

On the matter of PC 14853 Barrett Accelerated Conduct Hearing

Hearing Chair: ACO Andy Pritchard

Date of Hearing: 22nd June 2026,

Venue: Clift Room, Kent Police HQ

I have read the bundle provided to myself and listened carefully to all the evidence presented in the hearing. I am satisfied that this matter has met the criteria to be presented to me as an Accelerated Conduct Hearing. In making my determinations I have had due regard to the following documents and referred to these as necessary:

1. The Police Conduct Regulations (2020) (Statutory) which also set out the Standards of Professional Behaviour
2. Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations (2020) (Statutory)
3. The Police (Conduct) (Amendment) Regulations (2024) (Statutory)
4. College of Policing guidance on outcomes in Police misconduct proceedings
5. College of Policing Code of Ethics (2024) (non-statutory) with its constituent parts:
 - a. Ethical Policing Principles
 - b. Guidance for ethical and professional behaviour in policing
6. College of Policing Code of Practice for Ethical Policing (2023) (Statutory)
7. College of Policing Guidance on Outcomes in Police Misconduct Proceedings (2023) (Statutory)
8. Home Office Guidance Conduct, Efficiency and Effectiveness: Statutory Guidance on Professional Standards, Performance and Integrity in Policing (2020)

The date(s) of the matters under consideration predominantly predate the Police (Conduct, Performance and Complaints and Misconduct) (Amendment) Regulations 2025 being in force. Only matter 8 (which is in my view one of the lesser allegations) post-dates the 2025 amendment. Therefore, these amendments are disregarded for the purpose of this hearing.

In all my considerations the burden of proof under which I am working is that of 'balance of probabilities'. However, the starting point in this case is that you have accepted that your behaviour on all the allegations laid by the AA breached the standards of Professional behaviour as described *and* accept that these do amount to Gross Misconduct.

Therefore, It is not necessary for me as the Chair of this hearing to determine this issue, rather I must assess the seriousness of the behaviour and the most appropriate outcome.

The Allegations

The first three allegations concern breaches of the standard of professional behaviour: Confidentiality.

1. *It is alleged that "Between 27th June 2019 and 8th July 2019, you accessed CAD 20190628-1005 and Athena investigation 46/124191/19 without a legitimate policing purpose. The CAD and Athena records related to a Threats to Kill incident against your mother.*

2. *On 19th July 2020 you accessed Athena records without a legitimate policing purpose. The records relate to your previous family home address and two investigation records relating to your family members from that address.*
3. *On 16th April 2022 you conducted a PNC check on index number [REDACTED] and shared the results with your mother via WhatsApp.*

Whilst I accept that the ultimate purpose of your actions was the reporting of suspected criminality, the manner in which you obtained and communicated the information was wholly inappropriate and contrary to the standards expected of a police officer. It is very evident that feedback about police records on a vehicle's insurance should not have been given back to a family member and you would have known this. There is some mitigation in that you subsequently followed this up with an intelligence submission about the findings of the PNC / Athena check. This however is a criminal matter that is associated to family and it is common sense as well as clear procedure that the correct route for this information would have been to operate with complete transparency as to the source of the information, and to detach yourself from it and to create sterility between yourself and the information. As such your integrity has been found wanting. There is no allegation here that you subverted, compromised, or distorted any police activity as a result of this check, but nevertheless it is inappropriate that you exchanged information in this way with your mother in determining what information to submit.

4. *On 10th November 2022 you engaged in conversation with your brother PC Ronnie Barrett regarding CAD 20221110-1260. You have used derogatory language towards Kent Police working practices, you have discussed the reporting of [REDACTED]'s online report, which Ronnie admits to writing. You then discussed writing [REDACTED]'s statement and VPS.*

I accept that this was in the context of a private conversation between yourself and your brother, which has subsequently been exposed through an investigation. No such VPS or Statement was ever written, so this remains speculation and cannot be an allegation that any such activity actually happened. It is a clear breach of authority respect and courtesy in your comments about colleagues in the way that it was expressed but one I am careful not to prejudice my overall findings given the private nature of the conversation between two brothers as police officers, where you have limited license to express your views to each other in that context.

5. *On 22nd October 2023 you discussed a fatal accident with PC Ronnie Barrett whilst off duty. PC Ronnie Barrett refers to the members of public in highly derogatory terms, and you have failed to challenge your brother regarding that comment. You have accessed the CAD for no policing purpose.*

I am satisfied that your access to the CAD was legitimate in that you were on duty and had cause to stay aware of policing matters across the policing area. I am careful here to recognise that the despicable comment was not made by yourself. However, you did not react at all to this comment, and it was in the context of a private conversation that was later exposed through the investigation. The comment itself appears to have been laden with baseless, nasty assumptions, rather than working knowledge of what had happened. The weight upon you in this regard is the responsibility to challenge such comments but you did not. I recognise the difficulty in doing so within a private family chat. The matter most

correctly rests with accountability for your brother as to what he said. Nevertheless, on your breaches the standards of authority respect and courtesy for your failure to challenge the comment in that context. (failure to challenge and report improper conduct).

6. *On 27th October 2024 you accepted a request from PC Ronnie Barrett to access his work laptop and mobile phone.*

This again is wholly contrary to IT acceptable-use policy, although it is known that this practice has been followed by other officers on occasions at other times, where officers have trusted a colleague with their login details at times they are not able to log in themselves. The action itself seemed administrative in its purpose only, however clearly a breach of policy, and unacceptable, and therefore does breach the standards of professional behaviour in terms of duties and responsibilities and obedience to orders.

7. *On 27th October 2024 you disclosed details of an arrest on a family WhatsApp chat.*

This is sadly another example where the examination of private family chat has exposed that you have shared operational policing details about an arrest you have made with little regard to the confidentiality and sensitivity of that information, not as you claim about the person arrested (who you did not name), but the other party (victim) in that regard, and the clear sensitivity around that being 'gossip' that wider public would have been very interested in but not entitled to know at this time. This represented a potentially serious breach of confidentiality which, whilst not resulting in identifiable harm, carried a significant risk of further adverse consequences.

8. *On 28th August 2025 you shared sensitive information from Athena with a family member. You identified your father was in custody and shared that information with your mother during a phone call when you left work.*

The evidence is that you declared your awareness of the information immediately to your supervisor (i.e. of your personal relationship to a person in custody) and that you had inadvertently seen in the legitimate course of your duty. It is also accepted in evidence that your mother was aware of this information. The conversation between yourself and your mother acknowledged that he was still in custody although it is very evident that it should not be you providing this update. You have blurred the clear and necessary boundary between your responsibilities of a police officer with those of a son supporting your mother.

Standards of Professional Behaviour Breached

Consequently, I find that the conduct demonstrated across all 8 allegations have collectively breached the standards of Duties and Responsibilities, Obedience to Orders, Confidentiality, Honesty and Integrity (Integrity engaged in this case rather than honesty), Challenging and Reporting Improper Behaviours, and Discreditable Conduct.

Determination on Seriousness

To determine outcome I must determine seriousness and I rely upon the College of Policing Guidance on outcomes to make this determination.

Culpability

Your actions in respect of the data breaches are deliberate and intentional; there can be no other person to take responsibility for these. You should have foreseen the risk of your

actions in terms of wider use of the data should the recipients of this data be minded to enact upon that knowledge in any way. Had you stopped to think would you know such access is wrong, but you have gone ahead and searched these records regardless. You acknowledge you have had suitable training in respect of data protection so would have known the correct procedure to follow. I note that there is no operational dishonesty at play here, there is no use of the data in order to create an illegitimate outcome of any description, and there is no corruption inherent in your actions, with no advantage or disadvantage evident as a result of your actions.

In respect of culpability, The Guidance on Outcomes helps on the subject of data protection and misuse:

4.34 The misuse of police computer systems or confidential police information more generally is a particular concern for the police service. Police computer and manual systems hold a significant amount of information about members of the public. Most of this is sensitive, and it is both a public expectation and a legal requirement that information obtained during the course of policing duties should be treated in strictest confidence, properly protected and used only for legitimate policing purposes.

4.35 Under no circumstances should anyone access or use police information for personal benefit. Personal reasons for accessing confidential police information, such as general curiosity or a desire to check on criminal activity near an officer's home, are not acceptable. If an officer is accessing police information not available to the general public, there should always be a specific and proper policing purpose for doing so.

4.36 Accessing confidential police information without a legitimate policing purpose is an abuse of an officer's position and may merit dismissal in serious cases. Accidental access to information without a legitimate policing purpose will not attract such an outcome.

4.37 Factors that support a more serious outcome include:

- *accessing information of a secret nature or high classification*
- *onward disclosure of the information*
- *malicious motive for accessing or disclosing the information personal gain actual or potential*
- *compromise to a police investigation*
- *breaches of personal privacy where the data is very sensitive*
- *attempts to cover up improper accessing of data*
- *altering information held by the police*

4.38 When considering any misuse of confidential police information, be aware of the data protection principles under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the offence of unlawfully obtaining personal data under section 170 of that Act. 4.39 Officers regularly need to access and process confidential information, and errors can occur. Officers who have acted in good faith or on instructions from a supervisor are less culpable and may be more appropriately addressed under the performance regime or through the Reflective Practice Review Process

You acted wrongly and had you have stopped to think you would have known this to be the case. I am sympathetic that in the earliest and latest allegations the access directly derives from issues surrounding your own difficult childhood and the protection of your mother as a victim of abuse.

However, I am not persuaded that this explains your actions sufficiently, and it cannot be regarded that the data access breaches are sufficiently mitigated through that context.

Of the above bullet points in 4.37 of the Guidance only the second appears applicable in this case and the information by nature is minor in detail and of little use to the recipient in all cases as it is either known or obtainable.

Overall, I consider personal accountability to be high, but culpability (within the description of the guidance) to be medium towards high.

Harm

In respect of harm, the AA has not shown that you have actively used information you have obtained for gain either for yourself or for others. (beyond your own reassurance or knowledge),

In this case I cannot show that actual harm occurred to any individual whose data was accessed and I am satisfied that the AA have had a reasonable opportunity to identify this.

The IO report / AA Opening note makes it clear that no evidence of corruption was identified, which would be one of the key concerning risk for any misuse of police data. The risk of harm is nevertheless evident even where actual harm has not been manifested. Particularly the information regarding the arrest of a partner of someone he named to his family group chat was confidential and clearly 'gossip worthy' to which you have lost control of that information the moment it passes it outside of the police environment. It is only good fortune that this loose talk has not resulted in wider consequences for the subject concerned.

The reputational harm to policing is clear. Police have extremely privileged authority and access to sensitive data. The line has been crossed repeatedly in these examples in that the data accessed is not only accessed without a policing purpose. The public have to expect that Police will act with unrelenting care of that data and would be dismayed were they to think that police officers accessed their data beyond that of a legitimate policing purpose.

Taking these factors together, I assess the potential for harm as high and the actual harm caused as moderate, principally through the damage caused to public confidence and trust in policing.

Aggravating factors

In this case you have demonstrated repeated behaviour over time. You have not declared openly at any stage that you have made these searches knowing that they were without a legitimate policing purpose, you allowed the organisation to discover your wrongdoing in this case. The fact that there are 8 allegations in total falling out of one investigation is of significant concern.

Mitigation

I have considered carefully the mitigation offered by you in your reg 54 and presentation today. I accept that you have come from a very difficult and abusive upbringing. This is the only mitigation that bears weight upon the actions you undertook in respect of the familial matters only. These do not mitigate your actions in respect of the sharing of the arrest detail.

Outcome

You have been remorseful and admitted your conduct from the very start of this investigation. Whilst you have offered mitigation, you have made no effort to minimise or deflect away from your own personal responsibility. That is to your credit.

Having assessed seriousness, I have paid careful attention to your service record and character references offered which can only have limited weight to the finding (Para 6.1 of the Guidance on Outcomes) but can a greater application when considering the most appropriate outcome. You have an impressive work record with a very large amount of discretionary effort shown, and notably three commendations including one from the Chief Constable. An impressive collection of meritorious work for someone of your service level. There is no doubt the contribution of you as an officer goes well beyond that which might be expected of someone of your service level, and you do offer valuable skills and experience that the organisation might seek to retain.

I must consider the threefold purpose of these proceedings, namely:

- a. The primary purpose is to protect the public confidence in and the reputation of policing;
- b. The second purpose is the declaratory purpose of maintaining high professional standards by demonstrating to other officers that misconduct of a certain kind and/or a certain seriousness will be dealt with by disciplinary action of a certain severity; and
- c. The third purpose is to protect the public and/or officers and staff by preventing the officer from committing similar misconduct again

Each allegation when considered in isolation may be unlikely to amount to Gross Misconduct. It is the weight of multiple instances over time that aggravate this significantly. A lesser sanction would not be appropriate. The public rightfully would not support that an officer can conduct himself in this manner without sanction, no matter what the mitigation offered.

The sanction must reflect a suitable deterrent for other staff who see a proportionate and appropriate outcome (purpose 2) and one that assures the public that Kent Police will not tolerate such poor standards whilst ensuring that there is no repetition of such instances again. In that regard I believe the public would wish to see the standards strongly upheld but may not support the dismissal of an officer who in all operational regards is acting consistently in a way that the public would be proud of.

The correct balance therefore I have determined should be that of a Final Written Warning. Given the extended period of these breaches, I have determined that the length of this warning will be extended to 3 years to afford the organisation the opportunity to monitor and insist that the highest standards of you are to be maintained throughout.



ACO Andy Pritchard