

Misconduct outcomes underline Police Scotland's stance on standards of professional behaviour

Police Scotland is underlining its robust approach to tackling misconduct in order to maintain public confidence and ensure organisational values are upheld.

We publish gross misconduct hearing outcomes as part of a strategic, organisation-wide plan focusing on how policing in Scotland reflects, represents and serves our communities.

The most recent outcomes, from October to December 2023, highlight five cases where a Gross Misconduct hearing was scheduled, and officers were either dismissed or resigned prior to the hearing. These cases covered on and off-duty matters, and breaches of several of the Standards of Professional Behaviour.

An officer who was found guilty at court for drink-driving their personal vehicle, while off duty, was dismissed at a gross misconduct hearing. These actions are incompatible with the role of a police officer as it is contrary to both our values and our organisational efforts to address the significant harms caused by drink-driving.

A further officer resigned prior to a scheduled hearing relating to off-duty persistent, unwanted and excessive

contact, including verbal abuse, towards an ex-partner. The behaviour escalated to the assault of a child, and the officer pled guilty at court.

Similarly, another officer resigned in advance of a gross misconduct hearing having pled guilty at court to physical domestic abuse offences against their partner and threatening harm to other family members.

All three of these cases were judged to be gross misconduct as a result of breaching the Discreditable Conduct Standard of Professional Behaviour, which states an officer should behave in a manner which does not discredit the police service or undermine public confidence, whether on or off duty.

Inappropriate comments made by an officer to colleagues, both in person on duty and via messaging apps, as well as creating a hostile and intimidating atmosphere in the workplace was deemed as a breach of the Standard of Professional Behaviour for Authority, Respect and Courtesy. The officer resigned in advance of a scheduled gross misconduct hearing.

Another officer also resigned before attending a gross misconduct hearing, scheduled as a result of submitting numerous overtime claims, totalling a four-figure sum, which was substantially higher in value than the actual hours worked. The hearing was arranged on the grounds that this conduct goes against another of the Standards of Professional Behaviour, Honesty and Integrity.

Chief Superintendent Helen Harrison, Head of Professional Standards, said: "The determination in each gross misconduct case is made following full consideration of the available evidence, the response of the subject officer and any exculpatory evidence. Outcomes can vary, from dismissal, to demotion in rank, final warnings and corrective advice.

"Sharing these outcomes brings greater focus on our standards

of behaviour and sends a clear message that where an officers fail to uphold them, we will investigate and take action.”

Police Scotland is reinforcing the importance of the high standards of behaviour expected of its officers and staff, both on and off duty.

Officers are held to ten legislative Standards of Professional Behaviour, while members of police staff are bound by a Code of Conduct.

The organisation is driving a relentless focus on our standards and values of integrity, fairness and respect and our commitment to upholding human rights using real-life examples of situations where officer conduct has impacted public confidence and led to an investigation.