

# I've been suspended from work

MEMBERS WHO ARE suspended from work whilst their employers carry out an investigation into an allegation or incident can feel worried and lonely.

This guidance explains what suspension is, what your employer can expect from you and what you can expect from your employer. It is part of a series of guides on the disciplinary process.

## Important

If you require UNISON representation at any further meetings which may follow on from your suspension, **you must have been a member at the time of the incident**; you cannot join just to get representation.

Our advice is to join UNISON now so you are always covered in these rare individual circumstances but, more importantly, because increased membership density helps us put into practice procedures through collective representation that can prevent some disciplinary issues occurring.

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## *What does being suspended mean?*

- If an employer receives an allegation about the conduct of a staff member or a report of an incident where a staff member was involved, it has a duty to investigate that allegation.
- Particularly where safeguarding issues are concerned in the allegation/incident, employers are likely to suspend the staff member under investigation whilst they carry out their fact finding.
- Suspension is a neutral act and anyone suspended is not automatically considered guilty of any alleged misdemeanour.

## *What can my employer ask me to do or refrain from doing and how will they do it?*

- Under most circumstances, you are initially likely to be suspended verbally by a supervisor/manager and asked to remove yourself from the employer's premises.

You should be given time to collect, or have collected for you, any personal belongings. You may be asked to hand back employer property.

- Again, in most circumstances, your employer will follow this up with a letter detailing the suspension and any procedures they want you to follow which may include some “don’t”s.
- It is very likely the employer will ask you not to be in contact with anyone who works for the same organisation. You **MUST** respect this instruction. If the request is impossible because, say, your partner or a family member works for the same organisation, immediately contact the person who has issued the instruction – or the person named by your employer as your contact point - to inform them.

### *What can I expect from my employer during my suspension?*

- Under most circumstances, you will be suspended on full pay; this is an acknowledgement that no guilt is attached to the investigation of an allegation and that suspension is a precautionary measure. This should be detailed in the letter.
- You should be given the name and details of a contact point within the organisation (this is necessary if you are barred from talking to others, for instance).
- Your employer’s representative should maintain contact with you, particularly if the suspension is protracted whilst investigations are carried out.
- You are not necessarily entitled to full details of the allegation against you; this is because it is an investigation/fact finding exercise and until your role in any incident is ascertained, the employer will not want to release what may be deemed confidential details. This can be frustrating, especially if you have no idea what it is all about, but there is nothing that can be done to force your employer to give you more details.

### *What happens next?*

- As part of your employers’ fact-finding, you are likely to be invited to an investigatory meeting to answer some questions. (For further details of investigation meetings and disciplinary hearings, see our guides **I have to attend an investigation meeting** and **I have to attend a disciplinary hearing**).
- The process of suspension and what happens after this depends on your employer’s investigation. Many suspensions end with far less fuss than they began. The employer investigates, the allegation proves to be unfounded and the employee is reinstated.

- However, some will result in you needing further UNISON assistance. (See our guides **I have to attend an investigation meeting** and **I have to attend a disciplinary hearing**).

### *General tips*

- It is not essential you inform UNISON you have been suspended but early warnings of potential problems ahead certainly don't harm. You can report a suspension by calling the branch office on 01629 582266 or completing the contact form on our website [derbyshireunison.com](http://derbyshireunison.com)
- If you have a personal email address, ask your employer to email you any official documentation regarding your suspension. You will not have access to a photocopier if you are suspended and this is the easiest way of getting any necessary details to your UNISON rep.
- If you know what the allegation or incident is about, write yourself some notes while they are fresh in your mind. These could be useful later on.