Notice of outcome of misconduct proceedings regarding an alleged breach of the Standards of Professional Behaviour, other than senior officers.

Regulation 43 Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020.

Name: **Craig Hamilton** Force number: **PC 2678** Rank: **Former Police Constable**

Case reference:RI/2024/522 & CM/61/24

You are hereby given notification of the outcome of misconduct proceedings which relate to your alleged breach of the Standards of Professional Behaviour. Details are as follows:

Misconduct Hearing

Date(s) of misconduct proceedings: 11th November 2026.

Location: Scotswood House, Teesdale South, Thornaby Place, Thornaby, Stockton-On-Tees. TS17 6SG

Person or persons conducting misconduct hearing:

Chair: ACO Richard Baker
Panel: Independent member Alma Hellaoui
Panel: Independent member Louise Tupling

LQP: Ms Anna Wilkinson

Former officer Hamilton faced one allegation that he had breached the Standards of Professional Behaviour relating to authority, respect and courtesy and discreditable conduct.

An order pursuant to Regulation 39 of The Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 was made ordering that:

1. The complainant shall not be identified by name in any public notice, public reporting, publication or broadcast relating to these proceedings.
2. During the course of the hearing, the witness shall be referred to by the cypher "Officer A".
3. No information shall be published which could directly or indirectly lead to the identification of the witness as the complainant in the alleged sexual offences.

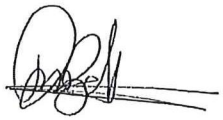
Determination of your alleged breach of the Standards of Professional Behaviour

Gross Misconduct

Outcome at misconduct hearing if misconduct / gross misconduct found.

That had the former officer still been serving there would have been dismissal without notice.

Person conducting / chairing misconduct proceedings:



ACO R. Baker

Date: 12/11/2026

Details of reasons for determination and outcome are stated below.

Determination and Outcome of Misconduct Hearing

Reasons for determination:

1. Counsel for the AA was Mr Reed. Nobody attended to represent Former officer Hamilton. Mr Holdroyd attended as the Police Federation representative.

2. The Panel received, read and considered a bundle of evidential material consisting of 199 pages of material.

3. During the hearing the Panel received, read and considered former officer Hamilton's Record of Police Service.

4. The Panel received a helpful Opening note from Mr. Reed setting out the AA's case, details of the character and purpose of police misconduct proceedings, guidance, the facts as asserted by the AA's case and commentary upon the alleged breaches of the Standards.

5. The Panel received oral submissions from Mr Reed which were considered in detail. The submissions on the evidence presented and on appropriate potential outcomes with reference to the proven facts of the gross misconduct and the proven breaches of the Standards of Professional Behaviour and applicable COP Guidance on Outcomes (2023) were very helpful.

6. The Panel heard oral evidence from Officer A. The evidence of PC Coleman, PC Smith, PC Dredge and PC Moon were admitted in documentary form and although we have taken all of this evidence into consideration we refer to the contents of these statements below only in so far as is required to explain our decision.

7. Former officer Hamilton did not attend the hearing and we were informed that he knew that the hearing was taking place. We had within the bundle the contents of the former officer's interview and his Regulation 31 response which we considered.

8. An application was made by Mr Reed for the matter to proceed in the absence of the former officer. We were satisfied that the former officer had been made aware of the hearing and had elected not to attend. We were not provided with any medical or other evidence explaining the former officer's absence and there was no application to adjourn the hearing in order that he could attend. We were not satisfied that if we adjourned the hearing the officer would

attend on a future occasion and we considered it to be in the interests of justice to proceed in the absence of the former officer.

9. In coming to our decision as set out below we took into account the explanation advanced by former PC Hamilton in his interview and his Regulation 31 response dated 8th December 2025.

Stage 1 Decision

10. This is the decision of the Panel in respect of allegations against former Police Constable Hamilton.

Standard of Proof

11. The Panel is required to apply the civil Standard of Proof namely to determine whether any fact is proven on the balance of probabilities.

12. The alleged conduct is proven if the Panel is satisfied that it is more likely than not that the conduct occurred.

13. The Burden of Proof falls on the AA throughout to prove the allegations to the requisite standard.

The Panel's Approach

14. The Panel applied the following structured approach in determining the relevant issues in these proceedings:

    i) To ascertain the facts whether admitted or found proven.
    ii) To determine whether, based on the proven facts and admissions the officer has engaged and breached the Standards of Professional Behaviour, alleged. If yes,
    iii) To decide whether such breach constituted Misconduct, Gross Misconduct or neither.
    iv) Dependent upon the Panel's findings under 2 and 3 (above) to decide on the appropriate outcome.

15. The allegations are contained in the Regulation 30 notice. It was alleged:

Allegation 1

PC Hamilton, your conduct breached the Standards of Professional Behaviour of Authority, Respect and Courtesy and Discreditable Conduct in respect of the following matters:

Facts of the case:

1. **You were Officer A's tutor constable.**
2. **On 20th December 2024, you were off-duty and attended a night out with fellow police officers from Cleveland police.**
3. **During the night you attended various licensed premises including, O'Connell's, the Twisted Lip, and Dovecot Bar.**

4. **During the course of the evening and morning of 21st December 2024 you and other officers consumed alcohol.**
5. **During the course of the evening and morning of 21st December 2024 you acted in a sexualised and/or inappropriate way towards Officer A.**
6. **Your sexualised and/or inappropriate conduct included:**
   - i) **Staring at Officer A's breasts and saying "I didn't know you had your nipples pierced, they look really nice".**
   - ii) **Attempting to kiss Officer A.**
   - iii) **Being possessive of Officer A by keeping her in your immediate company throughout the evening.**
   - iv) **Touching Officer A's bottom on more than one occasion, without seeking or obtaining her consent.**
   - v) **Touching Officer A's breasts, without seeking or obtaining her consent.**
   - vi) **Asking Officer A if she was seeing someone and after she replied saying to PC Smith, "we are gonna get her[1] some dick tonight".**
   - vii) **Telling Officer A that she looked "gorgeous" and "stunning".**
   - viii) **Repeatedly asking Officer A to come back home with you.**
   - ix) **Phoning Officer A after she had left your company and asking her to return to join you, when she refused, continuing to phone her on a further 3 occasions.**

7. **Your actions towards Officer A included unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.**

8. **Your conduct caused Officer A to be harassed, distressed and/or uncomfortable.**

EVIDENCE SUMMARY

Officer A

16. Officer A confirmed the transcript of her video interview and then was asked a few supplementary questions by Mr Reed. She stated that, at the time of the incident on 20-21 December 2024, she did not wish to report the former officer's conduct. She had only recently commenced employment in August 2024 and was still on probation. She was attempting to establish herself within the workplace, make friends, and demonstrate that she could do the job. She felt embarrassed and ashamed and did not want to be perceived as "a grass" or someone who reported colleagues, as she feared this would affect how others viewed and treated her. She was also contemplating resignation and did not appreciate the full repercussions of the conduct at the time.

17. The witness was clear that she did not want the former officer to touch her breasts or bottom and that she gave no consent for any physical contact. She stated that he placed his hands over her body without asking for or obtaining consent. She similarly stated that she did not want him to kiss her and gave no consent to any kissing. Although she did not physically push him away, she described herself as having "frozen" and explained that she did not want to create a scene. She said the former officer proceeded without seeking any indication of consent.

18. The witness stated that the former officer made comments about her appearance, including telling her she was beautiful and commenting on how she looked. These comments made her uncomfortable, although she did not tell him to stop. She attributed this to his position as both

[1] A short form of officer A's name was used, replaced with "her" for the purposes of this decision, in order to prevent identification.

her tutor and colleague and her reluctance to cause a scene. She denied being sexually attracted to the former officer. When asked what she meant by feeling uncomfortable, she said she felt unable to do anything to protect herself and described the entire evening as uncomfortable. She said she was placed in a vulnerable position throughout the night and felt vulnerable because the former officer would not leave her alone. From the beginning to the end of the evening, she felt isolated from the wider group.

19. The witness stated that when the former officer kissed her in the bar, she felt obliged to accept it. She explained that she was new to the workplace and wanted colleagues to have a positive impression of her and to like her. She looked around at the time to see if anyone else was present but they were not and she felt unable to object.

20. When asked how the conduct of the former officer made her feel, the witness described feeling uncomfortable, ashamed and embarrassed. She said that, as a new member of staff, she did not expect such behaviour, particularly from her tutor. She felt disgusted with herself and believed she could have done more to stop what happened, whilst maintaining that she had given no consent at any stage. She felt that the former officer behaved as though he could do as he pleased. She eventually disclosed what had occurred to a colleague, towards the end of the night.

21. The witness stated that she considered resigning and spoke to an inspector about the incident. A colleague ultimately reported the matter at the end of the evening. Following the incident, she did not want to return to work because she feared workplace gossip and did not want to face colleagues or confront what had happened. She was concerned that others would judge her, regard her as someone who made complaints, or view her differently as a victim. She feared being ostracised or treated as an outcast.

22. When asked by the panel whether she considered the behaviour of PC Hamilton to be sexualised she responded that it was clearly sexualised, there was only one reason PC Hamilton was asking about coming back to her house and that this sexualised behaviour was repeated throughout the evening.

ISSUES

23. We consider the undisputed and disputed facts in respect of the allegation to be as follows.

Undisputed facts

i) Officer A and PC Hamilton were on a night out together on 10th December 2024.
ii) PC Hamilton had previously been part of the group of tutors to whom Officer A was a tutee.
iii) Photos and CCTV show some of the interactions between the group on the night out, including those in which Officer A hugs and initiates some physical contact with PC Hamilton.

Disputed facts

i) PC Hamilton disputes that any of the contact or behaviour by him towards Officer A was sexualised.
ii) Former PC Hamilton disputes making verbal comments about Officer A's appearance.
iii) Former PC Hamilton disputes saying to PC Smith that he would get Officer A "some dick tonight".
iv) Former PC Hamilton disputes deliberately touching Officer A's breasts.

v) Former PC Hamilton disputes deliberately touching Officer A's bottom.
vi) Former PC Hamilton disputes attempting to kiss Officer A.
vii) Former PC Hamilton disputes repeatedly asking Officer A to go home with him.

FINDINGS AND REASONS

24. We found Officer A's evidence to be credible and consistent. She gave evidence in line with her statement. Her recollection regarding important factors was clear. She appeared genuine when giving evidence regarding the effect the incident had had on her and why she did not initially want to report it and we believed her account of how the incidents of the evening took place.

25. Where there was a dispute on the facts between Former PC Hamilton and Officer A we preferred Officer A's account.

26. We rejected Former PC Hamiton's account from his interview that the contact as described by Officer A was accidental and/or was not sexualised.

27. We took into account the statements of PC Smith and PC Coleman, to both of whom recent reports of the behaviour of former PC Hamilton were made. We deemed their statements to be reliable and their evidence was not tested on behalf of the former officer in cross-examination.

28. We had the benefit of being able to view CCTV footage from parts of the evening. The panel found Former PC's Hamilton's account given in interview to be unreliable. We found that the footage shows the former officer to touch Officer A's bottom on the footage at 21:53:23. We do not consider that touching to be accidental.

29. In deciding whether Former PC Hamilton acted in a sexualised and inappropriate way, and whether his actions included unwanted conduct of a sexualised nature, we looked at each of the elements of behaviour described in paragraph 6 of the Regulation 30 in turn.

    i) Staring at Officer A's breasts and saying, "I didn't know you had your nipples pierced, they look really nice". On the basis of Officer A's evidence and the fact we found her to be a credible witness, we find it more likely than not that this took place.

    ii) Attempting to kiss Officer A. On basis of her evidence and the recent reporting of this event during the evening to PC Coleman and at the end of the night to PC Smith we accept that this is more likely than not to have occurred.

    iii) Being possessive of officer A and keeping her in his immediate company. We find Officer A's evidence in respect of this is consistent with the CCTV footage, the photographic evidence, the written evidence of PC Coleman, the disclosures described by PC Coleman from Officer A during the evening and the verbal confrontation between PC Hamilton and PC Coleman at the end of the night. We therefore find it more likely than not that this occurred.

    iv) Touching Officer A's bottom – We find that the CCTV footage at 21:53:23 supports the allegation that this occurred and we accept Officer A's evidence that this was non-

consensual. This was also supported by a complaint to PC Smith at the end of the night.

v) Touching Officer A's breasts without consent. We find on the balance of probabilities this is more likely than not to have occurred as we found Officer A to be a credible witness and she gave oral evidence which was consistent with her interview that this took place.

vi) Asking Officer A if she was seeing someone and after she replied, saying to PC Smith, "we are gonna get her some dick tonight". We accept there is no corroborative evidence in support of Officer A's allegation that this was said and take into account the lack of evidence on this point from PC Smith, however we consider it to be an unusual comment, which is likely to be memorable, and as we have accepted the credibility of Officer A as a witness we consider it more likely than not that this was said.

vii) Telling Officer A that she looked "gorgeous" and "stunning". We accept Officer A's interview and oral evidence on this point given our findings in respect of her as a credible witness.

viii) Repeatedly asking officer A to go home with him. We accept Officer A's evidence on this point as we found her to be a credible witness.

ix) Phoning Officer A after she had left his company and asking her to return to join former PC Hamilton, when she refused, continuing to phone her on a further 3 occasions. We accept this took place, as it is supported by screenshots of calls being made via Whatsapp. Further, we do not accept the former officer's explanation regarding the fact that he was calling in an attempt to obtain his vape, as CCTV shows him with his vape after the phone calls have been made.

30. We have considered the guidance from the Crown Court Compendium in respect of assumptions regarding sexual offences, and we consider that Officer A's explanation and evidence regarding why she did not want to report the allegations, and how she felt after the incidents to be truthful and credible.

31. We considered the CCTV footage to be supportive of Officer A being upset towards the end of the evening and the evidence of PC Smith and PC Coleman of reports being made to them on the evening to be supportive of Officer A's account.

32. Applying the burden and standard of proof set out above, we found that the conduct at paragraph 6 i-ix of the Regulation 30 notice had taken place.

33. Further, we found that Former PC Hamilton acted in a sexualised and inappropriate manner.

34. We also found that the conduct was unwanted and sexual in nature.

35. As a result of these findings we also considered that the conduct constituted sexual harassment towards Officer A.

Were the Standards of Professional Behaviour engaged and breached?

36. Having reached factual findings in respect of the allegations, the panel went on to consider whether the standards of professional behaviour were breached.

37. We found that former officer Hamilton abused his position of relative authority as a tutor and failed to treat Officer A with respect and courtesy. By engaging in unwanted physical contact and sexualised behaviour, he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries and exploited the complainant's vulnerability as a tutee officer.

38. Having found the factual allegations proved we also considered that Former PC Hamilton acted in a manner which undermined public confidence in Cleveland Police and in the force as a whole.

39. The panel found that former PC Hamilton breached the standards of:

    i) Authority, respect and courtesy.
    ii) Discreditable conduct.

40. Using the COP guidance the panel applied themselves to the proved breaches of professional standards by former PC Hamilton, and considered that they were so serious as to justify dismissal as a potential outcome. Accordingly this was gross misconduct.

OUTCOME

41. The panel received helpful oral submissions from Mr Reed. Mr Holdroyd did not wish to address the panel.

42. The panel applied the staged process approach as set out in section 4 of the College of Policing Guidance on Outcomes (Updated 2023) to the consideration of the appropriate outcome.

43. The Panel assessed seriousness, kept in mind the purpose of imposing sanctions and chose the sanction that most appropriately fulfilled the purpose and to reflect the seriousness of the misconduct.

44. The panel had regard to proportionality and weighed the interests of the public and those of former PC Hamilton.

45. The panel considered less severe outcomes first and chose the appropriate outcome to deal adequately with the issues involved in the misconduct proceedings whilst protecting the public.

46. The panel considered the College of Policing Guidance on Outcome in Police Misconduct Proceedings and applied it in considering the severity of the gross misconduct. The Panel has considered the culpability of the officer, the harm caused, and the presence of aggravating and mitigating features.

SERIOUSNESS

Culpability

47. The panel made the following findings in relation to culpability in this case.

i) We considered the conduct of former PC Hamilton to be intentional and targeted but not planned. The harm caused was unintentional but could reasonably have been foreseen.

ii) We consider 4.12 of the Guidance on outcomes in police misconduct proceedings to apply. There is increased culpability due to the former officer's position of responsibility, in light of his role as tutor and the relationship with officer A as a tutee.

iii) We consider 4.40 of the guidance applies. This falls to be sexual harassment and is predatory behaviour motivated by a desire to establish a sexual or improper emotional relationship with a colleague.

iv) 4.45 of the guidance is applicable as we find there to be an imbalance of power due to the tutor constable in relation to tutee relationship.

v) Under 4.52 we consider Officer A to be vulnerable due to her status, relative to the former officer. We consider that the former officer should have recognised this taking account of all of the circumstances.

vi) We have considered paragraph 4.60 of the guidance and we consider that the section regarding violence against women and girls applies as sexual conduct of this nature falls within the definition of the same. There is therefore a high degree of culpability with likely outcome being severe.

vii) Taking culpability overall we considered that culpability was high. This was behaviour which had foreseeable consequences and which constituted sexual harassment.

Harm

48. We considered there was harm to an identifiable victim, Officer A, who was caused immediate distress and the panel heard evidence that it caused her an extended period of anxiety and concern regarding continuing her career as a police officer.

49. We also considered that there was harm towards Cleveland Police in that conduct such as this might deter female officers and staff from joining or staying in the organisation.

50. There is further reputational harm to the force and service as a whole. There is significant and sustained national concern about sexual harassment by police officers. If the public were aware of the behaviour of former PC Hamilton this would undermine public confidence in policing amongst all communities but specifically amongst women.

51. We have considered the outcomes guidance at paragraph 4.74 in which it is stated that violence against women and girls perpetrated by police officer, will always harm public confidence in policing since this is inimical to the values of modern policing and standards of professional behaviour.

52. Taking all of these factors into account we concluded that the level of harm is high.

AGGRAVATING AND MITIGATING FACTORS

53. The Panel considered the relevant aggravating and mitigating factors.

54. Considering potentially aggravating factors, the Panel noted that the factors of predatory behaviour, sexual gratification, abuse of position, violence towards women and girls and the scale and depth of local and national concern had already been considered under culpability and harm and did not treat them as additional aggravating factors.

55. We considered that the leadership responsibility of former PC Hamilton, where there is an expectation of acting as a role model, is an aggravating factor as is the breach of more than one standard of professional behaviour.

56. In terms of mitigation we took into account that allegations were confined to events which took place on one evening.

57. The panel recognised the former officer's previous good service.

58. The panel did not reach conclusions on seriousness lightly, however taking culpability, harm, aggravating and mitigating factors into account, the overall level of seriousness was determined to be high.

59. The purpose of the police misconduct regime is threefold;

    i) to maintain public confidence in and reputation of the police service

    ii) to uphold high standards in policing and to deter misconduct

    iii) to protect the public.

60. The Panel considered the potential impact on former officer Hamilton and balanced the interests of the officer against the wider public interest. It reminded itself that the primary purpose of police misconduct proceedings is not to punish the officer but to maintain public confidence in and the reputation of the police service, and to uphold proper standards of conduct.

61. Having considered the available outcomes in respect of former officers in ascending order of severity and all mitigation, the Panel considered had the officer still been serving, dismissal without notice would be the only outcome capable of maintaining public confidence and upholding professional standards.

62. Former PC Hamilton will be placed on the College of Policing barred list.

63. He has the right to appeal which is set out below.

64. This ends the decision of the panel.

ACO Richard Baker – Misconduct Chair.