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## Probation Policy

# Probation Policy

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## 1 Introduction and purpose

- 1.1 This policy and procedure has been agreed following consultation with the Staff Representative Council and applies to all staff during their probationary period. This policy only applies to new members of staff joining PSOW and not those transferring within the Organisation.
- 1.2 Annual leave arrangements for staff during their probationary period are set out in the Attendance and Absence Policy.
- 1.3 This policy does not form part of contracts of employment and may be amended at any time. PSOW may also vary this procedure, including any time limits, as may be appropriate on a case by case basis. Substantial changes to this policy will only be made following consultation with the Staff Representative Council.
- 1.4 The purpose of a probation period is to allow an employer to monitor the conduct and performance of probationary members of staff during that period, to ensure that they meet the required standards of the business (ACAS definition).
- 1.5 PSOW operates both a six month and nine month probationary period for new starters according to their role. A six month probationary period is standard however, the nine-month probation period applies to Investigation Officers, Investigation & Improvement Officers, Assistant Investigation Managers, and Investigation Managers, and reflects the longer timescales involved in completing investigative work.
- 1.6 The probation period allows both the new starter and the Organisation (particularly the line manager) the opportunity to assess objectively whether the new member of staff is suitable for the role, taking into account the values of the organisation, the need for high quality work and the need for an acceptable level of output.
- 1.7 This policy will work alongside the induction process for new members of staff at PSOW.

## 2 Principles

- 2.1 Any concerns or issues regarding performance, misconduct or attendance for a member of staff during their probationary period will normally be dealt with under this policy.
- 2.2 This policy is separate to the disciplinary and performance management policies, and the Performance Review and Development Process, which apply to staff once they have successfully completed their probation period. Members of staff in their probationary period will not normally be subject to those PSOW policies. New members of staff will be made aware, by their line managers, of the conduct and performance standards required and will be given relevant induction, training, support and feedback to help achieve these standards.
- 2.3 Clear and accurate records of the probationary period (formal review meetings) must be made by the line manager. The completed forms (see Probation Review forms) should be signed by both parties and passed, by the line manager, to the Human Resources Business Partner for review and retention on the appropriate personal file.
- 2.4 If any concerns, problems or issues arise during the probationary period, line manager's are advised to discuss these with the HRBP at the earliest opportunity and clearly explain this to the member of staff. It is important that this is done in a timely fashion so that the member of staff is given the chance to respond/explain and any support, action or improvement can be identified and recorded on the Probation Review form.
- 2.5 Confidentiality must be maintained at all stages of the Probationary Review Process, especially when issues are being addressed. The HRBP should be contacted at the earliest opportunity in order for support to be provided.
- 2.6 The member of staff has the right to be accompanied (by a trade union representative or work colleague) at any probation review meeting where termination could be a potential outcome of that meeting.

## 3 Responsibilities

### 3.1 The new member of staff is to:

- demonstrate their suitability for the role appointed to (refer to section 2);
- ensure they understand the duties of the role and all of the standards required of them;
- ensure that their conduct and behaviour reflects PSOW's values;
- ensure they follow PSOW policies and procedures;
- ensure good attendance;
- ensure they comply with reasonable instructions or contractual requirements, including those in the Staff Standards of Conduct policy;
- participate and engage constructively in induction, any training and one-to-one meetings with their line manager; and
- raise any issues or problems with their line manager as soon as is possible.

### 3.2 The line manager is to:

- explain clearly all of the standards required to the member of staff;
- communicate clearly objectives and timescales to be met;
- ensure the new member of staff completes his/her induction and any required training;
- meet with the new member of staff regularly and hold probation review meetings at the requisite times;
- provide feedback, coaching, guidance and supervision as required.
- monitor performance and attendance;
- complete and maintain records (e.g. of probation review meetings); and,
- transfer all relevant records to Human Resources, and destroy any records not requiring transfer to Human Resources, in line with PSOW's retention periods.

### 3.3 Human Resources staff are to:

- add records to the appropriate personal file; send letters confirming successful completion of the probation period where applicable; and,
- destroy records in line with PSOW's retention periods.

### 4 Probation Review Meetings

4.1 As well as more frequent one to one meetings and discussions which would normally take place between the member of staff and their line manager (particularly in the first few days and weeks), the following formal review meetings must take place in the probation period:

- First probation review meeting to take place at the end of the first month of employment to check how the new member of staff is settling in and to ensure they are equipped with the information they need to carry out their role.
- Probation meetings should then take place after 2, 4, 6 (and 9 months where applicable) months.

4.2 The dates of formal probation review meetings should be agreed in advance.

4.3 A form should be completed, by the line manager, to document every formal probation review meeting (see template forms at Appendices B, C and D). These should be signed and sent, by the line manager, to the Human Resources Business Partner.

4.4 If at any stage performance, conduct, or attendance is not considered to meet the standards required, the member of staff must be informed of this, how to improve and to what standard. Support, supervision, and any relevant additional training should be offered.

4.5 Successful completion of probation will be confirmed by letter (from Human Resources) following the final formal probation review meeting. Where the probation is likely not to be confirmed as successful, the HR Business Partner should be consulted before the final meeting takes place.

### 5 Extending Probation

- 5.1 The period of probation can be extended where there have been concerns or issues identified about the performance, conduct, or attendance of the member of staff and communicated to them through the review meetings. Extensions should be used only where it is considered likely that these concerns can be addressed satisfactorily within a short timescale. The line manager must record the decision to extend and identify what the member of staff needs to achieve, by when, to meet the standards required. These records are to be copied to the Human Resources Business Partner.
- 5.2 In exceptional circumstances, where a probationary period has been extended, it may not be extended beyond 12 months from initial appointment. If the performance, conduct, or attendance of a member of staff is not satisfactory at that stage, employment will be terminated.

### 6 Absence during Probation

- 6.1 Satisfactory attendance is a factor in decisions on whether or not the probation period has been completed successfully. Where a member of staff is absent as a result of unauthorised absence or sickness for a period of a week or more during the probation period, consideration may be given to extending the probation period by the length of the absence.

### 7 Dismissal

- 7.1 In cases of misconduct during the probationary period, dismissal could result if circumstances justify it. There is no requirement to wait until the end of the probation period to consider dismissal. However, the Human Resources Business Partner should be consulted in such circumstances. .
- 7.2 A dismissal may take place only after a formal meeting with the line manager. The staff member has a right to be accompanied by their Trade Union Representative or work colleague at that meeting. If dismissal is confirmed at that formal meeting, the member of staff will receive written notification of their dismissal. This will include details of any pay in lieu of notice and of any adjustments for annual leave and/or flexitime balances.

### 8 Review and publication

- 8.1 This policy will be reviewed every 2 years and published internally and externally.
- 8.2 All queries about this document can be directed to [policycontrol@ombudsman.wales](mailto:policycontrol@ombudsman.wales)

## Appendix A

### Matters to be covered during probation review meetings

- Set out progress made in relation to working through a) the induction process and b) objectives set at last probation meeting (where applicable)
- Line manager and member of staff review how the member of staff is working in accordance with the values of the organisation
- Line manager and member of staff review how the member of staff is working within the qualitative demands of their role.
- Line manager and member of staff review how the member of staff is working within the output demands of their role.
- Set out the training, supervision and support available to the member of staff up to the date of the next planned probation meeting.
- Note and discuss any absences since the start of employment.
- Discuss any other queries/issues and record actions agreed.
- Set out objectives for the member of staff to meet or progress before the next probation meeting.

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## Appendix B

### Probation Review Form

First probation review form (review to take place within one month).

Employee name:	
Start date:	
Job title:	
Line manager name:	
Date of this meeting:	
Date set for the <b>next</b> probation review meeting:	

Please refer to the responsibilities of the line manager and the member of staff during the probation period, as set out in the PSOW policy.

<b>1. Set out here the standard of work outlined to the new employee:</b>
<b>2. Set out here (or on a separate sheet) the objectives set for the new employee (these should be as SMART as possible):</b>
<b>3. Set out here the induction, training, support and supervision to be provided:</b>
<b>4. Any other points of discussion at this meeting?</b>

Employee signature:		Date:	
Manager signature:		Date:	

**Please now return this completed form to the Human Resources Business Partner**

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## Appendix C

### Probation Review Form

Probation review form for use at probation review meetings other than first and final.

<b>Date of this meeting:</b>	
<b>Employee name:</b>	
<b>Start date:</b>	
<b>Job title:</b>	
<b>Line manager name:</b>	
<b>Date for the next probation review meeting:</b>	

Please refer to the responsibilities of the line manager and the member of staff during the probation period, as set out in the PSOW policy.

<b>1. Set out progress in relation to standard of work:</b>
<b>2. Set out progress against the objectives set:</b>
<b>3. If there have been any absences detail these here:</b>
<b>4. If any areas of performance, conduct, or attendance require improvement please set out the details here:</b>
<b>5. Set out here the training, support and supervision that is to be provided in the next period:</b>
<b>6. Other discussion points / extending probation</b>

Employee signature:		Date:	
Manager signature:		Date:	

**Please return this completed form to the Human Resources Business Partner**

## Appendix D

### Final Probation Review Form

After six/nine months (Delete as applicable)

<b>Date of this meeting:</b>	
<b>Employee name:</b>	
<b>Start date:</b>	
<b>Job title:</b>	
<b>Line manager name:</b>	

Please refer to the responsibilities of the line manager and the member of staff during the probation period, as set out in the PSOW policy.

<b>1. Set out progress in relation to standard of work:</b>
<b>2. Set out progress against the objectives set:</b>
<b>3. Summarise the member of staff's performance and progress to date:</b>

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<b>4. Summarise the details of any absences during the probation period here:</b>
<b>5. Summarise here the training, support and supervision provided to date, and whether anything else is needed:</b>
<b>6. Are there any areas of performance, conduct or attendance that require improvement? If YES, set out the details here and proposed actions:</b>
<b>7. Any other points of discussion at this meeting?</b>
<b>8. Any comments from the member of staff about their experience of the probationary process:</b>

**Manager to complete:**

Is the employee's appointment to be confirmed?	<b>Yes / No</b>
If NO, please provide any additional reasons or information here. (This should have been discussed with the new employee).	

Manager signature:		Date:	
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**Please return this completed form to the HRBP for outcome letter**