



HUMBERSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

People and Culture

Probation Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to ensure probationary periods are managed fairly, consistently and lawfully, providing new employees with clear expectations and appropriate support, while enabling the Service to confirm suitability for the role at the earliest reasonable opportunity. The policy supports early identification and resolution of performance, conduct or attendance concerns and operates in alignment with the Service's Performance and Capability Policy, which emphasises guidance, development and evidence-based decision-making.

The Service is committed to ensuring that probation is managed in accordance with the principles of fairness, transparency, consistency and accountability. These principles underpin all decisions taken under this policy.

Core Code of Ethics

HFRS has adopted the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services. The Service is committed to the ethical principles of the Code and strives to apply them in all we do, therefore, those principles are reflected in this Policy.

National Guidance

Any National Guidance which has been adopted by HFRS, will be reflected in this Policy.

2. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

HFRS has a legal responsibility under the Equality Act 2010, and a commitment, to ensure it does not discriminate either directly or indirectly in any of its functions and services or in its treatment of staff, in relation to race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, gender reassignment or marriage and civil partnership. It also has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants, employees and service users.

3. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The Service will ensure that:

- Probation is managed in a supportive and proportionate manner, with clear objectives, regular feedback and appropriate training;
- We promote high standards of professionalism, accuracy and service delivery in line with our Core Code of Ethics.
- Concerns are addressed promptly and documented;
- Equality, diversity and inclusion considerations are embedded throughout, including the provision of reasonable adjustments where required; and
- All actions taken during probation comply with statutory rights that apply from day one of employment, including protection against automatically unfair dismissal. These included, but are not limited to equality, health and safety, whistleblowing, pregnancy and maternity, family-related rights, and trade

union activities Managers must actively consider reasonable adjustments where disability, neurodivergence, pregnancy, menopause or other relevant factors may affect performance, attendance or conduct, and should seek HR and Occupational Health advice where appropriate before decisions are made.

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- [Equality Impact Assessment](#)
- [Professional Standards Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)
- [Absence Management Policy](#)
- [Professional Standards Disciplinary Procedure Policy](#)
- [Professional Standards Grievance Policy](#)
- [Professional Standards Performance and Capability Policy](#)
- [Professional Standards Conduct Policy](#)
- [Professional Standards Whistleblowing Policy](#)
 - Legal References [Employment Rights Act 1996](#) (as amended)
 - [Equality Act 2010](#)
 - [Working Time Regulations 1998](#)
- National Guidance Reference
There is no specific National Guidance relevant to this policy.

5. CONTRACTUAL STATUS AND LENGTH OF PROBATION

Probationary periods are contractual and will apply where set out in the employee's contract of employment or written statement of employment particulars.

Unless otherwise specified:

- the standard probationary period is four (4) months for support (Fire Staff) and professional roles;

Probation may be extended where reasonable and proportionate, for example where absence, training requirements or restricted duties have limited the ability to assess performance. Any extension must be confirmed in writing, setting out the reasons, support measures, expectations and review period. Extensions will normally be for a defined period and normally only one extension will be granted unless exceptional circumstances apply. Completion of the original probation end date does not, of itself, amount to confirmation in post.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Line Managers are responsible for setting expectations, providing induction, training and ongoing support, conducting reviews, identifying concerns early, maintaining accurate records and seeking HR advice where required. They must also consider reasonable adjustments and any equality, health, attendance or wellbeing issues relevant to the employee's circumstances.

Line managers must also consider early referral to Occupational Health or other

support services where health, wellbeing or underlying factors may be affecting performance, attendance or conduct,

Employees are responsible for engaging in induction, training and development; demonstrating commitment to the Service values and behaviours; meeting expected standards of performance, attendance and conduct; and participating in review discussions and feedback.

HR will provide advice on consistency, process and legal compliance, support managers in applying the policy fairly and consistently, and ensure appropriate governance and record-keeping.

7. PROBATION REVIEW PROCESS

Probation reviews will normally be **led** by the individual's line manager and will include:

Initial Meeting (within first two weeks):

- Setting objectives and expectations
- Clarifying role responsibilities and standards

Interim Reviews (at least monthly):

- Progress against objectives
- Quality and accuracy of work
- Conduct, performance, attendance and behaviours
- Training and development progress
- Compliance with Service standards and values

Final Review:

- Overall assessment of performance
- Consideration of suitability for confirmation in post

All probationary periods must be formally documented using the designated probation record form to ensure accurate tracking and review of employee progress. Please refer to Appendix A.

Where a formal probation meeting is required, the employee will normally be informed of the concerns in writing in advance of the meeting, including the nature of the concerns, any relevant evidence and the potential outcomes. The employee will be given a reasonable opportunity to respond to the concerns during the meeting, before any decision is made.

As a matter of policy, employees may be accompanied at formal probation meetings by a workplace colleague or trade union representative. In reviewing attendance, managers must take account of disability-related absence, pregnancy-related absence, workplace injury and any other protected or relevant circumstances before reaching a decision.

For operational roles, assessment during probation will be aligned to the relevant competence, training and development frameworks applicable to the role, including any national or Service specific operational standards.

8. MANAGING CONCERNS DURING PROBATION

Where concerns arise, managers will address them **promptly and proportionately**, normally through informal guidance and support in the first instance, consistent with the Service's Performance and Capability Policy.

Where improvement is not achieved, a formal probation meeting may be held, clearly setting out the concerns, required improvements, support to be provided, timescales and potential outcomes. The employee will normally be given a reasonable opportunity to improve.

In exceptional circumstance, where concerns are sufficiently serious and evidence indicates that the continuation of the probation process is not appropriate, the service may take accelerated action in line with legal requirements. Such decisions will be supported by HR advice and will remain subject to the principles of fairness and proportionality.

Examples of concerns may include inconsistent or unsatisfactory performance, failure to meet deadlines or quality standards, poor attendance or timekeeping, and unsatisfactory behaviour or conduct. Managers must ensure that concerns are not assessed without appropriate consideration of any relevant disability, health condition, pregnancy-related issue, workplace injury, reasonable adjustment, protected characteristic or other protected legal right.

Where concerns relate to alleged misconduct, the Service may determine that the matter should be managed under the Disciplinary Policy rather than, or in addition to, the probation process.

Serious concerns may justify accelerated action in line with contractual provisions and legal requirements.

9. OUTCOMES AT THE END OF PROBATION

At the conclusion of probation, one of the following outcomes will apply, and the outcome will be confirmed in writing:

- **Confirmation in post**, where standards are met;
- **Extension of probation**, where additional time is reasonably required and a defined review period is set; or
- **Termination of employment**, where standards have not been met and the employee is not considered suitable for confirmation.

Termination will be in accordance with contractual and statutory notice provisions (unless summary dismissal for gross misconduct applies) and will be a fair, evidence-based and appropriately documented process. The employee will have been given a reasonable opportunity to respond to the concerns prior to any decision being made.

Any decision to dismiss will be confirmed in writing, including the reason for the

decision, notice arrangements and the right of appeal. Where probation is still under review at the contractual end date, this does not automatically result in confirmation in post; the Service will confirm the outcome formally in writing.

10. RIGHT OF APPEAL

Employees dismissed during or at the end of probation will have the right of appeal.

- Appeals must be submitted in writing within five working days of the written outcome
- Appeals will be heard by a manager not previously involved in the decision
- The outcome of the appeal will be confirmed in writing

11. RECORDS AND GOVERNANCE

All probation documentation will be retained on the employee's personnel file in accordance with the Service's data retention and information governance arrangements, the [UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018](#). Processing of this data will be undertaken on the basis of the Service's lawful basis and/or compliance with legal obligations. Access to probation records will be limited to those with a legitimate business need.

Probation decisions will be subject to audit and review to ensure consistency and compliance with policy and legislation.

The Service will have regard to the principles set out in the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures where relevant and appropriate.

This policy should be read alongside the Service's [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#), [Absence Management Policy](#), [Disciplinary Policy](#), [Grievance Policy](#), [Performance and Capability Policy](#), [Conduct Policy](#), [Whistleblowing Policy](#) and any relevant Occupational Health procedures.

If anyone requires any further guidance / information regarding this document, please contact Human Resources