

Guide for Supporting Staff During Suspension

GUIDE FOR DESIGNATED CONTACT PERSON

CRAW, WENDY - HR MANAGER

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This guide is to provide guidance to the Designated Contact Person identified to support staff during suspension.

1 Brief overview of suspension process:

Suspension as part of a disciplinary procedure

Suspension should never be an automatic approach for an employer when dealing with a potential disciplinary matter. Most disciplinary procedures will not require suspension. An employee will usually be able to continue doing their normal role while the matter is investigated. Further information can be found in NHSS Once for Scotland Policies: <https://workforce.nhs.scot/supporting-documents/guides/conduct-policy-guide-to-suspension/>

Alternatives to a suspension as part of a disciplinary procedure

An employer considering suspending an employee should think carefully and consider all other options. Even where there are reasons to consider suspension, in most situations a temporary adjustment to the employee's working arrangements can remove the need to suspend. Only if all other options are not practical, suspension may become necessary.

Additional considerations when suspending as part of a disciplinary procedure

There should be no assumption of guilt associated with a suspension and suspension must not be used as a disciplinary sanction. However, a suspension can still have a damaging effect on the employee and their reputation. Therefore, if a suspension is necessary, the suspension and the reason for it should be kept confidential, where possible. If it is necessary to explain the employee's absence, an employer should discuss with the employee how they would like it to be explained to colleagues.

Pay during a suspension

An employee suspended due to a serious allegation of misconduct must receive their full pay as if they were at work.

How long should a suspension last?

A period of suspension should be kept as brief as possible and regularly reviewed to ensure it is still necessary. A suspended employee will usually still be expected to be contactable during normal working hours and available to attend any meetings and/or interviews that are necessary concerning the investigation.

2 Role of Designated Contact Person

The Designated Contact Persons role is to support the member of staff during suspension. The Designated Contact Person should be impartial to the matter, therefore should not have any other involvement in the conduct process.

Regular contact should be maintained between the employee and the Designated Contact Person. Both the Designated Contact Person and member of staff should be comfortable with the arrangements put in place.

The Designated Contact Person will be available for the staff member to discuss any concerns they may have. The Designated Contact Person should be kept updated by the investigation manager about the staff member's suspension, the ongoing reasons for it, and how much longer it is likely to last.

If the member of staff declines the offer of support, this should be documented and the member of staff should be asked to confirm via email. Please note that the member of staff should be gently encouraged to maintain contact with the designated contact person and engage with Salus Occupational Health.

The Designated Contact Person should make contact fortnightly, or as agreed between them and employee. A brief record of contact should be kept by the Designated Contact Person (Appendix A). The suspension checklist must also be completed by the Designated Contact Person. This can be found in the OfS policies: [NHSS Designated Contact Person Checklist](#).

Responsibilities of Designated Contact Person

It is the responsibility of the **Designated Contact Person** to:

- Make initial contact with the employee to introduce him / herself and arrange appropriate contact going forward.
- Keep the suspended employee updated on the progress of the investigation.
- Act as a neutral person within the investigation process.
- Act as a recognised point of contact for any issues raised by the suspended employee
- Keep accurate records of discussions and provide updates to the investigating manager on a fortnightly basis.
- Advise the investigating manager of any adjustments recommended by Salus OH or requested by the staff member to enable them to participate in the process.

3 Staff support – Salus Occupational Health

A management referral to Salus Occupational Health should be discussed with the employee and referral made as soon as practicable. The Designated Contact Person or the line manager can make the management referral.

Any Occupational Health advice regarding the employee's fitness to attend meetings, etc. will be shared with the Investigating Manager. The staff member will be informed that this information will be shared.

4 Staff Side Representatives

Staff side representatives should contact the Designated Contact Person direct if they have any queries and/or concerns regarding the member of staffs wellbeing.

EMPLOYEE DETAILS	DESIGNATED CONTACT PERSON DETAILS
NAME: _____ JOB TITLE: _____ AREA: _____ DATE OF SUSPENSION: _____ LINE MANAGER: _____ INVESTIGATING MANAGER: _____ CONTACT TEL NO: _____	NAME: _____ JOB TITLE: _____ AREA: _____
ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED CONTACT PERSON	
<p>When an employee is suspended from duty, the manager informing the employee of the suspension is required to provide a point of contact for employees under investigation to obtain advice on the process and progress with their case. This point of contact is the Designated Contact Person (DCP). It is recognised that suspension can isolate individuals from their normal organisational support mechanisms. Not all employees will be a member of a trade union / professional organisation and therefore support should always be identified for them.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of the Designated Contact Person to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make initial contact with the employee to introduce him / herself and arrange appropriate contact going forward. • Keep the suspended employee updated on the progress of the investigation. • Act as a neutral person within the investigation process. • Act as a recognised point of contact for any issues raised by the suspended employee. • Keep accurate records of discussions and provide updates to the investigating manager on a fortnightly basis. • Advise the investigating manager of any adjustments recommended by Salus OH or requested by the staff member to enable them to participate in the process. <p>There must be regular communication between the employee and the DCP regarding progress and the likely timescale for completion of the investigation. This is a shared responsibility and not solely the responsibility of the DCP. It is recommended that an update be provided to the employee fortnightly, however the frequency of contact should be mutually agreed by the DCP and the employee as appropriate to the circumstances. The NHSS Designated Contact Person Checklist provides further guidance on contact with the suspended employee.</p> <p>The contact log below has to be used to record contact between the DCP and the employee.</p>	

Suspension Contact Record

Name of employee:

Contact Details

Date Suspended

Date Returned to Work

Date/time of contact & method	Was contact made Yes/No	Update	Actions identified/who to action (initials)	Date updated Investigation Chair	Date actions completed

Date/time of contact & method	Was contact made Yes/No	Update	Actions identified/who to action (initials)	Date updated Investigation Chair	Date actions completed