

# Probationary Period Policy

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<b>Division and Department:</b>	Workforce and Organisation Development, Human Resources				
<b>Author / Originator and Job Title:</b>	Vicki Higgins, Interim Head of Human Resources				
<b>Replaces:</b>	CORP/POL/632, Version 1.1, Probationary Period Policy				
<b>Description of amendments:</b>	Relocate the last bullet in Section 10 to Section 8.				
<b>Approved by:</b>	Joint Negotiating Consultative Committee				
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<b>Review Date from Date of Approval:</b>	1 Year <input type="checkbox"/>	2 Years <input type="checkbox"/>	3 Years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 24/11/2025	4 Years <input type="checkbox"/>	5 Years <input type="checkbox"/>

Version Control Sheet			
Date dd/mm/yy	Version	Author	Reason for changes
24/11/22	1	Vicki Higgins, Interim Head of Human Resources.	New document
13/01/23	1.1		Policy Amended, letter linked.
19/01/23	1.2		Relocate the last bullet in Section 10 to Section 8

Consultation / Acknowledgements with Stakeholders		
Name	Designation	Date Response Received
Maggy Heaton	Staff Side Chair	20/11/22
HR Policy Forum Group	Staff Side Representative.	17/11/22
Barry Casey	Unite Lead Representative	20/11/22

## CONTENTS

Version Control Sheet.....	1
Consultation / Acknowledgements with Stakeholders.....	1
1 Introduction / Purpose .....	3
2 General Principles / Target Audience .....	3
3 Definitions and Abbreviations .....	3
4 Responsibilities (Ownership and Accountability) .....	3
5 Principles.....	4
6 Probationary Review Meetings.....	4
7 Extension to Probationary Periods .....	5
8 Probationary Employees .....	6
9 Confirmation of Employment .....	6
10 Termination of Contract within the Terms of Probationary Period .....	6
11 Right of Appeal.....	7
12 Suspicion of Fraudulent Activity .....	7
13 References and Associated Documents.....	8
Appendix 1: First Probationary Review .....	9
Appendix 2: Second / Additional Probationary Reviews .....	11
Appendix 3: Final Probationary Review .....	13
Appendix 4: Equality Impact Assessment Form.....	15

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust		ID No. CORP/POL/632
Revision No: 1.2	Next Review Date: 24/11/2025	Title: <b>Probationary Period Policy</b>
<b>UNCONTROLLED COPY WHEN PRINTED</b> <b>Current Version held on the Intranet</b>		

## 1 Introduction / Purpose

The purpose of this document is to ensure a robust probationary period procedure operates across Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. It provides guidance to managers and new employees during the probationary period process, ensuring the necessary information and support is provided to enable successful and continuing employment with the Trust.

## 2 General Principles / Target Audience

All new Non-Medical Employees of the Trust.

### To be read in conjunction with

- Trust's New Starter Induction Programme (1)
- Disciplinary Policy (CORP/POL/525) (2)
- Performance Improvement Policy (CORP/POL/517) (3)
- Appraisal Policy (Non-medical Employees) (CORP/POL/046) (4)
- Contract of Employment

## 3 Definitions and Abbreviations

- A probationary period is a trial period during which the performance, conduct and attendance of the employee will be assessed by the line manager against the particular requirements of the role, the Trust values and behaviours and expected standards of attendance and punctuality.
- In line with the Agenda for Change NHS Terms and Conditions of Service (5), all terms and conditions of employment will have continuous service from the first day of employment at the start of the probationary period, not from the end of the probationary period.

BTH Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
OD Organisational Development

## 4 Responsibilities (Ownership and Accountability)

- **The Trust Board** – are committed to ensuring that staff and managers adhere to all our policies and procedures to make this a great and safe place to work. Ultimately ownership of all documentation rests with the Executive Team.
- **OD** – oversee the introduction, operation and monitoring of this policy to ensure the fair and consistent application.
- **Line Managers** – making sure new employees to the Trust are made aware of the Probationary Period Policy at their local and Trust induction. They will also ensure the policy is applied fairly and consistently.

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust		ID No. CORP/POL/632
Revision No: 1.2	Next Review Date: 24/11/2025	Title: <b>Probationary Period Policy</b>
<b>UNCONTROLLED COPY WHEN PRINTED</b> <b>Current Version held on the Intranet</b>		

- **Trade Union Representative / Workplace Colleague** – can support the employee during probationary review meetings if required.
- **Employees** – will be responsible for performing their duties in accordance with their contractual obligations.

## 5 Principles

- All new non-medical appointees to the Trust, including temporary and fixed-term posts, are subject to a six-month probationary period as stated in their contract of employment.
- Appointment of employees to fixed-term contracts, will be subject to a probationary period as set out in the table below.

**Table 1**

<b>Length of the Fixed Term Contract</b>	<b>Recommended Probationary Period</b>
3 months or less	1 month
Up to 6 months	3 months
Up to 9 months	4 months
12 months or more	6 months

- The probationary period will continue to apply for any new or Probationary employees with less than six months continuous service upon transfer to a new role within BTH (see Section 7- Probationary Employees)
- In accordance with the Trust’s New Starter Induction Programme (1) line managers are required to complete a local / workplace induction for the new employee and ensure expectations of the role are explained within a week of commencing in the new role.

## 6 Probationary Review Meetings

- It is the line manager’s responsibility to monitor the progress of new employees, ensure their needs are met, keep the employee informed of their performance and ensure that any problems are addressed in a timely manner before they become a concern.
- The following formal probationary review meetings must be held:
  - The first review within the first 2 months (Appendix 1)
  - The second review by the end of month 5 (Appendix 2)
- At all formal meetings employees have the right to be accompanied by a member of a recognised trade union or a work colleague. The representative will have the opportunity to address the meeting in order to present the employee’s case. They

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust		ID No. CORP/POL/632
Revision No: 1.2	Next Review Date: 24/11/2025	Title: <b>Probationary Period Policy</b>
<b>UNCONTROLLED COPY WHEN PRINTED</b> <b>Current Version held on the Intranet</b>		

cannot, however, answer a question directly asked of the employee. The colleague can only be present in a supportive capacity and cannot participate in the meeting.

- If, by the end of the 6-month period, the probationary is deemed unsatisfactory, and providing the individual has previously been made aware of the issues and had the opportunity to respond, a decision may be taken to terminate the employment contract (see Section 10 – Termination of Contract within the Terms of Probation Periods).
- A decision to extend the probationary period beyond the 6 months must be agreed as an exception, and this must be for no longer than 3 months. At the end of the extended period, a final review will take place to decide whether the individual had met the satisfactory performance or to terminate the employment (see Section 10 – Termination of Contract within the Terms of Probation Periods).
- Where a probationary period is less than 6 months (as outlined in Table 1), it is envisaged that two reviews would be undertaken within reasonable timeframes, with the exception of a 1-month probationary period, when only a final review would be held.

## 7 Extension to Probationary Periods

A probation period may be extended in the following circumstances:

- Where the performance, behaviour or conduct of the employee has not met the required standard and it is believed that these can be addressed during the extended period.
- The employee has not completed all mandatory training due to workplace demands and they were unable to obtain workplace release. However, if the non-completion of mandatory training is down to the employee, justification must be explored.
- The employee has had a significant amount of time away from work, for example sickness and this has resulted in an inability to conduct themselves in accordance with the job description, or to attend meetings.
- The employee has moved to a different role during their probationary period which is very different role or in a different department.
- All necessary training, support and supervision will be provided to assist in effecting an improvement. The line manager should also explore other reasons or mitigating circumstances which may be affecting the employee's performance at work and provide support as appropriate i.e., Occupational Health.
- If the employee has demonstrated an acceptable level of improvement, which is felt by the manager to be sustainable, they should be confirmed in post. If, however, there are still concerns, managers should also explore alternative roles within their service that may be deemed more suitable, and this may include positions at a lower band.
- Any extension to the probationary period will be for no longer than 9 months in total after the employee commenced employment. In these instances, they will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Workforce Advisory Service.

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust		ID No. CORP/POL/632
Revision No: 1.2	Next Review Date: 24/11/2025	Title: <b>Probationary Period Policy</b>
<b>UNCONTROLLED COPY WHEN PRINTED</b> <b>Current Version held on the Intranet</b>		

- The line manager should confirm in writing to the employee that their probationary period is being extended: the reason why, the length of the extension, any support/training to be provided and any improvements that are required. It will also advise that failure to meet these will result in non-completion of the probationary period and therefore termination may apply.
- Where performance is the issue, a counter fraud referral may be applicable in order to confirm the details provided in the recruitment process. In such circumstances, the probationary period will be extended.

## 8 Probationary Employees

- For employees with less than 6 months continuous service with the Trust who change role following, for example a promotion to another role, the probationary period will continue to apply.
- A discussion will take place and an agreement may be reached between the individual and the new manager as to the length of an extension of the probationary period, if needed, in respect of the new role.
- If an individual resigns during the probationary period, they can give a minimum of one week's notice.

## 9 Confirmation of Employment

- Once an employee has successfully completed their probationary period, the line manager will send them a letter confirming this (template letter can be found on OneHR [Probationary-Period-Letter-Completed.docx \(live.com\)](#)). A copy of this letter and a copy of all the completed probationary period review forms should be held on the employee's personal file indefinitely.
- Any future concerns about the employee's performance (3), attendance (6) or conduct (7; 8) should be addressed using the relevant Trust policies.

## 10 Termination of Contract within the Terms of Probationary Period

- Employees must be made aware of any concerns regarding their performance, attendance, behaviour or conduct during the review processes.
- If, after regular review meetings, provision of appropriate training and support, it becomes evident that no further training or support would allow the employee to reach the required standards then consideration will be given to terminate the employment.
- A decision to dismiss the employee must only be made at a formal meeting heard by a more senior manager (Band 8B or above) within the Division, who has had no prior involvement in the case and supported by HR. Based upon the evidence provided by both the line manager and individual, the senior manager may decide to terminate the employment contract giving one week's notice.

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust		ID No. CORP/POL/632
Revision No: 1.2	Next Review Date: 24/11/2025	Title: <b>Probationary Period Policy</b>
<b>UNCONTROLLED COPY WHEN PRINTED</b> <b>Current Version held on the Intranet</b>		

## 11 Right of Appeal

- An employee has the right to appeal against a decision made to terminate their employment.
- The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Head of HR, specifying the grounds of appeal. The appeal must be made within 14 within receipt of the outcome letter.

## 12 Suspicion of Fraudulent Activity

Any suspicions of fraudulent activity will be referred to the Trust's Counter Fraud Specialist for detailed information gathering. Should such an investigation find reasonable grounds to suspect an offence has been committed, further action will be taken, in accordance with the Trust's counter fraud, bribery and corruption policy.

Further advice can be obtained from the Trust's Counter Fraud Specialist.

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust		ID No. CORP/POL/632
Revision No: 1.2	Next Review Date: 24/11/2025	Title: <b>Probationary Period Policy</b>
<b>UNCONTROLLED COPY WHEN PRINTED</b> <b>Current Version held on the Intranet</b>		

### 13 References and Associated Documents

1. **BTHFT - Guideline.** New Starter Induction Programme. [Online] 07 01 2021. [Cited: 21 12 2022.] <http://fcsp.xfyldecoast.nhs.uk/trustdocuments/Documents/CORP-GUID-465.docx>. CORP/GUID/465.
2. **BTHFT - Policy.** Disciplinary Policy. [Online] 31 05 2019. [Cited: 21 12 2022.] <http://fcsp.xfyldecoast.nhs.uk/trustdocuments/Documents/CORP-POL-525.docx>. CORP/POL/525.
3. —. Performance Improvement. [Online] 03 07 2020. [Cited: 21 12 2022.] <http://fcsp.xfyldecoast.nhs.uk/trustdocuments/Documents/CORP-POL-517.docx>. CORP/POL/517.
4. —. Appraisal (Non-medical employees). [Online] 07 01 2021. [Cited: 21 12 2022.] <http://fcsp.xfyldecoast.nhs.uk/trustdocuments/Documents/CORP-POL-046.docx>. CORP/POL/046.
5. **NHS Employers.** NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook. [Online] 04 08 2022. [Cited: 21 12 2022.] <https://www.nhsemployers.org/publications/tchandbook>.
6. **BTHFT - Policy.** Attendance Management Policy. [Online] 28 07 2022. [Cited: 21 12 2022.] <http://fcsp.xfyldecoast.nhs.uk/trustdocuments/Documents/CORP-POL-011.docx>. CORP/POL/011.
7. —. Standards of Business Conduct. [Online] 09 12 2020. [Cited: 21 12 2022.] <http://fcsp.xfyldecoast.nhs.uk/trustdocuments/Documents/CORP-POL-358.pdf>. CORP/POL/358.
8. —. Confidentiality Code of Conduct. [Online] 18 08 2021. [Cited: 21 12 2022.] <http://fcsp.xfyldecoast.nhs.uk/trustdocuments/Documents/CORP-POL-107.docx>. CORP/POL/107.
9. **BTHFT - Procedure.** Development and Management of Procedural Documents. [Online] 15 04 2019. [Cited: 21 12 2022.] <http://fcsp.xfyldecoast.nhs.uk/trustdocuments/Documents/CORP-PROC-001.docx>. CORP/PROC/001.
10. **BTHFT - Policy.** Core Skills Training Framework (CSTF) and Role Specific Training. [Online] 04 01 2021. [Cited: 21 12 2022.] <http://fcsp.xfyldecoast.nhs.uk/trustdocuments/Documents/CORP-POL-354.docx>. CORP/POL/354.

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust		ID No. CORP/POL/632
Revision No: 1.2	Next Review Date: 24/11/2025	Title: <b>Probationary Period Policy</b>
<b>UNCONTROLLED COPY WHEN PRINTED</b> <b>Current Version held on the Intranet</b>		



## Appendix 1: First Probationary Review



**Blackpool Teaching  
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This form must be completed (continue on separate sheet if necessary) no later than at the end of the employee's **first 2 months** in their new post. Both the Line Manager and the employee should meet to discuss progress, and both should be fully involved in its completion.

Name		Date of commencement	
Job Title		Line Manager's Name	
Department		Date of Review	

Is the employee satisfied that all the topics within the Induction have been fully covered and is clear about what their new role entails and how they contribute to the work of the team/service/department?

--

What are the key objectives for the employee between now and the completion of their probationary period? How will they be supported to achieve these; how will success be measured and what are the agreed timescales?

--

Are there any specific areas for improvement or concern?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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If yes, please provide examples and detail the support which is being put in place to aid improvement

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## Appendix 1: First Probationary Review

What training and development has been provided so far?

General comments

MARK WITH X

I confirm that the first 2 months have been satisfactorily completed and that the next review meeting will be held during month 5 OR

I confirm that in order to support the employee to improve against the concerns raised or above I wish to hold a review meeting before month 5 to review progress

Provisional date for next probationary review meeting agreed as:

/ /

Line  
Manager's  
Name  
PRINT

Signed

Date

/ /

Employee's  
Name

Signed

Date

/ /

Please keep a copy on personal file (with action plan if required)

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust		ID No. CORP/POL/632
Revision No: 1.2	Next Review Date: 24/11/2025	Title: <b>Probationary Period Policy</b>
<b>UNCONTROLLED COPY WHEN PRINTED</b> Current Version held on the Intranet		

## Appendix 2: Second / Additional Probationary Reviews



**Blackpool Teaching  
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### Probationary Second Review

This form must be completed (continue on separate sheet if necessary) no later than by the end of the employee's 5<sup>th</sup> month in their new post. Both the Line Manager and the employee should meet to discuss progress, and both should be fully involved in its completion.

Name		Date of first review	
Job Title		Line Manager's Name	
Department		Date of Second Review	
Has all mandatory training been successfully completed?	Yes		No
Highlight individual performance strengths, including key achievements to date?			
What progress has been made since their last review, any agreed action plans, key targets and areas for improvement or concerns to address performance or other issues?			
Are there any specific areas for improvement or concern?	Yes		No
If yes, please provide examples and detail the support which has been put in place to aid improvement			

**Appendix 2: Second / Additional Probationary Reviews**

General Comments	

<b>Satisfactory Completion or Extension of Probation</b>	MARK WITH X
I can confirm that the probationary period has been satisfactorily completed and that I recommend confirmation in post OR	
After explanation and discussion with employee I wish to extend the employee's probationary period (no longer than 3 months)	
Provisional date for next or final/additional probationary review	/ /

<b>Non-Satisfactory Completion of Probation</b>	MARK WITH X
I do not feel that an extension period would be productive and therefore I am unable to confirm their continuation in this post and will refer to Human Resources to arrange a formal meeting	

Line Manager's Name PRINT		Signed		Date	/ /
Employee's Name		Signed		Date	/ /

Please keep a copy on personal file (with action plan if required)

## Appendix 3: Final Probationary Review



**Blackpool Teaching  
Hospitals**  
NHS Foundation Trust

### Final or Additional Probationary Review

This form must be completed (continue on separate sheet if necessary) at the end of the employee's 6-month probationary period (no later than 9 months after commencement date) in their new post. Both the Line Manager and the employee should meet to discuss progress, and both should be fully involved in its completion.

Name		Date of first review	
Job Title		Line Manager's Name	
Department		Date of Second Review	
Has all mandatory training been successfully completed?	Yes		No
Highlight individual performance strengths, including key achievements to date?			
What progress has been made since their last review, any agreed action plans, key targets, and areas for improvement or concerns to address performance or other issues?			
Are there any specific areas for improvement or concern?	Yes		No
If yes, please provide examples and detail the support which has been put in place to aid improvement			

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust		ID No. CORP/POL/632
Revision No: 1.2	Next Review Date: 24/11/2025	Title: <b>Probationary Period Policy</b>
<b>UNCONTROLLED COPY WHEN PRINTED</b> Current Version held on the Intranet		

**Appendix 3: Final Probationary Review**

General Comments	

<b>Satisfactory Completion or Extension of Probation</b>	MARK WITH X
I confirm that the probationary period has been satisfactorily completed and that I recommend confirmation in post OR	

<b>Non-Satisfactory Completion of Probation</b>	MARK WITH X
I do not feel that an extension period would be productive and an unable to confirm in post and will refer to Human Resources to arrange a formal meeting	

Line Manager's Name PRINT		Signed		Date	/ /
Employee's Name		Signed		Date	/ /

Please keep a copy on personal file (with action plan if required)

<b>Appendix 4: Equality Impact Assessment Form</b>					
Department	HR&OD	Service or Policy	Probationary Period	Date Completed:	05.03.2021
<b>GROUPS TO BE CONSIDERED</b> Deprived communities, homeless, substance misusers, people who have a disability, learning disability, older people, children and families, young people, Lesbian Gay Bi-sexual or Transgender, minority ethnic communities, Gypsy/Roma/Travellers, women/men, parents, carers, staff, wider community, offenders.					
<b>EQUALITY PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS TO BE CONSIDERED</b> Age, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender identity (or reassignment), religion and belief, carers, Human Rights and social economic / deprivation.					
QUESTION	RESPONSE		IMPACT		
	Issue	Action	Positive	Negative	
What is the service, leaflet or policy development? What are its aims, who are the target audience?	This document is to ensure Policy ensure a robust probationary period procedure operates across Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	No action required at this time, but future review might see a change that will require action.	This policy promotes a positive and inclusive approach to supporting our employees	No negative impact identified at this time	
Does the service, leaflet or policy/ development impact on community safety • Crime • Community cohesion	There is no identified impact on community safety/crime or community cohesion	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Is there any evidence that groups who should benefit do not? i.e. equal opportunity monitoring of service users and/or staff. If none/insufficient local or national data available consider what information you need.	Currently this is no evidence that shows who should benefit does not	No action required at this time, but future review might see a change that will require action.	This policy promotes a positive and inclusive approach to supporting our employees	No negative impact identified at this time	
Does the service, leaflet or development/ policy have a negative impact on any geographical or sub group of the population?	No negative impact identified in relation to geographical or sub group of the population	No action required at this time, but future review might see a change that will require action	No impact identified at this time but might change at a future review	No negative impact identified at this time	
How does the service, leaflet or policy/ development promote equality and diversity?	Provides a framework for managers and staff to ensure a fair and robust approach to probation periods and it is equitable across all groups	Ensure compliance with the policy through regular monitoring throughout probation period	This policy promotes a positive and inclusive approach to supporting our employees	No negative impact identified at this time	
Does the service, leaflet or policy/ development explicitly include a commitment to equality and diversity and meeting needs? How does it demonstrate its impact?	This policy values the contribution made by employees and ensures appropriate support is implemented when highlighted through the reviews	No action required at this time, but future review might see a change that will require action	This policy promotes a positive and inclusive approach to supporting our employees	No negative impact identified at this time	
Does the Organisation or service workforce reflect the local population? Do we employ people from disadvantaged groups	The Trust is reflective of the community it serves. The Trust employs people from disadvantage groups i.e. those who have a disability/learning disability/low social economic status	To continue monitoring staff across all protected characteristics and comparing with the local demographic figures from the Council and ONS	This policy promotes a positive and inclusive approach to supporting our employees	No negative impact identified at this time	
Will the service, leaflet or policy/ development i. Improve economic social conditions in deprived areas ii. Use brown field sites iii. Improve public spaces including creation of green spaces?	This policy does not have any direct impact on the development to improve economic social conditions in deprived areas/use brown field sites/improve public spaces etc.	To continue monitoring this policy to ensure any review takes into account any changes re points i ii iii	This policy promotes a positive and inclusive approach to supporting our employees	No negative impact identified at this time	
Does the service, leaflet or policy/ development promote equity of lifelong learning?	No it doesn't	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Does the service, leaflet or policy/ development encourage healthy lifestyles and reduce risks to health?	No it doesn't	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Does the service, leaflet or policy/ development impact on transport? What are the implications of this?	No it doesn't	N/A	N/A	N/A	

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust		ID No. CORP/POL/632
Revision No: 1.2	Next Review Date: 24/11/2025	Title: <b>Probationary Period Policy</b>
<b>UNCONTROLLED COPY WHEN PRINTED</b> <b>Current Version held on the Intranet</b>		

<b>Appendix 4: Equality Impact Assessment Form</b>				
Does the service, leaflet or policy/development impact on housing, housing needs, homelessness, or a person's ability to remain at home?	No it doesn't	N/A	N/A	N/A
Are there any groups for whom this policy/ service/leaflet would have an impact? Is it an adverse/negative impact? Does it or could it (or is the perception that it could exclude disadvantaged or marginalised groups?	No particular group has been identified as having an impact as a result of this policy, whether adverse/negative	No action required at this time but future review might see a change which requires action	This policy promotes a positive and inclusive approach to supporting our employees	No negative impact identified at this time
Does the policy/development promote access to services and facilities for any group in particular?	No it doesn't	No action required at this time but future review might see a change which requires action	This policy promotes a positive and inclusive approach to supporting our employees	No negative impact identified at this time
Does the service, leaflet or policy/development impact on the environment  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● During development</li> <li>● At implementation?</li> </ul>	No it doesn't	No action required at this time but future review might see a change which requires action	This policy promotes a positive and inclusive approach to supporting our employees	No negative impact identified at this time
<b>ACTION:</b>				
<b>Please identify if you are now required to carry out a Full Equality Analysis</b>			<b>No</b>	<b>(Please delete as appropriate)</b>
<b>Name of Author:</b>	Victoria Higgins	<b>Date Signed:</b>		01/11/2022
<b>Signature of Author:</b>				
<b>Name of Lead Person:</b>	Victoria Higgins	<b>Date Signed:</b>		25/10/2022
<b>Signature of Lead Person:</b>				
<b>Name of Manager:</b>	Jayne Taylor	<b>Date Signed:</b>		25/10/2022
<b>Signature of Manager</b>				

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust		ID No. CORP/POL/632
Revision No: 1.2	Next Review Date: 24/11/2025	Title: <b>Probationary Period Policy</b>
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