

IN THE MATTER OF POLICE (CONDUCT) REGULATIONS 2020

BETWEEN:

THE CHIEF CONSTABLE OF NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE

Appropriate Authority

-AND-

FORMER POLICE CONSTABLE [REDACTED]

Former Officer

FORMER OFFICER [REDACTED]

CHAIR'S REPORT – FINDINGS AND REASONS

Summary of the Case

1. At the misconduct hearing between 27 – 28 July 2026, the panel found all bar one of the factual allegations proven and found that the Standards of Professional Behaviour of 'Honesty & Integrity', albeit integrity only, 'Authority, Respect & Courtesy', 'Equality and Diversity', 'Discreditable Conduct', and 'Challenging and reporting improper conduct' had been breached. The Panel went on to find that the nature of the breaches amount to Gross Misconduct and had the Former Officer still been a serving police officer, he would have been dismissed without notice.

References and abbreviations

2. Page numbers referred to within this report are page numbers of the bundle, unless otherwise stated.

3. In this report:

- a) the 2020 Regulations’ means the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020. Reference to a regulation is, unless otherwise stated, to a regulation in the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020.
- b) the 2020 Home Office Guidance’ and ‘the Home Office Guidance’ refers to the Home Office Guidance *Conduct, Efficiency and Effectiveness: Statutory Guidance on professional Standards, performance and Integrity in Policing* (issued under section 87 and 87A of the Police Act 1996) published on 5 February 2020.
- c) ‘the College of Policing code of ethics’ and ‘the code of ethics’ refers to the College of Policing Code of Ethics: A Code of Practice for the Principles and Standards of Professional Behaviour for the Policing Profession of England and Wales (issued under section 39A of the Police Act 1996) published in July 2014.
- d) the College of Policing outcomes guidance’ and ‘the outcomes guidance’ refers to the College of Policing Guidance on outcomes in police misconduct proceedings (issued under section 87 the Police Act 1996) published on 17 August 2022 and updated (by having paragraph numbers added) in March 2023.

4. The following abbreviations/terms have been used within this report:

- a) AA Appropriate Authority
- b) HOG Home Office Guidance
- c) IO Investigating Officer
- d) ACC Assistant Chief Constable
- e) IPM Independent Panel Member
- f) LQP Legally Qualified Person
- g) PC Police Constable
- h) PSD Professional Standards Department
- i) FO Former Officer

Regulation 43(1) Report

5. Regulation 43(1) of the 2020 Regulations provides:

43. Notification of outcome

(1) The person conducting or chairing the misconduct proceedings must, before the end of a period of 5 working days beginning with the first working day after the completion of the misconduct hearing or misconduct meeting, submit a report to the appropriate authority or, where the functions have been delegated under regulation 26(1), to the originating authority setting out –

- (a) The findings of the person or persons conducting the misconduct proceedings,
- (b) The reason for that finding,
- (c) Any disciplinary action imposed; whether disciplinary action for gross misconduct was imposed,
- (d) Any direction that the matter shall be dealt with under the reflective practice review process.

6. The document is the 'report' submitted pursuant to Regulation 43(1) of the Regulations.

Parties, representatives, panel members and other attendees

7. The FO [REDACTED] attended the misconduct hearing. The FO resigned from Northamptonshire Police on 5th December 2025. FO [REDACTED] was represented by Mr. John Greany and was supported by Federation Representative, PC Mia Ball.
8. The AA is the Chief Constable of Northamptonshire Police, represented by Ms. Joanne Kane.
9. The Chair of the police misconduct panel is ACC X0222 Emma James. The LQP is Louise Ravenscroft.
10. The IPMs are Mr Jim Maund and Mr Vince Cullen.
11. The IO DC 0572 John Minney attended the misconduct hearing.

12. No media representatives attended the misconduct hearing.

13. No witnesses attended the hearing.

Publicity, anonymity and preliminary applications

14. In advance of the misconduct hearing, ACC Ward made a direction for anonymity to be given to the FO. Throughout the misconduct hearing all parties referred to the officer as "the Former Officer".

15. Reporting restrictions were imposed to prevent the naming of the anonymised FO in the notice of hearing published by Northamptonshire Police, reporting of the case by the media, within any transcript of the hearing, publication of the outcome of the hearing or in respect of this report.

16. In accordance with Regulation 36(2), a notice of the misconduct was published by the AA on the Northamptonshire Police website.

17. By the beginning of the misconduct hearing the Chair had not received any written representations from media representatives in accordance with Regulation 36(5).

18. During the hearing, a further application was received from the AA for anonymity for the names of colleagues and members of the public referred to by the FO and members of the WhatsApp group. The Chair granted anonymity of all third parties named within the misconduct hearing and imposed reporting restrictions for third parties, including reporting of the case by the media, within any transcript of the hearing, publication of the outcome of the hearing or in respect of this report.

The Allegations and response

19. A Regulation 30 notice was served upon the FO on 22nd January 2026.

20. A Regulation 31 response was received on behalf of the FO, dated 17th February 2026, along with a reflective statement, prepared by the FO.

Documents before the Panel

21. The misconduct panel received a hearing bundle comprising of 2766 pages.
22. The content of the hearing bundle was agreed between the AA and the FO representatives in advance of the misconduct hearing. No further issues relating to the content of the hearing bundle has been raised.
23. Prior to the hearing, the Panel received an opening note from the AA.
24. On behalf of the FO, a reflective statement dated 17th February 2026, ADHD assessment report, dated 16th January 2026, an anonymity application bundle comprised of 11 pages, and a bundle of character references comprising of 46 pages were provided to the Panel prior to and during the hearing.
25. During the misconduct hearing, a further witness statement was provided from PC Mia Ball on behalf of the FO. The AA did not oppose the introduction of this witness statement. The Chair considered it was in the interest of justice to adduce this witness statement into proceedings.

The factual allegations

26. The Chair read the Regulation 30 notice into the hearing. The FO confirmed that he admitted the allegations and that the alleged conduct amounted to gross misconduct, save for the interpretation or the use or understanding of the words used within allegation 1.5.3 and 1.6.1.
27. Ms Kane opened the case on behalf of the AA, referring to the opening note.
28. No witnesses, save for the FO, were called to provide live evidence.
29. The IO report [pages 2 – 15] provided background information about the factual allegations. It stated that between 15th June 2020 and 26th December 2020, the FO was amongst a WhatsApp chat group of seven officers title "*P90 Test Successful*". The WhatsApp group is described as being for the main purpose for the group to relate to online gaming.

30. A number of the messages identified by the AA were described as '*...involving the officer [FO] opening using and sharing racist, misogynistic, derogatory, and inappropriate language within the group, the majority of which was aimed at various female colleagues, but also included comments about members of the public, witnesses and victims of crime*' [page 3]. It was further alleged that the FO failed to challenge other users within the WhatsApp group of making comments of a similar nature.

The evidence of the Former Officer

31. The FO gave evidence during the hearing.

32. The FO confirmed that at the time of being a party to the WhatsApp group he was approximately 23 years old. The FO confirmed that he joined Northamptonshire Police as a Special Constable at the age of 18 years before becoming a police constable in 2016. The FO advised that between 2016 and 2020 he was moved to various postings and teams across the force, which made it difficult for him to make friends and maintain a support network, arising from a lack of consistency.

33. The FO informed the Panel that he had been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder ('ADHD') which contributed to his struggle to make friends.

34. The FO acknowledged that his conduct had been a serious error of judgement 6 years previously, apologised for his conduct and accepted that the alleged conduct amounted to gross misconduct.

35. The FO advised that he joined a new team in Northampton in 2020 during the national lockdown. During this time, the WhatsApp Group 'P90 Test Successful' was set up, which he joined as a way of trying to make new friends and become involved with his new team. The FO purchased a PlayStation to fit in and be able to play computer games, including 'Call of Duty' with his work colleagues. The FO described 'Call of Duty' as a "*shooting game*". The FO provided a description as to how teams would play against rival teams.

36. In respect of allegation 1.6.1, [page 2707] the FO advised that he did not know that the term "*raghead*" had a racist meaning. The FO stated that he thought that if the

names of the teams were offensive, they would not be allowed to be displayed through the PlayStation network. The FO stated that he believed that the term was being used as a team name and had not come across the term previously.

37. The FO described to the Panel his own multicultural background, including having a nan from Trinidad and Tobago and his mother being from Pakistan. The FO stated that both family members were Muslim and he himself had been bullied for his skin colour as well as being racially abused whilst on duty. The FO advised of his friendships and positive relationships with members of the Muslim community, including supporting Ramadan and breaking fast with the local mosque. The FO stated that he felt "silly and naïve" for not challenging comments made by other colleagues within the WhatsApp group knowing what he had been through personally.
38. The FO described to the Panel how to assist the PSD investigation, he had obtained examples of team names from Call of Duty. The FO stated he did not notice the numbers within these examples of "69" or "911".
39. The FO informed the Panel that he was not anti-Muslim and was not racist.
40. In respect of allegation 1.5.3. [page 1695] the FO stated that he had no familiarity with Milton Keyes of the area of Fishermead. The FO confirmed that the messages exchanged related to a member of the WhatsApp group, but it was the nephew of this colleague who had made the comment and the FO repeated it. The FO stated that there was no racial intent behind the reference made to "*Somalian*".
41. The FO informed the Panel that he had apologised to his colleagues and that he had "*grown up*" since this incident with faultless conduct since this time. The FO described himself as a "*scared, little boy, very immature during the national lockdown*". The FO went on to inform the Panel that now, he would completely challenge the comments made by colleagues, the comments did not reflect his views, and he was now a "*completely different person*".
42. During cross examination, the FO advised that he did not know what was meant when a colleague stated, "*don't say Fishermead*" and was simply repeating what

the nephew had said. The FO stated that he understood the AA's case and with hindsight shouldn't have made the comment and apologised but was repeating the comment made by the nephew.

43. The FO accepted, as admitted previously, that the comment was intended to "wind up" his colleague. The FO confirmed that the nephew was not a member of the WhatsApp group. When put to the FO that he was repeating information that was not known to the group, the FO stated that he was sure they would have known.
44. The FO stated that he could see how it looks when referring to someone's nationality as a pointed comment.
45. In respect of the comment "raghead", the FO stated that he thought the term was a reference to a soldier, which may be similar to a reference to a soldier like the film 'Jarhead'. The FO stated that he could see what the AA meant when it was proposed that the term did not come across as neutral, however, the FO stated he did not think it was an offensive term. The FO stated that it did not strike him that the term "raggedyhead" [page 242] would be a derogative term.
46. The FO stated that in respect of other colleagues use of the term raghead, he thought they were referring to soldiers and thought that some of the messages related to Officer 4, who was very bad at the game, and thought they were referring to his character in the game getting killed.
47. The FO was asked what he thought "...the power of the rag is strong" meant [page 272]. The FO advised he understands what the term means now but that back then, he thought it was a reference to the power of the soldier.
48. The FO did accept that there was another way of reading the messages to his interpretation and that it could be a racial term but he did not know this meaning at the time and questioned why the phrase was being allowed to be used on the game.

49. The FO accepted that he understood that other phrases including "window licker" [page 2405] and "retard" was offensive. The FO stated he may have been naïve and should have known "raghead" was a racist term.
50. When put to him by the AA that the language towards females was offensive but the FO was happy to use the terms or for others to use such language, the FO stated he can see how it looks but at the time he was too scared to challenge, but as the person he is now, he would challenge these comments.
51. The FO stated that he would challenge terms if he recognised them if he considered them to be racist. The AA put to the FO that he was "happy for sexism, disability discrimination and misogyny" comments to have been made in the group, to which the FO replied "yes".
52. The FO accepted that it was open for him to leave the WhatsApp group, ask for clarification if he was unsure of the meaning of the phrases/terms used and could speak to people outside of the group for advice.
53. The FO stated that he didn't know what the term "raghead" meant and that he was very sorry for any offence caused.
54. When asked by the Panel why he would have been scared to challenge comments made within the WhatsApp group, the FO stated that he was new to the team, struggling in national lockdown, battling his own demons with ADHD and PTSD and didn't want to put his head above the parapet or challenge the men in the group which he had been added to. The FO confirmed to the Panel that he was showing off to the group and accepts that some of the things he said were unacceptable.
55. The FO advised the Panel that he had apologised to one of the female colleagues referred to within the messages once the investigation had come to light and she had provided a character statement.

Legal Advice

56. The Panel received and accepted the following legal advice from the LQP.
57. The Panel was advised that the onus of proof is on the AA. The standard of proof to be applied is set out at Regulation 41(16) of the 2020 Regulations, as follows:
- 41(16) The person or persons conducting the misconduct proceedings must not find that the conduct of the officer concerned amounts to misconduct or gross misconduct unless –*
- (a) they are satisfied on the balance of probabilities that this is the case, or*
- (b) the officer admits it is the case.*
58. Guidance on the standard of proof is given at paragraphs 9.10 – 9.11 of the 2020 Home Office Guidance. Findings of fact in this case should be made in accordance with the civil standard of proof: the balance of probabilities.
59. The LQP advised that the Panel should consider whether the evidence in writing is reliable in terms of proving the factual allegations, and the impact of any alleged conduct. If the panel considers the evidence to be reliable, it should decide what weight if any to attach to it.
60. The panel was advised to consider each factual allegation and particular of misconduct individually. The LQP referred the Panel to the Regulation 30 notice and advised that in relation to paragraphs 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6 and 1.7, the Panel will need to consider whether the conduct is proved, particularly where the former officer has raised dispute with the meaning, use or understanding of some of the terms or phrases used within the text messages, as set out within allegations 1.5.3 and 1.6.1.
61. The LQP went on to advise the panel that once it has established the facts, on a balance of probability, it should then apply Regulation 41(15) of the 2020 Regulations. This provides:

41(15) The person or persons conducting the misconduct proceedings must review the facts of the case and decide whether the conduct of the officer concerned amounts –

(b) In the case of a misconduct hearing, to misconduct, gross misconduct or neither.

62. Regulation 2(1) of the 2020 Regulations provides a definition of ‘misconduct’ as a breach of the Standards of professional Behaviour that is so serious as to justify disciplinary action.
63. Regulation 2(1) of the 2020 Regulations also provides a definition of ‘gross misconduct’ as a breach of the Standards of professional Behaviour that is so serious as to justify dismissal.
64. The LQP highlighted that the FO accepted that his conduct amounted to gross misconduct, however reminded the Panel that this was a matter for their determination.
65. The LPQ went to advise that should multiple allegations of misconduct be found, it is for the Panel to determine whether, taken together, the misconduct may amount to gross misconduct or whether it was appropriate for each allegation to be assessed individually.
66. The LQP advised the panel to assess seriousness by considering whether there had been any breaches of the Standards of Professional Behaviour as set out in Schedule 2 to the 2020 Regulations. The LQP referred the panel to the alleged breaches in the Regulation notice and advised the panel, if it found any breaches, to assess whether those breaches had been a falling short of the standards or a ‘serious’ falling short.
67. The LQP advised the panel to return to the hearing once it had reached a decision as to whether any of the factual allegations found proven (if any) amount to misconduct, gross misconduct or neither to inform the parties of its decision.

Panel Decision on the Facts

68. The Panel considered the evidence in its entirety, the opening submissions from Ms Kane and Mr Greany and the evidence provided by the FO during the course of the misconduct hearing.

69. Having carefully considered the evidence, the Panel determined on the balance of probabilities the below factual circumstances:

- a) Between 15th June 2020 and 7th December 2020, the FO was a member of the WhatsApp group titled 'P90 Test Successful'. The WhatsApp group comprised of a number of police colleagues including the FO.
- b) The Panel accepts that the WhatsApp group was created during a national lockdown and was initially intended to be used by the group to discuss gaming, particularly the game 'Call of Duty'.
- c) The FO joined the WhatsApp group as a way of meeting new friends and keeping in touch with new colleagues having recently moved to the team. The Panel further accepts that the FO purchased a PlayStation to be able to interact more closely with his police colleagues.
- d) Messages, pictures and videos would be shared by all members of the group. The FO was an equal contributor and participant of the group.
- e) On 17th August 2020, the FO sent a video to the group depicting a male being violently beaten to death. The FO accepts that he sent this video to the group, which he described as doing "*without thinking*" [page 2728].
- f) The FO sent a further message on 17th August 2020 stating "*South American's getting it tonight*", in respect of the video. The FO accepts sending this message.
- g) Between 15th June 2020 and 7 December 2020, the FO sent a number of messages to the WhatsApp group. These messages made comments relating to the appearance of females, the sexual activity of females and whether participants of the group would find the females sexually attractive.

- h) The FO accepted that the language towards females was inappropriate, demeaning, denigrating, offensive and discriminatory.
- i) On 27th October 2020, a member of the WhatsApp group confirmed he was moving address. In response to a comment made by another officer, the FO stated " *Nah his ex was from there she was Somalian*". The Panel notes that the FO accepts sending this message.
- j) Between 15th June and 7th December 2020, other members of the WhatsApp group sent particular messages into the group which were viewed by the FO. These messages made comment relating to female colleagues, sexual interactions with females and female colleagues, and referred to persons as "retards" and "window lickers". The FO accepts that he did not challenge or report the conduct of these officers.
- k) On 26th October 2020 a new member was added to the WhatsApp group, who commented " *Ahhh a chat where you don't have to rethink before you click send*". The FO sent a reply stating " *Oh mate its 10-14 in here mate yeah*" [page 2710]. The FO accepts sending this message.
- l) The Panel accepts that the reference to "10-14" is police code for confidential/free to speak and would have indicated the WhatsApp group was confidential.
- m) The Panel considered the evidence of the FO in respect of allegation 1.5.3. The Panel accepts that the comments related to the area of Fishermead as opposed to members of the Somalian community and accepted that the FO was unfamiliar with the area of Milton Keynes.
- n) The Panel accepted the FO's evidence that the comment was repeated, having originally been made by a colleague's nephew. However, in light that the nephew was not a member of the WhatsApp group and that the FO accepted that the purpose of the comment was to "wind up" his colleague, the Panel found that the comment was inappropriate.

- o) The Panel did not find that the AA had proved that the comment made by the FO was explicitly racist.
- p) The Panel found that the comment was inappropriate, but the language was not demeaning, denigrating, offensive, or discriminatory. The Panel found that limited evidence had been provided by the AA to evidence the wider context of the messages or the FO's state of mind at the time of sending this message.
- q) In respect of allegation 1.6.1. the Panel accepted the FO's evidence that he did not appreciate the full meaning or use of the term and understood it to be a reference to the name of a Call of Duty clan name. The Panel took regard to the examples provided by the FO where this term has been used within the Call of Duty game.
- r) The Panel, having considered the evidence found on the balance of probabilities, that the FO had between the relevant period, sent messages and a video to other police officers that contained language which was inappropriate, demeaning, denigrating, offensive and discriminatory.
- s) The Panel further determined that the FO failed to challenge or report the inappropriate, demeaning, denigrating, offensive and discriminatory conduct of other police officers within the WhatsApp group.

70. In view of the above, the Panel went on to consider each allegation in turn and found the following of the factual allegations in the Regulation 30 notice:-

ALLEGATION 1.3 – PROVED

This allegation was admitted by the FO and accepted as being GM. The Panel found that sending the video was inappropriate and denigrating and offensive.

ALLEGATION 1.4 – PROVED

This allegation was admitted by the FO and accepted as being GM. The Panel found that the message was inappropriate, denigrating, offensive and discriminatory.

ALLEGATION 1.5.1. – PROVED

This allegation was admitted by the FO and accepted as being GM. The Panel found that the message was inappropriate, denigrating, offensive and discriminatory.

ALLEGATION 1.5.2. – PROVED

This allegation was admitted by the FO and accepted as being GM. The Panel found that the message was inappropriate, denigrating, offensive and discriminatory.

ALLEGATION 1.5.3 – PROVED – but limited to the FO using inappropriate language

The FO accepted that he had sent the message and that his conduct amounted to GM. However, the FO denied that the comment was discriminatory.

The Panel found that the comment was inappropriate, but the language was not demeaning, denigrating, offensive, or discriminatory.

ALLEGATION 1.5.4. – PROVED

This allegation was admitted by the FO and accepted as being GM. The Panel found that the message was inappropriate, denigrating, offensive and discriminatory.

ALLEGATION 1.5.5. – PROVED

This allegation was admitted by the FO and accepted as being GM. The Panel found that the message was inappropriate, denigrating, offensive and discriminatory.

ALLEGATION 1.5.6. – PROVED

This allegation was admitted by the FO and accepted as being GM. The Panel found that the message was inappropriate, denigrating, offensive and discriminatory.

ALLEGATION 1.5.7. – PROVED

This allegation was admitted by the FO and accepted as being GM. The Panel found that the message was inappropriate, denigrating, offensive and discriminatory.

ALLEGATION 1.5.8. – PROVED

This allegation was admitted by the FO and accepted as being GM. The Panel found that the message was inappropriate, denigrating, offensive and discriminatory.

ALLEGATION 1.5.9. – PROVED

This allegation was admitted by the FO and accepted as being GM. The Panel found that the message was inappropriate, denigrating, offensive and discriminatory.

ALLEGATION 1.5.10. – PROVED

This allegation was admitted by the FO and accepted as being GM. The Panel found that the message was inappropriate, denigrating, offensive and discriminatory.

ALLEGATION 1.6.1 – NOT PROVED

Whilst accepting that the term "raghead" is a despicable and inappropriate terms with racial connotations, the Panel did not find this allegation proved.

ALLEGATION 1.6.2. – PROVED

This allegation was admitted by the FO and accepted as being GM. The Panel found that the FO failed to challenge or report colleagues for using inappropriate, demeaning, denigrating, offensive, derogatory and discriminatory language.

ALLEGATION 1.6.3. – PROVED

This allegation was admitted by the FO and accepted as being GM. The Panel found that the FO failed to challenge or report colleagues for using inappropriate, demeaning, denigrating, offensive, derogatory and discriminatory language.

ALLEGATION 1.6.4. – PROVED

This allegation was admitted by the FO and accepted as being GM. The Panel found that the FO failed to challenge or report colleagues for using inappropriate, demeaning, denigrating, offensive, derogatory and discriminatory language.

ALLEGATION 1.7 - PROVED

This allegation was admitted by the FO and accepted as being GM. The Panel found that the FO sent an inappropriate response to the message.

Breaches of Standards of Professional Behaviour

71. The Panel went on to decide whether in view of its findings on the facts, if there had been breaches of the Professional Standards of Behaviour. It had regard for the breaches alleged in the Regulation 30 Notice, specifically 'Honesty & Integrity', albeit integrity only, 'Authority, Respect & Courtesy', 'Equality and Diversity', 'Discreditable Conduct', and 'Challenging and reporting improper conduct'. The Panel also had regard to the College of Policing Code of Ethics.
72. Having determined the factual circumstances, the Panel considered the use of inappropriate, denigrating, offensive and discriminatory by the FO, and the failure to challenge or report his colleagues use of inappropriate, demeaning, denigrating, offensive, derogatory and discriminatory language, was wholly unacceptable and inexcusable.
73. The Panel reminded themselves of the Code of Ethics and the trust that is placed in police officers to maintain high standards of professional behaviour at all times, whether on or off duty.
74. The Panel considered the standard of 'honesty and integrity', mindful that the AA had indicated that the case was limited to integrity only. The Panel determined that the factual circumstances proven and admitted by the FO included discriminatory, offensive and denigrating comments towards females, persons with disabilities and persons of specific nationalities, which is not in keeping the behaviour expected of a police officer.
75. The Panel determined that there had been a significant breach of the professional standard of Honesty and Integrity.
76. The Panel considered the standard of 'Authority, Respect and Courtesy'. The Panel were mindful that the language used by the FO, or not challenged or reported by the FO could be perceived as inappropriate, demeaning, denigrating, offensive, derogatory and discriminatory language towards members of the public and

police colleagues. The FO conduct was not respectful, including making derogatory remarks about a female Inspector.

77. The Panel determined that there had been a significant breach of the professional standard of Authority, Respect and Courtesy.

78. The Panel considered the standard of 'Equality and Diversity'. The Panel found that the conduct of the FO was largely addressed towards females, not making the same remarks about males. The Panel found that the FO conduct was not fair or respectful to all people.

79. The Panel determined that there had been a significant breach of the professional standard of Equality and Diversity.

80. The Panel considered the standard of 'Discreditable Conduct'. The Panel considered how an ordinary, well-informed member of the public would respond to the FO's conduct. The Panel determined that police confidence would be significantly harmed as a result of this conduct, particularly members of the groups highlighted within the WhatsApp group, females and persons with disabilities. There is an expectation that officers will act to the highest standards and not in the manner in which this conduct has been proved and admitted.

81. The Panel determined that there had been a significant breach of the professional standard of Discreditable Conduct.

82. The Panel finally considered the standard of 'Challenging and Reporting Improper Conduct'. The FO use of "10-14" provided reassurance to other officers within the WhatsApp group that inappropriate, offensive, derogatory and discriminatory conduct would not be reported. The FO accepted that he could have left the group and spoken to someone outside of the WhatsApp group.

83. The Panel determined that there had been a significant breach of the professional standard of Challenging and Reporting Improper Conduct.

84. Having decided that the former officer had acted in breach of these Professional Standards of Behaviour, the panel assessed whether his conduct amounts to misconduct or gross misconduct or neither.

85. The Panel reminded itself that the definition of 'misconduct' is a 'breach of the Standards of Professional Behaviour that is so serious as to justify disciplinary action' and the definition of 'gross misconduct' is 'a breach of the Standards of Professional behaviour that is so serious as to justify dismissal. The College of Policing outcomes guidance on 'Assessing seriousness' (Section 4) is relevant to determining if a breach of a Standard of professional behaviour amounts to misconduct, gross misconduct or neither and the panel had regard to it.
86. Having considered the findings of the Panel in terms of the FO's conduct and seriousness of his actions and having reminded themselves that where multiple allegations of misconduct are proved can be taken together, the Panel found that the FO's conduct amounted to **GROSS MISCONDUCT**.

Outcome

87. The 'Guidance on outcomes in police misconduct proceedings' issued by the College of Policing pursuant to section 87 of the Police Act 1996 provides (paragraph 3.30) that the Conduct Regulations apply to former officers 'with some important differences in the possible sanctions and outcomes, the details of which are explained in the HOG.'
88. The relevant paragraph of the HOG is at 20.66:
- d) Where there is a finding of gross misconduct, the panel can only consider two potential outcomes; disciplinary action or no disciplinary action,*
- e) Where there is a finding of gross misconduct and disciplinary action imposed it can only be that the former officer would have been dismissed if they had still been a member of a police force. There is no option to enforce other sanctions .. if the panel determines that the matter does not justify the sanction that the former officer would have been dismissed, no action will be taken and the finding of gross misconduct recorded.'*
89. Paragraph 3.33 of the Guidance on Outcomes provides:

‘Before a panel decides to impose the disciplinary action that the former officer would have been dismissed if still serving, it must follow the same process that applies to serving police officers in arriving at what the appropriate sanction would have been.’

90. At this stage of the hearing, the AA provided the panel with a copy of the former officer’s record of police service and the panel had regard to it.
91. In accordance with regulations 42(14)(c)(iii) of the 2020 Regulations, the panel heard further oral submissions from Ms Kane on behalf of the AA and from Mr Greany on behalf of the former officer.
92. The panel received and accepted legal advice from the LQP. The LQP advised the panel that it should have regard to paragraph 2.66 of the HOG in terms of the available outcomes for a former police officer. The panel was also advised to refer to the College of Policing’s ‘Guidance on Outcomes in police misconduct proceedings’ and to impose an outcome that is appropriate and proportionate having regard to its assessment in terms of seriousness, culpability and harm. The LQP advised that whilst the purpose of police misconduct proceedings is not to be punitive in its approach on outcome, the interests of the profession as a whole ought to be given priority as opposed to the impact of a particular outcome for the former police officer as outlined in *Bolton v Law Society* [1994].
93. The LPQ advised the Panel to be mindful of the distinction between mitigation and personal mitigation and should have regard to paragraph 4.79 and section 6 of the Guidance. The LQP referred to the judgement of Mrs Justice Yip in the case of *R. (on the application of Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis) v Police Misconduct Panel* [2025] EWHC 93 (Admin) that that personal mitigation should not justify a lesser sanction, particularly when misconduct is so serious that nothing other than immediate dismissal would be sufficient to uphold public confidence in policing. The LQP highlighted that this authority further reminded Panels of the importance of following the Outcomes Guidance.
94. When considering outcome, the panel took into account the submissions from both parties and referred to the College of Policing outcomes guidance.

95. The Panel noted at paragraph 4.2 that the Guidance cites the case *Fuglers LLP v Solicitors Regulatory Authority* [2014] EWHC 179 (Admin) and says:

As Mr Justice Popplewell explained, there are three stages to determining the appropriate sanction:

- *Assess the seriousness of the misconduct*
- *Keep in mind the purpose of imposing sanctions*
- *Choose the sanction which most appropriately fulfils that purpose for the seriousness of the conduct in question.*

96. The Panel had regard to paragraph 4.3:

- Assess the seriousness of the proven conduct by reference to,
- The officer's culpability for the misconduct
- The harm caused by the misconduct
- The existence of any aggravating factors
- The existence of any mitigating factors

Assessing Seriousness:

Culpability

97. In assessing the seriousness of the proved and admitted conduct, the Panel considered the culpability of the FO.

98. The Panel found that the FO engaged in a number of WhatsApp exchanges, a number of which he instigated – including the sharing of a video depicting the violent and brutal assault upon an individual and inviting colleagues to comment on whether they would "marry, shag, or crew" female officer.

99. The Panel found that the FO's conduct was deliberate when not challenging the inappropriate comments made by fellow colleagues, particularly when reassuring colleagues that the messages were confidential, by referencing "10-14" [page 1679].

100. The Panel found that the FO engaged in a pattern of offensive comments against women. The Panel found that the conduct occurred over a prolonged period.
101. The Panel had regard to 4.14 of the outcome guidance and the examples of types of misconduct that should be considered as particularly serious.
102. The Panel found that some of the language used by the officer or not challenged by the officer was discriminatory, particularly towards women or persons with a disability. The Panel had regard for the FO admissions that the language used in reference to "*the South Americans are getting it tonight*" [page 717], the repeated reference to females and the FO failure to challenge comments relating to persons with disabilities was discriminatory.
103. The Panel reminded itself that it did not find the comment in respect of Allegation 1.5.1 as discriminatory.
104. The Panel found the FO to have high culpability for the conduct.

Harm

105. The Panel had regard to paragraph 4.66 of the outcomes guidance which says:
- Harm does not need to be suffered by a defined individual or group to undermine public confidence. If the circumstances were known to the public take this into account.*
106. The Panel carefully considered the submissions made on behalf of the FO and the AA that the harm in this matter relates largely to harm to the police service. The Panel accepted these submissions.
107. The Panel found that the conduct of the FO causes obvious reputational harm to Northamptonshire Police and the police service as a whole.
108. The Panel found that this conduct could significantly undermine public confidence if members of the public were aware of their content, particularly

females, in which the language was derogatory, particularly where women were referred to as "it" and "that".

109. The Panel has therefore found that the harm caused to the reputation of the police service has been high.

Aggravating factors

110. The College of Policing outcomes guidance at paragraph 4.76 sets out a non-exhaustive list of aggravating factors. The panel considered the submissions from the parties, the Guidance, and the circumstances of the misconduct.

111. The Panel found that the conduct of the FO was deliberate and contained some pre-meditation and planning, demonstrated by the FO initiating conversations or sharing of videos, as well as indicating that the messages exchanged were "10-14" and would not be reported. The Panel did not find that the FO conduct was predatory.

112. The Panel found that the conduct was regular, repeated or sustained behaviour over a period of 6 months and that the conduct continued after the FO realised or should have realised that it was improper.

113. The Panel found that there were multiple victims in that there were a number of specific individuals mentioned within the messages, including female colleagues.

114. As previously addressed, the Panel found that there were elements of discrimination to the FO conduct.

115. The Panel found that the FO failed to raise concerns or seek advice from a colleague or a senior officer. The Panel had regard to the FO's acceptance when questioned by the AA that he could have left the WhatsApp group at any time or speak to anyone outside of the group about the content of the WhatsApp messages.

Mitigating Factors

116. The College of Policing outcomes guidance at paragraph 4.76 sets out a non-exhaustive list of mitigating factors.

117. The Panel considered the submissions from the parties, the Guidance, and the circumstances of the misconduct. It decided that the following factors were mitigating features:

- The FO made open and early admission at an early stage, which was consistent from the FO Regulation 18 response to the reflective statement, Regulation 31 response, and the oral testimony provided to the Panel during the misconduct hearing.
- The FO expressed genuine remorse and had apologised for his conduct.
- The FO had shown insight and accepted the misconduct.
- There was no evidence of repeated behaviour since the incident.

118. The Panel were further invited to consider medical evidence relating to a recent ADHD diagnosis for the FO. The Panel had regard for paragraph 4.79 of the Guidance which states:

'Mitigating factors are those tending to reduce the seriousness of the misconduct. Some factors may indicate that an officer's culpability is lower, or that the harm caused by the misconduct is less serious than it might otherwise have been. This is not the same as personal mitigation, which is dealt with in the 'Personal mitigation' section of this guidance. Take care not to confuse personal mitigation with those mitigating factors that had an impact on the misconduct at the time.'

119. It was the Panel's view that the medical report of Dr Samantha Lewis, Consultant Clinical Psychologist who assessed the FO between December 2025 and January 2026 could be considered in respect of mitigation in so far as to whether it may have impacted upon the conduct at the time.

120. The Panel accepted that the FO, whilst recently diagnosed with ADHD, was likely to have experienced symptoms of ADHD from an early age [page 9 of ADHD report].
121. The Panel accepted that impulsivity was a factor that has been highlighted as a feature of ADHD which the former officer may have encountered.
122. However, the Panel found the content of the ADHD report did not specifically address the conduct or the state of mind of the officer at the time of this conduct. Therefore, the Panel found that this provided only limited mitigation due to the insufficient detail included within the report addressing how ADHD affected the former officer when engaged in the conduct in 2020.
123. On balance, the Panel did however consider that the mitigation presented did not reduce the overall seriousness of the conduct itself.
124. Overall, the Panel found that this was serious misconduct and the comment made by the former officer relating to "10-14" was an indicator that the former officer realised that the discovery of such messages would be very serious. At no time did the former officer seek to dissuade or challenge his colleagues about the comments made in the group.
125. Therefore, the Panel has found that this was a highly serious matter.

Personal Mitigation

126. Guidance on personal mitigation is given at section 6 of the outcomes guidance. The outcomes guidance says at paragraph 6.4:
- ...due to the nature and purpose of disciplinary proceedings, the weight of personal mitigation will necessarily be limited.*
127. The Panel received extensive character references on behalf of the FO. The Panel carefully considered each character reference, including an additional reference provided by a female colleague provided to the colleague during the course of the misconduct hearing.

128. The Panel had regard to the positive work that FO is described as undertaking in the last 5 years and the high level of praise bestowed upon him from senior officers within Northamptonshire Police, of which the FO should be proud.

129. However, the Panel had to consider the purpose of misconduct proceedings as directed by the Guidance, and imposed limited weight on the personal mitigation advanced on behalf of the FO.

Purpose of imposing sanctions

130. The College of Policing Outcomes guidance says at paragraphs 2.2 and 2:3:

2.2 When determining the appropriate outcome to impose, consider the purpose of police misconduct proceedings.

2.3 The purpose of the police misconduct regime is threefold:

(1) To maintain public confidence in, and the reputation of the police service

(2) To uphold high standards in policing and to deter misconduct

(3) To protect the public

131. The 2020 Home Office Guidance lists these ‘three over-arching purposes for police disciplinary proceedings’ at paragraph 4.26.

Findings on outcome

132. The Panel considered paragraphs 3.30 – 3.33 of the Guidance and the options available to them in terms of outcome.

133. The Panel continued to consider paragraph 2.8 of the Guidance, considering the less severe outcomes before more severe outcomes.

134. Having considered the allegations that the Panel found proven, specifically the offensive, demeaning, and sometimes discriminatory conduct of the FO towards females, including colleagues and persons with a disability, the Panel determined that the proportionate and appropriate conclusion that it could reach in the circumstances, namely to impose disciplinary action.
135. the Panel determined that had the FO still been a serving police officer, the only proportionate and appropriate sanction to fulfil the purpose of misconduct proceedings would be to dismissal the FO.

Police Barred List and report to the College of Policing

136. Northamptonshire Police will be required to report the FO to the College of Policing under section 88A(1)(b) of the Police Act 1996.
137. Whilst it is a matter for the College of Policing, the Panel considered there are sufficient grounds to withhold the name of the FO from the public list and would recommend the FO anonymity afforded throughout these proceedings is maintained.
138. Having received evidence in relation to an application for anonymity, the Panel are satisfied that the risks to the FO and his family previously identified by ACC Ward on 17th February 2026 remain present. The Panel has considered the FO's ADHD medical diagnosis which indicates identifying the FO on the public list may resulted in heightened fear by the FO for the safety of family members. The Panel has also viewed medical evidence relating to the mental health of the FO which is relevant.
139. The Panel has been presented with documents including intelligence reports indicating that organised crime groups and known criminals have been proactively trying to identify the FO. The FO further provided evidence to the Panel during the misconduct hearing that as recently as 8 weeks ago he was informed by officers of Northamptonshire Police that active criminals had identified the FO's personal vehicle.

140. This has been well evidenced and only forms to compound the anxiety of the FO and their family members for their overall safety which will only seek to heighten the anxiety of the FO. It is the recommendation of the Panel that the FO's name is not publicised to prevent the significant risk of harm that may be caused to the FO and/or his family.

141. This report is written with the expectation that a copy will be provided to the College of Policing to allow the publication of the FO name to be carefully considered.

Right of Appeal

114. Paragraph 11.158 of the 2020 Home Office Guidance says:

A police officer has the right to appeal against the finding or outcome of a misconduct hearing to a Police Appeals Tribunal. The Officer must be informed of their right to appeal when notified out of the outcome (Regulation 43(2) of the Conduct Regulations).

115. Paragraph 9(1) of the Police Appeals Tribunals Rules 2020 provides:

Subject to rule 10, a police officer or former police officer who wishes to appeal to a tribunal must give notice of the appeal before the end of 10 working days beginning with the first working day after the day on which the officer is first supplied with a written copy of the relevant decision.

Publicity

116. In accordance with regulation 43(6) of the 2020 Regulations, this report should be published on the Northamptonshire Police website for not less than 28 days, as soon as is practicable after it receives the report and has notified the former officer concerned, with the directed anonymisation prescribed by the Chair.

117. If the former officer exercises his right to appeal to a Police Appeals Tribunal, the AA will in due course be required to re-publish this report under regulation 26(11)(b) of the Police Appeals Tribunal Rules 2020.

ACC James

Chair

Date: 29th July 2026