

Probationary Policy



How and where we work
Agile, adaptable, accessible

www.slough.gov.uk
Slough
Borough Council

Contents

1. Policy Statement.....	1
2. Purpose	1
3. Scope	2
4. Equality Statement.....	2
5. Length of the scheme.....	2
6. Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (Applicable to Newly Qualified Social Worker – NQSW’s)	3
7. Induction.....	4
8. Management of the Probationary Process	4
9. Confirmation of Appointment.....	4
10. Unsatisfactory Performance	5
11. Extension of the Probation Period	5
12. Dismissal	5
13. Right of Appeal and Appeal Hearing	5
14. Relationships with other policies and procedures.....	6

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Probationary Period Process Flowchart

Appendix 2 - Managers Guidance

Appendix 3 - Probationary Assessment Form 1

Appendix 4 - Probationary Assessment Form 2

Appendix 5 - Probationary Assessment Form 3

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The purpose of the probationary period of employment is to assess the suitability of employees for the posts to which they have been appointed. The procedure sets out fair and equitable processes for such assessments to be made by managers and, also for employees to be able to raise any concerns that they might have. The intention is to give each individual every opportunity to succeed and provide a clear process where there are concerns that are identified during this period.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of a Probationary Period is to:
- Ensure that new members of staff have the opportunity to become familiar with the practices and procedures of Slough Borough Council (SBC).
 - Allow new members of staff to demonstrate their ability to perform their duties effectively and efficiently.
 - Ensure that new members of staff receive the appropriate support and development opportunities to enable them to perform their role to the required standards in line with their job description.
- 2.2 During their probationary period, employees are given the opportunity to become familiar with relevant practices and procedures.
- Employees have a framework within which to demonstrate their ability to perform their duties effectively and efficiently.
 - Line managers have effective methods for reviewing employees.
 - Reviews occur to agreed timescales.
- 2.3 In making their assessment, a line manager will consider a number of factors (refer to Managers guidance in Appendix 2). Probation Process has been mapped in Agresso. Managers will need to complete the Agresso Probation Form in 'Agresso Web/Forms'. [A User Guide is available on Freshdesk](#)
- 2.4 This Policy does not form part of your contract of employment. We reserve the right to amend this policy. If there is any conflict between the terms of this Policy and the statutory rights which it covers, then the statutory rights will prevail.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This procedure applies to all employees of Slough Borough Council including maintained schools. It excludes school-based staff who are under the control of Governing Bodies.

4. Equality Statement

- 4.1 Slough Borough Council (SBC) aims to design and implement policy documents that meet the diverse needs of our services, and workforce, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others. It considers current UK legislative requirements, including the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998. SBC promotes equal opportunities for all where an inclusive workforce and diversity is valued (Refer to EDI policy).

5. Length of the scheme

- 5.1. The probationary period will be 3 or 6 calendar months (contract dependent) and for Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYEs) 12 months (Table 1) during which time the manager will meet regularly with the employee to discuss their progress and suitability for the role.
- 5.2. If there are concerns about the employee's suitability, or due to absence there has been insufficient time to assess the employee, the probationary period maybe extended by up to 3 calendar months or such period as is reasonable to be able to assess the employee.
- 5.3. Where there is sufficient evidence that the standards are not being met, or are unlikely to be met, the contract of employment may be terminated at any stage during the probation period i.e. - it is not always necessary or appropriate to wait until the end of the probation period.
- 5.4. During or at the end of the probation period, the contractual notice period required by either party to terminate the employment is one week.
- 5.5. The probationary period is stated in the employee's contract of employment. Normally, all contracts for new permanent employees' state that the contract will be subject to the satisfactory completion of a probationary period of six months. However, where an individual is on a fixed term contract, the probationary period will be proportionate according to the length of the fixed term contract (Table 1 - below). Where an employee is on an annually renewed fixed term contract due to statutory requirements, the probation period will be six months.

Table 1

Length of Contract	Length of Probationary Period
Fixed term, less than 12 months	3 months probationary period
Newly qualified social workers on ASYE qualification	12 months
Fixed Term 12 months +	6 months probationary period
Permanent Contract	6 months probationary period

- 5.6. If an employee is on a fixed term contract where the probationary period is three months, the probationary assessment meetings should take place during the 1st, 2nd and 3rd month of employment. The manager would be required to follow the same principles of the first, second and final assessment meetings as detailed in this policy and should complete the appropriate probationary assessment forms. If deemed necessary, the probationary period may be extended for an appropriate period.
- 5.7. Where an existing employee is appointed to a new role and have already completed a probationary period with the Council, a formal probationary period will not apply. However, the employee's performance will be monitored closely during the first six months (or proportionate period if on a fixed term contract) and during this period the employee will be expected to demonstrate their suitability for the post.
- 5.8. Where a new employee has joined Slough Borough Council with previous local government service, they will be expected to complete a full probationary period. The length of this probationary period will be determined by the type of contract the employee is on as shown in Table 1.
- 5.9. If an employee changes job within their probationary period, whatever the reason for the change, they will be expected to complete a further full probationary period in the new post.

6. Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (Applicable to Newly Qualified Social Worker – NQSW's)

- 6.1 The probationary period for newly appointed NQSWs on the ASYE will be one year. The probationary period may be extended if the ASYE is extended e.g., where the NQSW has a period of maternity leave or long-term sick leave. Probationary Assessments/Reviews will be held at 3 and 6 months, completing the final assessment report at the end of ASYE at 12 months. An assessment/review can be undertaken at 9 months if the ASYE Team/Practice Manager or Practice Educator considers this to be beneficial to the NQSW.

For further information please refer to the ASYE procedure, available on SBC Insite.

7. Induction

- 7.1 It is the manager's responsibility to devise an appropriate local induction programme for all newly appointed employees which will enable the individual to meet key contacts, understand their role and the standards expected of them, and understand how they contribute to the team, service, and overarching goals of the business. The manager needs to use the induction checklist to ensure all areas are covered with the induction period.
- 7.2 The manager should also discuss and agree an initial training and development plan based on the individual's personal needs, to support them joining a new team, covering processes, systems, introduction to team members, Subject matter experts in the team, set in place a 'buddy' to support, so that they will be able to perform their new role effectively.
- An Induction Checklist can be found in **Cornerstone**. [Cornerstone](#)
 - An induction checklist is automatically assigned on Cornerstone to every new starter as a prompt to run through with their line manager.
 - A further copy of the Induction Checklist should be forwarded to the line Manager.
 - Once completed the line manager and new starter should sign this off and store it in the new starter's record in Agresso system.
 - The manager should ensure that all stipulated training is agreed, arranged, and completed by the individual, within the designated period set on Cornerstone.

8. Management of the Probationary Process

- 8.1 It is the manager's responsibility to monitor the progress of the new employees, ensure training needs are met, to keep the employees informed of their progress and ensure that any problems are resolved promptly before they become serious concerns. For the **process of the Probationary Assessment Meetings refer to Probationary Period Process Flowchart in Appendix 1 and Managers guidance in Appendix 2. Probationary Assessments First, Second and Final forms are given in Appendices 3, 4 and 5.**

9. Confirmation of Appointment

- 9.1 Where the appointment is to be confirmed, the line manager must complete the relevant section of the Probationary Final Assessment Form and refer to the Managers guidance in Appendix 2, and Probationary Final Assessment Form in Appendix 5.

10. Unsatisfactory Performance

- 10.1 Where performance and/or conduct is unsatisfactory, line managers can recommend extending the probation period to allow additional time for the employee to demonstrate their suitability for the post or termination of employment at any stage during the probation period refer to Managers guidance in Appendix 2, section 4.
- 10.2 Also, the Council's Code of Conduct for Employees, Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, Capability Policy and Procedure, Managing Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure, Dignity at Work and the Grievance Policy, set out the standards of behaviour expected of employees. Failure to meet the required standard may result in the employee's contract being terminated.

11. Extension of the Probation Period

- 11.1 Extension of the Probation Period does not have to wait until the end of the 6-months period if concerns have been identified sooner, an improvement action plan should be implemented. If there are no measurable improvements, then the next stage of the process needs to be instigated refer to Managers guidance in Appendix 2, section 5.

12. Dismissal

- 12.1 The line manager will consider whether the employee's contract of employment should be terminated if no improvement has been made to demonstrate the suitability for the role. Any recommendation must be justified with sufficient supporting evidence.
- 12.2 Where the decision is to dismiss, the employee will be notified in writing that their appointment is not confirmed and their contract of employment will be terminated, and of their right of appeal.
- 11.2 The notice period for employees whose contract of employment is terminated during the probationary period is one week on either side, unless otherwise specified in the contract of employment - refer to Managers guidance in Appendix 2, section 6.

13. Right of Appeal and Appeal Hearing

- 13.1 All probationary employees have the right to appeal against dismissal refer to Managers guidance in Appendix 2, section 7 and Appeal Hearing is in Appendix 2, section 8.

14. Relationships with other policies and procedures

- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- Capability Policy and Procedure
- Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure
- Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Dignity at Work Code of Practice.

Appendix 1 – Probationary Period Process Flowchart



