



CLUB AND PLAYERS GUIDE TO PERSONAL HEARINGS

CONTENTS

1. What should I bring with me to my Personal Hearing?
2. What should I wear?
3. Can I bring any witnesses with me? If so, how many should I bring?
4. My witness cannot attend. Can they submit a written statement instead
5. Who else will be there?
6. How long do Personal Hearings normally last?
7. Will I be able to ask any questions?
8. What are the procedures that will be followed during my Personal Hearing?
9. When will I receive notification of the results?
10. What happens if I am not happy with the result of my Personal Hearing?
11. Youth Procedures
12. Further Information



WHAT SHOULD I BRING WITH ME TO MY PERSONAL HEARING?



You **do not** have to bring anything with you on the evening of your Personal Hearing.

However, it is generally a good idea to bring a copy of the charge letter and correspondence with you. This may help when referring to specific parts of the incident, and may help to jog your memory as to what you are being charged with.

You **will not** be expected to make notes. However, this is entirely up to the individual and you are perfectly entitled to do so. Under FA Regulations, the hearings are held in private and it is not permitted to record the proceedings.

You may wish to write down your version of events prior to the Personal Hearing if it helps you to read straight from this on the evening. We want you to feel as comfortable as possible to ensure you receive a fair hearing.

If any fines are imposed as part of a sanction, these will not need to be paid on the evening.

WHAT SHOULD I WEAR?

There is no set dress code for a Personal Hearing.

Whether you turn up in a suit or wearing a tracksuit or simply jeans and a t-shirt, we will still make sure you receive a fair appeal.

Again, we want you to feel as comfortable as possible.



CAN I BRING ANY WITNESSES?

IF SO, HOW MANY SHOULD I BRING?



Yes, you can bring as many witnesses as you feel necessary to your Personal Hearing.

However, as a guide we would suggest the following:

- If a witness has submitted a letter for your particular case prior to the hearing, it is preferred that they attend the hearing as a witness so that they can be asked any questions about their report.
 - We would recommend you stick to a maximum of 3 or 4 witnesses. If you bring any more than this, we tend to find that either the same story is repeated over and over again, or people's stories become confused which may not help your case.
 - The witness **does not** need to have submitted a report in order to attend.
 - Please the notify the County FA in advance of how many witnesses you intend to call in order to assist with administrative arrangements.
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MY WITNESS CANNOT ATTEND.

CAN THEY SUBMIT A WRITTEN STATEMENT INSTEAD?

Yes. If your witness cannot attend you have a couple of options.

- Find another reliable witness
- Ask your original witness to submit a written statement to the County Football Association 7 days prior to your personal hearing

If your witness drops out at the last minute, they can still submit a statement to the County FA, however, the commission may not place as much weight on this piece of evidence if the witness is not there to be questioned.



WHO ELSE WILL BE THERE?



There will be at least 4 other people who will be at your Personal Hearing:

- A Disciplinary Chair
- 2 Commission Members
- A Secretary

The person who reported the incident would also be invited to attend to give their version of events. This would normally be the Match Official(s). However, occasionally this could be someone else, for example, a member of another club.

Additional people who may appear at the Personal Hearing may include the County FA Child Welfare Officer and/or the County FA Referee Development Officer.

WHO ELSE WILL BE THERE?

Anyone under the age of 18 will also be able to bring a parent or guardian (please contact the County FA for further information).

You can also bring a club official with you if you wish. The club official could have one of 3 roles at your Hearing:

- They could represent you if you feel more comfortable having representation.
- They could act as a witness. This means they cannot come into the whole hearing but will be called as a witness for that part of the hearing.
- Alternatively, they could attend as a club representative. This means that they can come into the Hearing with you, but they must not say anything during the process. They will simply be there to observe the proceedings and to give moral support.



HOW LONG DO PERSONAL HEARINGS NORMALLY LAST?



This depends on the case and how much evidence is presented.

As a general rule we allow 45 minutes to an hour for each case. However, some will last longer depending on the details.

Please bear this in mind when you attend a Personal Hearing. If the Hearing before you over-runs, the Commission may be late starting your Personal Hearing. Please be respectful of this, as it could be **your** Personal Hearing that over-runs, resulting in the third case starting late too.

WILL I BE ABLE TO ASK ANY QUESTIONS?

Yes, you will be able to ask questions.

You will get the opportunity to ask the person who has reported the incident (i.e. the Match Official), questions when the Chair gets to that part of the hearing and any other witnesses.

If the questions you are asking are not appropriate you may be asked to re-phrase your question or to ask a more suitable question.

The Commission will also be able to ask questions but witnesses are not permitted to ask any questions.



WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURES AT A PERSONAL HEARING?

When you arrive at the hearing, the Secretary will meet you and record everyone's name. You will then be asked to wait until the Commission are ready to begin. If you have any additional reports/statements to add you must let the Secretary know at this point. However, it is recommended that these documents are with the County FA before your Hearing to ensure the Commission has received everything prior to the case being heard.



When the Commission is ready to begin, you will be shown to the meeting room (with your Club Representative if required). The referee or first County FA witnesses will also be invited at this point.

The Chair will then introduce the panel, and ask you to introduce yourself. He will then check you have seen/read the report and the charge.

The witnesses will then be asked to give their versions of events one at a time. You (or if represented, your Club Representative) will then be given the opportunity to ask questions with regards to the incident concerned.

The Commission will also ask any questions they may have after reading the report and hearing their version of events.

WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURES AT A PERSONAL HEARING?

Afterwards, the Secretary of the County FA will bring the witnesses in support of the charge to the room one at a time, when they will have the opportunity to give their version of events. It will then be your turn to present your evidence and be asked questions by the panel. Following your submission, you can call any witnesses you require. Once again the Commission will ask each witness any questions which they may have.

Once all the evidence has been heard, you will be given the opportunity to summarise the evidence for your case.

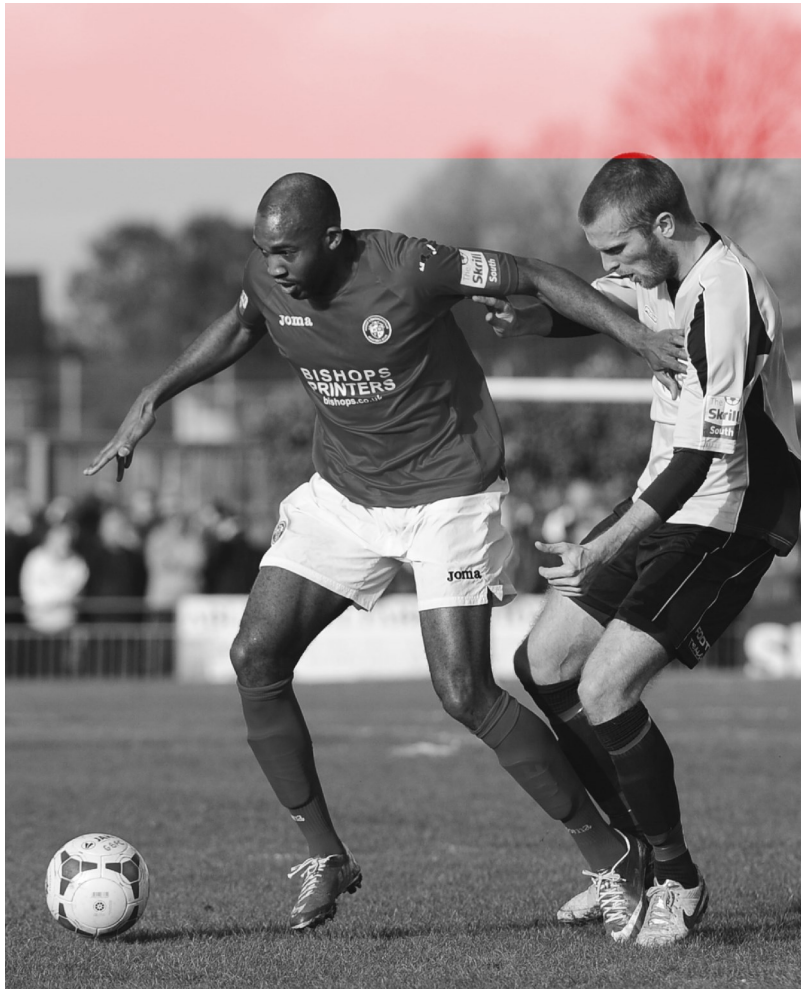
The Chair will then check with you that you are satisfied with the evidence that has been given. If you are satisfied with the evidence, the referee and your witnesses will be asked to leave and you will be asked to wait whilst the Commission considers the case.

The Commission then decides (in private) if the case is Proven or Not Proven. You will then be invited back into the room where you will be told the outcome by the Secretary.

If your case is found Not Proven, you will be free to leave and your appeal fee and admin fee will be returned at a later date.



WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURES AT A PERSONAL HEARING?



If your case is found Proven, the Secretary will then read out your previous history and you will be asked to make a plea of leniency. This gives the Commission a chance to decide whether you should be given the full punishment for that particular charge, or whether the punishment should be reduced.

You will be asked to leave the room again, whilst the Commission decides (in private) on the appropriate sanction.

You will return to the room, where the Commission will tell you the verdict. However, the Commission do have the right to inform you of the outcome by letter rather than on the night if they feel this is best.

Please note that the Commission has the right to add costs to any fine that may be imposed, if your case is found Proven.

WHEN WILL I RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF THE RESULTS?

Most results are entered onto the system a day or so after the Personal Hearing.

You should receive your results within 5 days of your Personal Hearing. Copies of the results will be sent to your club.



WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM NOT HAPPY WITH THE RESULT?



If your case is found Proven by the Commission, you may have the right to appeal to The FA.

Participants have the right to an appeal where the sanction imposed is in excess of 2 matches and/or a £25 fine.

All appeals should be made to **The Football Association, Wembley Stadium, P.O. Box 1966, London, SW1P 9EQ** or via email to discipline@thefa.com, and must be received by them within 14 days of the date on the hearing results paperwork.

A covering letter stating your grounds of appeal must be sent to the above address, along with a cheque for the relevant payment made payable to 'The Football Association'.

Further information, on how to appeal to The FA will appear on the letter you will receive after the Personal Hearing along with the outcome of the case.

YOUTH PROCEDURES

The following procedures must be adopted when young people are involved in personal hearings:

Evidence can only be received from young people (who must be accompanied by a responsible adult) in front of the Commission Members, Commission Secretary, Participant charged and his/her representative.

No other persons are to be permitted within the room whilst a young person is giving evidence.

Only the Chair of the Commission is permitted to ask questions of the Young person.

If the representatives or the Participant charged wish to ask questions, or if other members of the Commission wish to ask questions, those questions must be addressed through the Chair, who will put the questions to the Young person.

At the end of the questioning by the Commission, and having confirmed the participant or representative charged has no further questions that need to be put to the young person, the young person will be permitted to leave the room and will not be required to stay for the remainder of the hearing unless they specifically request to do so.



YOUTH PROCEDURES



It is preferable at this stage that the Young Person leaves the Commission venue completely although the practicalities surrounding joint travel with other attendees may make this difficult. However, the Young Person should not remain in the Commission room.

The procedures must be sent to all parties in advance of the Personal Hearing so that they are aware of the procedures before arriving and so that they can prepare appropriately.

FURTHER INFORMATION

You can find further information with regards to Personal Hearing procedures on the County FA website:

www.countyfa.com/fagovernance

For example: www.suffolkfa.com/fagovernance

Written reasons for discrimination cases (except those involving U18s) are published online:

www.countyfa.com/tacklingdiscrimination

For example:

www.essexfa.com/tacklingdiscrimination





For ALL