes separate probation provisions previously adopted by East and West Sussex | | |

Probation/Appointment Support Review Form

| Employee Details | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Academy/Department | | | |
| Name | | | |
| Job title | | | |
| Start Date | | Review Date | |
| Review | 6 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> | 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> | 20 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Professionalism and Personal Qualities | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> | Good <input type="checkbox"/> | Average <input type="checkbox"/> | Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Comments: | | | |

| Knowledge | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> | Good <input type="checkbox"/> | Average <input type="checkbox"/> | Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Comments: | | | |

| Skill and Ability | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> | Good <input type="checkbox"/> | Average <input type="checkbox"/> | Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Comments: | | | |

| Communication | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> | Good <input type="checkbox"/> | Average <input type="checkbox"/> | Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments:

Performance

Excellent

Good

Average

Needs Improvement

Comments:

Areas for Development/Further Support

Excellent

Good

Average

Needs Improvement

Comments:

FINAL REVIEW ONLY

The recommendation is that the employee:

Has successfully completed their probation/appointment support period

The probation/appointment support period is unsuccessful

The probation/appointment support period should be extended by Choose an item.

Signed

Employee

Date

Manager

Date

A signed copy of this form must be returned to the HR department for recording.