

Last Date Modified: 17th March 2026

(a signed copy is kept in the Circuit Office)

1. Introduction

It is the policy of the North Kirklees and Morley Methodist Circuit Meeting ('the Circuit') to operate probationary periods for all new employees, and in some cases at the employer's discretion in respect of employees who have been transferred or promoted into different posts.

The purpose of the probationary period is to offer support and guidance to all new employees in order that there is a clear understanding of the requirements of the role along with offering the necessary support to achieve the required standard during the initial period of employment.

At the same time, it provides the Circuit with an opportunity to assess the performance and future potential of the employee before confirming the appointment.

Under this policy the Line Manager is responsible for ensuring that all new employees are properly supported and their performance is monitored during their probationary period. If any problems arise the Line Manager should address these promptly. This will ensure that the employee is aware that some aspect of their performance or conduct is unsatisfactory and prevent the problem from escalating.

2. Length of probationary period

The Circuit's standard probationary period is six months. For senior management, professional positions and roles with complex responsibilities, the Circuit may impose a longer probationary period of e.g. nine months. The length of the probationary period will be set out in the Written Statement of Terms and Conditions of each new employee.

3. Extending the probationary period

The Circuit reserves the right to extend an employee's probationary period at its discretion. This will be limited to one extension and the total probationary period will be no longer than 12 months.

An extension may be agreed in circumstances where the employee's performance during the probationary period has not been entirely satisfactory but it is thought likely that an extension to the probationary period may lead to an improvement, or where the employee or the Line Manager has been absent from the workplace for an extended period during the probationary period.

Before extending an employee's probationary period, the Line Manager must consult with the District Lay Employment Team. If an extension to the probationary period is agreed, the Circuit will confirm the terms of the extension in writing to the employee, including:

- the length of the extension and the date on which the extended probationary period will end;

- the reason for the extension and, if the reason is unsatisfactory performance, details of how and why performance has fallen short of the required standards;
- the performance standards or objectives that the employee is required to achieve by the end of the extended probationary period;
- any support, for example further training or coaching, that will be provided during the extended probationary period; and
- a statement that, if the employee does not meet fully the required standards by the end of the extended probationary period, their employment will be terminated.

4. Line Manager's responsibilities

Under this policy, the Line Manager has responsibility for monitoring a new employee's performance and progress during the probationary period. The Line Manager must ensure that the employee is properly informed at the start of their employment about what is expected of them during the probationary period, for example the required job outputs or standards of performance.

The Line Manager is also responsible for providing guidance and support to the new employee during the probationary period. The level of support required will differ depending on the individual employee. All support necessary should be given by the Line Manager to allow the employee to successfully complete their probationary period and continue their employment.

The Line Manager should ensure the employee receives appropriate training at the start of the probationary period. The Probationary Period Review Form should be completed to assist with the employee's development and introduction to the employment. All relevant Circuit documentation should be made available to the employee at the earliest date.

5. Mandatory training

To successfully complete their probationary period, all new employees and workers are required to complete the following mandatory training:

- Local Health and Safety induction training
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training (for those roles which require it)
- Data Protection training (for those roles which require it)
- Safeguarding training (for those working with children or adults at risk)

6. Interim reviews during probationary period

Following an initial meeting at the outset of the Probationary Period, the Line Manager should arrange interim reviews, and assess the employee's performance, capability and suitability for the role, carrying out a probationary period interim review meeting on at least one occasion during the employee's probationary period, preferably at the mid-point, and again at the end of the probationary period.

A clear record should be made of each review meeting. A Probationary Period Review Form is available for this purpose. A copy of the record should be passed to the employee and the original kept in the employee's personnel file.

The Circuit processes any personal data collected during the probationary period in accordance with the Methodist Church's Data Protection Policy. The privacy notice is available from the TMCP website: [Managing Trustees' Privacy Notice - Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes \(tmcp.org.uk\)](http://tmcp.org.uk). Any data collected is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of operating the probationary period. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the Methodist Church's Data Protection Policy immediately.

During an employee's probationary period, the Line Manager should provide regular feedback to the employee about their performance and progress, and, should there be any problem areas, raise these with the employee as soon as possible with a view to resolving them. The Line Manager is also responsible for providing guidance and support and for identifying and arranging any necessary training or coaching.

In assessing performance, consideration should be given to any contextual factors which may have affected the employee's ability to perform to their full potential (for instance, caring responsibilities, periods of maternity/paternity/adoption leave, bereavement, ill health or injury, medical treatments or a disability).

Where an employee has indicated that they have a disability as defined in the Equality Act 2010, the Line Manager should take care to provide additional support and ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to the workplace and/or working arrangements so that the employee is not at a substantial disadvantage when compared to a non-disabled person. The Line Manager should consult the District Lay Employment Team for support in this regard.

7. Irregularities discovered during the probationary period

If, during an employee's probationary period, it is suspected or established that the employee does not have the qualifications, experience or knowledge that they claimed to have at the time of recruitment, the matter will be discussed with the employee to establish the facts. If the evidence suggests that the employee misrepresented their abilities in any way, the Line Manager will consult the District Lay Employment Team and termination of the employment may result, with the required notice being issued as set out in the Written Statement of Terms and Conditions.

8. End of probationary period - final probationary period review

At the end of the probationary period, the Line Manager should conduct a final review of the employee's performance and suitability for the job. This will involve a meeting with the employee to discuss their performance and progress throughout the probationary period. The review must be conducted **on or shortly before** the date on which the employee's probationary period comes to an end.

If the employee's performance is satisfactory, the Line Manager should notify the District Lay Employment Team and issue a letter confirming the successful completion of the probationary period to the employee.

If the employee's performance has not met the standards required by the employer, where work targets have not been met or there has been persistent lateness or unacceptable conduct, the Line

Manager should discuss the matter with the District Lay Employment Team before any decision is made to terminate the employee's employment.

Where the probationary period has not been completed satisfactorily but where a further period of time is judged to provide realistic opportunity for a satisfactory outcome, the Line Manager should, in agreement with the District Lay Employment Team, seek to extend the probationary period for a further period.

Any extension to the probationary period must be with good cause (see the section above regarding extending probationary periods), and the Line Manager must be able to demonstrate the benefits of such an extension.

The Line Manager must inform the employee of the decision and provide them with an action plan for completion during the extended period.

The Line Manager should complete the Probationary Period Review Form recommending that the probationary period should be extended, indicating the period of the extension and including a copy of the action plan. Copies of these should be given to the employee.

9. Termination of employment

If an employee's performance during the probationary period has been unsatisfactory (despite reasonable support and training), and it is thought unlikely that further training or support would lead to a satisfactory level of improvement, the employment will be terminated at the end of the probationary period.

The Circuit's usual approach is to allow the employee to complete the designated probationary period rather than terminating employment before the probationary period has come to an end. This is to give the employee a full opportunity to come up to the required standards. If, however, there is clear evidence prior to the end of the probationary period that suggests the employee is wholly unsuitable for the role, the Line Manager should consult the District Lay Employment Team with a view to terminating the employee's contract before the probationary period is completed.

Where a decision is taken to terminate the employee's employment, the employee must be invited to a meeting and informed of the reason for the termination. Following this, the employer will write to the employee confirming the termination and the reason for it. The employee will be given an opportunity to appeal the decision.

If an employee's employment is terminated after the expiry of the probationary period, or if the employee is an existing employee who has been transferred or promoted into a different role, the normal Disciplinary Procedure of the Circuit must be followed in full.

October 2024