

**In the matter of the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020
and in the matter of**

[OFFICER A]

Decision of the Independent Chair Jonathan Roy

16th July 2026

Preliminary matters

1. I have today conducted an accelerated misconduct hearing at West Mercia Police Headquarters and have given consideration to various breaches of the standards of professional behaviour as pertain to [OFFICER A]
2. The Appropriate Authority was represented by A/D/Sergeant Lewis Cleaves and Investigating Officer D/Constable Rachel Lynch. [OFFICER A] has chosen not to attend this hearing and has indeed submitted his resignation although he is still a serving officer at the time of this hearing. [OFFICER A] is aware that this hearing is taking place and has had opportunity to attend so I am satisfied it is appropriate for me to continue in his absence.
3. It was alleged that between June 2018 – January 2023 [OFFICER A] exchanged a series of WhatsApp messages with members of his immediate family and/or other individuals known to him personally who are not involved in law enforcement, in which he disclosed confidential police information that he had obtained from policing systems.
4. [OFFICER A] has provided a statement, contained within the bundle in which he accepts exchanging the messages but does **not** accept that his actions breached the Standards of Professional Behaviour (SPB) in respect of Confidentiality and Discreditable Conduct at the level of Gross Misconduct.
5. I, having considered the evidence and the verbal submissions of the Appropriate Authority, have determined it is appropriate for me to hear this case in that

there are sufficient grounds as evidenced in the bundle that [OFFICER A] has breached the standards of SPB as set out.

6. I also conclude that the breaches of the SPB proven are so serious that they do indeed amount to gross misconduct.

Outcome

7. In coming to a determination as to the most appropriate outcome, I have considered the submissions of the appropriate authority as contained within the bundle of evidence submitted to me prior to this hearing along with verbal submissions by the representative of the appropriate authority.
8. [OFFICER A], as stated, chose not to engage with the investigation or process and was not in attendance although was aware he could be, and there was no representation from the police federation or other representative on his behalf. [OFFICER A] had responded to the allegations and provided both a written statement and Regulation 54 response in which he offered some mitigation.
9. In determining the appropriate outcome, I have had regard to the relevant provisions of the College of Policing's Guidance on outcomes in misconduct hearings. I do recognise that it does not automatically follow that where breaches of the code of conduct are found to be so serious as to justify dismissal, that dismissal can be the only sanction implied. Nevertheless, it remains very powerfully the case that the principal objective in the conduct of these hearings must be to preserve public confidence in the police service.
10. I received written and verbal submissions from the Appropriate Authority that the appropriate disciplinary outcome in this case, despite the fact that the officer has submitted his resignation albeit is a serving officer at the time of this hearing, would be dismissal without notice and the placing of his details onto the College of Policing's Barred List.
11. I have reminded myself of the purpose of police misconduct proceedings – these are expressly set out in the College of Policing's Guidance namely;
 1. To maintain public confidence in, and the reputation of the police service
 2. To uphold high standards in policing and deter misconduct
 3. To protect the public

12. My approach has been to adopt the "3 stage approach" also referred to in the College of Policing's Guidance. Namely to assess the seriousness of the misconduct, to keep in mind the purpose of imposing sanctions and to choose the sanction that most appropriately fulfils that purpose bearing in mind the seriousness of the conduct in question. I have been careful to avoid 'double counting'.
13. Culpability denotes the officer's blameworthiness and responsibility for his actions. In this case his actions were very clearly intentional & deliberate. It may well be that the officer did not intend to cause any harm to individuals or police operations. However he ought, given his policing experience and by the standards of any reasonable person, to have foreseen the harm that could be caused to ongoing police operations & investigations, the subjects of the information improperly disclosed, victims of crime and indeed public confidence. As such his culpability is increased.
14. The misuse of police systems and confidential information is a particular concern for the Police Service. The information that was disclosed in this case was sensitive and should have been treated in the strictest confidence and only used for legitimate policing purposes, not to provide points of idle gossip with unauthorised recipients. This is not mitigated or in any way diminished by the officer's assertions that he did not do so for any form of personal gain.
15. The officer has simply abused his position of trust as a police officer.
16. The level of culpability in this matter is high.
17. In terms of harm, whilst no physical harm to any victim or subject as a result of the officer's action is alleged, significant harm is clearly risked when sensitive information is 'leaked' to a number of people not connected to policing
18. The potential for physical and psychological harm to those subject of these breaches of confidentiality is very significant. Victims of serious violence, purported OCG members and even police officers attending to further investigations, operations or make arrests could very possibly have been put at increased risk of harm
19. Any breach of confidentiality is serious but where it concerns Violence Against Women & Girls, as it does with breach 9, it engages matters of local and national concern and has an increased impact on public confidence in policing. In this case harm does not need to be suffered by a defined person or group to

undermine public confidence. In this instance [OFFICER A] has revealed details of the victim, the allegations made, the offender and the ongoing police operation to arrest him. The Appropriate Authority has highlighted the potential significant impact on the harm to the reputation of policing as demonstrated in para 4.66 of the Home Office Guidance.

20. Aggravating factors are present, and I am again careful not to double count in this instance.
21. The officer, in his submissions, pleads that there is no personal gain. There was clearly malign intent in [OFFICER A]'s actions in seeking a personal advantage as the source of confidential gossip – he even makes clear to recipients that he ought not to be sharing certain information.
22. His behaviour was not confined to a single instance or short duration but was repeated and sustained over a period of time.
23. There are multiple proven allegations breaching 2 SPBs.
24. He knew, or ought to have known, that his actions were improper. He said as much to one recipient and in another case, when sharing information with a person believed to be outside the UK, switched to using a more secure means of communication to share information.
25. I find that there are no mitigating factors present. The officer has shown some remorse and some insight in his written submissions but what he states to be 'the absence of personal gain, the absence of corrupt motive, the absence of operational compromise, the absence of dishonesty' simply do not excuse or reduce the seriousness of his misconduct.
26. Furthermore [OFFICER A] has chosen not to engage with this hearing, and I am therefore unable to consider any further mitigations.
27. With regard to personal mitigation, of those set out in the College of Policing's Guidance, I have taken into account [OFFICER A]'s record of service. [Redacted]. The personal mitigation advanced does not in any way detract from his conduct and is not relevant to the seriousness of his conduct in this matter.

28. I reiterate the point that the core purpose of these proceedings is to sustain public confidence in the police. As articulated above, there is no doubt that the facts of this case have the obvious potential to seriously and substantially diminish public confidence. In conclusion, I consider that the level of seriousness in this case is high.
29. West Mercia Police rightly expects and demands the highest standards of professional behaviour from its officers and staff both on and off duty. The behaviour of [OFFICER A] was totally unacceptable, it undermines the values of West Mercia Police and is not befitting of a police officer.
30. I have heard no appropriate evidence to suggest that any other outcome other than dismissal without notice is the only appropriate sanction in this matter.
31. I also order that [OFFICER A]'s name be added to the College of Policing's Barred List.
32. This concludes today's hearing.