**Probation Policy**

**1 Our Aim**

* + 1. You matter to us. We chose you because we believe you are the best person to do your job, which in turn means that our residents get the best services that we can deliver.

1.2 We want to see you Connect, Belong, Grow, and Flourish in your role. These are the four landmarks in our [Organisational Wellness Strategy](https://intranet.hounslow.gov.uk/corporate-policies/organisational-wellness/organisational-wellness-strategy/) by which we want you to thrive. We also want you to learn and appreciate the Hounslow way of delivering our services. We call this our [Values and Behaviours](https://intranet.hounslow.gov.uk/working-together/one-hounslow/our-values-and-behaviours/) and they are the bedrock of the organisation; no matter what our job, we all have an important role in living and breathing these values in our daily working life.

1.3 This policy is aimed at both new colleagues and their managers. Our starting position is that we expect you to succeed in your probation. Your manager will Lead with Heart and Be a Rock, helping and supporting you through this process.

1.4 We understand that for many starting a new role can be both exciting and challenging. We therefore ask that you fully engage with our onboarding and induction processes, utilising the information on our [New to Hounslow](https://intranet.hounslow.gov.uk/new-to-lbh/) hub. This will assist you in understanding how we operate.

**2 What is Probation?**

2.1 We operate probationary periods for new employees. This allows us both to assess objectively whether the job is a suitable match. Throughout your probation we will work together to support you and your development, so that you can perform effectively in your new role.

2.1 During this time you and your manager will have frequent check ins conversations as part of your induction and probation to discuss how you are settling into the role. Your manager will also [review](https://lbhounslow.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/s/IntranetLinks/HR/EUuxwQ8qcrVLmkB9wJ3fDa8Bi7T263r5BZd6-BpW3St14g?e=NUZwEp) your performance and progress.

2.2 You will have the opportunity to demonstrate your suitability to undertake the range of duties of your post. This does mean however, that you will not be able to apply for acting up or secondment opportunities.

2.3 It is mandatory for you to attend the corporate induction event, Welcome to Hounslow, ideally before the end of your probationary period.

**3 Who must complete a probationary period?**

3.1 This policy applies to all employees of the Council, except those employed in schools under the control of Governing Bodies, for whom procedures adopted by the Governing Body will apply. For the purpose of this policy, employees are as defined in section 230 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 or any substituting or amending legislation.

3.2 All our new appointments (including those on fixed term appointments e.g. apprentices), will need to complete a satisfactory probationary period before being confirmed in post.

3.4 If appointed from other posts within the Council, and have already successfully completed a probationary period, you are not required to complete a further probationary period in your new post. Your manager will however monitor your performance, support your learning and development, and address performance concerns.

**4 How long will the probationary period last?**

4.1 Your probationary period will be six months from your start date at Hounslow, unless:

* the appointment is for a shorter fixed term contract e.g. apprenticeships, when an alternative period might be more appropriate, in which case your manager will seek the advice of their People Business Partner
* professional vocational requirements stipulate a different probationary period, in which case these will apply

4.2 We reserve the right to extend your period of probationary. This would be where:

* performance concerns have been raised and it is thought that an extension to the probationary period may lead to an improvement or
* either you or your manager have been absent for an extended period during probation

**5 What does the probationary period look like?**

5.1 We recognise that you are all individuals, with differing experiences, knowledge and backgrounds. We will factor this into the process and tailor arrangements to make your probationary experience the best that it can be. This does mean that your experiences may not be the same as other colleagues.

5.2 You can however expect your [manager](https://lbhounslow.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/s/IntranetLinks/HR/EdtPRViar-dIpkFr2dF2TkUBH_ppPo2DrBP8U6k7Onvg0Q?e=ZKPGTI) to schedule check in conversations and review meetings to:

* discuss and set performance [goals](https://lbhounslow.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/s/IntranetLinks/HR/EeY9VGrEvvxOlfmvFnrP9sMBVV3oFwQvCM5hIfvSMqIW0Q?e=fdfRFn)
* review and monitor your performance
* provide feedback on performance and progress
* raise any concerns as soon as possible with a view to resolving them
* provide guidance support as necessary
* identify and arrange learning, development or coaching

**6 Probationary Check in Conversations and Reviews**

6.1 The probationary process consists of a series of conversations and review meetings. The timing of the review meetings and regularity of conversations may be tailored to suit individual needs. Your manager will however ensure you receive feedback and where necessary time to develop and improve.

6.2 We use a performance management system called [Clear Review](https://lbhounslow.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/s/IntranetLinks/HR/EfGU5jmZSDdNt1WI0Fz52XIBdf9lXNghKDhKIEe38nZRQQ?e=sOQlfb). You and your manager should therefore ensure that check ins, review meetings and goals/ /objective are set up in Clear Review. You should also both use Clear Review to receive and give feedback at any time.

6.3 Throughout the probationary your performance, achievements and conduct will be regularly assessed. Concerns of [unsatisfactory performance](https://lbhounslow.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/s/IntranetLinks/HR/EfIo6V6JXyBIpvoe-94cyn8Bcj_F8Sof2Qa4h1OXFY7WBA?e=6rfZRe) will be raised with you and action plans developed to support your improvement as appropriate.

**7 End of Probation**

7.1 Towards the end of the six months’ probation period (unless significant concerns have emerged before this) your manager will decide whether to confirm your appointment, extend the probationary period or to end the appointment.

7.2 You will receive written notification of any decision made to extend the probationary or to end the appointment. Such decisions would follow where your performance is deemed unsatisfactory.

7.3 Your appointment is confirmed unless your manager has indicated otherwise as above.

7.4 Performance management is an on-going process for all colleagues. On completion of a successful probation, you and your manager should continue to schedule regular check in conversations on Clear Review. The pattern of these conversations will be determined by you and your manager based on circumstance and needs. It is important that performance goals are regularly discussed and reviewed, with new goals being set as necessary.

**8 Unsuccessful Probation**

8.1 If the decision is to [end employment](https://lbhounslow.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/s/IntranetLinks/HR/ERW3rJ-MuzlEglBy7kyleLgBdfJ29R8fUVeUsyW7l4WA2g?e=jPL4by) your manager will make a recommendation to their Assistant Director/Director, together with their justification, and all supporting evidence. You will be informed of the recommendation and given an opportunity to either meet with the Assistant Director/Director or provide written submissions to them before any decision is made to end employment. Should you wish to meet with them, then arrangements for this meeting will be made under section 6.1 of our [Formal Meeting Protocol](https://lbhounslow-my.sharepoint.com/personal/liz_carey_hounslow_gov_uk/_layouts/15/onedrive.aspx?id=%2Fpersonal%2Fliz%5Fcarey%5Fhounslow%5Fgov%5Fuk%2FDocuments%2FAbsence%2FFormal%20Meeting%20Protocol%201%20November%20%2Epdf&parent=%2Fpersonal%2Fliz%5Fcarey%5Fhounslow%5Fgov%5Fuk%2FDocuments%2FAbsence&ga=1). This meeting is not a hearing but an opportunity for you to explain your side to the decision maker.

8.2 We want you to succeed in your role and are fully committed to supporting you and developing your performance. If, however, there is clear objective evidence that you are not a good match for the post, for example you have failed to achieve performance goals, or fulfil duties or meet Council standards and values, we may seek to end your employment before the end of your probationary period. Your manager will consult their People Business Partner before taking any such decision.

8.3 Where a decision is made to end your employment, your notice period during the probationary period, is one week on either side, unless otherwise specified in the contract of employment.

**9 Right of Appeal**

9.1 You have the right to appeal against a decision to not confirm your appointment.

Any appeal must be submitted within five working days of receipt of the notice letter. The specific grounds for the appeal must be made in writing to the Director of HR&OD.

 **Appendix A**

**The probationary process**

A flowchart showing the stages of probation is set out [here](https://lbhounslow.sharepoint.com/%3Ab%3A/s/IntranetLinks/HR/EbBi3fI9OCxBq2Sw6d1RTJoBvApCDMSBL5_zzhIUUiV86A?e=X8Vu9N). It is important you and your manager have a clear understanding of the process which will involve the following:

**Week 1 and 2**

Your manager will arrange to meet with you. This meeting forms part of your induction and marks the start of your probation. You should agree the scheduling of check in conversations and set dates for the probationary reviews, recording these in Clear Review. The schedule can be amended to reflect performance during the probationary period, i.e. that dates may be added or removed.

You and your manager will identify performance goals, not usually more than 5, which will link to the Corporate Plan. These goals should be such as to enable your manager to assess your ability to undertake the role to a high standard. You can expect your knowledge, skills, abilities, and professionalism to be assessed throughout the probationary. You are also expected to meet high standards of conduct and attendance; these are mandatory. Performance goals will be recorded on Clear Review and used to review and assess performance.

**Month 1 to Month 3**

The first probation review will take place at the end of the first month. This review, and subsequent monthly reviews, will focus on performance against the goals/ objectives and identification of learning and development needs.

Your manager will provide feedback, highlighting any areas for improvement and identify support for learning and development. Where there are performance concerns, these should be raised with you at the earliest possible opportunity and not postponed until the next review meeting. All comments or feedback either from you or your manager will be discussed and recorded on Clear Review.

Objectives not achieved, or partially achieved should be considered at the review meetings. If there are performance concerns, an action plan should be drafted, identifying how the concerns can be addressed and the required outcomes.

**Months 4 to 6**

Your performance will continue to be reviewed and assessed during these months.

 Towards the end of the 6 months (unless significant concerns emerged before this) your manager will a decision on whether to confirm your appointment.

Where performance goals have been achieved, and your conduct and attendance deemed satisfactory, your appointment should be confirmed. If this is not the case, your manager will, in conjunction with People Business Partnering Services, consider extending the probation or make a recommendation to end your employment. You will have a right of appeal should your appointment not be confirmed.