1. **Introduction**

Throughout this Policy, the words ‘Translink’ ‘Company’ and/or ‘the Group’ refer to all corporate entities under the ownership of the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC). This includes the parent company and each subsidiary either individually or taken together as a group.

2. **Scope**

This policy applies to all Translink employees. It includes new employees recruited externally into the organization and also those employees who have been promoted internally and who are on a probation period. The policy does not cover Agency Workers or Self-Employed Consultants.

The purpose of the probationary policy is to provide a clear framework for assessing a new employee’s capability, reliability and suitability in respect of a post. All employees will be subject to a probationary period of six months for monthly paid employees or 26 weeks for weekly paid employees. This probationary period may be extended if satisfactory performance or conduct is not achieved within this timescale and it is believed that performance or conduct will improve with the necessary support or training. Probationary periods may not extend beyond 10 months from the date of appointment.

Translink is committed to Equality of Opportunity for all regardless of gender, race, religion, ethnic or national origin, union membership, marital status, age, disability or sexual orientation.

3. **Aims and Objectives**

The policy aims to ensure an effective probationary process is undertaken for all employees that will include provision for induction, training and performance review during the probationary period.

The policy aims to ensure that both managers and new employees understand the purpose of the probation period and ensures that all employees are given the support and opportunity to maximise their potential and to achieve success in carrying out their duties to the required standard.
4. **Line Manager Responsibility**

The Line Manager is responsible for ensuring the employee is aware of this probation policy and procedure. He/she must ensure that they explain the expected standard of performance, how performance will be monitored and outline the expected standards of conduct to the new employee.

The Line Manager is responsible for completing a probation review for the new employee at **three monthly intervals**. He/she is responsible for:

- Notifying the employee of the probation review meetings in advance so that both parties have time to prepare.
- Holding regular one to one meetings with their employee in order to ensure a good working relationship and provide feedback on the employee’s progress.
- Ensuring that systems are in place to support and monitor the probationer’s work throughout the probationary period in order that they receive such assistance as is reasonable to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the post.

5. **Corporate Induction**

Each new employee will be invited to attend the Corporate Induction by Human Resources; these will be scheduled on a quarterly basis. It is the employees’ responsibility to attend these events.

6. **Employee Review**

HR will remind the Line Manager of the date of the probation review. During the review the Line Manager will formally discuss the probationer’s performance with them and document the discussion. The probationer will be given the opportunity to add their comments to the written assessment. If any review is deemed unsatisfactory the Line Manager must discuss with the probationer the aspects of performance that need improvement and should set clear objectives and timescales within which they will be reviewed. The probationer should be asked if they consider that any further assistance and/or training is necessary to enable them to complete tasks to the standards expected of them. The probationer should sign the review and receive a copy of it to confirm that they have been made aware of the improvements required.

The six month probationary review must recommend one of the following:

- Transfer to permanent employment
- Extension of the probationary period
- Dismissal during probation

When notified of completion of a successful probationary period HR will write to the employee and arrange for the transfer of the employee to permanent employment.
7. Extension of the Probationary Period

It may be appropriate to extend the probationary period if:
- Through the probationer’s sickness or other authorised absence, it has not been possible to assess performance.
- The probationer has not performed satisfactorily but the manager has evidence to suggest that performance is likely to improve with a further period of probation.

Probationary periods should not normally be extended by more than three months and may not extend beyond 10 months from the date of appointment. Where the probation is extended, the following should be discussed between the Line Manager and the employee and confirmed in writing:
- Reasons for the extension.
- Length of the extension period.
- Assistance/training that will be given during the period of extension.
- Areas for improvement and indication of how these will be monitored and measured.
- Dismissal will be recommended at the end of the extension period if the employee fails to meet standards of performance expected for the post.

If progress and performance are satisfactory at the end of the extended period, the Line Manager will recommend that the appointment should be confirmed and will complete the probation form as appropriate. The employee will be advised in writing of the successful completion of their probation period. If progress is still considered unsatisfactory, the Line Manager will inform the employee and make a recommendation that the employee be dismissed.

8. Dismissal during Probation:

If, at the review stages, insufficient improvement has taken place, the employee will be invited to a meeting to consider the Line Manager’s recommendation to dismiss. The employee should be given 48 hours notice of the meeting and be given the right (in writing) to be accompanied by a work colleague or a trade union representative. This action may be taken by the line manager at any time during the probation period. The line manager, supported by a representative from HR will determine whether dismissal with notice is appropriate during the probationary period. The probationer and their representative will be given the opportunity to challenge any evidence brought forward or to present any evidence they believe is relevant.
The line manager will review the evidence and make a decision on one of the following outcomes:

- Transfer to permanent employment
- Extension of the probationary period (subject to maximum extension period)
- Dismissal, with notice, during probation

All employees must receive their contractual notice if dismissed during the probationary period.

9. **Appeal**

Any employee dismissed under the Probationary Policy has the right of appeal. The grounds for appeal must be put in writing within 7 days of receipt of the written outcome of the decision to the HR Business Partner.

On receipt of the written appeal, the HR Business Partner will arrange for a panel to hear the appeal within 21 days of receipt. This will be communicated to the employee who will be responsible for arranging their own representation.

The panel will consist of the Head of Department and an HR Business Partner. Where reasonably practical, none of the panel members selected will have had any previous involvement in the probation review to offer complete impartiality. The Appeal panel will hear the grounds for appeal from the employee and their representative. The panel will adjourn to consider all the facts and will give a decision either the same day or within 5 working days of the hearing, subject to the need to gaining more information/advice. In the event that further investigation is required this timescale may be extended by mutual agreement. The decision of the appeal panel will be final.