

Police Constable PC Mason O'Connor Warrant No: P263394

Accelerated Misconduct Hearing Finding and Outcome

Regulation 63(1) Report

1. This matter comes before me as an accelerated misconduct hearing under Part 5 of the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020.
2. The hearing was conducted by me, Commander Colin Wingrove, on 15 September 2026 in person at Patrick Dunne House, Chalk Way Pit, Sutton, SM1 4RD.
3. I have had the benefit of the papers in advance of today and read them carefully before the hearing started. I am satisfied that the required notices under the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 have been served. These are matters which have not, in any case, been disputed before me.
4. I am satisfied Police Constable (PC) O'Connor has been properly served with the papers and Regulations 51 to 53 of the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 have been complied with.

Hearing in Public

5. The hearing was held in public pursuant to Regulation 59(1) of the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020, as amended.

Representation

6. PC O'Connor attended the hearing and was represented by Counsel, Luke Ponte KC. PC O'Connor provided a Regulation 54 response.
7. The Appropriate Authority was represented by Counsel, Ms Cecile White and Case Manager, Ms Melissa Gordedo.
8. I was advised by a Legally Qualified Person, Ms Shah who provided her advice on the record.

Preliminary Issues —Abuse of Process

9. Before the substantive allegation could be addressed, a preliminary argument was heard, and I have provided a separate ruling on the matter.
10. In brief, the Officer's Application to stay the proceedings was refused.

The Allegation

11. On 9 October 2024, you were off duty at the Lemon Tree public house, behind Charing Cross Police Station, socialising with colleagues after work.
12. In the presence and hearing of two male colleagues, you said to one of your female colleagues:
13. "I hope you get raped on your way to Waterloo" or similar words.
14. Your comment shocked colleagues and caused genuine upset to the female officer concerned.
15. Your behaviour in making this comment breached:
 - i. The **Authority, Respect and Courtesy** paragraph of the Standard of Professional Behaviour because your behaviour was disrespectful.
 - ii. The **Equality and Diversity** paragraph of the Standards of Professional Behaviour because your offensive comment was about a violent sexual crime that disproportionately affects women and was made to your female colleague; and
 - iii. The **Discreditable Conduct** paragraph of the Standards of Professional Behaviour because your comment was likely to bring discredit upon the police service and/or undermine public confidence in the police service.
16. Your breach of the Standards of Professional Behaviour was so serious that it amounts to gross misconduct.

The Hearing

17. I have listened to the case presented on behalf of the Appropriate Authority by Ms White and the representations made on behalf of PC O'Connor by Mr Ponte KC. I have also heard from the officer directly.

The Facts

18. The main issues of fact which I must decide is whether the Appropriate Authority has proved on the balance of probabilities the allegation against PC O'Connor.
19. The evidence available to me are witness statements from PC A which details the incident and the profound and enduring personal impact on her.
20. Moreover, I have evidence from two officers present when the comment was made by PC O'Connor. One officer expresses that he was immediately shocked; his colleague's face dropped; PC O'Connor apologised profusely. He describes the comment as out of character and "misguided and disgusting." The other officer describes the same comment as having come "out of left field." He remarked that PC A was visibly shocked and upset. PC O'Connor showed immediate remorse and apologised profusely. This officer travelled home with PC A to support her after the comment was made by PC O'Connor.
21. PS Corcoran provided a statement that PC A reported the matter to him by telephone the following morning, very upset. He was supportive.
22. In PC O'Connor's written response dated the 21st May 2026 (statement under caution) admits making the comment. He states it was an off-the-cuff comment in light-hearted back-and-forth that he instantly regretted. He apologised at the time and by a long WhatsApp text message on the train home that evening. He states he has reflected and matured and completed further voluntary courses.
23. The three colleagues present gave mutually corroborative accounts of the same words and the immediate reaction. PC O'Connor has provided a written response.
24. If this allegation is proven, then I must decide whether it amounts to breach of the following standards of behaviour:

- i. **Authority, Respect and Courtesy** — Police officers act with self-control and tolerance, treating members of the public and colleagues with respect and courtesy. Police officers do not abuse their powers or authority and respect the rights of all individuals.
- ii. **Equality and Diversity** — Police officers act with fairness and impartiality. They do not discriminate unlawfully or unfairly.
- iii. **Discreditable Conduct** — Police officers behave in a manner which does not discredit the police service or undermine public confidence in it, whether on or off duty.

Officer's Position

- 25. PC O'Connor provided a detailed Regulation 54 response and submissions were made on his behalf by Mr Ponte KC. His position, in summary, is as follows:
- 26. The case history is highly unusual. He accepts that he made the comment as alleged.
- 27. He accepts that the comment breached the Standards of Professional Behaviour as to Authority, Respect and Courtesy; Equality and Diversity; and Discreditable Conduct.
- 28. He accepts on reflection that the breaches amount to gross misconduct.
- 29. He relies on matters of mitigation: the comment was a single, off-duty remark, out of character; he apologised immediately and by WhatsApp text that evening; he self-reported to his line manager the following day; he engaged fully with the initial process and RPRP (RPRP meeting on or around 20 December 2024); he showed insight and remorse; he completed voluntary courses (Mental Health First Aid; Welfare Support Officer training); and he has conducted himself without blemish over approximately 18 months since the incident.
- 30. He will rely on character evidence.

31. In line with Regulation 61(7) and Regulation 61(8), I have carefully considered submissions from the Appropriate Authority and from those representing PC O'Connor.

Decision on Finding

32. I have applied Regulation 61(15) and carefully considered all of the evidence before me. I am satisfied that the Appropriate Authority has proved on the balance of probabilities that PC O'Connor has made the comment as alleged. In any event, PC O'Connor admits that he made the comment.

Breach of Professional Standards

33. In line with Regulation 61(16), I bear in mind that the burden of proving a Breach of Standards rests upon the Appropriate Authority and that it must satisfy me on the balance of probabilities.
34. I am satisfied that the Appropriate Authority has discharged the burden of proof and the conduct did breach the standards of professional behaviour as to Authority, Respect and Courtesy, Equality and Diversity, and Discreditable Conduct.

Assessment of Seriousness

35. I go on to make a provisional assessment of seriousness by reference to Culpability and Harm, mitigating and aggravating factors
36. Culpability is high: The officer's remark was deliberate and intentional, he stated he was making a joke. Whilst I accept that the officer did not intend that the words he used were to be taken literally and he had no intention that any actual cause harm to PC A, the words he used were nevertheless extreme in nature, clearly said by him.
37. The comment referred to rape, a serious sexual and violent criminal offence, and was directed personally towards a female colleague.

38. Police officers are expected to understand the significance and impact of such language. The Officer's choice of words represented a serious failure of judgment and a marked departure from the standards expected of a police officer.
39. I also note that the conduct involved a protected characteristic, namely sex, in that the language used was inherently gendered and directed at a female colleague, the only female colleague in the group at the time, just prior to setting off on her journey home late at night.
40. I therefore conclude that the Officer bears a high degree of personal responsibility for the misconduct he has subsequently admitted and accepted at the level of gross misconduct.
41. Harm is high: the comment caused significant distress to officer A at the time and since. I am also satisfied that the off-duty conduct had the potential to undermine confidence and trust between colleagues on and off duty. Police officers and staff are entitled to work in an environment in which they are treated with dignity and respect, and to maintain these standards off duty. Remarks of this nature risk damaging officer and staff confidence in the workplace as a result of remarks and attitudes displayed.
42. I also consider the potential reputational harm to the MPS and policing to be significant. Members of the public would rightly expect police officers to demonstrate respect towards colleagues and to avoid language which trivialises or invokes serious sexual violence. I believe that public confidence in policing would be damaged were conduct of this nature not treated seriously.
43. Aggravating features: the reference to rape is especially serious given the prevalence of VAWG and the heightened scrutiny of police attitudes towards women.
44. Mitigating features: There are a number of mitigating features, including that the officer immediately apologised; has demonstrated reflection (through RPRP and voluntary courses) and genuine remorse.

Gross Misconduct

45. I have reminded myself that gross misconduct is defined by Regulation 2 of the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 as a breach of the Standards of Professional Behaviour so serious as to justify dismissal.
46. Applying that definition, having regard to the officer's own admission that the conduct amounts to gross misconduct, and having undertaken an assessment of seriousness, I am satisfied that the breaches of professional standards do amount to gross misconduct.

Outcome Decision

47. In making my decision on outcome I adopt the three-stage process, as outlined in the College of Policing's Guidance on Outcomes in Police Misconduct Proceedings to determine the appropriate sanction.
48. The first stage is to assess the seriousness of the conduct. This is assessed by reference to:
 - i. The officer's culpability,
 - ii. The harm caused by the misconduct
 - iii. The existence of aggravating factors
 - iv. The existence of mitigating factors.
49. The second stage is to keep in mind the purpose of the police misconduct regime. I remind myself that this has three elements:
 - i. To maintain public confidence in and the reputation of the police service,
 - ii. To uphold high standards and deter misconduct, and
 - iii. To protect the public
50. I further remind myself that the police misconduct regime is not designed to punish police officers – it is about the reputation and standing of the profession as a whole.
51. The third stage is to choose the outcome that most appropriately fulfils that purpose given the seriousness of the conduct in question.

52. I start by assessing the seriousness of the conduct:

Stage 1: the seriousness of the conduct

Culpability

53. The officer's remark was deliberate and intentional. Whilst I accept that the officer did not intend that the words he used were to be taken literally and he had no intention that any actual cause harm to PC A, the words he used were nevertheless extreme in nature, clearly said by him.
54. The comment referred to rape, a serious and violent criminal offence, and was directed personally towards a female colleague. Police officers are expected to understand the significance and impact of such language. The Officer's choice of words represented a serious failure of judgment and a marked departure from the standards expected of a police officer.
55. I also note that the conduct involved a protected characteristic, namely sex, in that the language used was inherently gendered and directed at a female colleague, the only female colleague in the group at the time, just prior to setting off on her journey home late at night.
56. I therefore conclude that the Officer bears a high degree of personal responsibility for the misconduct he has subsequently admitted and accepted at the level of gross misconduct.
57. Considering all factors, I assess the culpability as high.

Harm

58. the comment caused significant distress to officer A; I am also satisfied that the off-duty conduct had the potential to undermine confidence and trust between colleagues on and off duty. Police officers and staff are entitled to work in an environment in which they are treated with dignity and respect, and to maintain these standards off duty. Remarks of this nature risk damaging officer and staff confidence in the workplace as a result of remarks and attitudes displayed.

59. I also consider the potential reputational harm to the MPS and policing to be significant. Members of the public would rightly expect police officers to demonstrate respect towards colleagues and to avoid language which trivialises or invokes serious sexual violence. I believe that public confidence in policing would be damaged were conduct of this nature not treated seriously.
60. In this case, the harm is therefore high.

Aggravating factors

61. When considering aggravating factors, I am mindful not to double count matters that have already formed part of my assessment of harm and culpability. The reference to rape is especially serious given the prevalence of VAWG and the heightened scrutiny of police attitudes towards women.

Mitigating factors

62. There are a number of mitigating features, including that the officer immediately apologised; has demonstrated reflection (through RPRP and voluntary courses) and genuine remorse.

Conclusion on seriousness

63. Taking all these matters into consideration, I assess the seriousness of the conduct as high.

Personal Mitigation

64. I note that the officer advances the following matters of personal mitigation: a single, off-duty comment out of character; immediate apology and WhatsApp message that evening; self-report to line manager the following day; full engagement with the initial local process and RPRP; insight and remorse; voluntary completion of Mental Health First Aid and Welfare Support Officer courses; approximately 18 months of unblemished service since the incident; and 31 character references from colleagues and civilians.
65. I have read the character references which address wide aspects, including his commitment, specific examples of his supportive nature (incl. as a supportive

and active bystander to female colleagues), and the high regard in which he is held for his work ethic and overall efforts as a police officer.

66. I am mindful of the limits to the weight I should attach to personal mitigation as identified in the College of Policing's Guidance on Outcomes in Police Misconduct Proceedings, and that the interests of the police service, and the protection of the public, are more important than those of the individual officer.

Stage 2: the purpose of the misconduct regime

67. I have reminded myself of the threefold purpose of the police misconduct regime carefully in considering the appropriate outcome in this case.
68. I further remind myself that the police misconduct regime is not designed to punish police officers – it is about the reputation and standing of the profession as a whole.
69. I do acknowledge the risk that the outcome imposed can have a punitive effect; accordingly, the outcome should be no more than is necessary to satisfy the purpose of the proceedings. Therefore, in deciding the appropriate outcome I shall consider less severe outcomes before more severe outcomes and shall impose the least severe outcome that deals adequately with the issues identified, whilst protecting the public interest.

Stage 3: the appropriate outcome

70. I have considered the officers record of service.
71. I have considered whether a final written warning, or indeed a reduction in rank, would be an appropriate sanction in this case, but owing to the fact that PC O'Connor is a constable, he cannot be reduced in rank.
72. I considered whether a final written warning would be consistent with the public interest.
73. In doing so I have weighed the extreme nature of the remark itself, that the officer states was meant as dark humour and a momentary lapse for which he quickly apologised and subsequently engaged with remedial development. I have

carefully read and considered the substantial personal character statements from a range of colleagues.

74. Then I considered the particular resonating impact on PC A, setting aside her experiences of the process that followed, and focussing on her comments in her impact statement relating to PC O'Connor.
75. Ultimately thinking about the wider community and public perception and the damaging effect on public trust and confidence hearing about an officer who made such a remark. In weighing these overall factors in my view a final written warning would not be consistent with the public interest.
76. A lesser outcome would not serve to mark the seriousness of this misconduct or deter others from similar misconduct and fulfil the purpose of the police misconduct regime.
77. I have carefully considered the matter fully, including the nature and severity of the breaches of the Standards of Professional Behaviour.
78. Therefore I am satisfied that it is the only appropriate sanction in this case is dismissal without notice.

Outcome

79. Having considered the matter fully and having regard to the nature and severity of the breach of the Standards of Professional Behaviour, the sanction I impose is dismissal without notice and the officer should be placed on the College of Policing's barred list.

Commander Colin Wingrove

Metropolitan Police Service

15th September 2026