



Consideration of alternative to suspension

The possible risk of harm to children posed by the subject of an allegation should be evaluated and managed in respect of the child/ren involved in the allegations. In some rare cases that will require the case manager to consider suspending the accused until the case is resolved. Suspension must not be automatic response when an allegation is reported; all options to avoid suspension should be considered prior to taking that step. If the case manager is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the individual family, those concerns should be reported to the LADO or police. But suspension is highly unlikely to be justified on the basis of such concerns alone.

Suspension should be considered only in a case where there is cause to suspect a child or other children is/are at risk of significant harm or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. However, a person should not be suspended automatically; the case manager must consider carefully whether the circumstances warrant suspension from contact with children or until the allegation is resolved, and may wish to seek advice from their HR adviser and the LADO.

The case manager should also consider whether the result that would be achieved by immediate suspension could be obtained by alternative arrangements. In many cases an investigation can be resolved quickly and without the need for suspension. If the LADO, police and children's social care services have no objections to the member of staff continuing to work during the investigation, the case manager should be as inventive as possible to avoid suspension. Based on assessment of risk, the following alternatives should be considered by the case manager before suspending a member of staff:

- Redeployment within the organisation so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned
- Provide an informed third party to be present when the individual has contact with children
- Redeployment to alternative work so the individual does not have unsupervised access to children

These alternatives allow time for an informed decision regarding the suspension and possibly reduce the initial impact of the allegation. This will, however, depend upon the nature of the allegation. The case manager should consider the potential permanent professional reputational damage to employees that can result from suspension where an allegation is later found to be unsubstantiated, unfounded or maliciously intended.

If immediate suspension is considered necessary, the rationale and justification for such a course of action should be agreed and recorded by both the case manager and the LADO. This should also include what alternatives to suspension have been considered and why they were rejected.