



# Barrowby Parish Council

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## Probation Policy

### Document control

- **Owner:** Staffing Committee
- **Responsible officer:** Clerk / Proper Officer
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- **Version:** 2026.1
- **Review:** Annually or earlier if legislation/guidance changes
- **Next review due:** January-March 2027 at Staffing for formal adoption at Parish Council  
May 2027

### 1. Purpose and status

**1.1** This policy sets out the Council's arrangements for managing probationary periods for new employees.

**1.2** The purpose of probation is to provide a fair and structured period during which the Council can assess whether a new employee is suitable for the role, and to provide support, supervision and feedback to help them succeed.

**1.3** This policy is non-contractual. It should be read alongside the employee's contract of employment and any relevant Council policies,.

**1.4** Where there is any conflict between this policy and the contract of employment, the contract will take precedence.

### 2. Scope

**2.1** This policy applies to all new employees of the Council unless expressly stated otherwise in their contract of employment.

**2.2** A probationary period applies only where it has been included in the employee's written statement of employment particulars or contract of employment.

### 3. Length of probation

**3.1** Unless otherwise stated in the contract of employment, the standard probationary period will be **three months** from the start date of employment.

**3.2** The Council may extend probation where this is considered reasonable, for example where:

- a. further time is needed to assess performance or suitability;
- b. additional training or support is required;
- c. attendance has been affected by sickness or other absence; or
- d. there has not been a sufficient opportunity to assess the employee fully.

**3.3** Any extension will normally:

- a. be confirmed in writing;
- b. state the length of the extension;
- c. explain the reasons for the extension;
- d. set out the improvements or standards required; and
- e. confirm the date of the further review.

**3.4** Extensions should normally be for the shortest reasonable period. As a guide, an extension would usually be for between **one and three months**, though the Council may determine a different period where justified.

## **4. Objectives of probation**

**4.1** During probation, the Council will assess matters such as:

- a. performance against the requirements of the role;
- b. conduct and professionalism;
- c. reliability, attendance and timekeeping;
- d. ability to follow instructions, policies and procedures;
- e. relationships and communication with councillors, colleagues, contractors, residents and partner organisations as relevant to the role; and
- f. overall suitability for continued employment.

**4.2** Probation should not be approached solely as a pass/fail exercise. It should also be a period of induction, training, supervision and support. ACAS distinguishes probation from induction, but notes that they may run alongside each other.

## **5. Roles and responsibilities**

### **5.1 Staffing Committee**

The Staffing Committee will:

- a. oversee the fair and consistent operation of this policy;
- b. conduct probation reviews for the Clerk;
- c. decide outcomes for the Clerk's probation; and
- d. where appropriate, determine any extension or termination during the Clerk's probation.

### **5.2 Clerk / line manager**

For employees managed by the Clerk, the Clerk will:

- a. arrange induction and supervision;
- b. monitor progress during probation;
- c. hold review meetings;
- d. identify support, training or concerns promptly; and
- e. make recommendations on confirmation, extension or termination in line with delegated arrangements.

### **5.3 Employee**

The employee is expected to:

- a. engage with induction and training;
- b. perform the duties of the post to the required standard;
- c. raise any issues affecting performance or support needs promptly; and
- d. attend probation meetings and respond constructively to feedback.

## **6. Induction and support**

**6.1** All new employees should receive a suitable induction for their role, covering matters such as:

- a. the duties of the post;
- b. reporting arrangements;
- c. relevant Council policies and procedures;
- d. health and safety;
- e. expected standards of conduct and performance;
- f. key systems, processes and contacts; and
- g. any mandatory or role-specific training.

**6.2** Probation should include appropriate supervision and regular informal feedback, so that concerns are raised early rather than only at the end of the probation period.

**6.3** The Council should keep a brief written record of probation meetings and any agreed actions.

## **7. Review meetings**

**7.1** At least one formal probation review meeting should normally take place before the end of the probation period. In most cases, the Council should aim to hold:

- a. an informal check-in during the early part of probation; and
- b. a formal review meeting before probation ends.

**7.2** Where concerns arise, additional review meetings may be arranged.

**7.3** A probation review meeting should normally cover:

- a. what is going well;
- b. any areas of concern;
- c. whether standards and objectives have been met;
- d. any support or training needed;
- e. attendance, conduct and general suitability; and
- f. the proposed outcome.

**7.4** The employee should be given the opportunity to comment and respond at review meetings.

## **8. Standards and concerns during probation**

**8.1** Where concerns arise during probation, these should normally be raised with the employee as soon as reasonably possible.

**8.2** Where appropriate, the Council should explain:

- a. the nature of the concern;
- b. the improvement required;
- c. any support, training or guidance to be provided; and
- d. the timescale for improvement.

**8.3** Examples of issues that may be relevant during probation include:

- a. failure to meet reasonable performance standards;
- b. poor attendance or timekeeping;
- c. misconduct or inappropriate behaviour;
- d. inability to carry out the duties of the role satisfactorily; or
- e. failure to follow lawful instructions or Council procedures.

**8.4** Where concerns involve potential misconduct, the Council may decide that the matter should be handled under the disciplinary procedure instead of, or in addition to, the probation process.

## **9. Reasonable adjustments and equality**

**9.1** The Council will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and will not discriminate unlawfully in applying this policy.

**9.2** If an employee is disabled, the Council will consider whether reasonable adjustments are needed to remove or reduce any disadvantage during probation, including in relation to:

- a. duties or working arrangements;
- b. supervision and support;
- c. review meetings;
- d. performance expectations, where appropriate; or
- e. absence triggers and related procedures.

**9.3** Employees are encouraged to raise any adjustment needs as early as possible so they can be considered appropriately.

## **10. Sickness absence and other absence during probation**

**10.1** Employees remain entitled to statutory and contractual rights during probation, including holiday accrual and sickness reporting arrangements.

**10.2** If an employee has significant absence during probation, the Council may extend the probationary period where this is reasonable in order to allow a fair opportunity to assess suitability.

**10.3** Absence due to disability, pregnancy, maternity or other protected reasons should be handled with appropriate care and legal awareness.

## **11. Possible outcomes**

**11.1 Confirmation in post** Where the employee has performed satisfactorily and is considered suitable for the role, the Council will confirm successful completion of probation in writing.

**11.2 Extension of probation** Where the Council considers that there is a realistic prospect of improvement, but more time is needed to assess suitability, probation may be extended in accordance with section 3.

**11.3 Termination during or at the end of probation** Where performance, conduct, attendance or suitability remains unsatisfactory, the Council may terminate employment in accordance with the contract of employment and following a fair procedure.

Even where an employee has not yet acquired ordinary unfair dismissal protection, the Council should still act reasonably, investigate concerns sufficiently, give the employee an opportunity to respond, and make a balanced decision. ACAS advises employers to follow a full and fair procedure when dismissing.

**11.4 Notice** Notice during probation will be in accordance with the employee's contract of employment. The current Clerk contract provides for **one week's notice** by either side during probation unless dismissal without notice is justified.

## **12. Procedure where probation may not be passed**

**12.1** Where the proposed outcome may be extension or termination, the employee should normally be invited to a probation review meeting and told in advance that this is being considered.

**12.2** The employee should be given:

- a. a brief summary of the concerns;
- b. a reasonable opportunity to respond; and
- c. the opportunity to explain any mitigating circumstances.

**12.3** After the meeting, the Council will confirm the decision in writing, including:

- a. the outcome;
- b. the reasons for the decision;
- c. any improvement required and review date, where probation is extended;
- d. notice arrangements, where employment is terminated; and
- e. any right of review or appeal under section 13.

## **13. Review / appeal**

**13.1** An employee may request a review of a decision to extend or terminate probation by setting out their reasons in writing within **5 working days** of receiving the written outcome.

**13.2** Any review should, where practicable, be considered by councillors not previously involved in the decision.

**13.3** A review will not usually re-hear the matter in full, but will consider whether the decision was reasonable, procedurally fair and supported by the information available.

**13.4** The outcome of the review will be confirmed in writing and will be final.

## **14. Record keeping**

**14.1** The Council will keep probation records securely and in accordance with data protection requirements.

**14.2** Records may include:

- a. induction notes;
- b. review meeting notes;
- c. correspondence confirming outcomes; and
- d. any support or improvement measures agreed.

## **15. Relationship with other policies**

**15.1** This policy should be read alongside:

- a. the contract of employment;
- b. induction arrangements;
- c. disciplinary and grievance policies;
- d. sickness absence policy;
- e. equality and diversity policy; and
- f. flexible working and other relevant employment policies.

## **14. Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance with current legislation and best practice.

