



In the matter of the British Transport Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020;

APPROPRIATE AUTHORITY FOR
THE BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE

V

PC GAVIN PARSONS [6077]

CASE REF CM/184/25

Regulation 43 Outcome Report

Location: PSD Office, Ivason House, 8A London Bridge Street, London, SE1 9SG

Date: 22.07.2026 – 23.07.2026

Legally Qualified Chair: Christopher McKay

Independent Panel Member: Bernadette Leverton

BTP Superintendent: Sandra England

Outcome: Gross Misconduct

Sanction: The Officer would have been Dismissed Without Notice had he been a serving Officer.

The Decisions of the Hearing

Allegation no.	Allegation	Finding
1.	On 15 March 2025 you were on duty	Proven
2.	At approximately 3.00am you attended an incident at Hounslow East London Underground Station with police colleagues	Proven
3.	You arrested Person A	Proven
4.	Following his arrest, Person A was lying on the ground, he was facing away from you and he was in handcuffs to the rear of his body	Proven
5.	You raised your baton and struck him twice on his back using the baton.	Proven

Background

1. Former PC Parsons joined the British Transport Police (BTP) on 29.8.17. The allegations relate to what happened when PC Parsons was on a night shift on the 14th/15th March 2025. He and other officers were called to an incident at Hounslow East Underground Station. It had been reported that there were people fighting at the station with weapons. He arrived first at the scene and became involved in chasing a suspect on waste-ground near the station. PC Parsons was with PC Sawyers when they located and arrested a suspect, who is referred to as Person A in these proceedings. It is alleged that after Person A had been detained and was lying face down on the ground with his wrists handcuffed, PC Parsons struck him twice in the back with his baton. It is alleged that in doing so PC Parsons breached 3 standards of professional behaviour, namely, Authority, Respect and Courtesy, Use of Force and Discreditable Conduct.

Preliminary matters

2. Former PC Parsons did not attend the hearing, however, he was represented by his Police Federation Representative, Inspector Mark Stook. He told the Panel that Mr Parsons had resigned from the force and his final day of service was yesterday (21st July 2026). He also explained that Mr Parsons was not intending to attend the hearing and was content that it proceeded in his absence. Insp. Stook was not instructed to ask for an adjournment. Ms Kane on behalf of the Appropriate Authority (AA) asked the Panel to proceed with the case in the absence of Mr Parsons as he had voluntarily absented himself from the hearing. She referred the Panel to the case of GMC v Adeogba [2016] EWCA Civ 162. She submitted that it was fair to Mr Parsons to proceed in his absence because he had chosen not to attend and was represented by his Police Federation Representative. He had filed a regulation 31 response which the Panel could take into account when considering the case. The Panel decided that it was fair to proceed in the absence of Mr Parsons. The reasons for this decision were firstly, that there was a public interest in the case being heard and concluded. Secondly, there were a number of persons present to participate in the hearing, who would be inconvenienced if it did not proceed. Finally, Mr Parsons had consented to the case proceeding in his absence and he was represented. Mr Parsons will be referred to as PC Parsons in the rest of this decision because that was his status when the misconduct is alleged to have taken place.

Findings of Fact

3. Prior to the hearing commencing the panel had read and considered the hearing bundle totalling 271 pages. The Panel bore in mind that the burden of proof is on the AA and the standard of proof is the balance of probability. This means that the Panel must be satisfied that it is more likely than not that a fact occurred before they can find it proved. There were no live witnesses who gave evidence at the hearing. The Panel had viewed the body-worn video (BWV) evidence prior to the hearing. The Panel then had it played again during the hearing and were also able to review it when they retired. This evidence came from cameras worn by PC Parsons and PC Rahman, who was present at the scene when the alleged misconduct took place. This was the most important evidence in the case as it showed what happened during and following the arrest of Person A.
4. The Panel had read the written witness statement of PC Parsons, made later the same day, after the incident. The Panel had also read the record of his misconduct interview on 25th November 2025 and his regulation 31 response, made recently on 26th June 2026. The Panel noted that PC Parsons had failed to make any mention of collapsing his baton using Person A's back in his first witness statement on 15th March 2025. In his interview under caution PC Parsons claimed to have collapsed his baton on the suspects back just using the weight of the baton itself. The Panel rejected that version of events.

Having seen the evidence from PC Parson's BWV the Panel was satisfied that PC Parsons made contact with the back of Person A with some degree of force. This caused Person A to cry out. During the hearing the Panel examined a baton similar to that used by PC Parsons on the night in question and it was clear that some degree of force was necessary to collapse it properly. The Panel is satisfied that PC Parsons could have collapsed the baton using his own hand or leg or by using the ground near where Person A was lying. None of these alternatives would have involved bringing the baton into contact with Person A. In the Panel's judgement PC Parsons deliberately brought his baton into contact with Person A's back in an aggressive act to emphasise his superiority over the prone detainee. He was making a point.

5. The five allegations of fact against PC Parsons were all found proved. In relation to allegation 5 the Panel was satisfied that PC Parsons did not raise his baton above his shoulders before striking Person A, but he crouched over Person A when he used his back to collapse the baton. He struck Person A twice in the back to do this. At the time he did this Person A was lying face down on the ground with his hands handcuffed behind him. The Panel was able to see the 2 blows land on Person A's back on PC Parson's BWV recording and heard Person A react to the blows by saying "ow!", or words to that effect, at the moment when the blows landed on his back.
6. The Panel next considered the alleged breaches of the Standards of Professional Behaviour by PC Parsons.

(i) Authority, Respect and Courtesy

This is defined in the regulations as being that 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. The Panel is satisfied that PC Parsons lacked self-control and tolerance when he struck Person A twice with his baton. He had no need to use his baton in the way he did. He could have closed the baton using other methods which did not involve contact with Person A's body. The Panel is satisfied that PC Parsons lacked respect and courtesy for Person A when he struck him with his baton. The Panel finds that PC Parsons abused his powers and authority when he struck Person A, who was lying face down on the ground in handcuffs and was not struggling or resisting in any way. Finally, under this breach of standard, PC Parsons failed to respect the rights of Person A. Members of the public are entitled to expect to be treated fairly and reasonably by police officers even when they are suspected to have broken the law and are being arrested. The Panel finds that PC Parsons has breached this standard.

(ii) Use of Force.

This standard is defined in the regulations as being that police officers only use force to the extent that it is necessary, proportionate and reasonable in all the circumstances. When PC Parsons struck Person A twice with his baton it was not necessary because Person A was lying face down on the ground in handcuffs and was not struggling or resisting. Indeed, Person A is heard to say on the BWV recording of PC Parsons, "I am done" several times when he is on the ground being handcuffed prior to the two strikes by PC Parsons. This indicated to PC Parsons that Person A was being compliant and there was no need to strike to secure his compliance. It was not proportionate for PC Parsons to strike Person A when he did, nor was it reasonable for him to do so, for the same reasons. PC Parsons did not seek to justify his use of force against Person A in his statements or interview. He denied that he had used force against the detainee. The Panel reject his evidence on this issue. The Panel finds that PC Parsons has breached this standard.

(iii) Discreditable Conduct.

This is defined in the regulations as follows;

Police officers behave in a manner which does not discredit the police service or undermine public confidence in it, whether on or off duty. By striking Person A twice with his baton in circumstances where it was unjustified, PC Parsons acted discreditably. If a member of the public had witnessed his actions they would have been concerned that he had treated Person A so disrespectfully.

Misconduct/Gross Misconduct

Because PC Parsons is a former officer there are special provisions that apply when considering the questions of whether the breaches of standards by him amount to Misconduct or Gross Misconduct or neither. Regulation 2 (as amended by the schedule 1 amendments in respect of former officers) provides that misconduct means a breach of the Standards of Professional Behaviour that is not so serious that the officer concerned would have been dismissed if the officer had not ceased to be a member of a police force.

Gross Misconduct is defined as a breach of the Standards of Professional Behaviour that is so serious that the officer concerned would have been dismissed if the officer had not ceased to be a member of a police force. The Panel have applied these definitions to the circumstances of the present case.

To enable the Panel to determine whether the acts of PC Parsons constituted Misconduct or Gross Misconduct or neither, the Panel first carried out an assessment of the seriousness of the misconduct which it had found proved against PC Parsons. This assessment was carried out following the guidance of Mr Justice Popplewell in the case of *Fuglers LLP v Solicitors Regulation Authority* [2014] EWHC 179 (Admin). The Panel assessed the officer's culpability for the misconduct, the harm caused by the misconduct, any aggravating factors and any mitigating factors.

(a) Culpability

The Panel finds that PC Parsons targeted Person A and his actions were deliberate and intentional. Person A was unable to defend himself against what was an assault on him by PC Parsons. The level of culpability is high in the Panel's judgement.

(b) Harm

The Panel finds that the actions of PC Parsons probably caused harm to Person A. He exclaimed "ow!" when he was struck by the two blows. There is no evidence that Person A sustained injury but it appears he felt the blows, which were a complete surprise to him as he could not see them coming. Person A was in a very vulnerable position, face down lying on the ground. Person A is likely to have had his confidence in the police treating him fairly and appropriately undermined by what happened to him. The Panel is satisfied that the actions of PC Parsons would have caused harm to the public image of police officers. The public expect police officers to behave lawfully and appropriately when dealing with them and other members of the public. The level of harm in this case is high in the Panel's judgement.

(c) Aggravating features

- (i) The strikes which PC Parsons made to Person A's back were deliberate.
- (ii) The strikes that PC Parsons made to Person A's back amounted to a gratuitous use of force.
- (iii) Person A was in a vulnerable position, lying face down on the ground, handcuffed and not struggling.
- (iv) Multiple breaches of the Standards of Professional Behaviour

(d) Mitigating factors

- (i) The assault only involved 2 strikes which did not appear to the Panel to have been particularly hard.
- (ii) This was a single episode of misconduct.

In the judgement of the Panel for a police officer to inflict gratuitous violence on a detainee is never acceptable, regardless of how hard any strikes are perceived to have been. Person A was not resisting and was lying prone on the ground. He was handcuffed. He was no danger to the arresting officers at the time PC Parsons struck him. In fact, he was in a very vulnerable position. The Panel has concluded that the acts of PC Parsons were too serious to be classed as Misconduct. They amounted to Gross Misconduct.

Outcome

The Panel has already assessed the seriousness of the misconduct in this case when it considered whether the actions of PC Parsons amounted to misconduct, gross misconduct or neither.

The Panel has revisited their consideration of seriousness set out earlier in this decision and confirm it when considering outcome.

The purpose of these proceedings is;

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.

PC Parsons is a former police officer. He left the service on 21st July 2026. Because of this the Panel has limited outcomes available to it. The Panel has decided that PC Parson's actions amounted to Gross Misconduct. In such circumstances the Panel must decide whether to take disciplinary action or not. The high level of culpability and harm in this case has caused the Panel to decide that disciplinary action is required in this case.

In considering outcome the Panel must take into account any personal mitigation. In the present case this is extremely limited because of PC Parson's poor disciplinary record, both before 15th March 2025 and since. He has also failed to show any insight into his inappropriate behaviour. He has made no admissions and offered no apology. In any case it is clear from a number of cases decided in the High Court that personal mitigation is of limited weight because of the importance of maintaining public confidence in the police service. In this case personal mitigation has no impact on the outcome.

The Panel has followed the Guidance on outcomes in police misconduct proceedings at paragraph 3.33. The Panel first considered whether, if PC Parsons had still been a serving officer, it would have imposed a final written warning on him of 2 to 5 years. The Panel has taken into account his record of service, which causes great concern because in the past he has been the subject of 2 other complaints of breaching the standard of professional behaviour of use of force. The oldest allegation was in 2019 but much more recently he was given a final written warning on 23rd February 2026 for breaches of the use of force standard as well as breaches of the standards of Discreditable Conduct, Duties and Responsibilities, Authority, Respect and Courtesy and Orders and Instructions. PC Parsons is not in breach of this sanction because it post dates the current misconduct. However, it is highly relevant to the Panel's consideration of sanction today that PC Parsons has continued to ignore the Standards of Professional Behaviour applicable to police officers after 15th March 2025.

A further relevant matter is the complete absence of any acceptance by PC Parsons that he has acted wrongly. There has been no apology from him. In his interview under caution he was asked towards the end of the interview whether there was anything he would do differently now. His reply was "No".

The Panel has decided that if PC Parsons was still serving a final written warning would be wholly inappropriate. The Panel would have dismissed him without notice. It follows that the appropriate outcome in this case is for the Panel to declare that

they would have dismissed former PC Parsons without notice if he had still been serving.

Dated 23rd July 2026

Signed

Handwritten signature of Christopher McKay in black ink.

Christopher McKay (Chair)

Handwritten signature of Bernadette Leverton in black ink.

Bernadette Leverton (IPM)

Handwritten signature of Sandra England in black ink.

Chief Superintendent Sandra England (BTP)

Appeal Notice

You have a right of appeal to the Appropriate Authority, but may only appeal on the following grounds:

- The finding or disciplinary sanction imposed was unreasonable;
- There is critical new evidence that could not have reasonably have been considered at the misconduct hearing; or
- There was a serious breach of the procedures set out in the British Transport Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 or other unfairness which could have materially affected the finding or decision on disciplinary action

If you wish to appeal you must do so in writing to the British Transport Police Authority. Please email btpa-enquiries@btp.police.uk within 10 working days of receipt of this letter. Your letter should state the grounds for appeal, whether you require a transcript of the hearing in whole or part and whether or not you consent to the appeal being dealt with without a hearing.