

WORKFORCE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

PROBATION PERIOD POLICY

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Feb 2014	1.1	Helen Carroll – HR Business Advisor	Transfer to new policy template, update legislation
Feb 17	2.0	Tricia Beck-HR Business Advisor	Review and update of policy
August 2019	3.0	Stephanie Spencer – HR Business Advisor	Review and update of policy. Included the Organisational Values and Behaviours section, and clarity of process reviewed.

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction	4
2.0 Purpose	4
3.0 Scope	4
4.0 Organisational Values & Behaviours	5
5.0 Responsibilities	5
6.0 Procedure	5
6.1 First Meeting (within first four weeks of employment)	6
6.2 Review Meeting (in or before month 3).....	7
6.3 Final review meeting (to take place at any time up to month six).....	8
7.0 Confirmation in post	9
8.0 Non-confirmation in post dismissals.....	9
9.0 Notice Periods during the Probation Period	9
10.0 Sickness absence during the probationary period.....	10
10.1 Short Term Absence	10
10.2 Long Term Absence	10
11.0 Procedural Rules	11
11.1 Exclusion of the Probationary Period.....	12
12.0 Laws & Regulations	12
13.0 Training.....	12
14.0 Audit	12
15.0 Appendices	13
Appendix 1: PROBATIONARY PERIOD FLOW CHART	14
Appendix 2: PROBATIONARY PERIOD REVIEW FORM	15
Appendix 3: Template Letter	19

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 All new employees (excluding Medical Staff) appointed to posts within The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre NHS Foundation Trust (CCC) are required to successfully complete a probationary period of six months. This is generally sufficient time for a line manager to make a realistic assessment of a member of staff's performance and suitability for the post.
- 1.2 The Trust produces guidance on this policy which sets out how it will be applied in practice and the expectation is that these will be followed.

2.0 Purpose

The aim of the probationary period is:

- To ensure that new members of staff have the opportunity to become familiar with the practices and procedures of the Trust
- To allow staff members to demonstrate their ability to effectively and efficiently perform their duties.
- To assess the objectives or clinical skills & competence in the role.

3.0 Scope

This policy applies to all new employees to CCC with the exception of Medical Staff. Those staff that transfer internally or who are promoted internally to a post within the Trust will not be subject to a probation period.

Staff appointed to a post in the Trust having previously worked on the Bank will be subject to a probationary period.

Departments within the Trust who have staff that are on internal rotations covering separate areas and are required by the nature of their role to work beyond 6 months, shall have the probation period extended to ensure all areas are covered.

Issue Date: 12 th November 2019	Page 4 of 19	Filename: PHRJPROBA	Issue No: 3.0
Author: Stephanie Spencer	Authorised by: WOD		Copy No:

4.0 Organisational Values & Behaviours

The Trust's Values and Behaviours support the Vision *'to provide the best cancer care to the people we serve'* and our Mission *'To improve health and wellbeing through compassionate, safe and effective cancer care'*.

In order to deliver the Vision and the Mission the Trust has set out the Values & Behaviours that it will demonstrate which are:

- Putting People First
- Passionate about what we do
- Achieving Excellence
- Looking to our future
- Always improving our care

These values and behaviours need to be at the heart of everything we do and have been incorporated into the development of this policy.

5.0 Responsibilities

Employer

During the probationary period, the line manager has a responsibility to set the required performance standards and follow up any development needs that have been identified, either during the selection process or subsequently. Line managers must ensure that members of staff understand what is expected from them during their employment.

Employee

During the probationary period, the employee has a responsibility to commit to and work towards the performance standards expected of the role, and to raise any further training needs as soon as possible.

6.0 Procedure

The process for managing probationary periods is outlined below and comprises the following elements:

Issue Date: 12 th November 2019	Page 5 of 19	Filename: PHRJPROBA	Issue No: 3.0
Author: Stephanie Spencer	Authorised by: WOD		Copy No:

- First meeting to set objectives (within first four weeks of employment);
- Review meeting in or before month three;
- Final review meeting before the end of month six, leading to either confirmation in post or non-confirmation in post.

All meetings MUST be clearly documented and placed on the line manager's staffs personal file.

Throughout the probationary period, the line manager should carry out one-to-one meetings with the member of staff on a monthly basis, or more frequently if required. These meetings should cover:

- Establishing and reviewing performance standards;
- Progress with induction and training;
- Reviewing performance against objectives;
- Setting further objectives for the next month and/or remainder of the probationary period;
- General concerns from the line manager and member of staff.

It is vital that any issues or concerns are dealt with as they arise and appropriate support given to assist the new staff member to attain the required level. Action plans to address any shortfalls in performance should be clearly documented to ensure that all parties concerned are clear about the required outcomes. Supervision notes may be used providing the issues are clearly identified. Where the level of performance is putting the member of staff's continued employment at risk, **this should be clearly explained and documented.**

If the standards of performance do not improve, despite appropriate support, the line manager must notify the HR Business Partnering Team.

6.1 First Meeting (within first four weeks of employment)

This meeting should be held between the manager and employee within the first 4 weeks of employment, to agree and set objectives to be met during the probationary

Issue Date: 12 th November 2019	Page 6 of 19	Filename: PHRJPROBA	Issue No: 3.0
Author: Stephanie Spencer		Authorised by: WOD	Copy No:

period. The manager should explain that the probationary period will be utilised to assess the achievement of objectives set, competence and an assessment of the member of staff's behaviour and conduct at work. The employee must be made aware that failure to perform at the expected standard throughout the probationary period will result in the end of the individual's employment. Any health issues identified within this period should be referred to Occupational Health (OH) and the employee advised to contact the Employee Assistance Provision help and advice line available 24/7/365 days a year via a local call rate number 03303 800658 .This is a free confidential service for staff. There is also website where employees can access a range of supportive information www.vivup.co.uk.

6.2 Review Meeting (in or before month 3)

A review meeting should take place in or before month 3 to confirm if at that point the employee's performance is good, satisfactory or below what is required in line with their job description. If there are shortfalls in the member of staff's performance the line manager (accompanied by a member of HR Business Partnering team, if appropriate) should clearly identify and discuss these with the employee and develop an action plan for improvement.

In addition, the line manager should reiterate that if the standard of performance is not improved, this may jeopardise their continued employment. Any health issues identified within this period should be referred to Occupational Health. (OH) and the employee advised to contact the Employee Assistance Provision help and advice line available 24/7/365 days a year via a local call rate number 03303 800658 .This is a free confidential service for staff. There is also website where employees can access a range of supportive information www.vivup.co.uk. This meeting should be clearly documented back to the member of staff.

At this stage, there are three options:

- 1 If performance is generally satisfactory, but more time is required to make a full assessment, the manager should continue with the regular one-to-one meetings until the final formal review. The

Issue Date: 12 th November 2019	Page 7 of 19	Filename: PHRJPROBA	Issue No: 3.0
Author: Stephanie Spencer	Authorised by: WOD		Copy No:

member of staff should be made aware of the expected standards and be given every support to achieve them. This can include additional learning and development needs.

- 2 If it is clear that performance is at (or above) the level required during the probationary period, the line manager can decide to offer the post on a permanent basis at the end of the probationary period by completing the actions outlined in section 5.3. See Appendices for the template letter
- 3 If the level of performance is below that required, this should be discussed and a plan for improvement made. The line manager **must** notify a member of the HR Business Partnering Team.

For review meetings that require a member of the HR Business Partnering team to be present, five working days' notice of any meeting must be given in writing. The individual should be offered the right to be accompanied at the meeting by a trade union official or a work based colleague. See Appendices for the template letter.

It must be reiterated during the probation period that failure to perform at the expected standard may result in the end of the employees employment.

6.3 Final review meeting (to take place at any time up to month six)

The final review meeting will be held with the member of staff before the end of month six. The purpose of this meeting is to review the probationary period so far and the individual's ability to perform in the post.

If the member of staff's performance is satisfactory, the line manager will inform the member of staff that their employment will be confirmed and follow the actions outlined in section 5.2. They should also agree future objectives and identify any further learning & development needs.

Issue Date: 12 th November 2019	Page 8 of 19	Filename: PHRJPROBA	Issue No: 3.0
Author: Stephanie Spencer	Authorised by: WOD		Copy No:

In cases where the line manager believes that the employee’s performance is unsatisfactory, a senior manager with dismissing authority will chair the Final review meeting accompanied by a member of the HR Business Partnering team. The line manager will also be required to attend the meeting to present the probation support given during the period of probation. The member of staff will be given the opportunity to respond and state their case. If the senior manager agrees that performance is unsatisfactory, the member of staff will be dismissed in line with capability. This must be confirmed to the employee in writing.

7.0 Confirmation in post

The line manager will write a letter of confirmation to the employee.

8.0 Non-confirmation in post dismissals

The non-confirmation in post process is used on the grounds of sickness/ capability where it is clearly demonstrated that the member of staff is not capable of carrying out their duties, despite training and support being provided.

Non-confirmation in post dismissals can take place at any stage during the probation period.

A letter confirming the details and outcome of the meeting will be issued within 5 working days.

9.0 Notice Periods during the Probation Period

The following paragraph is included in all contracts for staff appointed to the Trust.

“The first 6 months of your employment with the Trust will be a probation period. During this period, your performance, sickness, competence and behaviour & conduct will be monitored and assessed.

Employment may be terminated during a probation period, and will be subject to one month’s notice on either side. Employees not being confirmed in post will receive one month’s notice and will not be required to work during this period.

Issue Date: 12 th November 2019	Page 9 of 19	Filename: PHRJPROBA	Issue No: 3.0
Author: Stephanie Spencer	Authorised by: WOD		Copy No:

Once a member of staff has satisfactorily completed the probation period, the notice requirement to terminate employment will be set in the contract.”

In instances where a probationary period has been extended, the one months’ notice on either side will still stand.

10.0 Sickness absence during the probationary period

A member of staff’s attendance record can be taken into account as a relevant factor in the overall assessment of whether they should be confirmed in post.

10.1 Short Term Absence

An employee who triggers the informal stage under the Trust’s Attendance Management Policy should be advised that any further absences during their probationary period will trigger a Stage 3 Final Absence Review Hearing and this may result in termination. It should be noted that reasons for the absence should be taken into account and where there are mitigating circumstance these should be discussed with a member of the HR Business Partnering Team. Consideration should be given to an Occupational Health referral and the employee advised to contact the Employee Assistance Provision help and advice line available 24/7/365 days a year via a local call rate number 03303 800658 .This is a free confidential service for staff. There is also website where employees can access a range of supportive information www.vivup.co.uk.

10.2 Long Term Absence

In the event of an employee’s absence lasting 4 weeks or more whilst on probation the manager should write to the employee, giving them at least 5 working days’ notice inviting them to a long-term absence review meeting. The manager should be accompanied by a member of the HR Business Partnering team and the employee can be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work place colleague if they wish. If there is no foreseeable return to work date the employee will be issued with a notification as per the Trust’s attendance management policy. Subsequently, if there continues to be no foreseeable return to work date the employee should be invited to a final absence review hearing to consider their continued employment with the Trust. Consideration should be given at the outset of a potential long-term absence to an Occupational Health referral, and the employee advised to contact the Employee Assistance Provision help and advice line available 24/7/365 days a year via a local call rate number 03303 800658 .This is a free

Issue Date: 12 th November 2019	Page 10 of 19	Filename: PHRJPROBA	Issue No: 3.0
Author: Stephanie Spencer	Authorised by: WOD		Copy No:

confidential service for staff. There is also website where employees can access a range of supportive information www.vivup.co.uk. In the event that the employee or the representative is unable to attend these meetings a rescheduled meeting will be arranged as quickly as possible. If the employee or the representative fail to attend the rescheduled meeting then the meeting may go ahead with a decision being made in their absence. Please refer to the Trust's attendance management policy for guidance in relation to these specific processes.

If an employee has been absent it may be appropriate for the manager to extend the probation period in order to fully assess their performance and suitability for the post. The probation period may be extended without holding a formal review meeting, in instances where the employee has been absent from work and therefore the meeting has not been able to be held; if this is the case, the employee will be informed in writing of this decision.

11.0 Procedural Rules

The following rules will be applied to all stages of the Procedure, including appeal meetings:

- The employer will conduct the steps and stages in the procedure without undue delay.
- The employee will receive reasonable written notice (of at least five working days) of any formal meeting, and the notification will contain sufficient information to let the employee know the nature of the concerns and to explain the nature and purpose of the meeting and its potential outcomes.
- The employee will have the right to be accompanied at review meetings by a trade union official or work colleague and will be informed of that right.
- The employee will be given a full opportunity at any meeting to present any information relevant to their position and to state their case as regards any actions being considered by the employer.
- The outcomes of meetings will be communicated to the employee promptly (normally within five working days) and in writing. See

Issue Date: 12 th November 2019	Page 11 of 19	Filename: PHRJPROBA	Issue No: 3.0
Author: Stephanie Spencer	Authorised by: WOD		Copy No:

Appendices for the template letter

11.1 Exclusion of the Probationary Period

In exceptional circumstances, for example, for highly specialised roles, a senior manager may consider that it is not appropriate for a probationary period to apply to a particular post.

Authorisation for not including a probationary period must be approved by the relevant Director for that area of work with advice from HR Business partner for the area.

In cases where a probationary period is not applied the review process must still be followed by the line manager as described above.

12.0 Laws & Regulations

Equality Act 2010

Employment Act 2008

13.0 Training

No essential (including mandatory) learning and development requirements have been identified for any staff groups, in order to fulfil the requirements stated within this policy. The impact of the policy on individual learning and development requirements should be considered in conjunction with the Learning and Development policy and the Performance and Development Review policy.

14.0 Audit

This policy will be audited periodically by the HR Business Partnering Team and a report from this including recommendations, action plans and changes implemented will be provided for the Integrated Governance Committee.

The Trust shall monitor the implementation of this policy and review its performance against one or more of the following key indicators:

- Number of performance management cases within the probationary

Issue Date: 12 th November 2019	Page 12 of 19	Filename: PHRJPROBA	Issue No: 3.0
Author: Stephanie Spencer	Authorised by: WOD		Copy No:

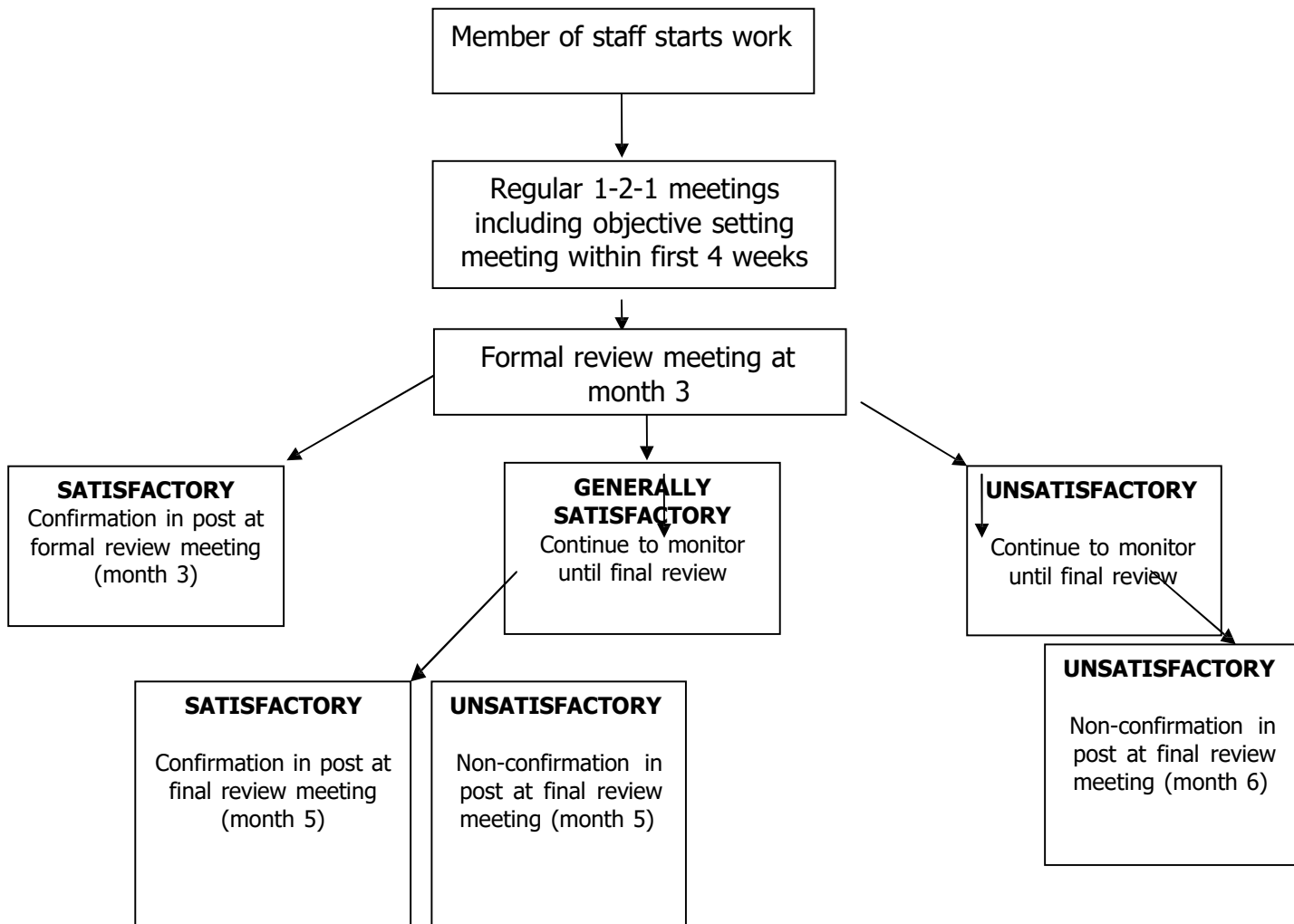
period.

- Number of these cases successfully resolved against the number of non-continuance of employment through this policy.
- Number of complaints/claims/appeals made as a result of the probationary period policy.
- The policy itself will be reviewed via the standard review process within the policy group. This policy this will be reviewed three yearly with a review taking place more frequently should a substantial change or need arise.

15.0 Appendices

Issue Date: 12 th November 2019	Page 13 of 19	Filename: PHRJPROBA	Issue No: 3.0
Author: Stephanie Spencer	Authorised by: WOD		Copy No:

Appendix 1: PROBATIONARY PERIOD FLOW CHART



NB: All stages of this process must be clearly documented using the probationary period review form and follow up letters

Appendix 2: PROBATIONARY PERIOD REVIEW FORM

The line manager should ensure that the employee is given a copy of this document at each stage of their probation and should retain the original to monitor progress against set objectives at follow-up meetings.

Name:		
Job Title:		
Department:		
Post Start Date:		
Line Manager:		
	Date Due	Please tick when completed
First Meeting		
Review Meeting:		
Final Review Meeting:		

PART 1: First meeting (within first 4 weeks)

This section should be completed by the line manager within the first four weeks of the employee commencing their employment.

SECTION A: SMART - Objectives

The line manager should identify specific objectives for the employee. These will be statements of what should be achieved during the probationary period, including indicators of success and timescales for achievement.

SECTION B: Development Plan

To support the employee in achieving these objectives, the line manager should identify any training and development needs and specify how and when these needs will be addressed during the probationary period.

Employee's Signature:	
Manager's Signature:	
Date:	

PART 2 – First review (month 3)

To be completed by the Line Manager in discussion with the employee.

	Improvement required	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Quality and accuracy of work				
Efficiency				
Attendance				
Work relationships (team work and interpersonal communication skills)				
Competency in the role				
Behaviour in line with Values & Behaviours				
<p>If any areas of performance, conduct or attendance require improvement please provide details below:</p>				
<p>Where concerns have been identified, please summarise how these will be addressed during the remaining period of probation.</p>				
<p>Summarise the employee's performance and progress over the period</p>				
Have the objectives identified for this period of the probation been met?	YES / NO	If NO, what further action is required?		Review
Have the training / development needs identified for this period of the probation been addressed?	YES / NO			
Employee's Signature:				
Manager's Signature:				
Date:				

PART 3 – Final Review (month 6)

To be completed by Line Manager in discussion with the employee.

	Improvement required	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Quality and accuracy of work				
Efficiency				
Attendance				
Work relationships (team work and interpersonal communication skills)				
Competency in the role				
Behaviour in line with Values & Behaviours?				
Have the objectives identified for the probationary period been met?	YES / NO	If NO, please provide details		
Have the training / development needs identified for the probationary period been addressed?	YES / NO			
Summarise the employee's performance and progress over the period				
Is the employee's appointment to be confirmed?				YES /
If NO, please provide reasons below and summarise what action has been taken to address any difficulties which have arisen during the probationary period.				
The employee may provide any comments about their experience of the probationary process here.				
Should the employee's probationary period be extended?				YES /
If YES, please provide reasons and, where appropriate, specify any areas of improvement required and how these will be monitored.				
Length of the extension				
New Probation Period completion date:				

THE CLATTERBRIDGE CANCER CENTRE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

Employee's signature:	
Manager's signature:	
Date:	

PLEASE NOTE: At the final review meeting, the line manager should confirm verbally whether or not the employee has successfully completed their probationary period, this must then be followed up in writing.

Appendix 3: Template Letter

Private and Confidential

[Name]
[Department]

[Date]

Dear [Name]

Successful Completion of Probationary Period

Following the probation period review meeting I held with you on [Date], I am pleased to confirm that you have successfully completed your probationary period.

Henceforth, the notice period required by either side to terminate your employment will be that stated within your Statement of Terms and Conditions.

All other terms and conditions of your employment remain unchanged.

May I take this opportunity to wish you continued success in your career with the Trust.

Yours sincerely

On behalf of The Clatterbridge Cancer Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Line Manager's
Name

Job title

Email address

Issue Date: 12 th November 2019	Page 19 of 19	Filename: PHRJPROBA	Issue No: 3.0
Author: Stephanie Spencer	Authorised by: WOD		Copy No: