

Diversity impact assessment

TITLE
Probationary Policy
DATE
29/07/2025
LEAD OFFICER.
Harry Steer, ER Consultant & Policy Lead
1 Summary description of the proposed change
What is the change to policy / service / new project that is being proposed? How does it compare with the current situation?
<p>Our Probationary Policy requires significant updates to ensure that the process is as clear as possible for both employees and managers. The changes proposed increase the clarify of the policy and associated processes, while also adding important elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allowing temporary staff made permanent to eschew a probationary period - Ensuring those with a substantial break in employment serve a new probationary period - Makes clarifications around the probationary notice period, probation extensions, and the appeals process - Adds reasonable efforts to be made to contact and employee absent from a probationary hearing - Provides new clear guidance on documenting and dealing with conduct issues during the probationary period <p>These changes represent a balance of new protections and clarity for employees regarding probationary periods while also making the process of dealing with issues during the probationary period smoother for the organisation. This will reduce the overhead for all parties for the probationary process and ensure both employees and the organisation are not unduly penalised due to a lack of clarity in the process.</p> <p>They also ensure due consideration is given to those employees with disabilities, recognising that the early capture of performance issues can inform reasonable adjustments and the provision of equipment to assist in a successful probation and work life thereafter.</p>
2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment
E.g. Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user. E.g. Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile
<p>This policy was benchmarked against other local authority Probationary policies, supplemented with research conducted on probationary best practice from UK law firms and governmental guidance.</p> <p>Consideration was given to potential changes to probation in the upcoming Employment Rights Bill, however at this time we remain compliant with the upcoming changes.</p>

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Furthermore, consultation with the wider HR team, interest groups, forums and trade unions shaped the policy via feedback implemented into the policy.

3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?

Is it likely to:

Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups

Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups

Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't

(insert Yes when there is an impact or No when there isn't)

Protected characteristic groups (Equality Act 2010)	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Age	No	No	No
Disability	No	Yes	No
Gender reassignment	No	No	No
Marriage/civil partnership	No	No	No
Pregnancy/maternity	No	No	No
Race	No	No	No
Religion/belief	No	No	No
Sex	No	No	No
Sexual orientation	No	No	No
Care experience	No	No	No
Other (e.g. low income groups)	No	No	No

4 Summary of the likely impacts

Who will be affected?

How will they be affected?

The primary impact will be on disabled employees.

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This is due to better procedural protections ensuring that issues are highlighted to the Employee Relations team earlier and proportional measures can be implemented to support those employees, including Occupational Health, Access to Work, equipment, flexible working, etc.

5 What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?

What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?

Are there alternative providers?

Can demand for services be managed differently?

N/A

6 Action plan

Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence

Action	Lead	Deadline or review date

7 Recommendation

The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be: to proceed with the change, implementing the Action Plan if appropriate, consider alternatives, gather further evidence

If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.

Recommendation: Agree to the adoption of the suggested Probationary Policy.

8 Authorisation

The authorising officer is consenting that the recommendation can be implemented, sufficient evidence has been obtained and appropriate mitigation is planned, the Action Plan will be incorporated into the relevant Service Plan and monitored

Assistant Director

Sam Beck-Farley, Chief Organisational Culture Officer

Date of authorisation

31 July 2025