

# Notes for a person under suspension

## Reasons for suspension

A volunteer can be suspended from their involvement in Scouting for a number of reasons, which can be found in [Policy, Organisation and Rules 16.7](#).

## Purpose of suspension

Suspension of any involvement in Scouts is a neutral act and is intended to protect Scouting and all the individuals concerned. It allows time and space for any necessary investigation to take place, in as fair and objective a manner as possible, by preventing situations which could give rise to further concerns or allegations, which could potentially cause further compromise.

## The suspending authority

At least 2 Lead Volunteers (except Group Lead Volunteers) need to be involved in your suspensions process. The first Lead Volunteer (suspending authority) will suspend you, and the next Lead Volunteer (approver) “one level up” will approve your suspension. For example, if the District Lead Volunteer is your suspending authority, then the County Lead Volunteer will be your approver.

## Suspension process

The suspending authority will usually tell you directly that you are being suspended and confirm this in writing.

It may be necessary to inform other Scout volunteers about your suspension, but this will be kept to the minimum that circumstances allow. The suspending authority will maintain a review of who is to be informed and to what extent confidentiality can, or should, be maintained. If the matter becomes common knowledge, it may be desirable for the suspending authority to provide an accurate statement of the facts for public information. If at all possible, you will be informed of this statement beforehand.

Further details about the process can be found on our [suspension process webpages](#).



### During the suspension

If you've been suspended, you must not participate in any activity connected with Scouting, whether or not young people are present. This includes administrative tasks, and uniform or badges must not be worn. You also must not use electronic communication such as text, email, social media, for Scouting purposes. Full details about what the suspended person must not do can be found in [Policy, Organisation and Rules 16.7](#).

You are not permitted to access Scout premises. However, if you need access for a specific purpose (for example to collect personal belongings or to complete an ID check in order to obtain a criminal record check as part of a suspension review) then this may be allowed under certain circumstances. This is a decision for the suspending authority and approver (and UK Headquarters Safeguarding Team, for safeguarding cases) and specific permission must be received. If your child is in Scouting, the suspending authority and approver may be able, in some circumstances, to allow you to attend specific events (for example to see your child receive an award). The exact nature of what will be allowed is a matter for the suspending authority and approver (and UK Headquarters Safeguarding Team, for safeguarding cases) and you must receive the suspending authority's specific written permission, in line with [Policy, Organisation and Rules 16.7](#).

### Support available

During your suspension, social contact with Scout volunteers and friends is not precluded unless this is likely to prejudice an investigation, or would subject them to unfair or undue pressure. Social contacts must not be used to circumvent the purposes of suspension, for example by attending Scout activities or entering Scout premises.

The suspending authority will offer to appoint a Scout volunteer to give you direct support for as long as is judged appropriate by the suspending authority (this is called the "liaison person"). The liaison person may join interviews with you and the relevant HQ staff team, such as the Safeguarding Team (if this is deemed necessary), but will not be involved in any way with the concern raised, or with any subsequent Scout investigation. They will not play any part in the process of suspension or be there to speak on your behalf. The liaison person should not be expected to enter into any legal, financial or personal commitment, for example bail, surety, binding over, or be involved in court proceedings.



Being suspended can be a difficult time and details of professional organisations that can provide support can be found on the [mental health organisations webpage](#).

### Ending suspension

If there is statutory agency involvement in your case, the HQ Safe Scouting Team must wait until the conclusion of their involvement before starting an internal (Scouts) investigation. Experience has shown that any disciplinary, legal or judicial processes which may follow an allegation or concern can become drawn out over a long period of time. This means a timeline for any suspension cannot be provided. On safeguarding cases, after statutory agency involvement is concluded, the UK Headquarters Safeguarding Team may need to conduct further enquiries within Scouts, including gaining accounts of those involved, to inform a risk assessment.

When all enquiries are completed, a decision will be made about your re-instatement or ending your role/s. The decision might be made by Headquarters staff, or by the approver (consulting with Team Leaders or Lead Volunteers and suspending authority, as appropriate) depending on the circumstances. For full details of possible outcomes please refer to [Policy, Organisation and Rules 16.7](#).

If your suspension is due to the failure to have a valid criminal record check, the suspension will end automatically once a valid criminal record check has been obtained, and the vetting process is complete.

If your suspension is due to incomplete mandatory learning, the suspension will end automatically once the required learning has been completed and recorded on the membership system. At this point the suspending authority will be informed.

If your suspension includes aspects of safeguarding, you will be required to undertake a criminal record check before returning to Scouting, following the usual process relevant to your country.

In all cases, your period of suspension will not come to an end until you receive formal notification in writing.



## Sources of legal advice

Where your suspension relates to a serious criminal or misconduct allegation, or relates to any serious harm to Scouting or to any person, you may wish to seek independent legal advice, through a solicitor or through the Citizens Advice Bureau or local law centres.

If you are questioned at a police station, you must be offered free legal advice, and can ask for this, usually from a duty solicitor, who will give you independent legal advice.

The Scout Association cannot provide legal advice or representation to a suspended volunteer.

