



Independent Discipline Panel Members - Role Information

Introduction

Leicestershire & Rutland FA are looking to appoint members to join an independent pool of people to sit on discipline hearings. Previously the Discipline Commissions were formed almost exclusively of County FA Council Members, but from January 2018 it became mandatory for all Commissions to have at least one independent member. Independent panel members do not have to have any footballing experience, but an interest in the game and an understanding of regulatory processes is beneficial. Independent panel members can be active football participants (playing, coaching refereeing etc.), but must be independent from the County FA and The FA.

The Disciplinary Hearing Process

Members of the Independent Discipline Panel will form part of the Discipline Commissions that adjudicate on misconduct charges, which are issued against participants for breaches of FA rules and regulations.

Individuals or Clubs charged with misconduct can choose to have their case heard either in person or by correspondence. Cases heard at a personal hearing will require Association Witnesses (e.g. the referee or opposition players) to attend, as well as the individual charged and any witnesses they choose to bring. Correspondence cases are heard only on the paperwork available, and are usually held via WebEx.

For both personal and correspondence cases the misconduct charge will be considered by a Discipline Commission, which will consist of:

- An FA qualified Chairperson. This can be either an independent member or a member of the County FA Disciplinary Committee.
- A member of the Independent Discipline Panel.
- A member of the County FA Disciplinary Committee.

The Commission will be supported by an FA qualified Secretary, who will ensure the appropriate FA rules and procedures are followed throughout the hearing.

At a personal hearing the Discipline Commission will hear evidence from witnesses, and will have the opportunity to question the witnesses, as well as considering any written submissions available. For correspondence cases written evidence only is considered. The Commission will then make a decision on the balance of probabilities and based on the evidence available as to whether or not the charge is Proven. For Proven charges the Commission then makes a decision on what sanction to impose, taking account of The FA's guidelines for sanctioning.

Responsibilities and Requirements of Independent Panel Members

- To attend and/or complete training as required. This may be an online resource, or an evening or daytime session. All panel members must complete an online assessment, this has become mandatory for the 2018/19 season and further guidance will be given prior to undertaking the

assessment. There are additional training sessions and assessments that must be completed to sit as a Chair or on anti-discrimination cases.

- To complete 'cascade training'. This is a safeguarding briefing detailing the roles and procedures of Safeguarding within the County FA, and explains the responsibilities and expectations that may be placed upon any individuals undertaking a role on behalf of the County FA. All new panel members must complete within three months of undertaking the role. This will be arranged with the County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- To be available for Discipline Commissions on weekday evenings and/or Friday afternoons. A Commission is usually convened weekly, but each panel member would not be expected to commit to attending more than once every few months, although it can be more frequent if individuals are willing to do so.
- To read in advance of the hearing the papers for the charge(s) and to ensure the Individual or Club charged has a fair hearing, and the opportunity to state their case.
- To be competent and confident in assessing evidence, and deciding the credibility and reliability of witnesses.
- To follow and implement FA rules and procedures when hearing charges and making decisions. Full knowledge is not required, but a willingness to comply is.
- To assist the Commission Chair in producing Written Reasons following a Commission when necessary.
- To ensure discretion and confidentiality. Information may be acquired whilst undertaking this role that should remain confidential. The confidentiality agreement must be complied with, and any papers received (hard copy or electronic) must be destroyed and/or deleted as soon as practically possible following the Commission, or on completion of the Written Reasons if required.
- To declare any conflicts of interest before hearing a charge, which could include being a player/manager who competes in the same League as the individual/team charged, a referee who officiates in the same League, or a club official with a team in the same League. If unsure, please contact the office for advice.

Further Opportunities

There will be the opportunity to sit on red card appeals and appeals against League decisions in addition to the more regular discipline cases. Members of the independent panel may have the opportunity to train as a Chair and/or to sit on anti-discrimination cases if they express an interest in progressing on to these roles.

To express your interest in the role please contact Rachel Scase, Discipline Manager at Leicestershire & Rutland FA on Rachel.scase@leicestershirefa.com or discipline@leicestershirefa.com.