IN THE MATTER OF THE MISCONDUCT PROCEEDINGS UNDER THE POLICE (CONDUCT) REGULATIONS 2020 (AS AMENDED BY THE POLICE (CONDUCT) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2024)

B E T W E E N:

THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE OF THE METROPOLIS

and

POLICE SERGEANT HARJINDER SINGH SANGHA

PANEL FINAL DECISION

MISCONDUCT HARING

1 – 5 DECEMBER 2025

This is the written decision in respect of the misconduct hearing for PS Sangha. The outline of the panel decision on facts, gross misconduct and outcome was provided to the officer during the hearing. Due to our legal adviser being unwell after the hearing providing this full written decision has unfortunately been delayed.

The panel comprised as chair Mrs Jessica Harrabin and independent panel members, Ms Fiona Barrett and Vincent Walker. The legally qualified adviser ("LQA") was Mr Darren Snow.

The Appropriate Authority ("AA") was represented by Mr Alan Jenkins and the officer represented by Ms Heather Oliver.

The hearing took place on the 1st to 5th December 2025 at Empress State Building.

At the outset of our determinations and throughout the hearing the panel has reminded itself of the purpose of police misconduct proceedings – which is as follows:

1. To maintain public confidence in, and the reputation of, the police service.
2. To uphold high standards in policing and to deter misconduct.
3. To protect the public.

THE PROCESS

The first stage in the hearing process is to hear the evidence and for the panel to decide what facts we find proved, then whether facts found proved amount to a breach of the professional

standards pleaded. We then consider if, on findings standards are breached, there is misconduct or gross misconduct. If we find misconduct or gross misconduct proved then we go on to consider the final stage which is Outcome.

In this case there has been a finding of **Gross Misconduct** and the outcome has been **Reduction in Rank**. This decision has been set out orally in the hearing.

THE ALLEGATIONS

The allegations against PS Sangha are as follows:

Allegation One – Inappropriate Relationship

*1. Between approximately October and December 2022 you pursued and/or conducted an inappropriate sexual relationship with a female student officer, ***REDACTED***.*

2. The relationship was inappropriate because:

*a. ***REDACTED***was a student officer;*
b. You were a Sergeant;
*c. You were ***REDACTED***'s line manager;*
d. There was an imbalance of power;
e. There was a conflict of interest; and/or
f. You failed to report the relationship.

*3. Pursuing and/or conducting an inappropriate sexual relationship with ***REDACTED***breached the following Standards of Professional Behaviour:*

a. *Honesty and Integrity, because you were aware that your behaviour was inappropriate but you continued anyway, demonstrating a lack of integrity;*

b. *Orders and Instructions, because your behaviour breached the College of Policing and National Police Chiefs' Council guidance on 'Appropriate personal relationships and behaviours in the workplace';*

c. *Authority, Respect and Courtesy, because your behaviour demonstrated a lack of respect for ***REDACTED***; and*

d. *Discreditable Conduct, because your behaviour discredited the police service and/or undermined public confidence in the police service.*

Allegation 2 – Sex on Duty

*1. On 10th October 2022 you and ***REDACTED*** were both on duty, working out of Plaistow police station.*

*2. Around the early evening ***REDACTED*** was out on patrol and you asked her to return to the police station.*

*3. When ***REDACTED*** arrived back at the police station you and ***REDACTED*** went to a room on the second floor where you both engaged in sexual activity, during which you touched ***REDACTED*** vagina.*

*4. On approximately four other occasions (dates unknown, but between October and December 2022) you engaged in sexual activity with ***REDACTED*** when you were both on duty in Plaistow police station.*

5. Engaging in sexual activity whilst on duty and in a police station breached the following Standards of Professional Behaviour:

a. *Honesty and Integrity, because you were aware that your behaviour was inappropriate but you did it anyway, demonstrating a lack of integrity;*

b. *Orders and Instructions, because your behaviour breached the College of Policing and National Police Chiefs' Council guidance on 'Appropriate personal relationships and behaviours in the workplace';*

c. *Authority, Respect and Courtesy, because your behaviour demonstrated a lack of respect for ***REDACTED*** and/or your policing colleagues; and*

d. *Discreditable Conduct, because your behaviour discredited the police service and/or undermined public confidence in the police service.*

Severity

Taken individually and/or cumulatively your breaches of the Standards of Professional behaviour were so serious that they amount to gross misconduct.

THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

We have reminded ourselves of the professional standards raised in this case:

Honesty and Integrity "*Police officers are honest, act with integrity and do not compromise or abuse their position."*

This is not a case where dishonesty is alleged so our focus has been on the question whether the alleged conduct lacked integrity.

Orders & Instructions "*Police officers only give and carry out lawful orders and instructions. Police officers abide by police regulations, force policies and lawful orders."*

Authority, Respect and Courtesy "*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."*

Discreditable Conduct "*Police officers behave in a manner which does not discredit the police service or undermine public confidence in it, whether on or off duty. Police officers report any action taken against them for a criminal offence, any conditions imposed on them by a court or the receipt of any penalty notice."*

APPLICATION FOR ANONIMITY

As a preliminary matter in this case PS Sangha sought an order that his identity was not published in order to protect his anonymity on grounds of the nature of the allegations, impact upon his mental health and impact upon his family. The AA opposed that application. The starting point is that a police misconduct hearing is expected to be held in public. Open justice and accountability are significant factors in why this is the normal position. It is normal practice that the officer is named. The presumption should be of transparency where possible which includes naming of the officer facing the allegations. Reg 33(8) sets out provision for representations on whether a hearing should be in public, the exclusion of persons from a hearing and /or publication of information about the hearing. Reg 39 sets out provision for reporting restrictions to be imposed and the power to give such directions prohibiting the publication of any matter relating to the proceedings.

On the basis of the submissions a preliminary ruling was made that PS Sangha would not be named in the public notice nor reported during the hearing. He was referred to as "*Officer A*".

The decision was reviewed at the conclusion of the hearing. With the finding of facts on Allegation 1 and of Gross Misconduct, the panel lifted the restriction upon naming PS Sangha. The panel was satisfied that it was in the public interest to name the officer at the conclusion of the hearing in light of the outcome. There was, in our opinion, no sufficient reason to step back from the principles of open justice and that the misconduct process is a public process in light of the gross misconduct and outcome decision reached in this case.

THE EVIDENCE

We summarise the evidence in short form. The panel has read all of the written evidence submitted on behalf of the AA and the material submitted on behalf of the officer in respect of character evidence. We have also had the benefit of PS Sangha's detailed Reg 31 document.

In PS Sangha's Reg 31 Response he admitted to a sexual relationship with ***REDACTED*** but denied it was an inappropriate relationship. He admitted sexual activity on two occasions off duty. He denied any sexual activity whilst on duty. He described the relationship as short lived.

The panel heard oral evidence from ***REDACTED***, ***REDACTED***, her husband, PC Ali Kayani, PC S Churchouse, PCSO Jason Moss and PC D Vann.

The case concerns allegations of sexual activity between PS Sangha and ***REDACTED***. ***REDACTED*** was a student officer at the material time in 2022 under the direct supervision of PS Sangha at Plaistow Police Station. It is alleged by the AA that sexual activity between them took place on and off duty.

REDACTED joined the Metropolitan Police as a student officer in February 2022. Background facts, which are not disputed show that ***REDACTED*** clearly had an emotional and sexual interest in PS Sangha by the Autumn of 2022. She had made it clear to colleagues that she was attracted to PS Sangha. ***REDACTED*** was a mature entrant to the police service and was of close age to PS Sangha. Both were also married. From our

examination of WhatsApp messaging between them and PS Sangha's admitted sexual activity out of work between them, we are satisfied that PS Sangha had shared a mutual sexual interest. The evidence shows that a relationship developed over the course October to December 2022. The relationship became sexual; there is no dispute to this. There was no evidence before us to suggest this affair was serious, with neither participant appearing to suggest they left their partners or were seeking a long term relationship with each other. For the main period of the relationship it appeared both parties were attempting to keep the relationship private.

REDACTED alleged sexual activity took place at Plaistow Police Station on the 10th October 2022. She alleged sexual intercourse took place between them on the 27th October 2022 at the Hilton Hotel in Canary Wharf. In her written evidence ***REDACTED*** initially alleged this took place whilst PS Sangha was on duty. During the course of the oral evdiecne to the panel it became clear that there was insufficient clarity on the precise time they had met and thus whether PS Sangha was on duty. The fact they had sexual intercourse on this occasion was not disputed by PS Sangha.

REDACTED alleged that there was a second incident of sexual activity at Plaistow where she stated they had sexual intercourse whilst both on duty. She also detailed at least one occasion of oral sex whilst in PS Sangha's car whilst off duty. ***REDACTED*** alleged that the sexual activity at Plaistow Police station occurred on at least two occasions. She made specific allegations that she had been called back to the Police station each time by PS Sangha on spurious reasons whereupon they had sex in an unused office at the police station. PS Sanga denied any sexual activity whilst on duty as alleged or at all. He admitted sexual intercourse at the Hilton Hotel and one occasion having oral sex out of work whilst in his car with ***REDACTED*** but there was a discrepancy between their evidence as to the date and location. It was not in dispute that oral sex in his car had occurred at least once whilst they were off duty.

PS Sangha gave evidence. He denied any sexual activity at work. He was clear that he would not have jeopardised his career recognising sex at work with a colleague would be wrong. His evidence was that the first sexual activity was on the 27/10/22 at the Hilton Hotel. In his Reg 31 document he makes clear the relationship for him was "casual" though he believes ***REDACTED*** may have wanted something more serious. The Panel felt that the evidence certainly pointed to ***REDACTED*** herself being emotionally vulnerable at this time. Our conclusion is that both of them sought this initial physical relationship but with no evidence either communicated any desire for anything more serious. ***REDACTED*** stated in her evidence that she had not realised how such a relationship would be serious misconduct nor lead to a risk of dismissal.

The various officers from PS Sangha's team provided evidence but we did not feel it helped us with our decision on whether on balance there was sexual activity on duty as alleged in Allegation 2. Sexual activity was admitted off duty by PS Sangha. We also felt that some witnesses were relying heavily upon an apparent lack of memory despite signed witness statements being made. This was unhelpful and frankly did not put those officers in a good light. There was clearly a reluctance by some officers giving evidence to say anything that may damage PS Sangha, who they clearly respected and they had liked as their sergeant.

REDACTED husbands evidence similarly provided some background to their relationship but did not assist the panel in resolving the key questions in this case. It remained unclear what the motivation was for ***REDACTED*** to have the relationship with PS Sangha. ***REDACTED*** disclosed in her evidence that on the 27/10/22 after meeting PS

Sangha she met with another police officer afterwards and was also involved in a sexual relationship with that officer. For the panel this was difficult to comprehend and reinforced our belief that at this time ***REDACTED*** may have been emotionally vulnerable for reasons unknown and that may explain her own decision making.

We found that the case on Allegation 2, Sex on duty, rested almost entirely upon our assessment of ***REDACTED*** and PS Sangha. The other witnesses called by the AA were helpful background but did not assist us in support of the allegations. Witnesses described PS Sangha and ***REDACTED*** texting each other whilst working in the team office. It was also stated that PS Sangha would apparently change his top in the office in front of ***REDACTED*** and sit in a way opening his legs towards ***REDACTED*** in the office. Ultimately, we did not feel that the evidence here was sufficient to enable the panel to reach a view on this alleged conduct being conducted as described nor in assisting with Allegation 2.

There was no independent evidence to support the allegations of sexual activity whilst on duty. Sexual activity off duty was largely admitted albeit with some discrepancy on dates and detail. The facts in Allegation 1 were to all intents a matter of fact, the issue in dispute for Allegation 1 was whether admitted sexual activity outside work was an inappropriate relationship in breach of professional standards.

PC Ali Kayani confirmed that PS Sangha had admitted to the relationship in conversation with him but we did not feel his evidence went as far as to suggest PS Sangha had ever admitted sexual activity whilst on duty with ***REDACTED***.

WhatsApp messaging between PS Sangha and ***REDACTED*** was a significant part of the evidence – we found the messaging consistent with a developing consensual sexual relationship. It was clear that the messaging was evidence of mutual flirting and sexual attraction. However, this evidence was of no assistance in proving sexual activity took place either at Plaistow Police station or on duty generally. It was accepted by PS Sangha that messaging had included the exchange of explicit images but these were deleted and not before the panel. There was insufficient evidence to establish if these had been sent whilst on duty.

It was clear to the panel from the evidence that PS Sangha was a respected Sergeant and line manager. All the police officers giving evidence agreed with this view, including ***REDACTED*** herself. Written character references submitted on behalf of PS Sangha also reinforced his qualities as a police officer. Evidence did not reveal any favouritism was displayed towards ***REDACTED*** in terms of allocation of duties, performance reviews or her general progress as a student officer. There was also little to no evidence to suggest the performance or moral of the team was affected - save for the witnessed messaging in the office and some evidence of inappropriate comments to colleagues by ***REDACTED*** about PS Sangha whilst on duty.

By the point the relationship ended ***REDACTED*** was to be moved to a new team as part of her rotation as a student officer. It was clear that she was unhappy with this move and unhappy that PS Sangha had not kept her on his team when he moved to Stratford. The formal allegations are made after the end of the relationship. By that time the panel felt the evidence was such that the relationship had become common knowledge. The specific allegations are detailed by ***REDACTED*** in an initial email dated the 2/6/22. A criminal investigation is initially commenced. No criminal charges are forthcoming after the initial criminal investigation. It was clear that the allegations made were informally raised with PS Sangha by his line managers before any formal action was taken. He appears to have

admitted to a sexual relationship at that stage in informal conversations with his line managers but not in the criminal investigation that followed. We draw no adverse inferences here – it was understandably why on legal advice he has not made any admissions in the criminal investigation.

The panel noted that when giving evidence, PS Sangha admitted the sexual relationship out of work but whilst giving evidence he made little, to no concession, to this relationship being inappropriate. He appeared to give little thought at the time of the relationship to the potential inappropriate nature of such a relationship with a student officer under his supervision nor to the potential impact upon his team and/or how the public might perceive such a relationship.

APPLICATION TO ADDUCE LATE EVIDENCE

REDACTED was examined in chief in detail by the AA. During her evidence she made reference to having saved WhatsApp messages between her and PS Sangha on her phone. These were messages not in the AA bundle and understood by the panel to have been deleted. Having completed her evidence in chief overnight a document was provided to the AA – we understand to have been saved on her phone. This was a notepad document where WhatsApp messages had been cut and pasted and saved. These were missing messages between her and PS Sangha not served either as used or unused material. It was accepted by the AA that it looked like there had been some editing by ***REDACTED*** when the document was created. The AA sought to introduce these messages in re-examination. Counsel for PS Sangha objected to the late admission of this evidence.

The panel was provided with the document to review and heard submissions on behalf of the AA and PS Sangha. PS Sangha's counsel raised the fact the reliability of the document was unclear and they were deprived through lack of time on instructing an expert to examine the material. Legal advice reminded us of the wide discretion to admit new evidence and the public interest in a panel considering all relevant material but any such admission must be balanced with fairness to the officer. This was a very late application, coming after ***REDACTED*** had completed her evidence in chief, and with considerable question as to how much of it could have been edited.

Having reviewed the document the panel formed the view that it served as further background material but was not of significant relevance to the key questions we had to resolve, especially with Allegation 2 - Sex on duty. The panel decision was to not allow the admission of this new material, it was coming very late, the material had been in the possession of the AA for a long time but overlooked. The potential prejudice to PS Sangha therefore outweighed this materials probative value. Having excluded this material, the panel directed itself to put it out of its mind. It was removed from our bundle and treated as unseen when deliberating.

OUR FINDINGS

At the outset of our deliberations, we have reminded ourselves that the burden of proof is upon the AA at all times. PS Sangha does not have to prove anything. The standard of proof for findings of fact is the balance of probabilities. We have received legal advice and follow that advice in applying this standard of proof.

Allegation 2 – Sex on Duty

We deal with this allegation first. We have not found this allegation proven. We are not satisfied that the AA case has presented sufficient evidence to satisfy the burden of proof that on balance of probability the allegations of sexual activity at work are proven. The burden of proof is at all times upon the AA. The panel does not feel that the AA has proved its case on Allegation 2 Sex on duty.

There was a fundamental dispute between PS Sangha and ***REDACTED*** in respect of whether there was sexual activity at work and specifically at Plaistow Police station. Both witnesses gave evidence that the panel has found to be, to some degree, credible. There was a lack of further supporting evidence to support the AAs case. The case for Allegation 2 relies wholly in our opinion on ***REDACTED*** evidence. The panel position is that PS Sangha and ***REDACTED*** both gave accounts that could be true, we found them both credible in part, equally we have concerns with both of their accounts. The issues with regards to room layouts, a window in a door, and a radiator were obvious inconsistencies, but these issues were in our view insignificant given the time delay between the alleged encounters and the date the evidence was captured, and so they did not really play a part in this decision.

We are faced with two witnesses, with conflicting accounts, where we have been unable to reach a view where one can be favoured over the other. That is our difficulty, without significantly more evidence to support the account of ***REDACTED*** of actual sexual activity at work we find that we cannot accept the AA case is proved. That is not the fault of ***REDACTED***. There is simply insufficient evidence overall to enable us to find on balance of probabilities there was sexual activity at work.

Whilst this situation may be unusual when applying the balance of probabilities, it has happened here. We have had guidance on the standard of proof and considered our decision on this allegation very carefully. With the burden of proof upon the AA the panel was simply not satisfied that they have proved their case on this allegation. We simply could not reach the decision that ***REDACTED*** evidence was any more credible, and thus accepted by us, over that of PS Sangha on Allegation 2.

REDACTED was very open in her evidence, shied away from nothing and described PS Sangha as the best line manager she had had. She also made clear she had received no different treatment from him either positive or negative because of the relationship. We therefore did not see any evidence she was seeking to exaggerate or intentionally mislead when she could have done. That all goes to her credibility.

PS Sangha admitted that there was sexual activity out of work. He has also admitted sending an explicit image to ***REDACTED***. There was, in our view, no reason to admit these facts unless he was telling the truth. That goes to his credibility. He was consistent and quite

robust when explaining why he would never have had sex at work. We found that equally credible evidence. His evidence in respect of sitting with his legs splayed, taking his shirt off in the office - we find his account on these issues was equally credible, and equally plausible that those observing these acts might have felt directed at ***REDACTED*** especially at the point in time rumours were spreading in the office, even if that had not been his intent.

Our position is that having carefully considered all of the evidence in this case and the evidence of ***REDACTED*** and Officer A on the allegation of sexual activity at work we have simply been unable to be satisfied on balance of probabilities Allegation 2 can be proved. In those circumstances our finding has to be that Allegation 2 is not proved.

Allegation 1 - Inappropriate Relationship

We find the facts of this allegation proved. We are satisfied on the evidence on a balance of probabilities that PS Sangha pursued and conducted a sexual relationship with ***REDACTED***. PS Sangha has admitted a sexual relationship albeit the extent of that relationship in terms of the sexual activity is disputed. It is a matter of fact that there was a sexual relationship between them and critically ***REDACTED*** was a student officer and PS Sangha was her sergeant and her line manager. He was her direct supervisor. In these circumstances, we find that this was an inappropriate relationship. The number of times that there was sexual activity between them is not the real issue – for the panel it is PS Sangha's decision to engage in a sexual relationship with a student officer under his direct line management that is the serious issue, not the duration of the relationship or number of times that there was sexual activity. This type of relationship is clearly inappropriate. We received specific legal advice on a police officer's right to a private life. We recognise this but the professional standards still apply outside of work. We also took the view that his responsibilities as sergeant and line manager in this situation do not cease at the end of his shift because the relationship clearly has the potential to impact upon work.

We find on the evidence that there was sexual activity between them on at least two occasions based upon the evidence of PS Sangha and ***REDACTED***. PS Sangha admits sexual activity at the Hilton hotel on the 27/10/22 and in his car parked up in Ferry Lane, East London. ***REDACTED*** details more sexual activity than that. There is a factual dispute between them on the number of times that there is sexual activity in PS Sangha's car. Whilst there is some inconsistency between their accounts as to the location and date of sexual activity in the car, it is clear that there was sexual activity in the car on at least one occasion. We are conscious that the events go back to 2022 which may explain the inconsistencies in the details on location and date with the two accounts. For the panel the key fact is that there is agreed sexual activity on at least 2 occasions.

It is a matter of fact with the messaging between PS Sangha and ***REDACTED*** that there was contact from 7/10/22 up to the 27/10/22 that clearly shows a mutual interest in a relationship before, according to PS Sangha, the first sexual encounter took place. That is 3 weeks for him to consider his position as ***REDACTED*** line manager and the appropriateness or not of that relationship yet he still pursued it. We find that shows that PS Sangha was clearly focused upon pursuing a sexual relationship over that period. On that basis we find that this was premediated behaviour. Furthermore, over the course of the developing relationship there was ample opportunity to seek advice on his position and for him to consider carefully the appropriateness of the relationship. He did not do this.

On the evidence it is clear to the panel that ***REDACTED*** was making her interest in PS Sangha very clear to him. She was very forward and has made it clear in her evidence she was interested in a sexual relationship. PS Sangha appears to have done nothing to prevent the development of the relationship and it becoming sexual.

Allegation 1, Para 2, lists 6 specific facts, A to F that the AA assert made the relationship inappropriate. A, B and C are to all intents admitted by PS Sangha –

(a) ***REDACTED***was a student officer.

(b) he was a sergeant.

(c) he was ***REDACTED***s line manager.

On their own, we find that these three undisputed facts make the sexual relationship between them inappropriate.

As a sergeant and line manager of this student officer there was clearly in our view:

(d) an imbalance of power.

We do not find evidence that this was acted upon to any significant degree.

There was clearly also:

(e) a potential for conflict of interest

PS Sangha was responsible for ***REDACTED*** welfare, assessment, performance reviews, pay through overtime and career progression as a student officer. Whilst we have found no clear evidence of actual conflict being demonstrated in any decision making or actions by PS Sangha there was clearly a conflict-of-interest present through his relationship with ***REDACTED***.

(f) failure to report.

It is a matter of fact that PS Sangha did not report this relationship. The policy may not have been known to him but he would have been able to explore if a policy existed – he did not. We find it difficult to accept that as a sergeant in this position he would have ever believed such a relationship was either acceptable or appropriate in his position. The policy makes clear of the need for caution in any situation where there is a supervisory or line management responsibility. That issue in our view should and would have been obvious to PS Sangha. We remind ourselves that on his evidence this was always a sexual relationship rather than emotional, as well as extra marital, which in our view should and would raise an obvious question for a sergeant whether it was an appropriate relationship. We are satisfied that he prioritised his sexual interest.

We find therefore that the facts as alleged at D – F in Para 2 are also proved on balance of probabilities as specific facts showing it to be an inappropriate relationship.

We accept the evidence before us that ***REDACTED*** was a willing participant in the relationship. At points she has taken the lead. We are quite satisfied the relationship was consensual. The fact it was a consensual relationship does not in our opinion alter the seriousness of PS Sangha's behaviour.

For avoidance of doubt, we find on balance that the sexual relationship was an inappropriate relationship and that the specific factors listed in Para 2 A – F are found to have existed

making it such. They are all, in our view, clear and obvious reasons why a sergeant in this position should have realised that such a relationship was inappropriate.

We have gone on to consider whether our findings establish any breach of professional standards.

Honesty & Integrity

We find that the PS Sangha has acted with a lack of integrity. This was a relationship with a student officer under his direct supervision. We do not believe he would honestly have thought, as he has said, that at this time he could see no potential conflict and no requirement to seek guidance before acting on the relationship. The panel formed the view that this is an obvious situation where integrity and doing the right thing as a sergeant to uphold the standards expected of a police officer is paramount.

Orders & Instructions

It is a matter of fact that there is a published policy document on appropriate personal relationships and behaviours in the workplace. We find that PS Sangha's failure to apply the guidance in place to amount to a breach of this standard. At very least he should have made enquiries about available policy or guidance. He did not. It would seem common sense to have taken steps to consider his position and whether his decision to pursue a relationship would ever be appropriate as a sergeant with line manager responsibility. The policy highlights obvious issues of concern to be considered where conflict may exist – line management responsibility, decision making on performance. remuneration decisions, decisions on access to training, deployment decisions. We saw no evidence that PS Sangha had really considered the potential problems as the direct line manager.

Authority, Respect & Courtesy

We find that this standard is breached. Whilst we find the relationship was consensual, we find that PS Sangha has fundamentally failed to show any degree of respect to ***REDACTED*** in allowing the relationship to develop with her as a student officer. From the evidence it does appear to the panel that he has prioritised his own sexual desires over any care or thought to ***REDACTED*** welfare as a student officer under his supervision. The relationship once public has clearly damaged her standing as a student officer. Whilst we accept this was a consensual relationship, PS Sangha's position was such that he should have never allowed a sexual relationship to develop even off duty. He should have realised the potential for negative impact on ***REDACTED***; known it was inappropriate from the outset to allow it to develop, risking an impact upon performance at work and should have identified that the imbalance in rank made her to some degree vulnerable. He failed in each of these respects.

Discreditable Conduct

This standard is breached. The public would be appalled by this sort of conduct by a sergeant. This was an inappropriate sexual relationship between a sergeant and a student officer under his direct supervision. This type of scenario is likely to greatly trouble the public and fundamentally undermine the publics respect and confidence in the police service.

As a panel we are concerned that PS Sangha appears to have little insight into how inappropriate and serious his behaviour was as a sergeant and line manager. He has admitted sexually activity with ***REDACTED***. His insight appears to be limited to wishing he had sought advice at the time with no apparent appreciation in his evidence of how

inappropriate such a relationship was in his role or why his own experience and judgment should have alerted him to why it should not have started.

MISCONDUCT/GROSS MISCONDUCT

We have gone on to consider if our findings on this Allegation amount to misconduct or gross misconduct. We have reminded ourselves of their definitions:

Misconduct: A breach of the Standards of Professional Behaviour that is so serious as to justify disciplinary action

Gross Misconduct: A breach of the Standards of Professional Behaviour that is so serious as to justify dismissal

The panel's findings raise very serious issues. As a sergeant he had responsibility for a student officer's performance, welfare and progression. There was also the risk of impact upon the wider team and their performance. There was also a specific conflict as he would deal with her performance reviews, operational deployments and pay. We do not accept that any officer in his role would not see the potential conflict of interest or need to seek advice about such a relationship.

We are satisfied that this type of behaviour would be seen as unacceptable by the general public. The public would be concerned with the lack of objectivity that may arise as a line manager having a relationship with an officer under his supervision. They would also call into question whether time on duty was being spent in their best interests – even if no sexual activity took place at work. As a sergeant there must be an expectation to work to, and to ensure others meet the professional standards for a police officer. We find that, from a public perspective, a sergeant having a sexual relationship with a direct report student officer will fundamentally undermine public confidence.

For these reasons in respect of Allegation 1, which we have found proved, and the breaches of professional standards found proved we find Gross Misconduct.

OUTCOME

We have only found Allegation 1 proved. We have followed the Outcome Guidance on Outcomes in reaching our decision, assessing seriousness before moving on to decide upon appropriate sanction. We have considered the positive character evidence but make clear PS Sangha's positive references carry minimal weight in assessing seriousness.

Culpability

We assess this as HIGH – it is deliberate and intentional conduct. This is not an impulsive one-off brief encounter. PS Sangha was a sergeant and line manager. We have found that he should have and would have known this relationship was inappropriate but still pursued it. The fact that ***REDACTED*** was in our view a willing participant is no excuse nor reduces the culpability as a sergeant and direct line manager of this student officer.

Harm

The potential for harm to public confidence and team dynamics is high in conduct of this nature. Whilst we have found that this was a consensual relationship, we do identify actual harm caused to ***REDACTED***by pursuing this relationship where she appears to have been infatuated whereas his interest seems purely sexual. PS Sangha would have known by pursuing and entering into that relationship on those terms he would risk emotional harm to ***REDACTED***. It is clear to the panel that once the relationship became public knowledge ***REDACTED*** standing was negatively affected. We are satisfied that this type of case does risk undermining public confidence in policing and may raise legitimate questions with the public on integrity and professionalism of male police officers with supervisory responsibilities over female student officers.

Aggravating Factors

As we have found this was premediated conduct and repeated over a few months. We do not double count. We do not find this to be an abuse of trust; PS Sangha's rank was not used to pressure or take advantage. He has failed to seek advice about the relationship and also failed to act properly in his leadership and supervisory role – that failure is an aggravating factor.

Mitigating Factors

There have been admissions by PS Sangha to the sexual relationship outside work. It is a single relationship with no suggestion of any prior misconduct. It was consensual. His service record and references show clearly, he has been an effective officer. At the start of this hearing there was little sign of insight but we note that there are now signs from his oral evidence of an understanding of the potential impact of his conduct on public confidence in policing.

Decision on Outcome

Cases all rest on their own facts. We have found this to be serious misconduct amounting to gross misconduct born out of poor judgment, a lack of integrity and a failure to grasp the fundamental responsibilities of a sergeant and line manager. We have been referred to the case of *Taylor*; we distinguish this case from that and do not believe that a final written warning would adequately reflect the facts in this case. PS Sangha was the direct line manager and has engaged with a student officer directly under his supervision and care. As a panel we have been unanimous in our opinion that a final written warning would be inadequate to reflect the seriousness of the misconduct here but also be inadequate to ensure public confidence in the misconduct process. PS Sangha's personal circumstances at the time cannot in our opinion undermine the simple fact he should have realised this was an inappropriate relationship. The *Taylor* case does however make it clear that an inappropriate sexual relationship of this type does not automatically mean dismissal, the panel shares that view in this case.

Given the evidence that PS Sangha appears fundamentally a good police officer with only this single short-lived proven misconduct over a long successful service working with the public and driving up standards in his team, we do not believe it is in the publics best interest to dismiss him from the police service. Given that the issue of gross misconduct goes to his understanding of his responsibilities as a line manager and in setting standards for his team and the organisation, a reduction in rank removing his leadership responsibilities is the most appropriate sanction. We take into account the facts found that this was a consensual relationship between two adults of similar age with no findings of abuse of trust, differential treatment nor of a coercive nature. The panel is also satisfied that PS Sangha is unlikely to behave in this way again.

As we say above, cases rest on their own facts. We have been mindful of the purpose of the police misconduct process to uphold professional standards and to protect the public. We are satisfied that reduction of rank is the appropriate and adequate sanction in this case to satisfy these objectives.

Taking into account all of these factors our decision on Outcome is to impose **Reduction of rank to Police Constable.**