



## Probation Policy and Procedure

### Probation Period

Mind in Croydon's probation period is six months. During this period, it gives the employer a chance to monitor the employee's performance, progress and conduct. This helps management to decide if a new member of staff is the right fit for the role. Similarly, probation period gives employees the change to think about if they have made the right decision in accepting the role.

If we are not satisfied with an employee's performance or conduct during or by the end of the Probation Period, Mind in Croydon may at their discretion end or extend the Probationary Period (this could be for three to six months). Reference to the Probationary Period in the contract of employment including extensions, found under clause 17.

When an employee has completed their Probationary Period to the organisation's satisfaction, HR will confirm in writing their continued employment.

No notice is required from either party during the first month of employment. After one month's service, during the Probationary Period, either Mind in Croydon or employee may terminate their employment by giving one week's written notice.

### Process for managing an employee in probation

#### Step 1. Set clear targets (objectives)

When an employee starts work, the line manager should set up probation review meetings on a monthly basis for the six-month period. The last meeting is called a **formal probation review meeting**. HR will need to know that these meetings are in place.

The first meeting should be within the **first two weeks** of starting. In the first meeting the line manager should set clear targets (objectives) which the employee is expected to achieve by the end of their probation period. Setting clear expectations with an employee early will support their professional development and secure our position in the event of performance or behavioural issues arising in the future. The **One-to-One Recording Form** should be used, written up and signed by both the line manager and employee.

#### Step 2. Monitor the employee

During the probation period, the employee's line manager should meet monthly with the employee to see how they are progressing, and to offer support in reaching targets (objectives), this includes training. As part of the induction process employees are asked to complete standard and specific service training. This should be ongoing training throughout the probation period and may include shadowing colleagues, line managers carrying out observation sessions, where they will sit in on a client meeting with the employee, and/ or a group session being delivered, observing the meeting and giving some constructive feedback after. This may be considered as an opportunity for reflective practice.

As well as looking at progress against agreed targets (objectives), we recommend you take into account the employee's:

- standard of work,
- how well the employee is getting on with their colleagues,
- any issues with the employee's conduct, such as lateness and attendance,
- how well the employee is fitting into the organisation's culture.

At any point in the probation review period if the line manager has concerns with an employee they should speak to their manager and HR. It is important to do this so that the line manager feels supported and given some advice or guidance. Regular check-ins should continue to see how the employee is performing. It is important for the line manager, if they have concerns with an employee to be frank so they know where they stand and understand what they need to develop to improve their ways of working. The line manager may suggest that an extension of probation period will be considered in a probation review meeting.

### **Step 3. Hold probation review meeting**

At the end of the probation period, the employee should be invited to a **formal probation review** meeting to review their progress to date. The probation review meeting should be set up in a room free from interruptions and should happen at least two weeks before the probation ends.

Usually, the employee does not have the right to be accompanied to the review meeting. However, if you intend to use the meeting to dismiss the employee or to give a formal warning, the employee should be given the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative. (HR will need to be present in this meeting and a Head of Services.) Please refer to the Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure.

The line manager will reflect on progress against agreed targets (objectives) as well as what is outlined above in **Step 2**. Positive and constructive feedback is always recommended.

Problems in the review meeting can be avoided if you stick to the facts and avoid opinions. Also, it's critical that you avoid any comments that could be seen as discriminatory in any way which can give rise to a claim at an employment tribunal. Similarly, if there are attendance difficulties because of childcare commitments, this would need to be handled empathetically and free from discrimination.

### **Step 4. Decide an outcome**

If the employee has met all agreed objectives, they can be considered to have passed probation. The line manager will inform HR so that they can write to the employee confirming they have passed their probation, this will be put on their personal file. They will join the same performance review cycle as the rest of your employees.

If the employee has met some but not all their objectives, you might decide to extend the probation period. Any extension should be confirmed to the employee in writing by HR. The letter should state:

- the reasons why the probation period is being extended,
- how long the probation period is being extended for,
- what the employee is expected to improve on before the end of the extended probation period,
- that the employee will be given support to meet their objectives,
- that if their performance is still unsatisfactory at the next probation review meeting, their contract may be terminated.

At the next probation review meeting, you might decide to extend the probation period again or dismiss the employee.

You don't have to extend an unsuccessful probation period, especially if the employee is severely underperforming. It might be the case that it will take the employee too long to reach the required standard. If so, you might skip the extension stage and go straight to terminating the employment contract.

*Reviewed and Approved by the Board of Mind in Croydon January 2023*