

Statement from Lochlinn Parker, Solicitor at Deighton Pierce Glynn:

“We have been asked to look at the restrictions placed on the upcoming Brighton and Hove Albion-Crystal Palace play-off games.

“Firstly, the club can, within reason, set almost any restriction on a fan entering the ground. It is therefore up to the club whether they refuse entry to a person without a ticket and corresponding identification.

“However, outside of the ground and the private land around it, neither the club nor the police have the power to search a person if the only aim of the search is to find out whether the person has a ticket.

“The police can conduct searches of a person if they reasonably suspect them of being in possession of stolen items, offensive weapons or an item that could assist that person in committing an offence (Section 1 Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984).

“The police can also search people without reasonable suspicion if there is a particular concern about serious violence or the carrying of weapons as long as a senior officer has authorised such searches (section 60 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994).

“Neither of these powers allows the police to search a person solely for a ticket or identification, and neither power requires a person to answer questions put to them by the police.

“The police can also remove a person from the area if there is a concern that the individual is causing or contributing to alcohol related violence or disorder. Not having a ticket or identification cannot be the only reason for removing a person.

“The police would be acting unlawfully if they searched fans or removed them from the area on the basis that the individual did not have a ticket or identification. If the police did act in this way then they may open themselves up to legal challenge.

“We hope that the police will clarify that they will not be seeking to search or question people outside the ground, unless there are other factors involved.”

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