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Ref: JA/Sus
Enquiries to: Angela Cooper
Direct Line: 0141 201 4264

Date: 19/06/15

To All Chiefs of
Medicine, Heads of HR
and Senior HR Staff

Dear all,

Re: Suspension from Duty of Medical/Dental Staff

It is recognised that on occasion it may be necessary to suspend a medical/dental employee if we need to immediately remove the practitioner from the workplace to protect the interests of patients, other staff or the individual. Suspension can also be instigated if there is a reasonable belief that the practitioner may interfere with or influence the investigation process. Prior to reaching the decision to suspend consideration should always be given to whether the practitioner can remain at work in some capacity (alternative or limited duties), as suspension can be distressing for the practitioner involved and have ramifications for service delivery.

The authority to suspend is the responsibility of the Chief of Medicine and the General Manager of the service (or equivalent in Partnership areas). If the Chief of Medicine is not available a delegated medical manager should accompany the General Manager. The practitioner should be invited to attend a meeting and be afforded the right to representation. The Chief of Medicine should clearly explain the reason(s) for the suspension to the practitioner and who they can contact if they have any concerns whilst on suspension. Written confirmation must be given to the practitioner as soon as possible and no later than 5 working days further to the suspension, stating the effective date and time, the content of allegations and that an investigation will follow. It should also be made clear that the practitioner should not enter the premises or contact others within the Board without prior authorisation from the General Manager (unless as a patient or patients' visitor). Any requests to access information to assist with their case should be directed through the General Manager.

Please note it is essential that all medical/dental suspensions are reported to Dr Jennifer Armstrong, Board Medical Director and myself at the earliest opportunity. We can then respond to any enquiries that come in centrally from the General Medical Council (GMC) or the Press Office. If the case involves a trainee doctor please also inform Prof Paul Knight, Director of Medical Education and he in turn will notify the West of Scotland Deanery.

We also have a mandatory responsibility to report all medical/dental suspensions to the Scottish Government Health Department (SGHD). The Medical Staffing Team undertakes this role and provides a monthly update on progress, until such time as the suspension has been lifted.

Suspension will always be for as short a period as possible and be reviewed on a fortnightly basis. At each review, careful consideration should be given as to whether the investigative process continues to necessitate suspension. If the suspension continues beyond 3 months the Chief of Medicine is required to provide a report to the Medical Director and the Director of Human Resources outlining the reason for delay and indicating how long the suspension is expected to continue, together with a plan for completion of the investigation.

Should you have any queries in relation to the above process please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

David Stewart
Deputy Medical Director NHSGGC

cc. Dr Jennifer Armstrong, Board Medical Director
cc. Anne MacPherson, Board HR Director