

Probation Framework

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Introduction

Starting a new role is an important milestone. Our probationary period is designed to support new employees to settle into their role, understand expectations, and receive regular feedback, support and development.

This framework sets out how Perth and Kinross Council provide a consistent, fair and supportive approach during this period, ensuring both employees and managers have clarity, structure and the right support in place from day one.

Purpose of the Framework

The Probation Framework is based around the existing [one-to-one process](#) that encourages open, honest, and regular two-way discussions and ensures that any opportunities, challenges, or issues are picked up early and a clear way forward agreed.

The purpose of this framework is to:

- ensure new employees have a structured induction to help them settle into their new role
- invest in new employees by providing clear objectives that are supported by appropriate training, development and support to help new employees succeed
- ensure open, honest and constructive feedback where any concerns are raised early
- set out a clear and consistent approach to the probationary period process whilst supporting fair and reasonable decision-making that's based on evidence and meets legal requirements
- document factual records of meetings, support and decisions during the probationary period

Scope

This framework applies to all new employees appointed on a permanent or fixed term contract. Perth and Kinross Council includes Council employees who work as part of Perth and Kinross Health and Social Care Partnership.

This framework does not apply to agency workers or contractors.

Probationary period overview

All new employees will normally be subject to a probationary period of four months from the start date of their employment.

The probationary period may be extended by management for up to a further two months less one day with the total probationary period, including the final outcome, not exceeding six months less one day.

Roles and responsibilities

Line Managers

Line managers are responsible for:

- delivering an effective team and service induction to new employees during their first days
- providing a comprehensive overview of the role and expectations
- setting clear objectives, milestones and success measures
- holding monthly probationary progress meetings, supplemented by regular one-to-ones
- recording discussions and outcomes using the templates that support this framework
- identifying and providing appropriate training, support and development
- providing feedback and raising concerns at the earliest opportunity
- making recommendations **based on evidence** regarding successful completion, extension to probationary period or progression to a capability hearing

Employees

Employees are responsible for:

- engaging fully with induction, training and development opportunities
- working towards agreed objectives and milestones
- attending and participating in probationary progress and review meetings
- raising any concerns or support needs with their line manager at the earliest opportunity

People and Culture

People and Culture are responsible for:

- providing procedural advice on framework, process and timescales
- supporting managers with hearings, where required
- ensuring consistency, fairness and legal compliance
- providing the manager with automated prompts to arrange and conduct regular probationary progress and review meetings

Probationary Framework Stages

Stage 1: Induction and early engagement

During the first days of employment, the line manager will:

- deliver a team and service induction
- provide a clear description of the role
- explain the probationary process and expectations

Stage 2: Objective setting and initial review

An initial probationary progress meeting will be held within the first week of employment to:

- set clear objectives and milestones
- outline success measures
- identify training and support requirements
- establish regular one-to-one meetings (minimum monthly during probation)

Stage 3: Ongoing review and support

Monthly probationary progress meetings will be held throughout the probationary period to review progress against objectives and milestones. During these meetings, achievements, progress and any concerns will be discussed and recorded, along with any additional support or development which is identified to help the employee fulfil the requirements of their role.

All discussions will be documented using the Probationary Progress Record template.

Stage 4: Final probationary review

At the end of the probationary period, a final review meeting will take place to assess performance, conduct, attendance and overall suitability for the role to determine the appropriate outcome of the probationary period. The outcome will be recorded on the Probationary Progress Review template.

Raising and addressing concerns early

Any concerns regarding performance, conduct, attendance or overall suitability for the role must be raised by the manager with the employee at the earliest opportunity. Concerns must be clearly explained to the employee and supported by evidence, giving the employee an opportunity to respond and outline any relevant mitigation. All concerns, from either the employee or line manager, must be documented in the Probationary Progress Review template.

Where concerns are identified:

- clear improvement milestones and timescales must be agreed
- appropriate support and development must be identified and provided
- responsibilities of both the employee and the line manager must be clearly recorded

Potential outcomes at the end of probation

Successful completion

Where the employee meets the required standards, successful completion of probation will be formally recorded and confirmed in writing to the employee.

Extension of probation

Where progress is evident but further improvement is required, the probationary period may be extended for up to two months less one day. An extension is intended to provide additional time and support where progress is being made and is not a punitive measure.

Monthly probationary progress meetings will continue with clear objectives, milestones and support arrangements to address areas of concern. The extension must be recorded and confirmed in writing to the employee.

Where things don't improve despite support – progression to capability hearing

Where, within the (extended) probationary period, there is no or insufficient improvement despite appropriate support, the employee should be advised of this in writing and advised they will be invited to a capability hearing.

A senior manager will be nominated to chair the capability hearing, with the employee being advised of the details in writing, giving a minimum of five days' notice and informed of their right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.

Progression to a capability hearing will only be considered where concerns have been clearly explained, support has been provided, and sufficient improvement has not been achieved.

The purpose of the capability hearing is to:

- review overall performance during the probationary period
- allow the employee the opportunity to respond and provide any relevant mitigation

- determine whether employment should continue

The outcome will be confirmed in writing, and where dismissal occurs, the employee will be advised of their right of appeal. An appeal must be lodged, in writing, to the relevant Strategic Lead outlining the grounds of appeal within 10 working days of receipt of the outcome. Appeals will take place without unreasonable delay.

Timescale and legal considerations

All actions and decisions must be concluded within six months less one day, including any hearings to be completed within this timeframe.

Employee absence, complaints or related matters will not normally delay completion of the process; however, we recognise that circumstances may occasionally impact on an employee's employment. We encourage all [employees to look after their wellbeing](#).

Documentation and records

Brief, factual records of probationary progress meetings must be kept by completing the Probationary Progress Record template and stored in the employee's personnel record.

Records should be objective, relevant and proportionate, with all outcomes and decisions confirmed in writing.

Records will be retained in accordance with data protection and records management requirements.

Definitions

- Probation – a structured introductory period at the start of employment used to support and assess suitability.
- Probationary progress record – an electronic template to document a one-to-one meeting where performance is discussed to ensure the employee is aware of how they are doing in their role.
- Performance includes conduct, attendance and overall suitability for the role.