

Thames Valley Police

A misconduct hearing took place between Monday 15th June to Wednesday 17th June 2026 chaired by ACO Melanie Dales

Officer: PC CM/12/25 – PC 3202 Lewis SYMM

Allegations:

Between October 2024 and January 2025, it is alleged that you have behaved in the following manner:

- a) Whilst on patrol in Barton with a female officer, you initiated and engaged in a conversation about a sexual encounter you had with another officer, PC A. In the course of that conversation, you gave explicit details about the sexual encounter, including the nature of the sexual activity that took place and PC A's specific actions;
- b) In December 2024, whilst on duty with a female officer and PCSO Tedstone, you initiated a conversation about having a foot fetish;
- c) Later that day, you again raised the same topic with PCSO Tedstone by asking him whether he also enjoyed feet in a sexual context;
- d) In December 2024, you made comments to PCSOs Tedstone and White to the effect that the female officer was disappointed and/or upset that you had not "made a move" on her;
- e) On the 19th December 2019 whilst at Cowley Police station, you were in the same briefing room as PCSO Tedstone and the female officer. After the officer stood up from a chair and walked away, you said words to the effect of, "You just want to smell it" in reference to the chair where the officer had been sitting;
- f) Whilst on duty in the Neighbourhood Policing Team office, you said words to the effect of, "Hey (officer's name), that is why they call me the Doctor, I have so many appointments with young women at Cowley";
- g) Told the female officer that you had a picture of Henry VIII in your locker, and implied that you had that picture because you admired the fact that he had multiple wives;
- h) In January 2025, you told PC Bryce that the female officer had flirted with you whenever you had been crewed together.

The course of conduct as described above was entirely inappropriate in a professional context, and amounts to disrespectful and degrading conduct towards your colleagues, (allegations (a) – (e) and (h)) and reveals a disrespectful attitude towards women in particular, (allegation (g) - (f)). Your conduct engages the following Standards of Professional Behaviour: Authority, Respect and Courtesy and Discreditable Conduct.

Allegation/fact a.

1. The Panel find this matter proved. The reasons for this decision are as follows:

- (a) The evidence of the female officer. The Panel had the opportunity to observe the officer give evidence and concluded that she was a compelling and credible witness. The Panel noted that she was measured in her evidence and accepted when questioned that she should have reported the incident if she felt uncomfortable about it. She gave a reason for not reporting stating she wanted to

avoid any awkwardness. She accepted that she had a duty to report improper conduct and accepted that she did not do so. Notwithstanding this, she was clear in her account of what happened and the language and words used by PC Symm about his encounter with PC A. She was challenged about the word “origami” and was clear that PC Symm used this word. She accepted that she initiated the conversation about PC A, and gave credible reasons for so doing, but she was also clear that she was very uncomfortable when PC Symm took the conversation into explicit detail. The Panel ultimately concluded that the officer was a credible and honest witness and accepted that her version of the conversation was a truthful one.

- (b) The Panel did not find the explanation given by PC Symm about this conversation to be either credible or compelling. PC Symm accepted that a conversation took place, but the Panel found him evasive about exactly what was discussed. He was pressed in cross examination to be clear about exactly what was said, but was unable to do so, despite being able to recall other details (e.g. that the officer had put music on in the car). The Panel did not find his explanation as to why he could not remember what was said in the conversation, either compelling or credible and ultimately preferred the account given by the officer.
- (c) The Panel also found that the conversation was one which would be remembered by the parties. It involved an explicitly sexual description of a sexual act involving a colleague. The use of the word “origami” is also something unusual and would be something that would be remembered. The officer was clear that this word was used by PC Symm. The Panel was satisfied that it is an unusual term in this context and it would have been an peculiar term for the officer to have chosen if it had not been used by PC Symm.

Allegation/facts b and c.

- 2. The Panel has found these matters not proved. The reason for this decision is as follows:

- (a) The Panel was satisfied that there was a conversation involving the female officer, PCSO Tedstone and PC Symm about feet in a sexual context. The evidence was insufficient for the following reasons:
 - (i) The female officer was clear that there were two conversations about feet, one in Cowley and one in Marston. PCSO Tedstone only refers to one conversation, and he says that was in a police car. PCSO Tedstone also

makes no reference to there being a “foot fetish”. The Panel was satisfied that both the officer and PCSO Tedstone were honest

- (i) in the accounts given but there were marked differences between them and the Panel could not be satisfied, to the required standard, that the allegations were proved.
- (ii) Additionally, the Panel noted the evidence of PCSO Bishop but were cognisant that PCSO Bishop was not a direct witness. Whilst he stated that he was aware PC Symm spoke about having a foot fetish he believed this to be a joke.

Allegation/fact d.

3. The Panel find this matter proved (but did not find that it amounted to misconduct).

The reasons for this decision are as follows:

- (a) The evidence of the female officer. The officer was clear in her statement, and in her evidence before the Panel, that PCSO’s White and Tedstone told her that they had heard PC Symm say the words that form the basis of this allegation/fact. The Panel have previously found the officer to be a credible and compelling witness and has no reason to doubt her evidence about this matter
- (b) The evidence of PCSO White. PCSO White’s evidence was very limited. She had no independent memory of this incident save for what was written in her statement. She did confirm to the Panel in her evidence before it what was said in the statement about the words used by PC Symm about the officer, and that the officer was annoyed by the comment (which is consistent with the officers evidence).
- (c) The Panel noted that PC Symm denied this allegation in his interview and in his Regulation 31 response. The Panel has previously found PC Symm’s account to be lacking in credibility and were satisfied, to the relevant standard, on the basis of the evidence of PCSO White and the female officer that PC Symm did use the words alleged in this allegation/fact.
- (d) Despite finding that the words complained of were used, the Panel was not satisfied that, even if they were, they could amount to misconduct. The words were not abusive or overly sexualised and failed to reach the required standard to constitute misconduct on this occasion.

Allegation/fact e.

4. The Panel find this matter proved. The reasons for this decision are as follows:

- (a) The evidence of PCSO Tedstone. PCSO Tedstone stated that on 19th December 2024 he was in the Neighbourhood Office awaiting a briefing. He was seated at a computer at the back of the room with the female officer sat next to him. The officer got up to go to the other side of the room for the briefing. PC Symm entered the room from behind PCSO Tedstone and sat on the chair next to him that the officer had left. PC Symm said "YOU JUST WANT TO SMELL IT" referring to the chair. PCSO Tedstone could not recall his response but disagreed with the comment along the lines of "NO".
- (b) The evidence of PC Bryce. PC Bryce stated that he was with PC Symm, the female officer and PCSO Tedstone in the Neighbourhood Policing Team office on the relevant day. They were together at one end of the office with some other members of the team at the other end. The officer stood up from her chair and when she was about 3 to 4 paces away PC Symm leant over, bending towards the seat the officer had left and made a gesture and noise as if sniffing the seat. He was seated on a nearby chair and his face was about 30 to 40 cms from the chair the officer had left. It was clear that he was mimicking sniffing her chair. He then said towards PCSO Tedstone "JUST MAKES YOU WANT TO SNIFF IT". The female officer was at the other side of the room by that time and was unaware.
- (c) PC Symm stated that this incident did not take place. He does recall one incident involving a chair at the venue but denied it involved a chair that the female officer had sat on. It was commented on because it had a food stain on it. The Panel considered his explanation and did not find it credible or consistent and whilst the panel agree that there was likely to have been some form of conversation between the witnesses, this did not amount to a conspiracy. The accounts given by PCSO Tedstone and PC Bryce were broadly consistent and specific and the words used could not be easily misunderstood. The act of smelling a chair that a colleague had sat on was sexual in the Panel's view and the accounts given by PCSO Tedstone and PC Bryce were compelling, credible and broadly consistent.

Allegation/fact f.

- 5. The Panel find this matter proved. The reasons for this decision are as follows:
 - (a) The evidence of the female officer. The officer stated that she was at work on her laptop when PC Symm asked her "I HAD APPOINTMENTS DIDN'T I (officers name)". PC Symm was talking with PC Kelly and clarified this with "YOU KNOW FOR GIRLS, DIDN'T I?" The officer thinks she just responded "OH RIGHT, OK" or words to that effect.

- (b) The officer further stated that throughout her contact with PC Symm his conversation has frequently been about how he has dated lots of girls. He has commented that he was called the Doctor because of all the appointments he had with the girls he was dating.
- (c) The evidence of PC Bryce. PC Bryce stated that one day in the Neighbourhood Policing Team office PC Symm was with PC Kelly when PC Bryce heard him comment to the officer "HEY (OFFICERS NAME), THAT IS WHY THEY CALL ME THE DOCTOR, I HAVE SO MANY APPOINTMENTS WITH YOUNG WOMEN AT COWLEY".
- (d) Statements from other officers in the hearing bundle confirm that it was general knowledge that PC Symm had the nickname of the Doctor and for what reason (statements of PS Benjamin and PC Hackett).
- (e) PC Symm accepted that he had the nickname of the doctor. He stated that it was a nickname given to him, not one chosen by himself. He denied using the words as alleged by the officer and PC Bryce but the Panel did not find his explanation credible and compelling. Although he stated that he did not choose the nickname, he confirmed that he had done nothing to stop people using it about him. The Panel found the accounts given by the officer and PC Bryce about this matter credible, compelling and ultimately consistent and was therefore satisfied to the required standard that this allegation/fact was proved.

Allegation/fact g.

6. The Panel find this matter proved. The reasons for this decision are as follows:

- (a) The evidence of the female officer. The officer stated that PC Symm has a poster of Henry VIII on his locker at Cowley. She stated that he told her that he printed the picture. She knew that PC Symm was into history and did a lot of metal detecting. PC Symm had at some point alluded to having chosen a picture of Henry VIII because he was 'a boy' because he had 6 wives.
- (b) The evidence of PC Bryce. PC Bryce stated that PC Symm had a picture of Henry VIII on his locker at work. He had commented that he would like to have multiple wives like Henry VIII.
- (c) The evidence of PC Hackett. PC Hackett stated that she recalled that PC Symm had a picture of Henry VIII on his docket when he was on the Neighbourhood Team at Abingdon. One day she asked PC Symm the relevance of the picture and he responded to the effect of 'because he had a lot of wives'.

- (d) PC Symm accepted that he did have a picture of Henry VIII on his locker. He accepted that he put the picture on his locker when he arrived to take up his duties at Cowley Police Station. This was a deliberate decision by him. He stated under cross examination that he did not use the words attributed to him by the officer and PC Hackett but subsequently accepted that he might have done. The Panel was satisfied that the accounts given by the officer, PC Bryce and PC Hackett were credible, compelling and ultimately consistent. PC Symm accepted that he “might” have said the words attributed to him by the officer and PC Hackett. The Panel was therefore satisfied to the relevant standard that this matter was proved.

Allegation/fact h.

7. The Panel found this matter not proved. The reason for this decision was as follows:

- (a) The evidence of PC Bryce. PC Bryce stated that on the day in question, he was crewed with PC Symm. The female officer should have been crewed with PC Symm however she no longer wanted the shift due to PC Symm’s behaviour. They were in a car together with PC Bryce driving. As they left the police station PC Symm questioned why the officer no longer wanted to work the shift. PC Bryce told PC Symm something had come up to which PC Symm said that he thought he had done something to offend her and that he didn’t think the officer liked him very much. He then commented to PC Bryce that whenever they are crewed together the officer always flirts with him when they are alone.
- (b) The Panel do not doubt the evidence of PC Bryce and found him to be a credible and compelling witness. The statement alleged to be made by PC Symm appears in a conversation where PC Symm genuinely appears to be trying to find out whether there was a problem between him and the officer. PC Symm seems to be showing some self -reflection and appears to be an isolated comment in a longer, more reflective conversation. Whilst the Panel was satisfied that the words alleged to be said by PC Symm were used, it was not satisfied that the context in which they were used in this instance amounted to misconduct. The Panel did not consider that the words appeared to be used maliciously but were used in a conversation where PC Symm was trying to ascertain whether there was a problem between him and the officer. In those circumstances, the Panel was not satisfied to the required standard that this matter was proved.

Standards of professional Behaviour Deemed to have been Breached

1. **Authority, Respect and Courtesy:** The Panel is satisfied that the allegation found proved at a. showed a lack of respect towards PC A by PC Symm. He should not have spoken about his encounter with PC A in such explicit and disrespectful terms with the female officer. The allegations found proved at d., e., f, and g. show a lack of respect towards the officer (allegations d and e) and women in general (allegations f and g). It also involves a course of conduct showing a pattern of behaviour and lack of respect to women.
2. **Discreditable conduct:** For similar reasons the Panel is satisfied that the conduct found proved against PC Symm also constitute breaches of the Professional Standard of Conduct in that the particular conduct can properly be described as discreditable conduct.

Disciplinary Action Imposed

1. The Panel considered the appropriate outcome for this matter using the College of Policing Guidance on Outcomes in Police Misconduct Proceedings [2023 Edition].
2. Paragraph 4.2 of this Guidance sets out the three stages to determining the appropriate sanction in these proceedings. The Panel first has to assess the seriousness of the misconduct. Secondly, the Panel needs to keep in mind the purpose for imposing sanctions in police misconduct proceedings. Thirdly, the Panel needs to choose the outcome that appropriately fulfils that purpose, given the seriousness of the conduct in question.
3. The Panel relied on its findings on seriousness set out in its findings on determining the level of Misconduct in these proceedings. The Panel adopted and relied on its findings and assessment of culpability, harm, and the identification of the relevant aggravating factors and mitigating factors set out in the decision on the facts, the breaches of the appropriate standards of professional conduct and the level of misconduct.
4. The Panel considered the service record of PC Symm. There were no previous disciplinary findings recorded against him. The Panel read the character evidence submitted on his behalf.
5. The Panel reminded itself of the threefold purpose of police misconduct proceedings, namely to:

- Maintain public confidence in and reputation of the police service.
 - Uphold high standards in policing and deter misconduct.
 - Protect the public.
6. The available outcomes at a Misconduct Hearing where there is a finding of misconduct are as follows:
- Written warning