

Probation Policy



1. Purpose

Transport for the North (TfN) recognises that a supportive and developmental probation process is vital in supporting new and existing employees in the commencement of roles with TfN.

Our Probation Policy offers a constructive process to allow newly appointed employees to understand the role, the TfN environment and TfN's values and behaviours; and to also understand the standards required in the role and to fulfil those standards in full.

There is a recognition that there may be occasions where employees are not suitably matched to the role. The Probation Policy sets-out the mechanism that will be adopted by TfN to recognise and manage these situations in an objective, open, fair and consistent way.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all newly appointed employees to TfN and existing TfN employees who are appointed to new internal roles (both permanent and fixed-term). This policy does not apply to:

- Agency workers, contractors or consultants
- Employees on an internal secondment (in such cases the provisions of the Secondment Guidance apply)
- Secondees from other organisations unless otherwise agreed
- Trainees on placement, who are not employees of TfN.

3. Key Principles

TfN is committed to respecting and valuing the diversity of its workforce. It is committed to ensuring that no-one is discriminated against, disadvantaged or given preference, through membership of any particular group, particularly based on age, disability, gender reassignment, race religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. The policy will therefore be applied equally to all employees irrespective of their background or membership of a particular group.

The first six months of newly appointed employees to TfN and employees who are appointed to new internal roles will be subject to a probationary period. Line managers should hold regular probation review meetings with employees. These should take the form of 1-1s. These meetings should take place regularly and at least at 1 month, 3 months and 5 months. A final probation review meeting should take place in month 6.

Line managers must produce a written record of the discussions which have taken place using the Probation Review Form (which is available via the TfN intranet).

There may be circumstances where a decision to fail an employee's probation period can be made earlier than 6 months. This could relate, for example, to the

employee committing acts of gross misconduct or where inability or lack of competency to carry-out the role has been established.

The advice of the HR Team must be sought in these situations and the procedure relating to the non-confirmation of probation as outlined in Section 5 should be followed without exception.

Line managers should use the principles of reasonableness in managing areas of concern. This requires managers during the probationary period to:

- Clearly highlight the deficiency or concern in capability, attendance or conduct to the employee.
- Agree with the employee measures to support the employee to bridge the gap in performance, capability or approach.
- Provide the employee with sufficient time to address the gap in performance, capability or approach.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of all parties within the probationary process are as set-out below:

Line Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create an appropriate orientation programme and ensure the new employee completes the required elements. • To set objectives and standards of performance and conduct at the earliest possible opportunity. • To ensure the new employee has completed all necessary training including their mandatory induction. • To monitor objectives and standards of performance and conduct throughout the probation process. • Provide clear, specific and constructive feedback on performance, conduct and attendance (at each probation review meeting). • Where standards are not being met, to be clear about the required improvement, the relevant timescales, discuss and agree appropriate support or intervention to assist improvement (at each probation review meetings). • To seek and take timely advice from HR where appropriate. • To document all review meetings and action points and provide copies to the employee and HR (via Talent).
Employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To engage fully with their induction, the setting of their objectives and the monitoring of their performance, conduct and attendance throughout the probation period. • To complete all necessary training including their mandatory induction. • To clarify expectations, standards, tasks, objectives and behaviours with their line manager if they are unclear about them. • To highlight all relevant issues which may affect their work performance, conduct and attendance to the attention of their

	<p>line manager.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To discuss and respond constructively to any aspects of their performance, conduct or attendance which are considered unsatisfactory (at each probation review meeting). • To undertake any agreed development activity and strive to help improve any aspects of their work, performance, conduct or attendance.
HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide procedural and best practice advice to line managers on the provisions of the policy. • To assist line managers in drafting correspondence as required. • To attend and support procedural related meeting as outlined within this policy.

5. Procedure

Induction and Orientation

Employees new to TfN should complete the corporate induction on commencement of employment with TfN, normally undertaken within their first two weeks at TfN.

During their first three months at TfN will expect all new employees to attend and undertaken all mandatory training as detailed and set-out in their Induction Plan.

Line managers should provide employees with sufficient information on the role and the environment in the first few weeks of employment.

Line managers should ensure that employees are attend all mandatory training and complete any associated on-line training requirements within the prescribed timeframe as set-out within the employee's Induction Plan.

Line managers should set objectives, standards of performance and conduct at the earliest possible opportunity and monitor these throughout the probation process.

Probationary Review Meetings

Probation review meetings can take the form of 1-1s. It is advised that these meetings should take place monthly, but, as a minimum must be held after 1, 3 and 5 months. A final probation review meeting must also take place in month 6.

Line managers should monitor and review the employee's capability in the role, their attendance and their conduct and note any discrepancies.

Line managers should seek the advice of HR where concerns in an employee's performance, attendance or conduct are identified, as soon as possible. Line managers should provide employees with constructive feedback of their

performance in the role, their attendance and their conduct at the meetings.

Areas of concern or gaps in performance should be clearly highlighted to the employee at the meetings and confirmed in writing within the Probation Review Form.

The employee should be provided with the opportunity to respond to each area of concern or gap in performance at the meetings.

If appropriate (in consultation with the HR Team) a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) can be put in place, whereby the line manager and employee agree measures to bridge the gap in performance or to rectify the capability or conduct. A timeframe for improvement should also be agreed.

The line manager should provide the employee with a copy of their PIP. Line managers should manage concerns during the probation period in line with the principles of reasonableness as outlined in section 3.

Confirmation or Non-Confirmation in role

Confirmation

Where the line manager assesses that the employee has passed their probation period, they should confirm this verbally to the employee at the 6-month probation review meeting.

On receipt/submission of the completed Probationary Review Form (in Talent) by the line manager the HR Team will subsequently arrange to write to the employee confirming that they have passed their probation period and have been confirmed in post.

Note: Where confirmation is not received, employees will be confirmed in post automatically, without recourse to the Line Manager.

Extension to Probation Period

Where the line manager is of the view that the employee has not met the required standards but is likely to do so within a reasonable amount of time, the probation period may be extended. Circumstances relating to missed probation review meetings, a change in management, or absence on the part of either party may apply in this situation.

Probation extensions should normally be for between 1 and 3 months and in certain circumstances up to 6 months. Regular probation review meetings should take place during the extended probationary period.

Where a line manager is minded to extend a probationary period, they are required to consult the HR Team in advance, in order that a member of the HR Team can be present at the subsequent Probationary Review Meeting to support both parties.

At the review meeting itself, it is essential that the employee has the right to

respond on all reason given where it proposed to impose an extension. As such, the line manager should only impose an extension having first considered all the facts and taken advice from the HR Team.

Line managers should confirm probation extensions verbally to the employee no later than at the 6-month probation review meeting, and/or before as soon as practically possible if any concerns are identified earlier within the probationary period.

On receipt/submission of the completed Probationary Review Form (in Talent) by the line manager the HR Team will subsequently arrange to write to the employee confirming that their probationary period has been extended, the reasons why and for how long.

Non-Confirmation in role

The line manager may make a recommendation that the employee is not confirmed in the role. This decision will be subject to acting in a reasonable manner as per the principles in Section 3, and where the line manager continues to have concerns about an employee's performance, capability or conduct in a role.

In such circumstances the line manager must have first consulted and discussed their recommendation with the HR Team who will arrange for a final probationary review meeting to be held with the employee.

HR will be present at this meeting to advise on the process. The employee may be accompanied at the meeting by a representative of a recognised trade union, or a TfN work colleague.

The line manager must (via HR) provide a copy of the probation review meeting notes and any other related paperwork they intend to rely on to the employee a minimum of 48 hours (two working days) ahead of the meeting for their consideration.

Where the employee is not being confirmed as having passed their probation, the line manager should confirm this verbally to the employee at the probation review meeting.

The line manager should liaise with the HR Business Partner in sending the employee a letter confirming this decision.

In the case of employees new to TfN, their employment will terminate with one month's notice. In the case of existing employees who have taken up a new role within TfN, the appropriate procedure will be applied to address the issue, for example the disciplinary or performance improvement procedure.

Appeals

Employees have the right to appeal against the outcome of all probation review meetings.

Appeal must be submitted in writing to the Head of HR within 5 working days of receiving written confirmation of the outcome of such meetings stating their grounds for appeal. Acceptable grounds for appeal are:

- Availability of new evidence
- Undue severity or inconsistency of the decision
- Procedural irregularities
- Insufficient consideration given to evidence or mitigating circumstances

All appeals will be conducted in accordance with the appeals process set-out within TfN's Grievance Procedure.



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