



Probationary Period Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the process for managing a probationary period.

The use of probationary periods

At Old Rayne Preschool, all new starters will have a probationary period written into their contract of employment. The length of this probationary period will depend on the nature of their work, but it is likely to be between three and six months in length. The purpose of the probationary period is to allow time for the organisation to assess the work of the employee and to determine if the employee has a long-term future with the organisation.

Managing the probationary period

As part of the induction process, all line managers should ensure that new employees are aware of their probationary period. Details of the probationary period will also be included in the contract of employment. The line manager should discuss the expectations of the employee with him/her during the induction process. The line manager should carry out regular reviews with the employee throughout the induction process. The purpose of these reviews will be for the line manager to discuss the employee's performance. If the line manager has any concerns regarding performance they should use these meetings to inform the employee of any concerns, and to indicate whether the probationary period is proceeding successfully or not.

Concerns during the probationary period

Although review dates will be set during the induction process/probationary period it is important that any concerns are brought to the attention of the employee when they arise so that the employee has an opportunity to address those concerns. Regular contact between the employee and the line manager during the induction process/probationary period should enable this to happen and timely steps taken to address the concerns.

Review meetings should be held in private and notes must be taken of any meeting. If targets or actions are agreed as a result of the meeting these should be confirmed in writing to the employee. It is acceptable to extend the probationary period if there has not been a reasonable amount of time for the employee to display performance in the role.

Support during the probationary period

All new employees need help and support as they settle into the new job. The line manager is responsible for ensuring that all required training is provided as soon as possible. The line manager is also responsible for ensuring that the employee is made aware of relevant company procedures and is introduced to all members of the team and appropriate other agencies. Old Rayne Preschool wants probationary periods to be completed successfully, and every support will be given to ensure that this happens.

Terminating the employment before the probationary period has been completed

It will be usual for employees to complete the full probationary period. The length of time has been set to allow employees to settle into the organisation, to learn the new job and to receive any required training. However, in some circumstances it might become apparent that the employee has some fundamental difficulties with the work. On speaking to the employee, it might become apparent that the employee is not going to be able to meet the required standards. In such a situation the line manager should consider terminating employment. It is suggested that the line manager takes advice from ACAS or a qualified individual before terminating employment.

Terminating employment at the end of the probationary period

Employees will always be made aware that there are concerns about standards of performance before the probationary period ends. Induction and probationary review meetings will provide support for this to happen. If the employee has not met the required standards of performance, despite all the help and support that has been offered, a decision will be taken to terminate the probationary period. This decision must be made before the probationary period has ended. Any line manager who thinks that it will be necessary to terminate an employee's contract at the end of the probationary period should seek guidance from ACAS or a qualified individual.

Confirming successful completion of the probationary period

It is important that employees are made aware if they have successfully completed the probationary period. The line manager is responsible for informing the employee that they have successfully completed the probationary period.

Discovery of irregularities during the probationary period

On some occasions it might become apparent that the employee has not been honest about his/her previous experience or qualifications when applying to the organisation. If the employee has been dishonest this is a potential breach of contract, which could result in immediate termination of the contract of employment. If a line manager does discover that there are some irregularities, then s/he should seek advice from ACAS or a qualified individual immediately and an appropriate course of action will be discussed.

Range of problems during the probationary period

It should be noted that 'successful performance' does not just mean the outputs from the job. A probationary period can be unsuccessful for other reasons – such as persistent lateness, persistent absenteeism, unacceptable behaviour etc