



PROBATIONARY POLICY AND PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE

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DOCUMENT INFORMATION

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Consultation & Approval: Consultation: PRG: 23/10/18
Approval (JNCC):

This document replaces: N/A: Probationary Policy (May 2011)

Notification of Policy Release: Staff Matters
Staff Notice Boards
Intranet Publication
Internet Publication

Equality Impact Assessment

Date of Issue: November 2013

Reviewed: November 2018 – amended November 2019

Next Review: November 2021

Version: Final

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- 1.1 All new staff appointed to posts within South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust ('the Trust') undertake a probationary period of a **minimum** of six months duration following successful completion of all educational aspects relevant to the role.
- 1.2 Staff promoted / appointed to new posts within the Trust, will undertake an agreed induction and training period in their new role should have regular meetings during the induction/training period. In the event that concerns are identified during this period which require to be managed formally, this will be in line with the appropriate Trust policy ie: Capability, Sickness Management of Discipline & Conduct in recognition of previous service.
- 1.3 This Procedure is designed to provide a framework for managing staff in probationary periods and, thus, to enable the Trust to support them in reaching the required standard / competence for the role.
- 1.4 The principles of the Trust's Capability Policy, Discipline & Conduct Policy, Dignity at Work and Attendance Policy apply to all employees. However, this Probationary Policy and Procedure will override the relevant elements of those policies during training and probationary periods.
- 1.5 The Trust values of Teamwork, Caring, Professional and Innovation underpin everything we do to support our vision of saving lives and enabling patients to get the care they need. SCAS aims to nurture a healthy culture, based on all staff demonstrating their role-relevant values-based behaviours within their working lives. All staff are expected to model their behaviours to support SCAS with its strategic aims to become an Employer, Partner and Provider of Choice.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 To clarify the procedure that will apply to new members of staff during their training and probationary periods.
- 2.2 To outline the framework for managing individuals in the event that they do not reach the required standard within the designated and agreed time frame, despite the efforts of the Trust and the individual. This procedure allows for either party to terminate the contract of employment without full use of the Trust's Capability or Disciplinary procedures.
- 2.3 To outline the framework for managing staff during their training period (i.e. those training programmes required in order to undertake the role and thus fulfil the requirements of the employment contract).

3. SCOPE

- 3.1 This procedure applies to all staff within their probationary period, during the initial period of a new role within the Trust (taking into accounts the statements made in

- points 1.1 and 1.2 in respect of existing staff undertaking a new role with the Trust)
- 3.2 The Procedure outlined in appendix 1 and 2 will apply to staff during periods of pre-deployment training.
 - 3.3 The procedure outlined at appendix 4 applies to newly-qualified clinical staff appointed to band 5 who will undergo a 24-month period of consolidated learning following completion of their training (NQP process). This does not apply to agency staff on a temp to perm basis.

4. EQUALITY STATEMENT

- 4.1 The Trust is committed to promoting positive measures that eliminate all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of age, marriage and civil partnership, disability, race, gender, religion/belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and pregnancy / maternity or any other basis not justified by law or relevant to the requirements of the post. The Trust will therefore take every possible step to ensure that this procedure is applied fairly to all employees regardless of the aforementioned protected characteristics, whether full or part time or employed under a permanent or a fixed term contract or any other irrelevant factor.
- 4.2 By committing to guidance encouraging equality of opportunity and diversity, The Trust values differences between members of the community and within its existing workforce, and actively seeks to benefit from their differing skills, knowledge, and experiences in order to provide an exemplary healthcare service. The Trust is committed to promoting equality and diversity best practice both within the workforce and in any other area where it has influence.
- 4.3 Where there are barriers to understanding; for example, an employee has difficulty in reading or writing, or where English is not their first language, additional support will be put in place wherever necessary to ensure that the process to be followed is understood and that the employee is not disadvantaged at any stage in the procedure. Further information on the support available can be sought from the HR Department.
- 4.4 Employees exercising their rights and entitlements under these regulations will suffer no detriment as a result.

5. PROBATIONARY PERIODS OF NOTICE

- 5.1 The length of probationary period within the Trust will be confirmed in the individual's Conditional Offer Letter and Contract of Employment.
- 5.2 For new employees, during the probationary period, either the Trust or employee will be required to give one week's notice if they wish to terminate the contract.

6. MANAGING STAFF DURING PROBATIONARY PERIODS

- 6.1 Line Managers must closely monitor and support employees during probationary periods. This will enable managers to identify any initial problems and offer as

much support as possible for staff in fulfilling the requirements and competencies of their role. For staff undertaking education or training, their Line Manager will be the Education Department until they have successfully completed the programme of study relevant to their role (however, the Education Department will **not** be responsible for the successful completion of induction training, outlining their posts etc. as this is the direct responsibility of their substantive Line Manager (see point 6.2 and 6.3).

- 6.2 Managers should be monitoring staff progress against agreed performance objectives drawn from the job description / person specification and ensure that they are in line with the agreed SCAS behaviours.
- 6.3 During probationary periods, the onus is on the substantive Line Manager to ensure that the individual undertakes an induction course, is introduced to the main responsibilities of their post, the performance standards expected of them and the context of their work.

Managers must ensure that staff have completed the following training courses, ideally within 6 weeks of commencement in their post:

- Corporate Induction
- Local/Departmental induction
- Other relevant statutory / mandatory training

- 6.4 Any outstanding recruitment checks or occupational health requirements must also be satisfactorily completed as outlined in the Pre-Employment Checks Policy.
- 6.5 Managers will meet with employees regularly during the probationary period as soon as the employee completes their training. Probationary meetings should take place (at least) at the end of each four-week period. The purpose of these meetings is to monitor progress, identify any concerns or issues and identify relevant support mechanisms which should be put into place. Meetings will be recorded, along with a record of any supportive action taken (a template is available at appendix 6 of this policy).
- 6.6 If any problems or issues are identified, or if the employee is not meeting the expected standards required of them, Trust Managers (where appropriate) should meet with the employee more regularly. The purpose of these meetings are to identify and put into place any additional training or support to assist the employee in reaching the expected standard(s). Assistance may be sought from the HR team as required. At this stage employees should be given the opportunity for either a trade union or a work colleague to be present at additional formal meetings.
- 6.7 Where appropriate consideration can be given to extending the probationary period to allow for any additional training / support to be completed, or where concerns have been identified but appear to be resolved and a further period of probation seems appropriate to ensure this is the case. This should be confirmed in writing to the employee (see 8.14).
- 6.8 A note of the discussion / action plan should be recorded at probationary review

meetings, along with details of any supportive action taken. A validated copy of this will be retained on the individual's file and a copy provided to the individual. If the probationary period has been successfully completed, this must be confirmed in writing by the Line Manager and a copy placed on the individual's personal file.

- 6.9 If it is clear during the process that the employee is unable to meet the standards expected of them, a formal hearing can take place **at any time** during the probationary period provided five days' notice given.
- 6.10 The Attendance Policy applies to staff during their probationary period. However, during the probationary period the standards of attendance (as outlined within the Attendance policy) may be amended (e.g. pro-rata) to reflect the shorter time period.
- 6.11 It may also be appropriate to extend the probationary period where, through the probationer's sickness or other authorised absence, it has not been possible to fully assess performance. The probationary period will therefore be extended to mirror the length of the absence (see 8.14). The Probationary Policy supersedes the Attendance Policy in terms of stages and targets.

7. COMPLETION OF PROBATIONARY PERIOD

- 7.1 It is envisaged that, in most circumstances, individuals will be able to reach the required standards with appropriate guidance and support during their probationary period. Unless the employee is informed otherwise within the probationary period, they will be deemed to have reached the required standard for the role and will progress onto their substantive contract with no action required.
- 7.2 In some cases it is recognised that, despite the efforts of both the Trust and the individual, the employee will not be suitable for the role for which they were employed. In considering whether an employee can meet the requirements and suitability for the role, the following may be considered (please note this list is not exhaustive):
- Attendance & timekeeping
 - Capability
 - Commitment
 - Conduct and behaviour
 - Organisational values and behaviours
- 7.3 The outcome of pre-employment checks will also be considered prior to confirming completion of a probationary period.

8. FORMAL PROCESS DURING THE PROBATIONARY PERIOD

- 8.1 Any action instigated during the probationary period to support improved performance to reach the required standards should be continued.
- 8.2 Where the manager feels that, even with support in place, the employee cannot

meet the standards required for the role, cannot pass any element of mandatory training or has breached a serious educational standard (see appendix 5 - fabrication, falsification and plagiarism) the employee's continued employment will be duly considered. This means that the decision to terminate the contract of employment during the probationary period can be made at any time in these circumstances.

- 8.3 The formal hearing will take place at which the appropriate manager and HR representative will form the panel.
- 8.4 The employee will be given 5 calendar days notice of the formal hearing.
- 8.5 The manager responsible for managing the probationary period / training programme will present their account of the employee's progress during their probationary period / training programme to the hearing panel.
- 8.6 To support their case, the manager will collate the probation review meeting notes, action plans, training records, attendance records, pre-employment checks and any other information relevant to the case.
- 8.7 The relevant concerns will be outlined, and the staff member will have the opportunity to respond to those concerns before a decision is made.
- 8.8 Individuals will be given the opportunity to be represented by a staff side representative or work colleague at the hearing. Individuals will be responsible for arranging this representation, and the Trust encourages staff to exercise this right.
- 8.9 As an alternative to dismissal, the panel may give due consideration as to whether the individual may be redeployed into an alternative role, particularly where they have previous employment history with the Trust. Redeployment should not be considered as an automatic right by the employee and will be subject to the availability of a suitable vacancy, considering the reasons the employee failed their probationary period and their transferable skills / qualifications.
- 8.10 Where redeployment or downgrading is decided upon, there will be **no** protection of pay or benefits and the employee will be employed on the terms and conditions that attach to the post, following their contractual statutory notice period. If there are exceptional circumstances (for example, the action is being taken in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 (EA)) these will be considered.
- 8.11 It may be considered appropriate to notify a relevant statutory / regulatory body that action is being taken against an employee. In majority of cases, this will only apply in cases of serious / gross misconduct or incompetence. If so, the HR representative to the panel will ensure that the relevant statutory / regulatory body is consulted and / or notified as appropriate and in accordance with the statutory / regulatory body's code of ethics / conduct. The employee will be informed of this and any subsequent action.
- 8.12 The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed to the employee in writing no later than 7 calendar days.

8.13 Any further extensions to the period of probation will be outlined in writing to the employee within 7 calendar days. The following will also be confirmed in writing:

- The length of the extension
- The reasons for the extension
- Any assistance or training that will be given during the extension period
- The performance standards expected; the way performance will be monitored, and the potential outcomes of a failure to meet expectations following the extension.

8.14 Probationary periods should not normally be extended for more than three months (with the exception of sickness and any authorised absence). Further monitoring should take place as outlined in section 6, and the principles of this procedure will continue to apply during any further period of probation. Appropriate consideration needs to be given with staff working part time hours.

9. APPEALS

9.1 Employees wishing to appeal against a decision to *extend their probationary period* should give notice of appeal. Appeals should be lodged in writing to the Line Manager of the manager who made the decision within 10 calendar days of receipt of the decision. The notice of appeal should clearly outline the grounds for appeal and include any additional supporting information the employee wishes to be considered.

9.2 Employees appealing against a decision to *redeploy or dismiss* have a single right of appeal to the Director for that directorate who reports directly to an Executive Director. Appeals should be lodged in writing to the Assistant Director of HR within 10 calendar days of receipt of the decision. The notice of appeal should clearly outline the grounds for appeal and include any additional supporting information the employee wishes to be considered.

9.3 The appeal process will follow the guidelines detailed in the Best Practice Guide to Formal Hearings and Appeals.

10. MONITORING AND REVIEW

10.1 The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored regularly by HR who will provide data on the use of the policy as and when required. Annual report will be provided to the Trust board at the end of each financial year. The results of the annual staff survey will also provide a valuable indicator of any problems.

10.2 In advance of the review date, the HR team will review and produce recommendation which will be shared via the recognised policy approval process (HR Policy Review Group) in time for the policy review date. An early review can be triggered by the Trust Board, HR or joint staff side if they have serious concerns about the policy or its implementation.

11. RELATED POLICIES

11.1 Please read this Procedure in conjunction with:

- NHS National Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook
- Capability Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Attendance Policy
- Pre-employment Checks Policy
- Corporate and Local Induction Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy

APPENDIX 1 - Procedural Guidance

PROBATIONARY PROCEDURE FOR STAFF IN TRAINING (OPERATIONAL 'FRONT-LINE' STAFF AND PTS)

1. Although the formal probationary period would not apply until they are qualified and in post, this procedure will also apply to staff who are required to successfully complete a training programme as part of their terms and conditions of employment and as outlined in their offer of employment. Such appointments are conditional upon the successful completion of the educational element.
2. Staff undertaking education will be subject to regular reviews (tutorials) as part of their programme of study with the Trust and any concerns in relation to meeting required standards will be identified and documented as part of this process as soon as possible. This includes attendance and timekeeping, conduct and behaviour, capability, commitment, organisational values and behaviours.
3. Where there are concerns as to whether the employee will be able to reach the required standard in any particular module, appropriate support will be offered by the Education team to assist the employee prior to them sitting a formal examination or assessment. Concerns discussed and support offered to the individual member of staff should be documented by the Education Manager / Course Director and then discussed with the relevant Senior Education Manager
4. Employees will be given a **maximum** of two attempts to pass any element of a course however, consideration will be given as to whether a second attempt at the module / element is reasonable, considering the previous attempt and the likelihood of improvement. The considerations are likely to be (but not restricted to):
 - a) where the employee has missed the pass mark within 5% another attempt may be granted
 - b) where the employee has unexpectedly failed an examination or assessment, having previously demonstrated consistent performance during tutorials and tuition (e.g. where an employee demonstrates clear extenuation through personal circumstances) another attempt may be granted
 - c) where the employee has failed the module / element by a margin greater than 5% and/or has been involved in previous review meetings (as per paragraph 3) and/or re-sits in more than one other module/element, it will be considered (in usual circumstances) inappropriate for a second attempt to be granted.
5. This decision will be taken by the relevant Education Manager / Course Director in conjunction with the Senior Education Manager responsible for the programme, the regulating / awarding body (where required) and an HR representative using the guidelines above.
6. In the case of driver training, where the individual is not considered by the educator

to be capable of meeting the required standard they may, after following the above internal appeals procedure, appeal direct to FutureQual as the awarding body following the guidance below.

1. *Formal complaints can be submitted in writing addressed to the Responsible Officer* using the contact details below, by letter or email, or via the FutureQuals website.
2. Future (Awards and Qualifications) Ltd, EMP House, Telford Way, Coalville Leicestershire LE67 3HE. Email: info@futurequals.com | Website: www.futurequals.com

Centres (and learners) have 30 working days from the key date to lodge an appeal with FutureQuals. The key date, dependent on the nature of the appeal, may be the date at which an internal appeals procedure concluded, or that a FutureQuals External Quality Assurer or other member of FutureQuals staff reported his/her decision.

There are some things that cannot be appealed, essentially anything:

- Submitted to us more than 30 working days after the key date
 - That took place before FutureQuals received the learner's registration or after the learner's registration period has expired
 - That is or should be dealt with under an employer's disciplinary or grievance procedure
 - Involving another Awarding Organisation
 - Involving points of law.
9. Where an individual fails a module for a second time, or where a second attempt is considered inappropriate in accordance with paragraph 4, a formal hearing must be held as outlined in the probationary procedure. This may be held in place of a regular tutorial meeting and will be chaired by the Education Manager supported by an HR Advisor. Employees will, however, be given reasonable notice of the nature and purpose of the meeting. Individuals will have the opportunity to be represented by a staff side representative or work colleague. The staff member will be responsible for arranging this representation.
 10. There may be other circumstances (in addition to failure of formal examinations or assessments) when it will be appropriate to formally review an employee's performance whilst in training. For example, serious or repeated conduct / performance concerns identified through formal supervision during an employee's period of workplace orientation and probation, where informal support as outlined in the Probationary procedure have proved unsuccessful.
 11. At the formal hearing, all details relevant to the individual circumstances should be considered and made available for discussion, for example: the individual's training portfolio, assessment/examination marks, audit results, supervision assessments, record of review/tutorial meetings.
 12. Options appropriate to the circumstances should be considered at the formal hearing. These may include a variation to training, permanent redeployment or

dismissal from the post, if it is considered appropriate and reasonable in all the circumstances (and, where relevant, considering the guidelines at paragraph 4).

13. Staff undertaking education will be entitled to appeal against a decision to redeploy or dismiss as outlined at Section 9 of this Procedure. The Appeal will be heard by a Senior Education Manager and an HR Advisor; both must be previously unconnected with the case. The employee will have the right to be accompanied at the appeal by their trade union representative or a work colleague.

The rules and regulations of the awarding body state that the individual educator makes the overall decision regarding a candidate's performance and an Internal Quality Assurance process is in place to ensure that educators make the correct decision.

APPENDIX 2 - Procedural Guidance

PROBATIONARY PROCEDURE FOR STAFF IN TRAINING (CLINICAL CONTACT CENTRES - 111 / EOC)

This is applicable to Direct Entry employees in CCC (e.g. Call Taking staff, Dispatch staff, Clinicians)

1. Although the formal probationary period does not apply until they are out of training (see below), this procedure will also apply to employees who are required to successfully complete a training programme as part of their terms and conditions of employment and as outlined in their offer of employment. Such appointments are conditional upon the successful completion of the educational element of the employee's entry into the CCC environment.
2. Employees undertaking CCC education will be subject to regular reviews (tutorials) as part of their programme of study within the CCC, and any concerns in relation to meeting required standards will be identified, and documented, as part of this process as soon as possible. This includes attendance and timekeeping, conduct and behaviour, capability, commitment, organisational values and behaviours.
3. Where there are concerns as to whether the employee will be able to reach the required standard to achieve a pass in any particular module, appropriate support will be offered by the Education team to assist the employee prior to them sitting a formal examination or assessment. Concerns discussed and support offered will be documented by the CCC Educator / Manager and discussed with the relevant Education Manager.
4. Employees will be given a maximum of two attempts to pass any element of a course; however, consideration will be given as to whether a second attempt at the module / element is reasonable, considering the previous attempt and the likelihood of improvement. The considerations are likely to be (but not restricted to):
 - a) where the employee has missed the pass mark within 5% another attempt may be granted;
 - b) where the employee has unexpectedly failed an examination or assessment, having previously demonstrated consistent competence during tutorials and tuition (e.g. where an employee demonstrates clear extenuation through personal circumstances) another attempt may be granted;
 - c) where the employee has failed the module / element by a margin greater than 5% and/or has been involved in previous review meetings (as per paragraph 3) and/or re-sits in more than one other module/element, it will be considered (in usual circumstances) inappropriate for a second attempt to be granted.

This decision will be taken by the relevant CCC Educator in conjunction with the CCC Education Manager responsible for the programme, the

regulating/awarding body (where required) and an HR representative using the guidelines above.

5. Where an employee fails a module for a second time, or where a second attempt is considered inappropriate in accordance with paragraph 4, a formal hearing must be held as outlined in the probationary procedure. This may be held in place of a regular tutorial meeting and will be chaired by the CCC Education Manager supported by an HR Advisor. Employees will, however, be given reasonable notice of the nature and purpose of the hearing and will have the opportunity to be represented by a staff side representative or work companion. The employee will be responsible for arranging this representation.
6. There may be other circumstances (in addition to failure of formal examinations or assessments) when it will be appropriate to formally review an employee's performance whilst in training. For example:
 - a) Serious or repeated performance concerns identified through formal supervision during an employee's period of workplace orientation and probation, where informal support as outlined in the Probationary procedure have proved unsuccessful;
 - b) Serious or repeated conduct concerns as detailed at 6.3 in the Probationary procedure either during tuition or during workplace orientation and probation.

The above list is not exhaustive.

7. At the formal hearing, all details relevant to the individual circumstances should be considered and made available for discussion, for example: the employee's training portfolio, assessment/examination marks, audit results, supervision assessments, and records of review/tutorial meetings.
8. Once the employee has passed into Mentoring in the department (NHS111 or EOC), the employee will be mentored by an approved and nominated person. Regular Probation Reviews will take place (as least weekly during mentoring) and be recorded, with appropriate action planning in the case of below standard performance.
9. Mentees will complete the initial qualification process applicable to the role undertaken and will then be confirmed as "out of training". Failure to complete this qualification process satisfactorily will lead to a Probationary Review hearing, chaired by the Head of CCC Education / Department (NHS111 or EOC), the outcome of which may be dismissal or return to agency.
10. Once "out of training" the formal probationary period commences. The probationary review processes will continue until the end of the 6-month probationary period, with meetings being held a minimum of monthly and each documented outlining the employee's progress, with appropriate action planning in the case of below standard performance.
11. Following successful completion of the probationary period the employee will be

confirmed in post.

12. Failure to complete this probationary process satisfactorily will lead to a Probationary Review hearing, chaired by the Head of Department (NHS111 or EOC), the outcome of which may be dismissal or return to agency.
13. Probation periods may be extended as part of a formal disciplinary or capability process or in light of extended periods of absence during the probationary period, in line with the probationary procedure.
14. Staff undertaking Probation in CCC will be entitled to appeal against a decision to redeploy or dismiss as outlined at Section 9 of the Probationary Procedure. The Appeal will be heard by the Director of Operations CCC and a HR representative; both must be previously unconnected with the case. The employee will have the right to be accompanied at the appeal by their trade union representative or a work companion.

APPENDIX 3 - Procedural Guidance

LEVEL 4 DIPLOMA ASSOCIATE AMBULANCE PRACTITIONER (AAP – TAKEN FROM THE REGULATOR GUIDANCE AND THE STUDENT HANDBOOK)

1. Programme Aims

- a. The purpose of this 38-week learning and development programme is to confirm competence in the skills and knowledge gained from completing this qualification. The trainee will gain knowledge of the underlying concepts and associated principles within each area of study, including the ability to evaluate and interpret these.

2. Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration

- a. A reasonable adjustment may be needed to provide access to assessment where a learner has a permanent or temporary disability or difficulty and is approved and/or agreed before the assessment takes place.
- b. A reasonable adjustment helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that puts learners at a disadvantage in terms of assessment. However, reasonable adjustments must not affect or compromise the integrity of what is being assessed
- c. Reasonable adjustments are approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the learner access to the assessment. The use of a reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a learner's work. FutureQuals and education centres are only required by law to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of giving access to assessment. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain standards and competence both whilst in training and once operational, and health and safety, will also be taken into consideration.
- d. It is important for a trainee to declare to the Education Team prior to commencement of the learning and development programme if they have been previously diagnosed with, or believe they have, a learning difficulty or a disability that requires reasonable adjustments to be made.
- e. Special consideration can be applied after an assessment if there was a reason the trainee may have been disadvantaged during the assessment. For example, special consideration could apply to a learner who has temporarily experienced an illness or injury, or other event outside of the learner's control.
- f. The FutureQuals procedure can be found in the Guidance on Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration document which is available for download from the FutureQuals website at: www.futurequals.com.

3. Education Centre Modules

- a. The total contact time in the Education Centre is 490 hours. These hours are split between four modules with practice placement hours interspersed.

- b. During the Education Centre modules, trainee's will be provided with the opportunity to discuss their progress and any concerns they may have in individual tutorials.

4. Practice Placement

- a. Practice placement forms one of the most important components of the Associate Ambulance Practitioner qualification; it ensures that the learner has considerable exposure to apply theory to practice. To achieve adequate exposure, the **minimum** number of practice hours for this qualification is 750 hours.
- b. Practice hours are to be undertaken as part of an operating ambulance crew under the supervision of an occupationally competent individual at the same level or above to ensure patient safety.
- c. Trainee AAP's should be crewed with any of the following;
 - Team Leader
 - Clinical Mentor
 - Band 6 Paramedic
 - IHCD Technician / Qualified AAP (maximum of 250 hours only)
- d. Trainee AAP's should **NOT** be crewed with any of the following;
 - Newly Qualified Paramedics (NQP's)
 - Emergency Care Assistants (ECA's)

5. Overtime whilst on Placement

- a. Trainee AAP's may undertake overtime crewed with any of the above accepted grades; however it is advised that they do not undertake excessive overtime hours as this will significantly impact upon your ability to remain on track with the expected level of progress.
- b. Trainee AAP's who have **not** previously qualified as an ECA are not permitted to work overtime as a Double Emergency Care Assistant (DECA) crew at any point. Only Trainees who have previously worked as an ECA (including successful completion of the ECA portfolio) and are DECA trained are permitted to work as a DECA crew.

*i. **NB:** DECA overtime hours cannot be counted as placement hours, thus will not contribute to your 750 hour requirement.*

- c. Please note that SCAS may implement a limit on, or ban on, overtime if progress falls below the expected milestones/standards as part of an action plan in line with SCAS policies and procedures.

6. Practice Assessment

- a. The Clinical Mentor (CM) will oversee the completion of the PAD and sign off each individual unit once completed. Your CM will not sign a unit as complete if they have any concerns about the clinical/operational competency, readiness to qualify as an autonomous clinician or professional conduct and may recommend an action plan be implemented to provide the trainee with support to attain the required standard.
- b. If, by Week 35, there are PAD elements that have not been able to sign off

due to lack of exposure the Clinical Mentor may decide to conduct an oral assessment / professional discussion to assess the knowledge and understanding and how you would apply that knowledge in practice.

- c. The PAD will not be added to your ePortfolio until the final week of the course. You must upload your specimen signature form, evidence of successful completion of 750 practice placement hours and your completed Clinical Mentor Practice Placement Interviews prior to your PAD being marked and added.

7. Assessment Regulations

- a. These regulations apply to staff that are required to successfully complete a training programme as part of their terms and conditions of employment and as outlined in their offer of employment. Such appointments are conditional upon the successful completion of the educational elements and are managed using this policy.
- b. Staff undertaking education will be subject to regular tutorials and placement interviews as part of this programme of study with the Trust, and any concerns in relation to meeting required standards will be identified, and documented, as part of this process as soon as possible.
- c. Where there are concerns regarding whether the employee will be able to reach the required standard to achieve a pass in any particular unit, appropriate support will be offered by the Education Team to assist the trainee prior to them sitting a formal examination or assessment. Concerns discussed and support offered should be documented by the Clinical Mentor, Education Manager / Course Director.
- d. Trainees will be expected to achieve all milestones by the expected deadline. Where a trainee does not meet an expected milestone, and has not submitted an acceptable request for extension, the trainee will be placed onto a formal probationary action plan in line with the SCAS Probationary Policy. Failure to achieve the action plan will result in suspension from the AAP programme and a formal meeting as outlined in the Probationary Policy.
- e. Trainees will be given a **maximum** of two attempts to pass any element of a course however, consideration will be given as to whether a second attempt at the module / element is reasonable, considering the previous attempt and the likelihood of improvement. The considerations are likely to be (but not restricted to):
 - i. *where the trainee has missed the pass mark within 5% another attempt may be granted*
 - ii. *where the trainee has unexpectedly failed an examination or assessment, having previously demonstrated consistent performance during tutorials and tuition (e.g. where an employee demonstrates clear extenuation through personal circumstances) another attempt may be granted*
 - iii. *where the trainee has failed the module / element by a margin greater than 5% and/or has been involved in previous review meetings and/or re-sits in more than one other module/element, it will be considered (in usual circumstances) inappropriate for a second attempt to be granted*

- f. This decision will be taken by the relevant Education Manager / Course Director in conjunction with the Senior Education Manager responsible for the programme, the regulating / awarding body (where appropriate / published) and an HR representative using the guidelines above.
- g. Where a trainee fails an assessment or required element for a second time, or where a second attempt is considered inappropriate in accordance with point e (above), a formal hearing must be held as outlined in the Probationary Policy. This may be held in place of a regular tutorial meeting and will be chaired by the appropriate manager, supported by an HR Advisor (if deemed appropriate). Trainees will, however, be given reasonable notice of the nature and purpose of the meeting. Trainees will have the opportunity to be represented by a staff side representative or work companion. The trainee will be responsible for arranging this representation.

8. Failure to meet the standard of portfolio evidence

- a. Trainees will be provided feedback on ePortfolio submissions which will indicate whether the required standard for each learning outcome has been achieved. Failure to meet an acceptable standard on the first submission will result in **ONE** further opportunity to resubmit in order to fully achieve the learning outcomes. Failure to meet an acceptable standard on resubmission will require you to produce another piece of evidence to achieve the outstanding learning outcomes.
- b. There may be other circumstances (in addition to failure of formal examinations or assessments) when it will be appropriate to formally review an employee's performance whilst in training. For example:
 - i. *Serious or repeated performance concerns identified through formal supervision during an employee's period of workplace orientation and probation, where informal support as outlined in the Probationary procedure have proved unsuccessful;*
 - ii. *Serious or repeated conduct concerns (as detailed in this policy) either during tuition or during workplace orientation and probation.*
 - iii. The above list is not exhaustive
- c. At the formal hearing, all details relevant to the individual circumstances should be considered and made available for discussion, for example: the individual's training portfolio, assessment/examination marks, audit results, supervision assessments, and records of review/tutorial meetings.
- d. It is envisaged that in most circumstances, individuals will be able to reach the required standards, with appropriate guidance and support, during their probationary period. Unless the trainee is informed otherwise within the probationary period, they will be deemed to have reached the required standard for the role and will progress onto their substantive contract with no further action required. In some cases, it is recognised that despite the efforts of both the Trust and the individual, the trainee will not be suitable

for the role for which they were employed. In this case, the Trust may consider two options during the probationary period, as outlined below.

- e. Options appropriate to the circumstances should be considered at the review meeting. These may include a variation to training, permanent redeployment or dismissal from the post, if it is considered appropriate and reasonable in all the circumstances.
- f. In considering whether an employee can meet the requirements and suitability for the role, the following may also be considered:
 - i. Attendance, Timekeeping & Commitment*
 - ii. Conduct & Behaviour*
 - iii. Capability*
 - iv. Organisational Values and Behaviours*

9. Appeals

- a. Staff undertaking a training and development programme will be entitled to appeal against a decision to redeploy or dismiss. The Appeal will be heard by the appropriate manager and a HR Advisor; both must be previously unconnected with the case. The trainee will have the right to be accompanied at the appeal by their trade union representative or a work companion.

APPENDIX 4 - Procedural Guidance

NEWLY QUALIFIED PARAMEDICS (NQPS)

1. Introduction

- a. During the 24-month consolidation of learning period, the student will be supported by your named Clinical Mentor, the named Team leader as well as other Band 6 Paramedics (Preceptors) in your operational area.
- b. NQPs who have been trained by the 12-month stage to be practice educators (PEds), will **not** be asked to support other NQPs.
- c. Preceptorship relates specifically to the transition period from newly qualified practitioner at registration, to autonomous professional. Preceptorship should not be viewed as an extension to existing training, or a means of filling possible gaps in pre-registration education programmes, but rather the means to facilitate the transition into professional practice.
- d. The preceptorship period is important for developing essential critical thinking skills, both for the newly registered paramedic and the preceptor, and for this reason preceptorship should not be a distance or e-learning package that is completed in isolation.

2. Structure of the Consolidation Period – The NQP Portfolio

- a. All NQPs will be required to develop and maintain a portfolio. Support for use of the portfolio and its completion will be provided locally by trusts, specifically by their learning and development, practice development and operational teams. Individual employing organisations will decide how best to implement it and how best to support their new paramedics. Both the theoretical and practical aspects of the consolidation period will be assessed. In addition to the achievement of specified learning outcomes competence will also be determined through consolidation in clinical practice.
- b. Upon successful completion, it is envisaged that paramedics moving on to Agenda for Change Pay Band 6 will be fully autonomous within their scope of professional practice. All paramedics will be expected to maintain a reflective approach to their learning and practice and to monitor this using an appropriate framework both during and after the consolidation period.
- c. To support NQPs for their role, the aim of the Consolidation of Learning (CoL) framework is to allow the NQP to provide evidence for continuous learning and self-audit, which includes evidence of the learning, supported by various forms of evidence. A key aim is to develop NQPs as confident, safe and effective problem-solvers during consolidation. During this period NQPs should be encouraged to seek help, advice and information at any stage when they are unsure.

3. Structure of the Consolidation Period – Monitoring Progress

- a. NQP progress will be monitored by preceptors who are themselves experienced, band 6 paramedics as well as Clinical Mentors (CMs) and Team Leaders (TLs). Written progress reports should be completed at 6, 12, 18, 23 month periods by either the NQP's CM or TL and should include

developmental plans which have been agreed between both NQP appraising manager. These progress reports should be completed in a progress meeting undertaken at the start of a shift when working together. In addition, to this, regular meetings can be undertaken to monitor progress. As a minimum, a Record of Progress Meeting and Interpersonal Skills Profile should be completed, at the aforementioned 6, 12, 18 and 23 month periods.

- b. CMs (as well as Preceptors (Band 6 Paramedics)) should assist the NQP to identify learning opportunities and resources and should help to provide access to these.

4. **Structure of the Consolidation Period – Induction**

- a. NQPs joining the trust will be required to attend a two-week induction programme. The first week will include Corporate Induction, Manual Handling, Conflict Resolution and Safeguarding awareness. The following week will provide an update of operational procedures and equipment used in the Trust.
- b. NQP previously employed by SCAS in a front-line operational role will only be required to attend a one-day programme to ensure familiarisation of current operational procedures.

5. **Structure of the Consolidation Period – Orientation**

- a. Following initial induction, NQPs will undertake a number of front-loaded shifts supported by a Preceptor (TL, CM or band 6 Paramedic).
- b. They will undertake further support shifts throughout the two-year consolidation of learning period, which will include a minimum of 180 hours with a TL, CM or band 6 Paramedic (up to a maximum of 300 hours over the 2-year period where deemed appropriate and agreed by the Operational Management structure)
- c. NQPs will **NOT** be eligible for solo response during their first year. Upon completion of the 1st 12 months of the NQP process, NQPs will be eligible to undertake solo response training (from month 10) but will not be authorised to undertake any solo response shift until month 12.

6. **Structure of the Consolidation Period – Practice Education**

- a. NQPs development as PEds themselves will aid personal and paramedic workforce development. During the first 12 months, NQPs will not undertake the role of PEd. Between 6 months and 12 months, NQPs should undertake a mentorship course in preparation for supporting pre-registration Paramedic students and trainee AAPs at the 12-month stage as outlined below:

0-6 months No practice education function

6-12 months NQP can undertake a mentorship programme if they have not already done so

12-24 months NQP can mentor pre-registration paramedic students and trainee AAPs

NQPs who have assumed the PEd role will not be asked

to formally support other NQPs

Post 24 months NQP can act as a preceptor as well as a PEd.

7. Review & Submission Process

- a. As described, NQPs will undertake review meetings with their named CM or TL at 6, 12, 18 and 23 month intervals. These meetings are designed to give an opportunity to discuss their progress through the consolidation of learning period and development as a newly qualified paramedic. The student should use these meetings to discuss developmental needs and to review progress through the consolidation of learning outcomes as detailed in this portfolio. The review meetings will take place in the first hour of a shift with the named CM or TL. The shift will give the student an opportunity to review your practice as well as giving them an opportunity to be mentored. If at any point through the 24-month period they are struggling and require support, they should highlight this immediately to the named CM or TL.
- b. The student should ensure that your portfolio is completed with sufficient evidence as well as signed and dated in advance of the 23-month review meeting. This will allow sufficient time to amend if required before it is summatively reviewed by the Education Team at the 24-month stage.

APPENDIX 5 - Procedural Guidance

FABRICATION, FALSIFICATION & PLAGIARISM

1. Introduction

- a. As an Organisation that carries out assessments, be it directly or indirectly through the use of third-party providers, has an obligation to assessment bodies, awarding organisations, its learners, its employees, its service users and the wider society in general to ensure that the qualifications its learners receive are a fair and accurate representation of their own work, and of the knowledge and skills attained.
- b. The fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or deception in proposing, carrying out, or submitting assessments undermine the value of qualifications for all concerned because they undermine their credibility.
- c. If a learner passes an assessment or gets a qualification and/or certification by unfair means, then this is unfair to those who have achieved the same fairly.
- d. For these reasons, the South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust will take appropriate measures to ensure that the Students/Learners work is in fact their own and that plagiarism and other forms of cheating have not taken place. The Trust will also take appropriate action where plagiarism or other forms of cheating is detected.

2. What is Plagiarism?

- a. Plagiarism is a form of cheating. More fully plagiarism is defined as a practice that involves knowingly taking and using another person's work and claiming it, directly or indirectly as your own.
- b. This definition covers a range of degrees of seriousness and intent. Plagiarism can also be seen as a breach between the Tutor/assessor and their Students/learners and between societies, and as such, issues relating to plagiarism are matters of honesty and fairness.
- c. It should be noted that, whether it is intentional or not, plagiarism presents a problem with the accurate assessment of a Student's/learner's knowledge, skills, behaviours and/or attitude.

3. Examples of Plagiarism

- a. The following list is not exhaustive, and is for illustrative purposes:
 - *Deliberately fabricating any paperwork that forms part of a programme and/or assessment*
 - *Submitting falsified signature sheets*
 - *Direct copying of another learner's work in part or in full*
 - *Direct copying from any sources in part or in full*
 - *Replacing words and retaining the basics sentence structure*
 - *Restructuring a sentence by rearranging, deleting words etc.*
 - *Deleting or rearranging sentences in order to restructure a copied paragraph*

4. Detecting Plagiarism

- a. The development of digital technologies and the internet has both exacerbated the problems of plagiarism. Also the motivation of a student/learner, for example, by laziness, as well as direct intent to obtain a qualification unfairly has exacerbated the problems of Fabrication, Falsification & Plagiarism.
- b. The South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, where possible will use mechanisms available to it for the detection of such unfair acts and/or omissions, such as:
 - *Observing the actual act of a student/learner copying from another learner during assessments, be it in part or in full.*
 - *Comparison with other works, published or unpublished*
 - *Comparison with other students/learners work submitted in part, draft or full at the same or different time of such assessment.*
 - *The judgement of the assessor*

5. Responsibilities

- a. It is the responsibility of all students/learners and tutors/assessors to ensure that learner work submitted for purposes of assessment, especially for the purpose of summative assessment, is in fact that of their own work.
- b. Students/learners will be asked, where applicable to acknowledge by signing a declaration that such work submitted is indeed that of their own.
- c. Tutors/assessors are asked to make their students/learners aware that such act and/or omissions is not accepted, to make it clear to students/learners the Trusts SOP and the consequences if they fail to comply.

6. Actions to reduce or remove fabrication, falsification & plagiarism

- a. Standards should be applied fairly by tutors and/or assessors so that accusations cannot be made of unequal treatment. Tutors and/or assessor should take preventative action through appropriate design of assessments, such as:
 - *More individualised assessments*
 - *The use of question banks rather than static, identical assessments*
 - *Frequent changing of assessment strategies*
 - *Appropriate supervision/invigilating of the learning and assessment process*
 - *Making students/learners aware of this SOP and that the unethical nature of Fabrication, Falsification & Plagiarism is unacceptable*

7. Actions to be taken if fabrication, falsification & plagiarism is detected at the time of assessments taking place

- a. The tutor and/or assessor must where possible bring to the attention of the learner that there is a belief of such action and/or omission taking place. This must be done appropriately and must not disrupt any on-going assessments

if still taking place.

- b. All meetings must be recorded, where possible a witness must be present, such as another tutor/assessor or Trust Officer.
- c. The Head of Education & Training must be notified of such belief and evidence of judgment used to assume that Fabrication, Falsification & Plagiarism has taken place, as well as the Education & Training Manager.
- d. The Senior Education & Training Manager, whoever the concern relates too will then liaise with the Head of Education & Training or his/her deputy to decide on the appropriate sanctions to be taken, such as:
 - i. *The student/learner is permitted to retake a separate assessment at that time, recorded as a first attempt (Low Risk)*
 - ii. *The student/learner is permitted to retake a separate assessment at that time, recorded as a second attempt (Medium Risk)*
 - iii. *The student/learner is permitted to retake a separate assessment at another time suitable to the learner & organisation, recorded as a first attempt (Low Risk).*
 - iv. *The Student/learner is permitted to retake a separate assessment at another time suitable to the learner & organisation, recorded as a second attempt (Medium Risk).*
 - v. *The Student/learner is removed from the programme, pending a formal investigation (High Risk) (refer to investigation policy)*
 - vi. *The Trust's disciplinary policy may be invoked, pending the outcome of the investigation (High Risk) (for use with Trust Employees only)*
 - vii. *The tutor/assessor is to accurately record the decisions taken and any actions falling out of such decisions on the learner progress record.*
 - viii. *Any awarding organisation/body where connected, must be informed of such event and actions taken.*

8. Actions to be taken if fabrication, falsification & plagiarism is detected after assessments have taken place

In some cases, the detection of fabrication, falsification and plagiarism may be detected after the assessment process has taken place. In such cases the following actions must be taken:

- i. *The tutor/assessor must bring such acts and/or omissions to the attention of the Head of Education & Training or his/her deputy*
- ii. *The tutor/assessor must produce a summarised report of why he/she feels that such acts and/or omissions have taken place*
- iii. *If certification of the qualification is yet to be awarded, then the Head of Education & Training and/or his/her deputy will place a hold on such production and award of certificate until the conclusion of a formal meeting has taken place.*
- iv. *If the certification/qualification has already been awarded which is validated by an awarding organisations/body, they must be informed as soon as possible so appropriate actions*

can be taken by such awarding organisation/body where possible.

- v. *The Head of Education & Training and/or his/her deputy will write formally to the learner to arrange a formal meeting.*
 - vi. *The formal meeting will be chaired by the Head of Education & Training or his/her deputy.*
 - vii. *In all cases, the student/learner is permitted to be accompanied by a fellow student, colleague or staff side representative if a Trust employee.*
 - viii. *In cases of Trust employees, a HR representative will also form part of the panel.*
 - ix. *The meeting shall proceed in the following order:*
 - *The tutor/assessor who has initially raised the suspicion of fabrication, falsification & plagiarism sets out his/her concerns*
 - *The learner will then be provided with the opportunity to respond to the concerns of the tutor/assessor*
 - *The chair/panel may ask further questions*
 - *The student/learner will be invited to make any final responses to the raised concern*
 - *The student/learner will be notified of the decision made by the Chair/Panel where possible on the same day of the meeting, if not, within five working days*
 - *The student/learner has the right to appeal any decision given (refer to the appeals SOP)*
- *Possible sanctions available to the learner following the formal meeting is:*
 - *The student/learner is permitted to retake a separate assessment at that time, recorded as a first attempt (Low Risk)*
 - *The student/learner is permitted to retake a separate assessment at that time, recorded as a second attempt (Medium Risk)*
 - *The student/learner is permitted to retake a separate assessment at another time suitable to the learner & organisation, recorded as a first attempt (Low Risk).*
 - *The student/learner is permitted to retake a separate assessment at another time suitable to the learner & organisation, recorded as a second attempt (Medium Risk).*
 - *The student/learners certificate/qualification is revoked (High Risk)*
 - *The Trust's disciplinary policy may be invoked, pending the outcome of the meeting (High Risk) (For use with Trust Employees only)*

Classification Guide (Low, Medium or High Risk)

Criteria **Was the student aware of the seriousness of their actions?**
Low Risk **Student not aware of SOP e.g.**

- no previous act and/or omission detected
- student has not undertaken the programme before

Medium Risk **Student is likely to be aware of SOP e.g.**

- previous Low Risk act and/or omission detected
- student has undertaken the programme before

High Risk **Student is aware of the SOP e.g.**

- previous Medium Risk act and/or omission detected
- experienced student who has undertaken similar programmes before

Criteria **What was the nature of their act and/or omission?**
Low Risk **Poor practice e.g.**

- student observed copying another learner/students work, which was ceased immediately
- work is not clear, or has numerous errors

Medium Risk **Bad Practice e.g.**

- student observed copying segments of another learner/students work
- work is not clear, or has numerous errors

High Risk **Clear Breach e.g.**

- student copied whole works of another student
- submitted work solicited from another source

Criteria **What was the amount of the act and/or omission?**
Low Risk **Minor e.g.**

- few sentences, or one paragraph

Medium Risk **Extensive e.g.**

- two to three paragraphs or a segment of work

High Risk **Substantial e.g.**

- more than three paragraphs of a large segment of work

Criteria **What was the intent of the act and/or omission?**
Low Risk **Unintentional or unaware e.g.**

- intent to cheat is unlikely or doubtful

Medium **Risk Negligence e.g.**

- intent to cheat is probable but cannot be clearly substantiated

High Risk

Deliberate or planned e.g.

Intent to cheat was evident and can be substantiated

The responsible officer for updating this SOP is the Head of Education (responsible for Compliance).

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Employees exercising their rights and entitlements under the regulations will suffer no detriment as a result.

The Screening element of the 'Equality Impact Assessment' is available on request. (See Section 4 for more details).