



Info Sheet: What does Fairness mean?

Everyone knows what it feels like when they are treated unfairly. It's a bit harder to explain what you might expect from a process or a decision that you would call fair. You might feel fairly treated if you received:

- Information that a decision might affect you and the criteria on which the decision will be made
- Notification of the information on which the decision maker is going to base her or his decision
- The chance to provide your side of the story to the decision maker
- A response within a reasonable timeframe



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These basic rights are part of what the law calls the principles of procedural fairness and they have grown out of an acknowledgement by the courts that individuals have a right to be treated fairly by an agency that has the power to make decisions that might affect their rights.

In addition to the above, fairness also includes:

- Having a decision maker who is unbiased and objective
- Accessible and easy to understand information about the process leading to the decision
- Having a decision that is supported by reasons
- Receiving information on possible avenues of appeal if you are unsatisfied with the decision

Fairness does not require that everyone be treated in the exact same way – it will depend on the nature of the decision being made and how it might impact the individual. Fairness also does not necessarily mean you will get the outcome you wanted – it does mean that certain steps should be followed.