IN THE MATTER OF THE POLICE (CONDUCT) REGULATIONS 2020

CONCERNING

Former Detective Sergeant 2843 Gary Story

CHAIR DECISION – Accelerated Misconduct Hearing Outcome Notice

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Preliminary Matters

1. On Monday 26th October 2026 I conducted an accelerated misconduct hearing (AMH) at Cumbria Police Headquarters. This full written decision follows an outline of my conclusion and reasons delivered orally at the hearing.
2. The hearing was convened to hear allegations relating to Former Detective Sergeant (FDS) 2843 Gary Story.
3. FDS Story was represented by Police Federation representative, DS McTear.
4. The Appropriate Authority (AA) was represented by DCI Simon Gray.
5. FDS Story did not attend the hearing.
6. FDS Story was fully aware of the date, time, and nature of the proceedings, and understood the potential consequences of not attending but he voluntarily absented himself.
7. The delay of the proceedings, when FDS Story clearly stated an intention not to engage, would have been contrary to the interests of justice.
8. The Chair determined that it was fair and appropriate to proceed with and conclude the hearing in the absence of the former officer (Regulation 57 (3)(b)).
9. FDS Story resigned on 20 October 2026.
10. In line with the descriptives contained in the regulatory framework, FDS Story will be interchangeably referred to as “the Officer” throughout the following outcome report.

Alleged conduct:

11. The AA alleged conduct amounting to Gross Misconduct as follows:

On 27/08/26, DS Gary Story 2843 provided a sample of urine during a random drug test at Durranhill Police Station. This sample has returned a positive result for Cocaine consumption (940 ng/mL Benzoylecgonine).

Such conduct is in breach of the Standards of Professional Behaviour in relation to:

• ***Orders and Instructions**. Police Officers give and follow reasonable instructions.*

• ***Discreditable Conduct**. Police officers behave in a manner, whether on or off duty, which does not discredit the police service or undermine public confidence in policing.*

The AMH

12. The hearing was conducted in line with Part 5 of the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 as the Deputy Chief Constable had certified that the special conditions had been met, namely that there was sufficient evidence in the form of written statements or other documents, to establish on the balance of probabilities, that the conduct of Officer constituted gross misconduct and that it was in the public interest for the Officer to cease to be a police Officer without delay.

13. Regulation 61 (15) (16) of the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 provides that:

(15) The person conducting the accelerated misconduct hearing must review the facts of the case and decide whether or not the conduct of the Officer concerned amounts to gross misconduct.

(16) A finding of misconduct or gross misconduct must not be made unless

(a) the Chair is satisfied on the balance of probabilities that this is the case, or

(b) the Officer concerned admits it.

The Home Office Guidance

14. The Home Office Guidance provides that discredit can be brought on the police by an act itself or because public confidence in the police is undermined or is perceived to be undermined. In general, it should be the actual underlying conduct of the police officer that is considered under the misconduct procedures, whether the conduct occurred on or off-duty. As a result of the nature of the office of constable, a police officer is always subject to the Standards of Professional Behaviour even when off duty. As such police officers should not behave in a manner that discredits the police service or undermines public confidence

at any time. In determining whether a police officer's off-duty conduct discredits the police, the test is not whether the police officer discredits themselves but the police as a whole.

Agreed Facts

15. The Officer accepted the test results and that a metabolite had been identified in his system indicating ingestion of a controlled drug.
16. The Officer accepted that this amounted to Gross Misconduct.
17. The Officer stated this was an isolated instance of poor judgement, made when impaired through significant stress and alcohol intoxication whilst off duty, but accepted this was not justification for his actions.
18. The Officer stated he was fully accountable for his conduct.

The Evidence

19. No witnesses gave evidence at the AMH.
20. A Detective Constable (DC) who works within Cumbria Constabulary's (CC) Anti-Corruption Unit provided a statement ahead of the AMH to explain how, on 27th August 2026, she was tasked with choosing 15 random employees to be subjected the CC routine Substance Misuse Testing.
21. The Officer was chosen as part of that exercise and was asked to attend and provide a urine sample at 08:20am hours.
22. The Officer stated he was unable to provide a sample at that time.
23. He was given additional time and liquid intake to assist in the process.
24. The Officer told the DC that he continued to struggle to provide a sample on several occasions over the course of the morning but finally provided a sample between 11:30 and 12:00 hours.
25. On 10th September 2026, the DC spoke to a Doctor at Abbott Toxicology, the laboratory assigned to process the urine samples. The Doctor reported that a positive result had been confirmed for the donor sample taken from DS Gary Story.
26. The Doctor reported that DS Story had tested positive for metabolite of Cocaine and that the level of the drug (benzoylecgonine - a metabolite of cocaine) within his sample was 940ng per ml of urine.
27. The Doctor later confirmed that the cut off point for metabolite of Cocaine in urine is 150 ng per ml of urine.

Cumbria Constabulary Substance Misuse Policy & Procedure

28. The policy procedure outlines the Constabulary approach to drugs and alcohol testing, why testing takes place, the action taken in response to test results and what happens when someone refuses to take a test.
29. The policy applies to Police Officers, Special Constables, Police Staff and Police Volunteers.
30. The Controlled Drugs tested for are Amphetamines (including ecstasy), Cannabis, Cocaine, Opiates (such as morphine or heroin), Benzodiazepines and one additional drug or drug group (for example, Ketamine – for with cause only).
31. The aim of the drug testing is to:
    a. Reduce the risk of corruption.
    b. Reduce the chances of people who misuse drugs becoming a Police Officer.
    c. Deter staff from misusing drugs.
    d. Protect the safety of all staff and community.
    e. Encourage officers and staff to seek help and support

Determination and Severity Assessment

32. In his Regulation 54 response, FDS Story accepted the allegation and that it amounted to gross misconduct.
33. My first consideration was the analysis of the evidence, determination the facts along with the fact that the Officer fully admitted the case.
34. I read and carefully considered every item contained within the bundle of evidential material supplied ahead of the hearing. This consisted of an electronic bundle of evidence consisting of 67 pages.
35. It is incontrovertible that the Officer was found to have 940ng or cocaine metabolite per ml of urine in his system at the time of the test
36. The Officer did not dispute this and fully admitted this was the case.
37. This reading is approximately six times the cut off limit of 150 ng per ml of urine.
38. Cocaine is a Class A Controlled Drug, and its possession in the UK is prohibited under The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. It is a criminal offence with a maximum penalty for possession of seven years.
39. There is no doubt that the Officer has used Cocaine.

40. The Police are the body who are tasked with applying the criminal law against those who breach it.
41. When an Officer breaches the law themselves, they not only discredit themselves, but the profession as a whole
42. The Use of controlled drugs also is explicitly not permitted as per the workplace policy. The use of drugs means an Officer is not safe or fit to protect themselves, their colleagues, but most importantly, the public they serve.
43. **Determination of Facts**; Having considered all the evidence, I find that the allegation is proven on the balance of probabilities. The former officer has also admitted the facts.
44. **Breaches of the Standards of Professional Behaviour**; The AA alleged that FDS Story's conduct breached the Standards of Professional Behaviour relating to Discreditable Conduct and Orders and Instructions.
45. The Officer has accepted the key facts that he had a metabolite had been identified in his system indicating ingestion of a controlled drug.
46. The workplace policy is designed to prevent use of drugs, and in any case, the possession of cocaine is a criminal offence, and officers are expected to both adhere to policy and abide by the law.
47. It therefore follows that I find that the officer has breached both relevant standards of professional behaviour relating to Discreditable Conduct and Orders and Instructions.

Seriousness / Level of Misconduct

48. I have considered the seriousness of FDS Story's conduct and in doing so I have referred myself to the four-stage approach as laid down in the College of Policing guidelines on outcomes in misconduct proceedings.

Culpability

49. Culpability denotes the Officer's blameworthiness or responsibility for their actions. The more culpable or blameworthy the behaviour in question, the more serious the misconduct and the more severe the likely outcome.
50. The outcomes guidance specifically denotes the types of misconduct which should be considered especially serious, such as committing criminal offences. It is unacceptable for police officers, who are responsible for enforcing the law, to break the law themselves.

The guidance states that if the conduct found proven in the misconduct proceedings is criminal in nature, this should be taken into account when considering the culpability of the officer, notwithstanding the absence of a criminal conviction.

51. In this case the officer has been found to have metabolites that indicate the use of a drug, the possession of which is a criminal offence. Whilst the officer has not been found guilty of that criminal offence, it is undeniable that this conduct is criminal in nature.
52. FDS Story is fully responsible for his actions.
53. I found the level of culpability in this case to be **high.**

Harm

54. The public expect that Officers will behave lawfully, and when they fail to do so, confidence in the service is damaged.
55. The public expect that Officers are not impaired to undertake their duties whilst at work; public safety depends on it.
56. An officer consuming controlled drugs undermines discipline and good order within the police service even though it hasn't (in this case) resulted in direct harm to individuals. This is classed as a serious matter in the outcome guidance.
57. I found the level of harm in this case to be **high.**

Aggravating Factors

58. The Officer was six times over the acceptable limit, a significant deviation from policy.
59. The Officer would have known how much Cocaine he had consumed, and when, and could have reasonably foreseen that he was about to parade for duty when unfit to work.
60. The Officer also held the rank of Sergeant, a position of responsibility where there is an expectation of acting as a role model, which FDS Story has greatly undermined.

Mitigating Factors

61. The Officer admitted the facts and showed remorse for his actions.
62. The Officer has been cooperative with the professional standards unit throughout.
63. Submissions have been made that this was an isolated occurrence, albeit the significant level of the metabolite found resulted in me placing lesser weight on this submission.

64. I have noted that the Officer states he was experiencing significant stress and alcohol intoxication whilst off duty at the time of the ingestion. Whilst I do not dispute this claim, I have not been presented with any substantive medical evidence to support it.

65. Seriousness – In the light of my findings above, I have concluded that seriousness was at a high level and that this is a **case that amounts to gross misconduct**.

66. The Former Officer accepts this.

Stage two – Outcome

67. I referred myself to overriding purpose of the misconduct regime which is:

- to maintain public confidence and the reputation of the police service
- to uphold high standards in policing and deter misconduct
- to protect the public

68. In relation to the seriousness of the misconduct, I had already considered this and made no significant changes when revisiting it at stage two.

69. I was alert to the fact that the purpose of misconduct proceedings is not to punish an Officer. I reminded myself that any outcome may have a punitive effect upon the Officer and that the outcome should be no more than necessary to satisfy the purpose of the proceedings.

70. I also recognised that where an outcome is necessary to satisfy the purpose of the proceedings, I must impose that outcome even if, in doing so it may lead to significant consequences for the individual Officer.

71. I had sight of and considered FDS Story's service record and saw that there were no other live disciplinary findings.

72. To the Officer's credit I observed examples of notable achievements during his service, where he had been awarded three commendations for his contributions to policing.

73. The AA submitted that pursuant to the amended Police Regulations 2025, the Officer would have been dismissed without notice if still serving as there were no "exceptional circumstances" justifying an alternative outcome.

74. DS McTear made no submissions in respect of there being exceptional circumstances.

75. There nothing that I considered to be exceptional circumstances.

Stage two – Conclusion on Outcome

76. I therefore concluded that **the most appropriate outcome is a finding that Officer would have been dismissed without notice** had they still be serving, and that this sanction does fulfil the purpose of the misconduct regime.

77. I acknowledge the Officer's previous service and personal issues, however, this would not allow me to impose a lesser outcome, given the serious nature of my findings.

Barred List

78. The Officer should be placed on the barred list.

Right of Appeal

79. In accordance with Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 the Officer has a right to appeal to a Police Appeals Tribunal against the findings and outcome of a misconduct hearing.

ACO Sarah Jackson.

AMH Conducting Officer

28th October 2026