

IN THE MATTER OF THE POLICE (CONDUCT) REGULATIONS 2020

CONCERNING

FORMER POLICE SERGEANT 5093 TIMOTHY REES

DECISION OF THE PANEL

1) Alleged Conduct – as set out in the Regulation 30 Notice

Alleged Conduct In 2023 and 2024, his conduct breached the Honesty & Integrity; Authority, Respect & Courtesy; and Discreditable Conduct Standards of Professional Behaviour in respect of the following matters:

1. FACTS

1.1 At all material times, he was a Police Sergeant with Staffordshire Police.

- 1.2 At all material times, PC A was a student Police Officer with Staffordshire Police.
- 1.3 On 12 July 2023, he sent an email to John Harrison to declare that he was in the early days of a relationship with PC B.
- 1.4 On 29 September 2023, he attended a meeting where he was informed about PC A's personal vulnerabilities.
- 1.5 From 29 September 2023, he was aware that PC A's personal situation made her a vulnerable person.
- 1.6 From 29 September 2023, he was appointed PC A's welfare officer.
- 1.7 On 18 October 2023, PC A moved to his team, to work under his direct supervision.
- 1.8 From 18 October 2023 to 31 December 2023, he was PC A's direct supervisor.
- 1.9 On 3 November 2023, he emailed the Professional Standards Department, to confirm that he was in a relationship with PC B.
- 1.10 While he was PC A's direct supervisor and welfare officer, he became involved in an emotional and sexual relationship with PC A.
- 1.11 In December 2023, he and PC A had consensual sexual intercourse. When he had sexual intercourse with PC A, he was PC A's direct supervisor and her welfare officer.
- 1.12 Being PC A's direct supervisor and her welfare officer, his emotional/sexual relationship with PC A involved a power imbalance, which required him to report the relationship to Staffordshire Police.
- 1.13 Knowing about PC A's vulnerabilities, being her direct supervisor and welfare officer, his emotional/sexual relationship with PC A involved him abusing a position of trust.
- 1.14 At no time when he was PC A's direct supervisor did he declare to Staffordshire Police that he was in an emotional/sexual relationship with PC A.
- 1.15 He deliberately failed to inform Staffordshire Police about his emotional/sexual relationship with PC A.

1.16 His decision not to inform Staffordshire police about his emotional/sexual relationship with PC A, while he was PC A's direct supervisor and welfare officer, was dishonest and/or involved a lack of integrity.

1.17 From January to August 2024, he continued his emotional relationship with PC A.

1.18 The nature of his ongoing emotional relationship with PC A included among other things: a) Kissing PC A while off duty, b) Regularly attending at PC A's home address while on duty, without a policing purpose for visiting her.

1.19 In February and March 2024, he sent/received emails with DC Gould about his role as PC A's welfare officer.

1.20 The contents of his emails with DC Gould demonstrate that he remained PC A's welfare officer and that he was fully informed about PC A's ongoing vulnerabilities.

1.21 During his emails with DC Gould, he failed to disclose that he was in an emotional relationship with PC A.

1.22 In February and March 2024, he knew that as PC A's welfare officer, he was required to declare his emotional relationship with PC A to Staffordshire police.

1.23 Knowing about PC A's vulnerabilities and being her welfare officer, his ongoing emotional relationship with PC A involved him abusing a position of trust.

1.24. He deliberately failed to declare his ongoing emotional relationship with PC A to Staffordshire police while he was PC A's welfare officer.

1.25 His decision not to inform Staffordshire police about his emotional relationship with PC A, while he was PC A's welfare officer, was dishonest and/or involved a lack of integrity.

## 2. PARTICULARS OF MISCONDUCT

- 2.1 The conduct at paragraphs 1.10 to 1.25, is behaviour that damages his own reputation and/or that of policing.
- 2.2 The conduct at paragraphs 1.10 to 1.25, is behaviour that involved him being in a relationship that creates an actual or apparent conflict of interest.
- 2.3 The conduct at paragraphs 1.18 b) is inappropriate conduct while on duty.
- 2.4 The conduct at paragraphs 1.12 to 1.16 involves dishonesty and/or a lack of integrity.
- 2.5 The conduct at paragraphs 1.21 to 1.25 involves dishonesty and/or a lack of integrity.
- 2.6 The conduct at paragraphs 1.10 to 1.25, is behaviour that undermines the public's confidence in Staffordshire Police and/or discredits Staffordshire Police.

### 3. REASONS THE CONDUCT AMOUNTS TO GROSS MISCONDUCT

His conduct, if proved, amounts to gross misconduct for the following reasons

- 3.1 The conduct was seriously inappropriate.
- 3.2 The conduct involved dishonesty and/or a lack of integrity.
- 3.3 The conduct involved an abuse of a position of trust.
- 3.4 The conduct involved a vulnerable person.

### 2)Response to the Allegations

Sgt Rees admits breaches of the Standards in respect of Authority, Respect and Courtesy and Discreditable Conduct but denies a breach of the Standard of Honesty and Integrity.  
He accepts that his behaviour amounts to misconduct but denies gross misconduct.

### 3)Representation

Throughout the hearing the Appropriate Authority ('AA') has been represented by Mr Reed of Counsel. The former officer was represented by Inspector Robinson from the Police Federation. The Panel is grateful for the assistance provided by both.

4)The Standards of Professional Behaviour are contained in Schedule 2 of The Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 and within the Home Office Guidance of 2018:

#### a. 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.

#### b. 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.  
Police officers report any action taken against them for a criminal offence, any conditions imposed on them by a court or the receipt of any penalty notice.

#### c. Honesty and Integrity

Police officers are honest, act with integrity and do not compromise or abuse their position.

## 5)The Panel's Incremental Approach

a. The Panel determined that it was: -

- Required to consider the facts of the case and to make its findings of fact in relation to each of the allegations;
- Determine whether those findings of fact found constitute a breach of the relevant standards;
- Determine whether the conduct found proven against the Officer amounted to misconduct or gross misconduct.

The Panel reminded itself that the burden of proof is on the Appropriate Authority throughout, and the standard of proof is the balance of probability, namely what is more likely than not.

The Panel also reminded itself of relevant guidance from the Home Office Guidance: -

“2.265. The more serious the allegation of misconduct that is made or the more serious the consequences for the individual which flow from a finding against him or her, the more persuasive (cogent) the evidence will need to be to meet that standard. This does not mean that the standard is higher. It means only that the inherent probability or improbability of the conduct occurring is itself a matter to be taken into account when weighing the probability and deciding whether on balance the conduct occurred.

2.266. Therefore, in making a decision whether the alleged conduct of a police officer is proven or not, the person(s) conducting the misconduct meeting/hearing will need to exercise reasonable judgement and give appropriate careful consideration to the evidence.”

b. Purpose of misconduct meeting/hearing

The purpose of a formal misconduct meeting/hearing is to:

- a. Give the police officer a fair opportunity to make his or her case having considered the investigation report including supporting documents and to put forward any factors the police officer wishes to be considered in mitigation (in addition to the submission which must be sent in advance to the person(s) conducting or chairing the meeting/hearing for his, her or their consideration).

c. Decide if the conduct of the former officer fell below the standards set out in the Standards of Professional Behaviour based on the balance of probabilities and having regard to all of the evidence and circumstances.

## 6)The Facts

In our deliberations, the Panel make it clear that it reviewed and considered the entirety of the facts and evidence presented to it. The Panel has considered whether the facts alleged in the Reg 30 Notice are proven on the balance of probabilities.

In making its findings, the Panel had regard to the good character of the officer. Whilst not a defence to the allegations made, it is relevant to our consideration of the matter in two ways. Firstly, the former officer has given evidence, and his good character is a positive feature that we should take into account when considering whether we accept what he has told us. Secondly, the fact that the officer has no previous findings against him may make it less likely that she acted in the manner alleged. The Panel has kept this at the forefront of their minds during their deliberations.

Sgt Rees joined Staffordshire Police on the 3rd of March 2003 and was a Cannock Neighbourhood Sergeant from June 2021. He subsequently moved roles and at the start of this investigation he was performing the role of an Investigations and Quality Sergeant.

The allegations emanate from the former officer's relationship with PC A, between September 2023 and September 2024.

The former officer was the subject of a misconduct interview about the allegations on 17 July 2025. Prior to his interview, he provided a prepared statement and elected to answer “no comment” to all the questions he was asked. He has provided a Reg 31 response and 2 responses to the AA’s note, dated 22 April 2026.

## 7) Findings of the Panel

### 1. Many of the facts were not in dispute:

Former Sgt Rees was a Police Sergeant,

PC A was a student Police Officer

He was aware of PC A’s vulnerabilities.

From 29 September 2023, he was appointed as PC A’s welfare officer.

On 18 October 2023, PC A moved to his team.

While he was PC A’s welfare officer, he became involved in an emotional and sexual relationship with her.

In December 2023, he and PC A had consensual sexual intercourse.

At no time did he declare to Staffordshire Police that he was in an emotional/sexual relationship with PC A.

### 2. In respect of the disputed facts, the Panel finds the following proven on the balance of probabilities: -

a. On the 18th of October 2023, PC A was moved to the former officer’s shift. By virtue of that posting, former Sgt Rees became one of PC A’s supervisors.

b. Sgt Rees does not accept that he was PC A's direct line supervisor at the time of their consensual sexual intercourse when they went away for the weekend on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2023. While he was a sergeant within the same team and had an element of supervisory responsibility in a broader sense, he says that he did not consider himself to be PC A's direct line manager or supervisor in a formal sense.

c. The Panel is satisfied that former Sgt Rees remained PC A's supervisor when the relationship became intimate on the weekend of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> December. He describes himself as performing an "admin" role over her case load once she completed her last shift on his team on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2023. However, the Panel is satisfied that: -

- his role as PC A's supervisor did not depend solely on whether he provided day-to-day operational direction.

In managing and assuming responsibility for her caseload, he performed a supervisory function as he was overseeing her work. The management and oversight of an officer's workload is a core supervisory responsibility and is entirely consistent with a supervisory relationship.

-In any event, the Panel is satisfied that he continued to be PC A's supervisor until January 2023. The fact that PC A attended a training course did not terminate the supervisory relationship between her and the former sergeant.

He retained supervisory responsibilities for her workload and performance or return to operational duties albeit the panel consider this inconsequential given that it is uncontroversial that he retained the role of welfare officer and there remained a power imbalance in their relationship throughout.

d. The Panel notes that the former officer booked and paid for the accommodation for the weekend away with PC A whilst acting as her supervisor and before the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2023.

This involved a significant failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. The former officer occupied a position of responsibility and influence over PC A and blurred the distinction between a professional supervisory relationship and an intimate personal one.

e. Further, the Panel is satisfied that the timing of the weekend away one day after she had completed her last shift on his team is relevant. The Panel considers it inherently unlikely to have been coincidental and instead indicates a deliberate attempt to wait until he considered that the supervisory relationship deniable. In the Panel's view, this timing is indicative of an awareness on the former officers' part that pursuing a personal relationship whilst PC A remained under his supervision would have been inappropriate and that he did have an appreciation of the professional boundaries that ought to have existed and the risks associated with crossing them.

By this stage, they had already kissed on the lips following a night out. As the former officer is unable to recall this or at least the timing of this, the Panel prefers the account of PC A in this regard, as she was clear and certain and the panel found her to be a credible witness.

3. In conclusion the Panel is satisfied on the balance of probabilities that former Sgt Rees's supervisory relationship over PC A had not ended by the time they engaged in a consensual sexual relationship on the weekend of 2–3 December 2023.

The Panel further finds that the timing of the weekend away is also significant. The Panel considers that it was not coincidental that it coincided with the ending of PC A's attachment to his shift, demonstrating the former officer's awareness that such a relationship would have been inappropriate whilst she was under his supervision.

4. The former officer accepts that he was PC A's welfare officer during the time that his relationship with PC A developed into a sexual one and that he remained her welfare officer during the period of their intimate relationship. This and the fact that he had supervisory responsibilities as well involved overlapping positions of responsibility towards her, particularly as he was fully aware of her vulnerabilities.

PC A engaged with former Sgt Rees as her Welfare Officer as she was seeking support during a period of vulnerability. Any misuse of that position risks undermining confidence in welfare services.

5. The Panel accepts that the former officer did not receive formal training for the welfare role. However, the absence of specific training does not negate the fundamental responsibilities arising from his rank, experience and position. As an experienced police supervisor, he must have been familiar with the importance of maintaining professional boundaries, particularly when dealing with vulnerable officers who may rely on his support or assistance. The obligation to act professionally and recognise the potential impact of a significant and obvious power imbalance does not depend solely upon specialist welfare training and does not absolve him of responsibility for conduct that an officer of his experience ought reasonably to have recognised as inappropriate.

9) On the totality of the evidence, the Panel is satisfied that the former officer abused his position of trust by entering into a relationship with PC A in the circumstances that existed and that there was a power imbalance between them.

The officer himself accepts poor judgment and misconduct but does not accept that he set out to exploit PC A or abused his position of trust.

The panel take a different view in that we find that his actions throughout appear deliberate.

6. The existence of a power imbalance arises from their respective positions and the responsibility that the former officer had for PC A.

PC A was a student police officer. The former officer had supervisory responsibility for her, exercised oversight of her work and caseload, and occupied a position of greater rank, experience and authority within the organisation.

As a student officer, PC A was at an early stage of her career and she was also vulnerable, the former officer having been informed of her difficulties. The relationship was therefore not one of equals.

a. The power imbalance was further intensified by the former officer's welfare responsibilities. PC A looked to him for emotional support and practical help. This increased the potential for influence and heightened the need for clear professional boundaries. Entering into a sexual relationship with the person for whom he has welfare and supervisory responsibility fundamentally compromised his roles.

b. In summary, the power imbalance arose from differences in rank, experience, supervisory responsibility and welfare influence and the Panel is satisfied that it must, on the totality of the evidence, have been apparent to the former officer.

7. The panel is satisfied to the appropriate standard that former Sgt Rees occupied a position of trust. He was a Sergeant and supervisor and was appointed as PC A's welfare officer because of difficulties she was experiencing and remained in this role throughout the duration of their relationship. Staffordshire Police entrusted him with responsibility for PC A's welfare and wellbeing. That role required him to maintain professional boundaries and place her interests above his own.

The Panel is further satisfied that he repeatedly and continuously abused his position of trust, using his welfare role to facilitate or maintain the relationship, by placing his personal interests ahead of his professional responsibilities and failing to manage or respond to the conflict of interest created by the relationship.

8. The Panel considers that there are features of the former sergeant's conduct that are consistent with grooming behaviour. He developed a relationship with a junior officer over whom he exercised supervisory influence, became increasingly involved in her personal life, such as taking her to view properties and allowed professional boundaries to erode before the relationship became intimate.

The Panel is satisfied that the evidence demonstrates a deliberate progression from welfare support to personal involvement to sexual intimacy that went beyond “poor boundary management”. For example, the timing of the weekend away in December and the multiple visits to her addresses under the auspices of welfare concerns and support suggests a calculated process of influence rather than simply an inappropriate relationship.

9. The Panel is satisfied to the appropriate standard that Former Sgt Rees should have reported his relationship with PC A to Staffordshire Police but deliberately failed to do so and that his decision not to inform them was deliberately dishonest and involved a lack of integrity.

a. PC A states that at some point within the relationship, they discussed that they wouldn't report the relationship unless they stayed together and unless the relationship were to progress further.

b. The Panel notes that former Sgt Rees was an Officer with a significant level of experience having joined Staffordshire Police on the 3rd March 2003.

He states that he did not think it was necessary to report the “relationship” to the Professional Standards Department, (PSD,) as a potential conflict of interest or power imbalance because he was no longer PC A's line manager and he did not believe that it was a relationship, despite the admitted sexual intercourse.

He viewed his relationship with PC A differently to that which he had previously declared to the PSD, with another officer, as they (PC B) had talked of starting a life together which he hadn't with PC A.

c. The panel rejects former Sgt Rees's reasons for not reporting his intimate relationship with PC A. We find his explanation inconsistent with both the circumstances and his experience as a police supervisor.

The Panel considers that an officer of such experience would have understood the importance of identifying and declaring potential conflicts of interest.

He knew that he had been appointed as her welfare officer, knew that she was a student officer, and knew that she had personal vulnerabilities which had been specifically discussed with him in his welfare capacity. He also accepts that he remained her welfare officer throughout the relationship. The Panel has previously found that that former Sgt Rees still had supervisory responsibility for PC A in early December 2023, when they had consensual sexual intercourse.

d. The Panel is unable to accept that a reasonable and experienced Sergeant could genuinely believe that a sexual relationship with a vulnerable officer for whom he retained welfare and supervisory responsibility gave rise to no requirement whatsoever to inform the organisation or seek guidance. The existence of an obvious conflict between his welfare role and his personal relationship should have been apparent.

Reporting the matter would have enabled the force to assess any risks, put appropriate safeguards in place, and, if necessary, remove or reduce any supervisory or welfare responsibilities from the former officer that could give rise to concerns about impartiality or an abuse of trust.

By failing to disclose the relationship, he deprived the organisation of the opportunity to manage those risks.

e. The Panel also places weight on the fact that former Sgt Rees had previously declared another relationship with a different police officer.

That previous disclosure demonstrates an awareness that personal relationships within policing can give rise to professional considerations requiring notification. We do not accept his explanation that disclosure depended upon whether they had discussed "starting a life together". The issue was not the seriousness of the romantic commitment but the existence of a personal and sexual relationship occurring alongside an ongoing welfare role. Despite acknowledging his welfare role, position of trust and the existence of a continuing personal and sexual relationship, He deliberately closed his mind to the concept of conflict of interest and how it applied in these circumstances.

Furthermore, during February and March 2024, former Sgt Rees continued to engage in email correspondence concerning PC A's welfare while simultaneously maintaining the intimate relationship. Those communications provided repeated opportunities to identify and address the conflict of interest, which he ignored.

f. In those circumstances, the Panel is satisfied that former Sgt Rees consciously and deliberately chose not to inform the organisation of the relationship. We therefore reject his explanation that he did not believe disclosure was required.

10. The Panel has considered whether his decision to inform was dishonest and/or lacked integrity.

a. The Panel is satisfied that former Sgt Rees acted dishonestly in failing to disclose the relationship. It has considered the test for dishonesty as set out in the case of *Ivey v Genting Casinos (UK) Ltd t/a Crockfords (2017) UKSC 67* and has considered what was the former officers' actual state of knowledge or belief as to the facts and whether his conduct was dishonest by the standards of ordinary, decent people.

The Panel rejects his explanation that he did not believe disclosure was required.

b. The Panel has ascertained the actual state of the former officer's knowledge or belief as to the facts.

The Panel note the following:

-Former Sgt Rees was an experienced police officer.

-He knew that PC A was a vulnerable student officer

-He had been appointed as her welfare officer.

-The Panel has found that he also exercised supervisory responsibility in relation to PC A when the sexual relationship commenced.

-He had previously disclosed another relationship with a different police officer, demonstrating an awareness that personal relationships within policing can require formal notification and management.

-The Panel noted that former Sgt Rees and PC A discussed not reporting the relationship unless it progressed further. That discussion demonstrates that the issue of disclosure was actively considered. This was not a situation in which the Officer simply failed to turn his mind to disclosure.

-He made 23 visits to her home addresses whilst on duty, totalling over 30 hours, including to another force area. At no time did he record any of the visits, inform any other person he was making such visits or seek permission to undertake such.

-The Panel has found that the timing of the weekend away was deliberate and suggests an appreciation on the part of the former officer that pursuing such a relationship with PC A in these circumstances would have been inappropriate. The former officer therefore understood the nature of the relationship, the professional boundaries that existed, and the potential significance of those boundaries. As the Panel has found that the former officer deliberately waited until PC A had ceased working directly on his shift before taking her away for the weekend that demonstrates an awareness that the relationship raised professional concerns. It is inherently difficult to accept that he honestly believed there was no need to disclose it.

-His continuing involvement in welfare matters concerning PC A throughout February and March 2024 further reinforces that conclusion. He repeatedly encountered circumstances which highlighted the obvious conflict of interest but nevertheless withheld the existence of the relationship.

c. Having found that former Sgt Rees knew of the conflict, appreciated the relevance of disclosure and deliberately chose not to inform Staffordshire Police, the Panel is satisfied that ordinary decent people would regard that concealment as dishonest.

Applying the objective test in Ivey, the Panel considers that ordinary decent people would regard the non-disclosure of an intimate relationship involving a supervisor and welfare officer and a vulnerable junior officer as dishonest. By choosing not to report the relationship, despite appreciating the concerns that it raised, the former officer withheld information that he knew was material to the force's ability to manage the risks involved. Ordinary decent people would regard such conduct as lacking in honesty because it involved a conscious decision to avoid transparency in circumstances where openness was plainly required.

d. The same conduct lacked integrity because he knowingly and deliberately failed to manage the conflict of interest or to uphold the ethical standards expected of a police supervisor. The former officer did not act in the appropriate way

11. In respect of the allegation that the former officer regularly attended PC A's home address without a proper policing purpose, he does not accept that this was "without a policing purpose" and asserts that such visits were linked to welfare concerns and support, albeit acknowledging that he became too involved with PC A.

a. The Panel is satisfied that as the relationship developed, the distinction between professional welfare support and personal involvement became increasingly blurred.

The subsequent frequency of his visits to PC A and the timing of them in relation to the development of the relationship, continuing after the relationship became sexual, lead the Panel to conclude to the appropriate standard that those visits were not welfare related.

b. The Panel also takes note of the former sergeant's failure to maintain appropriate records or inform his colleagues or supervisors of his many and sometimes lengthy visits to PC A. If the attendances had genuinely been undertaken solely in the exercise of his welfare responsibilities, it would be expected that there would be some degree of accountability, transparency or oversight, particularly given the frequency of the visits.

The lack of transparency is significant because it occurred in circumstances where the former officer was intimate with PC A and where the boundary between welfare support and a personal relationship had crossed over. The welfare role involved trust and accountability. The former officer undertaking repeated welfare visits to a junior officer's home would reasonably be expected to ensure that his actions were transparent and capable of scrutiny. By failing to create any meaningful audit trail or seek supervisory oversight, the former officer placed himself in a position where his conduct could not be properly monitored and where professional boundaries could be crossed without challenge.

The Panel is satisfied that his visits were not in furtherance of a legitimate policing function but rather for personal reasons unrelated to his role.

c. The Panel is further satisfied that the former sergeant's conduct was motivated, at least in part, by a desire for sexual gratification. The progression of his interactions with PC A from a professional relationship to an intimate sexual one, together with the personal time spent together and his continued involvement after professional boundaries had become blurred, supports the conclusion that his actions were driven by personal and sexual interests rather than any legitimate policing or welfare purpose. This significantly aggravates the seriousness of the misconduct.

The Panel found aspects of the former sergeant's evidence to be vague, and, at times, evasive. When asked about matters central to the allegations, he frequently provided broad or non-committal answers and was unable or unwilling to give clear explanations for significant aspects of his conduct. On a number of occasions, he appeared to minimise his involvement or characterise events in a manner that avoided directly addressing the issues raised. The Panel was left with the impression that the former sergeant was

reluctant to engage fully with the substance of the allegations and sought to distance himself from matters that reflected adversely upon him.

In contrast, the Panel found PC A's evidence to be compelling in its sincerity and lack of embellishment.

#### 8) Decisions relating to the Standards

The Panel find the disputed allegations proven in respect of former Sgt Rees. Together with the admitted facts, the Panel moved on to consider the totality of the evidence and the Standards of Professional Behaviour alleged to have been breached.

##### a. Alleged breach- Authority, Respect and Courtesy

On the balance of probabilities, the panel find that the former officer has breached this standard.

Police officers are required to act in a manner which maintains appropriate professional boundaries. Those obligations are particularly important where an officer occupies a position of responsibility, support or trust towards another colleague. Former Sgt Rees was not merely a colleague of PC A but rather a serving Sergeant exercising supervisory responsibility and her welfare officer. The welfare role required him to exercise sound professional judgment and maintain clear boundaries between his personal interests and his responsibilities towards PC A. Former Sgt Rees failed to maintain those boundaries and placed his personal interests in conflict with his professional responsibilities.

#### b. Alleged breach - Discreditable Conduct

On the balance of probabilities, the panel find that the officer has breached this standard. This is because the former officer behaved in a way which could discredit the police service.

Members of the public are entitled to expect that officers appointed to welfare and support roles will maintain appropriate professional boundaries and will identify and disclose conflicts of interest. The Panel is satisfied that a reasonable member of the public, fully informed of the facts, would be concerned to learn that a Sergeant entrusted with responsibility for the welfare of a vulnerable student officer entered into a sexual relationship with her whilst continuing to fulfil that welfare role and without disclosing the relationship.

Several high-profile cases have damaged the trust and confidence of the public, and in particular women and girls, in policing. The conduct of the former officer in this case strikes at the heart of women's ongoing concerns over the conduct of police officers.

The conduct was therefore capable of bringing discredit upon the police service and undermining public confidence in policing.

#### c. Honesty & Integrity

The Panel is satisfied that the former officer breached the Standard in respect of Honesty and Integrity.

The former sergeant breached this Standard because he failed to disclose material information and sought to minimise the nature of his relationship with PC A. He breached the integrity limb because he knowingly acted in a manner that was inconsistent with the ethical standards expected of a police supervisor and placed his personal interests ahead of his professional responsibilities for the purposes of his own sexual gratification.

## 9) Decision on Misconduct or Gross Misconduct

a. Having found breaches of the Standards set out above, the Panel has carefully considered whether the behaviour amounts to misconduct, gross misconduct or neither.

We have again reminded ourselves of the full circumstances of this case.

b. The Panel is entirely satisfied that the former officer's behaviour amounts to Gross Misconduct.

For the avoidance of doubt, the following factors are present: -

-PC A was a student officer and former Sgt Rees was a sergeant with supervisory responsibilities towards her. He also had a designated welfare role to support her and was aware of her vulnerabilities.

Former Sgt Rees entered into an emotional and sexual relationship with PC A which continued over many months, and he acted in a welfare capacity during this period and as a supervisor initially. This was not a momentary lapse in judgment but a course of conduct.

- Staffordshire Police had entrusted him with responsibility for supporting PC A. To enable him to fulfil this role, he was aware of sensitive personal information concerning P A.

The welfare role required clear professional boundaries. The Panel find that this increased his responsibility to exercise caution. Rather than stepping back from the welfare role, he continued both the welfare relationship and the intimate relationship simultaneously.

- The Panel is concerned that there was a disparity between the parties' understanding of the nature of their involvement. PC A's evidence was that she had developed strong emotional feelings for the former sergeant and believed that they were engaged in a relationship. By contrast, the former sergeant maintained that there was no relationship to disclose, notwithstanding that the parties had engaged in sexual intercourse and spent personal time together.

The Panel found a significant inconsistency in the former officer's position. On the one hand, he engaged in an intimate sexual relationship with PC A. On the other, he maintained that there was nothing to disclose because there was no "relationship".

Whatever label the former officer chooses to use, he knew that an intimate and emotionally significant connection existed to PC A. His attempt to deny the existence of a relationship for disclosure purposes may reasonably be viewed as an effort to avoid scrutiny of behaviour which he knew gave rise to professional and ethical concerns.

The former sergeant appears willing to have engaged in the intimate aspects of their relationship whilst denying its existence when questions of professional accountability and disclosure arose. The Panel regards this as an aggravating factor given the respective positions of the parties and the vulnerabilities of PC A at the time.

- Former Sgt Rees was a Sergeant with over twenty years' policing experience as opposed to PC A who was a student police officer at the beginning of her career.

He was responsible for providing welfare support to her. These factors created an inherent power imbalance regardless of whether the relationship was consensual. His rank and experience further aggravate the seriousness of the conduct.

- He did not disclose the relationship to Staffordshire Police or seek advice or guidance regarding the conflict of interest. In addition, former Sgt Rees did not remove himself from the welfare role. This continued over many months. The failure to disclose the relationship, together with the absence of appropriate records, supervision or oversight of his involvement with PC A, deprived the organisation of the opportunity to identify and manage the risks. The Panel considers that the timing of the relationship and the former officer's own evidence demonstrate an appreciation that professional boundaries existed and that the situation required care. Rather than acting openly and transparently, he chose to proceed without disclosure.

-The former sergeant exhibited behaviour consistent with grooming. His repeated welfare-related contact, growing personal involvement and progression to an intimate sexual relationship demonstrates a pattern of conduct through which he developed emotional and personal access to PC A before the relationship became sexual.

-The Panel has considered the risk of wider reputational harm to the police service. The Panel is satisfied that the former officer's actions have the potential to damage public confidence in the legitimacy of policing to a greater extent. Members of the public would reasonably expect officers in welfare and support roles to maintain professional boundaries and would likely be concerned to learn that a Sergeant responsible for the welfare of a vulnerable student officer entered into a sexual relationship with her whilst continuing in that role

10)In conclusion, the Panel is satisfied that each of the breaches of the Professional Standards in relation to Honesty & Integrity, Authority and Respect and Courtesy and Discreditable Conduct individually and/or collectively amount to Gross Misconduct.

Jonathan Roy/former Deputy Chief Constable/Chair  
Margaret Jolley/IPM  
Laeq Beg/IPM

11<sup>th</sup> June 2026

## Honesty and Integrity

In *Solicitors Regulation Authority v Wingate and Evans* [2016] EWHC 3455, Holman J followed the decisions of Chan and Scott agreeing both that there was a distinction between the two concepts of honesty and integrity and that it was unnecessary to provide a rigid, judicial definition of integrity. In referring to *Iqbal V Solicitors Regulation Authority* [2012] EWHC 3251, Holman J explained a lack of integrity as including, but not being limited to, a failure to adhere to trustworthiness. Whereas dishonesty was subjective, a lack of integrity was objective:

*“While all dishonesty involves a lack of integrity, not all lack of integrity involves dishonesty. The law requires a subjective element to any finding or conclusion of dishonesty, but the question whether a person lacked integrity is objective.”*

The decision of McGowan J in [\*Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police v \(1\) Police Misconduct Panel \(2\) Mark White\*](#) [2017] EWHC 923 (Admin) has been considered.

Relying on *Bolton* (to which Mostyn J also referred), she stated:

*“...A lapse of integrity is very serious but can fall short of the quality of a lapse of honesty. Integrity in this context is not used in the sense of freedom from moral corruption rather in the sense of a failing to act in the right way, not behaving as the totally correct police officer would, in some way falling short of the whole. It is explained for police officers as “doing the right thing”.*

*Accordingly, it follows that not every failure to act with integrity is inevitably so serious as to be gross. That is a matter for the exercise of judgment by a panel with the experience and expertise in such matters to determine. PC White clearly did not do the “right thing” in disposing of the card in confidential waste rather than arranging its safe return, to that extent he did not act as the “whole” police officer would. Whilst that conduct can be characterised as very serious it is not irrational for the panel seized of all the facts not to have found that to be gross misconduct.”*