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## PROBATIONARY PERIODS

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**Section:** Recruitment and Selection

**Source:** Corporate Resources Ratification Committee - 1st December 1999

**Issue Date:** January 2000

**Amended:** 24th June 2004, October 2007, July 2013, October 2015, July 2018, July 2019, June 2022, April 2023

**Appendices:** 1. Record of Probationary Period

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### Preamble

1. It is Sefton's policy that new employees are required to satisfactorily complete a probationary period of 6 months prior to being confirmed in their appointment. The purpose of the probationary period is to enable new employees to establish their suitability, and this must be made clear at the time of appointment.
2. New employees who are within their probationary period are excluded from the [Local Disciplinary Procedure](#) and the [Grievance Procedure](#), which states that the procedure does not apply "where less than six months probationary service has been completed and dismissal arises from unsuitability for confirmation of appointment."
3. Internal appointments are also subject to a period in which the employee's performance should be monitored and the manager should be offering support within the new role.

### Scope

4. The procedure applies to all employees other than teachers; it doesn't apply to employees in schools, but it is recommended for their use. It also applies to apprentices when they are appointed to posts within the Council.

### Principles

5. The probationary period allows assessment of an individual's ability to do the job and adhere to general standard of conduct (e.g. ability to properly observe normal work rules and conventions including punctuality, relationship with colleagues/managers/public and standards of attendance). Therefore, the expected standards, work rules etc. must be made known to the probationer as soon as he/she commences employment.
6. Whilst probationers will generally be excluded from the Disciplinary Procedure, it should be recognised that in exceptional circumstances where allegations of serious or gross misconduct arise, it will be both necessary and appropriate to apply the Disciplinary Procedure. The standard Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure will be applied where necessary for employees subject to an internal monitoring period. Advice must be sought from Personnel.

## The Procedures - New Employees

7. At all stages the employee will be informed of the right to be represented either by a Trade Union representative or some other person of his/her choice.
8. During the period new employees must be properly monitored and formal supervisory sessions conducted at least once per month. The purpose of these sessions will be to provide the new employee with feedback on his/her performance and conduct and to allow the employee to comment on any concerns or support required. Notes of the meeting and agreed actions should be recorded on the monthly meeting form (Appendix 1). This form should be signed by the employee. Every reasonable effort must be made by management to resolve any difficulties - this may include counselling, extra supervision, instruction and/or training.
9. Successful completion of the probationary period must be confirmed in writing.
10. If at any stage, and following additional support, a probationer's ability/conduct does not reach an acceptable standard, non-confirmation of appointment should be considered. A final decision should not be made until the employee has been given the opportunity to state his/her case with a trade union representative present (if he/she so wishes). A representative of the Personnel Department will be available to advise management if requested. The decision not to confirm a probationer's employment rests with the Service Manager.
11. If the probationer's appointment is not confirmed he/she must be given appropriate notice and be provided with a reason in writing. Notice must be served before the end of the probationary period; it is not necessary for the effective date of termination to be before the end of the period.

## Appeals

12. An employee whose appointment is not confirmed has a right of appeal to an Assistant Director, whose decision on the matter will be final.
13. Should an employee wish to appeal against the decision not to confirm the appointment, he/she must do so in writing within 10 working days of receiving the letter notifying them of the decision. The grounds of appeal should be set out in full in the letter which should be sent to the employee's Assistant Director who will acknowledge the letter and forward it to the Personnel Department.
14. The Personnel Department will arrange the Appeal Hearing which will take place within 28 working days from the receipt of the appeal from the employee. Any information the employee wants to be considered by the Assistant Director must be supplied to the Personnel Department no later than 10 working days before the hearing.
15. At the hearing the employee will have a right to representation or to be accompanied and will put their case to the Assistant Director. A manager from the employing department will respond to the employee's appeal and confirm the reasons for the non-confirmation of the appointment. There will be an opportunity for questions from both sides. The Assistant Director, the manager, followed by the employee, are to be given the opportunity to sum up.

16. The Assistant Director will adjourn to reach a decision on the appeal and the employee will be notified of the decision in writing within 5 working days of the decision.

### Internal Appointments

17. Employees who secure a new position within the Council (either through promotion or a move to another department) are subject to a monitoring period of 6 months.
18. The purpose of the monitoring period will be to provide the employee with feedback on his/her performance and to allow the employee to comment on any concerns or support required. It is important that the manager takes the time to meet with the employee to help them succeed within the new role. Every reasonable effort must be made by management to resolve any difficulties - this may include counselling, extra supervision, instruction and/or training. Notes of meetings and agreed actions should be recorded as necessary.
20. Performance issues which cannot be resolved within the monitoring period will be dealt with under the Capability Procedure.
21. Redeployees are not subject to a monitoring period as other provisions apply. Please see the Redeployment Procedure for further information.

### Extensions

22. ***Probationary periods cannot be extended other than:***
  - a) ***where there has been a lengthy absence due to illness or***
  - b) ***some other reason which hinders the ability of the manager to adequately access the probationer's performance within the 6-month period.***

In relation to b) such instances are expected to be minimal but may be deemed necessary to cover specific issues arising during the probationary period such as:

- Request by the probationer (approved by the manager) for special unpaid leave to deal with crisis /emergency matters.
- Specific urgent work matters arising for the manager that have prevented the ability to conduct the one of the supervisory/probationary meetings within the 6-month time period.
- Genuine concerns regarding the probationers practice that only come to light in the latter stages of the probationary period but require extra time to explore before an employment decision can be made.

***In all cases any extension must be by written mutual agreement and MUST NOT exceed 3 months*** at the end of which a decision on employment MUST be made.

It is imperative that managers ensure, as far as reasonably practical, that all probationary meetings are held in a timely manner. Any extensions agreed by management would be to afford the manager the opportunity to adequately

assess all aspects of the individual's performance and ability to undertake the job role.

### Monitoring and Review

23. The operation of this policy and procedure will be monitored and reviewed by the Personnel Department as appropriate in consultation with the Trade Unions and other appropriate bodies

**RECORD OF PROBATIONARY PERIOD**

Employee name:

Employee No:

Post Title:

Manager/Supervisor:

Department:

Date of Appointment:

Dates of Monthly Meetings:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_

Confirmation of appointment letter sent:

Yes, date: \_\_\_\_\_

or

No, please give reasons: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Monthly Meeting 1

Date: .....

Manager's/Supervisor's Comments:

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Probationer's Comments:

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Required:

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By whom: .....

When: .....

Monthly Meeting 2

Date: .....

Manager's/Supervisor's Comments:

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Probationer's Comments:

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Required:

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By whom: .....

When: .....

Monthly Meeting 3

Date: .....

Manager's/Supervisor's Comments:

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Probationer's Comments:

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Required:

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By whom: .....

When: .....



Monthly Meeting 4

Date: .....

Manager's/Supervisor's Comments:

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Probationer's Comments:

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Required:

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By whom: .....

When: .....

Monthly Meeting 5

Date: .....

Manager's/Supervisor's Comments:

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Probationer's Comments:

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Required:

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By whom: .....

When: .....

Monthly Meeting 6

Date: .....

Manager's/Supervisor's Comments:

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Probationer's Comments:

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Required:

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By whom: .....

When: .....