

# PSsst!

## What every employer needs to know about suspension



### When you have an issue with an employee, suspending them might feel like the right action.

However, you need to be 100% sure that this is legally compliant or you could leave yourself wide open to an expensive tribunal claim.

### Here are some of the real questions we're asked about suspension:

- "Is suspension the same as disciplinary action?"
- "Does suspending someone mean I think they're guilty?"
- "Do I have to suspend people automatically if it's serious?"
- "Is suspension always the safest option?"
- "Do I need to keep them on full pay while they're off?"
- "Am I supposed to leave them alone during the suspension?"
- "What am I allowed to tell the rest of the team?"

ACAS guidance is clear on how suspension should work in practice:

- It is a neutral step while you gather information
- It doesn't imply guilt or wrongdoing
- It's only appropriate when there's a real risk to the investigation, the business or the people involved
- Alternatives, like changing duties or shifts, should always be considered first
- Full pay must continue throughout the suspension
- You need to stay in touch and support the employee's wellbeing
- Suspensions should be as short as possible and reviewed regularly
- Any updates to colleagues should be minimal and confidential

Handled properly, suspension protects everyone involved and gives you the space to carry out a fair investigation in a calm, neutral way.

If you'd like more information, get in touch for our latest educational guide which explains when suspension may be appropriate, the steps ACAS expects and how to handle the process safely and fairly.

### LATEST NEWS

#### A simple lesson from a recent tribunal case

Two racial harassment complaints against Peterborough City Council were upheld after an employee challenged how she was treated at work.

One incident involved a senior leader assuming she was friends with another black colleague. Another involved a photo shared in a WhatsApp group that made her feel uncomfortable as the only black member.

Problems like this often come from everyday interactions, not deliberate discrimination. A quick policy refresh, clear rules on how work channels are used and short discrimination training for managers make a real difference.

When people understand how their behaviour might be received, issues are far less likely to turn into formal complaints.



## How to manage and reduce absence in your business

**Absence costs UK employers millions every single year.**

That's why it's really important to manage absence in your business.

**Here's 3 ways to get started:**

### **1: Track absence properly**

Start by recording absence in one place. HR software helps you to see patterns, spot repeat issues and understand the overall impact on your business.

### **2: Conduct return to work conversations**

A short return to work meeting helps you to understand why someone was off and whether they need support or adjustments.

These conversations reduce misunderstandings and help to prevent repeated absences.

### **3: Tackle the root causes**

The action you take will depend on the issues you uncover, but most improvements fall into a few areas:

- Clear policies and expectations
- Early conversations when patterns appear
- Reasonable adjustments where needed
- Manageable workloads and good communication
- Confident managers who know how to handle absence consistently

Businesses that take a proactive approach see fewer short notice call outs and more stable staffing.

**If you would like help with reviewing your absence policy, setting up tracking or supporting your managers, we can guide you through it.**



### **LATEST NEWS**

## **Bridging communication gaps between generations**

A new survey shows that Gen Z report the most strained workplace relationships, mostly due to different communication styles.

Younger staff lean toward messaging apps and voice notes, while older colleagues prefer quick calls, leading to frustration and mixed messages.

Setting clear communication norms and giving managers basic training helps to prevent misunderstandings and keeps day to day work running smoothly.

## **What AI automation means for your people and business**

A new outsourcing report claims that up to 90% of back office tasks can now be automated. For small businesses, the opportunity to save costs is real, but so are the risks.

As roles change and tasks shift to AI, you need clear job design, training and communication to keep people engaged and protect against confusion or morale issues. Thoughtful planning prevents problems before they start.

# Your top HR questions

## Can I reduce someone's hours after maternity leave if business is quiet?

Possibly, but only through proper consultation and with a genuine business reason. You cannot unilaterally reduce hours. Explore alternatives first and take advice to avoid discrimination risks.

## Do I have to pay staff for travel time between appointments?

Yes. Travel between appointments counts as working time and must be paid, even for salaried staff. You do not need to pay overtime, but their salary must cover all hours worked, including this travel, at least at National Minimum Wage.

## How do I handle it if an employee refuses to join a team social event?

Keep it simple. Social events should be optional. Check if there's a reason why they're uncomfortable, but don't pressure them. Focus on inclusive ways to build a team connection.

## Let's talk on the phone

Here are three questions for you:

- Do you currently have a HR consultant?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how happy are you with them?
- If the answer isn't "I'm so delighted I could print 1,000 flyers to spread the word about them", let's jump on a video call

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