

IN THE MATTER OF THE POLICE (CONDUCT) REGULATIONS 2020

IN THE MATTER OF PC 6086 CHRISTOPHER BONNEY

Accelerated Misconduct Hearing on 7 September 2026

by

Chief Constable Jeremy Vaughan

Decision on Outcome

Police Constable 6086 Christopher Bonney has attended this Accelerated Misconduct Hearing today and he is legally represented by Mr Ross McQuillan-Johnson of Counsel. He is also supported by his Police Federation Representative, Detective Sergeant David Rich. The Appropriate Authority is represented by Mr Paul Mason of South Wales Police's Professionals Standards Department.

The allegations against PC Bonney are contained in a Notice under Regulation 51 of the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 which has been served on the officer. I have summarised the allegations as follows:

Whilst on duty on the 01/02/2026 at 16:36 hours, PC Bonney conducted a PNC check on a motor vehicle, which was registered to a female member of the public, who I will refer to as Ms A. PC Bonney imputed on police systems that the reason for the vehicle check as "02 moving vehicle". PC Bonney required the motor car to come to a stop. At the time of the stop, Ms A was the driver of the vehicle and the sole occupant.

Later that same day, PC Bonney conducted a Niche systems check on Ms A, and viewed her Niche Profile, Occurrences and Photograph. The checks revealed that Ms A is a vulnerable person and that she had warning markers for self-harm, violence, suicide and mental health. This information would have become known to PC Bonney.

As part of their routine monitoring responsibilities, South Wales Police's Anti-Corruption Unit, identified that PC Bonney used his police issued mobile phone to contact Ms A and that the

officer and Ms A exchanged a series of text messages between 18:34 and 21:39 on the same day as the traffic stop took place. The full extent of the text messages on the police mobile phone is captured in Appendix A. This is incontrovertible evidence and has been accepted by PC Bonney.

Additional enquiries made by Anti-Corruption Unit revealed that PC Bonney used his police mobile phone own to send his own personal mobile phone number to Ms A and that he invited her to contact him on his own mobile phone. Ms A has confirmed that she took up PC Bonney's invite to continue their contact on PC Bonney's own mobile phone.

PC Bonney was subsequently interviewed by the Anti-Corruption Unit and during interview, he admitted that he gave his personal mobile phone number to Ms A and that he knew that she was a vulnerable person. He also accepted that he had breached the Standards of Professional Behaviour.

The Appropriate Authority's position is that it is apparent from the text messages sent by PC Bonney from his SWP mobile that he knew what he was doing was wrong and inappropriate. The messages were progressively over familiar and of a flirtatious nature. The Appropriate Authority acknowledges that there is no evidence of any sexual relationship and that the contact lasted for one day only.

The Appropriate Authority contends that PC Bonney's actions are a breach of the Standards of Professional Behaviour relating to:

Standard 2- Authority, Respect and Courtesy, namely that: *"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.;"* and

Standard 9: Discreditable Conduct, namely that: *"Police Officers behave in a manner which does not discredit the Police Service or undermine public confidence in it, whether on or off duty."*

The Appropriate Authority maintains that PC Bonney's behaviour, individually or collectively, amounts to gross misconduct, that is, his breaches of the Standards of Professional Behaviour are so serious, as to justify dismissal.

PC Bonney has submitted a Written Notice and Response to the allegations in accordance with Regulation 54. He accepts that he has breached the Standards of Professionals Behaviour in relation to Authority, Respect and Courtesy and Discreditable Conduct as alleged. PC Bonney accepts that his communications with Ms A crossed the boundaries of professional behaviour and that he failed to maintain the strict standards expected of police officers.

PC Bonney denies that his behaviour amounts to sexual misconduct or shows a predatory behaviour, and he denies that his admitted conduct amounts to gross misconduct.

PC Bonney specifically denies that he had any intention to develop any form of relationship with Ms A and insists his contact with her was because she was upset when he had stopped her. PC Bonney states he was concerned as to her welfare. He was mindful that Ms A had recently split up from her partner and that he had some empathy with Ms A in that both he and Ms A has recently suffered the loss of a parent.

In his Regulations 54 Response, PC Bonney states that his interactions with Ms A triggered an emotional response, which he finds difficult to explain. He adds:

"I deeply regret this failure. I do not offer this response to excuse my behaviour, minimize my actions, or deflect accountability. My purpose is to provide a factual explanation of the profound situational and psychological factors that impacted upon me on that day, and to demonstrate my absolute commitment to insight and rehabilitation"

I have had the benefit of hearing oral evidence from PC Bonney, and I have listened carefully to what he said. I am left in no doubt that he regrets his actions and that he wishes that he had done things differently. However, the reality is that he did not. I have found that on the

balance of probabilities PC Bonney sent text messages to Ms A from his police issued mobile phone, which he knew to be inappropriate, a breach of the Standards of Professional Behaviour and simply wrong.

Having carefully considered all the evidence, and the submissions made at this hearing today, I have found, on the balance of probabilities, that the allegations against PC Bonney are proven. I have found that his actions were particularly ill advised and a breach the Standards of Professional relating to Authority, Respect and Courtesy and Discreditable Conduct, as alleged, and as he has admitted. I am satisfied that PC Bonney's conduct amounts to gross misconduct.

I am satisfied that PC Bonney took steps to encourage Ms A to continue their contact on a different platform by providing her with his own mobile phone number. In doing so, his intentions were clear that he wished to pursue some form of personal or emotional relationship with Ms A. This is obvious by his text in which he comments: *"I'm sure the tone of these messages would already make any significant other of yours a little jealous / upset"*, which was followed by his final text on his SWP Mobile which read: *"Perhaps daft to do and perhaps we should leave it here but my personal number [which he then provided] if you want to chat some more as I'll have to pay work for all these messages at this rate!"*.

Outcome

Having found gross misconduct, I must impose disciplinary action on PC Bonney. In this respect I have given due regard to the provisions of Regulation 62(1) of the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 which states as follows:

"62.—(1) Where the person conducting the accelerated misconduct hearing finds that the conduct of the officer concerned amounts to gross misconduct, they must impose disciplinary action, which, subject to the provisions of this regulation, must be
(a) dismissal without notice, or

*(b) if the person conducting the accelerated misconduct hearing is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which justify it —
(i) a final written warning”*

In reaching my decision, I have also fully considered the College of Policing Guidance on Outcomes in Police Misconduct Proceedings which has formed the basis for my conclusion. I have tested the seriousness of the allegations and the purpose of imposing a sanction, which I have to consider in deciding an outcome. I have given due consideration to culpability, harm, any aggravating factors, and any mitigating factors as set out in the Guidance.

In assessing the seriousness of the conduct, I recognise that the more culpable or blameworthy the behaviour in question, the more serious the misconduct and the more severe the likely outcome. All police officers hold a position of trust and responsibility, and PC Bonney has abused that trust. In this respect, I am particularly mindful of paragraph 4.44 of the Guidance, which states as follows:

“The nature of the office of constable means that all police officers are in a position of trust and authority in relation to members of the public. An officer’s misconduct will be more culpable where it involves an abuse of this position. The abuse of position for a sexual purpose (APSP) is a form of serious corruption, defined as any behaviour by a police officer, whether on-duty or off-duty, that takes advantage of their position as a member of the police service to misuse their position, authority or powers in order to pursue a sexual or improper emotional relationship with any member of the public. Such conduct can cause substantial damage to public trust and confidence in the police, and is particularly serious where the subject of the officer’s behaviour is a vulnerable person.”

As PC Bonney knew that Ms A was a vulnerable person, this significantly increases culpability.

The harm caused by the officer’s actions is reputational harm and affects the police service and the public confidence in the service as a whole. A factor of the greatest importance is the

impact of the misconduct in the standing and reputation of the profession as a whole. I am satisfied that PC Bonney has caused damage to that reputation.

Aggravating factors are those tending to worsen the circumstance of the case, in relation to either the officer's culpability or harm caused. I have found that there are a number of aggravating factors present. Conduct which is intentional, deliberate, targeted and planned, such as the case here is always serious. There is an element of personal advantage. He continued the behaviour after he realised or should have realised that that it was improper. PC Bonney's actions are a significant deviation from instructions, orders and policy. Conduct of this nature is an area of national and local concern. In my judgment, these are all aggravating factors.

Mitigating factors are those factors which reduce the seriousness of the misconduct and lower the level of capability and harm. I have considered carefully the submission made by Counsel on behalf of PC Bonney as to mitigating factors, and I find that the misconduct was confined to a brief duration, and I acknowledge that PC Bonney has made open admissions at an early stage and I am satisfied that there is some evidence of genuine remorse and insight. He has also accepted responsibility for his actions. I give PC Bonney some credit for all these matters.

I have reminded myself of the threefold purpose of the outcomes in police misconduct proceedings which is to maintain public confidence in policing and the reputation of the police service; to uphold high standards in policing and to deter misconduct; and finally to protect the public.

I have considered the personal mitigation put forward on behalf of PC Bonney. I am deeply sympathetic to the personal issues he has referred to. I have paid great attention to the character references which have been produced by PC Bonney in his support. However, I recognise that due to the nature and purpose of disciplinary proceedings, the weight of personal mitigation will necessarily be limited, particularly where serious misconduct has been proven as it has been in this case.

I have specially considered whether there are any exceptional circumstances which would justify a final written warning. In doing so, I considered the representations put forward by the Appropriate Authority which were that there were no exceptional circumstances. I have had the benefit of hearing oral evidence from PC Bonney. I listened carefully to what he said and to the oral submissions made by Mr McQuillan-Johnson at the hearing.

Exceptional circumstances are not defined in the Regulations and after deep consideration, I do not accept that the representations made on behalf of PC Bonney amount to exceptional circumstances.

PC Bonney, I accept that you stopped this vehicle belonging to Ms A for a legitimate policing purpose and that you were faced with an agitated individual that you sought to calm down. You carried out a check which again I accept was legitimate.

Your decision to obtain Ms A's number and check that she had safely returned home, might be unusual in my experience, but at this point I might have accepted on the balance of probabilities that this was again you being dutiful and was done for a legitimate policing purpose.

In all probability, had it stopped here, you would unlikely have been in front of me today. However, as further text messages were exchanged, your underlying motivation for the initial contact, is undermined. Whilst I am empathetic to your situation, I do not believe that you were simply reaching out to help handle your own grief and vulnerability, I believe that you had intended to pursue something more than a welfare check with Ms A.

Even if your personal circumstances go some way to explaining your behaviour, it is my view that this is obvious from the messages, culminating in an exchange of your personal phone number with a vulnerable member of the public you had recently met. That cannot be the way an officer working for me conducts themselves.

You have not been charged today with a breach of the standards of honesty and integrity, but it is my view you have been less than honest with this hearing and indeed yourself.

In all the circumstances, there is only one possible outcome which I am able to impose, and I have absolutely no hesitation in doing so. Therefore, my decision on Outcome is that I am satisfied that the misconduct is so serious that PC Bonney will be immediately dismissed without notice. No other outcome is justified or appropriate.

The behaviour of PC Bonney is totally unacceptable. There is no room in South Wales Police for this type of behaviour. The Standards of Professional Behaviour apply the moment you walk through the door. Police officers should be trusted to the ends of the earth. The public rightly expect our officers to uphold the highest professional standards, and PC Bonney has failed to do so.

The vast majority of police officers and staff and volunteers, who work for South Wales Police conduct themselves impeccably and work tirelessly to protect the public. Those very few who chose to breach the standards expected of them undermine the public's trust and confidence in policing.

In accordance with the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 the Findings and Outcome from this hearing will be referred to the College of Policing in order for Police Constable 6086 Christopher Bonney to be placed on the Police Barred List.