# Former Met Police sergeant faces upskirting and exposure charges amid growing scrutiny of officer misconduct



A police sergeant has appeared in court facing serious allegations of upskirting and indecent exposure, stirring public concern over conduct within law enforcement. Christopher Herd, 48, is accused of using public transport to take covert photographs under the clothing of individuals for sexual gratification, alongside a separate charge of exposing himself in public. These incidents reportedly occurred both while he was on and off duty, calling into question the integrity of police officers tasked with upholding the law.

Herd, a former member of the Metropolitan Police residing in Capel St Mary, Suffolk, was arrested on August 30 of the previous year. He was subsequently suspended from his duties and resigned from the force on March 1, shortly after the allegations came to light. During a brief hearing at Chelmsford Magistrates' Court, it was revealed that one of the incidents took place in Manningtree on July 23, 2022. Three further charges relate to events in Clacton, Essex, occurring between March 12 and August 22, 2022. Each of these offences carries a maximum penalty of six months in jail and an unlimited fine.

Dressed smartly in a dark suit for his appearance, Herd maintained his innocence, confirming his name and date of birth, and he subsequently requested that the case be heard in Crown Court. The judge, Jennifer Twite, echoed the seriousness of the situation by reaffirming strict bail conditions to prevent further violations, which include restrictions on unsupervised contact with minors and prohibitions on both recording people in public and using public transport without supervision.

The backdrop to these events reflects a growing wave of scrutiny over police conduct, particularly in cases involving sexual misconduct. This coincides with several other significant trials in the UK concerning police officers accused of serious sexual offences. For instance, in a parallel case, Sgt Richard Heard of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary faced multiple charges, including rape and voyeurism, underscoring a troubling pattern within the ranks. While some officers have been acquitted, their suspensions and the nature of the charges have raised alarm about the standards of accountability in policing.

Moreover, debates around institutional practices and how allegations are handled have surfaced, highlighting systemic issues in monitoring officers' conduct. The public’s confidence in the police is imperative, and such allegations threaten to undermine this trust, especially when officers exploit their authority to commit acts of indecency.

As Herd’s case moves to a preliminary hearing at Chelmsford Crown Court scheduled for June 12, the safety and trust within communities remain paramount as they await the judicial outcomes amid these unsettling revelations about police behaviour. The implications of these proceedings extend beyond individual accountability and touch on broader issues of oversight and public faith in the policing system.

The contentious nature and emotional weight of these accusations continue to resonate, with many advocating for enhanced monitoring mechanisms within the force to ensure that offences committed by individuals equipped with such authority are dealt with transparently and justly. The continued evolution of public perception regarding policing practices will likely remain at the forefront as these cases unfold in the legal arena.

**Reference Map:**1. Paragraph 1 - Lead article [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14719451/Former-Met-Police-sergeant-appears-court-accused-upskirting-exposing-himself.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)2. Paragraph 2 - Lead article [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14719451/Former-Met-Police-sergeant-appears-court-accused-upskirting-exposing-himself.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)3. Paragraph 3 - Lead article [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14719451/Former-Met-Police-sergeant-appears-court-accused-upskirting-exposing-himself.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)4. Paragraph 4 - Sources [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cxe21g719p0o), [[3]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4gqr8dv49ko), [[4]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c728ld6vz80o)5. Paragraph 5 - Source [[6]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-essex-29069855)6. Paragraph 6 - Source [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cxe21g719p0o), [[3]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4gqr8dv49ko)7. Paragraph 7 - Summary and wider implications - General context from [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cxe21g719p0o), [[3]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4gqr8dv49ko), [[4]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c728ld6vz80o), [[6]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-essex-29069855)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14719451/Former-Met-Police-sergeant-appears-court-accused-upskirting-exposing-himself.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cxe21g719p0o> - A police officer charged with rape messaged his alleged victim saying 'no crimes were committed', a court has heard. Sgt Richard Heard, 44, of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary, has pleaded not guilty to three counts of rape and three counts of voyeurism. The female officer has been giving evidence at Bournemouth Crown Court. The court heard Sgt Heard sent her the message after he was released from police bail in June 2023. As part of his bail conditions he was not allowed to contact the victim, jurors were told. Defending, Matthew Butt KC suggested the messages were sent on 4 July and explained the pair exchanged a series of messages using an app called Viber, which has a disappearing message feature. He showed the court images, taken by the victim, of the messages. One of them, which Mr Butt read to the court, said: 'It's all consensual. We have been nice to each other.' It added: 'No crimes were committed. There was no harassment. No assault and we both want to carry on our jobs.' Mr Butt suggested to the victim: 'He is paraphrasing what you had said already. You were explaining to him at this time that he had done nothing wrong.' She replied: 'Yeah at that time I didn't want him angry with me.' More on this story Police sergeant raped fellow officer, court told Police sergeant cleared of raping fellow officer Police officer to stand trial accused of rape The court also heard Sgt Heard asked her to delete messages. Mr Butt suggested to the woman this was because Sgt Heard was 'worried' if it was found out he was breaching bail 'he would be in trouble'. The female officer replied: 'I don't remember it being at that time.' Mr Butt also suggested that 'nowhere' in the messages did she accuse Sgt Heard of rape, to which she replied 'no, it was a phone call we had'. She replied: 'No.' Sgt Heard is also standing trial for assault by beating, perverting the course of justice and faces a further count of malicious communication against a second person. The offences are all alleged to have happened between January 2022 and August 2023 while he was off duty. Sgt Heard has been suspended by Hampshire Constabulary. The trial continues. Follow BBC South on Facebook, X (Twitter), or Instagram. Send your story ideas to south.newsonline@bbc.co.uk or via WhatsApp on 0808 100 2240.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4gqr8dv49ko> - A police sergeant accused of raping a fellow officer has been cleared of all the charges against him. Sgt Richard Heard, of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary, faced allegations of attacking the woman while off duty between January 2022 and August 2023. The 44-year-old was found not guilty following a trial at Bournemouth Crown Court of three counts of rape and three counts of voyeurism. The force said Sgt Heard is currently still suspended, pending the outcome of misconduct proceedings. A further count of coercive or controlling behaviour was not proceeded with by the prosecution.
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c728ld6vz80o> - A police sergeant accused of raping a female officer joked to his victim 'it's not rape if you enjoy it at the end', a court heard. Sgt Richard Heard, 44, of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary, has pleaded not guilty to three counts of rape and three counts of voyeurism. His alleged victim, a female police officer, has been giving evidence at Bournemouth Crown Court. She told jurors Sgt Heard made the joke in September 2022, after he had raped her on two separate occasions. In a recorded police interview from September 2023, she said the first happened in July 2022. She said: 'He undid my belt, it felt like tug of war, I said no and then I pulled up to pull my trousers up and he pushed me back down.' Jurors were told she eventually 'just stopped fighting' and two days after the incident, she took photos of bruising on her arm. The next reported rape happened in August, when she said he told her: 'I like it when it hurts you.' 'I just wish my phone was recording or something,' she added. During his opening statement, prosecutor Andrew Bird KC, told the court Sgt Heard had two children and a long-term partner and had been a serving police officer for more than 20 years. He said the third alleged rape in September 2022, when the victim again asked Sgt Heard to stop and he replied: 'I'll be quick.' Jurors heard the three charges of voyeurism relate to a number of images and videos Sgt Heard took of the complainant. Sgt Heard is also standing trial for assault by beating and perverting the course of justice. The offences all reportedly happened between January 2022 and August 2023 when he was off-duty. Sgt Heard, who has been suspended, also faces a further count of malicious communication against a second victim in June 2023. The trial continues. Follow BBC South on Facebook, X (Twitter), or Instagram. Send your story ideas to south.newsonline@bbc.co.uk or via WhatsApp on 0808 100 2240.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-humber-22846339> - A teacher accused of sexual misconduct with three girls at a school has been cleared of all charges. Christopher Hird, 47, of Highfields, South Cave, had denied touching girls at South Holderness Technology College in East Yorkshire. Hull Crown Court heard the alleged incidents had taken place at the school between 2000 and 2012. Following the verdict, East Riding of Yorkshire Council said it would review Mr Hird's suspension from teaching. Earlier, the court had heard of four alleged incidents involving Mr Hird, a science teacher at the school. The first girl who came forward, who was 15 at the time, alleged Mr Hird had wiped ink from her face, stroking her in a way she found 'quite disturbing'. In the second alleged incident, the jury was told Mr Hird had come up behind the same girl in a classroom and pressed himself against her when she asked a question. When the incident was reported, the school told police about another girl's allegation made in 2009. The prosecution said this girl, who was 16 at the time, accused Mr Hird of brushing his hand against the side of her breast in class. The third girl came forward about an alleged incident in 2000 after the teacher was charged and a story about the case featured in a newspaper. The prosecution told the court Mr Hird had inappropriately touched the girl, who was 11 at the time, as he removed a piece of paper she had been sitting on. Denying the charges, Mr Hird had told the court if he had touched the girls it was completely accidental and there was never any sexual intent. Following the verdict, Judge Mark Bury said he agreed with the jury's conclusion. Speaking outside the court, Mr Hird said he had faced a very difficult time since the allegations were made. While the girls who had made the allegations would remain anonymous, his name had been tarnished, said Mr Hird.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-essex-29069855> - Christopher Scott, 44, admitted using computers to check on two women while employed in Camden, north London. He also found out details about two men he believed could have been supplying drugs to his partner's son. Scott, of Billericay, Essex avoided a custodial sentence but was given a 12 month community order. He is currently suspended from the Metropolitan Police and a spokesman for the force said Scott would face a misconduct board now that the hearing at Westminster Magistrates' Court had finished. Defence lawyer Robert Morris told the court Scott had used the database after his girlfriend of 11 years broke up with him, in 2012. He started checking up on a subsequent partner the day after they met, in April 2013. Mr Morris said: 'He was concerned by a number of things he saw and unfortunately curiosity got the better of him.' The court heard how Scott then used police databases in June 2013 to find out information on two men over concerns they were supplying his new partner's son with drugs. He later spied on her former partner over an issue of domestic abuse. Sentencing Scott, of Kennel Lane, Senior District Judge Howard Riddle acknowledged he had not carried out the acts for criminal or financial gain. But he said: 'As a police officer there is a particular onus on you to respect the law and people will be alarmed that privacy is being invaded in this way by access to a computer system when you have no right to do so.' Scott was also ordered to carry out 100 hours of unpaid work.