Accelerated Misconduct hearing for former PS Ian Walker EA283

I, Chief Constable Jo Shiner, am writing to confirm the outcome of the Accelerated Misconduct hearing held on Thursday 12th November 2026 at 1100hrs at Sussex Police HQ, Lewes.

The hearing consisted of myself, T/Insp Grace Douglas, PC Sue Marshall and Jo Dowes.

I had the benefit of the papers in advance of today and read them carefully before the hearing started, along with viewing the digital material. I am satisfied that the required notices under the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 have been served. These are matters which have not, in any case, been disputed before me. The hearing was held in Public.

I am satisfied PS Walker has been properly served with the papers and Regulations 51 to 53 of the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 have been complied with. The Appropriate Authority's case was presented by investigator T/Insp Grace Douglas.

PS Walker did provide a Regulation 54 response, accepting the allegations.

Proceeding in Absence having been informed that PS Walker would not be attending today's proceedings, I am satisfied that PS Walker has voluntarily absented himself.

Accordingly, under Regulation 57, I am satisfied it is reasonable to proceed in his absence.

IO Insp Grace Douglas presented the allegations and case made against PS Ian Walker EA283 on behalf of the Appropriate Authority. Also, present was press from The Argus newspaper, PC Marshall and Jo Dowes.

In my role as Chair of the hearing, I have been asked to consider the allegations made against PS Walker, listed directly below, which had the potential to breach the standards of professional behaviour as follows:

<u>Allegation 1</u>

It is alleged that at about 02:25 hours on Tuesday 22nd September 2026 when you were on duty at Eastbourne Custody Suite you have made comments about a person from the Romany Travelling Community-

You were talking about a colleague kicking the prisoner between the legs and stated –

"Had this mad *****, came into (unintelligible)"

"Sorry, can I not say that"

"He was a ******* *****, he was a ******* ********, a lowlife, you know brought into custody during the day. Let's face it that ***** will not gonna have any more kids"

This has been assessed as discriminatory behaviour and a breach of standards of professional behaviour in relation to Authority, Respect and Courtesy, Equality and Diversity and discreditable conduct.

I found this allegation proven.

Allegation 2

On the same date at around the same time, you use the terms "***-*****", "****** *******" and "* **** ****** **** * ******'* ****".

All these terms are discriminatory in nature and breach the standards of professional behaviour in relation to Equality & Diversity, Authority, Respect & Courtesy and Discreditable Conduct.

I find this allegation proven.

Allegation 3

On the same date at around the same time, a work colleague goes to have a cigarette outside, and you are heard to say, "going for a ***?" The staff member responds saying "You can't say *** anymore" to which you respond saying "oh no, that means you **** ** ** *** ****, doesn't it?"

This is a homophobic and discriminatory comment and breaches standards of professional behaviour in relation to Equality and Diversity, Authority, Respect & Courtesy and Discreditable Conduct.

I found this allegation proven.

Allegation 4

During the conversations documented in allegations 1 and 2 above, you are seen to be using a vaping device in the custody block.

This is a breach of force policy and standards of professional behaviour in relation to orders and instructions and discreditable conduct.

I found this allegation proven.

Allegation 5

It is felt that the way in which you insert yourself into the conversations, speak with bravado, double down on your comments despite 'gentle' challenges by officers and staff and the vaping in the custody block. This all appears designed to assert your authority. You are the most senior person in the block at that time and therefore should be modelling the professional standards, behaviour and culture amongst officers and staff.

The overall behaviour is an abuse of his power and authority and a breach of standards of professional behaviour in relation to Authority, respect and courtesy, Duties and Responsibilities and Discreditable Conduct.

I find this allegation proven.

Standards

I consider that the standards breached are as listed in the original allegation and as follows:

Duties & Responsibilities – Proven

Discreditable conduct – Proven

Equality & Diversity – Proven

Orders & Instructions – Proven

Authority, Respect & Courtesy – Proven

Decision

In line with Regulation 61(7), I have carefully considered submissions from the Appropriate Authority. No representations were made on behalf of PS Walker.

I bear in mind that the burden of proving Breach of Standards rests upon the AA and that it must satisfy me on the balance of probabilities. I am satisfied that the AA has discharged that burden and the conduct did breach the standards of professional behaviour as outlined previously.

Accordingly, I have found the facts proven.

Seriousness

I go on to make a provisional assessment of Seriousness by reference to Culpability and Harm, mitigating and aggravating factors. I consider the allegations individually and cumulatively. The Appropriate Authority addressed me on seriousness and contend that the conduct amounts to gross misconduct as the conduct is deliberate, intentional and caused serious potential harm to the public. I have carefully considered the submissions, and I find that PS Walker's conduct amounts to gross misconduct.

I remain mindful of the threefold purposes of the Misconduct regime.

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

In order to assess the appropriate outcome, my role as chair is to assess the seriousness of the conduct and I do that by considering the officers culpability for the misconduct, the harm caused by the misconduct, the existence of any aggravating factors and the existence of any mitigating factors.

I have referred to College of Policing Guidance on outcomes in police misconduct proceedings to assess seriousness by relating to culpability and harm.

Culpability

Culpability denotes your blameworthiness or responsibility for PS Walker's actions. I assess his culpability as high for the following reasons: The comments made by PS Walker were plainly racist, homophobic and ableist. They represent clear breaches of the Standards of Professional Behaviour, particularly those relating to Equality and Diversity and Discreditable Conduct. Such comments are capable of causing significant offence, undermining the dignity of others and damaging public confidence in policing. Police officers are expected to treat colleagues and members of the public

with fairness, respect and without discrimination. The officer's remarks are wholly inconsistent with those expectations. PS Walker is entirely responsible for the comments and his own behaviour.

Harm

The level of harm caused and the impact on others by the alleged misconduct is a factor I need to consider.

Assessing the harm caused by this alleged misconduct I have considered who harm was caused to. Harm does not need to be suffered by a defined individual or group to undermine public confidence, as the guidance on outcomes states, where an officer commits an act which would harm public confidence if the circumstances were to be known to the public, this should be considered. I must always take seriously misconduct which undermines discipline and good order within the police service, even if it does not result in harm to individual victims.

College of Policing guidance states that cases where discrimination is conscious or deliberate will be particularly serious. In these circumstances, the public cannot have confidence that the officer will discharge their duties in accordance with the Standards of Professional Behaviour.

Where gross misconduct has been found and the behaviour has caused – or could have caused – serious harm to individuals, the community and/or public confidence in the police service, dismissal is likely to follow.

I assess the actual and potential harm caused in this case as high.

Aggravating Factors

I have also considered the depth of national concern about the behaviour of officers and staff.

The seriousness of the conduct is further aggravated by the officer's role as a Custody Sergeant. He occupies a position of authority over vulnerable individuals detained within custody, who are entirely dependent upon him for the protection of their welfare, rights and dignity. The CCTV footage demonstrates that PS Walker was referring to detainees themselves, the very people whom he is entrusted to safeguard. This conduct is fundamentally incompatible with the responsibilities of a custody officer and raises legitimate concerns regarding the confidence that detainees and the wider public can place in the impartiality and professionalism of those within their care.

PS Walker was the most senior officer present and is regarded as a Sussex Leader within his role. The comments were deliberate and targeted protected characteristics including race, sexual orientation and disability. His position of authority magnifies the seriousness of the misconduct. Those under his supervision are entitled to expect leadership that reflects the highest professional standards, but instead, his conduct had the potential to influence workplace culture negatively, normalise discriminatory attitudes and undermine the confidence of colleagues expected to follow his example.

Mitigating Factors

I see no mitigating circumstances, nor have I been provided with any by PS Walker. In any case, mitigation will carry substantially less weight because public confidence considerations become paramount.

Other considerations.

There are no live warnings, other conduct or informal or formal performance matters raised. I have taken account of PS Walker's 23 years' service and his previous good conduct during that time.

I have also considered the Appropriate Authority's view on sanction.

I am also mindful of the 2025 amendment regulations as below:

Consideration for sanction:

1. *The Police (Conduct, Performance and Complaints and Misconduct) (Amendment) Regulations 2025 ("The 2025 Regs"), implementing the 'Tranche 2' reforms to the conduct regime, were laid on Wednesday 7th May 2025 and came into effect on the 28th May 2025.*

Presumption of Dismissal

2. *The 2025 Regs amend Regulations 42 and 62 of the Police (Conduct) Regulations 20202 ("The PCR") so that, where gross misconduct is proven against a serving officer, the panel must dismiss the officer unless there are exceptional circumstances (not defined in legislation).*

Outcome

In summary, the conduct and behaviours of PS Ian Walker are abhorrent and fall far below the high standards that we expect in Sussex Police. The highly discriminatory language that he uses and the insulting way that he talks about members of the public and his colleagues are not behaviours that are either welcome or acceptable within our Force.

The allegations which he has admitted, and I have found to be proven today, are offensive and gravely unprofessional.

Repeated use of discriminatory language is fundamentally undermining to public confidence in policing, especially when said in an operational environment amongst more junior officers. This type of conduct can only go towards eroding both public confidence and culture amongst the force.

Sussex Police priorities state that we will protect our communities, which includes safeguarding the vulnerable. His language exploits vulnerable members of our communities.

We must also deliver an outstanding service, including maintaining a fair, inclusive, anti-racist and anti-discriminatory service. PS Ian Walker actively uses language and demonstrates behaviours that are entirely at odds with this.

In summary, giving fair consideration to the purposes of the misconduct regime, together with the culpability, harm, aggravating and mitigating factors. My decision is that the proven conduct of PS Ian Walker is appalling and entirely unacceptable. Therefore, my sanction is that he should be dismissed without notice and placed on the College of Policing Barred List.

Signed:



Chief Constable Jo Shiner KPM

Date: Thursday 12th November 2026