SUPPLY CHAIN SAFETY
LEADERSHIP GROUP

Highways Safety Hub
Raising the Bar <<#>>

Suicide Prevention

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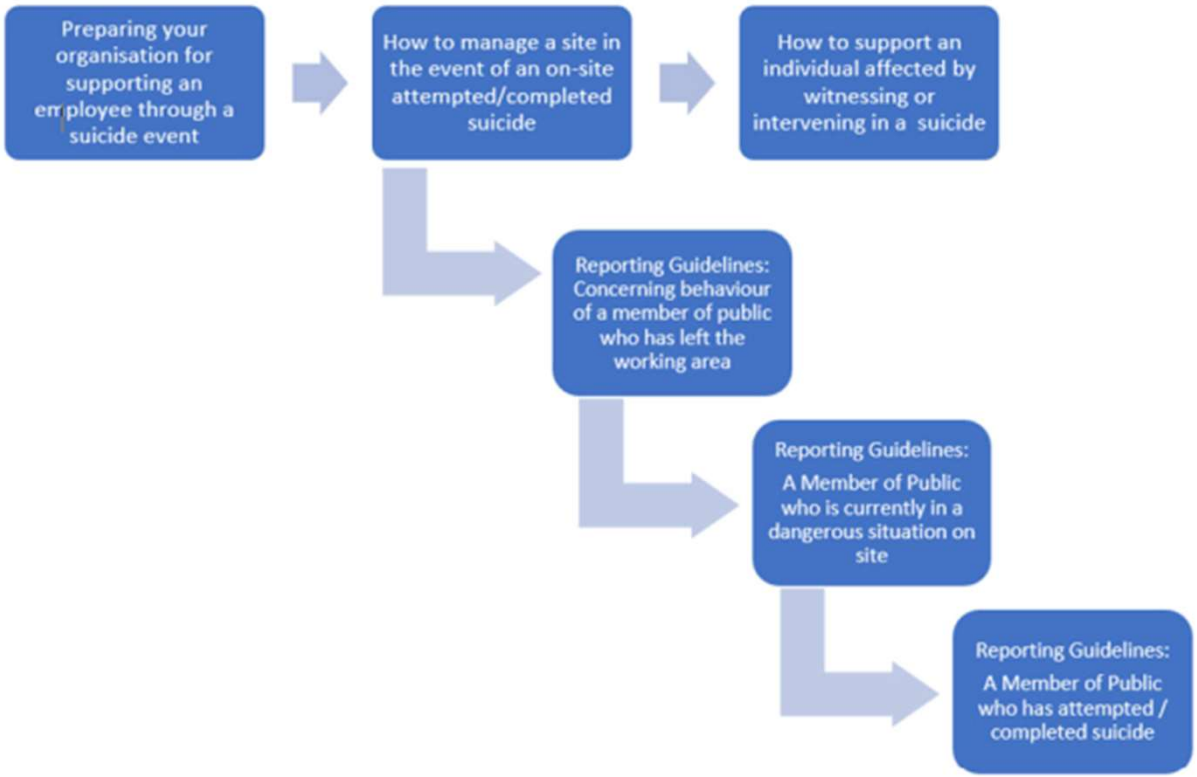
Introduction

This Annex has been created to supplement the guidance in the Raising the Bar: Suicide Prevention document.

The information included is presented as high level, easy to follow processes to enable quick understand and easy understood and implemented by the supply chain. The first three processes (shown on the horizontal in the figure below) are intended to be flexible and should be implemented in a way which compliments an organisation's own internal processes and procedures.

The latter three processes (represented by the downward flowing boxes in the diagram below) are best practice for reporting suspected on-site suicide situations to the authorities and may not require any variation to make them appropriate for your business.

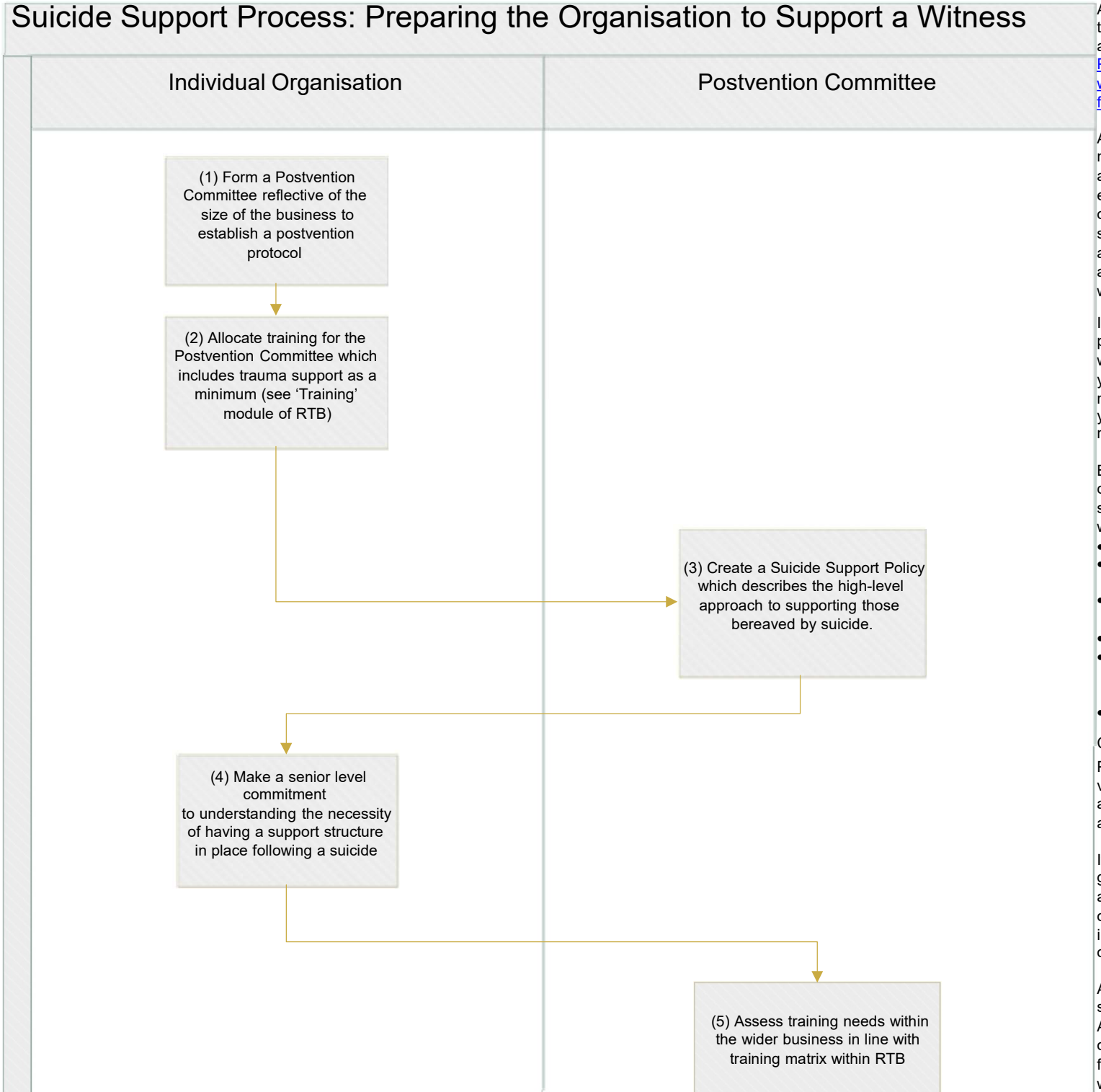
This Annex has been designed to reflect a logical process an organisation may follow in order to instil suicide support measures: an end-to-end approach. The diagram below represents this.



Templates have also been provided which organisations are invited to use or adapt in the event of a suicide to appropriately communicate this.

Suicide Support Process

Suicide Support Process: Preparing the Organisation to Support a Witness



A postvention protocol is an agreed approach to responding to an actual or potential suicide, ideally developed in advance of a suicide and preferably written - see NSPA Postvention Framework as guidance - https://nspa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/NSPA-postvention-framework-20.10.16-1.pdf

An organisation may not have the resource or consider it necessary to have a separate Committee as it may be work already carried out by another function, e.g. HR. However, employees should be aware of a facility within their organisation where they can access immediate support should they be affected by a suicide intervention. A gap analysis may be necessary to understand what processes and procedures your organisation already has in place and what is required to fully support your employees.

In some instances, it maybe be suitable to create an aligned postvention committee with other organisations operating within the same community or under the same contract as you. This multi-agency approach will potentially offer a more robust, comprehensive support Committee available for your employees and galvanise one another to enhance the resources available.

Be clear about what your Postvention Committee can and cannot offer so you are equipped to efficiently direct someone affected by suicide instead of making them wait while you understand what can be offered internally e.g:

- Information and signposting only
- Reactive service in response to traumatised or bereaved individuals requesting support
- Proactive service involving outreach contact to traumatised or bereaved individuals
- A face-to-face meeting
- An assessment of needs from a qualified person (who has training and experience in postvention, trauma or bereavement)
- One-to-one support from a trained volunteer

Confidentiality is of the upmost importance for the Postvention Committee. If the Committee are made up from various roles within the business, it may be appropriate to agree a confidentiality agreement to demonstrate integrity and trust.

It is recommended that professional training and practice is given to all people who will come into contact with those affected by suicide. There are a range of training providers of suicide awareness and prevention courses to raise individuals confidence, skills and experience of talking about suicidal ideation safely

As a minimum, the Postvention Committee should be suitably trained to carry out low-risk conversations following An attempted suicide and be aware of the resources offered by the organisation to support an employee through the period following the suicide. Local resources may also be available which are not in direct partnership with your organisation

(5) Assess training needs within the wider business in line with training matrix within RTB

(6) Create a suite of resources appropriate for postvention services an facilities

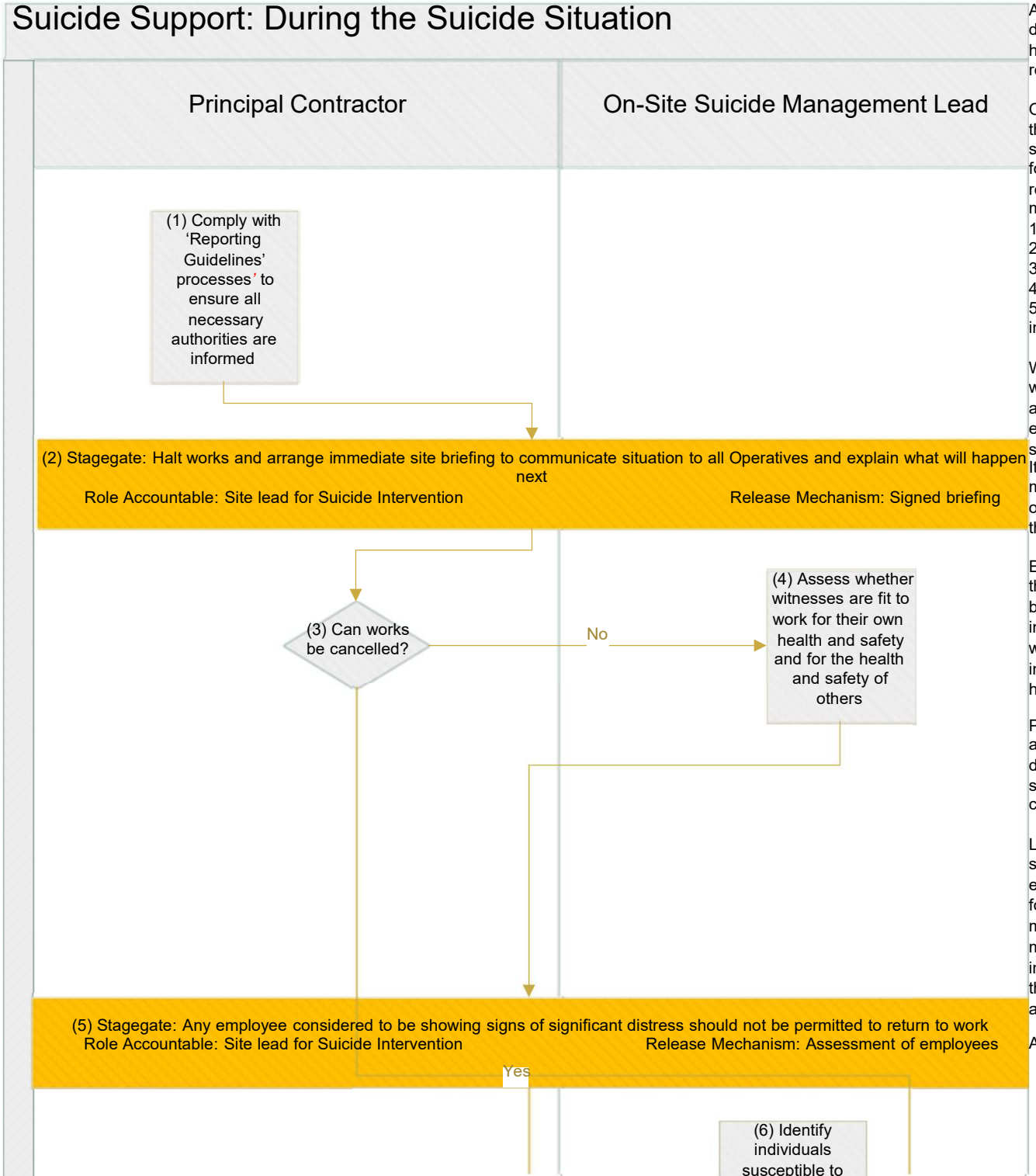
(7) Include procedures for recognising ‘at risk’ individuals and identifying where people would be referred;

(8) Raise awareness of the Postvention Committee and what they have been set up to do

As a minimum, the Postvention Committee should be suitably trained to carry out low-risk conversations following a suicide and be aware of the resources offered by the organisation to support an employee through the period following the suicide. Local resources may also be available which are not in direct partnership with your organisation but are still available to eb accessed within the community e.g. GP’s, local authority services.

If possible; employees would benefit from immediate access to a professional health worker as part of the committee, but where that is not feasible then being able to immediately access professionals externally will be of significant benefit.

Suicide Support: During the Suicide Situation



As part of this Raising the Bar, a step by step guide has been put together which details the appropriate process to follow once an attempted suicide has been discovered. Please refer to this for practical guidance on how to respond procedurally to suicide within the works.

Once it is understood that there is an attempted suicide situation, the Principal Contractor should communicate with all subcontractors to make safe and stop works as far as is practicable. Contractors should be called together for an emergency brief on the situation. The brief should initially include a register of attendees and justification of anyone missing, before covering as a minimum:

1) Location of situation;
2) Status of the authorities;
3) Process once the authorities arrive;
4) Any site-based personnel currently involved
5) A high level review of additional risks which have materialised following the incident e.g. exposed cables, broken barrier, fuel spillages etc

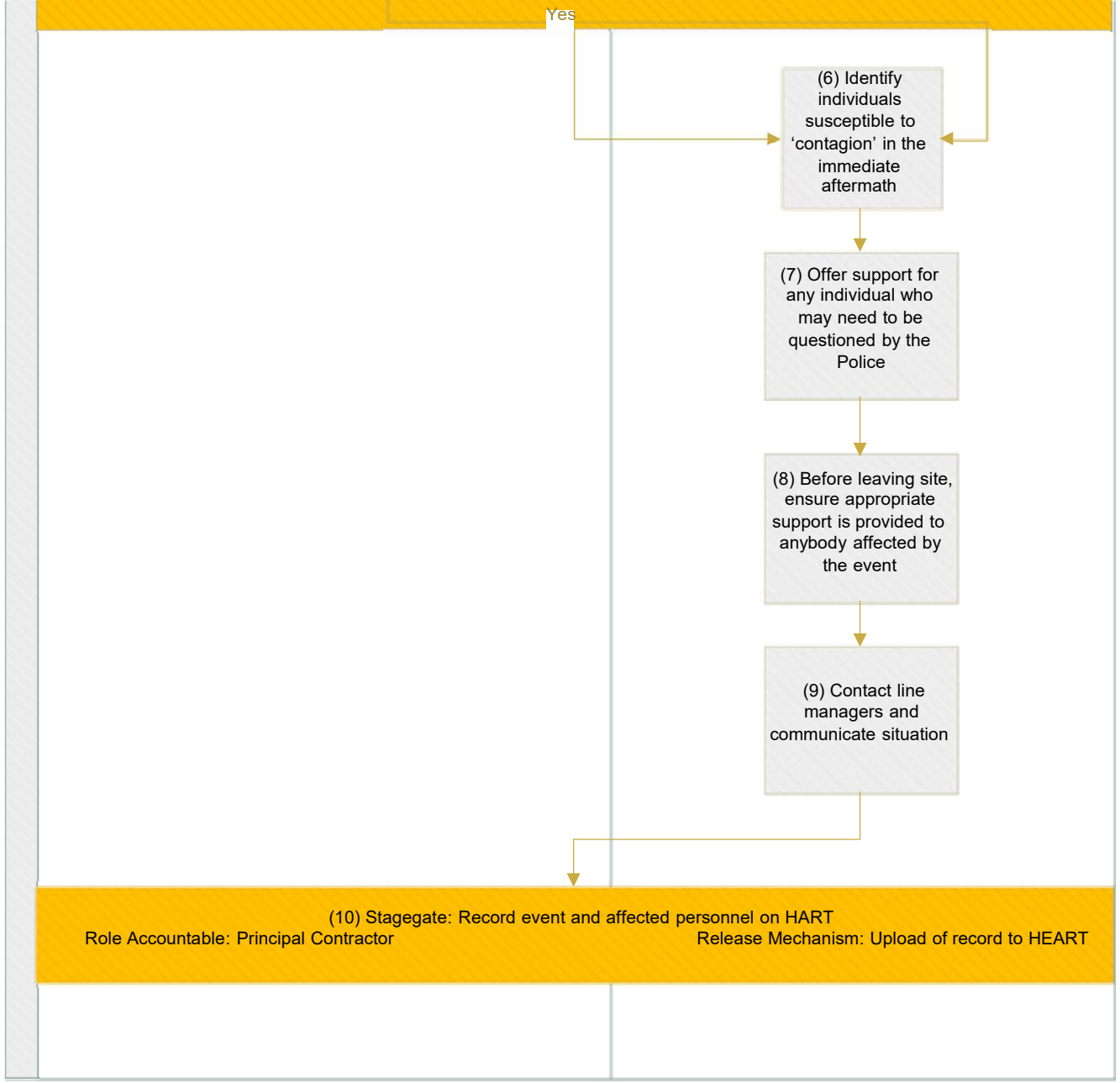
Where works cannot be cancelled, the most senior suicide-lead available on site will carry out an assessment to the best of their ability to understand whether anyone is not fit to continue work on grounds of health and safety. Any employees who voluntarily confirm they are unfit to work following the event should not be allowed back into a live works zone and should be given support. It should be stressed that the standard expected of the on-site suicide management lead is not that of a professionally trained person. The assessment of suitability to return to work will be based on discussion with individuals and the reactions and behaviours exhibited by the employees.

Exposure to a suicidal experience can sometimes trigger or enhance suicidal thoughts of others who are vulnerable: known as contagion. The risk of imitative behaviour should try to be addressed through immediately signposting individuals to available support and informing line management that this person will need to be reached out too as soon as possible, even if not directly involved in the suicide situation. If possible, ensure that the individual is accompanied home and aware of services available that can offer 24 hour support.

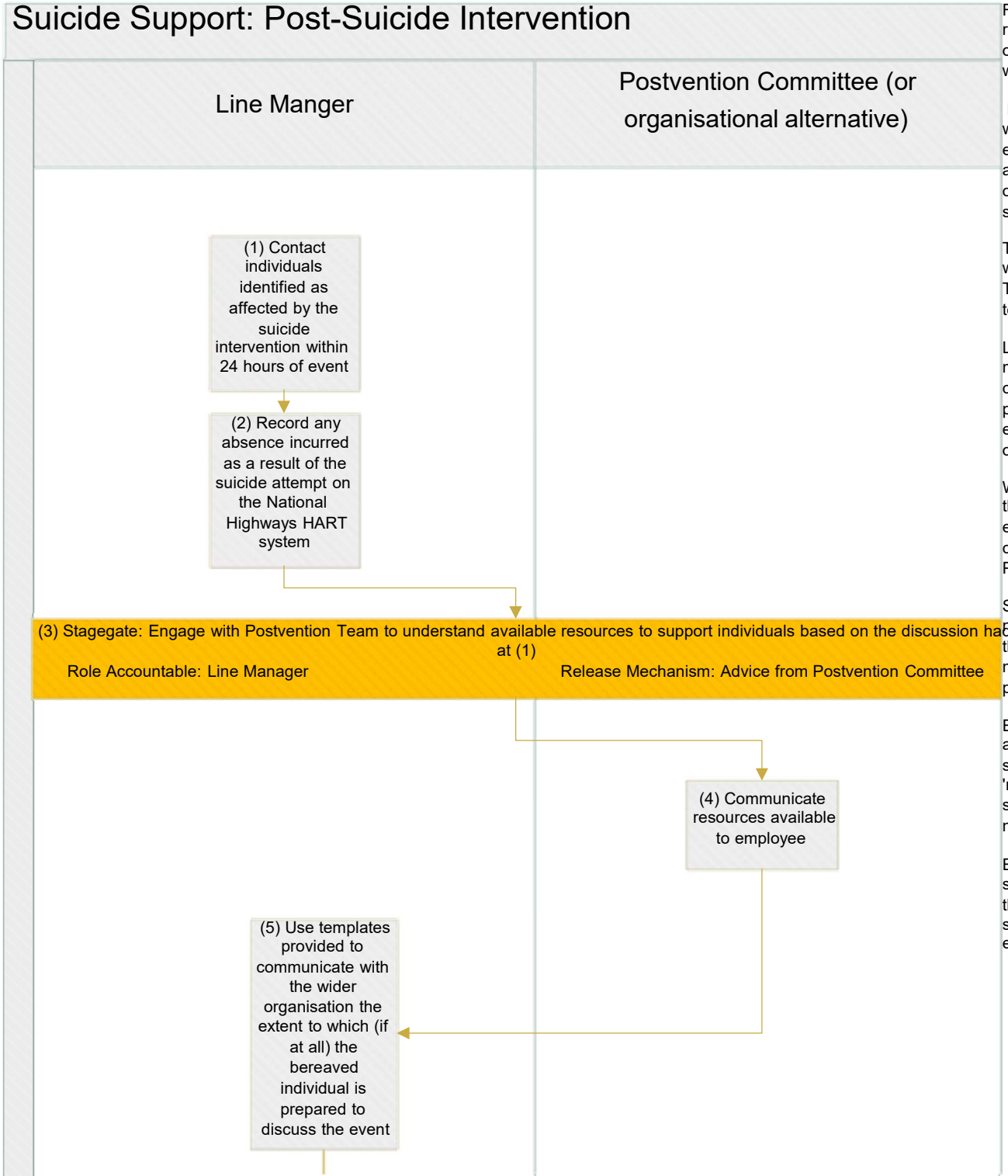
Police may need to question personnel. This will most likely to arranged at a time and date that suits the interviewee While it should be explained to operatives during the briefing at (2) that this is standard practice, the prospect may still seem intimidating for many. An interviewee may feel more comfortable with a colleague present and this should be requested to the Police.

Line managers should be made aware as soon as possible that there has been a suicide situation and their employee may require support. For night works, an email may be the most appropriate form of communication in the first instance, followed up by a phone call the following day. Some form of communication must be made before leaving site, regardless of the time A template has been made available as part of this RTB which can be used to relay the requisite information in the first instance. In the case of holiday or absence, please ensure the message is still communicated to the next most senior responsible person and the Postvention Team directly

All instances should be reported on National Highways HART Reporting system


Yes
(6) Identify individuals susceptible to 'contagion' in the immediate aftermath
(7) Offer support for any individual who may need to be questioned by the Police
(8) Before leaving site, ensure appropriate support is provided to anybody affected by the event
(9) Contact line managers and communicate situation
(10) Stagegate: Record event and affected personnel on HART
Role Accountable: Principal Contractor
Release Mechanism: Upload of record to HEART

Suicide Support: Post-Suicide Intervention



Research shows that access to a strong support network will enable a more effective recovery from bereavement or trauma. Beyond friends and family, employers should offer support e.g. through individual or group counselling and one-to-one sessions with management to understand their individual needs and potential concessions

Line Managers should contact those who were involved either directly or indirectly with the suicide at the earliest available opportunity to understand the needs of their employees. This should be within 24 hours of the event. Make sure the employee is aware of the work carried out by the Postvention Team or what the organisation can offer in terms of support and advise that they will make contact to understand any specific needs the employee has.

Try to understand whether the employee is comfortable discussing the event or whether they do not wish to discuss it beyond talks held with the postvention team. This message can be circulated to the relevant people within the business. A template has been provided as part of this RTB

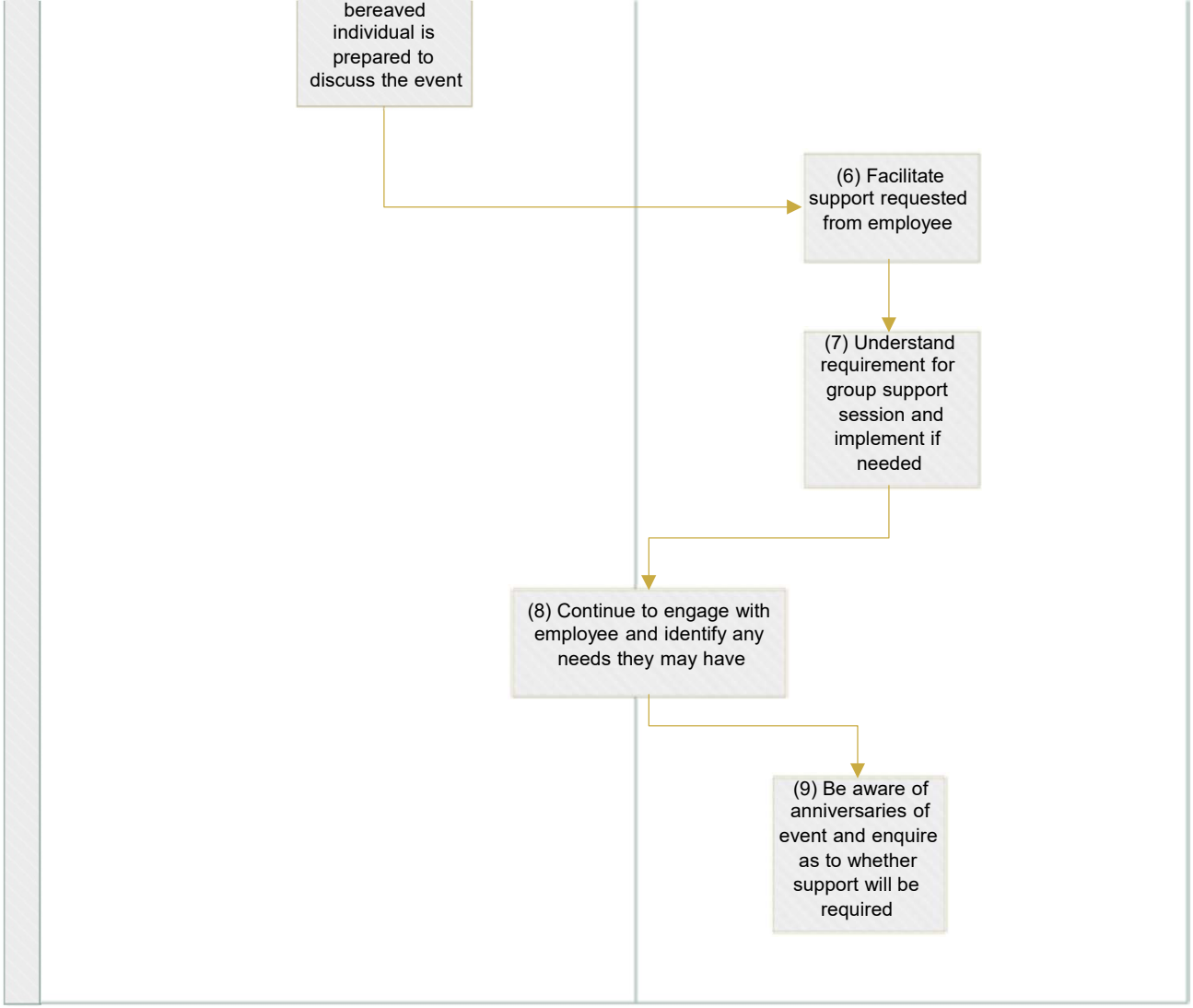
Line Managers should liaise with the Postvention Team before the Postvention Team make contact with the employee to relay anything significant following the conversation e.g. do they have a history of mental health issues, have they expressed particular issues with what they have experienced, are they experiencing physical effects etc. The Postvention Team should reach out to the employee at the earliest opportunity.

When there is a suicide and there is a clearly defined group of people connected to the event, it could be appropriate to organise a meeting that includes those employees, HR and a clinician. Conversations in small groups can give responders a chance to gauge individual and group reactions and to facilitate mutual support. Please engage experienced facilitators wherever possible for these conversations

Suicide postvention does not end after the initial crisis has passed. Weeks or months may go by before an employee realises the potential psychological impact of what they have seen. Your gentle reminders that they deserve to take care of themselves may be just what they need to make an appointment to sit down and talk with a professional.

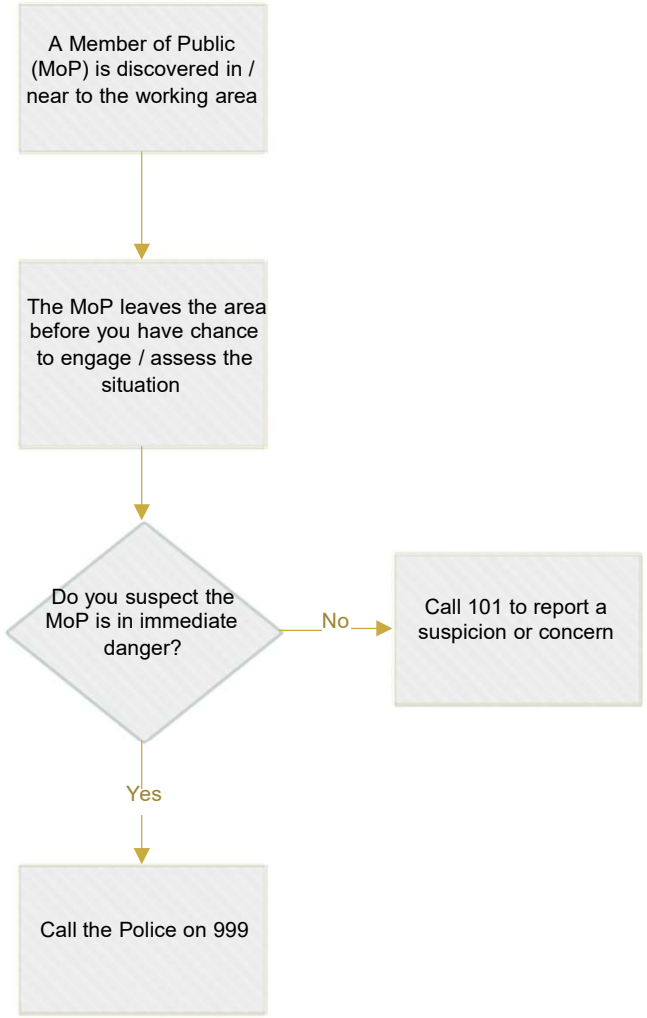
Employees may be affected for many weeks or months. It is important to ensure that appropriate support remains in place, and that line managers continue to be sensitive about the feelings and concerns of their employees. An appearance of 'returning to normal' may be hiding a number of unresolved emotions and things such as a mounting workload or anniversaries of the suicide should be considered by management.

Effective crisis management is the result of constant evaluation and appraisal. The same applies to suicide postvention. It is important for the senior management, at the appropriate time, to reflect on how the organisation responded following a suicide and what lessons can be learned and shared with others. The views and experiences of employees must be central to this reflection


bereaved individual is prepared to discuss the event
(6) Facilitate support requested from employee
(7) Understand requirement for group support session and implement if needed
(8) Continue to engage with employee and identify any needs they may have
(9) Be aware of anniversaries of event and enquire as to whether support will be required

Reporting Guidelines

Reporting guidelines:
Concerning behaviour of a member of public who has left the working area



A member of the public may find themself within a road closure for a number of reasons and leave before anyone is able to engage with them. If it is suspected that the MoP is vulnerable or at risk but they leave the site before anyone is able to engage with them, the event can be reported to the authorities.

If the MoP is considered to be in immediate danger to themselves or others then the Police should always be called on 999.

If the MoP is not considered to be in immediate danger but was showing concerning behaviour, the event can be reported to the Police on 999 or the British Transport Police on 0800 405040 or 101.

Any behaviour reported to the Police as concerning which turns out to be simply misconstrued will never be penalised– this is known as a “false call, good intention”.

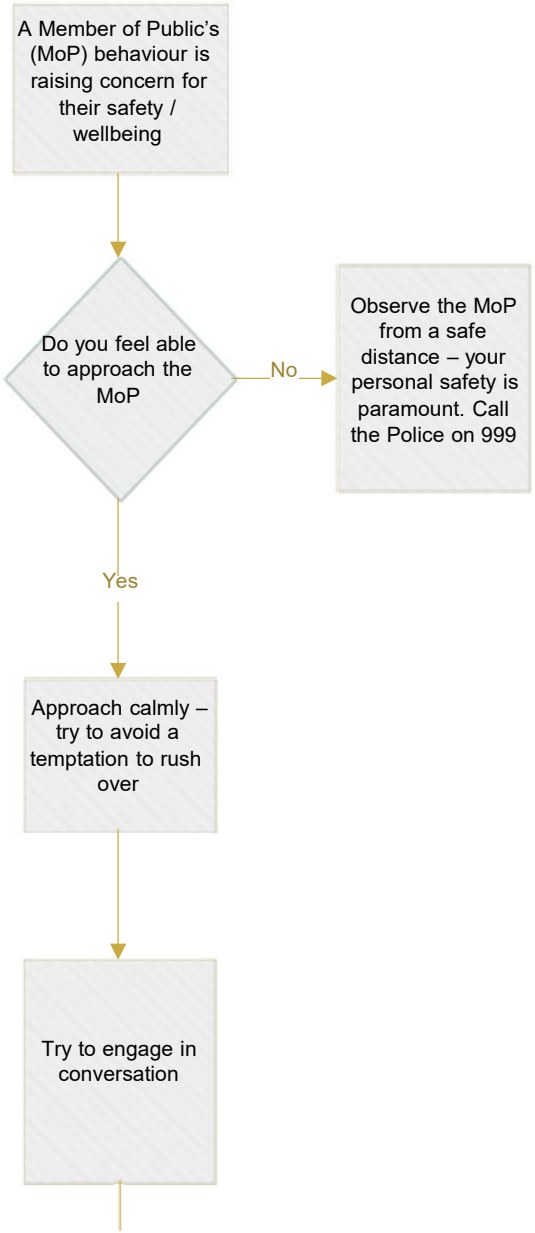
An Operator answering a call may ask for the following information to help them identify the MoP:

1) When did this happen?
2) Specific Location (e.g. using what3words or visual landmarks to pinpoint location)
3) Personal description including gender, build, height, hair colour, clothing and any distinctive features
4) Did they leave in / on a vehicle?
5) What direction did they leave in?
6) If possible, did they seem under the influence of drugs or alcohol (e.g. was there a strong smell of alcohol)?

The Operator can make a record of these details which can be used should other instances be reported

If you or anyone you know is affected in any way by a suicide, please seek support from your employer, your GP or the Samaritans on 116 123

Reporting guidelines:
A Member of Public who is currently in a dangerous situation on site



When discovering a member of public in distress, it may not always feel appropriate to try to engage with them. This could be for personal reasons or due to potentially dangerous behaviour being exhibited by the MoP. Choosing not to engage is completely acceptable – there is no right or wrong decision.

If the decision has been made not to approach the individual, please call the police immediately on 999.

If you feel able to approach, move cautiously so as to not startle the MoP and try to interact. Do not attempt to physically restrain the MoP.

Questions such as "are you ok?" or "do you need some help?" can instigate a conversation even if they seem inappropriate in the situation. It's important to remember that you will not make the situation worse by trying to engage, nor will you be introducing the idea of suicide if you ask if suicide is their intention

Be prepared to get no response.

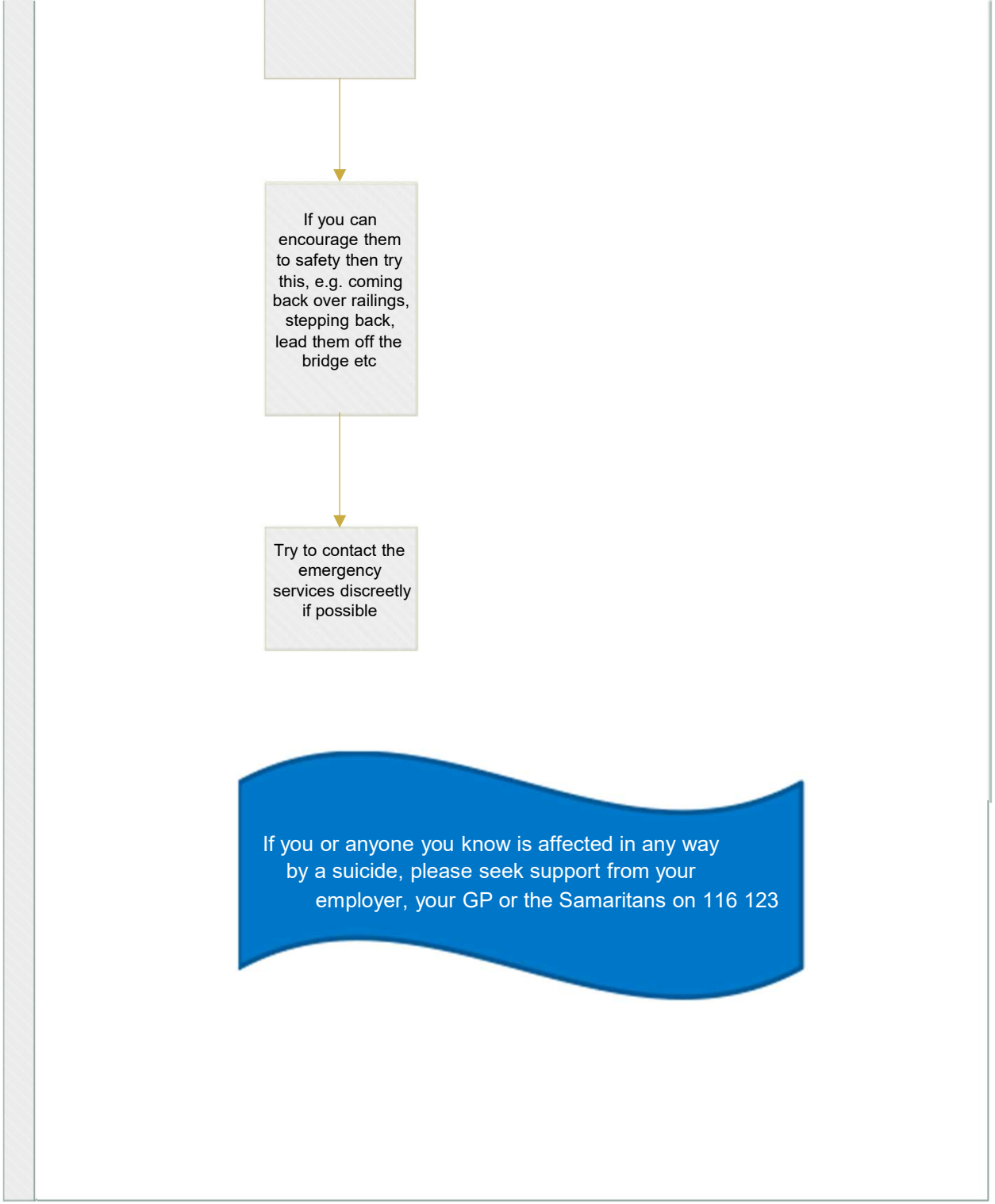
Offer to contact somebody on their behalf. If possible, try not to mention contacting the police directly but instead suggest "phoning for help".

Try to contact the Emergency Services on 999 as soon as you or another is able.

An Operator answering a call in this scenario may ask for the following information to help them identify the MoP:

1) When did this happen?
2) Specific Location (e.g. using what3words or visual landmarks to pinpoint location)
3) Personal description including gender, build, height, hair colour, clothing and any distinctive features
4) If possible, do they seem under the influence of drugs or alcohol (e.g. was there a strong smell of alcohol)?
5) Why do you consider the person vulnerable?

You may be asked to stay on the line to keep the Operator updated until the emergency services arrive. The Operator will have kept the emergency services updated while en-route, so you may just be asked to leave the scene upon their arrival. The Operator will have taken your details in case they need any additional details from you at a later date.


If you can encourage them to safety then try this, e.g. coming back over railings, stepping back, lead them off the bridge etc
Try to contact the emergency services discreetly if possible
If you or anyone you know is affected in any way by a suicide, please seek support from your employer, your GP or the Samaritans on 116 123

Reporting guidelines:
A Member of Public who has attempted suicide

Never attempt to recover a body yourself, especially if the body is in the carriageway

If you have discovered an attempted suicide, call 999 immediately

The Emergency Services will arrive on site and manage the scene

If not already obtained by the Operator, the Police may take your details for future use

If you witness or discover an attempted suicide where the body has fallen into a live carriageway, you must never try to recover the body yourself. **Your safety is paramount**

If there is an opportunity to warn oncoming traffic to stop without exposing yourself to any danger then attempt to do so, but only if you are confident there is no risk posed to yourself

If you have not already done so, call 999 immediately to report the incident. The Operator will guide you through the process depending on the specifics of the scenario.

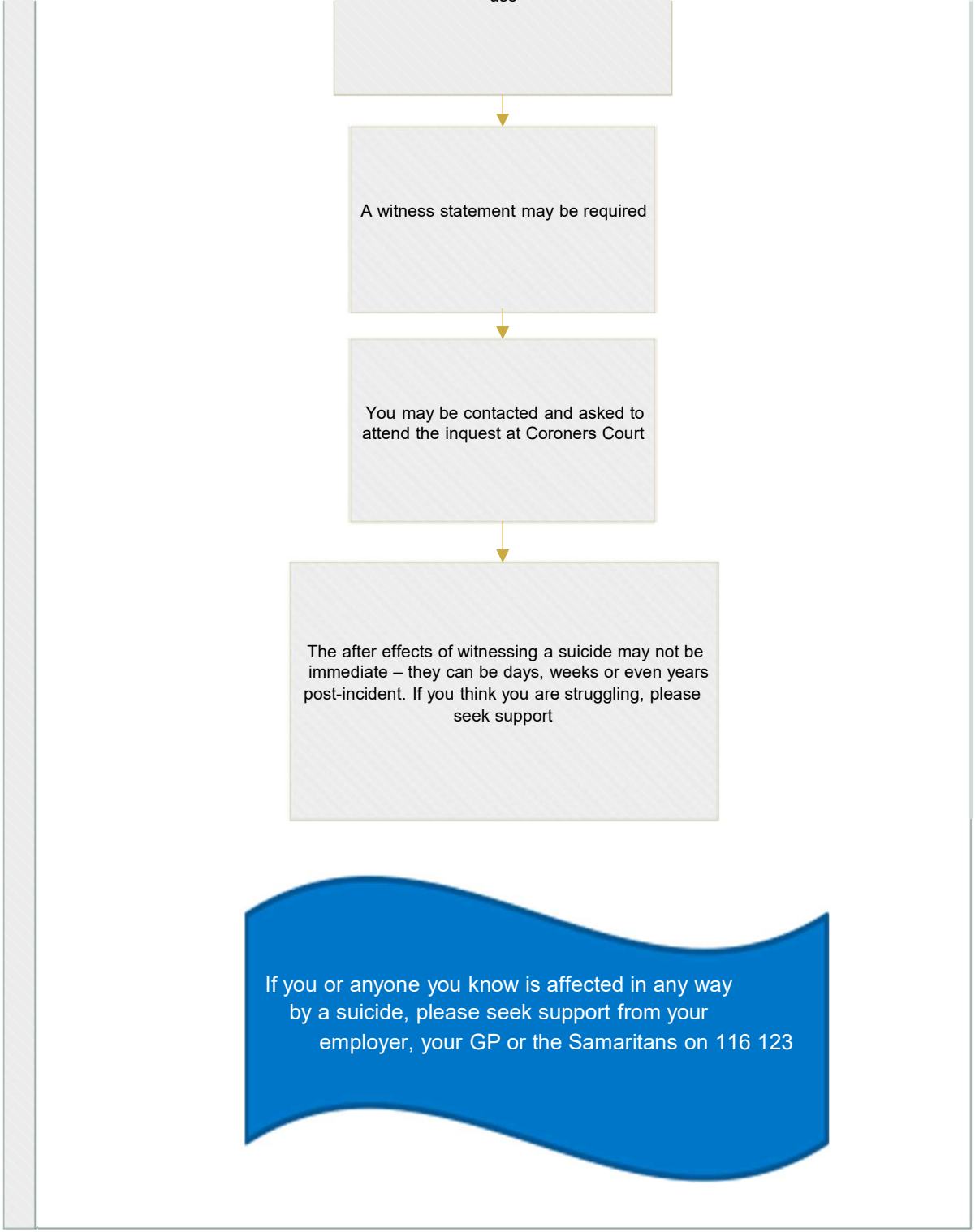
When the emergency services arrive, they will take over the management of the scene. They may briefly engage with you but may also direct you to leave and advise that they will contact you in the future for a witness statement.

The witness statement will be taken at a time and place that is appropriate for you. Typically you will not be expected to provide a statement immediately after the incident.

If you are considered a significant witness, you may be asked to attend the inquest at Coroners Court. The Coroner has a legal duty to report suspicious deaths and you will simply be asked to give your version of events. An examination of your statement here is standard and is not to be misinterpreted as disbelief in your version of events.

Post traumatic stress is a very common response to the situation and can be triggered by events or surroundings you hadn't even considered relevant. The Police understand the significant traumatic impact that witnessing a suicide can have on an individual and may offer you counselling or support via the family liaison officer and offer what support they can to help you manage it.

If you feel you have been affected by the suicide intervention either physically or mentally, please, please seek support.


A witness statement may be required
You may be contacted and asked to attend the inquest at Coroners Court
The after effects of witnessing a suicide may not be immediate – they can be days, weeks or even years post-incident. If you think you are struggling, please seek support
If you or anyone you know is affected in any way by a suicide, please seek support from your employer, your GP or the Samaritans on 116 123

Templates

Sample: Immediate correspondence from on-site team to management following a suicide attempt

Please amend the template below to suit the specifics of the circumstances. Alternatively, you can create draft your own communication

Date / Month / Year

To [management name]

Whilst working on the [site name / address] [this evening / last night / today], a member of the public [attempted suicide].

[employee first name] [intervened] / [witnessed] this situation. Whilst we offered support on site as far as is possible, we think it is appropriate that he / she is contacted by the business as soon as possible to ensure they're coping.

[Insert details of anything which you consider to be of importance following the event e.g. *Jack was driven home by James last night as he seemed quite affected by the situation and we wanted to make sure he was able to get home safely / Jack was quite withdrawn following the intervention and it raised concerns that he might have been affected by the event / Jack may need to provide a statement to the Police in the next few days and this seemed to worry him so he may need supporting through this / Jack's daughter completed suicide and we're worried this might have brought back memories for him]*

Should you wish to contact me before speaking with [employee first name] for any more detail from the shift, I'll be available to speak from [insert suitable time e.g., after midday following a night shift]

Regards

Sample: Letter to employees after an intervention has taken place to express wishes of those involved

Please amend the template below to suit the specifics of the circumstances. Alternatively, you can create draft your own communication

Date / Month / Year

To all our colleagues

[Yesterday afternoon] we were informed that [employee first name] [intervened] / [witnessed] a [attempted] suicide by a member of the public whilst at work.

We are in close contact with [employee first name] offering him/her as much support as we can. During this period, [employee first name] has informed us that they do not wish to discuss the event and we ask that you respect this decision by not asking for details of what happened. [employee first name] [understands that you may wish to let them know you are there to support them if required and a brief exchange to this effect is perfectly acceptable and would be well received]

This is indeed a sad piece of news to deliver, and I am sure we will have a wide range of reactions and feelings. Please take care of yourself, reach out to others, and respect that [intervening] / [witnessing] a [attempted] suicide will affect everybody differently, but there is no right or wrong way to cope with.

Our professional support services are available to utilise by anybody who is struggling with their mental health and we encourage everyone to take advantage of the support available should they need too.

Regards