# Employment tribunal upholds dismissal of FSCS manager over video call incident



A digital production manager with the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) faced dismissal after inadvertently exposing himself during a work video call, a decision that has now been upheld by an employment tribunal. The incident occurred on 8 May 2023, coinciding with a Bank Holiday, when the manager stood up to adjust equipment while attending a Microsoft Teams meeting. Witnesses were reportedly taken aback when his lack of trousers became evident, leading to a formal complaint from colleagues.

The manager, who had been with the FSCS since 2020 and earned an annual salary of £60,000, argued that the Bank Holiday context exempted him from standard workplace dress codes. He asserted that he was unaware his camera was still active and claimed the situation was a mere accident. "It was just an accident and apologies," he stated, though his defence hinged on the assertion that he did not expect to work on a public holiday.

However, the tribunal, chaired by Employment Judge Hodgson, concluded that the manager’s actions significantly undermined the company’s reputation. During the proceedings, Sabah Carter, a senior executive at FSCS, refuted the employee's claims, explicitly stating that the dress code applied regardless of whether it was a Bank Holiday. Carter pointed to the manager's lack of remorse and inconsistent testimony, noting that he initially admitted to being partially undressed before later claiming to be wearing "nude-coloured underwear."

The tribunal's ruling reflected a growing scrutiny on employee conduct during virtual meetings, particularly in leadership roles. In a digital age where remote working has become prevalent, standards of professionalism and appropriate behaviour are paramount. Comparatively, similar incidents in corporate environments highlight the importance of maintaining workplace decorum, even in a home setting. A comparable case involved Philip Taylor, a senior finance boss dismissed for exposing his underwear during a Zoom call. Taylor’s dismissal was upheld, although he won a technical wrongful dismissal claim due to a missing testimony from the female colleague involved.

Moreover, the issue of employee discipline regarding dress codes has broader implications, especially for those managing remote teams. The tribunal underscored that even under less formal circumstances, ensuring proper attire during professional engagements is crucial. The potential reputational damage posed by such incidents can have long-lasting effects, especially for companies dealing with sensitive financial information.

While the employee claimed his dismissal was racially motivated, stating that it was part of broader "mental harassment," the tribunal found no merit in these claims. The panel reiterated that the manager willingly chose to attend the meeting inappropriately dressed, thus compromising his professional standing. The judgment emphasised that he had not only failed to take the necessary precautions but also neglected to uphold the decorum expected at his level of responsibility.

In an environment where remote work is increasingly common, this case serves as a stark reminder of the need for clarity in workplace expectations, particularly regarding personal presentation. As companies navigate the blurred lines between home and office settings, ensuring employees adhere to professional standards remains vital in preserving company integrity and trust. The tribunal’s decision to uphold the dismissal reiterates the principles of accountability and professionalism that underpin workplace success.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
2. Paragraphs 5, 6
3. Paragraph 5
4. Paragraph 5

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14727251/Manager-sacked-standing-no-pants-work-video-call.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://metro.co.uk/2021/10/07/boss-told-worker-you-need-sausage-and-showed-her-tight-underwear-on-zoom-15383291/> - A senior finance boss was dismissed after exposing his underwear to a female colleague during a Zoom call. The incident occurred in June 2021 when Philip Taylor, head of financial planning at Compagnie Financiere Tradition, moved his laptop camera to reveal his lower body while wearing inappropriate clothing. The female colleague reported the incident, leading to an investigation. Taylor's explanation involving his puppy was deemed implausible, resulting in his dismissal. The tribunal found the company's actions reasonable, though Taylor won a claim for wrongful dismissal on a technicality due to the absence of the colleague's testimony.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-59573146> - Vishal Garg, CEO of Better.com, faced criticism after firing 900 employees during a Zoom meeting in December 2021. He acknowledged the execution was flawed and apologized for the lack of respect shown to affected individuals. Garg stated the layoffs were necessary due to market changes and aimed to ensure the company's survival. The incident sparked widespread discussion about the appropriateness of such mass layoffs conducted virtually, especially during the holiday season.
4. <https://female.readsector.com/2020/10/20/advertising-boss-is-sacked-after-taking-webcam-into-the-toilet-during-zoom-call-prank/> - Nick Emery, CEO of Mindshare, was dismissed after allegedly filming himself in the toilet during a Zoom call with colleagues in October 2020. Witnesses claimed he exposed his behind while using the restroom, which was reported to company owners. An investigation led to his termination for breaching company behavior standards. Emery had been with the company for over 20 years and declined to comment on the incident.
5. <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x928g1i> - A short film titled 'Lady Boss Forces Employees To See Her “Privately”' depicts a female boss demanding male employees undress during a private meeting to determine promotions. The protagonist, Sean, refuses to comply, valuing his principles over career advancement. The film concludes with Sean being offered a promotion for his integrity, highlighting the importance of standing up against inappropriate workplace behavior.
6. <https://www.dailydot.com/news/laid-off-company-to-pay-investors/> - A worker recounted his experience of being laid off during a company-wide video conference. The CEO announced immediate layoffs, citing investor demands for returns. The employee expressed feelings of betrayal and shock, questioning the suddenness and lack of transparency in the decision-making process. The incident underscores the challenges and emotional impact of abrupt layoffs conducted virtually.
7. <https://www.collegenews.com/article/900-employees-sacked-in-brutal-zoom-call-by-ceo/> - Vishal Garg, CEO of Better.com, dismissed 900 employees during a Zoom call in December 2021, stating their employment was terminated effective immediately. He cited market changes and the need for the company to adapt to survive. The incident was recorded by an employee and shared on social media, leading to widespread criticism of Garg's approach to handling layoffs.