

Accelerated Misconduct Hearing

Constable 5015 Ryan Hill

4th February 2025

Assessing the seriousness of the conduct lies at the heart of the decision on outcome, under Parts 4 and 5 of the Police Conduct Regulations. Whether conduct would, if proved, amount to misconduct or gross misconduct for the purposes of Regulation 14 of the Conduct Regulations is also a question of degree (i.e. seriousness).

There are three stages to determining the appropriate sanction:

1. assess the seriousness of the misconduct
2. keep in mind the purpose of imposing sanctions
3. choose the sanction that most appropriately fulfils that purpose, and reflects the seriousness of the conduct in question

The seriousness of the proven conduct, is assessed by reference to:

- the officer's culpability for the misconduct
- the harm caused by the misconduct
- the existence of any aggravating features
- the existence of any mitigating features

Having read all of the material in this case, I will first consider the assessment of the seriousness:

Culpability:

In terms of culpability, the actions of PC Ryan Hill were in my view of the most seriousness nature. Between February and March 2024 PC Ryan Hill knowingly engaged in communication with a female he reasonably believed to be 14 years old. The communication was of a sexual nature during which PC Hill expressed a sexual interest in younger girls in school uniform.

PC Hill made persistent contact via various messaging apps requesting photographs and suggesting meet ups, despite his belief that the person he was communicating with was 14. PC Hill's behaviour demonstrates a complete lack of integrity and respect for vulnerable females and children.

The persistent and wilful conduct of PC Ryan Hill would undoubtedly undermine and impact public confidence and trust in Bedfordshire Police. I therefore find the culpability of PC Hill to be high.

Harm

In terms of the harm, I believe that the actions of PC Ryan Hill will result in reputational harm. The Public have a right to be protected by Bedfordshire Police. The sexually predatory behaviour attributed to PC Ryan Hill has no place in in policing and undermines the values we stand for. Public trust and confidence could be significantly undermined if PC Hill were to be convicted of the serious criminal offences he is alleged to have committed. In my opinion, if the police had not intervened in this case when they did, PC Hill could have continued with this pattern of behaviour, potentially seeking out other potential victims.

Moreover, given our priority to tackling Male Violence Against Women and Girls (MVAWG) and the national spotlight on tackling violence against women and girls (VWAG), in particular the Governments VWAG strategy, there can be no place in policing for officers who perpetrate such behaviour.

Aggravating Features:

In terms of aggravating factors, the actions of PC Hill are so serious, that they constitute an alleged serious criminal offence.

A further aggravating factor is that some of the communication between PC Hill and the female he was engaging with, was during his work shifts. That PC Hill was engaging in such conduct whilst being paid to serve and protect the Public is grossly unacceptable.

This case is one where honesty and integrity are a factor, and I always consider breaches of this nature to be the most serious.

Mitigating Features

In terms of mitigating features, I acknowledge that PC Hill has not been subject to any performance or conduct issues previously in his six and a half years' service.

He has also tendered his resignation which I take as a small last-minute acknowledgement and acceptance of, the seriousness of the breach of the standards.

However, these mitigating factors in no way lessen the seriousness of the behaviour of this officer.

Determination

For the reasons outlined above, I find that there is a very serious breach of the following standards of professional behaviour namely:

1. Discreditable Conduct
2. Authority, Respect and Courtesy
3. Honesty and Integrity

I have no hesitation having considered all the facts of this case, and for the reasons set out so far, in finding that the behaviour of PC Hill amounts to gross misconduct.

Are there any representations before I move consider the outcome?

Having considered the seriousness of the behaviour I now move to the outcome:

Outcome

I have an absolute standard when it comes to the expectation of my officers that they will be diligent, will always prioritise public safety and will act with honesty and integrity. I believe that the public have the right to expect the same therefore, there is no room for officers in policing who are unable to fulfil these expectations. This was not an error of judgement but a wilful act of self-gratification.

The purpose of imposing a sanction is not to be punitive but to seek to restore public confidence and trust in the service. The actions of this officer have damaged that trust and made the job of those who continue to do their very best to serve the public harder.

There can only be one outcome in such a case in order to maintain confidence in the service, and whilst PC Hill has tendered his resignation, he remains on his notice period and will be dismissed without notice. PC Hill has been identified to be a risk to the Public. For these reasons I do not see that anything other than dismissal is appropriate. I therefore dismiss the officer with immediate effect.

In terms of publication of this outcome I have considered all of the evidence, and the test set out in the Regulations. I agree with the AA that the publication of this hearing should be delayed until the outcome of any criminal proceedings.

The officer will be placed on the CoP barred list.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Rodenhurst', is positioned above the printed name and title.

Trevor Rodenhurst KPM
Chief Constable
Bedfordshire Police