



memorandum

FINDINGS FORM

From:	T/Chief Constable Alex Murray
To:	Former Training DC 22630 Lauren BATHAM
Our Ref:	IC/175/23
Date:	9 th February 2024

ACCELERATED MISCONDUCT HEARING – former Training DC 22630 Lauren BATHAM

9th February 2024: Hindlip Hall, Hindlip Headquarters

In accordance with Regulation 63 of the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020, below-listed are the findings and any disciplinary action imposed in the above case. This document must be supplied to you before the end of 5 working days beginning with the first working day after the conclusion of the misconduct proceedings.

Hearing members:

Chair: T/ Chief Constable Alex Murray

Details of the conduct alleged to have breached the Standards of Professional behaviour:

On the 3rd April 2023 while at West Mercia Police Headquarters Hindlip you were subject to a with cause drug test in accordance with Force Policy page 6 on Drug and Alcohol Misuse. The result of that test showed that you had been in possession of and had consumed Cocaine, an illegal controlled drug of Class A.

The breaches of the Standards of Professional behaviour alleged are as Follows:

Discreditable conduct in that you have been in possession of and had consumed Cocaine, an illegal controlled drug of Class A which undermines public trust and confidence in West Mercia Police.

In accordance with Regulation 61, the person conducting the accelerated misconduct hearing shall review the facts of the case and decide on the balance of probabilities whether the conduct of the officer amounts to misconduct, gross misconduct or neither.

Findings:

The conduct amounts to gross misconduct.

The following is a summary of the finding:

I am satisfied that the former officer has breached the Standards of Professional Behaviour, in respect of 'discreditable conduct'. I find that the conduct amounts to gross misconduct.

Disciplinary action to be imposed:

I have had the benefit of the papers in advance of today and have read those carefully prior to the hearing. I have also considered the 2023 College of Policing Guidance on Outcomes in Police Misconduct Proceedings.

I have applied those guidelines and the three-stage process to my decision making today. The first of those three stages is assessing the seriousness of the proven conduct with reference to culpability, the harm caused and any aggravating and mitigating factors.

Former Training Detective Constable Batham was in possession of and consumed cocaine prior to 3rd April 2023. Lauren Batham was a student officer on the Police NOW development programme. Other student officers' had reported that Lauren had been open about her social use of class A drugs and that she had continued to use class A drugs, after enrolling on the police training course.

I regard the use of illegal substances as a serious matter. Drug misuse can lead to impaired performance and an increased risk of accidents. This can have serious consequences for members of the public. Moreover the blatant hypocrisy where an officer is required to enforce laws around prohibited drugs, who then goes on to take them, is self-evident.

The West Mercia Police Procedure on drug and alcohol misuse encourages officers to seek help and support at an early stage (prior to any testing) and those officers who volunteer a drug or alcohol misuse problem are dealt with sympathetically. Former T/DC Batham failed to follow force policy and accept personal responsibility here to self-refer.

Former T/DC Batham appears to have failed to appreciate the expected behaviour required of police officers and has shown a blatant disregard for West Mercia Police's mission, purpose and the code of ethics. This is clear by her casual, open conversations with her colleagues on the course, discussing her drug taking.

In considering the Guidance, and how we assess seriousness, it is clear that T/DC Batham was absolutely culpable for her conduct. It is obvious she could have chosen not to take drugs.

I have considered mitigating factors, one of which may have been that the misconduct is confined to a single episode, however, on balance, it is clear this is not the case, she appeared to openly discuss her drug taking. I have seen no evidence of remorse or

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personal mitigation. I have read the officer's personal record, which very limited, given the fact the former officer only joined WMP on 20.03.24.

As the College of Policing Guidance states, the purpose of the police misconduct regime is threefold: namely to maintain public confidence and the reputation of the police service; to uphold high standards in policing and deter misconduct; and thirdly to protect the public.

The outcome today is that former officer Batham would have been dismissed if she had not ceased to be a member of West Mercia Police force. As a consequence of this finding, former T/DC Batham's name will be included on the Barred List held by College of Policing.

I confirm that the above is correctly recorded. I also confirm that the officer's personal record was considered before a decision was reached on any disciplinary action to be imposed.

Signed:
T/Chief Constable Alex Murray

Date: 09/02/2024

If you wish to receive a copy of the record of the proceedings, please contact the Professional Standards Department.

You have a right of appeal against the finding. Should you wish to exercise this right you must do so in writing to the Chairperson of the Police Appeals Tribunal within ten days of this notice. Please note that the tribunal can increase any outcome imposed as well as reduce or overturn the decision of the panel. You have the right to be legally represented at the appeal hearing.

Form of receipt to be completed by the officer subject of the proceedings (or their Federation Representative):

I acknowledge receipt of this written notice of the misconduct proceedings, dated 9th February 2024 of which this is a true copy.

Signed.....

Date.....