

Press Release

30 April 2021

Met police officer dismissed after using up to 34 baton strikes on Black teenage girl with learning disabilities

A Metropolitan Police officer, PC Benjamin Kemp, 32, based at MPS North East Command, has been found guilty of gross misconduct and dismissed with immediate effect after a police disciplinary panel concluded that he used excessive force on a 17 year old Black girl with learning disabilities in East London on 9 May 2019. The girl's name has been anonymised as XAB to protect her identity.

Following the incident a police complaint was made by the girl's mother and NHS Trust staff members resulting in an investigation by the Independent Office for Police Conduct ('IOPC').

At the hearing, which took place between 28 and 30 April 2021, PC Kemp admitted breaching the standards of professional behaviour in relation to authority, respect and courtesy at the level of 'misconduct' but denied using excessive force.

The misconduct panel heard that the teenager had run away from a group while on an escorted walk and having become distressed flagged down a police car near a main road. The girl informed officers that she was a vulnerable child with mental health issues. She initially agreed to get into the police car but then exited. The panel heard that PC Kemp attempted to handcuff her and when this was unsuccessful he used CS spray less than a metre from her face. Within seconds he started using his baton and in total struck her up to 34 times. The panel concluded that PC Kemp was striking her with his baton during and after she was Tasered by another officer.

At the hearing, it was determined by the panel that PC Kemp breached police standards of professional behaviour relating to 'use of force', and 'authority, respect and courtesy', and that gross misconduct was proven.

XAB's cousin, speaking on behalf of the family, said: *"Having listened to two days of evidence I am shocked at the extent of force that XAB was subjected to by PC Benjamin Kemp. Rather than helping her as he should have done, he violently assaulted her, using up to 34 baton strikes and CS spray. Instead of showing any remorse, PC Kemp has spent the last two days trying to justify his actions. I am beyond happy that the panel entirely rejected his evidence. I feel the panel's decision rightly reaffirms the standards police officers must be held to in dealing with vulnerable members of the public. It also sends a message of hope to the Black community that accountability can be achieved"*.

Sophie Naftalin, solicitor for XAB said: *"This is a deeply disturbing case where a Black child with learning disabilities was brutalised and assaulted by a police officer in circumstances where she needed care and protection. There have been too many cases of disproportionate force being used by police officers upon members of the Black community. Today's finding of gross misconduct and dismissal by the panel sends a powerful message that more needs to be done by the Metropolitan Police to train frontline*

officers in how they deal with vulnerable members of the public. We also call on the CPS to review its decision not to charge PC Kemp with assault”.

NOTES TO EDITORS

XAB is represented by Sophie Naftalin and Sohini Mehta of Bhatt Murphy Solicitors. Any requests for interviews should be emailed to s.naftalin@bhattmurphy.co.uk