The Canddo Project CIC 

**Probationary Period Policy**

**Introduction**

All new staff appointed to posts are required to successfully complete a probationary period of three or six months. The probationary period will be detailed in the contract of employment. This is generally sufficient time for a line manager to make a realistic assessment of a member of staff’s performance and suitability for the post.

**Aim**

The aim of the probationary period is:

To ensure that new members of staff have the opportunity to become familiar with the practices and procedures of the organisation.

To allow staff members to demonstrate their ability to effectively and efficiently perform their duties.

To assess the competence and capability in the role.

**Duties/ Roles and Responsibilities**

* **Employer**

During the probationary period, the line manager has a responsibility to set the required performance standards and follow up any development needs that have been identified, either during the selection process or subsequently. Line managers must ensure that members of staff understand what is expected from them during their employment.

It is the employers duty to provide the employee with an induction where they are:

* Provided with suitable kit and any safety equipment

And inform them of performance and conduct standards including:

* + Reporting to work in a regular and timely manner
  + Scheduled breaks or lunch periods
  + Reporting sick leave use and other absences
  + Dress codes/standards
  + Appropriate conduct
  + Conducting themselves in accordance with designated safety rules
  + Departmental work rules
* **Employee**

During the probationary period, the employee has a responsibility to commit to and work towards the performance standards expected of the role, and to raise any further training needs as soon as possible.

**Procedure (for six month probationary period – will be adapted where probationary period is shorter)**

The process for managing probationary periods is outlined below and comprises the following elements:

* First meeting to set objectives (within first four weeks of employment);
* Formal review meeting in or before month three;
* Final review meeting before the end of month five, leading to either confirmation in post or non-confirmation in post.

All meetings should be clearly documented and placed on the personal file.

Throughout the probationary period, the line manager should carry out one-to-one meetings with the member of staff on a monthly basis, or more frequently if required. These meetings should cover:

* Establishing and reviewing performance standards;
* Progress with induction and training;
* Reviewing performance against objectives;
* Setting further objectives for the next month and/or remainder of the probationary period;
* General concerns from the line manager and member of staff.

It is vital that any issues or concerns are dealt with as they arise, and appropriate support given to assist the new staff member to attain the required level. Action plans to address any shortfalls in performance should be clearly documented to ensure that all parties concerned are clear about the required outcomes. Supervision notes may be used providing the issues are clearly identified. Where the level of performance is putting the member of staff’s continued employment at risk, this should be clearly explained and documented.

If the standards of performance do not improve, despite appropriate support, the line manager must notify their own line manager.

**Procedure**

First Meeting

This meeting will be held between the manager and employee, to agree and set objectives to be met during the probationary period. The manager should explain that the probationary period will be utilised to assess the achievement of objectives set, competence and an assessment of the member of staff’s behaviour and conduct at work. The employee must be made aware that failure to perform at the expected standard throughout the probationary period will result in the end of the individual’s employment.

Review meeting

The line manager should carry out a formal review during month three. This should measure performance against the job description and provide an opportunity for the line manager to clearly identify any shortfalls in performance. In addition, the line manager should reiterate that if the standard of performance is not improved, this may jeopardise the continued employment. This meeting should also be clearly documented back to the member of staff.

At this stage, there are three options:

1. If performance is generally satisfactory, but more time is required to make a full assessment, the manager should continue with the regular one-to-one meetings until the final formal review. The member of staff should be made aware of the expected standards and be given every support to achieve them.
2. If it is clear that performance is at (or above) the level required during the probationary period, the line manager can decide to offer the post on a permanent basis at the end of the probationary period.
3. If the level of performance is below that required, the line manager **must** notify their line manager.

It must be reiterated during the probation period that failure to perform at the expected standard may result in the extension of the probationary period or the end of the individual’s employment.

Final review meeting

The final review meeting will be held with the member of staff. The purpose of this meeting is to review the probationary period and the individual’s ability to perform in the post. This meeting will be pre-planned with at least five days’ notice given in writing.

If the member of staff’s performance is satisfactory, the line manager will inform the member of staff that their employment will be confirmed. They should also agree future objectives and identify any further learning & development needs.

In the case where the manager believes that performance is unsatisfactory the manager will describe the shortfalls in performance, explore the reasons for the unsatisfactory performance and review the steps taken to address the problems. The member of staff will be given the opportunity to respond and to state their case. If the Senior Manager agrees that performance is unsatisfactory, the member of staff will be informed in writing that their probationary period will be extended and for how long or that the employment will cease. The contractual notice period entitlement must be followed.

**Extending Probationary Periods**

After the review of their performance so far, the line manager may feel that the staff member can’t pass their probation yet. They may then offer a probationary period extension in line with the contract of employment which will detail that the employer reserves the right to extend the probationary period.

Reasons for extending a probationary period include:

Probation period extension reasons could include the staff member needing to:

* Improve their performance
* Work when the business is at peak – for example they have only worked in quieter months in a seasonal business
* Meet targets
* Improve attendance or punctuality
* Correct general conduct within the workplace
* Learn a new skill that will allow them to meet required standards

If the employee has been off work for a genuine reason such as ill- health or bereavement, the employer may decide that an extension will give them the time needed to meet the review criteria.

The length of the extension is generally is often one month, but can be extended month-by-month up to a maximum of three months if the line manager thinks the employee still needs more time.

In the letter to the employee it should detail:

* Extension reasons
* Targets for the employee
* Date of the next performance review

**Non-confirmation in post dismissals**

The non-confirmation in post process is used on the grounds of capability where it is clearly demonstrated that the member of staff is not capable of carrying out their duties, despite training and support being provided.

Non-confirmation in post dismissals can take place at any stage during the probation period, but must be instigated before the end of month five for six month probationary periods (amend for shorter probationary periods.) Prior to moving to non-conformation in post, at least one formal review meeting must have been held and the staff member must have been made aware that their underperformance is jeopardising their continued employment with the Company.

At the final review meeting, the manager with dismissing authority will be informed by the employee’s line manager of the details in the shortfalls in work capability and the measures implemented to facilitate improvement. The employee will be given the opportunity to state his/her case in the meeting. The Manager with dismissing authority must be present at this meeting.

A letter confirming the details and outcome of the meeting will be issued within 5 days by the manager with dismissing authority.

**Appeal**

If the decision is taken to dismiss, the employee will have the right of appeal against the decision. This will be a one stage process, involving an appropriate manager more senior than the one making the dismissal decision. An appeal must be raised within 5 working days of receiving the outcome of the final review meeting. An appeal will be arranged within 10 working days.

**Contract & Notice Periods**

The following paragraph is included in all contracts for staff appointed to the Company, amended to suit the length of the probationary period.

“The first 3/6 months of your employment with the Company will be a probationary period. During this period, your performance, sickness, competence and behaviour and conduct will be monitored and assessed.

Employment may be terminated during a probation period, and will be subject to contractual notice on either side. Employees not being confirmed in post will be paid in lieu of notice and will not be required to work during this period. The employer reserves the right to extend the probationary period.

Once a member of staff has satisfactorily completed the probation period, the notice requirements to terminate employment will be as set in the contract.”

**Internal transfers & promotions**

Those staff who transfer internally or who are promoted internally to a post within the Company will not be subject to a probation period.