

'Support available to Service personnel arrested for or charged with offences under the Service Justice System'

General advice

This leaflet outlines the support and sources of advice available to you if you are charged with an offence under the Service Justice System. It is intended as a quick reference and does not replace the detailed guidance to be found in:

- JSP 830, The Manual of Service Law and
 - JSP 838, The Armed Forces legal Aid Scheme
- Further guidance can also be found in Queen's Regulations and single-Service publications that supplement the Manual of Service Law.

Disciplinary cases

There are two possible ways in which your case can be heard if, after investigation, it is decided that you have a case to answer. How your case is heard will depend on your rank and the nature of the offence that you are alleged to have committed.

Summary hearing - this is where your case is heard by your commanding officer or by an officer within the chain of command.

The Court Martial - this is where your case is heard by a panel from outside the chain of command either because you have been charged with an offence that cannot be dealt with by your commanding officer or because you have chosen to have your case heard in the Court Martial.

Your rights

Regardless of the way in which your case is heard, you will be given a booklet entitled Your rights if you are charged with an offence under the Service justice system (Manual of Service Law, Chapter 6, Annex G). This explains your rights and options, and details of who you may wish to contact and how.

Support

Your main source of support should be your unit chain of command or line management. You should be advised about the process leading up to, during and after your case being dealt with.

Accused's Assisting Officer - if you are arrested, charged or placed in custody you are advised to choose an Accused's Assisting Officer to support and assist you throughout the Service justice process. If you cannot find anyone to act as your Accused's Assisting Officer, your commanding officer will be able to help you find one.

Legal Assistance - if your case is to be heard in the Court Martial, you are entitled to a lawyer of your choice. This will normally be a civilian lawyer or may be a lawyer from one of the other Services if you are abroad. If you choose a civilian lawyer, legal aid may be available to you. RN and RM personnel may always choose to be represented by a Naval barrister.

Media attention – your chosen representative will advise you about dealing with any media attention. You can also seek help from the chain of command, community relations officer or the MOD press desk. There is a 24-hour helpline on 020 218 7907.

Other support

Medical - unit medical staff

Spiritual - appropriate Service chaplain

Armed Forces Confidential Support Line

From UK Phone: 0800 731 4880

From Germany Phone: 0800 1827 395

From Cyprus Phone: 800 91065

From Falklands Phone: #6111

From anywhere in the world (call back)

+44 (0) 1980 630854

Samaritans Phone: 08457 909090

Royal Navy Royal Marines Welfare (RNRMW) exists to support the Royal Navy, its personnel and families. RNRMW is made up of qualified and registered social workers and uniformed case workers, and offers a comprehensive social work service to RN/RM personnel and their families, a professional service to the RN executive and divisional systems and a link between the Service person and their family in times of difficulty.

Accessing this service is through the RNRMW Portal on 023 9272 8777

Army Welfare Service - the Army Welfare Service operates in the UK, British Forces Germany and BATUS. It provides both personal and community support services to the chain of command and to Service men and women and their families (including TA, reservists and veterans). AWS personal support provides a specialist, confidential, comprehensive and professional service for all personal and family difficulties. AWS services can be accessed either by contacting the local AWS team or by telephoning the Army Welfare Information Service (AWIS) on 01722 436569

RAF welfare - SSAFA-Forces Help RAF(UK) provides RAF personnel and their families with a professional social work service offering an all-embracing service to the RAF community that is outside the chain of command.

SSAFA-Forces Help RAF(UK) Phone: 0207 403 8783

Help for your family

Families also have their normal access to the Service welfare organisations, their Families Federation, HIVE and civilian welfare organisations.

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