



Aurora

Enriching lives, Enriching Communities

Probation Policy

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3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Point 4.3 Probation process changed from 6 months to 12 months with 3, 6 & 9 month reviewPoint 6 Absence process	
Reviewed by		Review completed
Áine Forde HR Manager		07.02.2025
CEO signature		Next Review Date
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Mission Statement

Enable people with complex needs to experience the same rights as every other citizen and as equal members of the community.

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1 Purpose

- The purpose of a probationary period is to ensure an employee is a good fit for the organisation, can fulfil the duties of the role for which they were employed and that the organisation is a good fit for the employee. The probation period in Aurora Kilkenny is 12 months duration which is in line with the HSE probationary period.
- The probation process provides a period of both professional development and time to assess the individuals' compatibility and suitability for the role. It enables the new employees (probationer) to develop, with appropriate guidance and support, the necessary skills to be fully effective within their role and to integrate within their department; whilst also enabling them to understand and access their own suitability for meeting the required performance of their role.
- This policy sets out Aurora's approach to probation for new employees, with the aim of ensuring that it meets its commitment to the fair, equal, and consistent treatment of employees with regard to the probationary period.
- Aurora recognises that a supportive and developmental probationary process is vital to providing an appropriate level of support and training for new employees on commencement of their employment. The use of the probationary period is intended as a constructive process to allow new employees to:
 - Understand Aurora; their department; their role and how these fit together.
 - Understand the standards required of them in their new role and to how to meet the required standards.

2 Scope

- This policy applies to all newly appointed employees and to all employees who assume a promotion or a new position in Aurora.

3 Policy Statement

The policy aims:

- To ensure that the probationary process is undertaken for all new/promoted or those that take up a new position and is applied in a fair and consistent manner within a supportive framework and in line with employment legislation requirements.
- To ensure that Aurora is provided with an opportunity to assess the skills, capability, conduct and attendance of those employees before ascertaining whether or not to confirm their employment.

- An employee on probation can be terminated at any stage during the probation if they are not performing to the required standard. The Line Manager/Person In Charge does not have to wait to the end of the probation period but is expected to apply fair process in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

4 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Aurora expects all employees to:

- Carry out their role to the standard that is expected and required for the role and grade.
- Understand the impact of their work performance, conduct and attendance on other colleagues, people supported and in the wider Organisation.
- Clarify expectations, standards, tasks, objectives and behaviours with their Line Manager/Person In Charge if they are unclear about them.
- Engage fully in their induction, the setting of their agreed objectives and the management and monitoring of their performance, conduct and attendance through this policy.
- Develop their skills and knowledge to carry out their role to the highest possible standard.
- Promptly bring all relevant issues which affect their work performance, conduct and attendance to attention of their Line Manager/Person In Charge
- Attend meetings to discuss any aspects of their performance, conduct or attendance which are considered unsatisfactory as requested to do so and respond constructively to any feedback given;
- Cooperate with their Line Manager/ Person In Charge and undertake any agreed development activity and strive to improve any aspects of their work performance, conduct or attendance which are considered to be unsatisfactory.

4.2 Employees can expect Aurora to:

- Treat performance, conduct and attendance issues occurring during their probationary period promptly, fairly and consistently across Aurora and in line with this policy and procedure.
- Encourage an open dialogue throughout this process, placing an emphasis on supporting the probationer to achieve the required standards.
- Provide probationer clear and constructive feedback on their performance, conduct and attendance, clarifying any aspect which is considered unsatisfactory and give them an opportunity, where appropriate to rectify this.

- Be clear about the required improvement and the relevant timescales.
- Give appropriate support and help with the view to improving their performance, conduct or attendance.

4.3 Line Manager/Person In Charge are expected to:

- Create an appropriate on-boarding programme and ensure the employee completes the required element.
- Set objectives and standards of performance at the earliest possible opportunity normally within a week of the employee commencing employment or commencing in a new role (known as the Probation Agreement) and to monitor these objectives and standards through the probationary process. This includes conducting 3, 6- & 9-month reviews and regular one to one meetings. The probation form is to be used as a guide to discuss suitability for the role. The form must be signed by the Line Manager/Person In Charge and the employee.
- Formally review each employee at least three times during the 12-month probationary period, areas to be reviewed will include:-
 - ability
 - performance
 - attendance
 - conduct
 - suitability for the role
- Conduct the first probationary review 3 months after the employees start date but this may occur earlier than the 3-month period where the employee is having difficulty achieving the expected performance standards in his/her new role.
- Conduct the second review at 6 months after the start date. If necessary probationary meetings may be held more regularly where deficits in performance are being observed. A record of each probationer's review meeting will be prepared and issued to the probationer.
- Conduct the third review at 9 months after the start date. If necessary, probation meetings may be held more regularly where deficits in performance are being observed. A record of each probationer's review meeting will be prepared and issued to the probationer.
- Encourage an open dialogue with the probationer throughout the process, placing the emphasis on supporting the probationer to achieve the required standards.

- Provide clear, specific and constructive feedback on performance, conduct and attendance, praising good standards and identifying where instances fall below required standards.
- Identify issues in relation to performance, conduct and/or attendance and meet the probationer at the earliest opportunity to discuss any issues. The Line Manager/Person In Charge must be clear about the required improvements, the relevant timescales and must discuss and agree appropriate supports or interventions to assist improvement.
- Seek advice from Human Resources as appropriate.
- Manage all relevant employees in line with this policy and procedure.

5 Terms of employment during the probationary period:

- During their probationary period employees will be subject to all the terms and conditions of their contracts of employment;
- Where an employee resigns during their probationary period their contractual notice period will apply.
- Any employee who is experiencing performance difficulties within their probationary period will be dealt with under the Probation Policy & Procedure.

In the case of misconduct any employee within their probationary period will be dealt with under the Probation Policy & Procedure and not under Aurora Grievance & Disciplinary Policy. Aurora reserves the right to invoke the statutory dismissal process in cases of serious misconduct. Where there are attendance issues (sickness etc) during the probation period, this will be dealt with under the Probation Policy.

- The sick leave limits for permanent and fixed term employees on a period of probation will apply on a pro-rata basis. Upon satisfactory completion of their probation period, an employee (permanent or fixed term) will have access to full limits.

6 Absence Process

- Where an employee is absent from work during their probation period due to any of the following types of statutory leave, an employer can extend the probationary period for the duration of the employee's absence: -
- Maternity Leave/health and safety leave/leave to which a father is entitled under the Maternity Protection Act 1994
- Adoptive Leave
- Carer's Leave
- Paternity Leave
- Parents Leave

- Any other statutory provision providing that probation shall
 - i. Stand suspended during an employee's absence from work, and
 - ii Be completed by the employee on his or her return from work after such absence.

Sick Leave Act 2022

- The list of statutory leaves in the regulations includes the Sick Leave Act 2022 (which provides for statutory sick pay). However, the Sick Leave Act 2022 does not apply to Public Health Service employees as they are covered by the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme which is a more beneficial scheme.

This means that if public health service employees are absent due to their sick leave, their probationary period cannot be extended for the duration of their sickness absence.

7 Dealing with Performance Achievement

- Performance achievement must be implemented where it is considered that a probationer is not performing his/her duties to the expected standard and as such can be instigated at any stage of the probationary period. In particular, these processes should be applied if it is considered that in the absence of any improvement there are performance issues which could lead to a recommendation that the appointment of the probationary employees should be extended or not continued.
- The primary purpose of the performance achievement process is to bring about a sustained improvement and to ensure that the employee/s has adequate opportunity to achieve this. In such cases it is important that Aurora has provided adequate warning and has taken appropriate steps to communicate;
 - the areas in which improvement is required
 - the targets set for that improvement to be demonstrated and sustained
 - has provided appropriate support and supervision
 - has regularly monitored progress against the set objectives
- The Line Manager/Person In Charge will discuss performance issues with the employees and indicate where performance is below required standards. It is the responsibility of Line Manger//Person in Charge to ensure that the employee is aware of the areas in which improvement is required. The Line Manager/Person In Charge shall also seek to identify any support or guidance which can be provided to assist with an improvement in performance. Specific performance achievement targets will be set, after discussion with the employees, along with a timescale for such improvements to be demonstrated.

- Where performance is below required standard, or there are other issues for concern, the employees should be advised at the earliest possible stage including specific task or behavioural examples.
- The Line Manager/or/Person In Charge/ will provide feedback and reasonable support in order to help the employees to reach the required standard. This will be documented in the probation form and filed in the employee's file.
- Similarly, the Line Manager/Person In Charge/ should advise Human Resources (HR) of any concerns at the earliest possible stage. HR will provide guidance and support to Line Manager/Person In Charge/ on how best to manage the situation.
- A series of review meetings between the employee and the Line Manager/Person In Charge/ will be scheduled to allow regular monitoring of progress against the agreed objectives.
- The employee will be advised that if he/she fails to achieve the performance achievement targets and to demonstrate a sustained improvement then his/her employment may not be continued. Any such circumstances will be confirmed in writing along with details of the required improvement in performance and the arrangements for monitoring and assessing progress against these agreed objectives along with the details of any support or guidance that will be provided. Reviews will take place in accordance with the timeline discussed at the meeting.
- If the Line Manager/Person In Charge/ deems the progress and performance of the employee to be insufficient to recommend continuation of employment, then he/she will consult with Human Resources.

8 Representation

- Employees have the right to be accompanied by a colleague (at the same grade or below) or trade union representative at formal meetings where dismissal is a possible outcome and at appeal hearings, following a decision to dismiss.

9 At the End of Probation/Extended Probation

- The Line Manager/ Person In Charge is required to make a recommendation prior to the end of the probationary period on:
 - Whether the individual has successfully completed probation and will be offered continued employment. Where the final probation form recommends continued employment, HR will issue a letter to the employee/s to confirm successful completion of the probationary period.

- The normal expectation is that all new employees will successfully pass their probation. Where the probation form recommends the probation has not been successfully completed and therefore employment may be terminated, the employee will be given no less than one week's notice or as stated in the terms of employment and the Minimum Notice Act 1973 – 2001. This must be communicated in writing prior to the end of the probation period.
- The following process will apply;
 - The Line Manger/ Person In Charge/ and a representative from HR will hold a meeting with the employee to advise him/her of the recommendation and the reasons for it.
 - The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the probation recommendation and to allow the employee the opportunity to respond to the issues raised in the probation reports and the recommendation.
 - Following this meeting, the HR Manager or any other assigned member of Senior Management will review the recommendation and any new evidence presented at the meeting and, after due consideration will confirm a final decision in writing to the employee. There are two outcomes possible as a result of the meeting.
- The decision to dismiss is confirmed.
 - A letter will include information regarding: the reasons for the dismissal, the date on which the employment will terminate, payment arrangements and the details of the arrangements to follow should he/she decide to appeal e.g., to whom to appeal
 - Details of the Appeal process will also be included.
 - Aurora reserves the right to make payment in lieu of notice in the event of termination.

10 Appeals Process:

- The probationer may appeal the decision in writing within seven calendar days from date of written notice of the decision to dismiss, stating the grounds on which the appeal is based.
- Human Resources will arrange a formal meeting to hear the appeal, as far as reasonably practical within seven calendar days from receipt of appeal letter.

- The appeal is not a rehearing of the original meeting but rather a consideration of the specific area with which the employee is dissatisfied with in relation to the outcome of the meeting. Therefore, unless the Appeal Manager determines that new evidence has a bearing on the whole appeal, The Appeal Manager will confine discussions to those specific areas rather than reconsider the whole matter afresh.
- At the appeal meeting the documentary evidence made available at the original meeting will be made available for reference purposes. The Appeal Manager may also seek further information about the case from the employee. Where appropriate, the probationer will have the opportunity to comment on any new evidence arising during the appeal. All new evidence will have been disclosed in advance according to timescales agreed for the case.
- As the purpose of the appeal is not a reconsideration of all matters, it is the responsibility of the employee to state the case and bring to the attention of the Appeal Manager all relevant documentary evidence that should be considered.
- Based on the appeal case presented and the associated evidence, the Appeal Manager may either; uphold the grounds for appeal or reject the grounds for appeal.

Appendix 11 – Probation Agreement

Before completing this form, you are advised to read the company’s Probation Policy & Procedure

PLEASE NOTE:

You are required to submit a copy of this form to the HR department where the employee's performance during probation is satisfactory. However, you **MUST** submit a copy to the HR department and seek the advice of your HR Manager as soon as possible if difficulties arise during the probationary period which mean that extending the probationary period and/or non-confirming the employee in post are possible outcomes. Non-reporting will result in the assumption that the employee's probation period is progressing satisfactorily.

The Line manager/Person in Charge should ensure that the employee is given a copy of this document at each stage of their probation and should retain the original to monitor progress against set objectives at follow-up meetings.

Probation Record

Employee name:		
Job Title:		
Grade:		
Location		
Start Date:		
Line Manager/Person in Charge:		
	Date Due	Please tick when completed
Initial Meeting (first week of start date)		
3-month review:		
6-month review:		
9- month review:		

PART 1: Initial meeting

This section should be completed by the Line manager /Person in Charge within a week of the employee commencing their employment.

SECTION A: Objectives

The Line manager/Person in Charge should identify specific objectives for the employee (for 3, 6 & 9months, as appropriate) These will be statements of what should be achieved during the probationary period, including indicators of success and timescales for achievement.

SECTION B: Development Plan

To support the employee in achieving these objectives, the Line manager/Person in Charge should identify any training and development needs and specify how and when these needs will be addressed during the probationary period.

Employee's Signature:

Manager's Signature:

Date:

PART 2 – First review (3 months) - a second copy of PART 2 of this form may also be used to conduct a 3-month review with an employee whose probationary period is 12 months)

To be completed by the Line Manager /Person in Charge in discussion with the employee.

<i>(Please tick)</i>	Improvement required	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Job Knowledge				
Quality				
Timeliness				
Productivity				
Execution				
Teamwork				
Initiative				
Attendance				
Overall Evaluation				

If any areas of performance, conduct or attendance require improvement, please provide details below.

Where concerns have been identified, please summarise how these will be addressed during the remaining period of probation.

Summarise the employee's performance and progress over the period

Have the objectives identified for this period of the	YES / NO	If NO, what further action is required?	Review Date

probation been met?			
Have the training / development needs identified for this period of the probation been addressed?	YES / NO		
Employee's Signature:			
Manager's Signature:			
Date:			

PART 3 – Second review (6 months) - a second copy of PART 3 of this form may also be used to conduct a 6-month review with an employee whose probationary period is 12 months)

To be completed by the Line Manager /Person in Charge in discussion with the employee.

<i>(please tick)</i>	Improvement required	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Job Knowledge				
Quality				
Timeliness				
Productivity				
Execution				
Teamwork				
Initiative				
Attendance				
Overall Evaluation				

If any areas of performance, conduct or attendance require improvement, please provide details below.

Where concerns have been identified, please summarise how these will be addressed during the remaining period of probation.

Summarise the employee's performance and progress over the period

Have the objectives identified for this period of the probation been met?	YES / NO	If NO, what further action is required?	Review Date

Have the training / development needs identified for this period of the probation been addressed?	YES / NO		
Employee's Signature:			
Manager's Signature:			
Date:			

PART 4 – Final Review (9 months)

To be completed by Line Manager/Person in Charge Leader in discussion with the employee.

<i>(please tick)</i>	Improvement required	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Job Knowledge				
Quality				
Timeliness				
Productivity				
Execution				
Teamwork				
Initiative				
Attendance				
Overall Evaluation				
Have the objectives identified for the probationary period been met?	YES / NO	If NO, please provide details		
Have the training / development needs identified for the probationary period been addressed?	YES / NO			
Summarise the employee's performance and progress over the period				
Is the employee's appointment to be confirmed?				YES / NO
If NO, please provide reasons below and summarise what action has been taken to address any difficulties, which have arisen during the probationary period.				
The employee may provide any comments about their experience of the probationary process here.				
Should the employee's probationary period be extended?				YES / NO

<p>If YES, please provide reasons and, where appropriate, specify any areas of improvement required and how these will be monitored.</p>	
<p>Length of the extension (max 3 months' Probation cannot exceed 12 months:</p>	
<p>New Probation Period completion date:</p>	
<p>Employee's signature:</p>	
<p>Manager's signature</p>	
<p>Date:</p>	

PLEASE NOTE: At the final review meeting, the Line manager/Person in Charge should confirm verbally whether the employee has successfully completed their probationary period. **In such cases, a copy of the completed probationary review form should be sent to HR to trigger issuing of the confirmation letter.**

