

Probation Policy & Procedure

January 2021

Purpose

Our **probationary period policy** will define the employment probationary period and explain its meaning for the employee and Healthwatch Cornwall (HC). This practice is designed to allow an introductory period for everyone involved to decide if the hiring of the particular employee *has met the performance requirements of the role* and whether the employee should continue working for Healthwatch Cornwall.

Scope

This policy applies to all prospective and existing employees of our organisation.

Policy elements

Those who can be placed in an employee probationary period include the following:

- New employees who have just passed through a hiring process for a permanent position
- Current employees who are promoted to a position of higher responsibility

The length of the probationary period will usually be six months. It will be clearly stated in the employment contract.

Where a staff member successfully passes probation this will be confirmed in writing in the relevant section on the probation assessment form QF103 (see appendix below). It should also be confirmed in writing with the employee and to payroll.



The probationary period may be extended for reasons that justify this action. The employee will receive formal notification in writing with the reason for the extension, the length of the extension and clearly defined objectives.

New Employees

HC will make an effort to ensure that its recruitment process serves the purpose of recruiting the best employees for each open position. However, we acknowledge that they are inevitably not always accurate in predicting performance or determining appropriate cultural fit. The probation period for new employees gives both employee and employer enough time to find out if their employment relationship will eventually work out to the benefit of both.

What is the meaning of probation period?

The **probationary period definition** for new employees is the time between signing an employment contract and being granted permanent employment status. It is a “trial period” when the *performance of the employee is being assessed against the requirements of the role*. The new employee will be given consistent feedback and coaching to have the chance to learn their new job and improve during the probationary period. At the end of the probation period (or possibly before that), the line manager will determine if the employee should be retained in the organisation using the Probation Assessment form (see annexe). This decision will be made by appraising the following criteria:

- The skills, competencies and knowledge of the employee on the job
- The employee’s progress towards agreed objectives
- Their reliability, trustworthiness and other relevant personality characteristics of the employee
- The employee’s relations and collaboration with subordinates, managers and peers

The abovementioned criteria will be assessed with quantitative measures if applicable. Their progress will be documented in supervision notes, and the decision to retain them will be at the line manager’s discretion in consultation with the wider management team.

Permanent employees



An employee may also be placed in a probationary period if they have been promoted or transferred to a position. The purpose of this is to ensure that the employee is able to complete their new duties. This does not affect the individual’s permanent employee status and the aim is for line manager and employee to work together to make the new role successful, and to give a framework towards achieving this.

Termination: Dismissal during probationary period

If the employee is deemed unsuitable while on a probationary period, they may be terminated without the minimum prior notice mandated by law. The [termination of employment](#) during this period may be for cause or without cause depending on the circumstances and the individual’s evaluation.

Termination may occur before the ending of the probationary period. This may happen if the tactical evaluations of the employee are highly unsatisfactory or if the employee engages in behavior that justifies a for-cause dismissal. The employee will be officially notified in writing for the decision to terminate them. The document will explicitly state the reason behind their termination and the expected date it will take effect.

Employees may still have to be dismissed for various reasons, after the end of the probationary period. In such cases, HC will follow employment law, legal guidelines and its own [disciplinary procedure as contained within the Employee handbook](#).

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Appendix 1: QF 103 – Probation Assessment Form

Healthwatch Cornwall, within its Terms and conditions of Employment, has a six month probation period for all employees. Assessment is carried out on an ongoing basis during supervision during the probation period, and any issues requiring attention would normally be noted on the supervision forms and dealt with on an “as and when” basis.

This form is to formally record the assessment at the end of the six months, and confirm whether it has been successfully completed or whether an extension is required to enable the employee to complete any objectives that have not been met a written record is kept detailing the content, time and date of each assessment held for each employee.

Probation assessments will be conducted with an employee’s line manager, normally on a one to one basis. Where additional support is required or there are concerns about performance the next date will be set at the six month assessment.

Checklist for Managers

Pre-preparation

- Give the jobholder adequate notice and information on what to expect.
- Consult in advance: own manager, colleagues, and others as appropriate.
- Examine any prejudices. Ensure fairness and consistency.
- Ensure privacy and freedom from interruption for the meeting.
- Prepare adequately and base assessment on valid evidence and clearly defined performance standards known and understood by the job holder.
- Avoid the ‘recency effect’ and ensure that feedback is based on the whole review period rather than just the last few weeks.

During the probation assessment meeting

- Put the jobholder at ease and start/finish on a positive note.
 - Allow the jobholder to review their own performance and establish and agree unmet objectives and the reasons for them.
 - When considering whether the jobholder has achieved their objectives over the review period (consider what the obstacles were and how the job holder overcame them)
 - Was there adequate time or support?
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- Was the key task or objective still valid in the light of events?
- What difficulties occurred that were not within the control of the individual?
- What skills and behaviour contributed to the success or otherwise of the performance against the objective?
- Ask open questions rather than making statements and encourage the job holder to do most of the talking.
- Tackle under-performance firmly but constructively, and don't take the easy way out.
- Ensure that the job holder knows your views on their strengths, development needs, plans and priorities.
- Create a sound basis for commitment to the objectives following the probation assessment.

Following the probation assessment meeting

- Deal with the paperwork promptly.
- Notify CRCC payroll (Sarah.Howell@CRCC.org.uk) that the probation period has been completed or extended as appropriate.
- Ensure training and development needs have been translated into good action plans. Is it clear who will do what, by when? How will the results be assessed?
- Arrange for action plans to be regularly reviewed and provide the necessary training/development opportunities

Reflect and review

- How would I feel if I had been on the receiving end?
 - What would I do differently next time?
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Probation Assessment Form

Employee Name	
Job Title	
Line Manager	
Date of Probation Assessment Meeting	

Probation objectives
The specific objectives, tasks, targets and measures set for the probation period.
Current performance
Performance measured against the above objectives during the probation period, noting both positive and negative factors that have affected performance. What has been done well? What not so well? Why?
Competencies
Key competencies / behaviours required. Note of discussion of evidence of competencies and how objectives and goals are being achieved. Note strengths and areas for development.

Probation completed / requires further time to complete objectives (please delete as appropriate)	
Date of completion (or date or extension):	
Objectives for period until next appraisal	
Summarise priorities and focus until next appraisal.	
Personal development until next appraisal	
Any other personal development actions or training needs that have been identified. What support has been agreed?	

It is important that a written record of this discussion is kept detailing the content, time and date of each probation assessment held for each employee. Please complete all the above discussions with your employee and both sign the checklist within 14 days of completion.

Remember to notify payroll (sarah.howell@crcc.org.uk) on successful completion of probation

Employee comments			
Employee's Signature		Date	

Manager comments			
Manager's Signature		Date	

CEO comments			
CEO's Signature		Date	

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