

Supporting a person under suspension: the liaison role

Introduction

A person who has been suspended from Scouts is entitled to an independent Scouting colleague to provide some personal contact so that they are not entirely disconnected from Scouting. This guidance notes set out the responsibilities that the liaison role covers.

The Commissioner, following discussions with the suspended person, appoints the liaison person. This is an informal role within Scouting. It is part of the support offered to an adult, during what may be a difficult time, perhaps, following an allegation of a serious disciplinary or criminal offence.

The Liaison Role

The liaison person gives direct personal support to the suspended person for as long as it is judged appropriate by the suspending Commissioner.

The liaison person is appointed by the suspending Commissioner at the request of and with the agreement of the suspended person.

It is the liaison person's role to provide a listening ear and to help the suspended person to not feel completely disconnected from Scouting. Remember that the suspended person must not be involved in Scouting apart from the contact required for the suspension process itself. There are some modifications that might be applied to allow the suspended person to do some specific things such as attend an award presentation for the suspended person's child. These modifications need to be permitted by the suspending Commissioner in writing and are detailed in [Policy, Organisation and Rules rule 16.4](#).

The suspension process is managed by the suspending Commissioner (or delegated person) who will keep the suspended person updated on the status of the process. The liaison person has no responsibility for the running of the suspension process.

The liaison person will not be involved in any way with any allegation, or with any subsequent Scout investigation, and will not take part in the process. The liaison person is not expected to enter into any legal, financial or personal commitment, for example bail, surety, binding over, or be involved in court proceedings.

The liaison person should not discuss or advise on any details of any alleged incident, or champion the suspended person's case. The liaison person should always remember that their role is to provide personal support only. They should keep in regular contact with the person they are supporting. This may involve visiting the person or telephoning them. The frequency of any contact will depend on the suspended person's wishes and may vary as the situation develops.

Things to consider

Some points for the liaison person, when considering or undertaking this role:

- Do say early on if you think you cannot do the role.
- Do keep an open mind.
- Do offer support in a proactive way – don't wait to be asked.

- Do maintain confidentiality. Should you feel you need to share a confidence tell the person you are supporting first.
- Do regularly consider whether the role is still appropriate for you.
- Do not get involved with any investigation.
- Do not get personally involved. You have been appointed for your ability to remain objective.
- Do not give legal / technical advice but you can suggest where the person can get advice and support.
- Provide details of other organisations where people can get support for the mental wellbeing. Details can be found on the supporting our members webpages.

Further information:

- [Policy, Organisation and Rules 16.4](#)
- [The Suspensions Process. Information for Commissioners](#)
- [Notes for a person under suspension](#) found in POR.