

IN THE MATTER OF THE POLICE (CONDUCT) REGULATIONS 2020

AND IN THE MATTER OF

FORMER DETECTIVE CONSTABLE CASPER BANGERT

**DECISIONS OF THE PANEL ON
DISPUTED FACTS, STANDARDS, GROSS MISCONDUCT
AND OUTCOME**

Introduction

1. The misconduct hearing for Former Detective Constable Casper Bangert (the Former Officer) was held in public and a Notice was published to that effect in accordance with Regulation 36(1) of the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 (the 2020 Regulations). The amended Regulation 30 Notice served on the Former Officer by the Appropriate Authority (the AA) alleged that the Former Officer had behaved in a manner which amounted to Gross Misconduct.
2. In brief, it was alleged that on 5 separate occasions, the Former Officer had placed drawing pins in the eyes of a Thames Valley Police Inspector as depicted in photographs of this Inspector on two separate noticeboards at a police station in Oxfordshire. The conduct had taken place between July 2025 and November 2025.
3. No other photographs were defaced in this way. It was alleged that because the Inspector was an openly gay man, the Former Officer had engaged in targeted homophobic conduct.
4. A Direction was made under Regulation 39 of the 2020 Regulations that no information was to be published that might lead to the identity of the Inspector becoming known, and that he was to be referred to as "Inspector X".
5. The AA alleged that the Former Officer's conduct amounted to breaches of the Standards of Professional Behaviour (SPBs) relating to 'Authority, Respect and Courtesy', 'Discreditable Conduct', and 'Equality and Diversity'. These breaches were so serious that the dismissal of the Former Officer would be justified had he still been serving, and his behaviour amounted to Gross Misconduct.

6. In his amended Regulation 31 response which was provided on 8 May 2026, the Former Officer accepted he had placed the drawing pins in the eyes of Inspector X (in the photographs) on each of the five occasions alleged. He denied however that he had targeted Inspector X for any particular reason. He said that he had not known about the sexuality of Inspector X at the time, and he denied that he had acted with any homophobic intent.

The Proceedings

7. The Panel read and carefully considered all the documentation that was submitted in advance of the hearing. At the start of the Hearing, Former Officer accepted he had breached the SPBs in respect of 'Authority, Respect and Courtesy', and 'Discreditable Conduct'. In this regard, he accepted that his actions amounted to Misconduct, but not to Gross Misconduct. The Former Officer denied having breached the 'Equality and Diversity' SPB.
8. Given that the central issues in the case revolved around the Former Officer's reasons/motivation for his actions, it was determined that no witnesses would be required to attend the Misconduct Hearing. The Former Officer did give evidence, and the Panel's assessment of his evidence is set out below.
9. The Panel reminded itself that the burden was on the AA to prove on the balance of probabilities that the Former Officer had behaved in the manner alleged and in doing so that he breached the relevant SPBs. Further, the AA was required to satisfy the Panel to the same standard that the manner of the breach was of such a nature or degree that it amounted to Gross Misconduct.
10. The Panel took note of the established principle that the more serious the allegation, the more persuasive the evidence would need to be to meet that standard.
11. The Panel approached its task in the following stages:
 - i) Are any of the facts admitted?
 - ii) What facts have been proved by the AA on the balance of probabilities?

- iii) Of the admitted or proved facts, has the AA satisfied the Panel on the balance of probabilities that the relevant SPBs have been breached?
- iv) If so, has the AA satisfied the Panel on the balance of probabilities that it is Gross Misconduct?

The Admitted Facts

12. As indicated above, the Former Officer admitted most of the factual allegations in this case. In factual terms he accepted particulars 1 to 6 of the specified Allegations of Breach in the amended Regulation 30 Notice, namely:

“1) On a date /dates unknown between 25 July 2024 and 29 July 2024 you damaged a photograph of Inspector X on the SMT noticeboard at a police station by placing pins into the eyes.

(2) On a date /dates unknown between 25 July 2024 and 29 July 2024 you damaged a photograph of Inspector X on the ‘Endeavour’ noticeboard at a police station by placing pins into the eyes.

(3) On a date unknown between 18 October and 21 October 2024 you again damaged a photograph of Inspector X on the SMT noticeboard at police station by placing pins into the eyes.

(4) Between 14.00 – 23.00 on 5 November 2024 you again damaged a photograph of Inspector X on the SMT noticeboard at a police station by placing pins into the eyes.

(5) Between 14.00 – 23.00 on 5 November 2024 you again damaged a photograph of Inspector X on the ‘Endeavour’ noticeboard at a police station by placing pins into the eyes.

(6) Such conduct amounts to a breach of the Standard of Professional Behaviour in relation to Authority, Respect and Courtesy, and Discreditable Conduct.

The Disputed Facts

13. The main point of contention in the case concerned what led the Former Officer to act the way that he did. The AA’s case was that homophobia was the probable motivation for the Former Officer’s action – that he knew that Inspector X was gay, that the fact of his sexuality was the only matter that distinguished him from others whose photographs were on the SMT and Endeavour notice boards, and that Inspector X was

being targeted for this reason. This was set out at particular 7 of the Allegations of Breach.

14. The Former Officer strenuously denied that this was the case. He stated that he only stuck the pins in the eyes in the pictures as a practical joke so as to raise morale; that this was a common phenomenon both back in his native Denmark and in the university and naval environments he had previously been in; that the first time he found about Inspector X's sexuality was in his misconduct interview; and that he harboured no homophobic feelings or beliefs, and would never therefore act with such motivation.
15. An additional matter for the Panel to consider was that set out at particular 8 of the Allegations of Breach. This was whether the Former Officer's failure to respond to an all-user email on 7 November 2024 about damage to the noticeboards was an aggravating feature of his conduct.

Assessment of the Former Officer's evidence

16. Having heard the Former Officer's evidence, the Panel found him to be a credible witness overall, and someone who was genuinely remorseful for his actions and the harm he had caused. He was someone who clearly had a strong moral code, and he was acutely aware of his own failings.
17. There were certain aspects of his evidence upon which the Panel were not wholly persuaded however. His explanation, for example, that he had only placed the pins in Inspector X's eyes because the 'Googly Eyes' effect ensuing would look particularly amusing in his case was not considered to be wholly satisfactory. In addition, the Panel retained doubts as to whether the Former Officer was truly the 'team player' he was claiming to be. Finally, the Panel also did not find convincing the Former Officer's evidence to the effect that he did not make a connection between Superintendent Riddell all-user email on 7 November 2024, and his own conduct which had been continuing until only 2 days previously. The Panel considered it more likely that the Former Officer simply chose not to come forward and identify himself as the culprit in the hope that his actions would not be discovered.

Character Evidence

18. The Panel had been provided with a bundle of 18 character references. These ranged from policing colleagues of the Former Officer to those who knew him well through his

previous work at a University and in the Navy, along with those who knew him through his faith and recent ordination.

19. These character references were taken into account by the Panel, first in terms of whether the Former Officer was likely to have acted with the homophobic intentions as alleged by the AA, and secondly in respect of how the Panel assessed the credibility of his evidence overall.
20. Of particular note to the Panel was the character evidence of one friend who described himself as being openly gay, who remarked on how kind and respectful the Former Officer had always been to him, and who considered that neither his faith nor any other reason had ever given rise to concerns over the Former Officer's attitudes towards homosexuality.

The Panel's Findings on the Disputed Issues

21. The key issue for the Panel to determine was that set out in paragraph 7 in the Allegations of Breach section of the Regulation 30 Notice, namely whether the Former Officer, knowing that Inspector X was an openly gay man, had acted in a homophobic manner.
22. Although paragraph 8 of the same section of the Regulation 30 Notice contained a factual allegation which the AA said amounted to an aggravating factor rather than a specific breach of Standards, the Panel also made findings on this.
23. The Panel, as invited by the parties, approached its consideration of paragraph 7 in two stages:
 - i) Did the Former Officer know that Inspector X was gay?
 - ii) If so, was his conduct in sticking pins in the noticeboard motivated by homophobia?
24. In terms of the first question, having assessed all the evidence in the case, the Panel reached the view that the AA had not, on the balance of probabilities, proved that the Former Officer knew what the sexuality of Inspector X was.
25. Although some evidence was put forward about Inspector X which stated that he was open about his sexuality in the workplace, and there may have been a degree of knowledge of this amongst policing colleagues, the Panel was not satisfied that it was

more likely than not than the Former Officer himself knew that Inspector X was gay. The Panel accepted the Former Officer's evidence on this question.

26. On this basis, the Panel found that paragraph 7 of the Allegations of Breach was not proven.

27. Although the Panel was not required to make any additional findings, the Panel did wish to make known its views that, even if the Former Officer had known of Inspector X's sexuality, based on all that it had seen and heard about the Former Officer, it did not consider him to have acted with homophobic motives. Whilst the Panel considered his motives to still have been unfathomable, it did not consider homophobia to be a probable reason.

28. In respect of paragraph 8 in the Allegations of Breach, as indicated above the Panel did find on the balance of probabilities that the Former Officer had read the email, known it related to his conduct, and wholly failed to respond. This was therefore deemed to be an aggravating feature in the case.

Standards of Professional Behaviour

29. Having ascertained the facts in the manner outlined above, the Panel went on to consider whether breaches of the SPBs had occurred.

Authority, Courtesy and Respect

30. When considering the Standard relating to 'Authority, Respect and Courtesy', the Panel reached the view that the Former Officer did not exercise the level of self-control expected of an officer in his position. He did not have any regard to either the rights or the likely feelings of Inspector X, the target of his actions, which were unprofessional and had the potential to damage the reputation of policing.

31. For all these reasons, the Panel found this Standard to have been breached. It was noted that the Former Officer had accepted breaching this Standard.

Discreditable Conduct

32. The Former Officer's actions clearly had the potential to bring discredit to Thames Valley Police and to undermine public confidence in policing. The public would rightly

be concerned about an officer repeatedly acting in this childish and disrespectful way towards a senior colleague.

33. Again, taking note of the fact that the Former Officer accepted he had breached this SPB, the Panel also found the SPB in respect of 'Discreditable Conduct' to have been breached.

Equality and Diversity

34. In the light of the Panel finding that the Former Officer did not know of Inspector X's sexuality when he carried out his actions, the Panel did not consider homophobia to have played any part in the matter.
35. According the SPB relating to 'Equality and Diversity' was not considered to have been breached.

Misconduct or Gross Misconduct

36. The Panel went on to consider whether the Former Officer's behaviour amounted to Misconduct or Gross Misconduct. Regulation 2(1) of the 2020 Regulations defines Misconduct as "*a breach of the standards of behaviour so serious as to justify disciplinary action*". Gross Misconduct is defined as "*a breach of the standards of professional behaviour that is so serious as to justify dismissal*".
37. The Panel reminded itself that the purpose of the police misconduct regime is to: maintain public confidence in and the reputation of the police service; uphold high standards in policing and deter misconduct; and to protect the public.
38. In assessing the seriousness of the Former Officer's conduct, the Panel drew assistance from the College of Policing (CoP) Guidance on Outcomes in Police Misconduct Proceedings.
39. Adopting the structured approach set out within this Guidance, the Panel made the following findings:

Culpability

40. The Former Officer's actions were clearly intentional, deliberate and targeted. And although the harm caused to Inspector X may have been unintentional, the Former Officer could reasonably have foreseen that such harm would ensue.

Harm

41. The Former Officer's actions over a 5-month period clearly caused psychological distress to Inspector X. In his witness statement, Inspector X had described how the ongoing actions had impacted upon his confidence, both in the workplace and in his personal life. He said that he felt like he was being stalked and he was worried that matters would escalate further.
42. In addition, the Panel was quite sure that conduct of this nature would have the wider effect of undermining discipline within the Police Service, and harm the integrity of the policing hierarchy which was a necessary element of how effective policing should be maintained.

Aggravating Factors

43. The Panel recognised that some of the aggravating factors listed in the CoP Guidance on Outcomes had already been taken into account when assessing culpability, so it took care not to 'double count' these, in particular the targeted and deliberate nature of the conduct.
44. Additionally however, the Panel noted the following aggravating factors, namely:
- i) Damage to property occurred on several occasions - although relatively minor, it still required time and effort to be remedied.
 - ii) The Former Officer actions in failing to respond to the email of Superintendent Riddell had the effect of concealing his wrongdoing, albeit this was for a relatively short time given that he was served with his misconduct investigation papers only 4 weeks later.
 - iii) The behaviour was both repeated and sustained over a period of 5 months.
 - iv) There were 5 separate proven allegations, and two of the SPBs were breached.

Mitigating Factors

45. The Panel acknowledged that the Former Officer had made open admissions at early stage to those conducting the misconduct investigation. In addition, he had demonstrated genuine remorse, insight, and an acceptance of responsibility for his actions.

46. Taking all of the above into account, the Panel concluded that the breaches of SPBs did reach the threshold whereby they were so serious as to justify the dismissal of the Former Officer from Thames Valley Police had he still been in service.

47. They therefore amounted to Gross Misconduct.

Outcome Decision

48. Having come to the view that the Former Officer's conduct amounted to Gross Misconduct, the Panel went on to determine the appropriate outcome in terms of disciplinary action.

49. The Panel applied the principles set out in *R (on the application of the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police) v Police Misconduct Panel* [2018] 11 WL UK 822 and *R (on the application of Chief Constable West Midlands Police) v Panel Chair, Police Misconduct Panel v Officer "A" – Interested Party* [2020] EWHC 1400 (*Admin*) which emphasise the importance of following the structured approach as set out in the College of Policing (CoP) Guidance on Outcomes in Police Misconduct Proceedings.

50. In summary, the Panel:

- (i) Assessed the seriousness of the conduct and behaviour of the Former Officer
- (ii) Reminded itself of the purpose of imposing sanctions, namely:
 - Maintaining public confidence in and the reputation of the police service;
 - Upholding high standards in policing and deterring misconduct; and
 - Protecting the public.
- (iii) Arrived at an Outcome which most appropriately fulfilled the purpose of imposing sanctions in the light of the seriousness of the Former Officer's conduct.

Seriousness of the Conduct and Behaviour

51. In considering the appropriate sanction, the Panel considered the following factors in line with the guidance on assessing seriousness in the CoP Guidance on Outcomes:

- The culpability borne by the Former Officer for his actions

- The harm caused by the Former Officer's actions
- The existence of any aggravating factors
- The existence of any mitigating factors

52. The Panel's detailed consideration of culpability, harm, aggravating factors and mitigating factors has been set out earlier in this Outcome Report in the context of its finding that the seriousness of the case was such as to have crossed the threshold so as to amount to Gross Misconduct. This will not be set out again here therefore.

53. However, in terms of taking a step back and considering the case in the round, the Panel took the view that there was a **medium level of blameworthiness** on the part of the Former Officer, and that the **harm** he caused (both to Inspector X in particular and to the integrity of policing generally) was also at a **medium level**.

54. Prior to the Panel retiring to make its determination on outcome, the AA indicated that, notwithstanding the finding of Gross Misconduct, it would be submitting that dismissal without notice would be the outcome it would be seeking had the Former Officer still been in service. This was on account of the Equality and Diversity SPB having not being found to have been breached. It was acknowledged however, that the decision on outcome was for the Panel to make.

Personal Mitigation

55. The Panel considered the personal mitigation on behalf of the Former Officer.

56. Given the purpose of police misconduct meetings, the Panel kept in mind the fact that personal mitigation will carry limited weight and less than it might do in a different context [as explained by Holroyde J as he then was in *The Queen (on the application of Williams) v Police Appeals Tribunal* [2016] EWHC 2708 (QB)].

57. Nevertheless, the Panel did take account of the fact that there were no previous disciplinary findings in the Former Officer's service history, along with the bundle of character references that described the Former Officer's various qualities, including how he was thoughtful, committed, and had a strong work ethic.

Outcome

58. The Panel then went on to consider the outcome which would most appropriately

fulfil the purposes of imposing sanctions in the light of the seriousness of the Former Officer's conduct.

59. Whilst weight was accorded to the limited mitigation that existed for the Former Officer, the Panel also gave proper emphasis to the strong public interest in the maintenance of public confidence in policing in reaching its conclusion on outcome. The Panel kept in mind the declaratory purpose of any decision made in terms of maintaining high professional standards, and for prevention and protection purposes.
60. It was recognised that where there is a finding of Gross Misconduct and disciplinary action is imposed, this can only be dismissal as there is no option to enforce other sanctions given the termination in the Former Officer's employment status.
61. Having taken all the circumstances of the case into account and balanced the aggravating and mitigating factors, the Panel's decision about the appropriate outcome is that a sanction short of dismissal without notice would have been appropriate had the Former Officer still been a member of a police force.
62. Therefore, the outcome in this case was one of Gross Misconduct with no disciplinary action.

Right of Appeal

63. The Panel is required to notify the former officer that he has a right of appeal to the Police Appeals Tribunal. The Appropriate Authority shall provide a notice as to the procedure to be followed in that regard.

Publication of Outcome

64. In accordance with Regulations 43(1) and (6) of the 2020 Regulations, the AA shall publish a report of the outcome of these proceedings on its website for a period of not less than 28 days.

ACC Christian Bunt – Chair

Jane Charlton – Independent Panel Member

Dominic Hurst - Independent Panel Member