

Berks & Bucks FA

Football Services Guides



Personal Disciplinary Hearings

What are they?

A player or club ("Participant") has the opportunity to attend a Personal Hearing to deny a misconduct charge raised against them.

What happens at a Personal Hearing?

There are three key stages to a disciplinary hearing:

1. **Questioning of County FA witnesses.** The County FA will invite those witnesses who provided statements in support of the charge to attend the hearing. The Participant charged and the Commission will have the opportunity to ask them questions regarding their statement; however the witness cannot ask questions of the Participant charged.
2. **Questioning of defence witnesses.** After the County FA witnesses have been questioned, the Participant charged puts forward their own statement denying the charge and the Commission can ask them questions. Once this has been completed the Participant charged can call witnesses in support of their defence. Both the Participant charged and the Commission will have the opportunity to ask questions of each defence witness.
3. **Deliberation.** After all witnesses have entered their evidence, the Participant charged has a final opportunity to sum up their defence before the commission deliberates on whether they believe the charge is proven or not proven. The Commission has to be satisfied that that the charge is proven **on the balance of probability** - ie that it is more likely than not that the incident occurred.
 - a. **Proven.** If the charge is proven, the Commission Secretary will read the Participant's five year disciplinary history, and the Participant charged has the opportunity to enter a verbal plea for leniency. The Commission will then deliberate a second time to consider The FA's Sanction Guidelines and any aggravating or mitigating factors that may lead to a reduced or increased penalty before reaching a decision on what sanctions should be imposed.
 - b. **Not Proven.** If the charge is not proven, the hearing is closed and the case expunged.

Do I have to attend in person?

As a Participant requesting a personal hearing you **must** be in attendance to answer questions from the commission. You can choose to be represented by another individual who would ask questions of other witnesses on your behalf and present your case. **A representative cannot give evidence on your behalf**, even if they were present at the game. If you intend to be legally represented you must inform the County FA of this when responding to the charge.

How long does the hearing last?

This depends on the number of witnesses being questioned. If there are no defence witnesses, a hearing will usually last approximately 90minutes. Please allow roughly 15 minutes for each additional defence witness.

Can I appeal the decision?

All proven disciplinary cases can be appealed to The FA by the Participant charged. The FA must be notified of your intention to appeal **within seven days of the decision**. More information is available by contacting [Alastair Kay](#).