THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE OF THE METROPOLIS

Appropriate Authority

- and -

FFPC Joss Astley

Warrant No: P242784

Officer Concerned

Date of hearing:	18 November 2025
Chair	Commander Andy Brittain
Legal Assessor	Rebecca Butler (counsel)
Appropriate Authority	Russell Wilcox (counsel)
Police Federation Rep	Not present

The Decisions at the Hearing:

A. Preliminary applications: The matter is to proceed in the absence of the Former Police Officer.

B. The allegations were found proved;

C. Gross Misconduct was established;

D. Sanction: Dismissal without Notice (had the officer been serving at today's date);

E. This written decision is to be published.

The chair confirmed that this hearing was to be held in public.

Service of Documents

The chair was satisfied that a regulation 17 Notice was sent to the Former Officer on 9 June 2021 in relation his alleged conduct in respect of Person A and Person E. A further Regulation 17 Notice was sent to the Former Officer on 20 June 2023 in relation to his alleged conduct in respect of Person B-D and F-K.

Former FPC Astley (henceforth "the former officer') was served papers under ***Regulation 51(1) (b) and (c) of the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020, (as amended by the Police (Conduct) (Amendment) Regulations 2024)*** on 10 October 2025. Furthermore, the chair was satisfied that the former officer had communicated that he would not be attending this hearing and that he did not seek a hearing under Part 4 of the Regulations.

The chair also considered **The Police (Conduct, Performance, Complaints and Misconduct) Amendment regulations 2025** and the presumption of accelerated hearings for former officers. Notice was served on the officer by email on 1 October 2025 and the officer responded on 14 October 2025.

The chair confirmed that he had been supplied with the documents in accordance with ***Regulation 56*** of the same Regulations.

Namely:

- The certificate issued under ***Regulation 49(4)***;
- Form ***3355D***, the alleged failures of the Standards of Professional Behaviour;
- Response from FPC Astley under ***Regulation 54***.
- Case summary and skeleton arguments from the Appropriate Authority (henceforth "AA)
- A schedule of anonymity

Allegations

The chair read the following allegations into the record:

1. **Harassment/ Stalking of Person A**:
    a. On a number of occasions between dates in 2016 and 2020 you have sent posts

    and/or messages to Person A via her various social media platforms.

    b. The posts and/or messages referred to in 1.a. were unwelcome and unwanted.

    By sending the posts and/or messages referred to in 1.a. you have engaged in a course of conduct which has amounted to harassment and/or stalking of Person A.
2. **Harassment/ Stalking of Person B**:
    a. On a number of occasions between dates in 2017 and 2020 you have sent posts

    and/or messages to Person B via her various social media platforms.

    b. The posts and/or messages referred to in 2.a. were unwelcome and unwanted.

    By sending the posts and/or messages referred to in 2.a. you have engaged in a course of conduct which has amounted to harassment and/or stalking of Person B.
3. **Harassment/ Stalking of Person C**:
    a. On a number of occasions in 2020 you have sent posts and/or messages to Person C via her various social media platforms.
    b. The posts and/or messages referred to in 3.a. were unwelcome and unwanted. By sending the posts and/or messages referred to in 3.a. you have engaged in a course of conduct which has amounted to harassment and/or stalking of Person C.
4. **Harassment/ Stalking of Person D**:
    a. On a number of occasions between dates in 2014 and 2020 you have sent posts

    and/or messages to Person D via her various social media platforms.

b. The posts and/or messages referred to in 4.a. were unwelcome and unwanted.

By sending the posts and/or messages referred to in 4.a. you have engaged in a course of conduct which has amounted to harassment and/or stalking of Person D.

5. **Harassment/ Stalking of Person E**:
    a. On a number of occasions between dates in 2017 and 2020 you have sent posts

    and/or messages to Person E via her various social media platforms.

    b. The posts and/or messages referred to in 5.a. were unwelcome and unwanted.

    By sending the posts and/or messages referred to in 5.a. you have engaged in a course of conduct which has amounted to harassment and/or stalking of Person E.
6. **Harassment/ Stalking of Person F**:
    a. On a number of occasions in 2019 you have sent posts and/or messages to Person F via her various social media platforms.
    b. The posts and/or messages referred to in 6.a. were unwelcome and unwanted.

    By sending the posts and/or messages referred to in 6.a. you have engaged in a course of conduct which has amounted to harassment and/or stalking of Person F.
7. **Harassment/ Stalking of Person G**:
    a. On a number of occasions in 2020 you have sent posts and/or messages to Person G via her various social media platforms.
    b. The posts and/or messages referred to in 7.a. were unwelcome and unwanted.

    By sending the posts and/or messages referred to in 7.a. you have engaged in a course of conduct which has amounted to harassment and/or stalking of Person G.
8. **Harassment/ Stalking of Person H**:
    a. On a number of occasions between dates in 2018 and 2020 you have sent posts

and/or messages to Person H via her various social media platforms.

b. The posts and/or messages referred to in 8.a. were unwelcome and unwanted.

By sending the posts and/or messages referred to in 8.a. you have engaged in a course of conduct which has amounted to harassment and/or stalking of Person H.

9. **Harassment/ Stalking of Person I**:

   a. On a number of occasions in 2020 you have sent posts and/or messages to Person I via her various social media platforms.

   b. The posts and/or messages referred to in 9.a. were unwelcome and unwanted.

   By sending the posts and/or messages referred to in 9.a. you have engaged in a course of conduct which has amounted to harassment and/or stalking of Person I.

10. **Harassment/ Stalking of Person J**:

    a. On a number of occasions in 2020 you have sent posts and/or messages to Person J via her various social media platforms.

    b. The posts and/or messages referred to in 10.a. were unwelcome and unwanted.

    By sending the posts and/or messages referred to in 10.a. you have engaged in a course of conduct which has amounted to harassment and/or stalking of Person J.

11. **Harassment/ Stalking of Person K**:

    a. On a number of occasions between dates in 2018 and 2020 you have sent posts

       and/or messages to Person K via her various social media platforms.

    b. The posts and/or messages referred to in 11.a. were unwelcome and unwanted.

    By sending the posts and/or messages referred to in 11.a. you have engaged in a course of conduct which has amounted to harassment and/or stalking of Person K.

The alleged Standards of Professional behaviour breached are as set out in **Reg 5 Sch 2 of the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020** (as amended); namely

- Discreditable Conduct

And that these breaches amount to Gross Misconduct.

A. PRELIMINARY APPLICATIONS

The AA made an application to proceed in the absence of FPC Astley.

The chair determined on the basis of the legal advice given in open session that the FPC had sufficient notice of the hearing date, he had previously indicated that he would not be participating in the hearing or seeking a full hearing under Part 4 of the Regulations. There was no application for adjournment of the hearing.

The chair was reminded of the principles set out in the case of Adeogba

General Medical Council v Adeogba *[2016] EWCA Civ 162* and that he should be mindful that the FPC had deliberately chosen to absent themselves from the hearing and process.

No application for an adjournment has been made by the FPC when he responded to the AA on 14 October 2025.

There is no reason to suppose that adjourning would secure his attendance at some future date;

There is a strong public interest in the expeditious disposal of the case.

On this basis, the chair determined that the matter should proceed in the absence of the FPC.

B. Facts

The conduct matter came to the attention of the appropriate authority in **February 2021.**

Person A reports having received messages between 2016 and 2020. She is friends with Person D and Person B, who she knows from studying at the University [REDACTED]. She also knows FPC Astley from time spent at university. She initially reported this matter to Gwent Police who identified FPC Astley through online social media account subscriber records. Gwent Police then referred this to the MPS who retained primacy on this investigation.

Person B reports having received messages between 2017 and 2020 and is friends with Person A, who reported this to Gwent Police. It is not known if she knows FPC Astley, but they both attended the University [REDACTED]. Person B was identified as a victim of FPC Astley following Person A initially reporting this to police.

Person C received messages from FPC Astley in 2020 and is friends with Person A, who she knows from [REDACTED] Secondary school. It is not known if she knows FPC Astley, but they both attended the same school. Person C was identified as a victim following Person A reporting this initially to police.

Person D received messages between 2014 and 2020 from FPC Astley and is friends with Person A from the University [REDACTED]. It is not documented as to whether she knows FPC Astley, but they both attended the University of [REDACTED]. Person D was identified as a victim following Person A reporting this initially to police.

Person E received messages from FPC Astley between 2017 and 2020. She is friends with Person D having attended [REDACTED] Secondary School together. It is not documented as to whether she knows FPC Astley, but they both attended the same school. Person E initially reported these offences to West Midlands Police in 2020. WMP completed subscriber account enquiries and identified the home address of FPC Astley as being the IP address where the accounts were registered. This case was therefore transferred to the MPS who retained primacy of the criminal investigation.

Person F is not known to any of the other victims and knows FPC Astley having been in a relationship with PC GL, who had been living with FPC Astley at the time of the offending. Person F was made aware of FPC Astley's activities following his arrest and then reported him to police.

Person G received messages in 2020 and is friends with Person F. It is not known if she knows FPC Astley. Person G was identified as a victim following Person F reporting this matter to police.

Person H received messages between 2018 and 2020. She is friends with Person I and Person J and knows FPC Astley as they are both MPS Police Officers and worked together previously. Person H was made aware by colleagues of FPC Astley's offending and arrest, she then reported these offences to police.

Person I is friends with Person H and Person J. It is not known if she knows FPC Astley. Person I was identified as a victim following Person H reporting this to police.

Person J received messages in 2020. She is friends with Person H, but it is not known if she knows FPC Astley. Person J was identified as a victim following Person H reporting this to police.

Person K received messages between 2018 and 2020. She has made no reference to knowing any of the other victims. She knows FPC Astley as she is a serving MPS Police Officer and has worked with him previously. Person K was made aware by colleagues of FPC Astley's activities and arrest and then made a report to the police.

Forensic Evidence

The registered Internet Protocol address (IP address) for the account known to have been used to contact the victims is listed as being 86.11.225.89. The account provider, Virgin Media, provided police with the account holder details which was held by GL. This being the same address as FPC Astley with whom he was in a house share with.

The registration IP address for the phone number that was used to set up some of the Instagram accounts, and which received a verifying message in relation to the accounts Katieolivia27 and Elise.Newson, shows that this number was registered to FPC Joss Astley.

Checks completed on police databases show this same phone number was used by FPC Astley to call police when off duty with various CAD messages linked to his home address.

FPC Astley was arrested on 13th April 2021 for the offence of stalking and was interviewed in connection with these criminal allegations on the same date. FPC Astley denied being the person responsible for sending any of these messages or using any of the account names that have been used to contact any of the complainants. He stated that he was aware of females receiving messages relating to belly button piercings due to friends of his, Person A and Person B, who he had been at university with, seeking advice from him due to him being a police officer.

FPC Astley did not explain why any of the accounts used were set up at his address. He was also unable to provide an explanation as to why his mobile phone number was linked to some of these messages, with no one else having permission to use his phone.

AA submissions:

The AA relied on MG11 witness statements, and the Forensic Evidence provided to the Police identifying the ISP, home address and telephone number of the social media accounts linked to the FPC.

Regulation 54 Response:

The officer provided a Regulation 54 response in which he denied the allegations but gave no explanation for his address and telephone number being linked to the allegations of stalking and harassment via social media.

Decision:

The chair was advised that the burden of proof rests on the AA and that the standard to be applied was Balance of Probabilities.

On that basis, the chair found the following:

Allegation 1

Proven

Allegation 2

Proven

Allegation 3

Proven

Allegation 4

Proven

Allegation 5

Proven

Allegation 6

Proven

Allegation 7

Proven

Allegation 8

Proven

Allegation 9

Proven

Allegation 10

Proven

Allegation 11

Proven

C. Finding on Gross Misconduct:

Appropriate Authority Submissions:

Having reviewed the findings, the chair may reach a finding of Gross Misconduct where:

a. He is satisfied on the balance of probabilities that the officer's conducts provenance amounts to gross misconduct; or
b. The officer admits that his conduct amounts to Gross Misconduct.

In the instant case it is submitted that the officer's conduct is so serious that it plainly amounts to Gross Misconduct and that his dismissal would be justified had he been a serving officer.

OUTCOME

Having considered the submissions of the AA the chair made a finding of Gross Misconduct. In his deliberations he had considered:

Culpability

The more culpable or blameworthy the behaviour in question, the more serious the misconduct and the more severe the likely outcome.

The chair considered whether the comments made by the FPC were intentional and found that FFPC Astley was responsible for the words he used and his actions on multiple occasions.

Harm

It is clear that there exists reputational harm to the MPS with this officer's comments being in the public domain of social media platforms. The harm that his actions have created is likely to undermine public confidence in policing.

The chair confirmed that in the specific circumstances of this case, harm either was or had the potential to cause suffering by the defined individuals or group in order to undermine public confidence.

The chair confirmed that it is right and proper that he takes misconduct seriously when it undermines discipline and good order within the police service particularly in the light of the extraordinary powers that police are given. The potential for harm to public confidence would remain high were this officer's conduct to be in the public domain.

Breach of Professional Standards

The chair determined that the following Professional Standards had been breached:
(Schedule 2 Police Conduct Regulations 2020)

- **Discreditable Conduct**

The words used and the conduct of the officer discredits the police service and will inevitably erode public confidence in the safety and respect shown towards members of the public.

D. Sanction

On finding Gross Misconduct the chair sought representations on an appropriate sanction.

APPROPRIATE AUTHORITY:

The AA referred to the College of Policing Guidance on sanction at 2.7 and the regulations governing AMH. He submitted that the chair must impose Dismissal without notice had the officer continued to be a serving officer, having found Gross Misconduct.

The chair was advised by the Legal Assessor in open session and was reminded of the College of Policing guidelines on Sanction. It was reiterated that the principle that the least severe sanction ought to be considered first was the first consideration.
The chair was directed to the correct approach to determining sanction, following the test laid out by Popplewell J in **Fuglers LLP (in association with David Berens & Co), David Anthony Berens, Bryan Myer Fulger v Solicitors Regulatory Authority [2014] EWHC 179 (Admin)**

At para 28:

> *'The first stage is to assess the seriousness of the misconduct. The second stage is to keep in mind the purpose for which sanctions are imposed by such a Tribunal. The third stage is to choose the sanction which most appropriately fulfils that purpose for the seriousness of the conduct in question'*

This approach has been confirmed by the College of Policing "Guidance on Outcomes in Police Misconduct Proceedings (published 2023)

The chair was advised to adopt a three-staged approach in order to arrive at the appropriate sanction.
The first stage is to assess the seriousness of his conduct. This is assessed by reference to:

i. The Officer's culpability;
ii. The harm caused by the misconduct;
iii. The existence of aggravating factors;
iv. The existence of mitigating factors.

The second stage is to keep in mind the purpose of the police misconduct regime.

i. To maintain public confidence in, and the reputation of, the police service;
ii. To uphold high standards and deter misconduct; and
iii. To protect the public.

At this stage, it is to be kept in mind that the police misconduct regime is not designed to punish police officers, but is about the reputation and standing of the profession as a whole.

The third stage is to choose the outcome that most appropriately fulfils that purpose given the seriousness of the conduct in question.

The chair was reminded that in adopting the three-staged approach outlined above, the Chair is required to bear in mind the Officer's record of conduct.
Since there is only a binary choice in respect of a former officer of imposing or not imposing disciplinary action, it is good practice to consider, first, whether had the Former Officer still been serving, he would have attracted a sanction of dismissal, or been given a lesser sanction.

Decision on Sanction

The chair retired to consider further the legal advice on sanction and the submissions offered by the AA. He also considered the HR record of the officer.

Seriousness

Culpability

The chair found that the facts established were serious. He found culpability high.

Harm

The chair took account of the fact that there were 11 victims of sustained harassment and stalking by the FPC.
The chair was further guided on the case of **Raschid v GMC [2007] 1 WLR 1460**
Per Laws J at para 18.

> *"The panel then is centrally concerned with the reputation or standing of the profession rather than the punishment of the doctor"*

The chair found harm both to the individuals and the policing profession to be high.

Aggravating Factors

In respect of aggravating factors, there was significant premeditation, planning, targeting and taking deliberate or predatory steps. There was a malign intent of sexual gratification in the officer's conduct. The conduct was regular, repeated and sustained over a period of time. There was continued behaviour after the officer realised, or should have realised, that it was improper. There were multiple victims where the scale or depth of local or national concern about a particular issue of online conduct was of national concern.

Mitigating Factors

The chair had no mitigating circumstances to consider and dismissed the officer's denial of his conduct.

Exceptional Circumstances

The chair dismissed exceptional circumstances.

Undermining public trust is a sufficient reason why exceptional Circumstances would not apply in this case as the harm caused was significant.

Purpose of Sanction

The chair confirmed that the purpose of his sanction was to reflect the seriousness as well as to maintain the public confidence in and the reputation of, the policing profession as a whole. The dual objective must take precedence over the impact of this sanction on the individual officer.

D. Appropriate Sanction

The chair confirmed that a consideration of the least available sanction first as per **Davey v GDC [2015] EWHC 3594** would not deal adequately with the matter before him today.

The chair confirmed that he had no option other than to impose **Dismissal without Notice** had the officer remained in the employment of the MPS.

E. Publication

After inviting submissions on privacy, the chair confirmed that these reasons are to be made public.

Commander Andy Brittain