

RESTRICTED – INVESTIGATIONS

DORSET POLICE
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DEPARTMENT

NOTICE under Regulation 62 of the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020

OUTCOME OF ACCELERATED MISCONDUCT HEARING

Date of hearing – 09 June 2022

Persons Present

Officer Subject of Proceedings – PC Hopper

Federation Representative – PC Andy Robertson

Chief Constable – Scott Chilton

Other Person(s) Present

Mrs Tara Harrop (Presenting officer)

DI Phil Swanton (Investigating Officer)

CI Stewart Gates (Staff Officer)

Finding(s) of Hearing

Proved – Gross Misconduct

Rationale for Finding(s)

I have assessed that there is incontrovertible evidence that former PC Hopper's conduct has fallen below the standards of professional behaviour, namely: **honesty and integrity, authority, respect and courtesy, orders and instructions, duties and responsibilities and discreditable conduct.**

The Appropriate Authority has presented a compelling case in which seven specific allegations are laid out involving the inappropriate contact and conduct with a victim of domestic abuse.

This conduct has involved the use of force email and phone contact with a female victim which former PC Hopper was the officer in charge of the case. Former PC Hopper admitted in misconduct interviews that his behaviour was non professional.

Additionally, former PC Hopper sent several emails outside of the organization which contained confidential material relating to policing matters. These emails were not sent for a policing purpose.

Further behaviour resulted in a visit to the victim and engaging in sexual contact while off duty.

In terms of findings I am satisfied that there is incontrovertible evidence to prove that former PC Hopper's conduct amounts to Gross Misconduct.

Disciplinary Outcome

Former PC Hopper would have been dismissed had he not resigned from Dorset Police and as such should be put on the barred list.

Reason for Decision

In reaching my decision I have taken account of all the representations made by the former officer's representative, PC Robertson.

I have also carefully considered the culpability of former PC Hopper as articulated by Mrs Tara Harrop.

The uncontested evidence in this case provides compelling and incontrovertible evidence of behaviour falling far below the professional standards of behaviour, and clearly amount to Gross Misconduct.

Lord Justice Morris Kay in *Salter-v-Chief Constable of Dorset Police* concluded that "Police officers carry out vital public functions in which it is imperative that the public have confidence in them. It is also obvious that operational dishonesty or impropriety of a single officer tarnished the reputation of his force and undermines public confidence in it."

Sexual impropriety by police officers continues to be a national high threat and remains on the national threat assessment as a priority. Seeking to engage in a relationship with a victim of domestic abuse undermines the trust the public deserve to have in policing. Such a flagrant abuse of this trust can, in my view, only result in dismissal from Dorset Police.

I additionally consider that it is entirely appropriate for the former officer to be placed on the Police Barred List to protect potential future policing employers from the risk of this former officer operating in a policing role. The nature of former PC Hopper's conduct leaves me to conclude that full disclosure of this finding falls to me as I would not be confident PC Hopper would make such disclosure in future job applications and therefore the Police Barred List is appropriate.

Right of Appeal

You have the right to appeal against my decision. Please refer to the guidance notes attached.

Your appeal should be sent to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner



09/06/2022 - 14:58HRS

Chief Constable