

# Unsafe and counterproductive investigatory practices

with specific reference to St John Ambulance  
and a suggestion that the issues may be endemic  
to the wider healthcare & volunteering sectors

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## **Bottom Line Up Front**

The SJA investigatory process is unfit for purpose.

The process is both powerfully counterproductive and utterly neglectful of the rights and well-being of those under investigation. Luckily, a handful of simple changes will have an outsized effect on this issue without negatively affecting the organisation's ability to conduct investigations. Adopting these will spare SJA people from significant distress, ensure their time is used more productively and protect SJA from financial and reputational losses.

Whilst researching this issue it became apparent that the same issue may be endemic to the broader healthcare and volunteering sectors, up to and including the level of Parliamentary legislation. This would be far beyond my pay grade if so, but I do propose some simple changes that should serve as a jumping-off point for alleviating this. This will extend the benefits previously mentioned across these sectors.

Despite the simplicity of the remedies, the potential risk of not implementing them is serious. It is my belief that the worst-case scenario of not making these changes is that an SJA colleague may, under exceptional circumstances, be driven to serious harm. I would much rather raise the alarm now and risk being seen to overreact than to not and for the same realisation to only occur following an inquest.

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## 1. Introduction

Having just been through the process, I have serious concerns about the manner in which St John Ambulance (SJA) conducts investigations. This conduct is, I will hopefully show, an inevitable consequence of the lack of meaningful safeguards for the rights of defendants across a range of SJA policies and procedures.

Where allegations are made against employees, they are afforded some protection by external employment law and the Acas Code of Practice; where allegations are made against volunteers, no such protections exist. Failure to safeguard the rights of volunteers means failure to safeguard the welfare of volunteers. By comparison with other organisations of similar size, nature, sector, etc., I aim to show that this is highly unusual almost everywhere except, perhaps, the wider healthcare and volunteering sectors.

This report is structured similarly to the process by which I arrived at this conclusion, beginning with my own direct experience and rippling outward. As these ripples extend further into the wider healthcare and volunteering worlds, I become less certain of my conclusions; however, if correct, I am more concerned about their potential implications. It is my hope that by raising these here, those better-placed to investigate further may be prompted to do so.

However, where I *can* be confident in my conclusions it is clear that I can and must try to get my own house in order, and as a result this report is aimed first and foremost at an SJA readership.

**A note on timing:** I am aware that between the coronavirus, recent political events, etc., many of us are currently swamped. I do not expect responding to this report to be anybody's top priority, but I feel it is appropriate to deliver it now in order to at least make everyone aware of the issues raised, which can then be worked on in due time.

[P.S. This report, with the exception of a number of the appendices, was almost entirely written prior to me receiving a copy of the *Investigation Report* on Jun 30; that is, it predominantly written during the first five weeks of what would end up being a thirteen-week process, and which would end in my dismissal from SJA.

As a result, most of this document is a time capsule of my optimism and sense of charity prior to this point, when I still had faith in the organisation and my colleagues and believed that truth and sense would win out in the end. I believed, not without reason, that a verdict

was about to be reached and this misunderstanding about to be cleared up.

The concerns raised in this report are still applicable; the procedures-as-written are still broken, even if followed correctly. But I have another reason for dusting off and finishing this report: SJA have attempted to duck responsibility for dangerous recklessness on their part. Dangerous recklessness that put me, my colleagues and the public at risk. They have scapegoated me—the least-experienced and least-responsible person involved—and if they are not held accountable, I fear they will do so again in future.

Perhaps I should have reported my concerns earlier. However, considering the situation back in March/April, I felt that rules of a pre-pandemic world would have to be bent, and less-than-ideal situations be accepted as necessary and expedient. Clearly, SJA did not concur, and therefore it is only right that they be held to the same standard they have held me to.

Comments added following the conclusion of the process are clearly marked as postscripts in the same manner as this one.]

## 2. This Report

Whatever it is that you're doing, I'm grateful for your honesty, for your willingness to speak up when that's required...<sup>1</sup>

This part of the report aims to explain the background and thinking behind this report, as well as to assist SJA colleagues by hopefully pre-empting much of the analysis that they may have to perform before responding to it.

I first briefly describe myself, where my personal circumstances impact on the points raised, for the benefit of unfamiliar readers. I then present detailed justifications for my decision to leverage the SJA whistleblowing process in the submission of this report. After this, everyone who has received a copy of this report is listed and the rationale(s) given as to why. Finally, there is a Q&A of questions I expect may be raised by this report.

Note: All internal references in this report are hyperlinked; click on them to jump to the part being referenced (e.g., see § 2.1). Throughout this report I have used § and ¶ symbols for internal references and 's' and 'para' for external references.

### 2.1 About the author

I am [P.S. was] a member of the SJA Lancaster Event Services Unit. I am [P.S. was] also a (probationary) member of the North Region Medical Response Team (MRT). I am [P.S. was] not a member of any virtual Ambulance Unit.

In this report, unless otherwise specified, any references to:

- 'Regional' roles refers to North Region;
- 'District' roles refers to Cumbria & Lancashire District;
- 'Area' roles refers to South Cumbria Area prior to Jul 3 and Fylde Coast & North Lancs Area afterwards; and

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<sup>1</sup>Chief Executive Officer, 'Message from Martin' (SJA CONNECT, St John Ambulance 29 May 2020) (<https://sjconnect.me/Communicating/News-and-announcements/Latest-News/Pages/Message-from-Martin-our-international-family,-our-finances-and-our-future.aspx>).

- ‘Unit’ roles refers to the Lancaster Event Services Unit.

My line manager until Jun 10 was the Lancaster Event Services Unit Manager. It is unclear who is [P.S. was] now my line manager after this, but I presume it was the South Cumbria Area Manager from then until Jul 3, and the Fylde Coast and North Lancs Area Manager from then on.

No colleagues from either the Lancaster Event Services Unit or the North Region MRT were involved in the creation or submission of this report. However, many have sent me messages of support, and I am very grateful to them for it.

I consider the following facts to have some bearing on the creation of this report and the issues it raises:

- I am relatively new to SJA:
  - I joined SJA as a First Aider in late 2017; and
  - I qualified as an Emergency Ambulance Crew this March.
- I have minimal prior experience with the SJA investigatory process:
  - I have never been on the investigator’s side of the process; but
  - I have submitted two Incident Report Forms (IRFs) in the past; and
  - I have been the defendant once before; although
  - to the best of my knowledge none of these involved investigations and all were resolved via email back-and-forth; and
  - summaries of each of these can be found in Appendix C.
- I do not come from a clinical background:
  - I work at a university on IT threat intelligence research; and
  - my academic and professional background is in software development.
- I am [P.S. was] a volunteer within SJA, not a paid employee;
- I was in a position where I was highly impacted by SJA’s suspension:
  - I have taken three months’ leave from work to support SJA’s COVID-19 response;
  - I chose in March to remain in my flat up North, where I live alone, rather than head down to the Midlands and wait out the lockdown with my family for the same reason; but
  - ensuring I had no distractions rather backfired when SJA decided to suspend me.
- I have a strong drive to help others learn and develop:

- I am [P.S. was] the (unofficial) Lancaster Event Services Unit Training Lead;
  - I am a First Response trainer for another large charity; and
  - I have volunteered in the past teaching programming and other subjects.
  - [P.S. I was greatly very heartened to receive so many words of support, not to mention character references, from those I have delivered training both to and alongside.]
- I, like most of the country, have had an incredible amount of free time lately.

So, in short: I am a meticulous medical outsider who abhors inefficiency, and when I have concerns I spare no expense at highlighting these in the hopes that all involved can learn and grow.

Hence, this.

## 2.2 This report's basis in SJA policy

[P.S. This section is obviously no longer relevant to this report, but I have left it in for interest.]

This report is being submitted in line with the St John Ambulance *Whistleblowing Policy*<sup>2</sup> on the following bases:

- it alleges that continued use of current SJA processes represents 'an act creating a risk to health and safety';<sup>3</sup>
- the author has 'a reasonable belief'<sup>4</sup> that this is the case;
- it represents a 'challenge [to] formal St John Ambulance policy',<sup>5</sup> so cannot be submitted as a grievance; and
- the complaints procedure is inappropriate as there can be no local and regional resolution to this issue<sup>6</sup> and there is no explicit statement in s 3.3 that anyone under investigation will be provided with a copy of the allegation(s) against them, so I have to conclude that it will be run in a similar manner to the *Incident Management Framework (IMF) policy*.

I am aware that the concerns raised also represent 'a set of circumstances which may cause harm, loss or damage to an individual or the charity' and therefore an *incident* (or even, in

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<sup>2</sup>St John Ambulance, *Whistleblowing Policy* (4.0, 2014) s 3.2.

<sup>3</sup>*ibid* s 2.1.3.

<sup>4</sup>*ibid* s 2.1.

<sup>5</sup>St John Ambulance, *Volunteer grievance procedure* (1.1, 2014) s 7.

<sup>6</sup>St John Ambulance, *Feedback & Complaints Procedure* (2.0, 2019) s 3.1.

cases more extreme than my own, a *serious incident*<sup>7</sup>) that should be dealt with under the *Incident Management Framework (IMF) policy*. However, it is my belief (and the subject of this report) that the IMF investigatory process is unavoidably harmful at present. If I were to submit an IRF that sparked an investigation conducted in this manner, I would be complicit in that harm. Due to the opacity of the system I would also not be able to tell if I had done so or not, so I must err on the side of caution—as a result I am not able to submit an IRF. However, I am obliged to report my concerns, both by moral sense and by SJA policy.<sup>8</sup>

This may not have been the intended meaning, but I have therefore interpreted the *Incident Management Framework (IMF) policy* as encouraging me to use the *Whistleblowing Policy*.<sup>9</sup> This policy provides the least-prescriptive procedure of all the St John Ambulance ‘speak up’ options and therefore allows me the greatest leeway when submitting my concerns—it allows me to bypass raising these concerns with my line manager as ‘the important thing is that the matter is raised’<sup>10</sup> and, as I am navigating somewhat uncharted territory, it also provides the greatest level of protection for myself in the event that my concerns are not shared, clearly stating that ‘if the individual raises a concern, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against that individual’.<sup>11</sup>

With the only acceptable SJA procedure thus available to me providing no formal process for correctly raising concerns, I have had to get creative. In order to demonstrate that I have ‘acted honestly, responsibly and with good faith’,<sup>12</sup> I have done my best to accurately determine the ‘spirit of the law’ underpinning the various other SJA ‘speak up’ policies. Guided by this, I have decided to adopt a well-established technique within the software development world known as a ‘blameless post-mortem’.<sup>13</sup> It is my understanding that this may be unfamiliar within the medical world, but I cannot find anything to suggest that this explicitly contravenes SJA policy, nor the law. One of SJA’s greatest strengths is the variety of experience that its volunteers can bring from their own industries and backgrounds, and I believe this is a perfect example.

It is my honest belief that by submitting this issue in this manner, along with the confidentiality-preserving measures detailed in § 2.3, I have behaved in full compliance with the terms of the St John Ambulance *Whistleblowing Policy*<sup>14</sup> as well as the driving spirit behind the *Incident Management Framework (IMF) policy*,<sup>15</sup> the *Feedback Policy*,<sup>16</sup> the *Information Governance*

<sup>7</sup> St John Ambulance, *Incident Management Framework (IMF) Policy* (4.0, 2018) ss 3.7–8.

<sup>8</sup> *IMF policy* (n 7) s 3.2; St John Ambulance, *Equality, Inclusion & Diversity Policy* (2.0, 2016) ss 2.1 & 2.4.

<sup>9</sup> *IMF policy* (n 7) s 1.4.

<sup>10</sup> *WB Policy* (n 2) s 3.1.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid* s 2.5.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid* s 1.2.

<sup>13</sup> John Allspaw, ‘Blameless PostMortems and a Just Culture’ (*Code as Craft*) (<https://codeascraft.com/2012/05/22/blameless-postmortems/>) accessed 22 May 2012; see Appendix A for a description of the process.

<sup>14</sup> *WB Policy* (n 2) ss 1.2, 2.5 & 3.1.

<sup>15</sup> *IMF policy* (n 7) ss 1.2, 1.14, 1.5, 2.1.2, 2.1.3 & 2.1.5.

<sup>16</sup> St John Ambulance, *Feedback Policy* (3.0, 2019) s 3.7.

policy,<sup>17</sup> work area 7 of the current *Volunteering Strategy*,<sup>18</sup> the HEART values,<sup>19</sup> SJA's pledge to 'give [volunteers] the opportunity to express [their] views about how St John Ambulance can improve and develop',<sup>20</sup> the 3R promise<sup>21</sup> (to which SJA was an early signatory) and SJA's 2022 strategic goal of providing the 'best experience for all St John people'.<sup>22</sup> I am confident I am 'behav[ing] in a courteous and professional mannner'<sup>23</sup> and 'treat[ing everyone involved] with respect'.<sup>24</sup> Whilst my approach may be unorthodox, therefore, I nonetheless expect to be treated 'fairly and sensitively'<sup>25</sup> and 'with respect'.<sup>26</sup>

## 2.3 Who this report has been shared with and why

[P.S. This section originally documented everyone I intended to share the report with and why; in the spirit of the blameless post mortem, this was to have been everyone directly involved in it and everyone whose role was relevant to the matters discussed. This is of course no longer relevant, and I have omitted it.

As I have used up my final avenue of appeal and been dismissed from SJA, I no longer care who receives this report. However, I had originally written the following:]

SJA do not have a published document classification scheme; only 'PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL', which does not have explicit handling instructions defined.<sup>27</sup> In light of this I have decided to use the *Government Security Classifications* level of OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE for this document;<sup>28</sup> this means that the document may be passed on to additional parties, but should be handled on a need-to-know basis.

## 2.4 Questions likely to arise

In this section I will try to predict as many questions that readers may have after receiving this report. My predictive powers are not perfect; any questions that are not answered here can be directed to me at the email address on the title page.

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<sup>17</sup>St John Ambulance, *Information Governance* (1.0, 2015) ss 1.4 & 1.7.

<sup>18</sup>St John Ambulance, *Volunteering Strategy* (2015) p 6.

<sup>19</sup>St John Ambulance, *Our values*.

<sup>20</sup>St John Ambulance, *Volunteer Charter* (2.0, 2017).

<sup>21</sup>Volunteer Rights Inquiry, *Volunteer Rights Inquiry: Recommendations and call to action* (2011) p 4.

<sup>22</sup>St John Ambulance, *St John 2019–2022: Serving your communities* (2019).

<sup>23</sup>*Vol. Charter* (n 20).

<sup>24</sup>St John Ambulance, *Conduct and Performance Policy* (1.0, 2015) s 2.3.

<sup>25</sup>*ibid* s 3.3.1.

<sup>26</sup>*Vol. Charter* (n 20).

<sup>27</sup>Email from Information Governance Manager to author (2 June 2020).

<sup>28</sup>Cabinet Office, *Government Security Classifications* (2018).

**Did this report have to be so *long*?**

Yes, I believe that in order to make the strongest case possible I required detail in abundance. To counter this, I have attempted to structure the document in a logical manner and provide guidance for all recipients in § 2.3. Of course, feel free to jump ahead; if you are willing to accept my claim that the process is harmful, for example, you do not need to read the section entitled “This process is harmful”.

That said, as with any academic writing the reader pressed for time can get away with reading only the introduction (pt 1) and the conclusion (pt 4) to find out *what* I want them to think; everything in-between simply provides the reasons *why*.

**Do I have to read the whole thing?**

If you are one of the primary recipients listed in § 2.3, then I would say yes (except perhaps §§ 3.9–3.12). [P.S. § 2.3 has been omitted.] If you are not, it’s up to you. Each section of the report is designed to build on the previous ones, but each is also designed to stand alone. You can either look at § 2.3 to find out which parts are relevant to you, or you can skim through.

**Can you sum it up in a single sentence?**

Secure defendant rights in writing, protect them in practice.

**Aren’t you just bitter about being investigated?**

I do not believe so; it is just that the experience of being investigated has led me to these concerns. If I had just started working with Badgers<sup>29</sup> and found that their policies were similarly broken, I would be raising concerns about *those* instead.

I also have a history of submitting detailed feedback, having previously done so in March following the organising of a First Aider Pathway course and again in May following my first month of ambulance shifts.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>SJA youth groups for children aged 7–10.

<sup>30</sup>Email to North Regional Assurance and Quality Officer et al. from author (4 March 2020); Email to North ROCC from author (2 May 2020). I have also provided course feedback to my ambulance trainers in light of what I’ve learned from a month and a half of shifts (Email to North Regional Ambulance Lead from author (1 June 2020)). To quote a friend of mine, a response of this length and depth is very ‘on brand’ for me; it may be unique in *degree*, but not in *kind*.



### **Aren't you just being dramatic?**

No, I don't believe so. It is perhaps unlikely that anybody will suffer serious harm as a result of an investigation held under these conditions; however, that would be a high-impact event, so the overall risk is moderate.

### **Weren't you only suspended for TODO: INSERT NUMBER HERE days?**

Yes, and it was deeply unpleasant. As mentioned in § 2.1 I *had* put myself in a particularly vulnerable position; on the other hand, I consider myself to be above-average in terms of mental resilience and how well I cope with stress. [P.S. Don't just take my word for it, this came up in multiple character references, with one describing me as 'unflappable'<sup>31</sup> and another describing me as having 'an exceptional level of organisation and drive, which [my] calm and seemingly care-free exterior sometimes hides'.<sup>32</sup>]

On balance, I would therefore expect that my experience would be roughly representative of someone with more distractions, but less durability. Also, from discussions with colleagues and the Investigating Officer, this appears to have been an uncharacteristically quick process; one colleague reported that they were suspended for *a month* as a result of allegations that were a) entirely vexatious and b) easily shown to be vexatious, once they were eventually told what they were.

[P.S. This section has aged particularly poorly, but has been left in for both context and amusement.]

### **Weren't you only suspended from clinical activities?**

Both the Investigating Officer and the Cumbria & Lancashire District Manager made this claim. As I told them, I do not have any non-clinical roles within SJA; insisting there is a material difference is therefore pedantic at best and disingenuous at worst.

[P.S. This claim continued to be made by others, including the Head of Volunteering in their appeal verdict, and it continued to be just as disingenuous. See Appendix K for more.]

### **What happens now?**

I hope that I have made my case convincingly enough to provoke meaningful change. My future relationship with SJA is more nebulous, and depends on the response to this report. It may seem like a small request when compared to the size of this report, but I require a formal apology—a recognition by SJA that their actions were wrong and have caused me

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<sup>31</sup>Character reference from Armed Forces colleague (5 July 2020).

<sup>32</sup>Character reference from author's friend and former colleague (5 July 2020).

harm—before I can even start to rebuild my relationship with an organisation that, unlike in mid-April, I no longer believe will look after me.<sup>33</sup>

However, I am not naive. It is entirely possible that my more cynical friends are correct, and SJA will ignore this report and refuse to change or to accept their responsibility. It is also possible that I will be retaliated against for submitting this report, up to and including being dismissed from the organisation. If any of this happens, I will have been shown that the rot runs too deep to treat and will accept that continued membership in such an organisation is untenable.

[P.S. My cynical friends were, alas, bang on, and SJA made the membership decision for me.]

### **Why didn't you only send people the parts of the report that are relevant to them?**

Firstly, this would have taken substantial time and effort on my part. Secondly, this would have gone against the spirit of the blameless post-mortem. Thirdly, my goal throughout this project has been to ensure that this report is as self-contained as possible to avoid the one-bus problem (i.e., the moment after I submit it I walk outside and am hit by a bus).

That said, I have made a significant concession to confidentiality in that any allegations I have regarding the specific conduct of individuals has been submitted separately, to a far smaller set of recipients, in complaint 1105.

[P.S. For obvious reasons, this complaint was never submitted. As far as I am aware, complaint 1105 remains 'on hold'.]

### **Isn't this all just 'human nature'?**

This was a claim made repeatedly by the Investigating Officer (IO) to excuse my crewmates for not raising any issues they had at the time.<sup>34</sup> It is beyond the scope of this report to define what is and isn't human nature. However, it *is* within the scope of this report to say that this is a profoundly weak argument.

It is human nature to rush towards a casualty without first checking for danger. It is human nature to miss things without a structured system to act as a guide. It is human nature to panic. It is the role of training, systems and experience to counteract these natural inclinations. When this is not the case, it is not a failing of human nature; it is a failing of those measures to mitigate the failings of human nature.

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<sup>33</sup>See Appendix B, ¶ 61.

<sup>34</sup>See Appendix B, ¶ 169 for one such instance.

### **Don't people need to be able to report concerns anonymously?**

Yes, of course, there will be circumstances in which it is appropriate to raise concerns anonymously and to withhold these from the defendant. However, there is nothing to suggest that this was appropriate in the case of IMF 76723. This should absolutely *not* be the default, and should be considered only as an exceptional response to those exceptional cases. The current system—anonymous, fire-and-forget, consequence-free for the complainant—grants the worst kind of person the greatest amount of power; this is a system ripe for abuse. Even those with the best of intentions, as I believe Crewmate A to have been, are nonetheless incentivised to avoid informal, instantaneous resolution because it might be awkward; worse, they are likely not even aware of the impact of their actions.

### **Who do you hold responsible?**

I am a firm believer that bad systems, rather than bad people, produce bad outcomes. In this case I think it is probably a case of institutional groupthink, a preference to go along with 'how we've always done it' and a lack of thought paid to volunteers. I think this has gone on so long in part because most people prefer a quiet life and will learn to live with a bad system rather than try to change it after falling afoul of it. I think my intentional lack of distractions during the first three weeks of my suspension has also made a difference. As soon as I gave up on a swift resolution and left the North to stay with family, I noticed my focus and motivation to work on this report waned. Luckily, by that point it was already mostly finished and I only had to tweak a few bits here and there whilst the process continued to drag on. Finally, I believe that the people who write these policies rarely end up on the other end of them; in that case, hopefully this message from the bottom of the hierarchy to the top will help them to better understand the real-life effects of their decisions.

### **Why are you being so open about the things you did wrong?**

I am not perfect; it does me no good to ignore the fact that I struggled to take a manual blood pressure,<sup>35</sup> that I scraped an ambulance exhaust against a kerb<sup>36</sup> or that I lost my temper when a new set of spurious IRFs came in just as I was anticipating a resolution.<sup>37</sup> I am aware that this may be unusual for SJA, and I believe this pervasive self-protective reflex is a direct result of the organisation's dysfunctional systems. However, I am happy to hold all of my conduct up to public scrutiny. Moreover, I am attempting with this report to show colleagues that there is a better way; it would be unfair of me to ask others to come forward and expose their errors without first doing so myself.

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<sup>35</sup>See Appendix B, ¶ 45.

<sup>36</sup>See Appendix B, ¶ 49.

<sup>37</sup>See Appendix B, ¶ 208.

## Were the allegations true? What were they?

The allegations were wide-ranging and resist blanket categorisation. Some were completely spurious, some were accurate but no longer relevant by the time they reached me, some were misunderstandings and some were true but I believe mitigating circumstances to have been present.

The investigators, at various points, concluded that anywhere from 10 (e.g., in the *Investigation Report*,<sup>38</sup> miscounted by the author as 13) to 3 (e.g., in my disciplinary outcome letter<sup>39</sup>) of the allegations could be upheld, whereas I independently concluded that there was some merit to 6, but with the aforementioned caveats of mitigating circumstances and/or a lack of continuing relevance.<sup>40</sup> Of these, four had already been investigated.<sup>41</sup>

However, this obscures my primary point: the merits (or lack thereof) of the charges against me are entirely immaterial to this report. There could have been ten times as many allegations, each of the greatest severity, and I could have been guilty of every last one of them; none of this would justify the harmfulness of this process.

## Is it really ‘whistleblowing’ if no-one’s doing anything wrong?

I think ‘sexy whistleblowing’—the kind where someone risks life and limb to expose corruption at the highest levels—fills newspapers, but is probably not representative of most whistleblowing. I am here viewing my actions in terms of somebody blowing a whistle to alert everyone to something dangerous, rather than malicious.

However, the language used is incidental; as the National Guardian’s Office says:

Speaking up may take many forms including a quick discussion with a line manager, a suggestion for improvement submitted as part of a staff suggestion scheme, raising an issue with a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, or bringing a matter to the attention of a regulator. Some people may interpret all or some of these actions as ‘whistleblowing’, others may only associate ‘whistleblowing’ with something that is ‘formal’, or a matter that is escalated outside an organisation, or to describe something that may qualify for ‘protection’ under the Public Interest Disclosure Act. **Speaking up is about all of these things.**<sup>42</sup>

The choice of the specific term ‘whistleblowing’ is primarily a result of my choice of SJA policy to submit this under; see § 2.2 for justification.

<sup>38</sup>District Manager, *Investigation Report* (2.0) p 6.

<sup>39</sup>Letter from Regional Volunteer Manager to author (23 July 2020).

<sup>40</sup>Ben Goldsworthy, *Investigation Response* (v 3, 2020) p 29.

<sup>41</sup>*MSY Investigation Report*.

<sup>42</sup>National Guardian’s Office — Freedom to Speak Up’ ([nationalguardian.org.uk/](https://www.nationalguardian.org.uk/)) (<https://www.nationalguardian.org.uk/>) accessed 2 June 2020, , emphasis theirs.

## What's your take on what may have happened here?

At an organisational level, as I've hopefully shown in § 3.9, explicit support for the rights of the accused have been neglected in the legislation underpinning the health and social care sector's statutory duty to handle complaints. This has left the implementation up to individual organisations and, as medicine is a highly-regulated and risk-averse field, they have taken the most parsimonious interpretation possible. As the medical field is also reasonably insular, this has come to be accepted as the norm and has trickled down to secondary and tertiary organisations such as SJA.

It is certainly not beyond the realms of possibility for something that seems obvious outside of the field to have a hard time breaking in. The pathologies of the NHS are legend (*Eyes passim ad nauseam*); it was not until 2015 that the NHS formally recognised the importance of protecting whistleblowers, for example.<sup>43</sup> In addition, a 2014 internal General Medical Council (GMC) report into the suicides of doctors under investigation proposed as its first recommendation that 'doctors under investigation should feel they are treated as "innocent until proven guilty"'.<sup>44</sup> As the presumption of innocence appears in both Roman and Talmudical law of the 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD,<sup>45</sup> from this we can conclude that healthcare may, in this context at least, be as many as 2,000 years behind the curve.

The impact of this is amplified in the case of volunteers, who lack externally-granted rights or codes of practice to cite when being treated unfairly. In my particular case, I did not receive the support that would normally be given to a new ambulance crewman as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This resulted in early errors, which were then reported and logged by my crewmates (though unbeknownst to me). Because I did not know that these had been reported, I could not respond to them and so they remained open. I went on to crew over 200 hours in April and had found my feet by May.

However, the grievance<sup>46</sup> submitted in mid-May, viewed in the light of this mass of prior, unresolved incident reports, must have looked like the latest example of a continued pattern of behaviour. Perhaps realising that they had not responded to the early April reports, somebody over-reacted to compensate and I was suspended and investigated; I do not believe that any individual incident report would have necessitated this response and the grievance, evaluated in isolation, would have been immediately suspect.

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<sup>43</sup>Robert Francis, *Freedom to Speak Up: An independent review into creating an open and honest reporting culture in the NHS* (2015).

<sup>44</sup>Sarndrah Horsfall, *Doctors who commit suicide while under GMC fitness to practise investigation* (1, GMC, GMC 2014) p 2.

<sup>45</sup>'Presumption of Innocence' (*Wikipedia*) ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presumption\\_of\\_innocence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presumption_of_innocence)) accessed 23 June 2020.

<sup>46</sup>Unlike the preceding incident reports, which were either valid or understandable misinterpretations, I consider the grievance to have been spurious; this and other concerns I have about individual behaviour relating to IMF 76723 will be dealt with separately; see complaint 1105 [P.S. or don't].

**Don't you have anything better to do?**

No, not at the moment; St John has seen to that.

### 3. Investigating the Investigatory Process

...it's characteristic of this judicial system that a man is condemned...in ignorance of the facts<sup>1</sup>

This part contains the substance of the report. First, I summarise my experience of the IMF 76723 investigation in brief. For anyone unwilling to accept at face value my claim that this process caused me distress, I then briefly describe some of the effects this experience has had on me, before demonstrating that this harm is greater than that which is unavoidable in any investigatory process and therefore gratuitous.

I then present the ways this serves to actively hamper the investigation, waste precious time and negatively impact SJA both financially and reputationally; it is therefore in everyone's interests to fix this system. Next, I show that this was not the result of a mishandled investigation, but rather the correct application of SJA policies and procedures as written (or, rather, not written). [P.S. In fact, there *was* significant mishandling as well; see Appendix K. This does not diminish the points made in this report.]

My scope then widens as I compare equivalent policies from the wider world, as well as the reactions of friends from outside of SJA to whom I have described this, to show that this is not normal. I consider whether this represents established practice in the wider medical world and conclude that it does appear to, and the same for the 'third sector' in general. I follow up each of these three analyses with a handful of simple, powerful solutions that in most cases can be implemented immediately and against which I do not foresee opposition.

IMF 76723 has now been closed; it is not my intention here to exhume the allegations that prompted it, critique the actions involved or question the final resolution. Ideally, I would not have to include these aspects at all. However, as it forms my primary evidence for many of the points made throughout this report, some description has been unavoidable. I have attempted to do so with as little detail as possible whilst still getting the point across, so please do not take the brevity of my summaries as any comment on the complainants; they clearly felt they needed to report their concerns, just as I do now, and any concerns I may have about the actions of individuals will be dealt with in a separate process.

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<sup>1</sup>Franz Kafka, *The Trial* (Richard Stokes tr, first published 1925, Alma Books 2018).

### 3.1 IMF 76723 summary

This section summarises the events of IMF 76723 in brief, to the best of my knowledge. As will quickly become clear, this knowledge is likely to be imperfect. For a detailed timeline of all of the relevant events before, during and after this investigation, see Appendix B.

On Sat 23 May, an SJA Investigating Officer informed me that I was under investigation following concerns about my conduct having been raised and that, as a result, I was suspended from clinical activities until the investigation had finished. [P.S. On Jun 30, the investigation concluded and a disciplinary hearing was arranged.<sup>2</sup> This eventually took place on Jul 16, chaired by the (a?) Regional Volunteer Manager. On Jul 23 I was told that the outcome was dismissal; I immediately appealed.<sup>3</sup> On Aug 24, my appeal was rejected by the Head of Volunteering and the original decision upheld.<sup>4</sup>]

Between Sat 23 and a scheduled interview on Fri 29 I was not informed of the allegations against me despite repeated pleas that highlighted the negative effect that this uncertainty was happening on me. It reached a point where I threatened to boycott my own interview until more clarity was provided; it was, to some extent, but far less so than I consider fair.

The allegations came, as far as I can tell, in the form of multiple IRFs from early April and a formal grievance in mid-May. [P.S. This was incorrect; the early April allegations actually came from a secret investigation prompted by an informal complaint from Crewmate A to the Cheshire & Merseyside Ambulance Unit Manager and the mid-May ones from an IRF submitted by Crewmate I.]

In my opinion, the allegations can be classified into four types:

1. genuine errors on my part (e.g., having to perform an emergency stop on Apr 2);
2. misunderstandings in which my inexperience was construed as unhelpfulness (e.g., incidents from early April alleging that I had failed to assist in cleaning the vehicle after a patient);
3. allegations that I could not refute with certainty, either due to vagueness or how much time had elapsed since (e.g., an accusation that I had not recorded a patient's observations on their PRF, which would have been out-of-character but which I could not deny with certainty without having the document to hand); and
4. allegations that were either spurious or, to apply a maximum level of charity, resulted from preconceived notions and a refusal to entertain alternative explanations.

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<sup>2</sup>See Appendix H.

<sup>3</sup>See Appendix I.

<sup>4</sup>See Appendix K.



The type 1 allegations did not require investigation; I accepted them when presented with them, and I had independently self-reported one incident of vehicle damage shortly after it happened. All of the other allegations would have been easily clarified by my crewmates at the time, but this was not done. They would have been easily clarified by Assurance once they were reported, but this was not done. They would have been easily clarified by the IO on Sat 23, but this was not done.

As a result of the flaws in this process (ordered from the more immediate to the more speculative):

- I was caused significant distress;
- my time was wasted;
- the IO's time was wasted;
- I don't know how the IO felt, but in their shoes I would have felt uncomfortable causing a colleague distress;
- colleagues may have been unable to cover ambulance shifts due to a lack of an available crewmate during my unnecessary suspension;
- as a result, SJA will have missed out on potential income during my unnecessary suspension;
- patients may have experienced delays in treatment for want of an additional ambulance on the road during my unnecessary suspension;
- and so on, and so on, all for want of a nail.

There are future consequences to consider, as well. As discussed in § 2.2 I no longer feel ethically able to utilise the SJA Incident Management Framework (IMF) process until it is reformed (though I will make all possible efforts to ensure that I can raise concerns in a way that I am comfortable with). I will describe my current state of mind in more detail in my conclusion (part 4), but the long and short of it is that I will only work with trusted crewmates for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, after which I will be reconsidering my continued membership of SJA. [P.S. As mentioned, SJA ended up making the membership decision for me.]

### 3.2 This process is harmful

I believe it will be obvious to most readers why being suspended and investigated without being told the reasons *why*, or discovering that colleagues you believed could be relied upon for feedback and correction could in fact not be, or having to recall minor events from over

a month ago—with no opportunity to refresh your memory in advance—whilst knowing that what you say may well change how the investigation concludes, might be just a *little* bit distressing, not to mention frustrating. If that is not apparent to anybody, consider that I have just been through this process and I believe it caused me significant harm. If that, too, does not suffice, please see the emails I sent during this time, reproduced in Appendix D.

I could go through all of the gory details of my psychological state during this time—Have I unintentionally harmed one of my patients? Am I looking at a slap on the wrist or a coroner's court? Which colleagues can I trust?—or the physiological impacts of stress—playing whack-a-coldsore, disrupted sleep, etc.—but I think this is unnecessary. The most powerful evidence of how unpleasant this experience has been is every one of the 16,000+ words that comprise this report.

I appreciate that, in my case, the most harmful part of the process—not being told why I was suspended and under investigation—lasted only a week. [P.S. This was the case prior to Jun 30; however I think I rank 'being accused of a crime based on incredibly flimsy evidence that I wasn't allowed to see for the longest time' somewhat higher.] However, as colleagues and the IO have told me, this is apparently uncharacteristically fast for SJA. One colleague spoke of being suspended for a month before being told the charges against them (which, as it turns out, were both entirely spurious *and* easily shown to be so).

Also, as mentioned in § 2.4, I consider myself to be someone of above-average durability who found himself in a particularly vulnerable position, and therefore I assume my level of discomfort to be about the same as someone closer to the mean on both counts. However, many are not in this situation, and are therefore at increased risk of harm. Our neuroatypical colleagues, such as those on the autism spectrum, will be particularly affected by the lack of transparency, the sudden changes and the persistent uncertainty. Colleagues who are particularly in need of an interpersonal support network due to personal issues will be particularly affected by not knowing who they can trust. In addition, I expect that these more-vulnerable colleagues will more prone to finding themselves in this situation; if one behaves in ways that others may consider abnormal, or if one is distracted by other concerns, they are more likely to make a mistake (or to be perceived to have made a mistake).

I have intentionally avoided focusing this report on the most lurid possibly outcome, but there is no need to feign ignorance of what we all understand the worst-case scenario of this to be. Death by suicide is almost always the result of multiple, complex issues, but there are more than enough examples in which poorly-handled investigations have contributed to this. Caroline Flack may be the first example to come to mind, but the death of Welsh Assembly Member Carl Sargeant in 2017 is especially relevant: Sargeant was removed from his position, denied details of the allegations against him and ignored when he raised concerns of the impact this was having on his mental health.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup>BBC News, 'Carl Sargeant not given natural justice, family says' (*BBC News*, 8 November 2017) (<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-politics-41908424>) accessed 22 June 2020.

Most worryingly, a 2014 internal GMC report found that over the period of 2005–2013 ‘there were 28 reported cases in the GMC’s records where a doctor committed[sic] suicide or suspected suicide whilst under their investigation procedures’.<sup>6</sup> Other healthcare and allied health professions present a varied landscape. Four nurses killed themselves whilst under investigation in 2019 (see Hamilton 2019), but the Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) do not—at least as of 2015—collect figures on this (see Nibbs 2015 & Jones-Berry 2016). However, in contrast to the apparent inaction of the GMC, the Chief Executive of the NMC *has* directly addressed this issue and appears to be personally invested in countering it (see Sutcliffe 2019). On the other hand, the General Dental Council (GDC) reported only two suicides during the period 2005–2015 (see Holden 2015).

Finally, whilst the College of Paramedics does not appear to collect figures, anecdotal evidence exists of one paramedic who tried to take their own life three times during an investigation that ‘was meant to take approximately six weeks, but...dragged on for seven months’ (see Merritt 2019). With (male) paramedics facing a risk of suicide ‘75% higher than the national average’ (see Hird and others 2019), there is clearly a pile of kindling that one should avoid flicking lit matches at wherever possible.

As far as I can tell, a coordinated campaign<sup>7</sup> and a petition currently boasting almost 21,500 signatures<sup>8</sup> have not yet effected any change five years on.

### 3.3 This harm is excessive to the needs of an investigation

As SJA recognise, ‘a formal grievance procedure can be a stressful and upsetting experience’.<sup>9</sup> Obviously, nobody likes to be investigated, but we accept that it is necessary in order to ensure a high standard of service and a tolerable working environment.

That said, all available measures must be put in place to minimise this unpleasantness as much as is possible without negatively impacting the ability to conduct these vital investigations. This is doubly so in the case of an initial investigation, before the concerns raised have been deemed substantive, at which point the defendant is still afforded the presumption of innocence. I believe that the lack of explicit safeguards combined with SJA’s interpretation of how to operate in their absence results in a system that causes distress above and beyond that which is necessary for an investigation. This harm, therefore, is gratuitous; gratuitous

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<sup>6</sup>Horsfall (n 44); Keith Hawton, ‘Suicide in doctors while under fitness to practise investigation’ (2015) 350 *BMJ*; David Casey and Kartina A Choong, ‘Suicide whilst under GMC’s fitness to practise investigation: Were those deaths preventable?’ (2016) 37 *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine* 22.

<sup>7</sup>Protecting Medics from Tragedy, ‘www.protectingmedicsfromtragedies.org’ (*Protecting Medics from Tragedy*, 2018) (<https://protectingmedicsfromtragedies.org/>) accessed 22 June 2020.

<sup>8</sup>Protecting Medics from Tragedy, ‘Stop the inhuman treatment of doctors’ (*Change.org*, 2020) (<https://www.change.org/p/secretary-of-state-for-health-stop-the-inhuman-treatment-of-doctors>) accessed 22 June 2020; Eleanor Philpotts, ‘Petition urges GMC to take responsibility for wellbeing of GPs under investigation’ (25 February 2020) (<http://www.pulsetoday.co.uk/news/petition-urges-gmc-to-take-responsibility-for-wellbeing-of-gps-under-investigation/20040186.article>) accessed 22 June 2020.

<sup>9</sup>St John Ambulance, *Grievance Procedure* (2.0, 2019) s 5.4.6.

harm is cruelty.

The surest sign of bad laws, be they organisational policies or Parliamentary legislation, is that they produce absurdity.

I do not see what other word one could use to describe the IO having to tiptoe around telling me the allegations, when within 24 hours they would be doing so as part of our interview anyway.<sup>10</sup>

I do not see what other word one could use to describe the process of hearing the allegations read off of a script, umm-ing and ahh-ing through an unprepared answer, having that answer noted down by a third party, then finally having that third party's notes sent over to me to correct and approve, rather than just receiving the script in the first place and writing in my answers directly.<sup>11</sup>

I do not see what other word one could use to describe suspending someone in the middle of a pandemic for issues you 'wouldn't say [are] critical'.<sup>12</sup>

### **3.4 This is counterproductive to the investigation and detrimental to SJA**

One could perhaps argue in favour of the present system on the basis that it is ruthless but efficient, and that the need to thoroughly and rapidly investigate concerns takes priority over the welfare of the defendant. I believe that this is a reprehensibly inhumane view, but it is at least a logically defensible one.

However, this argument does not hold water. The same factors that make the process so harmful also serve to delay and hinder the investigation at near enough every step of the process. Readers who are unmoved at my accounts of personal harm—those who believe that eggs must be cracked to make omelettes—will perhaps be convinced by the evidence in this section that the process is functionally unable to avoid getting in its own way.

I was not able to submit responses to the allegations for a week, as I was not told what they were. When the interview finally rolled around, I was unprepared for the questions, many of which related to events over a month and a half old by that point. It's a cliché to say that the wheels of justice turn slowly, but this represents a remarkably lengthy disjoint between cause (the first IRF) and effect (the suspension), particularly as most of the allegations came with no additional evidence and so the process of responding was primarily one of 'did you do x?' 'no I didn't/don't think so/don't remember'.

This has additional knock-on effects. Let us assume that all of the allegations were com-

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<sup>10</sup>See Appendix B, ¶¶ 164–170.

<sup>11</sup>See Appendix B, ¶¶ 171–185.

<sup>12</sup>See Appendix B, ¶ 167.

pletely accurate, and I was unsafe to remain on the road. I nonetheless did so for a month and a half whilst the system caught up. Any opportunity to reduce the amount of work and time it takes to deal with each allegation should be seized upon, and in the case of all of the allegations against me this would have been the case had I been asked for a response immediately.

The most effective way to improve the rate at which one learns is to minimise the delay between action and feedback, but as a result of this process my errors were left potentially uncorrected for a significant amount of time. As it happens, I was lucky enough to later crew with colleagues who did provide this instantaneous feedback. By the time I was pulled up on them, the type 1 errors had been mostly stamped out. Some of the reported issues related to driving ability; the need for immediate feedback is not lost on the DVSA:

Feedback is critical to developing your driving. Imagine if your driving instructor didn't give you any feedback when you made mistakes during your driving lesson. Without your driving instructor correcting faulty decisions, you could easily develop bad habits and drive in a way that puts you and other road users at risk.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, this unnecessary suspension has an (admittedly small) financial impact on SJA. [P.S. SJA receives £100/hr from the NHS ambulance trusts per crew on the road. Therefore, if I am worth £50/hr to SJA, and I was doing an average of four 12-hour shifts per week prior to my suspension, SJA was passing on income of £2,400 *per week* during this period.]

For the remainder of this section, I will provide a series of case studies from the IMF 76723 investigation that demonstrate just some of the myriad of ways in which this system is dysfunctional.

### Members of the public exposed to COVID-19

On Apr 10, I decided to U-turn to assess a wounded pedestrian whilst carrying a Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)-positive patient.<sup>14</sup> Crewmate A submitted an IRF. I was never informed of this. On Apr 29, Crewmate F and I accepted assistance from a neighbour whilst transferring a patient.<sup>15</sup> The next day, Crewmate F and I again accept the assistance of a neighbour (this time a doctor).

In my interview on May 29, the IO asked whether I was familiar with the *Infection Prevention and Control Procedure* in relation to the Apr 10 job.<sup>16</sup> In a phone call on Jun 11, the North East Ambulance Locality Manager (ALM) claimed that there was a clear protocol that we should not have involved the neighbour on Apr 29.<sup>17</sup> In a phone call on Jun 17, the IO

<sup>13</sup>DVSA, *The Official DVSA Guide to Better Driving* (1st edn, TSO 28 October 2019) p 14.

<sup>14</sup>See Appendix B, ¶ 53.

<sup>15</sup>See Appendix B, ¶ 82.

<sup>16</sup>See Appendix B, ¶ 174.

<sup>17</sup>See Appendix B, ¶ 214.

relayed feedback from the Regional Clinical Lead (RCL) to the effect that we should not have introduced the doctor to the situation on Apr 30.<sup>18</sup>

Let us agree for sake of argument that the *Infection Prevention and Control Procedure* and/or the supplementary COVID-19 guidance clearly state that members of the public must, under no circumstances, be exposed to patients and that additional ambulance crews must be called to assist instead.<sup>19</sup> Clearly, the IRF submitted for the Apr 29 job would have suggested that I was unfamiliar with this. However, as this was not brought to my attention until May 29, I was not aware that I was doing anything wrong and, along with my crewmate, went on to potentially expose two other members of the public to COVID-19.

### Healthy conflict resolution

During a job, my crewmate behaved in a way that I considered unsafe and put a patient at risk. My initial assumption was unfavourable; it was late in the shift, and I assumed that they were tired and had been rushing. I gave it some time whilst I considered other possible explanations. Once I had a few, I brought the issue up with the crewmate and asked why they had done what they did. They explained their side and, fortunately, my initial assumption was proven false. Knowing why the issue had happened, I was able to provide my crewmate with some immediate tips and suggestions in case they found themselves in the same position in the future.

Crewing together again the next day, my crewmate was quiet and abrupt. Believing it to be related to the previous day, I assumed that they were angry and being petty so I arranged to not crew with them the again the day after. Once my next shift was confirmed, I told them

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<sup>18</sup>See Appendix B, ¶ 243.

<sup>19</sup>As it happens, I do not believe this is the case; see Appendix B, ¶ 236. Clearly, though, a number of people have now independently brought this up, so they must be getting it from somewhere. I can think of three possibilities:

1. Is it written down in some other SJA policy or procedure?
2. Is it the policy or procedure of the ambulance service that we were volunteering for? or
3. Is its obviousness taken for granted by those who work in healthcare?

If it's possibility #3, I would argue that this needs to be made explicit in an organisation with so many non-healthcare personnel such as myself as it is not an intuitive conclusion.

In my case, I went on the basis of what I had been taught about consent ('someone with capacity has a right to make a decision that may harm them') when accepting passer-by assistance and a dynamic risk assessment that concluded that a single neighbour who had probably spent the last few weeks with limited outside contact would pose less of an infection risk to our patient than an additional ambulance crew who had spent their weeks interacting with COVID-19 patients.

This is clearly not just a fringe view on my part. Not only did Crewmate F see no issue with involving the neighbours on either occasion, but another SJA colleague concurred: 'As far as I'm aware, members of the public can be utilised as long as they are will[ing]. Particularly in the case of the doctor who knows the risks and I'm assuming volunteered to help. Tbf you're more likely to expose the patient to [COVID-19] if you called in another crew bc its rife in health care but not so much in the public'. The colleague then reviewed the SJA *Infection Prevention & Control Procedure* and concluded, as I had, that 'Yeah there's nothing about public help for anything Unless it's [ambulance service Local Operating Procedures (LOPs)] but we're not allowed them anyway' (WhatsApp message from SJA colleague to author (22 June 2020)).



this. We ended up having a heated conversation, paused, and then reapproached the issue. My crewmate had been primarily concerned with things entirely unrelated to the day before, but had also been upset by the manner in which I had brought up the issue with them. We talked out our dispute, I apologised for upsetting them and we ended the shift reconciled.

Well over a month later, talking to and catching up with this crewmate was in large part responsible for my decision not to quit SJA during the investigation. Conflict is inevitable, but due to the way in which we handled it openly and immediately (although, in my case on the second day, not immediately enough) we continue to trust one another and have remained friends. On the other hand, Crewmates A & I avoided a potentially awkward conversation at the expense of harming or destroying the chances of a future working relationship.

[P.S. This is *phenomenally* ironic in light of that fact I would later find out, only a few days after writing this, that Crewmate F had in fact baselessly accused me of forging their signature on a PRF.]

### **The hunt for the complaint reference**

On Jun 11 the North East ALM contacted me to provide a witness statement in response to a complaint.<sup>20</sup> No reference number was provided. Wanting to be able to include it in this report so that readers would be able to easily reference it if they wished, I called them again on Jun 15 to ask for the reference number. They said that they did not know it.

This led me on a TODO: INSERT NUMBER OF DAYS HERE-day hunt, across a chain of TODO: INSERT NUMBER OF PEOPLE HERE SJA personnel, to track down this number.<sup>21</sup> At one point, as I was pulling in favours and using SJA CONNECT to track down somebody's direct reports, I realised that this was no longer a simple administrative procedure; it was practically investigative journalism.

[P.S. I never received this reference number.]

### **No cross-communication**

Whilst the investigation was underway, two additional IRFs were submitted. One of these was forwarded on to the ROCC Tactical Commander, who contacted me for a response. It was two and a half hours before the IO contacted me to say that they would be handling the new IRFs as part of the ongoing investigation.<sup>22</sup>

Later that same day, I was contacted by the North East Ambulance Locality Manager about a complaint for an entirely unrelated job.<sup>23</sup> When I asked them later, they told me they had had

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<sup>20</sup>See Appendix B, ¶ 214.

<sup>21</sup>See Appendix B, ¶¶ 231–TODO: INSERT END HERE.

<sup>22</sup>See Appendix B, ¶¶ 205–206.

<sup>23</sup>See Appendix B, ¶¶ 214–216.

no idea about the ongoing investigation until I mentioned it (after what must have seemed to them like rather odd stubbornness on my part to accept that they were not, in fact, calling about that other job).<sup>24</sup>

During my hunt for the complaint's reference number I ended up contacting the Human Resources (HR) Advisor who would later arrange and attend the disciplinary hearing, who forwarded it on to the Regional HR/Admin. Manager responsible for gathering the aforementioned IRFs under the ongoing investigation.<sup>25</sup> Despite this, there is no sign that this complaint was introduced to the investigation. [P.S. It was, eventually.]

On the one hand, it had already been investigated by the ALM and perhaps introducing it at that point would have risked double jeopardy. [P.S. As I would later be re-investigated for the early April allegations,<sup>26</sup> double jeopardy does not appear to be a thing in SJA.] On the other, the fact I was already under investigation should have been obvious and it should not have been given to the ALM to investigate in the first place.

### **[P.S. Missing the obvious]**

Finally, throughout the whole five-week investigation into my suitability for working on ambulances, the potentially month-long secret investigation that preceded it and the eight-week drama that followed it, nobody at any point thought to highlight the fact that I have never received a Hepatitis B vaccination, which is mandatory for ambulance crew.<sup>27</sup>

This is despite the fact that my vaccination status is clearly visible on my MyData record. Even better, this lack of vaccination was not through a lack of trying on my part; I had been trying to find out how to get the vaccination back in April.<sup>28</sup> Who did I contact? My then-Area Manager, and when they couldn't help?

My District Manager, who never replied to me. And Crewmate I.

So which is it? Did this 'thorough' investigation somehow manage to completely miss the sole *actual* reason for me not to be on ambulances, despite it being easily found and despite me having raised the issue previously? Or did the District Manager just decide that they were better off not drawing attention to it?<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>See Appendix B, ¶ 231.

<sup>25</sup>See Appendix B, ¶¶ 237–238.

<sup>26</sup>*MSY Investigation Report* (n 41).

<sup>27</sup>St John Ambulance, *Occupational Health Procedure* (1, 2016) s 2.12.

<sup>28</sup>See timeline, ¶¶ 71, 80, 87, 100 & 117.

<sup>29</sup>For what it's worth, the SJA procedure is unclear on whether I should have been allowed out at all without vaccination, stating that 'after appropriate communications crew will be given 90 days to start the vaccination and testing process' (*Occy Health Proc.* [n 27] s 2.12.3) but never clarifying what those 'appropriate communications' are. Other documents provide no additional clarity (St John Ambulance, *Occupational Health Policy* (2, 2016); St John Ambulance, *Hepatitis B* (Local Operational Procedure - North West 0); St John Ambulance, *Occupational Health Policy Clarification - Hepatitis B*).



### 3.5 This stems from a lack of explicit safeguards in SJA policy

I initially believed that I was dealing with a stubborn IO. When they finally relented and asked HR if they could tell me the allegations, I thought I had succeeded. Then HR said no; it wasn't normal policy to do so. So I read the procedure documents, and I realised with mounting alarm that yes, HR were at least *half*-correct: it wasn't policy to do so, but it also wasn't policy *not* to do so. It simply wasn't stated clearly one way or another. As discussed in § 2.4, I think that the natural risk-aversion of both a large organisation and one operating in the highly-regulated healthcare sector has led to a particularly ungenerous reading of these rules, which has become standard operating practice.

Five SJA procedures contain sections detailing investigative procedures. These are:

- the *Grievance Procedure* and *Disciplinary Procedure* for employees;
- the *Volunteer grievance procedure*<sup>30</sup> and *Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure*; and
- the *Feedback & Complaints Procedure*.

In the cases where separate procedures exist for employees and volunteers it is not stated which should apply in cases where an employee raises a concern against a volunteer or vice versa; that is, the edge case at which both could reasonably be argued to apply is not explicitly considered.

I will now go through each procedure and highlight what they have to say as regards the rights of the defendant.

#### ***Volunteer grievance procedure***

This document describes the procedure by which a volunteer can raise a 'St John Ambulance-related concern, problem or complaint',<sup>31</sup> provided it is not 'used to challenge formal St John Ambulance policy'.<sup>32</sup>

This procedure states only that, in the event of an investigation, 'the IO will need to meet with the volunteer to ascertain any further details regarding the grievance',<sup>33</sup> but based on the rest of the document 'the volunteer' appears to refer to the complainant. In fact, there is not a single explicit mention of the existence of a defendant in the entire document; only a few mentions of 'the parties' and 'all parties involved'.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>This capitalisation is per the document.

<sup>31</sup>*Vol. griev. proc.* (n 5) s 1.

<sup>32</sup>*ibid* s 7.

<sup>33</sup>*ibid* s 25.

<sup>34</sup>*ibid* ss 15, 16, 19.c & 28, Appendix 1.

### ***Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure***

This document describes the procedure by which ‘under-performance in volunteers...caused by negligence and/or non compliance[sic]’ as opposed to ‘lack of skill and/or capability’, shall be dealt with. The term ‘misconduct’ is defined as ‘any incident which may constitute a disciplinary offence’. Formal action is to be taken ‘in the case of repeated under-performance or misconduct, misconduct of a serious nature, or gross misconduct’.<sup>35</sup>

The section on interviews makes no reference to telling the defendant anything at all, even that they are under investigation;<sup>36</sup> it is only if matters escalate to a formal disciplinary hearing that they must be told ‘the nature of the allegation’,<sup>37</sup> although how specific one must be to get across the ‘nature’ of the allegation is left to one’s own interpretation.

The entire section on suspending a volunteer—‘where volunteers are temporarily stopped from performing their role, or engaging in SJA activities, whilst an investigation into their alleged misconduct takes place’,<sup>38</sup> under which I assume I was suspended—makes no mention of telling the defendant *why* this decision has been taken or even that it *has* been taken.<sup>39</sup> This section clarifies that ‘a volunteer may be suspended from SJA activity whilst [an] allegation is investigated, however, suspension should only be considered in serious circumstances’.<sup>40</sup> It also states that a volunteer under investigation should be appointed a ‘Volunteer Support Officer...who has been trained to help volunteers to understand and navigate their way through the process [and] provide moral support’.<sup>41</sup>

### ***Feedback & Complaints Procedure***

This document describes the procedure ‘by which members of the public and customers can provide feedback about [SJA’s] services and products[, including] St John people who, at times may also be customers’. The procedure is not to be used for grievances, which it says are to be dealt with under the ‘HR Grievance Policy and Procedure’.<sup>42</sup>

This procedure details three levels of investigation that at no point mention anything about the existence of a defendant.<sup>43</sup> A subsequent section on ‘Complaints requiring investigations involving an employee or volunteer’ states that ‘the Line Manager must contact the employee/volunteer(s) to inform them of the investigation to ensure they understand the process that will be followed and to offer support’ and that the employee/volunteer will be

<sup>35</sup>St John Ambulance, *Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure* (2.0, 2015) ss 1.2.2–4.

<sup>36</sup>*ibid* s 2.11.

<sup>37</sup>*ibid* s 2.12.2.

<sup>38</sup>*ibid* s 2.16.2.

<sup>39</sup>*ibid* s 2.16.

<sup>40</sup>*ibid* s 2.10.4, emphasis theirs.

<sup>41</sup>*ibid* s 2.10.5.

<sup>42</sup>*Feedback & Complaints Procedure* (n 6) s 1.1; there is no SJA ‘Grievance Policy’, and it does not specify which of the two grievance procedures to use in ambiguous circumstances.

<sup>43</sup>*ibid* ss 3.3–5.

contacted ‘to confirm the details of the Investigating Officer’, but this is all that they must be told in advance. After all is said and done, ‘the Line Manager will be responsible for ensuring that the outcome of the investigation is fed back to the employee/volunteer(s)’,<sup>44</sup> but as mentioned elsewhere this can take months from the point at which the defendant learns that they are under investigation.

### ***Grievance Procedure***

This document describes the procedure by which paid SJA employees can raise a formal grievance concerning ‘the way in which they believe they have been treated by the organisation or its’ managers acting on its behalf, colleagues, or about any aspect of their work’, except where this would ‘amount to an allegation of misconduct’<sup>45</sup> (in which case the *Disciplinary Procedure* should be used) or the issue ‘relate[s] to whistleblowing’<sup>46</sup> (in which case the *Whistleblowing Policy* should be used).

The procedure states that ‘if the cause for complaint relates to an individual or group of individuals, then: they will be notified when appropriate that a grievance has been raised against them, and advised of the steps being taken by SJA; they will be informed of the severity of the complaint; ...where possible the complainant’s identity will be withheld; [and] no action will be taken against them until the grievance has reached conclusion...’,<sup>47</sup> but nowhere states that they will be told the allegations against them. Similarly, no mention of this made in the section detailing the investigation process.<sup>48</sup>

The document claims that SJA will ‘take steps to ensure the rights of **all parties** concerned are protected, where this can reasonably achieved’.<sup>49</sup> It says that ‘the subject of a grievance claim will be advised of the allegations against them’, but provides no clear indication as to *when* this should happen; the rest of the paragraph would seem to suggest that this should happen at the same time they are told ‘the likely timescales of the process, the level of severity of the allegation and possible consequences for them if the allegations are found to be valid’ and before they are ‘asked to [attend] an investigative meeting’, but it is unclear.<sup>50</sup>

The document does recognise ‘that a formal grievance procedure can be a stressful and upsetting experience for all parties involved, however, it is expected that all parties adhere to our values and code of conduct throughout the process’;<sup>51</sup> it is my belief, however, that SJA suspending a defendant and refusing to tell them what they are alleged to have done for a considerable amount of time represents a failure to do so on their part.

<sup>44</sup> *Feedback & Complaints Procedure* (n 6) s 3.10.

<sup>45</sup> *Griev. Proc.* (n 9) ss 1.2.2 & 3.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid* s 1.2.5.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid* ss 3.9.a–d.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid* s 5.4.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid* s 6.4, emphasis theirs.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid* s 6.4.3.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid* s 5.4.6.

## ***Disciplinary Procedure***

This document describes the procedure by which SJA responds to cases of ‘repeated under performance[sic] or misconduct, failure to improve following informal measures, or misconduct of a serious nature’.<sup>52</sup> It is to be used in the case of paid employees.

This procedure states that ‘the employee will be informed when appropriate that an investigation is being carried out and when it has been concluded’,<sup>53</sup> but they do not need to be told the allegation(s) against them until a formal hearing where they will be ‘given written details of the nature of their misconduct or performance issues’;<sup>54</sup> as mentioned above, the definition of ‘nature’ is unclear.

### **3.6 This leaves volunteers particularly vulnerable**

SJA’s *Conduct and Performance Policy* states that SJA ‘is committed to providing contemporary procedures to underpin this policy which are aligned with industry best practice and the [Acas] Code of Practice, and the “Three R Promise”[sic] under the Volunteer Rights Enquiry[sic]’.<sup>55</sup>

The Volunteer Rights Inquiry, set up in 2009 ‘following a number of high profile reports of serious breaches of trust between volunteers and the organisations they volunteered for’,<sup>56</sup> produced a brief final report in 2011 that outlined the ‘3R promise’. Organisations that signed up to the promise (including SJA) pledged that, despite the lack of legislative safeguards for volunteers, they would endeavour to ‘get it RIGHT from the beginning’, to ‘offer means to achieve RECONCILIATION if things go wrong’ and to ‘accept [their] RESPONSIBILITY’.<sup>57</sup> This promise, and the reference to it in SJA policy, forms the only semi-formal protection that volunteers have.

Employees, meanwhile, have legislation to ensure their protection.<sup>58</sup> Where this legislation neglects to specifically protect the rights of the accused, however, the Acas Code of Practice steps in. Whilst not, itself, possessing any formal legislative power, ‘employment tribunals are legally required to take the Acas Code of Practice into account when considering relevant cases’.<sup>59</sup>

The Acas Code of Practice states only that ‘employers should inform employees of the basis of the problem and give them an opportunity to put their case in response before any deci-

<sup>52</sup>St John Ambulance, *Disciplinary Procedure* (2.0, 2018) s 1.2.2.

<sup>53</sup>*ibid* s 4.3.3.

<sup>54</sup>*ibid* s 6.1.2.

<sup>55</sup>*C&P Policy* (n 24) s 5.1.8; see Appendix G for corrections.

<sup>56</sup>*Volunteer Rights Inquiry* (n 21) p 2.

<sup>57</sup>*ibid* p 4, emphasis theirs.

<sup>58</sup>Employment Rights Act 1996 (ERA 1996).

<sup>59</sup>Acas, *Discipline and Grievances at work* (2019) p 5.

sions are made',<sup>60</sup> which it could be argued that SJA policy does do (unless the decision to suspend is considered a decision worthy of immediate justification, which I believe it is). A later section details the need to 'inform the employee of the problem', but this is only invoked after the decision has been made 'that there is a disciplinary case to answer'.<sup>61</sup>

However, supplementary Acas guidance provides more insight into the spirit behind the letter of the law:

### **Informing an employee they are under investigation**

If an employee is under investigation, they should be informed in writing of the allegations against them and that an investigation will be carried out.<sup>62</sup>

It's important for the employer to keep talking confidentially with:

- the employee who raised the grievance
- anyone else involved in the grievance

Clear, regular and confidential communication can help avoid:

- misunderstandings
- a drop in work morale
- stress or other mental health issues
- further action, such as more grievances
- legal action later on<sup>63</sup>

Again, none of this applies to volunteers. Whilst SJA's procedures lack detail, employees can at least challenge harsh interpretations of them using the Acas Code of Practice; volunteers are left to fend for themselves. Acas advise against this:

The Acas Code mainly applies to those with employee employment status. But to keep good working relationships, it's a good idea if employers follow the same fair procedure for all workers.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Acas, 'Acas Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures' (11 March 2015) (<https://www.acas.org.uk/acas-code-of-practice-on-disciplinary-and-grievance-procedures>) s 4.

<sup>61</sup>*ibid* ss 9–12.

<sup>62</sup>Acas, *Conducting workplace investigations* (2019) p 17; see also Acas' template letter at Appendix F, fig. F.1.

<sup>63</sup>Acas, 'Formal grievance procedure: step by step' (<https://www.acas.org.uk/grievance-procedure-step-by-step>), step 3.

<sup>64</sup>Acas, 'Disciplinary procedure: step by step' (<https://www.acas.org.uk/disciplinary-procedure-step-by-step>), step 2.

### 3.7 SJA is exceptional, and not in a good way

As mentioned, I felt unable to discuss what I was going through with all but a highly-trusted few within SJA. Instead, I mainly described my experiences (with due care to preserve confidentiality) and sought support amongst my non-SJA friends; SJA left me no alternative, and I make no apologies for this.

When I say ‘friends’, I mean people I can trust to call me out if I am exaggerating or being overdramatic; not one did. In fact, a number of them initially refused to believe me when I explained the way the process worked. As their comments are generously laced with profanity I’ve collected them in Appendix E; suffice it to say that SJA’s process was roundly criticised.

But the thoughts and opinions of the the general populace are one thing; a more persuasive analysis would consider how other organisations handle the process of investigating complaints against their members. In this section I have attempted to collect and analyse the grievance procedures of various other organisations I am connected to, plus the two organisations most similar in position to SJA: the British Red Cross and St Andrew’s First Aid.

The other organisations form a diverse set that should give us a reasonable idea of how other organisations’ policies and procedures describe the process of dealing with complaints. The other organisations are:

- a university;
- that university’s students’ union;
- another national charity that also operates in a heavily regulated sector;
- a faith community; and
- HM Armed Forces.

#### British Red Cross

Unfortunately, their complaints procedure is ‘is currently being re-written’, so they were unable to share it with me.<sup>65</sup>

#### St Andrew’s First Aid

St Andrew’s did not respond to my email enquiry.

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<sup>65</sup>Email from British Red Cross to author (8 June 2020).

## University

This university's *Grievance Procedure* states that 'where a formal grievance is raised which involves a complaint against another member of staff, the person against whom the grievance lies will also be interviewed and given the opportunity to counter the complaints, and where appropriate, may be invited to the grievance meeting'.<sup>66</sup> The university's HR department clarified for me that 'The defendant is written to notifying them of the grievance and provided with a copy of the submitted grievance form [and] they are invited to a grievance interview meeting and are given at least 5 working days' notice to allow them sufficient time to prepare'.<sup>67</sup>

## Students' Union

The above-mentioned university's students' union has a clear-cut procedure: 'Any person who is the subject of a complaint has the right to be supplied with a copy of the complaint, and to comment on it'.<sup>68</sup>

## Large Charity

Comparing SJA to a university is perhaps unfair; SJA is a charity, and has to manage far a largely-volunteer workforce. Whilst the university's attached students' union is in a similar boat, it is perhaps not under as much regulatory pressure as a charity operating in the health-care sector. So, in the interests of fairness, I will extend the comparison to another charity of similar size and national profile, with a similarly primarily-voluntary workforce, as well as one that also operates in a heavily-regulated sector; in this case, working with children.

This charity's procedure for handling complaints states that, in the event that a member must be suspended during an investigation, 'they must be informed of their suspension in writing';<sup>69</sup> it does not, however, state whether that writing includes the reason(s) for their suspension. In the event of a membership being terminated by a resolution of the Board of Trustees, 'the Board shall be under no obligation to state its reasons for making such a resolution'.<sup>70</sup> The sections describing one's right to appeal a dismissal include no explicit requirement that the appellant be told the allegation(s) they are appealing against; this would, I think, present somewhat of an obstacle.<sup>71</sup>

For employees, however, the *Grievance Procedure* says that a meeting will be called within

<sup>66</sup>University, *Grievance Procedure*, s 3.6.

<sup>67</sup>Email from University HR Advisor to author (5 June 2020).

<sup>68</sup>Students' Union, *[Students' Union] Complaints Procedure*, s 3.viii; see fig. F.3 for an example email.

<sup>69</sup>Large Charity, *Policy, Organisation and Rules* (2020) s 15.2.f (s 15.4.g for youth).

<sup>70</sup>*ibid* s 15.6.c (s 15.8.c for youth).

<sup>71</sup>*ibid* s 15.13 (s 15.14 for youth); note that s 15.12 currently states 'This rule is intentionally left blank', so it is unclear if this means that adult members are not able to appeal dismissals.



five days between the complainant and their manager. Amongst other things, at this hearing the Hearing Manager will 'where applicable allow the respondent to respond to the grievance';<sup>72</sup> there is no prior mention of whether the defendant is told the allegation(s) against them. However, it may be worth noting that this procedure document apparently predates the release of the final report of the Volunteer Rights Inquiry.

I contacted the charity and was given supplementary guidance that clarified that '...the suspending Commissioner should consider how and when the suspended adult is told' and that 'there are no absolute rules here, just the need to remember to treat the suspended person with dignity and consider their wellbeing'.<sup>73</sup> They could not find any guidance stating that there is the opportunity to appeal an adult suspension and it is expected that one will attempt to resolve any issues informally prior to lodging an employee grievance.<sup>74</sup>

Also, during this period, the charity produced guidance on 'mutually agreed restrictions', which present a less-impactful alternative to a full suspension when this is considered necessary. The page detailing the process also features an aside titled '[Our] Values', stressing that 'when using this document these values [of Integrity, Respect, Care, Belief and Cooperation] should be at the forefront of every interaction and decision that is made, and all involved should be regularly referred to them'. It also states unequivocally that 'focusing on the values of Respect and Care the wellbeing and mental health of all involved in the this process should be considered throughout'.<sup>75</sup>

Finally, it is worth noting that the charity also provides a document of guidance for the person under suspension<sup>76</sup> and that their example letters for managers are all publicly available.<sup>77</sup> More importantly, the organisation's rules clearly and exhaustively state the serious circumstances in which suspension will be merited,<sup>78</sup> and suspension is handled by the Safeguarding team rather than HR.<sup>79</sup>

Despite the fact this organisation views suspension as something to be avoided unless absolutely necessary (whilst SJA is vague on circumstances), they have nonetheless gone to greater lengths to minimise the harm of the process than SJA have.

## Faith Community

In the interests of leaving no stone unturned and no aspect of SJA un-compared, I examined the policies and procedures of a large faith community. Whilst SJA itself is a secular

<sup>72</sup>Large Charity, *Grievance Procedure* (2010) s 22.d.

<sup>73</sup>Large Charity, *The [Large Charity]'s Adult Suspension Process* (2016) 2.3(c).

<sup>74</sup>Email from Support Centre Team Leader to author (17 July 2020).

<sup>75</sup>Large Charity, 'Mutually agreed restrictions — [Large Charity]' (Large Charity ).

<sup>76</sup>Large Charity, *Notes for a Person under Suspension: Guidance notes for adults under suspension* (2016).

<sup>77</sup>Large Charity, 'Suspension information for managers' (Large Charity ).

<sup>78</sup>*Policy, Organisation and Rules* (n 69) s 15.2(b).

<sup>79</sup>Email from Resolutions Manager to Support Centre Team Leader (14 July 2020).



organisation, it overlaps with the more religious Order of St John.<sup>80</sup> The structure of the Order and this faith community are, however, significantly different. The Order in the UK is represented by the Priory of England & The Islands, which is then sub-divided into multiple CPGs and a few 'semi-autonomous Commanderies' which report to the central Priory. This faith community, on the other hand, is confederally-structured and centred around fully-autonomous Area Meetings, which can formally recognise the existence or laying down of local meetings to which membership is informal;<sup>81</sup> the members of an Area Meeting then double as members of the Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM), which represents all UK members.<sup>82</sup>

I could only access two documents from the public-facing Web site: one containing complaints procedures to follow for both employees and volunteers who are involved in work with young people; and a resource for employers.

The former lists separate (though very similar) procedures for both types of member, stating half-way through that '[any members] involved in the complaint (directly or through her/his responsibilities) will give [in] a written report on the issue, and any other volunteers or staff involved will also be asked to write down a report of their recall of the matter'.<sup>83</sup> However, it does not make clear whether the member is informed of the allegation(s) when they are made or only if/when the process reaches this stage. Unfortunately, the Children and Young People's Work team are currently on furlough so I could not get this clarified.<sup>84</sup>

The latter document says that, in the event of a grievance that cannot be resolved informally, one should 'follow your grievance procedure' in the case of staff and 'follow the procedure in your volunteer agreement' in the case of volunteers; the BYM site provides examples for both. The example grievance procedure contains no mention of informing the defendant anything, but also does not include any provisions for actions such as suspension.<sup>85</sup> The example volunteer agreement says that problems will be resolved 'initially with a meeting with your supervisor who will explain the concerns', but similarly does not mention any actions such as suspension.<sup>86</sup> Unfortunately, HR were unable to answer any questions about volunteers,<sup>87</sup> but in cases involving employees they explained that 'the person is normally told prior to an investigation meeting what allegation have been made against them [and] we would write to them to confirm the details of the allegation(s), the time and place when the

<sup>80</sup> Although, I should note, the Order also admits members of all faiths and none.

<sup>81</sup> Britain Yearly Meeting, *Quaker faith & practice: The book of Christian discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain* (5th edn, Quaker Books 1 November 2013) ch 4.

<sup>82</sup> *ibid* ch 6.

<sup>83</sup> Britain Yearly Meeting, *Children and Young People's Work - Volunteer Involvement Policy* (2008) s 5 (staff procedure), s 6 (volunteer procedure).

<sup>84</sup> Email from BYM Data Officer (Communication & Services) to author (5 June 2020).

<sup>85</sup> Britain Yearly Meeting, 'EXAMPLE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE – xx AREA QUAKER MEETING' (December 2015) (<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/er-example-grievance-procedure.docx>).

<sup>86</sup> Britain Yearly Meeting, 'Example Volunteer Agreement' (May 2018) (<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/er-example-volunteer-agreement.docx>) pt 3.

<sup>87</sup> Email from BYM Data Officer (Communication & Services) to author (9 June 2020).

meeting will take place and their right to be represented'.<sup>88</sup>

As Area Meetings are free to adopt the policies and procedures that they wish, I emailed my local one to ask about theirs. They did not reply to my enquiry.

Finally, where these procedures and policies neglect to specify how the defendant is to be treated, there is at least some form of formal protection afforded to all members of the community, employed or not, by the faith's central text:

If any Friend, by conduct or publicly expressed views, appears to be denying the Society's beliefs and principles or bringing it into disrepute, **and private counsel has proved of no avail**, the area meeting shall appoint well-qualified Friends **to attempt to restore unity**. If it appears that advice and counsel are, and are likely to continue to be, without their desired effect, the area meeting may record a minute of disunity with the action of that Friend and, in exceptional circumstances, terminate membership.<sup>89</sup>

## HM Armed Forces

To complete my analysis, I turned to HM Armed Forces; famed bastion of rigidity, formal chains of command and 'only on a need-to-know basis'. SJA was formerly structured along much more militaristic lines, so I thought perhaps some of the mentality may have remained despite much of the rank structure having been done away with. To my astonishment, however, the procedure laid out for the Armed Forces is the most open and transparent of all the ones I have looked at!

The procedure states 'the aim of the service complaints system is to provide Service personnel with a process that is fair, effective and efficient [and that i]t is the responsibility of all those involved in the process to ensure that complaints are handled fairly, promptly and correctly'.<sup>90</sup> It adds that 'the principle of providing information and disclosure to the complainant **and any other person who might be affected by the outcome of the complaint** is an important aspect of the service complaints process'.<sup>91</sup>

In the supplementary guidance, the entire second chapter is devoted to the responsibilities of the respondent<sup>92</sup> as well as what they can expect from the process.<sup>93</sup> Specifically as regards notification of allegation(s):

<sup>88</sup>Email from BYM Data Officer (Communication & Services) to author (10 June 2020).

<sup>89</sup>Britain Yearly Meeting, *QF&P* (n 81) s 11.32, emphasis mine.

<sup>90</sup>Ministry of Defence, *Redress of Individual Grievances: Service Complaints: Part 1: Directive* (JSP 831, 2016) (JSP 831:1) s 5.

<sup>91</sup>JSP 831:1, s 15, emphasis mine.

<sup>92</sup>Ministry of Defence, *Redress of Individual Grievances: Service Complaints: Part 2: Guidance* (JSP 831, 2016) (JSP 831:2) ss 5–11.

<sup>93</sup>JSP 831:2, ss 12–19.

If a **specified officer** (SO) receives a **statement of complaint** that names you as a respondent (i.e. as someone who is being complained about) the specified officer will write to tell you. You will then be notified by the SO once they have decided whether the complaint has been found to be admissible and will go forward as a service complaint.<sup>94</sup>

### One last comparison

My comparative analysis would not be complete without considering the people who conduct investigations and process miscreants day-in and day-out: the police. It would of course be ridiculous for the police to notify suspects that they are being investigated. I don't think that the same is true of an SJA investigation, and certainly not in my case (perhaps it would be justified if the allegation(s) implied untrustworthiness), but there is a better comparison to make: that of arrest. I do not mean to suggest that my suspension by SJA is directly comparable to being arrested by the police. What I am saying is that they are *broadly* (and I do mean broadly) similar: both are actions taken on the basis of suspicion or allegation rather than any confirmed wrongdoing (so in both cases the defendant retains the presumption of innocence), but both nonetheless represent a necessary restriction of the defendant's liberty.

And, as might be expected, the police are also highly transparent: 'no arrest is lawful unless the person arrested is informed of the ground for the arrest at the time of, or as soon as is practicable after, the arrest'.<sup>95</sup> Additional guidance stresses this further, stating that 'a person who is arrested, or further arrested, must be informed at the time if practicable, or if not, as soon as it becomes practicable thereafter, that they are under arrest and of the grounds and reasons for their arrest'.<sup>96</sup>

### One last *last* comparison

If the reader still feels that SJA is not going against the grain, popular opinion and common sense in its handling of investigations—in its opaque processes, in its lack of care for the well-being of the accused, in its withholding of allegations—then please allow me to furnish them with one, final, fundamental example.

Article 6 of the Human Rights Act states the following:

4. Everyone charged with a criminal offence has the following minimum rights:
  - (a) to be informed promptly, in a language which he understands and in detail, of the nature and cause of the accusation against him;

<sup>94</sup>JSP 831:2, p12, emphasis theirs; see fig. F.2 for the template notification provided in Annex A of this document.

<sup>95</sup>Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE 1984) s 28(3).

<sup>96</sup>*Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) Code G: Revised code of practice for the statutory power of arrest by police officers* (TSO 18 July 2012) para 3.3 & Note 3.

- (b) to have adequate time and facilities for the preparation of his defence;
- (c) to examine or have examined witnesses against him and to obtain the attendance and examination of witnesses on his behalf under the same conditions as witnesses against him;<sup>97</sup>

SJA investigations are obviously not a criminal process, but just because the stakes are lower does not mean the standards should be.

### 3.8 This is easy to fix

[P.S. As the process wore on and I became more and more convinced that I was being treated unfairly, I began to notice other ways in which the procedures-as-written left open gaping vulnerabilities that could easily be exploited by bad actors. For obvious reasons I no longer have the motivation to write these up in any real detail, but I do want to really hammer home one single point:

**The single most mind-numbingly indefensible problem with the current system is its reliance on manual note-takers at interviews and hearings.**

It's 2020; just record these instead. Using manual note-taking leads, as can be seen in Appendix J, to wildly inaccurate records, even if this is not intentional. In the hands of bad actors, this is absolutely ripe for exploitation.

Recording saves time and effort, provides a completely accurate record that cannot be disputed and will be just as intelligible by the parties to the conversation now as it will be to complete strangers years later.]

Hopefully we are all agreed that there is a problem. Thankfully, it is a problem that is easy to fix. However, as with all political choices, there is no single right answer. Instead, based on my previous analysis, I believe procedures generally fall into one of three categories:

- **Full Transparency**, wherein the defendant is provided with the precise allegation(s) as soon as possible, before they have even been assessed (e.g., HM Armed Forces);
- **Vetted Transparency**, wherein the defendant is provided with the precise allegation(s) once they have been vetted and deemed worth pursuing (e.g., the students' union); or
- **Transparency-by-Request**, wherein the defendant is not necessarily provided with the allegation(s) against them, but can request access to them.

Anything less than this—such as SJA's current system of 'Complete-Lack-of-Transparency'—I consider to be contrary to common sense, collegiality and basic human decency; anything

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<sup>97</sup>Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA 1998) art. 6, ss 3(a), (b) & (d).

less than these should not even be entertained as a possibility. So, the question becomes which of the three should be adopted? As will be clear from this report I am firmly on the side of Full Transparency, am happy with Vetted Transparency and will begrudgingly accept Transparency-by-Request, but the final decision lays in the hands of those with fancier epaulettes than myself.

What do I mean when I say that this problem is easy to fix? Simple: even the most radical overhaul, the adoption of Full Transparency, requires only a handful of amendments and additions to the current procedures.<sup>98</sup> Note that I have used 'should' and 'shall' throughout; I accept that there can be times where allegation(s) cannot be shared, such as when there is a risk that doing so would damage an investigation or put the complainant(s) at risk. The procedures, however, should be written with the most common use case in mind, and deviations from this must be justified case-by-case.

More detailed proposals can be found in Appendix G.

### ***Volunteer grievance procedure***

Add an additional paragraph after s 21 that states something like the following:

22. If the grievance involves other SJA personnel, the manager receiving the complaint shall write to them to inform them that a grievance has been raised, the next steps to be taken, a link to this procedure, likely timescales and details of the support available to them. The text of the grievance should be attached.

### ***Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure***

Add an additional paragraph after s 2.11.1 that states something like the following:

2.11.2. The investigator shall contact the volunteer as soon as possible to inform them of the investigation, the next steps to be taken, a link to this procedure, likely timescales and details of the support available to them. A description of the allegations should be attached.

Add an additional paragraph after s 2.16.5 that states something like the following:

2.16.6. In the event of a suspension, the line manager shall contact the volunteer as soon as possible to inform them of the suspension, the next steps to be taken,

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<sup>98</sup>Note that this presents the bare minimum of changes I believe necessary to achieve this in the short term, and should not be considered a comprehensive remedy. My personal view has evolved over the course of this experience, and I now believe that the current procedures must be scrapped in their entirety and something new built from scratch.

a link to this procedure, likely timescales and details of the support available to them. A description of the basis of the suspension should be attached.

### ***Feedback & Complaints Procedure***

Amend the fourth bullet point in s 3.10 to state something like the following:

- The Line Manager must contact the employee/volunteer(s) to inform them that a complaint has been raised, the next steps to be taken, a link to this procedure, likely timescales and details of the support available to them. The text of the complaint should be attached.

### ***Grievance Procedure***

Amend s 3.9.b to state something like the following:

3.9.b. they shall be provided with the text of the grievance

### ***Disciplinary Procedure***

Amend s 4.3.3 to state something like the following:

4.3.3. The employee should be informed in writing that they are under investigation, the next steps to be taken, a link to this procedure, likely timescales and details of the support available to them. A description of the allegation(s) under investigation should be attached.

Add an additional line after s 5.1.2 that states something like the following:

5.1.3. In the event of a suspension, the line manager shall contact the volunteer as soon as possible to inform them of the suspension, the next steps to be taken, a link to this procedure, likely timescales and details of the support available to them. A description of the basis of the suspension should be attached.

Add additional bullet points to s 5.2.5 that state something like the following:

- The basis for the suspension
- The next steps to be taken
- A link to this procedure
- Details of the support available to them.

### ***Incident Management Framework (IMF) policy***

Add an additional paragraph after s 3.18.2 that states something like the following:

3.18.3 Where there does not exist a compelling reason not to do so, informs SJA personnel involved in any reported incidents that they have been reported and the next steps to be taken (even if the next steps are to close the incident with no further action). The text of the incident report should be attached.

### ***Whistleblowing Policy***

This one is perfect, don't change anything.

## **3.9 This may be normalised within healthcare**

This section may not be relevant to SJA readers, although in the spirit of conducting a comprehensive post-mortem it may suggest a possible root cause for the issues within SJA. It is intended primarily for some of the non-SJA recipients detailed in § 2.3.

Whilst the reaction of non-SJA friends to the SJA process was visceral, the reaction from the handful of trusted SJA colleagues I told (again, with due care to ensure confidentiality) was more resigned. It's not that they weren't also angry:

I love the way people in this organisation would rather submit a complaint than speak to you directly

What a farce. How can you defend yourself if they tell you nothing?!

I can't believe they haven't told you anything what it's about? And say they're "investigating" like some mi5 detective<sup>99</sup>

God this organisation really is shit isn't it<sup>100</sup>

But something stood out to me; they all had similar experiences<sup>101</sup> or brushed it off as normal; this level of resignation initially struck me as odd, but I gradually realised it was more likely to come from those colleagues who also work in healthcare for their day jobs, and that some of my non-SJA friends who work in healthcare were the same:

<sup>99</sup>WhatsApp messages between SJA colleagues and author (24 May 2020).

<sup>100</sup>WhatsApp messages between SJA colleagues and author (25 May 2020).

<sup>101</sup>When I asked SJA colleagues if I could include their stories in this report, many expressed concern that 'someone reading it might be able to work out who they are' and declined. A culture of fear seems antithetical to the 'open and honest' culture that SJA purports to want, and I believe it stems in no small part from the opacity of the process as detailed throughout this report.



In my experience of other people I know that have been suspended, investigations take forever

Be worth noting that you'll probably never find out who reported you<sup>102</sup>

Thinking back to when I had to raise an IRF with a member of my unit, she was unaware until I had the conversation with her although I did read the entire complaint to her and gave her time to air thoughts, feelings and questions<sup>103</sup>

Yeah they're not great at handling these kinds of issues<sup>104</sup>

...I find most work places outside of universities are like that

Care little and are lazy - places like [our alma mater] will have the bubble [of] liberal minds to protect the fact that the outside working world is pretty dumb

Yes you must protect the one being accused but healthcare will always worry more about the accusation - and that's down to insurance really because they'll loose[sic] a lawsuit and pay in money, rights, and possible lost future potential. Really you should tear down the systems...that make organisations worry about money more than well being

But also society worries about physical health more than mental

So they just worry about a clinical 'hes lost an arm' [rather] than 'hes lost his mind from worry'<sup>105</sup>

Most alarmingly, especially in light of the number of doctors taking their own lives whilst under investigation (see § 3.2), was the story related by one colleague of an investigation at med. school (and therefore following the GMC standard) that 'was so scary that I vommed at a restaurant table and fainted en route to the toilet'.<sup>106</sup>

This is, of course, far from my realm of direct experience or expertise. Consider the following to be starting points for someone better-placed than myself to begin a deeper investigation from. Alternatively, consider it supplementary to the persuasive evidence already available.

## Ambulance Service

This NHS ambulance service's complaints procedure makes no mention of informing anyone mentioned in a complaint that the complaint has been made.<sup>107</sup> I am not able to access the *Incident Reporting Procedure, Investigation Policy or Investigation - Good Practice Guide*

<sup>102</sup>WhatsApp messages between SJA colleagues and author (n 99).

<sup>103</sup>WhatsApp messages between SJA colleagues and author (n 100).

<sup>104</sup>WhatsApp messages between SJA colleague and author (29 May 2020).

<sup>105</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friends and author (2 June 2020).

<sup>106</sup>WhatsApp messages between SJA colleague and author (11 June 2020).

<sup>107</sup>Ambulance Service, *Procedure for complaints and external incidents* (2019).



documents mentioned in Appendix H of the document, but the *Serious Incident Investigation Procedure* is publicly available on their Web site. It does not include ‘those involved in the Serious Incident’ in the list of people to be notified when one is recorded,<sup>108</sup> and no mention is made of informing those involved elsewhere in the document.

Their *Volunteer Policy* similarly lacks explicit safeguards. All it states is that ‘where attempts at informal resolution are unsuccessful, the volunteer or employee will be asked to put the matter in writing to the identified local manager. [The ambulance service] will review the issue and respond to the volunteer or employee within 20 working days of receipt of the letter’.<sup>109</sup>

### ***My expectations Report***

This report—jointly released in 2014 by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, Local Government Ombudsman and Healthwatch England—describes ‘a user-led “vision” of the complaints system’ for the health and social care sector. It is an admirable vision, and details step-by-step ‘the complaint journey’; at no point, however, does it mention whether complaints will be shared with those named within them.<sup>110</sup>

### **NHS England**

The complaints policy for NHS England stresses that ‘complaints will be handled in the strictest of confidence [and that] care will be taken that information should only be disclosed to those who have a demonstrable need to have access to it’. Strangely, NHS England do not seem to believe that this includes the defendant and the policy is—unlike every other policy and procedure reviewed in this report, in which the sins are merely those of omission—uniquely explicit about this: ‘Confidentiality will be maintained in such a way that only managers and staff who are leading the investigation will know the contents of the case. Anyone disclosing information to others who are not directly involved in this may be dealt with under disciplinary procedures’.<sup>111</sup> The ‘Safeguarding’ section discusses measures for ‘safeguarding patients/complainants’ and ensuring ‘the safety of complaints staff’, but nothing is said on the importance of safeguarding the defendant(s).<sup>112</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Ambulance Service, *Serious Incident Investigation Procedure* (2019) s 3.4.

<sup>109</sup> Ambulance Service, *Volunteer Policy* (2019) s 11.2.

<sup>110</sup> Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman and Local Government Ombudsman and Healthwatch England, *My expectations for raising concerns and complaints* (2014) p 16.

<sup>111</sup> Kyle Yeldon and Lee Bennett, *NHS England Complaints Policy* (06844, NHS England 2017) s 10.

<sup>112</sup> *ibid* s 18.

## ***NHS Constitution***

*The NHS Constitution for England* lists the NHS's values, including 'Respect and dignity...whether patient, their families or carers, **or staff**'. It talks of 'compassion' and how 'everyone counts'. A list of NHS pledges includes one to 'provide a positive working environment for staff and to promote supportive, open cultures...' and one to 'engage staff in decisions that affect them and the services they provide'.<sup>113</sup> If my suspicions are correct, the NHS is falling short in these respects.

### **3.10 One simple change might help**

As I said, I do not wish to speak out of turn as regards a sector I do not work in. I have raised my concerns, and hopefully others will be able to assess them and take action if necessary.

Luckily, one action in particular would be (relatively) simple to implement and would have a marked effect. The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 describe 'the arrangements for dealing with complaints' and provides the statutory duty for health and social care services to handle complaints. The arrangements aim to ensure that 'complainants are treated with respect and courtesy', 'complainants receive a timely and appropriate response' and 'complainants are told the outcome of the investigation of their complaint', amongst other things.<sup>114</sup>

I believe that, at a bare minimum, two additional sections should be added after 3(2)(g), which should state something like:

- (h) defendants are treated with respect and courtesy;
- (i) defendants are provided with details of any complaints against them, as soon as is reasonably practicable, unless reasons exist why this should not be the case.

If the issue is as normalised within healthcare as I suspect, then this would not fix things overnight. However, it would signal a shift in mentality that I believe would eventually trickle down into the wider health and social care sector.

### **3.11 This may be normalised within the voluntary sector**

Besides healthcare, one other thread runs through all of the most unclear policies and procedures we have analysed: volunteers. From the ambulance service volunteer policy reviewed

<sup>113</sup>Department of Health and Social Care, *The NHS Constitution: The NHS belongs to us all* (2015) emphasis mine.

<sup>114</sup>The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009, SI 2009 No. 309 (Complaints Regs 2009) reg 3(2).

in § 3.9, to the policies and procedures of the large charity reviewed in § 3.7 and back to the central issue of SJA itself, volunteers seem to routinely get the short end of the stick. Worker rights have been hard fought-for and begrudgingly carved out; whilst some, like unionisation, do not make sense when applied to volunteers, others should not be disregarded simply because there is no legal obligation for an organisation to ensure them.

### 3.12 This is harder to fix

The Volunteer Rights Inquiry's final report came out nine years ago and described a volunteering that was professionalising: 'The nature of volunteering is changing as illustrated by volunteering as a pathway to work or by volunteering in the delivery of commissioned services', they wrote, adding that 'this will inevitably lead to increased scrutiny of the relationship between volunteers and volunteer involving organisations both nationally and locally'. However, 'it was felt that [introducing additional regulation and/or legislation] may present more barriers to volunteering and prescribe universal action that is not proportionate to the needs of a diverse sector'.<sup>115</sup>

Clearly, there is a tension here between the needs of volunteering to remain distinct from formal employment (in more ways than just its lack of remuneration) on the one hand, and the need to ensure the protection of volunteers on the other. The Inquiry proposed 'that efforts to improve conditions for volunteers should: be proportionate to need; respect the reciprocity of volunteering; and **promote parity of esteem between paid and volunteer staff**'.<sup>116</sup>

My sample size is limited to a handful of organisations, and I do not profess to be an expert on the challenges facing the third sector, but all seem to be struggling on these points. The Inquiry's report stated that 'while the Inquiry acknowledges the support given for [the suggestion of introducing an independent Volunteer Complaints Commissioner], it also recognises that volunteer involving organisations should have the opportunity to improve and strengthen their standards before such a body is established'.<sup>117</sup>

Perhaps nine years is enough opportunity.

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<sup>115</sup> *Volunteer Rights Inquiry* (n 21) p 2.

<sup>116</sup> *ibid* p 3, emphasis mine.

<sup>117</sup> *ibid* p 2.

## 4. Conclusion

[P.S. I will first present my original, pre-Jun 30 conclusion, followed by my new, post-outcome conclusion.]

I have tried to remain detached and academic throughout this report, as I did not want to allow it to be dismissed as ‘just a rant’. However, rather than reiterate the points raised yet again I would like to conclude with a personal note.

Researching and writing this report has not been a labour of love; it has been a labour of anxiety, frustration and anger. My view of SJA has changed significantly as a result of my experience. Before, I did not believe that there was a substantive distinction between the treatment of volunteers and employees; now that distinction has been thrown into stark relief. Before, I was excited to have the opportunity to work with new people; now, I will only work with colleagues that I can trust to be open and honest. Before, I felt proud to put on my Kermit costume; now, I don’t know how much longer I will wear it.

The 3R promise, to which SJA was an early signatory, pledges three things:

- We will endeavour to get it RIGHT from the beginning;
- We will offer means to achieve RECONCILIATION if things go wrong; and
- We accept our RESPONSIBILITY.

It’s too late now for the first one, at least in my case. Trust is slow to build and quick to destroy, so reconciliation won’t happen overnight, but if SJA wish to show that they are serious about their promise, accepting responsibility though an apology would go a long way; meaningful change would go even further.

Thank you for reading.

— Ben

[P.S. So, what is the end result of my quarter-of-a-year odyssey?

Well, from a grab bag of lurid allegations—ranging from clinical incompetence to criminal misconduct—almost all of which were originally upheld in the *Investigation Report*, here is all that SJA could get to stick: I twice breached IPC procedures/ambulance protocols that

nobody has been able to demonstrate actually exist; I did not treat those responsible for bullying me out of the organisation with sufficient collegiality; and I took steps to protect myself and hold those people accountable, which they did not appreciate.

What you'll note is that not one of these upheld allegations came from anyone I crewed with, and none relate to my clinical ability.

On the flip side, I received an outpouring of support from those who knew what I was going through, and had no difficulties amassing a substantial collection of character references within a short space of time. Reading them has been incredibly uplifting; whilst SJA was lying about me, withholding evidence and breaching its own procedures to tear me down, my determination to resist was bolstered by a steady stream of evidence showing just how spurious their claims were.

I also behaved with transparency and integrity throughout, even where this would prove detrimental to me. I never claimed anything that I believed to be untrue, and I never denied anything that was true. SJA may not have lived up to its values, but I lived up to mine.

And, finally, it has not been for naught. Though I have had to sacrifice my roles—roles that I greatly valued—to do so, I have collected copious evidence of just how SJA treats volunteers. Perhaps SJA will make no change, but at least others will know what kind of organisation they are dealing with.

Hopefully, one day, SJA might become an organisation that deserves its volunteers. I will not be holding my breath.]

## A. The blameless post-mortem

The blameless post-mortem should occur following a significant incident, as soon as possible once the issue has been resolved in order to ensure memories are fresh and cause and effect can be established. The steps are as follows:

1. construct a timeline;
2. empower all engineers to improve safety by allowing them to give detailed accounts of their contributions to failures;
3. enable and encourage people who do make mistakes to be the experts who educate the rest of the organisation on how not to make them in future;
4. accept that there is always a discretionary space where humans can decide to take action or not, and that the judgement of those decisions lies in hindsight; and
5. propose countermeasures to prevent a similar accident from happening in the future.<sup>1</sup>

Attending the post-mortem should be everyone involved in the decisions that contributed to the incident, those who identified, responded to, diagnosed and were affected by the problem and anyone else who is interested. The timeline should be supported with evidence (e.g., emails, chat logs) where possible, and the post mortem report should be offered to the rest of the organisation in an accessible place in the event of similar issues in future. The blamelessness is vital:

When engineers make mistakes and feel safe when giving details about it, they are not only willing to be held accountable, but they are also enthusiastic in helping the rest of the company avoid the same error in the future.

This is what creates organizational learning.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Gene Kim and others, *The DevOps Handbook: How to Create World-Class Agility, Reliability, and Security in Technology Organizations* (IT Revolution 2016) pp. 274–275.

<sup>2</sup>*ibid* p 274.

## B. [P.S. IMF 76723 complete timeline]

What follows is as detailed a timeline as I have been able to construct, in spite of SJA's opacity; little attempt has been made at brevity.

This report claims that the norms of SJA (and beyond) are harmful and counterproductive. To paraphrase the writer Jonathan Chait, then:

[This timeline] is anthropological evidence of these norms in action. These are not headstrong kids, nor is the episode an anomalous case of a conflict that went off the rails. It happened this way because they were following the rules.<sup>1</sup>

Some may be unhappy at having their words and actions exposed to scrutiny. I am not. Sunlight is the best disinfectant.

I of course welcome any additions, corrections and clarifications that those who were also involved may wish to add.

(1) **MAR 5**        The first two UK COVID-19 deaths are reported.<sup>2</sup>

(2) :

(3) **MAR 8**        **My birthday.** I complete the fourth and final weekend of my SJA EMT course and qualify.

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<sup>1</sup>Citation elided as article not relevant to report.

<sup>2</sup>BBC News, 'Coronavirus: Woman in 70s becomes first virus fatality in UK' (*BBC News*, 5 March 2020) [⟨https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-51759602⟩](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-51759602) accessed 12 July 2020; BBC News, 'Coronavirus: Man in 80s is second person to die of virus in UK' (*BBC News*, 7 March 2020) [⟨https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-51771815⟩](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-51771815) accessed 12 July 2020.

- (4) **MAR 9** Responding to a friend's birthday wishes, I write the following:
- passed that course yesterday, got through a bottle and a half of wine last night with no hangover and the transfer to [something in another organisation] I requested in Dec has finally come through today
- So far being 24 is pretty cracking
- plus I've *just* received an invite to the Medical Response Team (the other SJA thing I'm after, along with EMT) training next weekend that I've been chasing for a bit
- christ how am i going to keep this up for a whole year<sup>3</sup>
- (5) :
- (6) **MAR 12** The UK Chief Medical Officer raise the risk level from 'moderate' to 'high'.<sup>4</sup>
- (7) SJA establish a 'Gold Command' group.<sup>5</sup>
- (8) :
- (9) **MAR 15** I attend an MRT initial training and selection weekend.
- (10) **MAR 16** Imperial College, London release a much-publicised report that predicts that there will 'in the order of 250,000 deaths' in the UK in the current approach.<sup>6</sup>
- (11) **MAR 17**
- (12) **MAR 18** SJA suspend all event first aid cover.<sup>7</sup>
- (13) I email Ambulance Operations North and the NHS-Shifts team with my availability for shifts, making clear that I have no prior experience.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (9 March 2020).

<sup>4</sup>Department of Health and Social Care, 'COVID-19: government announces moving out of contain phase and into delay' (Gov.uk, 12 March 2020) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-government-announces-moving-out-of-contain-phase-and-into-delay>) accessed 12 July 2020.

<sup>5</sup>'COVID-19: Gold Command Group' (SJA CONNECT, 12 March 2020) (<https://sjaconnect.me/Communicating/News-and-announcements/Latest-News/Pages/COVID-19-Gold-Command-Group.aspx>) accessed 12 July 2020.

<sup>6</sup>Neil Ferguson and others, 'Report 9: Impact of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) to reduce COVID19 mortality and healthcare demand' [2020], p 16.

<sup>7</sup>Project Manager, 'Event first aid cover suspended' (SJA CONNECT, 18 March 2020) (<https://sjaconnect.me/Communicating/News-and-announcements/Latest-News/Pages/Event-first-aid-cover-suspended.aspx>) accessed 12 July 2020.

<sup>8</sup>Email to Ambulance Operations North and NHS-Shifts from author (text reproduced in fig. D.1, 18 March



- (14) They reply to ask if I am looking to third-man or not;<sup>9</sup> my line manager replies that I need to third man<sup>10</sup>
- (15) **MAR 19** SJA suspend workplace training.<sup>11</sup>
- (16) **MAR 20** The Regional MRT Lead emails me to confirm that I have been successful, and provides feedback and areas for further development.<sup>12</sup>
- (17) The NHS-Shifts team also reply,<sup>13</sup> and I reiterate to them my need to complete supernumerary shifts.<sup>14</sup>
- (18) : At some point in March the JOCC release an online form through which one can register for block deployments around the country. I register my availability for the whole of April, and make clear that I have only just qualified and will require supernumerary shifts.
- (19) **MAR 23** The UK's lockdown begins.<sup>15</sup>
- (20) Talking to a friend, I say that my plan is to 'get on as[sic] any ambulance shifts going cos i need to do 3 as a third man before i can crack on as normal'.<sup>16</sup>
- (21) **MAR 24** SJA publish their plans to support the NHS. 'From 1 April', the COVID-19 National Tactical Commander writes, 'we need 200 ambulance crew to provide 100 ambulances a day'.<sup>17</sup>

2020).

<sup>9</sup>Email from Ambulance Operations North to author (18 March 2020).

<sup>10</sup>Email to Ambulance Operations North from then-line manager (18 March 2020).

<sup>11</sup>Director of Training & Enterprise, 'St John suspends workplace training courses' (*SJA CONNECT*, 19 March 2020) (<https://sjconnect.me/Communicating/News-and-announcements/Latest-News/Pages/St-John-suspends-training-courses-.aspx>) accessed 12 July 2020.

<sup>12</sup>Email from Regional MRT Lead to author (20 March 2020).

<sup>13</sup>Email from NHS-Shifts to author (20 March 2020).

<sup>14</sup>Email to NHS-Shifts from author (text reproduced in fig. D.2, 20 March 2020).

<sup>15</sup>BBC News, 'Coronavirus: Strict new curbs on life in UK announced by PM' (*BBC News*, 24 March 2020) (<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-52012432>) accessed 12 July 2020.

<sup>16</sup>WhatsApp message to author's friend from author (text reproduced in fig. D.3, 23 March 2020).

<sup>17</sup>COVID-19 National Tactical Commander, 'COVID-19 response: How you can help' (*SJA CONNECT*, 24 March 2020) (<https://sjconnect.me/Communicating/News-and-announcements/Latest-News/Pages/COVID-19-response-how-you-can-help.aspx>) accessed 12 July 2020.

- (22) After quietly observing colleagues in both the MRT group chat and a group chat that was set up during our EMT course being dismissive of SJA volunteers being utilised in the organisation's COVID-19 response, I feel I need to have my say. I post a long message in the MRT Discord channel. Though I am specifically talking about the use of FAs and AFAs in hospitals, my statements also represent how I consider my own position as an ambulance crewman. Colleagues post supportive messages, even where they do not fully agree with me.<sup>18</sup>
- (23) Throughout this whole period the news is constantly reporting on harrowing scenes from the likes of Spain and Italy, with the expectation that the UK is next.<sup>19</sup>
- (24) : My DM wants me to cancel the Essential Education courses I am booked onto this weekend in favour of one that they hope to run in our District at some point in the future. I am resisting them on the basis that I will be out ambulancing from Apr 1 and need the training now.
- (25) At some point around here I am informed by the JOCC that I have been allocated a four-week block deployment, and that the ROCC will be in touch soon.
- (26) **MAR 26** The number of daily deaths increases by more than 100 in a day for the first time, rising to 578.<sup>20</sup>
- (27) As part of the back-and-forth over the EE courses, I email the Area Manager (District Support) to lay out why I will not be cancelling my course booking.<sup>21</sup> I copy in my DM.

<sup>18</sup>Discord messages between Regional MRT members and author (text reproduced in fig. D.4, 24 March 2020).

<sup>19</sup>'spain coronavirus - Google Search' (*Google Search*, March 2020) ([https://www.google.com/search?q=spain+coronavirus&sxsrf=ALeKk02yWsEMprYX51qezGs8M0KS5dkqEw%3A1594573365696&source=ln&tbs=cdr%3A1%2Ccd\\_min%3A3%2F1%2F2020%2Ccd\\_max%3A3%2F31%2F2020&tbm=](https://www.google.com/search?q=spain+coronavirus&sxsrf=ALeKk02yWsEMprYX51qezGs8M0KS5dkqEw%3A1594573365696&source=ln&tbs=cdr%3A1%2Ccd_min%3A3%2F1%2F2020%2Ccd_max%3A3%2F31%2F2020&tbm=)) accessed 12 July 2020; 'italy coronavirus - Google Search' (*Google Search*, March 2020) ([https://www.google.com/search?q=italy+coronavirus&sxsrf=ALeKk02yWsEMprYX51qezGs8M0KS5dkqEw%3A1594573365696&source=ln&tbs=cdr%3A1%2Ccd\\_min%3A3%2F1%2F2020%2Ccd\\_max%3A3%2F31%2F2020&tbm=](https://www.google.com/search?q=italy+coronavirus&sxsrf=ALeKk02yWsEMprYX51qezGs8M0KS5dkqEw%3A1594573365696&source=ln&tbs=cdr%3A1%2Ccd_min%3A3%2F1%2F2020%2Ccd_max%3A3%2F31%2F2020&tbm=)) accessed 12 July 2020.

<sup>20</sup>BBC News, 'Coronavirus: UK deaths rise by more than 100 in a day' (*BBC News*, 26 March 2020) (<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-52056534>) accessed 12 July 2020.

<sup>21</sup>Email to Area Manager - District Support (later Investigating Officer) from author (text reproduced in fig. D.5, 26 March 2020).

- (28) That evening, the AM (District Support) emails out a request for ambulance crews to book onto shifts.<sup>22</sup> I send the ROCC my availability, including my need to complete supernumerary shifts.<sup>23</sup>
- (29) I also discuss the supernumerary shifts in the MRT WhatsApp group.<sup>24</sup>
- (30) :
- (31) **MAR 29** The Prime Minister announces plans to send a letter to 30 million households declaring that things will ‘get worse before they get better’.<sup>25</sup>
- (32) I complete the Essential Education 1 & 2 upskill modules to qualify as an SJA Emergency Ambulance Crew.
- (33) I also arrange an Operational check drive with the Regional Driver Training Lead. I tell them that I have not owned a car since passing my test in 2016, that I have driven a van-sized vehicle once for around 40 minutes and that I have only driven on a motorway once before.
- (34) At the end of the drive they ask whether ‘I would be comfortable with me driving if it was my parents in the back’. I reply that I would obviously prefer for it to be the most experienced, skilled driver available, but in light of current circumstances I would rather there be a driver at all. They agree and grant me a COVID-19 derogation that will last a few months, after which I will have to complete driver training to continue driving.<sup>26</sup>
- (35) I also find out from the ROCC that they are waiving the supernumerary shifts requirement.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup>Email from Area Manager - District Support (later Investigating Officer) to regional mailing list (26 March 2020).

<sup>23</sup>Email to ROCC North from author (text reproduced in fig. D.6, 26 March 2020).

<sup>24</sup>WhatsApp messages between SJA colleagues and author (text reproduced in fig. D.7, 26 March 2020).

<sup>25</sup>BBC News, ‘Coronavirus: Things will get worse before getting better, PM warns’ (*BBC News*, 29 March 2020) (<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-52079922>) accessed 12 July 2020.

<sup>26</sup>Conversation between Regional Driver Training Lead and author (29 March 2020).

<sup>27</sup>WhatsApp messages to author’s friends from author (text reproduced in fig. D.8, 29 March 2020).

- (36) I get a lift back home from Crewmate I, who I am meeting for the first time. During our conversation, I mention that I am disappointed that my only interaction with my new District Manager has so far been negative. Crewmate I tells me that they are friendly with my DM and will put in a good word for me.<sup>28</sup>
- (37) My employer gives me April off to volunteer with SJA.
- (38) **MAR 30**
- (39) **MAR 31** The ROCC inform me that I am on shift Apr 1–4, ‘third manning tomorrow and crewing for the other shifts’.<sup>29</sup>
- (40) **APR 1** **First ambulance shift with Crewmates A & B.** Crewmate B and I are both drivers. The ROCC have waived the normal requirement for a minimum of three supernumerary shifts post-qualification, but I have insisted on at least one.
- (41) At 10:53 the RDTL sends me my driver identification number and a link to a driving e-learning course<sup>30</sup>—as our shift starts at 10:00, I do not have an opportunity to complete it, and there is nothing in the email to suggest that it is mandatory or urgent (the URL calls it ‘Module 1 - Know Your Vehicle’).
- (42) We only attend two jobs all day: one stroke where we support another crew and I never leave the vehicle<sup>31</sup> and one set of observations followed by four hours trying to get through to control to clear.
- (43) The number of confirmed deaths increases by 563, with the total now exceeding 2,000.<sup>32</sup>
- (44) **APR 2** **Ambulance shift with Crewmate B.** We spend the whole day grounded at the ROCC waiting to be fit-tested for masks.
- (45) **APR 3** **Ambulance shift with Crewmate A.** I am the only driver, and drive for the full 12-hour shift; prior to this, the most driving I have ever done in a single day is a four-hour round trip some years ago, and I’m not even sure if I did both legs.

<sup>28</sup>Conversation between Crewmate I and author (March 2020).

<sup>29</sup>Email from ROCC North to author (31 March 2020).

<sup>30</sup>Email from Regional Driver Training Lead to author (1 April 2020).

<sup>31</sup>I submitted an IRF after this that was logged as IMF 73037; see Appendix C.

<sup>32</sup>BBC News, ‘Coronavirus: Boris Johnson vows more virus tests as UK deaths exceed 2,000’ (*BBC News*, 1 April 2020) (<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-52122761>) accessed 12 July 2020.

- (46) We are both new EACs (though I am more so), and we comment that it is strange that they have put such a 'virgin crew' together. We have three calls: a patient transfer who is already gone by the time we arrive, an elderly faller and a bariatric patient (?UTI and ?sepsis). This third patient is effectively my first complex job as an ambulance crewman. I struggle to find a brachial pulse during a manual BP, realise I'm starting to flap and ask my crewmate to take over.
- (47) **APR 4** **Ambulance shift with Crewmate A.** Another 12 hours of driving.
- (48) During our Vehicle Daily Inspection that morning I practice taking a manual BP on my crewmate. They point out that I am overcomplicating it for myself and show me a simpler way of taking the observation.
- (49) Later in the day I misjudge the approach to a traffic calming measure, scrape the side exhaust and the vehicle sustains some (I believe) cosmetic damage. Unsure of how to report this I submit a Vehicle Defect Report.
- (50) : At some point around this time (or close to it), SJA announce that volunteers will be eligible for death-in-service payments.
- (51) **APR 8** **Ambulance shift with Crewmate C.** I am the only driver.
- (52) **APR 9** **Ambulance shift with Crewmate C.**
- (53) **APR 10** **Ambulance shift with Crewmate A.** During a COVID-19-positive discharge I believe I see an injured pedestrian bleeding heavily and supporting their arm in the air. After weighing up my options I decide to perform a U-turn to assess the casualty and see if they require urgent aid, but I am unable to find them again and so continue on to the original destination. My crewmate is unhappy about this.
- (54) **APR 11** At some point, Crewmate A complains to their Ambulance Unit Manager about me.<sup>33</sup> They do not mention that the patient I struggled to find a brachial pulse on was bariatric, claim that I almost hit them (and that I *did* hit a pedestrian) whilst beached on the traffic calming measure and claim that I repeatedly failed to assist in the cleaning and restocking of the vehicle.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>District Manager (n 38) s 3.

<sup>34</sup>MSY Investigation Report (n 41).

- (55) The Cheshire & Merseyside Ambulance Unit Manager decides to conduct an ‘informal information gathering exercise’ and raises the concerns to my DM at some point prior to May 22. At no point does the AUM contact me to provide a statement on any of the allegations.<sup>35</sup>
- (56) Later that day, the RDTL emails me to ask if I have completed an IRF for the incident on Apr 4<sup>th</sup>;<sup>36</sup> I did not know I had to, so I submit one.<sup>37</sup> The RDTL’s email includes the line ‘if you [hav]e no idea what I’m referring to please let me know’; I do not think anything of this at the time, assuming that my VDR has prompted the email. In fact, they were informed by the ROCC,<sup>38</sup> presumably prompted by Crewmate A’s comments to their AUM.
- (57) **APR 12** At 16:13 I submit my availability over the next week to the ROCC.<sup>39</sup> At 17:47 I send an urgent email to the JOCC and ROCC after an issue arises regarding my leave from work.<sup>40</sup> At 17:51 I follow up my email about shifts, saying that I won’t be able to commit to any dates until the issue is resolved.<sup>41</sup>
- (58) COVID-19 deaths in the UK exceed 10,000 for the first time.<sup>42</sup>
- (59) **APR 13** The ROCC TC replies, saying the ROCC are seeking further guidance and will be back in touch as soon as possible.
- (60) **APR 14** At 12:46 I follow up again on my availability email, saying ‘I’d like to get back out volunteering whilst I’m waiting on that clarification’.<sup>43</sup> Later that day I call the ROCC and get Call Handler A, who I’ve worked with previously. They inform me on the down-low that I have been temporarily suspended from shifts until my leave issue is resolved and that this is why I have not heard anything back.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>35</sup>See ¶ 277; the AUM concludes that I require driver mentoring, but my DM does not appear to have acted on this suggestion. I only find some of this out on May 25 (see ¶ 174) and the remainder on Jul 14 (see ¶ 352).

<sup>36</sup>Email from North Regional Driver Training Lead to author (11 April 2020).

<sup>37</sup>Email to North Regional Driver Training Lead from author (11 April 2020).

<sup>38</sup>Phone call between North Region Driver Training Lead and author (recording held by author, 15 June 2020).

<sup>39</sup>Email to North ROCC from author (12 April 2020).

<sup>40</sup>Email to JOCC and North ROCC from author (12 April 2020).

<sup>41</sup>Email to North ROCC from author (12 April 2020).

<sup>42</sup>BBC News, ‘Coronavirus: ‘Sombre day’ as UK deaths hit 10,000’ (*BBC News*, 12 April 2020) (<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-52264145>) accessed 12 July 2020.

<sup>43</sup>Email to North ROCC from author (14 April 2020).

<sup>44</sup>I do not have an exact record; this call may have taken place on the 15<sup>th</sup> instead.

- (61) **APR 15** I receive two calls (at 13:04 and 14:55) from the COVID-19 National TC, asking about my leave issue. They assure me that SJA will look after me and help get this resolved. When I explain that the ROCC have suspended me, they say that this was an overreaction and will be reversed.<sup>45</sup>
- (62) I call the ROCC and get booked on to some shifts.
- (63) Meanwhile, the much-delayed new SJA *Driving Policy* is finally released.<sup>46</sup> They also release supplementary COVID-19 driver training guidance. My three-month derogation will now last until the end of the year.<sup>47</sup>
- (64) **APR 16** The C&M AUM calls to tell me that they would like to make sure that inexperienced crews are not being paired up, and so I will not be able to crew with Crewmate A any longer. They make no reference to Crewmate A's allegations or to their own 'informal information gathering exercise'.<sup>48</sup>
- (65) Meanwhile, I have sorted out the leave issue and my employer gives me until the end of June off to volunteer with SJA.
- (66) **APR 17** **Ambulance shift with Crewmate D.** I am the only driver.
- (67) Meanwhile, elsewhere somebody from C&M Ambulance Unit is telling someone I know that they are apprehensive about crewing with me in case they have to 'carry me'.<sup>49</sup>
- (68) **APR 18** **Ambulance shift with Crewmate E.** We are both drivers.
- (69) At one point we end up playing musical ambulances due to vehicle issues. The ROCC assign us a Category C bariatric ambulance, despite me not being licensed to drive such a vehicle. It is my crewmate who notices this; had they not been aware of the difference, I would have spent the rest of the day driving it illegally.<sup>50</sup>
- (70) **APR 19** **Ambulance shift with Crewmate E.**

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<sup>45</sup>Phone calls between COVID-19 National Tactical Commander and author (15 April 2020).

<sup>46</sup>Driving Standards Verification Lead, 'New Driving Policy hits the road...' (SJA CONNECT, St John Ambulance 15 April 2020) (<https://sjaconnect.me/Communicating/News-and-announcements/Latest-News/Pages/New-Driving-Policy-hits-the-road.aspx>); St John Ambulance, *Driving Policy* (1.0, 2020).

<sup>47</sup>St John Ambulance, *COVID-19 Support and Derogation Process* (2020).

<sup>48</sup>Phone call between Cheshire & Merseyside Ambulance Unit Manager and author (April 2020); I do not recall the exact date of this conversation.

<sup>49</sup>See ¶ 133; note that my colleague did not disclose the person's name to me, but I have a strong suspicion that it was Crewmate I.

<sup>50</sup>I do not know the exact date that this occurred, but I am sure it was with Crewmate E.



- (71) : Around this time (I do not know the exact date), I contact my GP Practice to ask about getting a Hep. B vaccination now that I am doing ambulance work. They tell me that I will have to go through SJA's Occupational Health department.<sup>51</sup>
- (72) I am also told by the ROCC that I will be third-manning with an EAC and a paramedic on Sat.<sup>52</sup>
- (73) **APR 23 Ambulance shift with Crewmate F.** I am the only driver.
- (74) At the start of the shift, Crewmate F signs on with the ROCC and tells them that we have FFP3 masks; I have told them that I am not fit-tested on the ones we have. The ambulance service immediately give us an FFP3-requiring job. I refuse to attend without being fit-tested and get a lot of grief from the ROCC for having said I was. Crewmate F denies that they said anything, and later claims to have been unaware that fit-tests were needed for each make of mask.<sup>53</sup>
- (75) I also somehow get signed on as a response driver, and again have to argue with my crewmate to correct this.
- (76) **APR 24 Ambulance shift with Crewmate G.** I am the only driver.
- (77) **APR 25 Ambulance shift with Crewmate G.**
- (78) **APR 26 Ambulance shift with Crewmate H.** I am the only driver.
- (79) **APR 27**
- (80) **APR 28** As my Unit Manager has taken a step back from Unit Management to focus on their role in the NHS, I email my Area Manager to ask them to arrange a Hep. B vaccination for me.<sup>54</sup> They reply that they are not sure how to, and that they got theirs by going to their GP.<sup>55</sup>
- (81) **APR 29 Ambulance shift with Crewmate F.**
- (82) On our first job of the day, we require assistance to transfer the patient onto a carry chair. A family member asks a neighbour (possibly at me or my crewmate's request, although it may have also been of their own initiative) to assist, and they agree to.

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<sup>51</sup>Phone call between GP Practice and author (April 2020).

<sup>52</sup>WhatsApp message to SJA colleagues from author (21 April 2020).

<sup>53</sup>I am pretty certain that this was my first shift with Crewmate F, but it may have been one of the others.

<sup>54</sup>Email to then-Area Manager from author (28 April 2020).

<sup>55</sup>Email from then-Area Manager to author (28 April 2020).



- (83) On our last job of the shift, I have to stop my crewmate and a hospital HCA when they almost harm a patient during a routine bed transfer. I then also have to spur them into action when the patient vomits whilst supine and begins to aspirate.
- (84) I raise this with my crewmate on the drive back to the station, and they blame the HCA, claiming that they don't feel comfortable disagreeing with 'an HCP'.<sup>56</sup> Having previously told me that they have been in SJA for five years and has been ambulance crew for one, they now tell me that they have only been doing actual ambulance work for a week and has never done a hospital bed transfer before. I give them some tips on assertiveness and tell them that HCPs are not infallible.
- (85) My crewmate is clearly not happy, but nonetheless drives me back to my hotel. They tell me that they will report what has happened to the ROCC. I tell them that I don't see any need to, as I'm happy that the problem is now resolved and won't happen in future. I tell them to sleep on it first, but they insist. If anything is reported, I am not copied in.
- (86) That night I reflect that, having now completed some 200-odd hours of ambulance work, I can no longer rely on my crewmates all being more experienced than me.
- (87) That evening, I email my DM asking them if they know what I should do about the Hep. B vaccinations.<sup>57</sup> I do not receive a reply.
- (88) Official figures include deaths in the community, such as in care homes, for the first time; the total number of deaths passes 26,000.<sup>58</sup>
- (89) **APR 30 Ambulance shift with Crewmate F.**
- (90) The entire shift is tense and it is clear that there is an unresolved issue between Crewmate F and me. Not wanting to push them until they are ready, I say nothing. By lunchtime, it has gotten ridiculous. I am supposed to crew with Crewmate F again tomorrow, but I have no desire to if they are going to be like this. I ask the ROCC if I can crew with someone else; they tell me to leave it with them.

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<sup>56</sup>Whilst, technically, an HCA *is* a professional who works in healthcare, within SJA the term 'HCP' refers to registered healthcare professionals.

<sup>57</sup>Email to District Manager from author (29 April 2020).

<sup>58</sup>BBC News, 'Coronavirus: UK deaths pass 26,000 as figures include care home cases' (*BBC News*, 29 April 2020) (<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-52478085>) accessed 12 July 2020.

- (91) Our final job of the day is a three-hour job that is both medically and logistically challenging. We enlist the help of a doctor who lives down the road, and by the end of it we are supported by two statutory ambulance service crews.
- (92) As we finally clear from the job, I see that the ROCC Travel Coordinator has left me a message so I call them back. They tell me that no additional crewmates are available tomorrow, and so they have taken me off the shift.
- (93) I tell Crewmate F that I will not be crewing with them tomorrow. This prompts them to finally bring up the previous night's events. We pull up at the ambulance station and get into an argument. Stepping out of the cabin I pause and realise how unproductive we're being. I take a breath, step back in and apologise for losing my rag.
- (94) We have a long, in-depth talk, and seem to resolve our issues. They tell me that they reported the incident to the ROCC the night before, apparently adding that they felt I had unfairly blamed them for it and given my feedback insensitively. I'm not too fussed about that, but I decide it will be best to give each other some space and leave tomorrow's shift un-covered.
- (95) **APR 31**
- (96) **MAY 1**
- (97) **MAY 2** I email the ROCC a list of seventeen feedback points based on my first month of ambulance crewing. One of them relates to the Apr 29 incident with Crewmate F, though I do not specifically reference it or them.

(98) I write the following:

...when assessing experience consideration definitely needs to be paid to a) how long they've been ambulance crew (i.e. not just how long they've been in SJA) and b) how much of that time was spent on events and how much was doing trust support shifts, as otherwise you risk pairing a newbie with someone who's been an ETA for ages but only ever done events as a fancy first aider and has limited experience with hospital admissions, patient extrication, etc.<sup>59</sup>

(99) **MAY 3**

(100) **MAY 4** The Practice Nurse from my General Practitioner (GP) Practice emails me to confirm that Hep. B for occupational health purposes should be offered by my employer's occupational health department.<sup>60</sup>

(101) **MAY 5** **Ambulance shift with Crewmate G.**

(102) The UK death toll becomes the highest in Europe, and the second-highest in the world.<sup>61</sup>

(103) **MAY 6** **Ambulance shift with Crewmate G.** I am due to crew with Crewmate G again tomorrow, but due to fatigue I do not feel safe to drive for three 12-hour blocks in a row and ask to cancel the shift.

(104) At 20:08, the ROCC Duty Manager replies to each of my feedback points from May 2.<sup>62</sup>

(105) **MAY 7**

(106) **MAY 8** **Ambulance shift with Crewmate E.**

(107) **MAY 9**

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<sup>59</sup>Email to North ROCC from author (n 30).

<sup>60</sup>Email from GP Practice Nurse to author (4 May 2020).

<sup>61</sup>Jon Sharman, Peter Stubley, and Vincent Wood, 'Coronavirus news – live: Key government adviser resigns over lockdown breach as UK becomes Europe's virus epicentre' (*Microsoft News*, 5 May 2020) (<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/uknews/coronavirus-news-live-uk-death-toll-now-second-highest-in-the-world-as-dominic-raab-gives-daily-briefing/ar-BB13BwQk>) accessed 12 July 2020.

<sup>62</sup>Email from North ROCC to author (6 May 2020).

- (108) **MAY 10** I submit my availability for the remainder of May (i.e., all of it) to the ROCC.<sup>63</sup> Back-and-forth ensues between me and Call Handler B for the next four days, and the chain eventually grows to 20 emails.<sup>64</sup>
- (109) **MAY 11** Whilst I am waiting, I suddenly remember the e-learning course the RDTL sent me and go through it.
- (110) At 14:08, the ROCC TC emails me and Crewmate E for our response to an IRF.<sup>65</sup> I call Crewmate E and we discuss it,<sup>66</sup> and then I send a response back.<sup>67</sup> Crewmate E then concurs.<sup>68</sup>
- (111) ⋮
- (112) **MAY 14** Call Handler B and myself eventually settle on the shifts detailed in the email in fig. D.9.
- (113) **MAY 15** At 14:59, the ROCC Travel Coordinator books me a hotel in Liverpool from May 17–21 and return train tickets.<sup>69</sup> Roughly five minutes later, both are cancelled.<sup>70</sup> They call me to ask if I would like to crew out of Preston instead as it is ‘easier’ and they have a crewmate for me. I say sure; the Travel Coordinator books new train tickets.<sup>71</sup>
- (114) **MAY 16**
- (115) **MAY 17**
- (116) **MAY 18 Ambulance shift with Crewmate I.** We attend two simple jobs and a running call that doesn’t amount to anything; most of our day is spent on standby. At one point my crewmate asks me, seemingly apropos of nothing, if I know how to perform a manual BP.<sup>72</sup>
- (117) At another, I mention that I have had no luck getting a Hep. B vaccination and ask if they know what the process is. They say they will ask the C&M AUM on my behalf and let me know.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>Email to North ROCC from author (10 May 2020).

<sup>64</sup>Multiple emails between ROCC and author (12–14 May 2020).

<sup>65</sup>Email from North ROCC Tactical Commander to author & Crewmate E (11 May 2020); see Appendix C for details.

<sup>66</sup>Phone call between Crewmate E and author (11 May 2020).

<sup>67</sup>Email to North ROCC Tactical Commander from author (11 May 2020).

<sup>68</sup>Email from Crewmate E to North ROCC Tactical Commander (11 May 2020).

<sup>69</sup>Email from Click Travel to author (15 May 2020); Email from Click Travel to author (15 May 2020).

<sup>70</sup>Email from Click Travel to author (15 May 2020); Email from Click Travel to author (15 May 2020).

<sup>71</sup>Email from Click Travel to author (15 May 2020); Email from Click Travel to author (15 May 2020); Email from Click Travel to author (15 May 2020).

<sup>72</sup>This may have been on the May 19 shift instead.

<sup>73</sup>Conversations between Crewmate I and author (18 May 2020).

- (118) **MAY 19 Ambulance shift with Crewmate I.** At 12:40 I receive an email from the C&M AUM inviting me to a virtual training session the following evening, as well as asking for my availability for a phone conversation. They tell me the call is ‘only in relation’ to our conversation from the previous month.<sup>74</sup> I reply at 13:03 saying that I will be working tomorrow evening, but that I will give them a ring after we have transported our current patient to hospital.<sup>75</sup> At 13:42 I call, but get no response.
- (119) Later, my crewmate and I return to ROCC at my crewmate’s urging to change vehicles. Whilst I am inspecting the new vehicle, my crewmate goes upstairs to the ROCC office. They eventually return and says that we have been stood down by the ambulance service as there is ‘nothing happening’ in this area.
- (120) I ask whether it would be worth asking them if they’d like us to cover another area, as it is where we need to end up anyway. My crewmate tells me to go up and ask the ROCC, where the Duty Manager says they don’t think there’s any point and that we should just go home.
- (121) On the drive back home, I call the C&M AUM again (at 16:20). They pick up, say they’re in the middle of something and will call me back shortly.<sup>76</sup> They never do.
- (122) The ROCC email me at 20:51 to say that Crewmate I is unable to make tomorrow’s shift and there is nobody else available to crew with me.<sup>77</sup> I ask Crewmate I if everything is okay; they tell me that they’ve had some bad news and apologises, so I tell them not to worry and that I hope everything’s okay.<sup>78</sup>
- (123) Unbeknownst to me, Crewmate I is in fact submitting a wholly-spurious IRF against me.
- (124) **MAY 20**
- (125) **MAY 21**
- (126) **MAY 22** At 14:54 I call the C&M AUM again; no reply.

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<sup>74</sup>Email from Cheshire & Merseyside Ambulance Unit Manager to author (19 May 2020); see ¶ 64.

<sup>75</sup>Email to Cheshire & Merseyside Ambulance Unit Manager from author (19 May 2020).

<sup>76</sup>Phone call between Cheshire & Merseyside Ambulance Unit Manager and author (19 May 2020).

<sup>77</sup>Email from North ROCC to author (19 May 2020).

<sup>78</sup>SMS messages between author and Crewmate I (19 May 2020).

- (127) At 15:33 my UM, who I'm supposed to be booked on with on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, tells me that the ROCC have put us both down for shifts that day, but not together.<sup>79</sup> At 16:16 I call the ROCC to ask if they've decided where my shifts the following week will be yet. Call Handler C informs me that there are no crewmates available on those dates, including the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, where I had booked on with *specific* crewmates. I bring this up and am told they will have a look at my email chain with Call Handler B and get back to me.<sup>80</sup> I update my UM.<sup>81</sup>
- (128) At 16:35 I copy the C&M AUM in an email chain I am having with another AUM regarding which virtual Ambulance Unit I wish to attach to (as C&L District does not currently have one); I ask to be assigned to the C&M Ambulance Unit. I add that I've been struggling to get through to them for this conversation and ask if they could 'let me know when's a good time';<sup>82</sup> I do not receive a reply.
- (129) At 18:29 my UM tells me they have received a confirmation email for their shift tomorrow and that they are not crewing with me. Having heard nothing for two hours, I call the ROCC back at 18:32. Call Handler C claims that they had written an email and forgotten to send it; I then receive an email saying that there are no available shifts out of that location on the 24<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup> May and therefore I am not booked on.<sup>83</sup> I am amazed, and inform them that I will be submitting a complaint. They ask me to send over my availability for the rest of the month.
- (130) I submit my complaint at 19:11.<sup>84</sup> The ROCC TC replies at 19:51 to say that they will contact me once Assurance have responded.<sup>85</sup>
- (131) Whilst all of this is going on, and of course unbeknownst to me, my DM is contacting the AM (District Support) to ask if they will conduct an investigation into IMF 76723, submitted by Crewmate I; they agree.

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<sup>79</sup>WhatsApp messages between then-Unit Manager and author (22 May 2020).

<sup>80</sup>Phone call between North ROCC and author (22 May 2020).

<sup>81</sup>WhatsApp messages between then-Unit Manager and author (n 79).

<sup>82</sup>Email to Greater Manchester and Cheshire & Merseyside Ambulance Unit Managers from author (22 May 2020).

<sup>83</sup>Email from North ROCC to author (22 May 2020).

<sup>84</sup>Email to Assurance from author (text reproduced in fig. D.9, 22 May 2020).

<sup>85</sup>Email from North ROCC Tactical Commander to author (22 May 2020).

- (132) At 23:12 I ask my UM if they have ‘heard anything that might suggest there’s more to this than just the ROCC being shit? because i’m getting a little suspicious about [Crewmate I] bailing on the third shift last-minute, all this with the ROCC today, [and then the C&M AUM] asking for a phone chat...’. Referencing my experiences in April,<sup>86</sup> I add that ‘it’s not like this would be the first time the ROCC have decided to silently [ground] me’.<sup>87</sup>
- (133) **MAY 23** My UM replies at 00:14, saying that some colleagues had raised concerns with them that I had been sent out too soon. They had dismissed their worries at the time and asked that any future concerns be raised with them. They assure me that they haven’t heard anything further.
- (134) I ask a colleague if they have heard anything, and they say that someone told them on Apr 16 that they were apprehensive about crewing with me in case they had to ‘carry [me]’.
- (135) I share my “‘it’s not a conspiracy” theory’ with my UM:
- [Call Handler B] put me down as available on those dates and for those locations but didn’t assign crews, someone’s come along later with none of the backstory and just assigned the two highest-ranked people available for that date and location to a crew (you and [my AM]), and then for the shifts next week they’ve done the same...and had an odd number of people so I got left out again.<sup>88</sup>
- Poking fun at my earlier worries, I tell them that ‘between that weird string of coincidences and the ROCC grounding me last month when I had that issue with leave (but not telling me) my spidey sense was tingling a bit’.
- (136) I get to bed shortly afterwards.

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<sup>86</sup>See ¶¶ 57–61.

<sup>87</sup>WhatsApp messages between then-Unit Manager and author (n 79).

<sup>88</sup>WhatsApp messages between then-Unit Manager and author (23 May 2020).

- (137) The IO wakes me up with a phone call at 11:08 to inform me I am under investigation and suspended.<sup>89</sup> At the end of the call I ask for an email summary of our call, and at 11:42 I update my UM, writing that it ‘turns out I had too much faith in them, got a call from [the IO] saying someone’s IRF’s[sic] me and I’m non-op[erational] whilst they conduct an investigation into my clinical ability’.
- (138) My UM says that they’ll see if they can find anything out from the Regional Operational Coordination Cell (ROCC), and says I can talk to them if I need to.<sup>90</sup>
- (139) I receive the call summary email at 18:17, with ‘Confirmation of Phone Call Information’ as the subject. The email states only that ‘clinical concerns have been raised and as a result of this the IRF[sic] system has been instigated...’ and that that I ‘have been requested not to take part in any clinical facing roles’. The IO explains that their ‘role is to look at all the information and present this to you during[sic] a meeting [as] this will give you the opportunity to respond’, and that the District HR Lead will also be present in the meeting to take notes, a copy of which I will then receive.<sup>91</sup>
- (140) At 18:22 I forward the email to my UM<sup>92</sup> and reply to the IO, asking for the UM to be copied into subsequent emails.<sup>93</sup>
- (141) **MAY 24** At 12:14 I follow up with another email, this time asking whether ‘I [can] hear the substance of the complaint made against me? Or the rough gist of it at the very least?’ I add that ‘it’s rather disconcerting being excluded from an investigation into one’s own alleged wrongdoing’ and ask if they can ‘give me a rough sense of how long you expect this process to last’.<sup>94</sup>
- (142) Separately, I also follow up my earlier complaint about the ROCC stating that ‘I’ve now been informed that there is another ongoing IMF process involving me that may be responsible for the issues I raised below’ and asking them to ‘consider this complaint on-hold until that has been resolved’.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>Phone call between Investigating Officer and author (23 May 2020).

<sup>90</sup>WhatsApp messages between then-Unit Manager and author (n 88).

<sup>91</sup>Email from Investigating Officer to author (23 May 2020).

<sup>92</sup>Forwarded email to then-Unit Manager from author (23 May 2020).

<sup>93</sup>Email to Investigating Officer from author (23 May 2020).

<sup>94</sup>Email to Investigating Officer from author (text reproduced in fig. D.10, 24 May 2020).

<sup>95</sup>Email to North ROCC Tactical Commander and Assurance from author (24 May 2020).



- (143) At 16:42 I receive a response from the IO. It states that ‘all information regarding the clinical concerns will be presented to you during the meeting, it can then be documented and a true record can be recorded’. They reiterate that ‘my role is to obtain the information and return my findings’ and that ‘timescale wise it will be as quickly as possible’.
- (144) They also advise me that my UM cannot be copied in as ‘if it is felt that the investigation need to be moved into a formal process, this would then involve them and may hinder the process’, but stress that they are ‘not suggesting in anyway[sic] at this stage that this will happen’.<sup>96</sup>
- (145) **MAY 25** At 13:07 I receive another email from the IO, with ‘Meeting Invitation’ as the subject and the DHRL now copied in. The IO announces that they ‘have now got all the information I require to proceed with the investigation and carry out a meeting with you’ and that, ‘additional to the clinical concerns that were raised, some information has been disclosed about driving concerns’ that they will also be asking questions about during our interview.<sup>97</sup>
- (146) A letter is attached that formally invites me to an investigatory meeting via Microsoft Teams on May 29 that ‘has been arranged because we are in the process of investigating allegations that have been made relating to your conduct in the workplace’.
- (147) It states that the ‘alleged misconduct includes Clinical Concerns and Driving Capabilities’ and clarifies ‘the meeting is entirely a fact-finding exercise and it does not form part of the St John Ambulance’s formal disciplinary procedure’, meaning that I ‘do not have the automatic right to be accompanied at this stage’. It explains that the meeting may lead to a decision to ‘institute formal disciplinary proceedings against you’. It ends with a request to ‘please bring...any information that might be of assistance to the investigation’.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>Email from Investigating Officer to author (24 May 2020); despite being required to do so (see *Vol. Disc. Proc* (n 35) s 2.10.5), no VSO is ever provided for me. I am left with nobody to talk to and having to work out everything about this process on my own.

<sup>97</sup>Email from Investigating Officer to author (25 May 2020).

<sup>98</sup>Letter from Investigating Officer to author (25 May 2020).

- (148) At 13:29 I reply, stating that I am concerned about not being told the allegations against me (which, from the language in the letter, appear to have jumped in seriousness). I also ask if it would be possible to have the meeting earlier.<sup>99</sup> At 14:13 I follow this up with a request for the IMF number for this incident, which I notice has not been mentioned thus far.<sup>100</sup>
- (149) That evening, whilst trying to work out with a friend just what the hell is going on, they ask me if Crewmate I is 'like a weasel-y [expletive] bc it's heavy wide to not call you out at the time and then make all these formal proceedings.' I reply:
- nah i spent two days with [them] and [they] seemed sound as anything [but] i was getting a little suspicious of how everyone [they] seemed to interact with apparently tried to screw [them] over[,] in a 'if you meet an asshole you met an asshole, if you keep meeting assholes maybe you're the asshole' kinda way...that's why i want this to be something else entirely because I've never encountered that level of snake before and i think this will be a life-changing experience if it was [them]<sup>101</sup>
- (150) This is what people in showbiz would call 'dramatic irony'.
- (151) At 22:54 I let my UM know that '[the IO] said I couldn't have you CC'd into things because you're my line manager and if it goes to a disciplinary process then you'll need to be involved in that and it'll cause dramas...which is a bit of a [expletive] because [they're] still not telling me what I've allegedly done so you're one of the few people in this organisation I feel I can trust not to be a snake but hey ho.' I add that 'it's still early days atm [but] if as a result of this i do decide to sack off SJA i'd still be willing to sort out training sessions (as a [university first aid society] member), at least for a while, so don't worry too much about that'.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup>Email to Investigating Officer from author (text reproduced in fig. D.11, 25 May 2020).

<sup>100</sup>Email to Investigating Officer from author (25 May 2020).

<sup>101</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (24 May 2020).

<sup>102</sup>WhatsApp messages between then-Unit Manager and author (25 May 2020).

- (152) **MAY 26** The Data, Incidents & Feedback Manager sends me an email at 08:03 regarding my earlier complaint against the ROCC, informing me that it has been assigned reference number 1105 and Investigating Officer B.<sup>103</sup> I reply with a copy of my earlier email asking for the complaint to be put on hold and for them to pass the message on to IO B.<sup>104</sup> They confirm that they will.<sup>105</sup>
- (153) **MAY 27** I wake up at 01:30 and can't get back to sleep so I begin drafting a complaint to submit once everything has wrapped.
- (154) I also search for Crewmate I's rather distinctive name online and find out that they are a Local Authority Councillor and that there are news articles from mid-2019 in which they are accused by their fellow Councillors of lying to the public.<sup>106</sup> I also find their Twitter profile, which contains no mention of any 'bad news' and shows that they were out on shift again as early as May 22. It also shows that they crewed with the C&M AUM on May 25 & 26.<sup>107</sup>
- (155) I call the Regional MRT Lead at 12:29, but get no response. I send them a message on WhatsApp asking if I can invite Crewmate F (who is not a member of the MRT) to a virtual training session tonight that is relevant to our Apr 30 job, but get no response.
- (156) I call the C&M AUM at 12:32, but get no response.
- (157) I call the IO at 12:35, but get no response. I call them again at 12:45 and leave a message asking them to respond to my email as soon as they can. I call them again at 19:07; no response. At 19:17 I email them again, copying in Assurance, reiterating my wish to hear what I have been accused of and pointing out that this experience is contrary to my past IMF experiences.<sup>108</sup> I declare that I will not participate in the interview unless I am told the allegations against me by close-of-play tomorrow.<sup>109</sup>
- (158) Something feels off, so from this point on I am recording my phone calls.

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<sup>103</sup>Email from Data, Incidents & Feedback Manager to author (26 May 2020).

<sup>104</sup>Email to Data, Incidents & Feedback Manager from author (26 May 2020).

<sup>105</sup>Email from Data, Incidents & Feedback Manager to author (26 May 2020).

<sup>106</sup>'Online article about Crewmate I' (31 July 2019).

<sup>107</sup>'Crewmate I's Twitter profile' .

<sup>108</sup>See Appendix C.

<sup>109</sup>Email to Investigating Officer from author (text reproduced in fig. D.12, 27 May 2020).

- (159) At 21:56 the IO replies, apologising for not getting back sooner due to work commitments. The IO claims that ‘at no point in any communications or phone calls have I informed you that you are suspended’, and that my clinical suspension ‘doesn’t prevent you from carrying out any other support roles for SJA’.<sup>110</sup> They again stress that the scheduled meeting ‘is not a disciplinary process and is a fact finding meeting to the concerns raised from an IRF generated and other concerns shared with the district team’—the first time the District Team have been brought up.
- (160) They state that ‘it is not normal practice to send documentation in advance of these meetings’ and assures me that ‘that no one is trying to withhold information or cause you undue stress or worry’; unfortunately, the 29<sup>th</sup> is the earliest date on which everyone is available.<sup>111</sup>
- (161) I reply at 23:15, clarifying that as I have no non-clinical roles in SJA a clinical-only suspension is tantamount to a full suspension, stating in no uncertain terms the harmful effect that this situation is having on me and absolutely refusing to take part in the interview.<sup>112</sup>
- (162) I also continue drafting my complaint and collecting evidence that I will be submitting when the investigation wraps. That complaint eventually expands into this report.
- (163) **MAY 28** The IO replies at 08:26, saying that they have ‘sent an email to HR to ask for clarification of what pre information could be send over to support you and myself with this meeting taking place’, but stating that they are ‘following what is a normal practice with these types of meeting and what advice was given to me on my training of being an IO from [NHQ]’.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup>I don’t think the IO had writing this report in mind.

<sup>111</sup>Email from Investigating Officer to author (27 May 2020).

<sup>112</sup>Email to Investigating Officer from author (text reproduced in fig. D.13, 27 May 2020); in retrospect I realise that this would make a good case study for non-clinical applications of the PACE model of graded assertiveness.

<sup>113</sup>Email from Investigating Officer to author (28 May 2020).

- (164) I receive a call from the IO at 13:48. The Regional HR & Admin. Manager has confirmed that the IO doesn't 'have to disclose any information before an investigatory meeting'. The IO explains that 'when I first spoke to you it was about a clinical concern [but that] when that information pack came through there was some information about a driving incident [and I] just need to clarify some further questions about it'. They tell me that the driving incident was on Apr 4 and, when I express surprised that it was so long ago, say that this was 'probably one of the quickest turnarounds I've done on an investigation meeting'.
- (165) They express sympathy when I say I am 'disappointed by this whole process [having only been told] that "something's been raised" and it's apparently severe enough that I've been suspended effectively completely in the middle of a pandemic, but [that they've] not given me any sort of hint as to what it is'. The IO says that they are 'having to work with the policies and procedures that are there' and assure me that I will be within my rights to raise a complaint if I feel it necessary.
- (166) I mention that nobody is returning my calls and ask if this is because they have been told not to interact with me during the investigation (a la my UM); the IO assures me that only my UM has been told to keep a distance.
- (167) Accepting that I will not be told the substance of the clinical concerns, I try to glean some information as to whether they relate to 'an acute thing that I've done that somebody's reported' or 'a chronic concern'; the IO replies that the concerns are 'around practice' and that there is an 'ongoing concern across a number of different people', but that they 'wouldn't say it is critical'. In disbelief, I point out that 'it's critical enough to suspend me from clinical stuff in the middle of a pandemic'.
- (168) I ask further questions as to when my suspension was put in place, and the IO says that I was suspended on Sat 23. I ask if the ROCC might have known this was coming earlier as they had been behaving suspiciously with my shifts, but the IO says that they shouldn't have done; they advise me to follow that up with them afterwards.

- (169) I express further disbelief at the fact that some of the concerns had been raised in early April, but that nobody had mentioned anything and I hadn't been suspended until a month and a half later. The IO says that this is 'human nature sometimes'; I reply that there was 'nothing human about it' and that it was 'fucked up'. I conclude by saying that I had no faith in the process, but will nonetheless give them the benefit of the doubt and participate in the interview.<sup>114</sup>
- (170) I write a transcript of the call and email this to the IO at 16:57; I also change the subject for the email chain to "IMF76723".<sup>115</sup>
- (171) **MAY 29** The interview starts at 11:55 and runs for 1 hr 46 min. I ask if I can record the video call, but am told no. The IO reads an initial spiel that explains how the interview will take place, and states that 'this investigation is being carried out in accordance with the St John Ambulance [Disciplinary/Grievance<sup>116</sup>/Bullying and Harassment] Policy'.<sup>117</sup> They then read questions from a script regarding the various allegations, as well as about related matters like my past driving history. The DHRL takes notes.
- (172) As many of the allegations related to events that happened over a month and a half earlier, much of the time is wasted on me attempting to jog my memory, exactly as I had said it would be in my earlier emails. Some of the allegations relate to genuine mistakes on my part, committed during my first few shifts. Some (I believe) are a result of my initial unfamiliarity with certain processes having been misconstrued as unhelpfulness.
- (173) A number of the allegations are vague (e.g., 'it is alleged that...you did not contribute to any treatment or monitoring of a patient'), which I can only dispute in vague or double negative terms (e.g., 'I don't think I *didn't* treat the patient because in other cases I definitely do').

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<sup>114</sup>Phone call between Investigating Officer and author (recording and transcript held by author, 28 May 2020).

<sup>115</sup>Email to Investigating Officer from author (28 May 2020).

<sup>116</sup>It was not specified whether this referred to the *Volunteer grievance procedure* or the *Grievance Procedure* (which is only for SJA employees); as Crewmate I is an SJA employee and was responsible for submitting the grievance I assume the latter.

<sup>117</sup>FAO whoever wrote this spiel: when spoken aloud, this 'delete as appropriate' slash-separated list of options sounds like 'the St John Ambulance Disciplinary, Grievance, Bullying & Harassment Policy', which is more than a little disconcerting for the accused.

- (174) One allegation revolved around my decision to perform a U-turn to assess a possibly seriously-injured pedestrian whilst transporting a COVID-19-positive patient home.<sup>118</sup> They ask me if I am aware of the *Infection Prevention and Control Procedure*. I am aware of what I have been taught in my training.
- (175) Some allegations are utterly without merit (e.g., ‘you were unaware of what a [GCS] was’) and would have been immediately shown to be such had a) the complainant asked a question at the time or b) the allegation been put to me at the beginning of the investigation.<sup>119</sup>
- (176) At 16:01 I email the IO a wealth of supporting documents. I also ask if they could pass a message on to the complainants with advice on how to speak up in person, as I consider it to be ‘vital to the thus far of oneself and one’s patients’.<sup>120</sup>
- (177) At 20:29 the IO emails me the transcript of the interview and asks if I have any amendments.<sup>121</sup> The transcript contains the text of each of the questions they had asked me, followed by a series of bullet points summarising my response. Looking over it, I am concerned to find that many of the notes lack detail, that some put words in my mouth or make what had been a ‘Ben said this *might* have happened’ into a ‘Ben said this *did* happen’ and that some even say the direct opposite of what I had said.<sup>122</sup>
- (178) I call the IO at 20:50 to clarify whether this document will be sent to my DM as-is or if it will form the basis of a report written by the IO. They say that the notes will serve as prompts for the IO when writing a summary to each question, which will then be forwarded on along with supporting documents to my DM to make a final decision.
- (179) In the 22 min 10 s call that follows, I say that I would have much preferred to have just received the document containing the questions back on the 23<sup>rd</sup> so that I could write my own responses in; they reply that ‘[the policy] doesn’t allow for that’<sup>123</sup> but that ‘somebody higher up than me must have written that policy for a reason’.

<sup>118</sup>See ¶ 53; having discussed this incident with multiple colleagues since, I have concluded that there was no obvious correct response and that the situation was particularly difficult and any response unavoidably controversial.

<sup>119</sup>Interview (29 May 2020).

<sup>120</sup>Email to Investigating Officer from author (29 May 2020).

<sup>121</sup>Email from Investigating Officer to author (29 May 2020).

<sup>122</sup>District HR Lead, *Transcript - Investigation Interview* (2020).

<sup>123</sup>This is false; see *Vol. Disc. Proc* (n 35) s 2.11.2.



- (180) I ask what policy the concerns had originally been raised under. The IO replies that the IRF(s) from the early April shifts came under the *Incident Management Framework (IMF) policy* and the complaints from the mid-May shifts under the *Grievance Procedure*.<sup>124</sup>
- (181) They comment that these latter complaints had been raised ‘loosely’ under the procedure (both of which state that attempts must be made to resolve matters informally first).<sup>125</sup> I challenge the fact that this had not been the case, to which the IO claims that the investigation represents the final informal step, after which the formal procedures may begin. They acknowledge that ‘reading through the documents it doesn’t really jump out like that to you’.<sup>126</sup>
- (182) The IO tells me that my DM is aware that they might be receiving the final report hopefully by the end of the weekend. I ask some more questions about the process:  
Do you tell the complainants the outcome? No.  
Is there anything restricting me from talking to the complainants about the issues raised? ‘[I] don’t suppose there is, just be mindful of how they might perceive it’.  
Do I find out the full list of incidents and grievances raised at the end of the process? ‘I’ll need to check’.
- (183) I follow up the question in my email about passing on a message about the need to be assertive. The IO says that they will raise this within the newly-formed virtual Regional Ambulance Unit. Finally, I ask if the IO has contacted anybody else in the course of their investigation who is now aware of my suspension, and whether they will be contacted with the final outcome or if I will have to clear my own name. The IO says that they have contacted a few people for clarity, but that they have not made anybody aware of the suspension as this would not be fair on me.<sup>127</sup>
- (184) At 22:44 I submit a list of amendments for the fifteen most glaring inaccuracies in the transcript.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>124</sup>They did not clarify whether this was the *Volunteer grievance procedure* or the *Grievance Procedure* for employees; I have again assumed the latter, but it does not make much practical difference. At any rate, this is false; there was no early April IRF, and the mid-May ‘grievance’ was the IRF that started this whole investigation.

<sup>125</sup>*Griev. Proc.* (n 9) ss 4.1.1 & 6.5.1; *Vol. griev. proc.* (n 5) s 15.

<sup>126</sup>This is false; both grievance procedures clearly list investigations under the headings of ‘Formal Process’ (*Griev. Proc.* [n 9] s 5.4; *Vol. griev. proc.* [n 5] ss 22–26), as does the *Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure* (*Vol. Disc. Proc* [n 35] s 2.5.3), as does basic common sense.

<sup>127</sup>Phone call between Investigating Officer and author (recording held by author, 29 May 2020).

<sup>128</sup>Email to Investigating Officer from author (text reproduced in fig. D.14, 29 May 2020).



(185) **MAY 30** The IO calls me at 14:24 to ask if I am happy for them to add my corrections to the transcript in a different colour to their notes before 'send[ing] it off'. Understand 'it' to mean the final report that will be written from these prompts and not the transcript as-is, I say that's fine.<sup>129</sup> They email me the updated transcript,<sup>130</sup> but I miss that they are now asking me to 'confirm you are happy for me to forward this onto [the DM] for review' and say yes.<sup>131</sup>

(186) **MAY 31**

(187) **JUN 1** I email three points of feedback to the new Regional Ambulance Lead who, in their previous role as a Regional Ambulance & Clinical Training Officer, was the lead instructor on my EMT course. This feedback relates to the need to teach some form of graded assertiveness, as well as more focus on the more mundane aspects of crewing, like cleaning and restocking the vehicle and putting up with someone for 12 hours.<sup>132</sup>

(188) **JUN 2**

(189) **JUN 3** At 13:13 I email the IO to ask if there are any updates and whether their report is now with my DM.<sup>133</sup>

(190) The IO replies at 17:22, confirming that 'this information is now with [the DM], who is working on the document'.<sup>134</sup>

(191) **JUN 4**

(192) **JUN 5** At 16:10 I call my DM to ask if they can give me an idea of when to expect a resolution. They tell me that further points of clarification were needed and that they are currently waiting on Assurance; with the weekend about to start, nothing will be happening until next week.

(193) They also repeats the IO's disingenuous claim that I am only 'clinically suspended', and thanks me for my patience.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>129</sup>Investigating Officer, *Transcript - Investigation Interview* (2020); Phone call between Investigating Officer and author (recording held by author, 30 May 2020).

<sup>130</sup>Email from Investigating Officer to author (30 May 2020).

<sup>131</sup>Email to Investigating Officer from author (30 May 2020).

<sup>132</sup>Email to North Regional Ambulance Lead from author (n 30).

<sup>133</sup>Email to Investigating Officer from author (3 June 2020).

<sup>134</sup>Email from Investigating Officer to author (3 June 2020); due to this constant shifting of responsibility, it is unclear if the author of the *Investigation Report* is the IO or the DM.

<sup>135</sup>Phone call between District Manager and author (recording held by author, 5 June 2020).

- (194) A little later, I open my letterbox to find a letter from the COVID-19 National TC thanking me for my ‘truly remarkable’ contribution of ‘more than 200 hours’ in April.
- (195) The letter is dated May 21; two days before the start of my suspension.<sup>136</sup>
- (196) **JUN 6**
- (197) **JUN 7**
- (198) **JUN 8** Shortly after midnight I message the Regional MRT WhatsApp group to ask if I can share a recording of a virtual training session with Crewmate F as it is relevant to our Apr 30 job.<sup>137</sup> Some colleagues urge me to share more details about the job. I state that I am ‘a bit wary of having a bunch of HCPs jump down my throat for making some obvious (to them) mistake’, but at 00:40 I put my worries aside and share a reflective report.<sup>138</sup> The report is fully-compliant with the Caldicott Principles and multiple people provide constructive feedback.<sup>139</sup>
- (199) At 12:19 I call the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, but don’t get through. I try again at 13:35 and leave a message asking them to call me back.
- (200) **JUN 9** Laying awake at 03:00 (as has by now become tradition) I realise that I have been unjustifiably patient towards an organisation that has so far treated me with contempt for two and a half weeks, and I’ve put my life on hold for long enough.
- (201) At 12:53 I call both the IO and my DM; no answers. At 13:38 I email them both demanding that I be kept in the loop on decisions that affect me, and asking why the process is continuing to drag on over a fortnight later.<sup>140</sup>
- (202) I call my employer a little later to tell them that I’m happy to come back to work early, and I start making plans to head back to the Midlands to be with my family.
- (203) **JUN 10** I talk to the FSU Guardian about my concerns and this report.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>136</sup>Letter of commendation from COVID-19 National Tactical Commander to author (21 May 2020).

<sup>137</sup>I had previously asked the Regional MRT Lead but had received no response; see ¶ 153.

<sup>138</sup>See ¶ 91.

<sup>139</sup>WhatsApp messages between Regional MRT members and author (8 June 2020).

<sup>140</sup>Email to Investigating Officer and District Manager from author (text reproduced in fig. D.15, 9 June 2020).

<sup>141</sup>Phone call between then-Freedom to Speak Up Guardian and author (10 June 2020); Email to then-

- (204) That evening I catch up with my UM, who tells me they have resigned from the role.<sup>142</sup> My line manager is now, presumably, my AM, but nobody seems sure, least of all them.
- (205) **JUN 11** At 09:34 the ROCC TC asks me to comment on a new IRF (IMF 78000). The email includes the text of the IRF, which was submitted on Jun 8 at 21:00 and states the following:
- Ben Goldsworthy (EMT[sic]) uploaded his reflection to a[sic] MRT WhatsApp group of a[n ambulance service] job that they attended and concerns was[sic] raised by members within the team.
- Please contact me for full details<sup>143</sup>
- It is categorised under ‘failed to obtain consent’ and, bizarrely, the TC feels the need to ‘to remind [me] of the implications in uploading pictures without consent’.<sup>144</sup>
- (206) At 12:00 the IO emails me to say that two IRFs have been submitted relating to the MRT WhatsApp group (the previously-mentioned IMF 78000 and a new IMF 78026). They include no details of either, writing only that ‘this relates to clinical practice’. It appears that they are unaware that the TC has already shared with me the full details of IMF 78000.
- (207) HR have decided to include both of these under the ongoing IMF 76723 investigation. The IO asks me to provide information on when and where the incident from my reflective report took place and who my crewmate was.<sup>145</sup>
- (208) I wake up, read this fresh onslaught of nonsense and reply to the TC’s email, copying in the IO, at 12:27. I explain what happened and include a copy of my reflective report, as it does not appear that the the IRF submitter(s) have done so. I ask for them to consider my reply as the lodging of a formal grievance against the reporter(s) as their allegations are patently spurious. I also refuse to assist the IO and say that I will be contacting my crewmate to give them a heads up that they may be contacted.<sup>146</sup> I am not diplomatic.

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Freedom to Speak Up Guardian from author (10 June 2020).

<sup>142</sup>Phone call between then-Unit Manager and author (10 June 2020).

<sup>143</sup>Harry G Frankfurt, *On Bullshit* (Princeton University Press 30 January 2005).

<sup>144</sup>Email from North ROCC Tactical Commander to author (11 June 2020).

<sup>145</sup>Email from Investigating Officer to author (11 June 2020).

<sup>146</sup>Email to North ROCC Tactical Commander from author (text reproduced in fig. D.16, 11 June 2020).

- (209) I call Crewmate F and let them know what is going on. We talk for some time and catch up. They are also amazed at what has been going on. Whilst talking, I begin to remember that there are a lot of fantastic people in SJA; they just wear blank epaulettes.<sup>147</sup>
- (210) All of my SJA interactions lately have taken place in an adversarial or inquisitorial context, but between this catch-up and talking to my UM the night before, I am reminded that there is still good in this organisation.
- (211) This is, again, what we would call 'dramatic irony'.
- (212) The TC replies, copying in the Regional HR & Admin. Manager as they 'cannot take my direction to raise a grievance' and advising me that I will 'need to follow the correct procedure'.<sup>148</sup> I reply that 'recent experience suggests that following correct procedure is optional' and that I consider my part over.<sup>149</sup>
- (213) Just to make absolutely sure that confidentiality does not mean something different in healthcare, I show my reflective report to an MRT colleague who is also an HCP, who confirms that there is nothing wrong with it.<sup>150</sup>
- (214) At 13:13 I receive a call from the North East Ambulance Locality Manager about a complaint from the ambulance service against me and my crewmate relating to the job on Apr 29.<sup>151</sup> In the context of the MRT allegations, I spend a long time arguing that they are in fact calling about a job on Apr 30. Things are not helped by the fact that both jobs were with the same crewmate, both patients were elderly men and in both incidents we received assistance from neighbours.
- (215) The ALM says that it is 'protocol' to call for an additional crew to assist with any patient lifts, though they do not specify whether they mean SJA or ambulance service protocol. I tell them I have never been told this before.<sup>152</sup>

<sup>147</sup>Phone call between Crewmate F and author (recording held by author, 11 June 2020).

<sup>148</sup>Email from North ROCC Tactical Commander to author (11 June 2020).

<sup>149</sup>Email to North ROCC Tactical Commander from author (11 June 2020); I do not expect that the Regional HR & Admin. Manager ever did anything with my grievance.

<sup>150</sup>WhatsApp messages between SJA colleague and author (n 106).

<sup>151</sup>See ¶ 82.

<sup>152</sup>Phone call between North East Ambulance Locality Manager and author (recording held by author, 11 June 2020).

- (216) I call Crewmate F again and ask what they remember about the Apr 29 job. They jog my memory and confirms that they are also not aware of the apparent protocol. I comment that it's strange that they weren't contacted too; they reply that they'll 'probably get a call from [the ALM] after this one'.<sup>153</sup> I then email the North East ALM back with my recollections, copying in Crewmate F in case they have anything to add.<sup>154</sup>
- (217) The IO replies at 14:22 to acknowledge my response to the MRT allegations and my refusal to provide the requested information.<sup>155</sup> I inform them that my UM has resigned and that I'm not sure who is now my line manager.<sup>156</sup>
- (218) I realise later that the North East ALM's call was a coincidence and not related to the ongoing investigation. I follow up my previous email, apologising for being unnecessarily exasperated and providing a few additional comments.<sup>157</sup>
- (219) At 17:19 I have cooled down and follow up my email to the IO to apologise for being out of line earlier.<sup>158</sup>
- (220) The IO calls me at 18:23 and we discuss the investigation and the newly-submitted IRFs.<sup>159</sup> Regarding some reflective practice reports I submitted as evidence, the IO tells me 'I didn't read through them all, I just sent them on to [the DM]'. They also say that the IRF 78000 submission came with a screenshot of my report, rather than a copy of it. I tell them about the feedback I have already received regarding errors on the Apr 30 job.
- (221) We talk about the May 19 job where Crewmate I has accused me of not writing obs down. We discuss my handwriting, and the IO says they have looked at the PRF and 'can see the variance'.

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<sup>153</sup>Phone call between Crewmate F and author (recording held by author, 11 June 2020).

<sup>154</sup>Email to North East Ambulance Locality Manager from author (11 June 2020).

<sup>155</sup>Email from Investigating Officer to author (11 June 2020).

<sup>156</sup>Email to Investigating Officer from author (11 June 2020).

<sup>157</sup>Email to North East Ambulance Locality Manager from author (11 June 2020).

<sup>158</sup>Email to Investigating Officer from author (text reproduced in fig. D.17, 11 June 2020).

<sup>159</sup>Phone call between Investigating Officer and author (recording held by author, 11 June 2020).

- (222) They say they will contact Crewmate F for their account of the job. I tell them that I will send them my report first to help jog their memory.<sup>160</sup> At 19:14 I email Crewmate F a heads-up, including my reflective report for the job. I also send them some training material on graded assertiveness I had promised to previously, in relation to the incident on our Apr 29 shift.<sup>161</sup>
- (223) At 19:52 I post a message in the Regional MRT WhatsApp group about the IRFs.<sup>162</sup> A couple people post supportive or neutral replies and one HCP messages me privately to discuss the reflective log and to reassure me that, as an HCP, they would never 'jump down my throat'.<sup>163</sup>
- (224) At 21:11, the Regional MRT Lead removes me from the group. They email me almost an hour and a half later to tell me that this is 'for my own safety whilst investigations are ongoing'.<sup>164</sup> They finish by asking me to get in touch if I have any questions or issues.<sup>165</sup>
- (225) 15 mins later I reply, reiterating my question about sharing the training recording for the third time.<sup>166</sup> I receive no reply.
- (226) **JUN 12** Crewmate F texts me to thank me for the training material, and says that the IO got in touch last night to ask for the PRF number of the Apr 29 job.
- (227) They tell me to go home, saying that 'nothing beats drama [like] being with family' and telling me to let them know if I need anything.<sup>167</sup>
- (228) **JUN 13** Before heading off to stay with family for an indeterminate amount of time, I try to call both the IO and my DM to see if it's worth me bringing my uniform with me. Neither pick up; I err on the side of caution and decide to take it.

<sup>160</sup>This turned out to be a very stupid move.

<sup>161</sup>Email to Crewmate F from author (11 June 2020).

<sup>162</sup>WhatsApp message between Regional MRT and author (text reproduced in fig. D.18, 11 June 2020).

<sup>163</sup>WhatsApp messages between SJA colleague and author (11 June 2020).

<sup>164</sup>The one and only time in this whole process that *anything* is done 'for my safety', and it's removing me from a group of supportive colleagues.

<sup>165</sup>Email from Regional MRT Lead to author (11 June 2020).

<sup>166</sup>Email to Regional MRT Lead from author (11 June 2020); see ¶¶ 153 & 198.

<sup>167</sup>SMS messages between Crewmate F and author (12 June 2020).

- (229) On the drive home I discuss the investigation my dad. They express worry that, regardless of whether I can respond to each and every allegation with clarification, at some point people will draw conclusions based on the number alone. They also comment that if, as it seems, somebody high up has it in for me, there is unlikely to be anything I can do about it. I am surprised to find myself arguing against their cynicism and saying that, despite all of my recent experiences, I have faith in SJA.<sup>168</sup>
- (230) **JUN 14** I come up with some questions to ask people, but decide to give myself (and everyone else) a day off.
- (231) **JUN 15** At 09:24 I call the North East ALM to ask them why they chose to speak to me first rather than my crewmate, who is from the same District; they reply that they *had* spoken to my crewmate first. I also ask what the reference number for the complaint was, but am told that they doesn't have it and has already submitted their findings. I explain why I was being a bit paranoid and they tell me that they had no idea about the ongoing investigation until I mentioned it.<sup>169</sup>
- (232) At 10:45 I call the IO and leave a voicemail. They text me to say they are in a conference at work and will call me back when they can. I reply that I want to catch up and ask them a question, but that it isn't urgent.<sup>170</sup> I do not receive a call back.
- (233) At 10:48 I call the RDTL to ask what prompted their email on Apr 11; my VDR or an IRF from my crewmate?<sup>171</sup> They reply that they were told informally by the ROCC.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>168</sup>Conversation between author's parent and author (13 June 2020).

<sup>169</sup>Phone call between North East Ambulance Locality Manager and author (recording held by author, 15 June 2020).

<sup>170</sup>SMS messages between Investigating Officer and author (15 June 2020).

<sup>171</sup>See ¶ 56.

<sup>172</sup>Phone call between North Region Driver Training Lead and author (n 38).



- (234) At 15:04 I message a Regional Assurance & Quality Officer to ask how I can find the reference number for a complaint. They tell me to contact the Regional HR Manager or the Regulatory Assurance Manager;<sup>173</sup> looking them up on CONNECT and reasoning that they are likely to be busy, I try to call one of the Regional HR Manager's direct reports instead. The number listed connects me to SJA Stockport, who put me through to the Training Coordinator (Volunteer/Employee); I go through to voicemail, and leave a message asking them to call me back.<sup>174</sup>
- (235) Whilst saying 'I don't want to tell you too much until it's wrapped since...I don't want to get either of us in trouble', I tell the RAQO about my inconsistent experience with IRF disclosure and ask what the official policy is. They say that it is strange and that, as far as they're aware, only person-identifiable information should be withheld.<sup>175</sup>
- (236) Also, having now been accused of unfamiliarity with the *Infection Prevention and Control Procedure* on two separate occasions,<sup>176</sup> I decide to read it cover-to-cover and see for myself.<sup>177</sup> The document contains nothing relevant to either of the situations in which I am alleged to have breached it. Nor is either situation addressed in the supplementary COVID-19 IPC guidance.<sup>178</sup>
- (237) **JUN 16** The Training Coordinator (Volunteer/Employee) calls me back at 12:05 and tells me to contact the HR Advisor.<sup>179</sup> I do so, and they tell me to put my request for the complaint reference in an email so they can verify that I am who I say I am.<sup>180</sup> I do so.<sup>181</sup>

<sup>173</sup>WhatsApp messages between Regional Assurance & Quality Officer and author (15 June 2020).

<sup>174</sup>Phone call to HR from author (recording held by author, 15 June 2020).

<sup>175</sup>WhatsApp messages between Regional Assurance & Quality Officer and author (n 173).

<sup>176</sup>See ¶¶ 174 & 214.

<sup>177</sup>St John Ambulance, *Infection Prevention and Control Procedure* (5, 2019).

<sup>178</sup>St John Ambulance, *COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control Ambulance Service and Community First Responders Guidance* (12, 2020).

<sup>179</sup>Phone call between Training Coordinator (Volunteer/Employee) and author (recording held by author, 16 June 2020).

<sup>180</sup>Phone call between HR Advisor and author (recording held by author, 16 June 2020).

<sup>181</sup>Email to HR Advisor from author (16 June 2020).



- (238) They reply at 16:10, telling me that they have forwarded my query on to the Regional HR & Admin. Manager.<sup>182</sup> Noting the '(Employees)' in their email signature, I inform them that I am a volunteer.<sup>183</sup> They reply that they and the Regional HR & Admin. Manager are currently covering both employees and volunteers.<sup>184</sup>
- (239) **JUN 17** At 09:32 I send the IO a message asking them to call me at some point during the day.<sup>185</sup>
- (240) At 17:35 my AM calls me and I catch them up on what has been happening so far, as well as the restrictions on their involvement.<sup>186</sup>
- (241) At 20:00 the IO calls me. I ask for an update and they tell me that everything is now with my DM and I should hopefully have a conclusion by the end of week. Pointing out that we were in this same position almost three weeks ago, I ask that they let me know if anything comes up that will delay the process further; they agree to, and say they will send my DM an email that evening to see where we're at.
- (242) The IO also says that they have closed IMF 78000 as 'not requiring a reply'.
- (243) They also relay that the Regional Clinical Lead has reviewed the Apr 30 job report. The only feedback they has provided beyond that already provided by others and myself is to say that we should not have introduced the neighbour/doctor to the scene. I ask if I will be shown the feedback, and the IO says 'I presume so'. They also says that, regarding the concerns about getting third parties involved, 'it's not overly clear, looking at the documentation, who instigated that'.
- (244) I question why the ROCC TC sent me the exact text, date and time of IRF 78000, as is consistent with every single other IMF I've been involved in, whilst the IO only sent me the two reference numbers for that and IRF 78026 and a vague description of what they relate to. The IO reiterates that it is normal for a defendant to first hear the allegations against them at their interview.

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<sup>182</sup>Email from HR Advisor to author (16 June 2020).

<sup>183</sup>Email to HR Advisor from author (16 June 2020).

<sup>184</sup>Email from HR Advisor to author (16 June 2020).

<sup>185</sup>SMS message to Investigating Officer from author (17 June 2020).

<sup>186</sup>Phone call between then-Area Manager and author (17 June 2020).

- (245) I ask them to forget about what happened weeks ago, as I am only referring to now. I ask if they would be willing to share with me the full details of all of the allegations that are now a part of the IMF 76723, both for my own reference and (though I do not state this) to assist in the production of this report. To my surprise, they say yes.<sup>187</sup>
- (246) At 20:27 I submit my request to the IO in writing.<sup>188</sup>
- (247) **JUN 18**
- (248) **JUN 19** In the morning, the IO calls Crewmate F to discuss the Apr 30 job.<sup>189</sup>
- (249) At 13:31, the IO emails to ask them to 'confirm that the signature on PRF 136891 is not yours';<sup>190</sup> they reply stating that 'as I said today on the phone to yourself, I don't believe that signature to be mine' and that 'I still stand by this, as it is completely different to that of my normal signature on the other PRF's[sic], as you yourself can see'.<sup>191</sup>
- (250) At 17:09 I call my DM and leave a message asking them to call me back at some point over the weekend to give me an update on the investigation.<sup>192</sup>
- (251) **JUN 20** It has now been four weeks since my suspension began.
- (252) **JUN 21**
- (253) **JUN 22** At 10:22 I again call my DM and get through, though the connection is poor. They tell me that they received the last of the material on Jun 19 and that the HR Advisor will send me a letter to arrange a hearing date. At this hearing we will discuss the evidence that has been gathered and I'll be able to give my version of events. At some point after this, my DM will come to a final decision.
- (254) I tell them that I am no longer in the North and will need the letter emailed to me. I ask if it would be possible to email me over the questions I will be asked in the hearing so I can respond in my own time, which will be faster than waiting for the three of us to all be available. The DM tells me that this will not be possible as it will be 'more of a conversation' than a set of questions.

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<sup>187</sup>Phone call between Investigating Officer and author (recording held by author, 17 June 2020).

<sup>188</sup>Email to Investigating Officer from author (text reproduced in fig. D.19, 17 June 2020).

<sup>189</sup>Phone call between Investigating Officer and Crewmate F (19 July 2020).

<sup>190</sup>Email from Investigating Officer to Crewmate F (19 July 2020).

<sup>191</sup>Email to Investigating Officer from Crewmate F (19 July 2020).

<sup>192</sup>Phone call to District Manager from author (recording held by author, 19 June 2020).

- (255) I ask whether the request for a formal hearing is an indication of the way that the process is going or whether it is just business-as-usual. They say that it is business-as-usual (but that it probably doesn't feel like that for me), but also state that the hearing will determine whether it is dealt with it as a 'performance management issue' or a 'formal disciplinary issue', with an outcome 'up to and including dismissal from the organisation', which suggests that the fact that there *is* an issue—i.e., some or all of the allegations have been upheld—is being taken as a given.
- (256) The DM tells me that the hearing will be my opportunity to 'answer more openly...about things that have been missed during the evidence-gathering phase, or...that'[ve] been misunderstood, because sometimes the documents don't always reflect what someone's trying [to say]<sup>193</sup>'.<sup>194</sup>
- (257) I ask what sort of timescales we are looking at for the hearing and they tell me that I will hopefully hear from the HR Advisor by the end of the day, but adds that the Advisor is very busy at the moment and will have to read the report first.<sup>195</sup> They add that they are not optimistic about the hearing itself being this week. I thank them for picking up, and they say they will chase the Advisor.<sup>196</sup>
- (258) At 12:14 I follow up my previous email<sup>197</sup> to the FSU Guardian to let them know that any report submission will not be for some time yet.<sup>198</sup>
- (259) Perturbed by my DM's mention of possible dismissal and the negative direction the investigation appeared to be taking, I begin putting in place contingency measures (e.g., backing up my SJA emails, ensuring I have downloaded copies of all relevant policy and procedure documents, recording the email addresses of everyone I intend to submit this report to) in case I suddenly find myself locked out of my SJA account.

<sup>193</sup>These exact words are unintelligible on the recording.

<sup>194</sup>See ¶ 161 for me raising raising these concerns with the IO prior to our May 29 interview, and ¶ 177 for exactly this then happening as a result of those concerns being ignored. The problem with being a Cassandra is that no-one bloody listens to you.

<sup>195</sup>It only occurred to me later that there is no need for the Advisor to be familiar with the report to schedule a meeting between two other people to discuss it.

<sup>196</sup>Phone call between District Manager and author (recording held by author, 22 June 2020).

<sup>197</sup>See ¶ 203.

<sup>198</sup>Email to then-Freedom to Speak Up Guardian from author (22 June 2020).

- (260) **JUN 23** At 20:46 the Regional Coordinator sends out a mass email, subject “Urgent Help Required”, asking whether anybody is available to attend an event tomorrow.<sup>199</sup> My instinctive response is to reach for my calendar to see if I am available, but alas.
- (261) **JUN 24** The FSU Guardian gives me some feedback on the draft report.<sup>200</sup> I reply with rough details of my plan for submitting it.<sup>201</sup>
- (262) **JUN 25**
- (263) **JUN 26** At 09:25, I follow up my Jun 17 email to the IO repeating my request for details of all the IRFs, grievances, etc. that are now a part of IMF 76723.<sup>202</sup>
- (264) At 09:49, I email the HR Advisor asking about the hearing date.<sup>203</sup>
- (265) I do not receive a reply from either.
- (266) **JUN 27** Laying awake at midnight, I consider my position. I consider the five weeks of my life I have wasted on this investigation. I consider the 200 hours I spent supporting SJA in April. I consider the well-over-1,000 hours I have given SJA since I first joined. And I consider what I have to show for it.
- (267) 02:00 rolls around, and I am still unable to sleep. I have been fooled by the sunk cost fallacy. I have allowed SJA to treat me with utter contempt because of how much I value my roles. I have bent over backwards to assume that my treatment has been due to incompetence, not malice. But sufficiently-advanced incompetence is indistinguishable from malice.
- (268) I draft a list of red lines that I shall not allow myself to cross. I will call the HR Advisor on Monday morning. I will call my DM if I do not get through. I will email both if I do not get through, asking to forego the hearing in favour of receiving a copy of the IO’s report to comment on directly. And if I have not seen the content of the investigator’s report and been given a fixed date for a resolution by close-of-play Friday, I will leave SJA.

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<sup>199</sup>Email from Regional Coordinator to regional mailing list (23 June 2020).

<sup>200</sup>Email from then-Freedom to Speak Up Guardian to author (24 June 2020).

<sup>201</sup>Email to then-Freedom to Speak Up Guardian from author (24 June 2020).

<sup>202</sup>Email to Investigating Officer from author (text reproduced in fig. D.20, 26 June 2020).

<sup>203</sup>Email to HR Advisor from author (text reproduced in fig. D.21, 26 June 2020).

- (269) I tell my AM what my plan is. I tell them that, whilst they cannot advocate for any particular outcome, if they wanted to put some pressure on the DM to encourage actually getting to an outcome at all it would be appreciated.<sup>204</sup>
- (270) **JUN 28** My AM tells me that they will talk to my DM on Monday or Tuesday.<sup>205</sup>
- (271) **JUN 29** At 10:31, I call the HR Advisor; no answer.  
I call my DM; no answer.  
I wait 45 minutes, in case I caught either of them in the middle of something and giving them a chance to call me back; nothing.
- (272) At 11:16, I email them both my ultimatum, copying in my AM and the IO.<sup>206</sup>
- (273) At 15:28 the FSU Guardian (unaware of these developments) emails me to arrange a phone call for tomorrow.<sup>207</sup>
- (274) **JUN 30** At 14:01 the FSU Guardian calls and asks how things are going. I update them, they ask if they can help at all. I say I'm happy for them to make some calls and see if they can find out what's going on.<sup>208</sup>  
The call ends at 14:23, and at 14:25 I forward them my ultimatum email.<sup>209</sup>
- (275) 15 minutes later, I suddenly receive an email from my DM containing summons to a hearing on Jul 7, a copy of the *Investigation Report* and copies of the *Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure* and *Conduct and Performance Policy*.<sup>210</sup>
- (276) The report is a hot mess. In seven short, typo-ridden pages, it takes the reader on a wild ride through both wild, unsupported accusations and subtle, misleading inaccuracies. It is truly a tour de force of bullshit.

<sup>204</sup>WhatsApp messages to then-Area Manager from author (27 June 2020).

<sup>205</sup>WhatsApp messages from then-Area Manager to author (28 June 2020).

<sup>206</sup>Email to HR Advisor and District Manager from author (text reproduced in fig. D.22, 29 June 2020).

<sup>207</sup>Email from then-Freedom to Speak Up Guardiancharmaineemail to author (29 June 2020); Email to then-Freedom to Speak Up Guardian from author (29 June 2020).

<sup>208</sup>Phone call between then-Freedom to Speak Up Guardian and author (30 June 2020).

<sup>209</sup>Email to then-Freedom to Speak Up Guardian from author (30 June 2020).

<sup>210</sup>Email from District Manager to author (30 June 2020); Email from District Manager to author (30 June 2020); Letter from District Manager to author (30 June 2020).

- (277) It does, however, reveal many interesting and concerning things. It appears that the reason I have not been provided with allegations this whole time is not due to any policy or procedure, but because they do not exist in the first place. The lion's share of the allegations come not from IRFs (of which there is only one beyond those I am already aware of: IRF 76723, submitted by Crewmate I on May 19) or formal grievances (of which there are none, despite the IO's earlier insistence), but rather from an 'informal information gathering exercise' on the part of the C&M AUM, which began on Apr 11 and continued until some point prior to May 22.<sup>211</sup>
- (278) It also appears that Crewmate F may have thrown me under the bus in order to avoid their own accountability (it is revealed that they are also under investigation for the Apr 30 job), and that the report author has been peculiarly credulous about their claims despite the lack of compelling supporting evidence and their obvious incentive now to deny responsibility.
- (279) This includes a new allegation—which I am first hearing about now, and which the report author is happy to assert as a proven fact with barely any evidence to support it—that I have falsified Crewmate F's signature on a PRF; a criminal offence.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>211</sup>District Manager (n 38) s 3.

<sup>212</sup>[ibid](#) p 5 & 6, although, as my DM only suggests I am facing dismissal from the organisation, it seems that they have either not noticed the severity of the new allegation or (more likely) is very aware that the paucity of evidence would never stand up in a court and is hoping I won't notice.

- (280) The charge now facing me is one of ‘gross misconduct’, which includes (but is not limited to):
- p. any criminal offence likely to involve police proceedings which may affect a volunteer’s duties or ability to carry out those duties
  - q. threatening or abusive behaviour or assault
  - r. theft, fraud, falsification of records, corruption or other serious unlawful conduct
  - s. victimisation of a volunteer or employee who has raised concerns via the Whistleblowing policy or relevant Grievance Procedure
  - t. incapability whilst on SJA business brought on my alcohol or illegal drugs
  - u. sabotage of SJA event or ambulance business
  - v. serious breaches under the headings [of what can be considered a disciplinary offence] listed in paragraph 2.1.1 above<sup>213</sup>
- (281) The thought that I am being scapegoated goes from being one of many plausible interpretations to the most credible one. I begin drafting my response. I also begin soliciting personal statements from friends and colleagues, both SJA and otherwise, from as far afield as Finland, testifying to my integrity and competence.<sup>214</sup>
- (282) **JUL 1** I call Crewmate H to ask if they will provide me with a character reference. They say they are happy to, but due to their role in the HR team they will have to ask first.<sup>215</sup>
- (283) Unsurprisingly, given my belief that my Region may be hanging me out to dry, the Regional HR & Admin. Manager denies this request.<sup>216</sup> This is despite the fact that Crewmate H is entirely uninvolved in this process, and that their HR role is purely advisory and so they would have no ability to influence anything even if this was not the case.

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<sup>213</sup> *Vol. Disc. Proc* (n 35) s 2.1.2.

<sup>214</sup> WhatsApp message to Crewmate E from author (30 June 2020); WhatsApp message to Crewmate H from author (30 June 2020); Email to Crewmate D from author (1 July 2020).

<sup>215</sup> Phone call between Crewmate H and author (recording held by author, 1 July 2020).

<sup>216</sup> Email from Crewmate H to author (1 July 2020).



- (284) Crewmate D has no such restrictions, and agrees to provide a reference.<sup>217</sup>
- (285) Crewmate E does not reply.
- (286) **JUL 2** I gather additional references.
- (287) I ask my former UM, as they are probably the person within SJA who knows me best. They say they would prefer not to get involved.<sup>218</sup> I respect their decision, but that doesn't mean it doesn't still sting.
- (288) **JUL 3** At 13:26 I call the Head of Volunteering and leave a message asking them to call me back;<sup>219</sup> I have been advised by Crewmate H to bring the C&M AUM's off-piste activities to their attention.
- (289) At 14:23, I reply to my DM's hearing invitation with an email linking to evidence of over seven years of 'rigid, verifiable, unwavering integrity', attaching my response to the *Investigation Report* and the nine references I've received so far (as well as the letter of commendation from the COVID-19 National TC).<sup>220</sup> I copy in the HR Advisor, the FSU Guardian (for reference) and the IO (so as not to criticise their work behind their back).
- (290) My 29-page response is a minutely detailed, evidence-backed point-by-point rebuttal of the IO's 7-page last-minute homework assignment.<sup>221</sup> I propose my grounds for suspecting that I am being scapegoated by my Region in a 5-page conclusion,<sup>222</sup> but I state in the introduction that this is only the most likely-seeming explanation and that I would like to be wrong.
- (291) I state that I will participate in the hearing if and only if my DM explicitly grants me permission to record it. I add that this would be a purely symbolic gesture, as it would be lawful for me to do so anyway without requiring permission, but that it would nonetheless provide 'a compelling counterargument to my conspiracy hypothesis'.<sup>223</sup>

<sup>217</sup>Multiple emails between Crewmate D and author (1–2 Jul 2020).

<sup>218</sup>WhatsApp messages between former Unit manager and author (2 July 2020); this sentiment was shared by a few other people I asked as well. I believe this was in part due to the escalation of severity with the addition of the document falsification allegation, and in part due to those people being familiar with the SJA (or, more broadly, healthcare) approach to investigation and wanting nothing to do with it, which I can empathise with.

<sup>219</sup>Phone call to Head of Volunteering from author (recording held by author, 3 July 2020).

<sup>220</sup>Email to District Manager from author (text reproduced in fig. D.23, 3 July 2020); multiple character references (3 Jul 2020).

<sup>221</sup>Ben Goldsworthy, *Investigation Response* (v 1, 2020).

<sup>222</sup>*ibid* pp 25–29; see also Appendix H.

<sup>223</sup>*ibid* pp 1–2.



- (292) I also submit a redacted portion of the response to Crewmate F, as I do not wish to criticise them behind their back or to add to the weight of their own investigation if any allegations will be dealt with as cackhandedly as my own, but I have had to breach confidentiality by naming them as my crewmate in a reflective practice report of the Apr 29 incident.<sup>224</sup>
- (293) In my response to my DM, I highlight being put in such a position as ‘a direct and obvious consequence of *your* choices in running this investigation’. I admonish them that ‘the next time you or anyone else involved in this process tries to talk about “humanity” or “teamwork” or “excellence”, the words should curdle in your mouths.’<sup>225</sup>
- (294) At 15:14 the HoV calls me back. They advise me to provide only a brief overview of what is happening, as they may end up involved in the process in the event of an appeal. I give them a rough summary and outline my concerns. They expresses sympathy and advise me to follow the process.<sup>226</sup>
- (295) My former UM messages me that evening to let me know that we have changed Area, from South Cumbria to Fylde Coast & North Lancs.<sup>227</sup> This presumably means that my line manager has changed again, to my new AM.
- (296) That’s a shame, as I know from experience that my new AM is utterly dismissive of non-HCPs. At an event I covered in 2019, where they were managing a Treatment Centre, I had one colleague immediately introduce themselves as a student paramedic because they ‘had been told that that’s the way to get them to like you’, and I had to dissuade another from taking them to task for how rudely they had been treating me. Back then, I thought that they represented a toxic minority within the organisation.  
Oh, to be young and naive again.
- (297) I no longer have anybody above me that I trust or respect. I’m on my own.
- (298) **JUL 4** I gather additional references.

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<sup>224</sup>Email to Crewmate F from author (3 July 2020).

<sup>225</sup>Goldsworthy, *Investigation Response* (n 221) p 22; see also *Our values* (n 19).

<sup>226</sup>Phone call between Head of Volunteering and author (recording held by author, 3 July 2020).

<sup>227</sup>WhatsApp messages between ex-Unit Manager and author (3 July 2020).

- (299) **JUL 5** I gather additional references, and submit a second batch of five to my DM.<sup>228</sup>
- (300) **JUL 6** I ask Crewmate G for a reference, as an earlier message turns out to have not sent. With Crewmates A, B, C, F & I all seemingly involved in this investigation,<sup>229</sup> H told that they can't give me a reference and E not replying, D and G are the only crewmates I have been able to ask. This is perhaps not ideal in the case of D, who I have only crewed with once, but I have done four shifts with Crewmate G; more than with anyone else. It is heartening that they agree without hesitation.<sup>230</sup>
- (301) Plotting out my shift history to make the above point, I realise something peculiar. The IO's report lists 'Info from [Crewmate B]', and the same for Crewmates A & C, under the folder 'Concerns raised by [Cheshire &] Merseyside Amb[ulance] Unit'.<sup>231</sup> I have only crewed with Crewmate B twice, once as a supernumerary and once when we spent the whole day grounded waiting for mask fit-testing.<sup>232</sup>
- (302) As is tradition, this 'info' has not been shared with me. I wonder what info Crewmate B could have *possibly* provided, considering our clinical experience amounts to one job where I stayed with the vehicle and one where we performed a set of observations, tried to clear for three hours, took another set (at my instigation) and then took another hour to clear.
- (303) I also do some back-of-the napkin calculations. Assuming I kept up my 200-hours-per-month rate of shifts throughout the full three months of my leave from work, and with the NHS paying SJA £100/hr for each crew on the road, this month-and-a-half-long suspension has so far potentially resulted in as much as £15,000 in lost earnings for SJA (£50 × 300 hours).

<sup>228</sup>Email to District Manager from author (5 July 2020); multiple character references (3 Jul 2020).

<sup>229</sup>Although, as far as I can tell, only Crewmate I maliciously so—some or all of A, B and C appear to have been exploited unwittingly by the C&M AUM and F seems to have thrown me under the bus in self-defence, which I consider unethical but understandable.

<sup>230</sup>WhatsApp messages between Crewmate G and author (6 July 2020).

<sup>231</sup>District Manager (n 38) p 6.

<sup>232</sup>See ¶¶ 40 & 44.

- (304) **JUN 7** The Crewmate B thing is still bugging me. Crewmate C is a bit of an unknown quantity due to them also being in the MRT, but as far as I am aware Crewmate B and I got on well during our brief time working together, and they would have been well aware of my limited experience. The same goes for Crewmate A, who I worked with far more and with whom I believe I was still on friendly terms when all this started.
- (305) I also read through the *Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure* again after someone expresses a concern that perhaps refusing to attend a hearing will waive my right to appeal, and that this is what my DM is counting on. This is not the case. However, whilst reading, I realise that the fact that this is being handled as a disciplinary matter means that I am being accused of ‘under-performance caused by negligence and/or non-compliance’, rather than ‘lack of skill and/or capability’.<sup>233</sup>
- (306) I also notice that copy of the *Procedure* I have been emailed is 357.5 kB, whilst the one downloaded from CONNECT is 392.4 kB. Has my DM removed some lines that might be helpful to me? I compare the two both visually and using an automated file-checking tool, but they are identical. I’m losing my marbles here.
- (307) I wonder if Crewmates A & B know what is being done in their name, based on what appear to have been off-the-cuff comments and gripes that have been picked up by an AUM with an ulterior motive. I decide, ultimately, that it is too risky to contact them myself, as this could work against me if someone claimed I was harassing witnesses.
- (308) At 10:11 I email my DM and HR Advisor asking to know their position regarding my recording of the hearing by 12:00.<sup>234</sup>
- (309) At 11:02 I call the FSU Guardian to give them a heads up of what may be coming their way in an hour<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>233</sup>This is despite my DM's own words a mere 15 days ago; see ¶ 255.

<sup>234</sup>Email to District Manager from author (7 July 2020).

<sup>235</sup>Phone call between then-Freedom to Speak Up Guardian and author (7 July 2020).

- (310) At 11:57, the HR Advisor replies to my email to say that ‘we both do not agree to the recording of today’s hearing’, ending with ‘see you at 2pm’.<sup>236</sup> They have clearly not read any of my response, as the very first page says that my attendance is conditional on the right to record.
- (311) I escalate to the CEO and DP&O, highlighting my concerns and stating that ‘I am not asking you to rule on the validity of the allegations, but I fundamentally do not believe I am able to receive a fair trial in the North Region [and that] I am happy for the allegations to be assessed in another Region or nationally’.<sup>237</sup>
- (312) I also inform the HR Advisor and my DM that I will not be attending the hearing.<sup>238</sup> I also submit three additional character references.<sup>239</sup>
- (313) **JUL 8** Another thought: why have Crewmate F and I been pitted against one another in this bizarre Prisoners’ Dilemma setup?<sup>240</sup> Particularly when Crewmate E and I were contacted as a crew when an IRF was submitted against us back in May.<sup>241</sup> Cluelessness or sadism? The eternal debate continues.
- (314) The Director of People & Organisation replies at 09:54, saying that they discussed my email with the CEO yesterday and that they want to talk to the FSU Guardian and HR Advisor before getting back to me. They ask me which HR Advisor I am dealing with.<sup>242</sup> I pass on the information, but add that (to the best of my knowledge) the HR Advisor has only been involved since Jun 16.<sup>243</sup> They reply that they will talk to the Advisor later that day.<sup>244</sup>

<sup>236</sup>Email from HR Advisor to author and District Manager (7 July 2020).

<sup>237</sup>Email to Chief Executive Officer & Director of People & Organisation from author (text reproduced in fig. D.24, 7 July 2020).

<sup>238</sup>Email to HR Advisor and District Manager from author (text reproduced in fig. D.25, 7 July 2020).

<sup>239</sup>Multiple character references (7 Jul 2020).

<sup>240</sup>Having belatedly realised that this the situation Crewmate F and myself have been placed in, Crewmate F’s defection *does* represent the optimal strategy, game theoretically-speaking. However, in the event that I remain in SJA and we encounter each other again in the future, my transparent and forgiving TIT-FOR-TAT approach may well promote co-operation in the long run; see Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (first published 1984, Penguin 26 April 1990).

<sup>241</sup>See ¶ 110.

<sup>242</sup>Email from Director of People & Organisation to author (8 July 2020).

<sup>243</sup>Email to Director of People & Organisation from author (8 July 2020).

<sup>244</sup>Email from Director of People & Organisation to author (8 July 2020).

- (315) **JUL 9** I leave Crewmate E a message asking them to get back to me.<sup>245</sup> I don't know if they missed my earlier message, if they're ignoring me as others seem to be or if they're just somewhere out-of-the-way with work.
- (316) I also prompt Crewmate G, who said they would write me a reference and then suddenly stopped replying. Has Crewmate F said something to them? I feel like a leper.
- (317) Some good news though: re-reading this timeline I'm reminded that I asked the IO if I could contact complainants and was told yes.<sup>246</sup> I'm safe to contact Crewmates A & B, provided I am cautious. 'Cautious' is my middle name.
- (318) I call Crewmate B and ask for an honest assessment of me as an ambulance crewman. Sure enough, they echo my own conclusions: rough around the edges, quick to learn, could do with additional support. More interestingly, when I ask if they would provide me with that in writing for the investigation they say that they already submitted an email along those lines as a witness statement. They also tell me that their statement concluded with a list of mitigating factors, as well as a suggestion that I could do with a mentor.<sup>247</sup>
- (319) I wonder if the other 'Info from's are of a similar nature. Interesting how none of this made it into the *Investigation Report*. My leprosy starts to clear.
- (320) Meanwhile, Crewmate G's initial willingness to write me a reference has become a continued silence despite my promptings.<sup>248</sup> Did they speak to Crewmate F in the interim? Ah, good, there's that leprous feeling again.

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<sup>245</sup>Phone call to Crewmate E from author (recording held by author, 9 July 2020).

<sup>246</sup>See ¶ 182.

<sup>247</sup>Phone call between Crewmate B and author (9 July 2020).

<sup>248</sup>WhatsApp messages to Crewmate G from author (9 July 2020).

- (321) At 15:09 my DM emails me a letter inviting me to a rescheduled hearing on Jul 16.<sup>249</sup> Absolutely no concessions have been made. They tell me I cannot record the hearing ‘due to the confidentiality and the discussion of personal and sensitive data’.<sup>250</sup> They also try to scare me into deleting my phone call recordings, either themselves unaware, or hoping I will be, that consent is only one of six grounds for lawful data processing under the GDPR.
- (322) At 15:31 I call the FSU Guardian to ask for the phone number of the person who will be taking over the role at the end of the week (as the current Guardian is leaving SJA). Before I can get to that, they ask if anything new has happened and I mention the new hearing. They are uncomfortable about this and tells me that they will contact the DP&O and get back to me.<sup>251</sup>
- (323) **JUL 10** At 09:04 I message the FSU Guardian asking if they have heard anything, and asking for the new role-holder’s contact details. They reply with the DoG’s email address and tells me that the DP&O will give me an update by Jul 13.<sup>252</sup>
- (324) At 12:42 I reply to my DM’s email, asking to see the evidence against me before I can make any decision and presenting my bases in SJA procedure<sup>253</sup> for doing so.<sup>254</sup>
- (325) At 16:05 the DP&O emails me. They say that, having spoken to the FSU Guardian and the Regional HR & Admin. Manager, they have come to the conclusion that I was ‘fast-tracked through the training to become a member of ambulance crew’ (an interesting way to phrase ‘was rushed out irresponsibly quickly with no support’), that ‘there were multiple issues relating to your actions that caused colleagues to raise concerns about you’ (an interesting way to phrase ‘we spied on you, Crewmate I made stuff up about you and we incentivised Crewmate F to lie about you to save their own skin’) and that ‘the organisation has [not] handled this particularly well’ (an interesting way to phrase...you know what, words can’t do it justice).

<sup>249</sup>Email from District Manager to author (9 July 2020); Email from District Manager to author (9 July 2020); Letter from District Manager to author (9 July 2020).

<sup>250</sup>This is false; *Vol. Disc. Proc* (n 35) s 2.18.1 clearly states that ‘this is not a confidential process’.

<sup>251</sup>Phone call between then-Freedom to Speak Up Guardian and author (9 July 2020).

<sup>252</sup>SMS messages between then-Freedom to Speak Up Guardian and author (10 July 2020).

<sup>253</sup>*Vol. Disc. Proc* (n 35) ss 2.12.2 & 2.18.1; multiple conversations with SJA colleagues (May–Jul 2020); basic common sense.

<sup>254</sup>Email to District Manager from author (text reproduced in fig. D.26, 10 July 2020).

- (326) Despite this, they say that I ‘have a case to answer around the issues that your colleagues raised’ and urges me to take part in the hearing and ‘address any learnings that come from it’.<sup>255</sup>
- (327) No mention is made of the fact that I *have* answered the case, but that my DM has ignored my response.  
No mention is made of the fact that my initial concerns *were about* the very same HR & Admin. Manager with whom they have spoken, or that I expressly consider my DM to be either an untrustworthy bully or an incompetent bungler.  
No mention is made of the fact that falsely dismissed for gross misconduct is unlikely to provide many ‘learnings’.
- (328) At midnight I realise I’m no longer fighting to remain in SJA; I’m fighting to leave it with the clean record I deserve.
- (329) **JUL 11** I draft a response to the DP&O, and start creating investigation memes with friends.<sup>256</sup>
- (330) **JUL 12** I reason that if I’m sat thinking about this on a Sunday, my DM can be as well. At 09:51 I email them a follow-up to my request to see the evidence, as well as two additional character references (bringing the total now up to 19, plus the letter of commendation).<sup>257</sup>
- (331) Later in the day I look at Crewmate I’s Twitter profile again to fact-check some things before I put them into this timeline.<sup>258</sup>
- (332) On May 22—a few days after making spurious allegations against me—they have shared a GIF that apparently ‘really resonates today’; the caption reads ‘TREAT PEOPLE LIKE they are PEOPLE, people!’
- (333) On May 31, they boast about having volunteered over 230 ambulance hours in May and wonders how many hours they will be able to get in in June; I am at that point in time suspended because of their spurious allegations, and will be getting in 0 hours.

<sup>255</sup>Email from Director of People & Organisation to author (10 July 2020).

<sup>256</sup>See Appendix E, § E.2.

<sup>257</sup>Email to District Manager from author (text reproduced in fig. D.27, 12 July 2020); multiple character references (12 Jul 2020).

<sup>258</sup>See ¶ 154.



- (334) And on Jun 5, they share a letter of commendation they have received from the CEO and Chief Commissioner, praising them for ‘always mak[ing] new people welcome [and] mak[ing] a person fit right in’.<sup>259</sup>
- (335) I also find an article from Crewmate I’s Masonic Provincial Grand Lodge about their volunteering with SJA. The article states that ‘the values of Freemasonry are based on integrity, kindness, honesty and fairness’.<sup>260</sup>
- (336) To quote a colleague, ‘Get rid of the whole organisation. At this point I dont[sic] care if there’s anything left for me to go back after this pandemic’.<sup>261</sup>
- (337) I draft an email to my DM. My intention is to send it in the morning, along with the email I’ve drafted to the DP&O. There won’t be any walking back.
- (338) **JUL 13** Morning arrives. I’ve decided to head back to my flat up North for the week. I’m about to send both emails before heading off, when I pause. I decide to email the Director of Governance instead, who has taken over the role of FSU Guardian, asking for a phone conversation.<sup>262</sup>
- (339) I have a four-hour drive, and it’s just what I needed to clear my mind. Halfway through I stop and see that the DoG has invited me to a call at 15:00.<sup>263</sup>
- (340) I arrive and get unpacked just in time for the call.<sup>264</sup> We discuss the events leading to this point, my unaddressed concerns and the status of the rescheduled hearing. I ask if they would be willing to accompany me to the hearing, and they agree. They also say they will see if they can find out why evidence is being withheld from me.<sup>265</sup>
- (341) At 17:01 they email my DM asking if the hearing can be delayed 30 minutes so that they can attend.<sup>266</sup>

<sup>259</sup>‘Crewmate I’s Twitter profile’ (n 107).

<sup>260</sup>Masonic Provincial Grand Lodge, ‘Online article about Crewmate I’ (10 June 2019).

<sup>261</sup>WhatsApp messages between SJA colleague and author (1 July 2020); see Appendix E.

<sup>262</sup>Email to Director of Governance from author (13 July 2020).

<sup>263</sup>Email from Director of Governance to author (13 July 2020).

<sup>264</sup>Email to Director of Governance from author (13 July 2020); Email from Director of Governance to author (13 July 2020).

<sup>265</sup>Phone call between Director of Governance and author (13 July 2020).

<sup>266</sup>Email from Director of Governance to District Manager (13 July 2020).



- (342) The system is still inconceivably broken, but at least I feel like I have a fighting chance at a fair hearing again.
- (343) I also reflect on my earlier feeling of ‘fighting to leave the organisation with the clean record I deserve’. I have, unfortunately, been responsible for bringing people into this organisation. Even if my card is punched, I am now determined to use my exit to try and gather as much evidence as I can of this broken system in the hopes that I can contribute some small part to the rebuilding of something better.
- (344) **JUL 14** Another thought occurs: why is this even being handled by my DM in the first place? When I was suspended on May 22, I still had my UM and AM between me and them; they were my 3UP line manager. Despite this, those two weren’t even made aware that I *was* suspended until I told them.
- (345) At midday, my DM replies to me and to the DoG. to say they are happy to delay the hearing start time,<sup>267</sup> and that they will send over the evidence I have requested later in the afternoon.<sup>268</sup>
- (346) At 15:49, they do so. *Kinda.*<sup>269</sup>
- (347) They only send me the five documents I have highlighted specifically as ones for which absolutely no confidentiality argument could possibly be made, and do so over email rather than just inviting me to the OneDrive (which I had told them would be more secure and therefore preferable). They have also redacted people’s names from the documents, despite the fact that I already know who is involved. They have chosen to invisibly redact using white rather than visually with black, which means I am unable to tell on the PRFs whether details like the patient’s names and dates of birth have been missed off by my crewmates and I in the first place or if they have just been redacted.
- (348) I strongly suspect that it’s the former, although I note with gruesome fascination that for all of their talk of ‘confidentiality’, my DM has neglected to redact the patient’s home addresses, next-of-kin details (names and phone numbers) and, in one case, a doctor’s name and GMC PIN.

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<sup>267</sup>Email to Director of Governance from District Manager (13 July 2020).

<sup>268</sup>Email from District Manager to author (13 July 2020).

<sup>269</sup>Email from District Manager to author (13 July 2020).

- (349)           Reviewing my reflective report from the Apr 30 job that prompted the submission of IRF 78026, the RCL mostly concurs with the feedback I had already received many times over by this point. Though their conclusion is critical, I believe it to be fair based on the reflective report.<sup>270</sup>
- (350)           One interesting comment they make is that ‘it is not clear whether [something is not indicated in the report] due to his inexperience or personality’, which is the exact kind of collegiate charity that has been refused by the submitter of the IRF. It does make me realise though—before it was a reflective report, the description of the job was a long WhatsApp message to a friend and colleague, and it reflects both that context and the gap between event and recollection. When the ambulance CPD booklets were issued, I just copied-and-pasted the description and feedback from that and put it into the template unedited.  
It is astonishing to me that this has led to so much trouble.
- (351)           The RCL also alludes to an additional formal report by the Regional Professional Lead (Paramedics) which has, of course, not been shared with me. Having not been listed in the Appendix of the *Investigation Report*,<sup>271</sup> it may well not have been shared with anyone. I hope they didn’t spend too much time writing it.
- (352)           The document ‘MSY Investigation Report’ contains no information as to precisely when it was written or by whom—I assume the C&M AUM, but if the mysterious ‘MSY’ are the author’s initials that can’t be the case—but it again says little that I disagree with.<sup>272</sup> My driving was almost certainly below-standard back in early April; I had barely driven in the four years since passing my test, and I had effectively never driven a vehicle of such size. It does contain some errors, though, such as accusing me of not reporting something as a near miss that I was not aware had happened until the IO brought it up in our interview *two months later* (and the full details of which I am only finding out *now*).

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<sup>270</sup>Email from Regional Clinical Lead to Investigating Officer (13 June 2020).

<sup>271</sup>District Manager (n 38) s 8.

<sup>272</sup>*MSY Investigation Report* (n 41).

- (353) It also addressed the U-turn incident, accusing me of having ‘forgot that [I was] transporting a COVID positive patient’ like some sort of simpleton. Interestingly, the author of the report has actually cited the specific point of the *Infection, Prevention and Control Procedure* that I am alleged to have contravened. This is the section on ‘IPC and Vehicles’,<sup>273</sup> which describes what to do after every patient contact, how to clean after a shift, etc. However, it does not address the incident in question.
- (354) The closest it gets is the description of what to do ‘after transporting an ill patient with a known or suspected infection’, and the introductory statement that ‘it is important that vehicles used as [a] treatment area for patients...are kept in a clean and safe state’. As the charge was that I may have infected the pedestrian, not the passenger, the latter point is moot; on the basis that we were mid-transfer the former is as well.
- (355) Most alarmingly, particularly if the report is from early April as I assume, is the fact that it concludes that I could do with ‘some 1-on-1 tuition from a driver trainer or a more experienced colleague’; despite it having been submitted to my DM, nothing ever came of this.
- (356) The other *Investigation Report*, written by the North East ALM and relating to the Apr 29 job attended by Crewmate F and myself, is mostly made up of emails from me, but it does include the claim that calling through to the ambulance service and requesting another crew ‘was protocol’, again without citing a protocol.<sup>274</sup> This appears to be false; I can find no evidence for this in any document I have access to.
- (357) Finally, the PRFs. PRF 192598 relates to one of the two jobs where Crewmate I alleges that I failed to carry out observations and record information. The PRF for the other such job is not listed as being on the investigation OneDrive, despite which the report author has nonetheless concluded that ‘there is no clear evidence to suggest if this was the case, but there is some probability from other evidence’.

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<sup>273</sup> *IPC Proc.* (n 177) s 7.

<sup>274</sup> North East Ambulance Locality Manager, *Investigation [Crewmate F] & BG*.

- (358) And now, the main event: did I falsify Crewmate F's signature on PRF 136891, from our Apr 30 job?<sup>275</sup>  
Um, no.  
Obviously not.
- (359) The document 'PRF info for Reflective Practice Log' contains three PRFs (and continuation sheets) from our three Apr 30 jobs; more than enough to tear the allegation to shreds with (see Appendix H.)
- (360) I email back to ask for the remaining evidence.<sup>276</sup>
- (361) **JUL 15** At 09:39 I follow up my email to request the IRF 76723 from Crewmate I as well.<sup>277</sup>
- (362) At 16:07, the HR Advisor replies to my email requesting further evidence to be shared prior to the rescheduled hearing. They say that, as we will be going through the remaining evidence in the hearing tomorrow, 'nothing further will be sent to you'. Quite how this would be fair if I were unable to attend the hearing and had to submit a written statement instead is unsaid.
- (363) They also say that my DM has had to pull out due to 'personal circumstances' and that the (an?) Regional Volunteer Manager<sup>278</sup> will be chairing it instead. They do not say whether my DM will still be responsible for the verdict or not.<sup>279</sup>
- (364) I reply at 16:23 to say 'Okay, see everyone tomorrow'.<sup>280</sup>
- (365) I then work late to update this timeline and to finalise my response to the *Investigation Report*.
- (366) **JUL 16** At 12:09 I email everyone over a copy of this timeline, version 3 of my response to the *Investigation Report* and all 19 character references (plus the letter of commendation), with the intention of referencing them repeatedly in the hearing.<sup>281</sup>
- (367) The hearing begins at 14:30. The RVM chairs. The HR Advisor takes notes. The DoG is accompanying me, on the understanding that they are a neutral observer and not there to take my side.

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<sup>275</sup>Ben Goldsworthy and Crewmate F, *PRF 136891* (2020).

<sup>276</sup>Email to District Manager from author (text reproduced in fig. D.28, 13 July 2020).

<sup>277</sup>Email to District Manager from author (text reproduced in fig. D.29, 14 July 2020).

<sup>278</sup>Searching their name on CONNECT suggests that they are/were a DM in the North East.

<sup>279</sup>Email from HR Advisor to author (15 July 2020).

<sup>280</sup>Email to HR Advisor from author (15 July 2020).

<sup>281</sup>Goldsworthy, *Investigation Response* (n 40).

- (368) The first question put to me is around my refusal to delete my phone call recordings, which the RVM warns me may result in further charges. I explain the five bases for lawful data processing besides consent provided by the GDPR, although I acknowledge that ‘the St John GDPR e-learning doesn’t really address [them] very well’.
- (369) I also state that if anyone can present me a procedural or legislative reason to do so, I of course will. Nobody does.
- (370) After a few reasonable questions around my early April awareness of the various SJA driving procedures comes the biggest stinker of the event: ‘why did you falsify your crewmate’s signature on the Apr 30 PRF?’
- (371) The allegation itself collapses like wet tissue paper, but I challenge this brazen question-begging. After asking why they chose to ask the question as ‘*why* did you’ rather than just ‘did you’, the RVM and the HR Advisor both attempt to deny that they did so (bearing in mind the HR Advisor’s whole purpose is to be taking notes, this cannot possibly be an innocent mistake). The DoG corrects them.
- (372) Further questions are asked around my knowledge of IPC procedures and apparent (but never evidenced) protocols for requesting additional crews, my use of dynamic risk assessments when enlisting outside help with the Apr 29 and 30 jobs and various clinical aspects of the Apr 30 job. It is clear from the clinical questions that the RVM has not looked at the PRF and is going solely off of my reflective report. For example, asking if we escalated to ambulance control after the patient first seized, which is clear from the PRF but ambiguous in my reflective log, and citing the patient’s oxygen sats as 70% when this was an incorrect figure I had given in my log.
- (373) At one point the HR Advisor (who I had assumed was supposed to be a neutral party) presses me on the allegation that I neglected to clean an ambulance with Crewmate I; I grow increasingly exasperated that they are asking me to state whether I ‘don’t remember not cleaning an ambulance’.
- (374) After the questions I note that, despite the claims of the HR Advisor’s email the day before, I have not been shown a single additional piece of evidence in the hearing and ask them to explain.

- (375) The HR Advisor's first response is not a comprehensible sentence. They then claim that the evidence I have not been shown is not relevant to what we have discussed in the hearing, which is both patently false (e.g., Crewmate F's claim that I falsified their signature) and utterly irrelevant (as the DoG points out, the *Investigation Report* and the RVM's final decision will both take the totality of allegations and evidence into account).
- (376) I apparently can't be trusted with evidence, because I have recorded phone calls and apparently 'threatened' to release them. They then have the *gall* to claim that doing so is not in line with the SJA HEART values, the third of which is 'Accountability';<sup>282</sup> they clearly know they have no procedural or legislative basis to be upset with me, but are nonetheless still mad.
- (377) I state that I did not 'threaten' to do anything, and that me stating that I had the recordings 'would only be a threat...if they recorded something embarrassing—I'm on those recordings and I have no qualms with them being released...—...if you considered it a threat, or if [my DM] considered it a threat, then I think that says more about your behaviour and [their] behaviour than it does mine.'
- (378) The DoG chips in to say that it is only fair for me to see any evidence that will be used to come to a decision. The HR Advisor begins arguing with the *Director of Governance* and repeatedly attempts to deflect and answer questions we haven't asked or going off on tangents about how busy everyone is.
- (379) Realising we're getting nowhere, I ask them to specifically confirm that a) there is a file listed in the *Investigation Report* called '[Crewmate F]', which b) from context presumably contains the allegation that I falsified their signature, and c) that they are claiming that this file is *not* relevant to any of the matters discussed in this hearing. They mutter something about not realising I hadn't been sent that file (having previously replied to say it would not be shared with me only the day before).
- (380) During this whole period, the RVM says nothing. I wonder if they regret putting themselves forward for this gig.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> *Our values* (n 19).

<sup>283</sup> Disciplinary Hearing (recording of author's side only available from the author, 16 July 2020); HR Advisor, *Disciplinary Hearing Notes*, p 7.

- (381) Concluding, I ask the HR Advisor whether my tearing down of the document falsification allegation means that we are no longer looking at gross misconduct; they tell me that the alleged gross misconduct is 'everything' and that I am still facing dismissal as a worst-case scenario.
- (382) I tell the RVM that it is not necessary for them to read my entire 77-page timeline on top of my 30-page report response, but they insist. I ask when they might come to a conclusion, and they suggest by this time next week. I ask them to inform me if this is delayed, and they says they will.
- (383) I chat to the DoG after the hearing and thank them for accompanying me. I confess that 'I'm not going to hold my breath for any more evidence to get shared with me'.<sup>284</sup>
- (384) Quelle surprise! At 18:57, the HR Advisor emails over the file '[Crewmate F]'.<sup>285</sup> Astonishingly, it only contains their statement in relation to the Apr 29 job, not the Apr 30 where they have apparently accused me of falsifying their signature.<sup>286</sup> I raise this in my usual timid manner.<sup>287</sup>
- (385) **JUL 17** At 09:48, the IO emails the HR Advisor with some information.<sup>288</sup>
- (386) At 10:34, the HR Advisor replies to my email, this time with Crewmate F's statement regarding the Apr 30 job.<sup>289</sup> They also include a Jul 7 statement from the North East ALM on Crewmate F's statement on the Apr 29 job, which the IO had emailed the Advisor earlier that morning (so, clearly, neither was included in the investigation's evidence OneDrive).<sup>290</sup> If I had not been shown Crewmate F's direct statement yesterday, I would now be receiving it fifth-hand.
- (387) Regarding the Apr 30 statement, until this point I have been holding out hope that the allegation would turn out to have been merely the product of the IO's fevered imagination, but I now know this is not the case. It is more than a little heartbreaking, but at least now I know.

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<sup>284</sup>Microsoft Teams messages between Director of Governance and author (16 July 2020).

<sup>285</sup>Email from HR Advisor to author (16 July 2020).

<sup>286</sup>Crewmate F, [Crewmate F] (June 2020).

<sup>287</sup>Email to HR Advisor from author (text reproduced in fig. D.30, 16 July 2020).

<sup>288</sup>Email from Investigating Officer to HR Advisor (17 July 2020).

<sup>289</sup>Email from HR Advisor to author (17 July 2020); see also ¶ 249.

<sup>290</sup>Email from North East Ambulance Locality Manager to Investigating Officer (7 July 2020).

(388) I also now know that Crewmate F was presented with a copy of the PRF without fanfare back in mid-Jun, whilst I had to fight tooth and nail (and eventually get the *Director of Governance* involved) to see it in mid-Jul. I email the HR Advisor back, outlining which evidence I have still yet to be shown.<sup>291</sup> I never hear from them again.

(389) Re-reading the *Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure* in the evening I notice a possible reason for the sudden, last-minute change of hearing manager (emphasis mine):

The individual's line manager will normally chair the hearing and undertake the role of 'hearing manager'. In some circumstances where the allegations are of such a serious nature, or **where it is felt that the case is of a complicated nature**, another appropriate hearing manager not linked to the case may chair the hearing.<sup>292</sup>

'Complicated' barely does it justice.

(390) :

(391) **JUL 22** Tomorrow is one week on from the hearing. There has been no transcript presented by the HR Advisor, no further evidence shared and no statement that further evidence is irrelevant.

(392) I expect things will not go my way tomorrow. I ensure the backups I made previously are up-to-date.<sup>293</sup>

(393) **JUL 23** At 10:48 the RVM calls me to inform me that they have come to the verdict of dismissal.<sup>294</sup>

<sup>291</sup> Email to HR Advisor from author (text reproduced in fig. D.31, 17 July 2020).

<sup>292</sup> *Vol. Disc. Proc* (n 35) s 2.12.7.

<sup>293</sup> See ¶ 259.

<sup>294</sup> Phone call between Regional Volunteer Manager and author (recording held by author, 23 July 2020).



(394) At 11:01 they email me a letter containing their justifications.<sup>295</sup> The decision has allegedly been made ‘following careful consideration of the allegations and with the evidence available’. It has been made on the basis of:

- clinical concerns relating to the Apr 30 job;
- failure to escalate to ambulance control and trusting that the neighbour was a doctor on the same;
- failure to follow correct damage notification procedures following the Apr 4 vehicle incident;
- putting members of the public at risk of injury and illness and potentially breaching patient confidentiality on the Apr 29 & 30 jobs;
- ‘Professional Misconduct’, presumably the signature falsification allegation; and
- ‘breach of confidence and trust’, presumably relating to my recording of calls and refusal to delete them.<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>295</sup>Email from Regional Volunteer Manager to author (23 July 2020).

<sup>296</sup>Letter from Regional Volunteer Manager to author (n 39).

(395)

In response:

- fair enough, but they both me and my crewmate's errors and we were dealing with by far our most complex job yet despite both being inexperienced;
- false, as we *did* escalate when the patient deteriorated beyond our abilities to try and correct, and the neighbour was known to the patient's wife and put their name and GMC PIN on our PRF so we had no reason to doubt their credentials;
- fair enough, but I did my best in light of having been rushed out underprepared in the mad April rush;
- fair enough, but everything involves risk and in light of there being no official guidance and therefore having to conduct dynamic risk assessments in line with my training I believe the actions justifiable (or, at worst, honest errors of inexperience);
- utter, indefensible nonsense; and
- I get that recording calls without informing people is perhaps rude, and someone unfamiliar with the GDPR may think it unlawful, but this is not the case. I have not breached confidentiality as I have not shared the recordings with anyone. I chose to record the calls for my own protection once it became clear that I was being treated unfairly, as I expected I would require them in the event of both an inevitable appeal and the report into systemic failings that I intended to submit after everything had wrapped, and in consultation with the FSU Guardian.

Of the 'fair enoughs', the thought that a once-in-a-lifetime national emergency would not count as 'exceptional mitigating circumstances'<sup>297</sup> absolutely beggars belief.

(396)

I email the RVM back asking them to elaborate on what they mean by 'professional misconduct'.<sup>298</sup>

(397)

I am then locked out of my SJA email account.

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<sup>297</sup> Vol. Disc. Proc (n 35) s 2.12.20.

<sup>298</sup> Email to Regional Volunteer Manager from author (text reproduced in fig. D.32, 23 July 2020).

- (398) The RVM's letter tells me to submit my appeal to the HoV, although it conveniently neglects to mention that I only have seven calendar days to do so.<sup>299</sup> I submit away...<sup>300</sup>
- (399) ...only to receive an automated out-of-office to say that the HoV is on annual leave until Aug 3.<sup>301</sup> If the issue is urgent (which this clearly is), I am advised to send me message to two people: the Regional Coordinator; and the RVM.
- (400) [screaming intensifies]
- (401) I email both asking them who my appeal needs to go to.<sup>302</sup>
- (402) **JUL 24** At 09:56 the Regional Coordinator replies, telling me to contact HR.<sup>303</sup> They CC in someone who they assure me 'will be happy to help'.
- (403) Oh yeah, you know *exactly* where this is going. Of bloody *course* it's the Regional HR & Admin. Manager.
- (404) The Manager emails back at 10:01, confirming receipt and telling me that the HoV will be in touch on their return.<sup>304</sup>
- (405) Nine weeks to the day since this trainwreck began, I am told to wait *another* week and a half.
- (406) I reply, including the HoV, to state that I have belatedly realised that I am in fact appealing on all *four* of the grounds laid out in the *Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure*; my new account of the Apr 30 job is based on the contemporary evidence from the PRF, rather than the previous report that was produced casually days after the fact and is incorrect on a number of points.<sup>305</sup>
- (407) **JUL 25**
- (408) **JUL 26** I send the HoV an updated version of my appeal letter.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> *Vol. Disc. Proc* (n 35) s 2.13.2.

<sup>300</sup> Email to Head of Volunteering from author (text reproduced in fig. D.33, 23 July 2020); Ben Goldsworthy, Appeal letter (v 1, 23 July 2020).

<sup>301</sup> Automated email reply from Head of Volunteering to author (23 July 2020).

<sup>302</sup> Email to Regional Volunteer Manager and Regional Coordinator from author (text reproduced in fig. D.34, 23 July 2020).

<sup>303</sup> Email from Regional Coordinator to author (24 July 2020).

<sup>304</sup> Email from Regional HR & Admin. Manager to author (24 July 2020).

<sup>305</sup> *Vol. Disc. Proc* (n 35) s 2.13.3; Email to Regional HR & Admin. Manager from author (text reproduced in fig. D.36, 24 July 2020).

<sup>306</sup> Email to Head of Volunteering from author (text reproduced in fig. D.37, 26 July 2020); Ben Goldsworthy, Appeal letter (v 2, 26 July 2020).

(409) :

(410) **Aug 3** At 20:29, the HoV emails me to confirm receipt of my appeal, saying they will be in touch in the next couple of days.<sup>307</sup> I reply with all of the documents together in one place for convenience.<sup>308</sup>

(411) **Aug 4**

(412) **Aug 5** The HoV sends me an invitation to an appeal hearing on Aug 12. The Regional HR & Admin. Manager will be note-taking. Recording is not mentioned.<sup>309</sup>

(413) **Aug 6** I call the DoG to let them know about the hearing and to ask if they are available to accompany me again. They are not, but they tell me they will be happy to submit a written witness statement about the disciplinary hearing. They ask me what I'd like them to focus on, but I tell them that as they were there as an independent observer rather than on my behalf I don't want to editorialise.<sup>310</sup>

(414) I reply to the HoV with a couple questions, with the primary one being whether I can record the hearing. I lay out my past experiences and why 'I do not trust live note-taking in general' and 'do not trust [the Regional HR & Admin. Manager] or [their] note-taking in particular'.<sup>311</sup>

(415) **Aug 7** The HoV responds, saying that I do not have their permission to record the hearing, but that they will respond to the concerns I have raised when they are next in the office on Aug 11.<sup>312</sup> I let them know the SJA colleague who will be accompanying me to the hearing.<sup>313</sup> They send them an invitation.<sup>314</sup>

(416) :

(417) **Aug 11** The HoV emails to let me know that a different HR Manager will be note-taking instead.<sup>315</sup> I'm still very wary, but this at least *seems* like a promising development.<sup>316</sup>

<sup>307</sup>Email from Head of Volunteering to author (3 August 2020).

<sup>308</sup>Email to Head of Volunteering from author (text reproduced in fig. D.38, 3 August 2020).

<sup>309</sup>Email from Head of Volunteering to author (5 August 2020); Letter from Head of Volunteering to author (5 August 2020).

<sup>310</sup>Phone call between Director of Governance and author (6 August 2020).

<sup>311</sup>Email to Head of Volunteering from author (6 August 2020).

<sup>312</sup>Email from Head of Volunteering to author (7 August 2020).

<sup>313</sup>Email to Head of Volunteering from author (7 August 2020).

<sup>314</sup>Email from Head of Volunteering to author (7 August 2020).

<sup>315</sup>Email from Head of Volunteering to author (11 August 2020).

<sup>316</sup>Email to Head of Volunteering from author (11 August 2020).

- (418) Discussing my expectations of tomorrow's appeal hearing with someone, I explain that I don't really know what to expect, but that there is one line of questioning that the HoV may embark down that will be a major red flag: anything to do with my future intentions.<sup>317</sup> Doing so will demonstrate that, rather than limiting their appeal to an objective assessment of the fairness (or lack thereof) of the original process and outcome, the HoV is making a calculation about what will best suit SJA's interests.
- (419) **Aug 12** At 07:40, the DoG sends their witness statement to the HoV.<sup>318</sup>
- (420) The appeal hearing is mostly uneventful.<sup>319</sup> The HoV begins by stating that the purpose of the appeal is only to look at the grounds the appeal has been made on, and not to re-examine the actual accusations themselves. This seems a bit of a meaningless distinction, since one of those grounds is that action has been taken on unfounded grounds and another is that new evidence exists.
- (421) I talk through each section of my appeal letter in turn, providing elaborations where prompted and clarifying some points. The HoV asks quite a few questions about the withholding of evidence; the HR Manager seems shocked when I point out that the HR Advisor claimed that this was because I could not be trusted with it.
- (422) At one point I discuss how my crewmate must have been the one taking patient observations on Apr 30 as I had been recording them on the PRF. The HoV asks me to clarify how the work is shared across a crew; it is at this point that I realise they are non-clinical.
- (423) As we conclude, the HoV tells me that I should have a final outcome within two weeks, though they will aim for sooner. They say they will contact me by the end of the week with a clearer idea of when to expect a resolution.
- (424) After the hearing I email the DoG to say that 'I'm (very, very, very cautiously) optimistic'.<sup>320</sup> I also ask if they will re-send a copy of their witness statement to my current email address, as the HoV had mentioned that they had sent it to my SJA address.

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<sup>317</sup>Conversation between author and author's parent (August 2020).

<sup>318</sup>Email from Director of Governance to Head of Volunteering (12 August 2020).

<sup>319</sup>Appeal Hearing (recording of author's side only available from the author, 12 August 2020).

<sup>320</sup>Email to Director of Governance from author (12 August 2020).

- (425) **Aug 13** I email the HoV some further clarification on the HR Advisor's behaviour in the disciplinary hearing and whether or not I raised the fact of my inexperience and lack of provided support with anyone (yes, many times). I attach multiple items of supporting evidence, including the recording I took of myself (and only myself) during the disciplinary hearing.<sup>321</sup>
- (426) They confirm receipt.<sup>322</sup>
- (427) The DoG forwards me their witness statement.<sup>323</sup> They limit their comments only to what they had observed during the disciplinary hearing, writing that 'Ben has not consistently been provided with details of the allegations made against him', and that when 'he has requested details so that he can prepare, these were either not provided or not done in a timely manner.' They also write that whilst they thought the hearing was otherwise fair, the 'why did you sign your crewmate's signature?' question was concerning.
- (428) **Aug 14** The HoV emails me to say that they are still looking into things and will contact me mid-week with a further update.<sup>324</sup>
- (429) It is immensely refreshing to have someone providing updates, sticking to promises and generally treating me like a human being. However, the bar should never have been lowered to such a point that that becomes remarkable.
- (430) :
- (431) **Aug 19** The HoV emails again to invite me to a follow-up call with them and the HR Manager (and my accompanying colleague) on Aug 21.<sup>325</sup> I confirm, but point out that I've not received any notes from the previous week's appeal hearing. I make an ill-advised quip about hoping that the HR Manager has 'just been busy rather than doing a[n HR Advisor]'.<sup>326</sup>
- (432) The HoV replies to say that they do not consider the comment acceptable.<sup>327</sup> I apologise to the HR Manager.<sup>328</sup>

<sup>321</sup>Email to Head of Volunteering from author (text reproduced in fig. D.39, 13 August 2020).

<sup>322</sup>Email from Head of Volunteering to author (13 August 2020).

<sup>323</sup>Email from Director of Governance to author (13 August 2020).

<sup>324</sup>Email from Head of Volunteering to author (14 August 2020); Email to Head of Volunteering from author (text reproduced in fig. D.40, 14 August 2020).

<sup>325</sup>Email from Head of Volunteering to author (19 August 2020).

<sup>326</sup>Email to Head of Volunteering from author (text reproduced in fig. D.41, 19 August 2020).

<sup>327</sup>Email from Head of Volunteering to author (19 August 2020).

<sup>328</sup>Email to Head of Volunteering from author (text reproduced in fig. D.42, 19 August 2020).

(433) **AUG 20**

(434) **AUG 21** The follow-up call is to discuss the nature of the vague ‘professional misconduct’ from the disciplinary outcome letter.<sup>329</sup> The HoV clarifies that it relates to two things: my occasional use of unprofessional language (e.g., the ‘really *fucking* mad’ from the first version of my investigation report response, and the comment from a couple days ago) and the fact that I recorded (my side of) the disciplinary hearing after having apparently agreed not to.

(435) I accept that I have occasionally let myself down in terms of professionalism, but that this has usually been apologised for shortly afterwards and is surely explainable, if not excusable, by the stress of the situation that I have been placed in for the last thirteen-plus months. The HoV repeatedly asks if I believe that this is a sufficient mitigation; I repeatedly say that it’s not my place to decide, and that I’m more than happy to accept responsibility and some proportionate punishment.

(436) Then the HoV asks if, ‘from where I am, if I am to move forward and if you were to come back, are we going to be in the same situation again?’

(437) My red flag has been tripped.<sup>330</sup> This appeal will surely fail.

(438) We then move on to the recording of (my side of) the disciplinary hearing. I explain that I don’t believe the characterisation of me apparently agreeing not to record was accurate, but again point out that no notes seem to exist. The HoV says that notes do exist, and that they will be given to me at the same time as the appeal hearing notes. I point out that that’s absurd, as the disciplinary hearing was weeks ago, not to mention absolutely material to my current appeal.

(439) Concluding, I say that whilst I have said some things that I shouldn’t have, I have been through a quarter-year ordeal and my patience is not what it once was. The HoV says they will get an outcome to me early next week.

(440) **AUG 22** This process has taken an extraordinary toll on me mentally. Lately, I alternate between bad days and good days. Today is a very bad day. I sleep for a large portion of it.

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<sup>329</sup>Videocall between Head of Volunteering and author (recording of author’s side only available from the author, 21 August 2020).

<sup>330</sup>See ¶ 418.

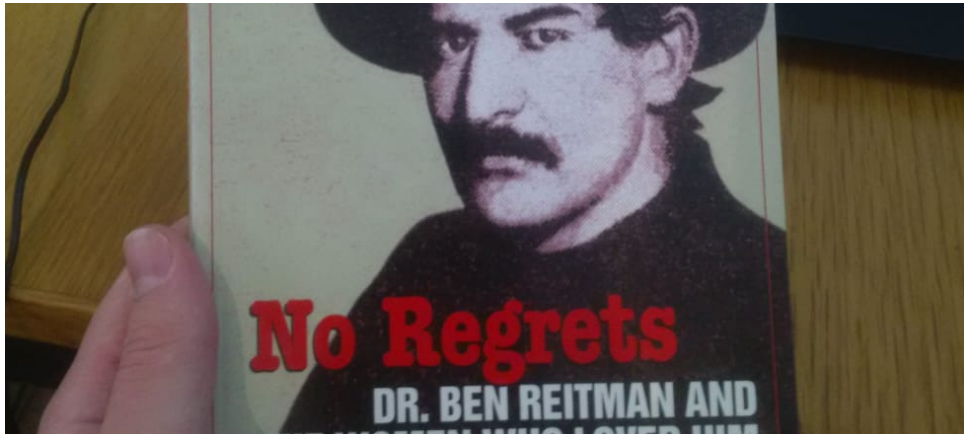
(441) Not long to go now.

(442) **AUG 23**

(443) **AUG 24** At 20:10, the HoV emails me the appeal outcome, as well as notes from the appeal hearing (and follow-up call).<sup>331</sup> They also attach the disciplinary hearing notes, writing that I had ‘stated during the appeal that [I] had not received [them]’.

(444) In their letter, they uphold the original decision and dismiss all four of the grounds of my appeal (see Appendix **K**).

(445) **AUG 25** That morning, a book arrives for me in the post.  
Its title?



<sup>331</sup>Email from Head of Volunteering to author (24 August 2020); Letter from Head of Volunteering to author (24 August 2020); HR Advisor (n 283); HR Manager, *Appeal against dismissal Ben Goldsworthy 12 August 2020*; HR Manager, *Additional meeting supplementary to Appeal Hearing*.



## C. Past IMFs

I have previously submitted two IRFs:

- IMF 56883 related to an incident on Aug 25 2019, but I do not know if I reported it the same day or not.
- I received a response on Sep 17 asking requesting clarification,<sup>1</sup> I replied the same day<sup>2</sup> and received a further email on Oct 1 containing the response of a Service Manager to whom it had been passed and closing the incident.<sup>3</sup>
- IMF 73037 related to an incident on Apr 1 2020, but again I do not know when I reported it.
- I received an email the following day containing the response of a Service Manager to whom it had been passed and closing the incident.<sup>4</sup>

I have been the defendant once before:

- IMF 74799 was submitted on Apr 20 2020 and related to an allegation against Crewmate E and myself.
- We were emailed a copy of the IRF on May 5 and asked to respond with comments.<sup>5</sup>
- We did so,<sup>6</sup> and were told that the incident would be closed.<sup>7</sup>

Though there were some gaps between submissions and responses, on the basis that these were all resolved over email I do not think formal investigations were carried out; rather, it seems likely that these were just standard procedural delays.

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<sup>1</sup>Email from Assurance Data & Systems Coordinator to author (17 September 2019).

<sup>2</sup>Email to Assurance Data & Systems Coordinator from author (17 September 2019).

<sup>3</sup>Email from Assurance Data & Systems Coordinator to author (1 October 2019).

<sup>4</sup>Email from Assurance Data & Systems Coordinator to author (2 April 2020).

<sup>5</sup>Email from North ROCC Tactical Commander to author & Crewmate E (n 65).

<sup>6</sup>Email to North ROCC Tactical Commander from author (n 67); Email from Crewmate E to North ROCC Tactical Commander (n 68).

<sup>7</sup>Email from North ROCC Tactical Commander to author & Crewmate E (11 May 2020).

## **D. [P.S. Correspondence from the author]**

Hi,

I am a newly-qualified EMT and I would like to help cover winter pressure shifts.

I can do this Sat & Sun (21st & 22nd) and next Sat (28th) currently—I'm booked onto Essential Education 1 in Stockport on the 29th, but if that gets cancelled I'll be free for a shift then too. I imagine I'll be free most weekends after that too as prior commitments get cancelled, but I'll let you know closer to the time.

As I'm newly-qualified I still need to do my three supernumerary shifts. I'm not bothered about shift times. Preference is emergency response/urgent care but happy with whatever. I'm based in Lancaster and do not have my own vehicle so will have to get the train to/from the shift start/end locations.

I am also a Basic Driver (post-1996 Cat B entitlement), but working on getting an operational check drive ASAP—if there's any chance someone could do one on a shift that'd be grand.

Cheers,  
Ben Goldsworthy

Figure D.1: "RE: Winter Pressures", sent Mar 18 at 08:39.

Hi,

I need to complete three supernumerary shifts before I can crack on properly, and I'm keen to get them done asap.

Would we need to book on as a three-person crew, or could I attach on to an already-booked shift for two?

Cheers,  
Ben

Figure D.2: "Re: Winter Pressures", sent Mar 20 at 12:16.

...i'm trying to get on as[sic] any ambulance shifts going cos i need to do 3 as a third man before i can crack on as normal and i don't really fancy trying to get that done when the fan is covered in shit

Figure D.3: WhatsApp message, sent Mar 23 at 13:50.

My two pence on the SJA NHS support plans from the perspective of a non-HCP SJA volunteer, because across both here and my EMT chat I've seen a lot of HCPs kicking off and it seems to me like a case of letting the perfect be the enemy of the good. Take as many grains of salt as you want with this; I'm not an HCP, I don't work in healthcare day-in day-out and I might be entirely off the mark.

First, the FA/AFAs in ED. Yes, there are some questionable volunteers in SJA (e.g., we had a pair on my EMT course arrive as AFAs and leave as FAs, and even that was generous). @[MRT colleague]'s comment about 'budget HCAs' is accurate. You don't get the budget version of something if you can avoid it, and it would be better if the NHS could receive an influx of highly-trained help with previous experience in hospitals. Unfortunately, they've already gone to the retired HCP well so now they have to open the search wider - if the only toilet paper available is scratchy one-ply, it's still better than using your hands. Also, I assume these training weekends are at least in part about catching the completely unusable bits of sandpaper before they reach the NHS.

I've seen an HCP complain elsewhere about babysitting FAs. But think what they'll be doing: obs, moving & handling, simple stuff. Even if they're crap at it now, the sooner they get in and start building experience, the smoother things'll go later when they're really needed. The nature of something like this is that there are no good options, only variably-bad ones. Yes, adding relatively inexperienced and unskilled people into hospitals may impact patient care, but is that impact going to be greater than the impact of an HCA having to do work an FA can do rather than something only they can (repeat up the hierarchy of skill levels as necessary)? Clearly those whose heads grace fancier epaulettes than mine have decided no, and I'm in no position to question that decision.

Second, PPE and risk. I've heard people here and elsewhere say SJA are endangering volunteers. I'm sure this comes from a good place; from concern about volunteer welfare. @[another MRT colleague] made a good point elsewhere though that all our volunteers have the capacity to make their own decisions, even where they may cause harm to themselves. Personally, I've done a risk assessment and determined that I'm low risk for serious [COVID-19] complications, and by virtue of living on my own and having a job I can do remotely I'm also in a good position to minimise further infections if I catch it. [concludes on next page]

I get that I'm more likely to contract [COVID-19] volunteering than sat at home. Someone said earlier that SJA et al. should stay away until we know what we're dealing with. Ideally, sure, but the virus won't stand around twiddling its flagella whilst we study it. I'm confident we've got the broad strokes down - rapid infection rate, resp. issues, can be fatal. Whether the CFR is 8 or 12% won't affect my risk assessment. An overburdened NHS threatens me more than [COVID-19], so I'm prioritising supporting the former over avoiding the latter.

~~SJA is a Cat. 2 responder under the CCA.~~ It's the nation's ambulance auxiliary; like any reserve force - the Army Reserves, the special constabulary, retained firefighters, etc. - it not anybody's first choice. However, in a situation like this where all hands are on deck and they still might not be enough, those reserve forces stepping up may make a crucial difference.

At the end of the day, this is SJA operating under the NHS's roof. *Absolutely* slap an FA down if they aren't respecting that and are going about things their own way or endangering themselves or others. However, through SJA I've met both fantastic, helpful HCPs and smug wanky HCPs. This isn't anyone's idea of an ideal situation, but please don't treat SJA volunteers you may soon be working alongside soon like they're the enemy or an encumbrance; you're going to need them.

**Narrator: there were more than two pence**

Figure D.4: Discord message, sent Mar 24, emphasis and correction mine in original.

Hi [Area Manager (District Support)],

It's great to hear that there will be a course put on in the District. I am currently booked onto the EE1 & EE2 in Liverpool this weekend.

My intention, however, is still to attend that course. I'll list the reasons below, but the short version is that I would prefer to complete the course ASAP rather than wait for a possible local course at some point in early April.

- As a recently-qualified EMT I need to do three supernumerary shifts; as the peak of demand is estimated to be in a couple weeks, I am keen to get those and this training out of the way now rather than after things have hit the fan
- I submitted my availability for countrywide ambulance deployments before news of this District course came out, so have already told them I expect to be an EAC and fit-tested [FFP3 mask fit-testing was supposed to take place on the EE2 course] by Monday
- Whilst I would like to complete EE1 and EE2, the crucial element is the PPE fit-testing and from your email it sounds as though that is not yet guaranteed to happen in-District
- Having submitted my availability for immediate countrywide deployments, there is a reasonable chance I won't still be in the District by the time any local course is scheduled

So, as I have already registered myself under the impression I will be available and fully-trained from Monday, I am asking @[my line manager] to approve my continuing to attend the Liverpool course. At about £15 for return trains and £50 for a Travelodge, it would be nice to be able to expense it (even if that's not until after the spending restrictions are lifted), but it's not the end of the world if not.

Cheers,  
Ben

Figure D.5: "Re: EE1 and EE2", sent Mar 26 at 10:21.

Hi,

As per below email,

**Availability:** Any weekends. Weekdays too with a few days' notice so I can ask for them off work.

**Location:** Lancaster. I do not have a vehicle and am reliant on lifts and public transport; where these are not available past 22:00 I will require accommodation, but I'm happy to kip on a sofa or something till the first morning train if need be.

**Clinical level:** EMT

**Driving level:** Basic (post-1996 Cat B entitlement), I'd be happy to finally get an operational check drive in order to be more useful if that is possible.

**Other:** I still have to complete three supernumerary shifts before I can crew normally. I have also made myself available for countrywide block deployments so am waiting to hear back from the JOCC.

Cheers,  
Ben

Figure D.6: "Re: Ambulance Crews Required", sent Mar 26 at 20:39, formatting mine in original.

i was told when i completed my EMT course that I would have to do a minimum of three supernumerary shifts before i could go out as part of a two-man crew (i was also told that there was 0 tracking of this so i'd have to be honest which is a whole other issue)

but i've been very clear about this to the JOCC and will be to the ROCC when they get in touch, and if they try to stick me on a normal shift i'll let them know

i assume by virtue of them allocating me a 4-wk block they've figured they can set me up to crack out those three shifts ASAP next week and be ready for shitty fan o'clock

Figure D.7: WhatsApp messages, sent Mar 26 between 23:08–10.

Speaking of genius plans, I'm supposed to do 3 shifts as a third man before I can crew in a two (because I'm newly qualified) but they've just suspended all that and are sending us straight out

Figure D.8: WhatsApp message, sent Mar 29 at 19:15.

Hi,

I don't think this merits an IMF as it doesn't fit any of the criteria for a serious incident, but I would like to register my disappointment with the ROCC's recent handling of my shift allocations.

I submitted my May availability on May 10<sup>th</sup> (email subject: "May Availability"). Over the course of the next four days I arranged a number of shifts with [the ROCC] who initially offered me the range of dates May 18–31.

We settled on the following:

- May 18–20 out of Stockport
- May 23–24 out of Preston, crewing with [then-line manager] on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and [Area Manager] on the 24<sup>th</sup> (both of whom I had specifically requested to crew with)
- May 26–28 out of Stockport
- May 30–31 out of Preston, crewing with [Area Manager] on the 30<sup>th</sup> (again at specific request)

So, after sitting around twiddling my thumbs for a week, I finally went back out on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>; the shift on the 20<sup>th</sup> had to be cancelled at the last minute due to an unforeseeable personal issue.

Come May 22<sup>nd</sup>, however, I had not heard anything about my shifts that weekend nor the Stockport shifts the following week. [Unit Manager] reported that [they] had called the ROCC, who apparently had us both down for the 23<sup>rd</sup> but not working together; the ROCC had said they would ring [them] back in the afternoon after 'looking at the spreadsheet'.

I later called the ROCC to ask about the Stockport shifts the following week and was told that I wasn't booked onto any. [The ROCC] told me [they] would review the email chain between myself and the ROCC and get back to me about the weekend's shifts.

About two and a half hours later I hadn't heard anything and so called the ROCC again. I was told that I was not booked on to any shifts this weekend either, but asked to send in my availability for future shifts.

I assume there is no unstated reason I am being messed around with these shifts and that it is simply poor handling on the ROCC's part. I will be sending in my availability for the rest of May, however I am understandably unhappy with my experience thus far, particularly the fact that shifts that were expressly booked on the basis of working with specific people were somehow fumbled this adroitly.

Thanks,  
Ben Goldsworthy

Figure D.9: "Complaint", sent May 22 at 19:11.

Hi again,

As this is my first time through this process, hopefully you'll excuse me for asking obvious questions.

1. Can I hear the substance of the complaint made against me? Or the rough gist of it at the very least? I'm sure you can understand that it's rather disconcerting being excluded from an investigation into one's own alleged wrongdoing.
2. Are you able to give me a rough sense of how long you expect this process to last—i.e., are we talking days, weeks or months here?

Cheers,  
Ben

Figure D.10: "Re: Confirmation of Phone Call Information", sent May 24 at 12:14.

Hi [IO],

Thanks for your email - I can make that date and time. However, I have two concerns.

One is that I am still not being told what the 'alleged misconduct' (which I note appears to have jumped in seriousness from what was a 'clinical cause for concern' in your original phone call and 'clinical concerns' in your recap email) actually is, which rather hampers my ability to 'bring with [me] any information that might be of assistance to the investigation' as per your letter. I understand you may be concerned I will suss out who raised the concern and go bother them, which I assure you I have no intention of doing, but 'fact-finding exercise' or not I would much rather be able to digest the allegation(s) and prepare my response in my own time, rather than live on a call with yourselves.

The second is that, whilst I appreciate schedules are busy and I am not going to be the only thing either of you are dealing with right now, you've scheduled the meeting for Friday; the best part of a week away. I am still on leave from work—ostensibly to volunteer with St John Ambulance—but with the exception of my two shifts last week have now been sat at home twiddling my thumbs for the past two weeks. If there is any way you could possibly move this meeting earlier to save a third week of twiddling, I would very much appreciate it.

Cheers,  
Ben

Figure D.11: "Re: Meeting Invitation", sent May 25 at 13:29.



Hello [IO],

It has now been five days since you informed me I was suspended due to clinical concerns, and (I strongly suspect) possibly as many as nine since I was actually first suspended. Each time you have contacted me the allegations appear to have increased in number, diversity and severity. Despite this, my knowledge of what those allegations are has remained nil and repeated attempts since Monday to contact you by both email and phone have gone unanswered. Not only is this secrecy contrary to my past experiences with the IMF process, but I also believe this to be a breach of s. 1.5 of the SJA IMF Policy.

I'm sure this is not your intention, and I am of course as keen as anyone to assist your investigation and get this resolved as soon as possible, but I will not legitimise a farce via participation.

Please tell me the full content of the allegation(s) against me, or give me a very good reason why this is not possible, no later than close of play tomorrow (Thursday) or I have no choice but to refuse to take part in your scheduled interview on Friday. Please also tell me the IMF number for this incident.

I understand that non-participation will likely prejudice this investigation against me (per s. 3.2.1.4 of the SJA IMF Policy). However, despite your earlier assurances I am afraid that I nonetheless feel great unease at the manner in which this process has taken place. I aim to pursue *[sic]* this formally subsequent to the resolution of this process, but at present I feel I am being treated unfairly; if that is the case I shall at least be treated unfairly on my own terms

Ben

Figure D.12: "Re: Meeting Invitation", sent May 27 at 19:17.

Evening,

As I've previously said, I fully appreciate that everyone has jobs and there is a pandemic on. However, as my only roles within SJA are clinical, a clinical-only suspension is functionally identical to a full suspension.

I also appreciate that you keep stressing that this is not (currently) a disciplinary process and that Friday's interview is solely a fact-finding exercise. However, consider my position: in the initial phone call you said that 'clinical concerns' had been raised—that is a term so vague as to cover anything from someone thinking I applied a plaster underenthusiastically to some sort of serious malpractice. Then, in the meeting invitation email, you said there were now also similarly vague 'driving concerns'. Then your attached letter raised the apparent severity of these 'concerns' to 'alleged misconduct'. I cannot judge whether this escalation reflects an actual increase in the severity of what is alleged or just loose use of language on your part because, again, **I do not have a clue what I am alleged to have done or when it is alleged to have happened**. All I know is that there seem to be plenty of allegations to go around but no clarity.

This is *profoundly* stressful for reasons I should not have to explain. I do not know if the allegations are true, partly true, simple misunderstandings or completely baseless. I do not know if they are severe or if they are minor. I do not know if I should expect a drawn-out disciplinary process to follow this or if I can expect a swift return to clinical work. I do not know who has made these allegations, so I do not know who in the organisation I can safely discuss things with (it would have been [line manager], but you nixed that). Did I potentially harm a patient? Did I get a speeding ticket? Or did I send someone a curt email once and now they're getting their own back? Why did whoever had these concerns not come to me directly before beginning this process? Have I ever met them? Have I ever worked clinically with them? Is this some sort of Chinese whispers nonsense blown way out of proportion? I have no way of knowing.

This is profoundly stressful, and also completely unnecessary. In a past IMF (74799), the submitted complaint itself was forwarded on to me for a response, so this level of secrecy does not appear to be 'normal practice'. As the investigator, it is surely also in *your* interests that I am able to attend the meeting with responses prepared and any relevant evidence or information collected beforehand. I cannot fathom why I am being kept in the dark here. You say 'no-one is trying to withhold information' or 'cause you undue stress' which may well be true, but the facts of the matter are that information *is* being withheld and undue stress *is* being caused.

I cannot make this clearer: **whilst I am sure you and [the District HR Lead] are both lovely and well-meaning people, I do not feel comfortable encountering whatever these allegations are for the first time on a Teams meeting with you both**, having never met either of you before, with [the DHRL] taking notes, and then being expected to respond to them then and there.

I also do not feel that finding out what I am under investigation for in advance of the meeting is an unreasonable demand. The end results would be that a) I no longer have to deal with the stressful uncertainty of not knowing what the hell is going on; and b) we can have a more productive, more prepared, smoother and briefer interview. It appears to be a clear win-win, and I do not understand why I am having to fight so hard to achieve this.

Ben

Figure D.13: "Re: Meeting Invitation", sent May 27 at 23:15, emphasis mine in the original.

Hi [IO],

Thanks for that. As you may have noticed I am quite careful about my choice of words - I have a number of amendments to suggest but please don't take the length of the list as any indictment or you or [the DHRL's] transcription abilities. It's just that in a circumstance where those words will be transmitted up and down the Chinese whispers chain and the wrong ones might get me in trouble, that carefulness of course will be amped up to 11.

- p2, 'Currently on probation on MRT'. This sounds to me like I'm in trouble with them. All new MRT members are considered 'probationary' until they have been in for at least two years.
- p3, 'Obs[ervations] Kit - proceeded to carry out observations'. I don't want to be accused of lying if this turns out to have not been the case. I do not remember one way or the other, but based on the fact my crewmate filled out the [PRF] and when this is the case I will sit the response kit down and take obs whilst they take history I believe it likely to have also been the case here.
- p3, 'Manual was used'. I did not use the [JRCALC] book as I did not fill out the PRF, I mentioned that I had it with me in case I ever had to work out a GCS score.
- p3, 'Is aware of what a GCS is now'. I was aware of what a GCS is[s/c] then, I said that I would not been able to rattle it off from memory. [Crewmate I] has misinterpreted this as me now knowing what GCS is, whether due to poor phrasing on my part or preconceived notions on [theirs].
- p4, 'Wiped with clinelle no longer visible or wet when crew mate arrived'. Again, I don't want to overcommit myself. I think this is what may have happened.
- p4, 'did not exactly know but when explain it made sense'. This makes it sound like I didn't know what a stroke was, which is exactly what the complaint claimed. I do, and I did - I encountered a vaguely familiar acronym and did not immediately recall that it was a fancy term for stroke.
- p4, 'Was not a splint [that was] current practice for St John'. I don't remember what item of kit was non-usable, it may or may not have been the traction splint in question.
- p7, 'IRF was completed and received an email from [RDTL North]...'. I completed a [VDR], not an IRF. I only completed the IRF after [they] emailed to ask if I had.
- p7, 'Sides, exhaust, and pads'. The sides were undamaged. I'm not sure what 'pads' means, but they were undamaged too. The only damage I am aware of was to the end of the exhaust.
- p7, 'aware [Crewmate A] was an experienced driver so seemed to know what [they were] talking about'. I said this in regards to taking my crewmate's advice that I would be able to fit after raising my initial concerns, not about the power. Afterwards [they] said it was [their] mistake; I corrected [them] that I was driving so it was my responsibility.
- p8, bit about ambulance suspension. I've just looked through my copy of the *Emergency Ambulance Response Driver's Handbook* and can't find the bit about ambulances being smoother at speed, so I'm not sure where I got that from.
- p8, 'It was suggested by [Crewmate I] that it's just done on app'. It was another crewmate who said we only needed to use the app after [Ambulance Locality Manager (North East Region)] had told me to do the paper inspections as well.
- p9, 'Military MFT test'. The military driving license is called the FMT-600.
- p9, 'Never owned a vehicle but hired as required'. I've never hired a vehicle, I just get short-term insurance on one of my dad's cars when I stay with the family.
- p10, 'April 29th would be experienced'. I think there's a word missing here. I realised due to an event at the end of April that I could no longer rely on my crewmates being more experienced than me.

And I've attached the reflective log of that U-turn incident, let me know if you have any comments to make yourself (as your normal self rather than the Investigating Officer).

Cheers,  
Ben

Figure D.14: "Re: IMF76723", sent May 29 at 22:44.

Hi guys,

On the phone the other day the DM] thanked me for being patient. Continued patience requires that I be treated with the barest minimum level of collegiate respect and kept informed about decisions that affect me; this is what we promise patients, and I expect nothing less.

I have made no secret of how Kafkaesque I have found this process, but I am now 2½ weeks into my suspension—that's 2½ weeks of leave that my employer generously gave me to volunteer with SJA wasted—and seemingly no closer to a resolution.

Last I heard, [the IO] was sending [their] notes over to [the DM] on the 31st, then [they] confirmed [they] had done so after I chased [them] up on Wednesday. On Friday, having heard nothing, I called [the DM] who told me [they] had 'additional questions for Assurance' and that nothing would be happening over the weekend. I've just tried to call you both and gone to voicemail both times. I appreciate that you are both busy and that you may prefer not to have to deal with my interruptions; unfortunately, due to you I am not busy and those interruptions seem to be the only way I find anything out.

I can think of three reasons why I am still suspended:

1. on the basis of the allegations that started the suspension, which I think me & [the IO]'s interview showed were either a) early mistakes that are by now corrected b) misunderstandings c) too vague to rule on either way or d) patently ridiculous from [Crewmate I];
2. you want to investigate why I was allowed out in April underprepared and undersupported, which sounds like a worthy thing to investigate but doesn't necessitate my continued suspension; or
3. new allegations have come to light, hence your 'additional questions for Assurance', in which case please drop the cloak and dagger nonsense and just **tell me**.

After this experience (both the investigation and the events surrounding it) nothing short of a formal apology from the ROCC/RMT will get me to volunteer in the North again, but I do want to know whether it's worth packing my uniform when I head back East or not. Assuming reason #1 above is correct, there is no way that it takes 2½ weeks to come to the same conclusion that [the IO] and I came to after a 1h40 Teams interview (and which we could have reached back on the 23rd had I just been told the allegations immediately).

And please do not attempt to gaslight me by saying I am only 'clinically' suspended again; you've just spent over a fortnight investigating me, so surely by now you know that I have no non-clinical roles and that the two are functionally identical.

Ben

Figure D.15: "Re: IMF76723", sent Jun 9 at 13:38, emphasis mine in the original.

Hi [North ROCC Tactical Commander],

Thanks for telling me what I am alleged to have done; I have not been afforded this luxury by others recently.

That said, I apologise for not being able to see what the problem is here.

At 00:40 on June 8 I shared a reflective report with the MRT WhatsApp group of a job that occurred on April 30, at the urging of multiple MRT colleagues. The report contained no personally-identifying details other than the date, the patient's sex and my own name—I obtained consent from myself before sharing. It contained no images other than a crude diagram of the patient's house layout, as it was relevant to the report. As far as I can tell I have acted fully within the Caldicott Guardianship principles outlined on the report template (which is from the 2020 SJA Ambulance Crew CPD book).

Nobody raised any concerns in the chat or to me privately. I had previously shared the text of the report shortly after the job in question with another SJA colleague for their feedback, who again raised no concerns. I had previously submitted it to the Investigating Officer (IO) of IMF 76723 on May 29, who again raised no concerns.

Did whoever reported this include a copy of the report? If not, please find it attached.

Unless you can give me a convincing reason otherwise, this is beginning to feel like harassment. If you cannot, please consider this reply the lodging of a formal grievance against whoever reported this on the grounds that it is spurious.

I have CC'd in the IO of IMF 76723, who has just informed me that this will be included in that investigation and asked me to provide details of who I was crewing with, the date and time, etc. I will not do so; you have the date now if you did not before, you can look it up yourself. I will, however, be giving my crewmate a heads up in case this gets them in trouble too, because I do not trust anyone else to and will not put them through the same experience I am going through.

Cheers,  
Ben

Figure D.16: "Re: IMFs 78000 & 76723", sent Jun 11 at 12:27.

Hi [IO],

I just tried to ring you and got voicemail; I just wanted to follow up to say that I've had a chance to simmer down and I think I was a bit out of line earlier, so my apologies for that.

I'm obviously incredibly frustrated by this whole affair, but having re-read your email about the new IRFs I genuinely do appreciate that you included as much information as you could about what had happened, the IRF numbers, what steps had been taken and why, etc.

I do think it's odd that [the North ROCC TC] forwarded me the exact text of one of the IRFs, as I've been saying is my normal IMF experience, and I'm pretty convinced now based on how incredibly spurious it was that I must've pissed on someone's cornflakes at some point (and that that someone has friends), but that's for me to deal with once this investigation wraps.

If you can, I'd appreciate any hint you can give me as to when that might be likely to happen. I've now cancelled my remaining leave from work and I'm heading home to Lincolnshire this weekend, but as I said the other day I'd like to know if I'm going to be returned to operational or not asap so I know whether it's worth packing my uniform.

Cheers,  
Ben

Figure D.17: "Re: IMF76723", sent Jun 11 at 17:19.

Hi all, quick from me: two IRFs were submitted against me following my recent sharing of a reflective log in this group. As far as I can tell, one relates to the clinical actions described in it and the other claims that I failed to obtain consent (though whether they mean during treatment or in sharing the report with you all I do not know).

I don't particularly care who submitted them, I've never even met most of you and I don't know whether this is related to some spurious shit I have been dealing with for three weeks now or not. All I want to say is that I said I was initially wary of sharing in case 'a bunch of HCPs jump down my throat for making some obvious (to them) mistake', but I decided to take a risk. This was evidently a mistake; consider the lesson learned.

Figure D.18: WhatsApp message, sent Jun 11 at 19:52.

Hi [IO],

Thanks for getting back to me. Hopefully we're nearing the end now.

As I said on the phone, could you please send me over the following when you get a chance—it's not urgent, but ideally by or before the time this investigation wraps.

For each 'thing' that is now a part of IMF 76723, I would like:

- the reference number;
- the type of 'thing' it is (e.g. IRF, grievance, complaint);
  - for any grievances, whether they were raised under the [Grievance Procedure](#) (for employees) or the [Volunteer grievance procedure](#) (for volunteers).
- the date and time of submission; and
- the text of the 'thing' (or a summary of the allegations made in the 'thing', if you feel any of the actual submission texts are particularly sensitive).

So far I have all of those for IMF 78000, the reference number alone for IMF 78026 and that's it.

Cheers  
Ben

Figure D.19: "Re: IMF76723", sent Jun 17 at 20:27, hyperlinks present in the original.

Hi [IO],

Hope you're well. I know I said that it wasn't particularly urgent, but could you please send me over these details soon?

When this investigation will end is still anyone's guess, but I've got an as-yet-unscheduled hearing with [the DM] coming up at some point (hopefully soon) and I'd really appreciate knowing what I'm up against going in, rather than continuing to flail in the dark as I have been over these past five weeks.

Cheers,  
Ben

Figure D.20: "Re: IMF76723", sent Jun 26 at 09:25.

Hi [HR Advisor],

Hope you're well! I was wondering if you could please give me any update on when the hearing for IMF76723 might be?

I spoke to [the DM] on Monday who said everything was with you to review, but [they] said you'd post me a letter to schedule a hearing. Just in case the message didn't get passed on, I'm not currently living at the address SJA have on file so will need this sending via email instead.

I understand things are busy at the moment, but as tomorrow marks five weeks of me being suspended over this I'm obviously keen to get it resolved (one way or another) as soon as possible.

Cheers,

Ben Goldsworthy, Emergency Ambulance Crew

Figure D.21: "IMF76723 Hearing", sent Jun 26 at 09:49.



Hi [DM] & [HR Advisor],

Apologies for length, and for the fact that this is probably coming somewhat out of the blue for [the HR Advisor].

I've just tried ringing you both, to no answer. I emailed [the HR Advisor] Friday morning, to no reply. We are now in the sixth week of this process and I've hit my limit.

This entire process has been a consistently astonishing shambles, but my personal highlights are certainly:

- being told nothing about the allegations for the first week, whilst simultaneously being told to prepare evidence for an interview about them;
- being told that I can't record the interview, and then finding that the transcript is unclear, inaccurate and in some cases completely the opposite of what I said; and
- being repeatedly gaslit about the nature of my suspension and the content (or lack thereof) of SJA policies and procedures.

You now propose that I:

1. wait an indeterminate amount of time to receive notice of a date where the three of us are all free;
2. wait the required 5–10 days post-notice for that hearing;
3. talk to [the DM] about a report I haven't read, having STILL not been told the full details of the allegations against me, whilst [the HR Advisor] takes notes (that will almost certainly require corrections—accurate live transcription is incredibly difficult); and
4. wait another indeterminate amount of time for a verdict to be reached.

No.

There are a lot of ways to describe doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. 'Frustratingly counterproductive' is a charitable one; 'abusively stupid' is not.

Whilst I don't think it would be in any way warranted by what (little) I know about the allegations and from talking to [the IO], let's assume that the end result of this is my dismissal from the organisation. If I were an SJA employee, based on the conduct of this process I would have an incredibly strong case for wrongful dismissal per the Acas Code of Practice. I'm not an employee though, I'm a volunteer, so I have no rights; there is no employment tribunal I can go to.

However much this second-class citizenship has been a colossal pain the last month or so, we can here exploit it to all of our advantage. If I cannot take SJA to an employment tribunal even in the most egregiously unfair circumstances, why does it matter if someone from HR is present in our discussion to ensure procedures are adhered to? [continues on next page]

**Please, then, consider this counter-proposal:**

- 1. send me a copy of the investigation report, and full details of the allegations involved;**
- 2. allow me to read it in my own time, and to reply with any comments I may have;**
- 3. if we need to discuss it in more depth and synchronicity than email allows, [the DM] and I can arrange a phone/Teams call between us, which will be far easier to arrange than a three-way chat;**
- 4. I will record the chat and share the recording, which removes the need for a third party to take notes and ensures an accurate record (plus, as I currently have a lot of free time, I could even write up notes or a transcript if that would be easier for you to process); and**
- 5. give me a fixed date for a verdict, and inform me as soon as reasonably possible if that date changes.**

If all goes well, we could probably have this whole thing wrapped up by the end of the week if we followed this process.

I am aware that you both, like many others, are currently very busy. I also appreciate that processes like this do not happen overnight. I am, in other circumstances, able to wait patiently for results, but patience requires trust, which requires communication. Throughout this process I have had to fight, cajole and nag for every single morsel of information, I have been given absolutely no reason to trust you or this process and I ran out of patience about a fortnight ago.

You decided to start this process. You decided to ignore every suggestion from me that would have made things easier for everyone. You are now keeping me suspended whilst I could otherwise be supporting the East ROCC. Whilst I do empathise with your current workload struggles, they are ultimately your problem and not mine.

And do not tell me that my counter-proposal is 'against procedure'. SJA policies and procedures have been used as an excuse throughout this farce, as though being ordered to do something stupid and harmful somehow makes it okay. I have become very familiar with SJA's policies and procedures during this process, and they are not worth the paper they are written on.

Don't get me wrong: I love my roles; I have a lot of fantastic colleagues (with blank epaulettes); I have big plans for the Lancaster Unit and I am incredibly proud to see one of our newest volunteers highlighted by SJA nationally for [their] work at Tameside Hospital. But I will not put up with this any longer. [concludes on next page]

Please consider my counter-proposal for concluding this mess. By close of play on Friday, I want to have:

1. full details of the allegations against me;
2. a copy of the investigator's report to review; and
3. a target date for a resolution.

If this is not the case, I am done with SJA. I am under no illusions that my leaving will cause you to lose much sleep, and it is very much not my preferred outcome, but repeated appeals to common sense, collegiate respect and basic decency have so far got me nowhere. My only remaining leverage is that you might prefer not to have to explain why you drove a keen volunteer out of the organisation in the middle of its largest ever mobilisation, through behaviour that has been absolutely and obscenely condemned by **every single person**—SJA or otherwise—I have described it to.

Thanks for reading,  
Ben

Figure D.22: "Re: IMF76723 Hearing", sent Jun 29 at 11:16, emphasis mine in the original.

Hello [DM],

Thank you for the hearing invitation and for sending me over a copy of [the IO]'s Investigation Report. Please find my full response to the report attached; it also lays out my stance re: the hearing on the first page. I have CC'd in [the IO] so as not to criticise [their] work behind [their] back, and the FSU Guardian for reference only.

I have also attached a number of character references, and a document outlining who they all are. These are just the ones that made my Friday midday deadline; I am expecting more to come, and I do not anticipate I will have any difficulty sourcing more if need be.

To be accused of incompetent or inconsiderate behaviour is one thing; to be accused of criminal dishonesty is quite another. In a sense though, it may have saved the day.

The original draft of my response (and the FSU Guardian can attest to this) was a much angrier document. It was scorched earth, not an olive branch. But this new allegation of document falsification prompted me to take a step back and consider things in a different light.

Imagine you have a friend, who you trust. Imagine they're generally normal enough, but occasionally make bizarre claims that appear to be incongruous with your own knowledge and experience, but are *just about* plausible. Gradually, without realising it, you may well start to doubt yourself.

And then one day they tell you that the Earth is flat, and you realise they don't have a Scooby-Doo what they're on about.

I gradually came to realise that the only way someone could possibly make such a claim about me would be if they didn't know me at all, and that that was in fact the case. I had never spoken to [the IO] prior to May 23. I have had two run-ins with yourself previously, both somewhat fraught. You have, effectively, three star witnesses, whose cumulative total of interactions with me is measured in days (and in the case of [the C&M AUM], who has apparently instigated this whole thing, *minutes*).

After our May 29 interview, I sent [the IO] a personal self-assessment. At that point I was only being accused of incompetence, so I only assessed my clinical ability. Please allow me to introduce myself properly; bear with.

I created my personal Web site in late 2013, when I was 17. In [the inaugural post](#), I wrote that one of the goals of the site was to 'immortalis[e]<sup>1</sup> anything regrettable that I say for all time'. In the 7 years since that post, I have written 102 more and not deleted a single one. In [a 2017 post](#) I repeated that mission statement, writing that 'publishing [one's]<sup>2</sup> thoughts further serves to motivate the author to hold those ideas to the degree of rigour they might consider a reader to, in order to head off criticism in advance.' Again in [a 2018 post](#), I wrote that 'exposing ideas, as I do here, to a potential audience (and the attendant risk of criticism) ensures that any such idea will have been thoroughly analysed, and any potential illogicalities headed off in advance'. [continues on next page]

It is not just my thoughts I have exposed to scrutiny for the best part of a decade. The site also lists [every Web site](#) I have ever worked on (25 items), [every piece of software](#) I have ever developed (31 items), [every article](#) I have ever written elsewhere (241 items), [every audiovisual work](#) I have ever produced (9 items), [every appearance](#) I have ever made elsewhere (18 items, plus 3 on a member of my Unit that I helped to arrange), and [everything else](#) I have ever done that doesn't fit into those categories (8 items).

Want more? How about [every qualification](#) I have ever earned (41 items), or [every award](#) I have ever received (25 items)?

More? How about [every book](#) I've ever read (445 items), [every film](#) I've ever watched (1,208 items), [every episode of TV](#) I've ever seen (5,316 items), [every musician](#) I've ever listened to (967 items) or [every game](#) I've ever played (457 items)?

Think this is all irrelevant? Okay, how about a list of [every role](#) I have ever held (160 items) with every organisation I've ever been a part of (55 items). Every one of these organisations and sub-organisations (271 overall) has a page dedicated to it that collates everything associated with it into one place. I realised I'd collected too much stuff, and built a tool to make it easier for people to search.

7 years itself is a long time—I'd go as far as to say that most 7-year-olds weren't even born when I started my site—but these things all stretch back even further than that. The [earliest role](#) is from 2000, when I was 4.

But maybe I only cherry-pick the things that make me look good? Let me grab a few rotten cherries:

- [in this two-parter](#), I conducted a post-mortem into having been accused (and acquitted) of hate speech whilst at university to find out what had gone wrong;
- in the second paragraph of [this piece](#) I inadvertently included a phrase that I later found out may be considered offensive—I chose to leave the phrase in and add an explanatory footnote rather than amend what I had written; and
- I have mentioned not just [once](#), but [twice](#), that one of my great-grandfathers fought for Nazi Germany, which as far as closet skeletons go is pretty *bloody* up there.

Now look at the link at the top of the CV that I also submitted to [the IO] on May 29.

Have a look around the site. Do some digging. Did you know I am [an ordained minister](#)? I'd actually forgotten until I received a 7-year anniversary email whilst drafting this email; hilariously, it seems almost like some sort of sign. Check out the time I [jokingly married](#) two people at a festival, and then later [looked into](#) whether it might have been accidentally legally binding (it wasn't). Or I could show you my 2019 US tax return, in which I declared the princely sum of \$3 in dividend income.

Everywhere you look, no matter how deep or obscure you go, I am confident that you will find nothing but further evidence of my meticulousness and integrity. Not to get too ministerial on you, but Matthew 7:16 seems appropriate here. [concludes on next page]

I decided a long time ago that I wanted to live a radically transparent life. I decided a long time ago to take the saying ‘don’t do/say anything that you wouldn’t want to see on the front page of tomorrow’s newspaper’ and instead to self-publish my own newspaper with everything I ever did or said covering *every* page. I decided a long time ago to guarantee that my conduct would always remain above reproach by virtue of the fact that I would have to present all of it alongside every application for every role I ever made in future.

And I do not relax these standards for anything. Even now, even after six weeks of this abusive process, even after finding out that I have been systematically mistreated by (at best) one rogue Unit Manager or (at worst) the entire RMT, I still made sure to clarify that I was not talking on the organisation’s behalf [in an unrelated interview](#) I gave yesterday evening. It did not even occur to me at the time to do otherwise.

You have seen the high standard I hold others to; recall my feedback from Mar 3 following the Lancaster First Aider Pathway (though I do accept in retrospect that I was perhaps too harsh on some points). I am only able to hold others to this high standard because I hold myself to a far higher one. I have undoubtedly said incorrect things in the past, but I have never, to the best of my knowledge, said or done anything that I believed at the time to be untruthful. And I have always shown my working.

So by all means make your allegations, accuse me of incompetence or of writing in someone’s signature in a momentary fit of madness, but if you’re going to accuse me of acting dishonestly you had better bring some bigger guns than one person’s word and a weird-looking squiggle; you’re going up against a lifetime of rigid, verifiable, unwavering integrity.

But don’t take my word for it; take everyone else’s.

Yours,  
Ben

Figure D.23: “Re: IMF76723 Investigation Report & Hearing Invitation”, sent Jul 03 at 14:23, emphasis and hyperlinks mine in the original.

Dear [CEO] & [DP&O],

I'm very sorry to bother you both with this issue, but I don't really know where else to go with it. This has been going on for over a month and a half and has grown hugely convoluted and difficult to explain briefly, but I'll do my best.

BLUF: I've been suspended and under investigation since mid-May. What started as 'clinical concerns' has gestated to the point where I am now being accused of serious gross misconduct on what I believe to be incredibly shaky grounds. The behaviour of many people, up to and including those holding Regional roles, has been utterly incomprehensible throughout, and recent revelations have caused me to suspect there is more going on than meets the eye.

I have had major reservations about the way this investigation has been conducted since the very beginning. For example, I was not told anything about the initial allegations against me for the first week, whilst simultaneously being told to prepare my defence. The transcript of my interview was highly inaccurate. I have evidence of multiple occasions in which the Investigating Officer and District Manager have made false or misleading statements to me.

Last Monday, I threatened to leave SJA if not provided with the full details of the allegations against me by the end of the week. I did not want to do this, but it was the only leverage available to me. I was finally given a copy of the Investigation Report on Tuesday (I believe as a result of [the FSU Guardian] inadvertently applying pressure, as it came after almost two days of silence to my ultimatum but only fifteen minutes after [they] made some calls to see if [they] could find out what the hold-up was). I was also invited to a hearing in one week's time.

Throughout this process I have endeavoured to be as transparent as possible—of the 44 items listed in the Investigating Officer's Investigation Report I provided 18, four of which are folders containing a total of 27 individual files—and I have raised my concerns in an appropriate manner, following the PACE model of graded assertiveness. I have consistently provided routes for de-escalation and have made sure to apologise whenever I have lost my temper, either fairly or unfairly.

I initially believed the allegations to be the result of misunderstandings and errors of inexperience, and thought that a fair investigation would surely see that. I thought my issues were with faulty procedures, so I began researching and drafting a whistleblowing report that I would be able to submit after the dust had settled and hopefully help improve those procedures, which I believed (and still do believe, independent of all this) to be dangerous. On Jun 10 I first spoke to [the FSU Guardian] about my concerns, and I shared with [them] a working draft of my report.

Finally reading the Investigation Report has challenged that view. It has revealed a number of concerning lapses in procedure, a startling paucity of evidence and the sudden appearance of a hitherto-unmentioned serious new allegation. As a result, I struggle to believe that I am being treated honestly, and I have a strong and credible fear that this is the result of some sort of conspiracy, at best between my District Manager and a neighbouring District's Ambulance Unit Manager but at worst between a sizeable proportion of the North Regional Management Team. [continues on next page]

Yes, I fully understand how tinfoil hat that sounds.

I submitted a detailed rebuttal to the Investigation Report on Friday, additionally outlining my grounds for suspecting that I am being treated in bad faith. I said that I would very much like to be proved wrong, and offered to attend the hearing if granted permission by the District Manager to record it for my own peace of mind—a symbolic gesture, as it would be entirely lawful for me to do so without permission (provided I did not share the recording), but a gesture that I said would provide ‘a compelling counterargument to my conspiracy hypothesis.’

Along with this rebuttal I also submitted 9 character references from a range of friends, bosses and colleagues (both current and former, both SJA and otherwise), as well as a letter of commendation from the COVID-19 National Tactical Commander. I have continued to forward on further character references as I have received them, for a current total of 16 (with a few more still expected).

The hearing is supposed to be at 14:00 today. I prompted the DM this morning to let me know their view re: recording the hearing by 12:00, and was told at 11:57 that they would not allow me to do so. They also said that they would ‘see me at 2pm’, which demonstrates they have not read even the first page of my response, where I make clear that my attendance is conditional on this being granted. I have no choice but to interpret this as evidence that my concerns are valid.

I am not asking you to rule on the validity of the allegations, but I fundamentally do not believe I am able to receive a fair trial in the North Region. I am happy for the allegations to be assessed in another Region or nationally. I have never been afraid of owning up to my mistakes (and I have 7 years of evidence to support this) and I will face the music if need be, but I have a serious worry that I am being scapegoated for North Region’s eagerness to send me out underprepared and undersupported in early April; an eagerness I have copious evidence of.

Though [they] presumably can’t take a side, [the FSU Guardian] should be able to verify the factual accuracy of much of what I have said here, and [they have] seen the early draft of my initial whistleblowing report. If either of you would like any further information I am more than happy to provide it; I have attached a redacted copy of my response to the Investigation Report\* (pp 25–29 detail my conclusions) and a forensically detailed timeline of the last three months for your reference.

I have not attached character references as I believe the wrongness of my treatment is independent of whether you think I am a saint or a complete nightmare, and that even someone completely guilty of for more serious allegations would deserve better than this. [concludes on next page]



I am not a naturally conspiratorial person, but it is now my sincere belief that this suspension is baseless and has been ordered on highly suspicious grounds. I do not believe that I am receiving a fair trial, nor that I will be able to within North Region. By my rough calculations, this suspension has already cost SJA potentially as much as £15,000 in lost earnings (I volunteered 200 hours in April \* £100/hr per crew \* I've been suspended for 1.5 months).

This has been a frankly godawful six weeks, and my faith in this organisation and many of my supposed colleagues has been immensely shaken. My only remaining hope is that, though it is a tiny sample size, my two brief interactions with management people outside of North Region ([the COVID-19 National TC] during an issue in April and [the FSU Guardian during this]) have been positive, and I hope this bodes well.

Although the fact my best-case scenario is that I'm only dealing with a single rotten Region is pretty damning.

Thank you for reading,  
Ben Goldsworthy

\* There is some choice use of language in this response (never directed at anyone though, just out of frustration). I only had a short time to get it done, and in an ideal world a couple more redrafts would have shaved off those last rough edges. However, multiple references have attested that I am an usually a calm, reasonable, unflappable person—I once had to talk my housemates through how to treat me for a head injury whilst floating in and out of consciousness after falling down the stairs. That I am now well and truly *flapped* is a testament to impact that this experience has had on me.

Figure D.24: "IMF76723", sent Jul 07 at 12:09, emphasis mine in original.

Hi guys,

Thanks for letting me know your position. As I clearly stated on the first page of my response document, my attendance was conditional on this request being granted.

I will not be seeing you at 2pm; I have escalated this accordingly.

Please find further character references attached.

Ben

Figure D.25: "Re: IMF76723 Investigation Report & Hearing Invitation", sent Jul 07 at 12:17.

Hi [DM],

Thanks for the invitation. I'll consider it and get back to you.

In the meantime though, there are 44 items listed in Appendix 8 of [the IO]'s Investigation Report. I submitted 18 of these.

Please could you share the remaining 26 items of evidence with me, either by emailing them over (insecure) or by giving me viewing access to the OneDrive (secure, preferable).

It's my understanding from talking to multiple colleagues, from the fourth bullet point of s 2.12.2 of the *Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure* and from s 2.18.1 of the same that this should not be a problem and should have been done already.

My understanding of s 2.18.1 is that this is explicitly not a confidential process and that I clearly have a need-to-know basis to access all of the information. Even if you consider the witness statements to be confidential, though I disagree, I see no way in which this argument can possibly extend to the following:

- 'MSY Investigation Report';
- 'PRF for IMF 76723' (with patient-identifiable details redacted);
- 'Feedback from [the RCL]';
- 'PRF info for reflective practice log' (with patient-identifiable details redacted); and
- 'Investigation [Crewmate F] & BG' (and, if 'Investigation [Crewmate F] & BG (1)' is a different document, then that too).

Being deprived of this information puts me at an unfair disadvantage when trying to respond to the allegations. In the case of the two Investigation Reports, you have already set a precedent by sharing [the IO]'s report with me.

Please let me know as soon as possible if you are willing to share this information with me, and if you are not then please state your reasoning.

Thanks,  
Ben

Figure D.26: "Re: IMF76723 Hearing (Rescheduled)", sent Jul 10 at 12:42.

Hey [DM],

Please see below email ref: evidence sharing.

Please also find two more character references attached, bringing the total up to 19 plus a letter of commendation, though I suspect you've not read any of them.

Cheers,  
Ben

Figure D.27: "Re: IMF76723 Hearing (Rescheduled)", sent Jul 12 at 09:51.

Hi [DM],

Thank you very much for sending those over, and apologies for the combative tone of my Sunday email. It's been a very taxing seven and a half weeks, and my restraint is not what it used to be.

Am I right in thinking that you are withholding the following on confidentiality grounds?

- 'Info from [Crewmate B]';
- 'Info from [Crewmate A]';
- 'Info from [Crewmate C]';
- 'Evidence from [RAL] for EMT course';
- 'Evidence from [RDTL] Reference Driving';
- 'Evidence from [C&M AUM] reference support';
- 'Information from ROCC ref 3<sup>rd</sup> crewing'; and
- '[Crewmate F]' (the file listed in Appendix 8, not the person).

If not, then could you please send them over also?

In particular, as it is presumably the source of the most serious allegation against me and the thing that has pushed this into gross misconduct territory, I would like to see '[Crewmate F]'. Redaction shouldn't be necessary; I think I can work out who it's from.

Cheers,  
Ben

Figure D.28: "Re: IMF76723 Hearing (Rescheduled)", sent Jul 13 at 16:43.

Also, because I just remembered, I would also like to see the content of the IRF 76723 that [Crewmate I] submitted that started this whole thing. There should be no confidentiality grounds to withhold this—I have been shown the content of the other IRFs involved in this process, and [the IO] had told me that [they] would send them all over to me back when the investigation wrapped (but [they haven't], despite repeat promptings).

So far I have only seen [the IO]'s summaries of what the IRF said, which based on everything else in [their] report may well have little to nothing in common with reality.

Before I call [Crewmate I] potentially pathologically dishonest, I'd like to make sure that's a fair assessment by seeing [their] own words.

Cheers,  
Ben

Figure D.29: "Re: IMF76723 Hearing (Rescheduled)", sent Jul 14 at 09:39.

Hi [HR Advisor] (et al.),

Thank you very much for sending me over [Crewmate F]'s statement.

I note that it only relates to the Apr 29 job—am I, therefore, to conclude that there is **no evidence** of [Crewmate F] accusing me of a **criminal offence** in relation to the Apr 30 job, despite which [the IO] has seen fit to accuse me of such? An accusation which, by the wording of the question in our hearing earlier, was initially doubled down on by yourselves?

For reference, the following is what [the IO] has written in [their] *Investigation Report* (pp 5–6, allegation 4.3):

It was[sic] also become clear during the investigation talking to Ben[sic] crew mate, that Ben has falsified [their] signature on PRF 136891, you can see the differences[sic], looking at the two other PRF's[sic] in the evidence folder

If this is the case, colour me *absolutely* astonished.

Re: the Apr 29 job itself, and as is the case with every bit of evidence that has been (eventually, after much cajoling) shared with me, this substantially recontextualises [the IO]'s characterisation.

I feel that [Crewmate F]'s statement is mostly accurate, although (due to my usual confirmatory approach to working as a team) I do not believe that 'the decision was made by my crew mate to gain further assistance' would have been done in isolation, although it is possible that there was a failure of communication and that, whilst I thought that [they were], [Crewmate F] was not in fact aware of my intentions.

The line 'he could not hold the carry chair with this gentlemen on it' is further evidence of this breakdown in communication. I was fine holding the carry chair, but as I said in the hearing I was aware that only SJA M&H-trained personnel can perform this role and so believed we required assistance for [Crewmate F] to lift [them]. If this was presumptuous and/or poorly-communicated to [them], then I do apologise. Having just re-read my email(s) to [the North East ALM], I made no claim of requiring assistance with the chair as [Crewmate F] has said.

So, in short, I'm happy to accept [Crewmate F]'s statement as accurate where it is more certain than my own, except on the points stated above. If it is the case that I instigated the request for neighbourly assistance, then I believe I did so under the impression that we were both aware of and on board with the plan, and on the basis of the dynamic risk assessment that I outlined in the hearing.

Cheers,  
Ben

Figure D.30: "Re: [Crewmate F] statement", sent Jul 16 at 19:26, emphasis mine in the original.

Hi [HR Advisor] (et al.),

Thank you for those. As disappointing as it is to find that this baseless allegation did, in fact, originate with [Crewmate F] rather than [the IO] (particularly in the light of [their] SMS messages to me on Jun 12 and other interactions documented in the timeline I submitted), as least I now have the dubious comfort of certainty.

Nothing substantively changes in my report response as a result of this or the attached email from [the North East ALM], although I would highlight that I/we wrote on the Apr 30 PRF that we offered the doctor some PPE so I have no reason to doubt I/we would have also done so on Apr 29 (assuming it is not written on the PRF, which I have not seen).

I do find it very interesting that [Crewmate F] was clearly shown the PRF as a matter of course way back on Jun 17, whilst I had to fight to see it (and eventually had to get [the DoG] involved) as late as Jul 14. I wonder what other preferential treatment [they have] been shown during [their] own investigation?

So that there can be no doubt, I have still yet to see the following items of evidence listed in section 8 ('Appendices') of [the IO]'s *Investigation Report*:

- **'Info from [Crewmate B]'** (though I've had the content described by [Crewmate B]);
- **'Info from [Crewmate A]'**;
- **'Info from [Crewmate C]'**;
- **'Evidence from [the RAL] for EMT course'**;
- **'Evidence from [the RDTL Reference Driving]'**;
- **'Evidence from [the C&M AUM reference support]'** (which I am interested in as I received none); and
- **'Information from ROCC ref 3rd crewing'** (which I am interested in as [the IO] neglected to mention the waiving of my usual supernumerary shifts in April for some reason).

Though they are not listed in section 8, I have also inferred the existence of the following and have also not been shown them:

- **the content of IRF 76723**, submitted May 19 by [Crewmate I], from which the allegations 4.2A–C have resulted;
- **the PRF of the May 18 or 19 job**, attended by [Crewmate I] and myself, from which IRF76723/allegation 4.2A has resulted;
- **the PRF of the Apr 29 job**, attended by [Crewmate F] and myself, from which the [ambulance service] complaint/allegation 4.4 has resulted; and
- **the formal clinical review** by [the RPL (Paramedics)] that is referenced in the first line of [the RCL]'s clinical review of the Apr 30 job, attended by [Crewmate F] and myself and from which IRFs 78000 & 78026/allegation 4.3 have resulted.

From this, I conclude that the list in section 8 is not exhaustive. [concludes on next page]

Again for the avoidance of doubt, where any evidence exists that is

1. material to any of the allegations against me; and/or
2. has been used by [the IO] in [their] report; and/or
3. will be taken into consideration by [the RVM] when coming to [their] conclusion; and/or
4. has not been submitted by myself and is not publicly available on CONNECT

I expect to receive a copy so that I can respond to it, as per SJA procedure, [the DoG]'s comments in the hearing and the basic concept of fairness.

**[HR Advisor]/[RVM]: please can one of you reply to this email stating explicitly that, in your view, all of the items listed above (as well as any additional ones that I have not listed) do not fall into any of those four categories, attaching any that do (adding me to the OneDrive is also acceptable, as well as being more secure and convenient for everyone).**

I'm absolutely just as sick of my constant emails as I'm sure you all are. I would much rather not have to send them, but I am consistently left with no alternative.

[HR Advisor], you mentioned the HEART values in the hearing—I have seen throughout this process absolutely no sign of 'teamwork' or 'responsiveness', desperate avoidance of 'accountability', a yawning chasm of 'excellence' and a distinct lack of 'humanity'.

Let's please just put this to bed and then hopefully never have our paths cross again in future.

Ben

Figure D.31: "Re: FW: ZM statement and NEAS info", sent Jul 17 at 13:04, emphasis mine in the original.

Hi [RVM],

Please elaborate on what you mean by 'professional misconduct'. Am I right in thinking this is the signature falsification allegation?

Ben

Figure D.32: "Re: Outcome Letter", sent Jul 23 around 12:00.

Hi [HoV],

Please find attached my appeal letter, as well as supporting documents.

I am appealing on the grounds that:

- SJA did not follow its own Voluntary Disciplinary Procedure (7 counts);
- SJA took disciplinary action based on an unfounded allegation (3 full counts, 2 partial counts); and
- the level of disciplinary sanction imposed (dismissal from the organisation) is a wildly inappropriate response to what remains.

As I have been locked out of my SJA account (with uncharacteristic speed) and I know the spam filter can be aggressive, please can you confirm that you have received this email.

I have CC'd in [the DoG], who is currently filling in the role of Freedom to Speak Up Guardian. I was in contact with [the former FSU Guardian] before [they] left the organisation, and [the DoG] attended my Jul 16 disciplinary hearing as an independent observer.

Cheers,  
Ben Goldsworthy

Figure D.33: "IMF 76723 Appeal", sent Jul 23 at 18:46.

Hi [RVM] & [Regional Coordinator],

I have just received an automated reply from [the HoV] to say that [they are] out-of-office until Aug 3.

The email said that I should contact yourselves about urgent matters that cannot wait. Since [the RVM] is the person I am appealing, please redirect this appeal to whoever it needs to go to and confirm for me when you have done so.

Please also confirm that you have received this email, as I am locked out of my SJA account and wary of being eaten by the spam filter.

Cheers,  
Ben

Figure D.34: "Fwd: IMF 76723 Appeal", sent Jul 23 at 18:55.

Hi all!

Long time no chat; I hope everyone's coping well and I do apologise that we didn't manage to get in more virtual training sessions since March.

This is a quick message to say I've just been dismissed from SJA. I am of course appealing this decision, but I've already been locked out of my SJA account and I imagine I'll get the boot from this chat just as soon as the Powers-That-Be realise it exists.

That's some bullshit, but it is what it is. I wanted to ensure that I had a chance to say that I'm immensely proud of everything the two SJA Units and the two First Aid Societies have achieved over the last year-and-a-half (80-odd people on the books! an average weekly training attendance of 13.3 people! 7 new FAs!) and it has been a pleasure to work with, train with and/or drink with you all.

Those who have just joined SJA, or who may wish to do so if the opportunity arises in future, I wish you the best of luck and hope you have a fantastic time with the organisation. My only remaining advice is to not trust anything that has pips or crowns (although tbh [the new Acting Lancaster Event Services Unit Manager] seems pretty sound so far).

AND ALWAYS, IN EVERY ASPECT OF LIFE, KEEP A PAPER TRAIL.

tyvm xoxo

Figure D.35: WhatsApp message, sent Jul 23 at 22:52.

Hi [Regional HR & Admin. Manager],

Tah for that.

For the record I've also belatedly realised that the PRF-based report of the Apr 30 job (see appeal letter, pp 7–10) amounts to 'new evidence or reasons why disciplinary action shouldn't be taken', so this is actually an appeal on all four available grounds.

Cheers,  
Ben

Figure D.36: "Re: IMF 76723 Appeal", sent Jul 24 at 10:18.

Hi [HoV],

Please find attached an updated version of my appeal letter as well as version 3 of my response to [the IO]'s *Investigation Report*, which I forgot to attach previously.

Cheers,  
Ben

Figure D.37: "Re: IMF 76723 Appeal", sent Jul 26 at 12:23.



Hi [HoV],

Thanks for the swift response, I appreciate you've probably got plenty to catch up on.

Since I sent over the documents a bit disjointedly, I've attached them all here together for convenience.

Cheers,  
Ben

Figure D.38: "Re: IMF 76723 Appeal", sent Aug 03 at 21:11.

Hi [HoV] et al.,

A few points following yesterday's appeal hearing:

- re: the Jul 16 disciplinary hearing with [the RVM] & [HR Advisor]:
  - whilst the implication was clearly that I 'couldn't be trusted with' evidence, I believe [the HR Advisor]'s *exact* words were something along the lines of 'you made phone call recordings without consent [which is true]<sup>3</sup> and threatened to release them [which is not]<sup>4</sup> so we had to make sure it was safe to send you the evidence first, which took some time';
  - as I said, I wasn't allowed to record the hearing and [they] produced no notes, but I've attached what evidence I *do* have of this:
    - \* an astonished WhatsApp message I sent someone later the same same day;
    - \* my own account of the disciplinary hearing, written a day or two after the fact (see timeline, ¶¶ 368–388); and
    - \* I also recorded myself (but no-one else) during the hearing, and I've attached the portion of that recording relating to evidence withholding (see 14:30–17:30 specifically for my reaction to [the HR Advisor]'s comments).
  - in the timeline I wrote that 'the biggest stinker' of a question was [the RVM] asking 'why did you falsify your crewmate's signature', but other highlights include a) me being asked whether I know what a PRF is, what they're for and why it's important not to falsify them, and b) me being asked to list what is included in the EAC scope of practice (which includes 101 items) with no further direction as to what, specifically, [they were] after.
- re: whether I raised the fact of my inexperience and lack of support:
  - I've attached [a friend]'s character reference, which I referenced in our appeal hearing re: me being aware of my inexperience, working to mitigate it and not acting with bravado;
  - see timeline, ¶ 18 (and correspondence, fig. D.4) for further evidence of this awareness in a message I sent to the MRT way back on Mar 24;
  - I've also attached shedloads of evidence of me going on about third-man shifts prior to Apr 1 (I also sent all of this to [the IO] at the start of the investigation, but it was never mentioned in the *Investigation Report*); and
  - I have also attached a reflective practice log of the Apr 29 incident that I referenced in our hearing, which includes a screenshot of the email I sent to the ROCC about it afterwards.

[the remainder of this email explains how to follow the references in my appeal letter, and has been truncated]

Hope that helps!

Cheers,  
Ben

Figure D.39: "Re: IMF 76723 Appeal", sent Aug 13 at 14:39, emphasis mine in original.

Hi [HoV],  
Sounds like a plan; thanks for keeping me posted.  
Ben

Figure D.40: "Re: Update", sent Aug 14 at 17:45..

Hi [HoV],  
[request for clarification on the date omitted]  
I haven't received any notes from [the HR Manager] for last week's hearing yet, but hopefully she's just been busy rather than doing a[n HR Advisor].  
Cheers,  
Ben

Figure D.41: "Re: IMF 76723 Appeal", sent Aug 19 at 15:09.

Hi [HoV],  
Sounds like a plan!  
Sorry about the comment [HR Manager], it's probably not the ideal time for sarcasm; I didn't mean to imply that you were up to any shenanigans.  
Cheers,  
Ben

Figure D.42: "Re: IMF 76723 Appeal", sent Aug 19 at 16:55.

Re: the disciplinary hearing, I've just checked and my only response to [the RVM]'s comment at the beginning about recording was 'yup' (I didn't think it was worth cutting this out, but I can send it over if you'd like to hear it yourself).  
As this would not make much sense as a response to a question phrased as 'are you recording this hearing' or 'please confirm that you are not recording this hearing', I feel this tenuously supports my claim that the question was phrased as 'please confirm you are aware that we do not consent to you recording this hearing', in which case I answered truthfully; I *was* aware, just as I was aware that consent is only one possible ground of six.  
In any case I played it extra safe and only recorded my side of the conversation, which meant that I could then share it freely with yourselves without having to ask anyone for permission (as I was the only one on the recording).  
I hope that clears things up.  
Cheers,  
Ben

Figure D.43: "Re: IMF 76723 Appeal", sent Aug 21 at 12:31, emphasis mine in original.

Also, it's belatedly occurred to me that if the 'professional misconduct' refers to comments I have made, then clearly the entire signature falsification allegation has been dropped as unceremoniously as it was introduced.

This is the same signature falsification allegation that:

- amounted to an accusation of criminal misconduct;
- was entirely unsupported by evidence (that I had to fight to even access);
- was nonetheless described as a 'clear' instance of me 'falsifying a medical document' in the *Investigation Report* (pp 5 & 6) as well as in [the C&L DM]'s disciplinary hearing invitation;
- was then taken as a given in the disciplinary hearing (see [the DoG]'s witness statement); and, to top it all off
- [the RVM] and [the HR Advisor] then both lied to me immediately afterwards about having asked the question and had to be corrected by [the DoG].

More insidiously, I feel the original intention was that I would not have seen the PRF in question prior to the hearing, and would have accepted their characterisation of it as accurate. This is exactly the same way I feel about having not been shown the disciplinary hearing notes during this appeal, which per your comment about recording have apparently again been misrepresented by [the RVM]/[HR Advisor].

This is what I have had to put up with for a quarter of year, in microcosm; being lied to and lied about by a whole string of supposed colleagues up and down the seniority scale. Whilst this does not excuse my own behaviour when I have stooped to the same level, nor do I intend it to, it must surely help to explain it.

I have no problem being held accountable for the things I have actually done, but it is clear that these do not represent the norm for me and have not occurred in a vacuum. For my part, I just want this to be over so that I can start hopefully getting back to my usual self—the Ben described in all those character references—as soon as possible

Cheers,  
Ben

Figure D.44: "Re: IMF 76723 Appeal", sent Aug 21 at 13:45.

## E. [P.S. Reactions to the process [Explicit]]

This appendix collects the reactions of various people—both SJA and non-SJA—to the SJA investigatory process. The individuals featured below represent a range of ages, temperaments, experiences and values, though their reactions were all remarkably similar. Most of the reactions are also riddled with profanity; I have made a conscious decision to retain this uncensored here in order to preserve the full impact of the messages. Insert your own ‘[sic]’s where appropriate.

### E.1 Comments

#### Between my suspension and the May 29 interview

[Bit] vauge

I mean I guess it’s all “let’s gather Investigation and see’ business but Christ  
Very ominous<sup>1</sup>

So weird

V strange

Huh

All sounds super suspect

I had terrible experiences with some of the staff at my last job, really put me off  
working in healthcare<sup>2</sup>

Wtf man

That is weird<sup>3</sup>

Oh god

This is Definitely turning into an ordeal!

And a more serious ordeal than “someone said you were shit’ or something

I hope they hurry with giving you the information tho

---

<sup>1</sup>WhatsApp messages between author’s friend and author (23 May 2020).

<sup>2</sup>WhatsApp messages between author’s friends and author (24 May 2020).

<sup>3</sup>WhatsApp messages between author’s friends and author (24 May 2020).

“subject to information being processed”

I read a a strange line

“subject to my eyes looking”<sup>4</sup>

Aye I was gonny say, how are you meant to bring relevant information/evidence when you dont know what’s been said about you

And surely if that’s them got all the investigating done they dont need to wait until fucking Friday????

This is actually enragingly shite patter<sup>5</sup>

It is very strange

Especially when you’re not an employee but a volunteer

Wtf I’m so intrigued<sup>6</sup>

That’s so strange I can’t believe that they still aren’t telling you the allegations

It’s bad that they’re going to tell you over video call

I don’t know why they’d do it in a way that might catch you off guard

Especially since this is probably a stressful process anyway

Seems v shitty<sup>7</sup>

You know if they don’t tell you what you’re having a meeting for can you contact a union or whatever as surely that’s a breach to not tell you what you’re being investigated for<sup>8</sup>

Yeah it’s really odd how it started with just clinical concerns and it’s as if it’s continuing to escalate whilst still not giving you a clue what it’s about

Really weird way to handle things<sup>9</sup>

Oh gawd

Now it’s a driving test

What next

I wonder if it’s just building to a seriousness

Or if it’s just a ‘we’ll ping him for driving whilst we’re here’<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>WhatsApp messages between author’s friend and author (24 May 2020).

<sup>5</sup>WhatsApp messages between author’s friend and author (25 May 2020).

<sup>6</sup>WhatsApp messages between author’s friends and author (25 May 2020).

<sup>7</sup>WhatsApp messages between author’s friends and author (25 May 2020).

<sup>8</sup>WhatsApp messages between author’s friends and author (26 May 2020) ; alas, friend, I am but a lowly volunteer.

<sup>9</sup>WhatsApp messages between author’s friends and author (26 May 2020).

<sup>10</sup>WhatsApp messages between author’s friend and author (26 May 2020).

They must realise that it's mad inefficient and tbh cruel to do this to you  
Disheartening to see them fuck it up this badly, cant imagine ur rage considering  
the dedication you've given them to then get cunted in this manner  
Also v delayed here but if this is for preliminary investigation still then why couldn't  
they just have emailed you w the deets and asked u to respond, have they actually  
given reason why it needed to be a full on conference<sup>11</sup>

If it wasnt sja during a pandemic I'd tell you to tell them to get fucked  
But at the same time fair fuckin play if you decide fuck it and chose to use your  
time for another cause<sup>12</sup>

It's mad though they need to tell you<sup>13</sup>

How is [the IO] going to say that it's human nature to not bring up concerns that  
someone isnt clinically competent when they're supposed to be delivering clinical  
care

What the fuck

Surely whoever's complaining should be getting bollocked for keeping that to  
themselves while you could be out potentially malpractising?????

This is actual bullshit

like that's a massive cockup<sup>14</sup>

You absolutely have a point

Even in [another organisation we were both in] you would be told what area at  
least you were accused of before being summoned

I guess anyway I was never on the plaintiff side

But even when I got called into investigations for information I was given a lot of  
info about why I was there and what I was expected to clarify

@Ben rest assured I have read all the emails you've posted in this chat. I think  
it's insanity they're not providing you with details

Also during a pandemic you would think they would want as many people on the  
front line as possible, not pissing around with bureaucracy

If they have an issue fine, if he's too busy to sort it then pass it on to someone  
else and sort out the issue promptly rather than have a clinically trained individual  
sat at home doing naff all

I'm proper interested in these concerns now

Like bad want to know what you're meant to have done

Yeah I'm so intrigued<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (27 May 2020).

<sup>12</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friends and author (27 May 2020).

<sup>13</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friends and author (27 May 2020).

<sup>14</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (28 May 2020).

<sup>15</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friends and author (28 May 2020).

## Following the interview

Nah sorry that's a fucking shambles

If this is a policy then they should be raising shit that nobody at all has spoken to you informally

Like how did it get to serious so quickly

Without anyone being like 'aw have u spoke to him/his line manager btw'

I'm v concerned about the fact that theres a person(?/people) who has thought you had repeatedly done something wrong or were too fresh and then didnt say anything to ANYBODY for a month and a half

That's fuckin negligent

[Receiving the allegations in writing and writing my answers in] would've been so much easier for literally everyone involved, I do not understand this whole thing<sup>16</sup>

So instead of having words with you/ working on issues as they occur they waited to pile it all up<sup>17</sup>

Absolute omnishambles

This is an absolute mangled system

That's wildly inadequate

How has this not been flagged as horrendous before now<sup>18</sup>

Wish woah woah *what the actual fuck?*<sup>19</sup>

...it really is pretty disgraceful.<sup>20</sup>

it's a very shiteshow<sup>21</sup>

## After receiving the letter of commendation from the COVID-19 National Tactical Commander

hahaha omg NAW

bit of a kidney punch like<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (29 May 2020).

<sup>17</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friends and author (29 May 2020).

<sup>18</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (30 May 2020).

<sup>19</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (emphasis theirs, 1 June 2020).

<sup>20</sup>Email from author's parent to author (2 June 2020).

<sup>21</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (3 June 2020).

<sup>22</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (5 June 2020).



the irony is hilarious

Wow you've helped so much thanks, but we won't let you help for a while longer  
because bureaucracy<sup>23</sup>

That is a genius bit of timing.<sup>24</sup>

### **After first deciding to give up on SJA**

if you dont want to volunteer with them in the north west anymore id say its fine  
they have been twats  
Sounds fine to me<sup>25</sup>

Real talk I would not recover from such multiple betrayals  
*I have had it with these motherfucking snakes on this motherfucking ambulance*<sup>26</sup>

### **After being informed there will now be a hearing**

Jesus  
They are never ending  
Seems v stupid at this point<sup>27</sup>

This is some top teir bullshit  
I'm honestly surprised you haven't quit  
Bc I've considered quitting over your investigation  
Just exposes the incompetence and arrogance of management  
It's utter bollocks  
Obviously I want this investigation to go well for you  
But I also want these bullshit processes to be exposed for what they are<sup>28</sup>

Are you still suspended??  
I spoke to the my area manager yesterday 'generically' asking about the investigation stuff. He said if investigated and suspended, everyone has a right to receive a copy of the written statements that have been made against them  
I don't know how you have the patience, I'd have told them to f themselves by now

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<sup>23</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friends and author (5 June 2020).

<sup>24</sup>Email from author's parent to author (7 June 2020).

<sup>25</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (9 June 2020).

<sup>26</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (emphasis theirs, 8 June 2020).

<sup>27</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (22 June 2020).

<sup>28</sup>WhatsApp message from SJA colleague to author (n 19).

Oh I didn't know that, it's just stupid how they're dragging this on so much. We're volunteers, giving up hours and hours for free, and they're treating you as though they're the ones giving you the benefit

Is there no one you can physically go and see and speak to? Or even take it higher? Call someone at the top somewhere?<sup>29</sup>

([254]) really confuses me like 'could u tell me what i need to answer so i can properly answer?' 'No this is just a conversation for u to give us better answers than we got the last time (where we did exactly the same thing)'

Like if they're saying evidence might've been missed and it's so you can fully explain/make yourself clear, surely that's proof that the way they did it in the first place wasn't ideal

What's going on here

So tbh obvs giving detailed written reports isn't for everyone, maybe some people would prefer a chatty format with surprise allegations from vague past events, but seems like the easy option is to give you it upfront and let you properly think about it, gather your receipts/check logs or whatever, and reply in your own time<sup>30</sup>

Oh dear, that sounds like drama

Do you even know by now what's the allegations?<sup>31</sup>

Oh dear sounds like a real shit show. When's the final hearing?<sup>32</sup>

### **After a week passed with no news of the hearing**

oh ffs, can't believe it's still going on, I was sure it would have been sorted by now<sup>33</sup>

why not just give an actually realistic timeline would that really be such an issue like it really shouldn't be on to u to have to be chasing them up so much

it's been >1w that's defo the accepted time wait for a follow-up

[Me: I don't understand why the HR Adviser needs to read the report before they can schedule a meeting for two other people to discuss it]

ah that's true

like seems like an unnecessary prolonging of the whole process

unless they need to set up some kind of formal agenda based on what they know

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<sup>29</sup>WhatsApp messages between SJA colleagues and author (22 June 2020).

<sup>30</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (22 June 2020).

<sup>31</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (24 June 2020).

<sup>32</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (29 June 2020).

<sup>33</sup>WhatsApp messages between SJA colleague and author (26 June 2020).

about the situation??

some kind of weird linear process that ignores normal time management and planning

#classicsja<sup>34</sup>

### After deciding to issue an ultimatum

That is an ultimatum and a half

But ye, if this is the only way you can get them to cooperate then do it<sup>35</sup>

Fair fucks to you lad

Aye put and end to it like theyve been right arses

Hello, lots to catch up on and I'm a bit confused

So have you still not got an outcome to the complaints like are you still waiting on a formal hearing after all this time?!

The drama continues<sup>36</sup>

Oooooooo big move

Theyve been shafting you for a v long time tho so justified I believe

Youd hope there was something able to be done but also youd have hoped a lot of things about the process and those havent happened either<sup>37</sup>

Hopefully they're compliant but I have my doubts<sup>38</sup>

You have have been treated abysmally

Better off out of an organisation that doesn't want keen volunteers during a global pandemic lol<sup>39</sup>

I would love to see their faces when they read this jesus christ

Theyve pushed you so far you've went full ultimatum

[Me: it's not like it's coming out of nowhere though is it]

Definitely not<sup>40</sup>

You sure do write a lot

However, jokes aside, this has taken far to long to piece together to find out all

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<sup>34</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (26 June 2020).

<sup>35</sup>WhatsApp messages between SJA colleague and author (27 June 2020).

<sup>36</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friends and author (28 June 2020).

<sup>37</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (27 June 2020).

<sup>38</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (28 June 2020).

<sup>39</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friends and author (30 June 2020).

<sup>40</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (29 June 2020).

the things that have apparently gone wrong for you. I'm sorry you also feel this way too!<sup>41</sup>

Whole thing is truth, let's see what they come back with, if anything. Such a shame and so shit at the same time<sup>42</sup>

### **After being shown the *Investigation Report***

Character assassination much?????

I'm also confused at hoe these paragraphs have come about based on that shite transcript

Theyve also used the fact that you're not sure about things against you which doesnt seem like good practice

So you're being penalised for trying to give a fair and honest account of a non-incident that nobody mentioned at the time on one vague day out of however many you worked

So?? what you shouldve just went in all guns blazing, violently denied everything and any trace of wrongdoing or doubt?????

'Oh no not me sir I am a perfect ambulance angel I would never'

Outrageous<sup>43</sup>

Also WTF acid is [Crewmate F] on

Like are they really going to drop a 'falsified medical documents' allegation in there so casually

AS IF

Actual insanity

Like I dont want to support ur leap into tinfoil hat territory but bitch I am a-leaping alongside u

Why would you ever

I'm actually laughing out loud but I think it's stress bc this is fucking unreal omg wtf

Kerbs, crewmates, the general public? All made to be crashed into i heard

[I tell them that I had protected Crewmate F's identity in a reflective report I submitted back in May]

Nope sorry goodbye u cant accuse someone of forgery and expect them to keep looking after u

Not that it definitely came from [them] but surely the best way to denounce that

---

<sup>41</sup>WhatsApp messages between SJA colleague and author (29 June 2020).

<sup>42</sup>WhatsApp messages between SJA colleagues and author (29 June 2020).

<sup>43</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (30 June 2020).

would be to show [them their] own signatures and identify if they are  
So I feel there's been a game of pin the blame on the ben<sup>44</sup>

i had to do many edits [of my character reference] to try and be more 'i swear ben  
is a cool dude' rather than 'YOU'RE A BUNCH OF CUNTS'

[Me: i feel like my natural tendency to justify and steelman others has led me to  
think that there might be more truth to these allegations than there actually is]

Ur gonna love this one from 'ben long.doc' then:

he won't argue his case strongly enough, even when the allegations seem to  
contradict his character on the basest of levels.

I was thinking about the ones that were like 'he sits on his arse'<sup>45</sup>

jesus christ that is ridiculous

Yeah, falsification of legal documents is an offence

So if they're going to accuse you of breaking the law, they better damn well have  
proof

Get rid of the whole organisation

At this point I dont care if there's anything left for me to go back after this pan-  
demic

They've treated you like shit, it's ridiculous

Yeah deffo send to [the CEO]<sup>46</sup>

### **After Crewmate H was told that they couldn't give me a character reference**

HR have told someone that they're not allowed to give you a character reference?

That's incredibly unnerving

North region have got to [them]<sup>47</sup>

This is weird like aye he's in hr but he's not dealing with your investigation is  
he???

Like what reason is there that he shouldnt

Other than [the Regional HR & Admin. Manager] not wanting anyone to give  
positive accounts of u

Accused of forgery? Sure. Accused of maybe being a decent person? Nahhhhh  
m8<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (1 July 2020).

<sup>45</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (2 July 2020).

<sup>46</sup>WhatsApp messages between SJA colleague and author (n 261).

<sup>47</sup>WhatsApp messages between SJA colleague and author (9 July 2020).

<sup>48</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (n 44).

**After laying out my plan for escalation on Jul 6**

Jesus fuck theyve pushed you to posadism<sup>49</sup>

Tbf it should be on them during this to explicitly state that they believe it was all done deliberately so they can even justify having the hearing at all, if they dont that'll be bonus points to u bc theyve clearly then just escalated it bc they wanted to

Imagine they had been smart enough to scapegoat u properly tho

Like congratulations you've managed to be incompetent while attempting to cover up ur incompetency

U really proved us wrong

I'm honestly v surprised tho that if this has been a malicious thing they havent backed down yet after realising ur a report-writing phonecall-transcribing pedant (like with good reason but I still think ur putting way more effort and detail in than most would)

Unless they know that you're already going to be complaining/whistleblowing or whatevs which will draw attention to them and their dodginess so theyve doubled down<sup>50</sup>

It's all v v confusing tho like surely it would've been easy as u say to get rid at the start

Is the whole informal investigation (spying tbh???) even allowed as a process  
Like that doesnt seem chill at all - 'we've had some minor issues flagged so instead of helping support his learning and progression we're just going to watch him and not tell him'

[Me: it is not]

Aye theyve hefty fucked it there then

Wtf goes on in folks' heads<sup>51</sup>

**After being told (three minutes before the deadline) I cannot record the first hearing**

Absolutely fucking ridiculous

Is that about recording it? Just do it, means you can't use it against them but recording it for your own use is fine?<sup>52</sup>

BAD SHIT BAD BAD SHIT

WHAT POSSIBLE REASON

---

<sup>49</sup>Not a typo; Posadism is a fringe accelerationist Cold War-era political ideology that advocated for provoking a nuclear war so that communism could be built from the ashes.

<sup>50</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (6 July 2020).

<sup>51</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (7 July 2020).

<sup>52</sup>WhatsApp messages between SJA colleagues and author (7 July 2020).

SERIOUSLY

IS THERE TO NOT HAVE A RECORDING  
(A REASON THAT'S ACTUALLY SENSIBLE)

Wtf

I have a feeling they're going to keep painting u as non compliant and angry

They really picked the wrong goat to scape here

Cant believe they're not recording, actual insane to me when there's so much evidence etc kicking around in a relatively short space of time

So tbh even if they do reach a conclusion, how long is it going to take them to tell u what happened bc surely they have to write it up all formal

And as we've seen they cant do anything in reasonable timescales can they

They seem to be very committed to the bullshit at this point

That's interesting in itself tho that they havent called any to refute ur counterpoints (aw wait naw bc they never bothered reading them)

It seems v v bad just like objectively wtf is this process<sup>53</sup>

This whole thing is a farce<sup>54</sup>

### **After growing suspicious about the 'Info from [Crewmate B]'**

This is jalapeno level spicy m8

This is vvvv interesting like what could possibly have been said when u did fuckall

What are the complaints from either of them do u know even vaguely

[Crewmate B could have only really commented on my driving]

Ok but even if it's just a driving thing [do they] realise [they're] being used in this huge investigation

Like would [they] agree to u being binned for gross misconduct is a big big question

So tbh I wonder if the 'info' has been leading questions???

Like if they just vaguely agreed with 'could the driving be bumpy' or 'did he not take the lead to restock' or whatevs is that being counted as a testimony<sup>55</sup>

### **After talking to Crewmate B**

This is so cool tho like [they've] literally said 'too fast, needed more help but was trying' like that is their WITNESS STATEMENT

And from that they're like 'GROSS MISCONDUCT CHUCK HIM IN THE BIN'

WHAT THE FUCK

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<sup>53</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (n 51).

<sup>54</sup>WhatsApp messages between SJA colleague and author (n 47).

<sup>55</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (n 50).

THIS IS IN THE EVIDENCE FOLDER

If anybody looks at the report citing crewmate b and then actually looks at [their] proper statement then that's a glaring fluorescent blinking light inconsistency

Assuming

A) [they're] telling the truth

B) [their] statement was recorded accurately to what [they] told them and not butchered a la ur investigation transcription

Tbf they've not put a lot of effort in anywhere, it's probs just pasted as received I'd have guessed

Btw fuck knows how ur feeling but just from the outside - this isnt real life??????

Like this is some kind if fucking investigation betrayal conspiracy *game*

How are u meant to take the world seriously when it's like this

For all that u were suffering and stressing at the start this has turned into a very very fun game that you're enjoying defo way too much

But nice to have positives in ur life<sup>56</sup>

### After being invited to the rescheduled hearing

What?????? W h A t?????????????? W H A T

I'm so confused- wtf happened at the hearing then??? Ignoring the glaring fact that you've already given [them] ur statement and opinions in written form

Every time I think we're at the top of to scoville scale it just gets better and better

Poor speak up man is having the most bullshit last month of a job ever

Something is afoot

Must be v frustrating to have to leave in the middle of a shiteshow (assuming [they care] about [their] work which it seems like [they do])

[I share all the breaches of the *Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure* I've identified]

This is all entirely damning

[s 2.18.1] is 1000000% my favourite

Also [the Jul 7 email] is all that they said

Like they didnt even give u a big official reason at the time and now they're making one up that isnt in the actual policy

They're either really bad scapegoaters or really bad investigators and idk which is worse

Where has all this info been hiding from u ???

It is true tho like surely to goodness they cant be **that** bad at their roles<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (9 July 2020).

<sup>57</sup>[ibid.](#)



### After requesting access to the evidence OneDrive

But legit if someone is making a good enough statement against you that it's been so crucial/decisive for ur case then I dont see why you should just have to take their word

'Wow that was such definitive evidence that u did that thing ben, really damning stuff there you scumbag'

'Wow really what did they say that was so convincing'

'U can never know'<sup>58</sup>

### After the D&PO's response

Reading it all back is just such a clusterfuck

I keep thinking of this line in ur 1st report draft that was like that q+a bit where u go 'But weren't you only suspended for X [weeks]?'

I dont think anybody would use 'only' to describe the time youd been suspended for now<sup>59</sup>

I wouldn't say fast tracked anyway

You were trained BEFORE covid was a thing<sup>60</sup>

Ha h a w o t

Any learnings that come from it? They're trying to have you thrown out for gross misconduct

Also [they] acknowledges u were fast-tracked out - why do you have to face a 'disciplinary hearing' for the crime of being sent out under-prepared and unsupported

I feel like he's sidestepping some really important things here

Also you've very much owned up to things that you agree you shouldnt have done, it's the bullshit ones they're using to pad out a lethal case with that's an issue (as well as lack of transparency, not following procedures, dodgy shit etc)

But all the genuine ones shouldve been dealt with on the other stream u mentioned where it's about knowledge/experience etc<sup>61</sup>

### [P.S. After receiving the appeal outcome]

Oh lordy

Are you actually joking

<sup>58</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (10 July 2020).

<sup>59</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (12 July 2020).

<sup>60</sup>WhatsApp messages between SJA colleague and author (10 July 2020).

<sup>61</sup>WhatsApp messages between author's friend and author (n 58).



## E.2 Memes

Sometimes, words just aren't enough. To amuse ourselves, some friends, colleagues and myself took to creating memes of what I was going through. These are collected below:











imgflip.com

JAKE-CLARK.TUMBLR



## 2 Purpose and scope

- 2.1 St John Ambulance (SJA) entrusts its volunteers and employees with high levels of responsibility and is committed to delivering an excellent quality of service for its patients, beneficiaries, and customers
- 2.2 As such, it is important that all volunteers and employees are equipped with the skills, knowledge, support and motivation they need to perform well in their roles

Finding the deepest  
deep end possible and  
throwing someone with  
no experience into it  
with no support

Spying on them for a month and a half, setting up a sting operation, suspending them just as they've found their footing, bullying them for seven weeks, manipulating a colleague into stabbing them in the back to save themselves, accusing them of a criminal offense with no additional evidence

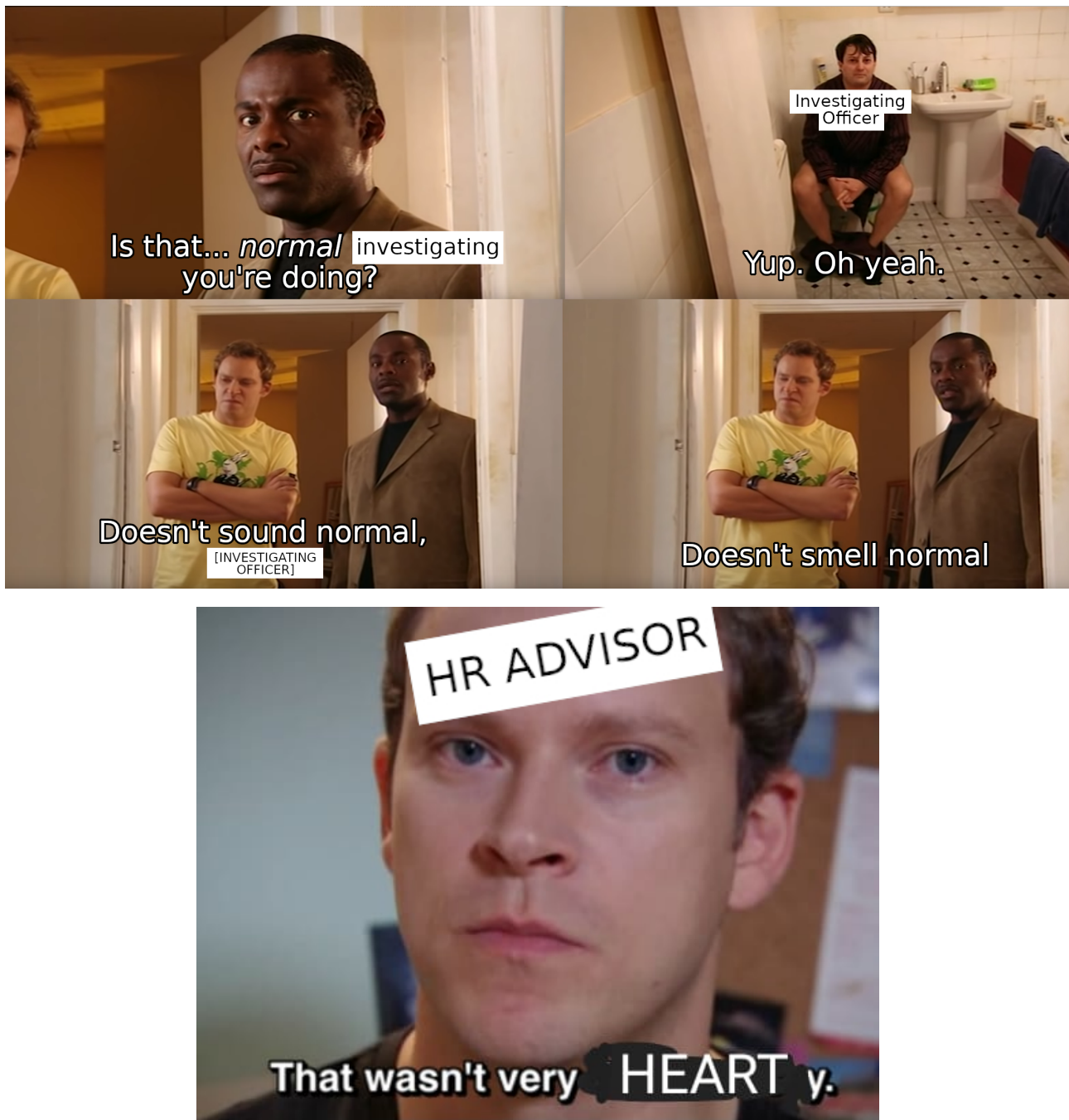




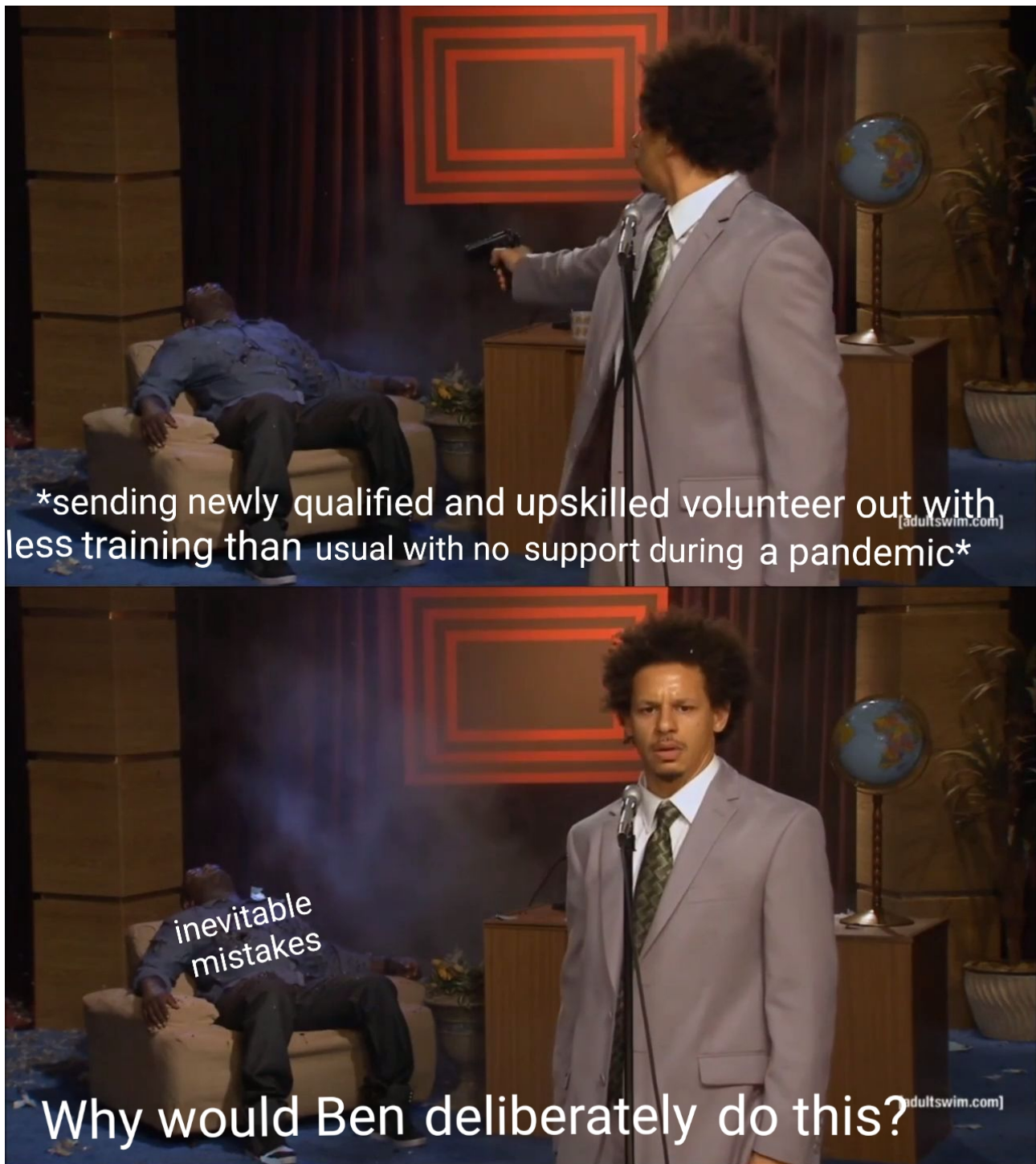










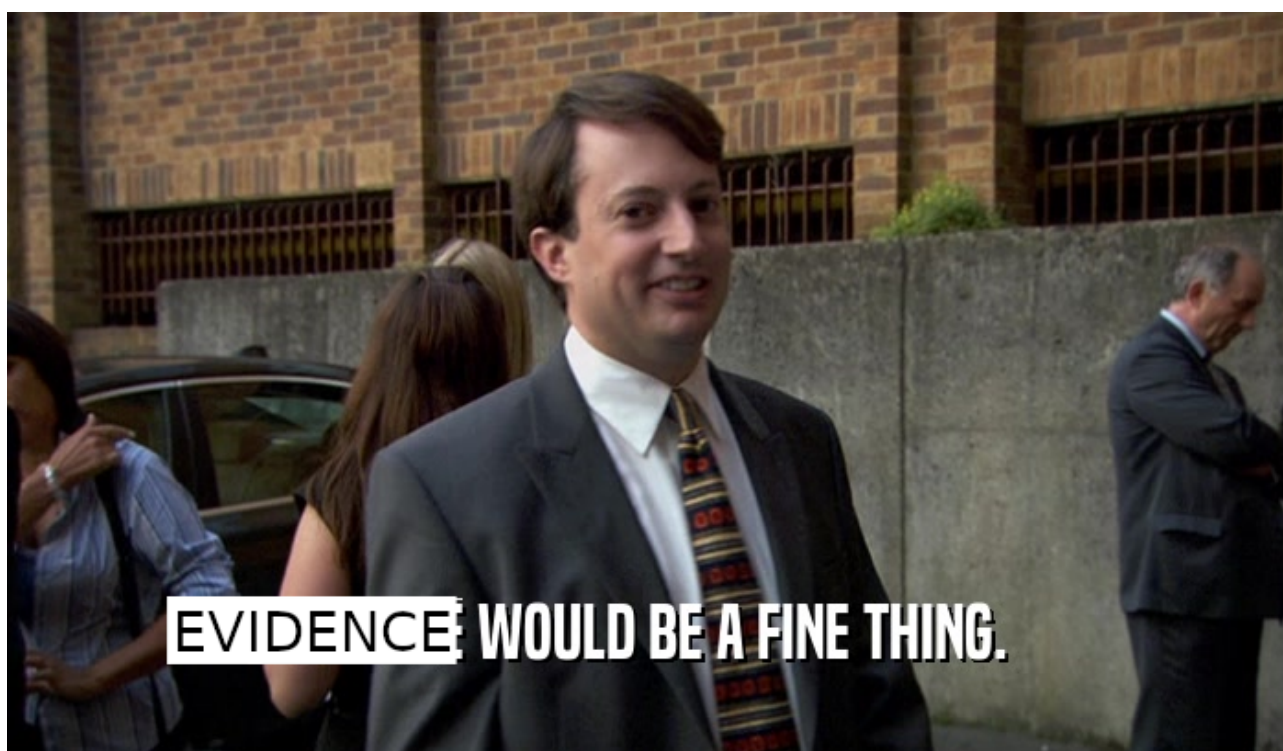












# Our values



## humanity

Treating volunteers like shit on our shoe



## xcellence

No shame in doing a godawful job



## ccountability

No, thanks



## esponsiveness

Continuously making the same mistakes



## eamwork

No support  
Spying on colleagues  
Making spurious allegations  
Incentivising backstabbing  
Poisoning the well  
Throwing colleagues under the bus  
Ignoring concerns raised  
Gaslighting victims



**St John  
Ambulance**



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## F. Examples of best practice

### Letter informing an employee they are subject of an investigation

Date .....

Dear.....

I am writing to inform you that the organisation has decided it is necessary to conduct an investigation into your actions in relation to:

- **[Summarise details of each issue being investigated in bullet points]**

The person in charge of the investigation will be **[name of investigator]**.

The aim of the investigation is to establish the facts of the matter by gathering as much relevant facts and information as possible. It is currently expected that the investigation will be completed by **[day, month]**.

Once the investigation has been completed, you will be informed in writing of its outcome. If it is found that there is a case to answer, you will be invited to attend a formal disciplinary hearing.

The investigator may invite you to attend an investigation meeting where you can explain your version of events. If this is required, you will be informed of the time and date of the meeting in advance.

In the meantime, should you have any information that might be of assistance to the investigation or wish to discuss anything, please do not hesitate to contact **[name of investigator/line manager/HR department]**. Their contact details are **[telephone number, email address]**.

To ensure that the investigation can be conducted as fairly as possible we request that you keep the matter confidential. Any breach of confidentiality may be considered to be a disciplinary matter.

Figure F.1: Complaint letter template provided by Acas.

**TEMPLATE - NOTIFICATION TO COMPLAINANT/RESPONDENT OF RECEIPT OF  
STATEMENT OF COMPLAINT**

*Cut and paste this template onto letter headed paper or email and ensure all excess text and headings are deleted.*

**To: [Insert name of Complainant/Respondent]**

**[A. Use for complainant]**

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your [letter/Annex F] which was received on **[Insert date of receipt]**.

I will now need to consider the matter in detail and may contact you to arrange for us to discuss it within the next week. Please be assured that our discussion will be confidential and will assist me to fully understand the nature of your complaint and the redress that you are looking for.

**Or:**

**[B. Use for respondent]**

I am writing to inform you that I have received a complaint in relation to an allegation/allegations made against you by (*Complainant's name*). A copy of the complaint is attached.

Before deciding what action to take in response to the complaint I will now need to consider the matter in detail which may involve me contacting the complainant.

**[Use for both Complainant and Respondent]**

Following that discussion I will then decide whether this matter is admissible as a service complaint. This should not take more than 2 weeks and I will notify you of my decision at that time.

In the meantime you can find more information on the service complaint process in JSP 831, which you can find on the internal Defence Intranet and on the internet by searching for "JSP 831".

You have a right to the services of an assisting officer (AO) to assist you with this process. I would encourage you to exercise this right and to use the services of the AO as we take matters forward. They can be a good source of guidance and support that is personal to you.

Figure F.2: Complaint letter template provided in JSP 831 Part 2, Annex A.

Dear ,

I am emailing you as the Complaints Co-ordinator to inform you that the has officially received a formal complaint made against yourself concerning and an alleged incident of .

As the complaint cites your role as an officer of the , it has been decided that this complaint does require 'Further Consideration' under the [Complaints Procedure](#) and I have been appointed as the Complaints Co-ordinator for this complaint and it is my responsibility to oversee the administration of the procedure.

In accordance with our procedure any person who is the subject of a complaint has the right to be supplied with a copy of the complaint, and to comment on it, so I have attached it for your reference, and included the supplementary evidence that was submitted in support of the complaint.

With the agreement of the President and the Chief Executive, I have now appointed an independent 'Investigating Officer' for this complaint and I am able to confirm that this will be [ Engagement Manager]. will be in contact with you shortly to confirm a date for a personal hearing to meet with yourself to talk through the complaint and outline the proposed timeline for an investigation. This hearing shall be minuted and you have the option to be accompanied by a representative of your choice.

In my capacity as the Complaints Co-ordinator I am available to provide advice and guidance on the process of the complaints procedure to both yourself and all other parties involved in the complaint however I am not able to be an advocate for any parties involved nor will I hear any evidence as part of the process or take any decisions about the outcome of the complaint.

If at any point during the complaint process you feel there has been a breach of the complaints procedure and the principles outlined within, then you should bring this to my attention as soon as reasonably possible for investigation.

I also want to make you aware that free, independent advice and support is available to all students via the Advice Centre: [Tel: \(01524\)](#) or email:

If you have any further questions about the complaints process please don't hesitate to contact me at

Kind regards,

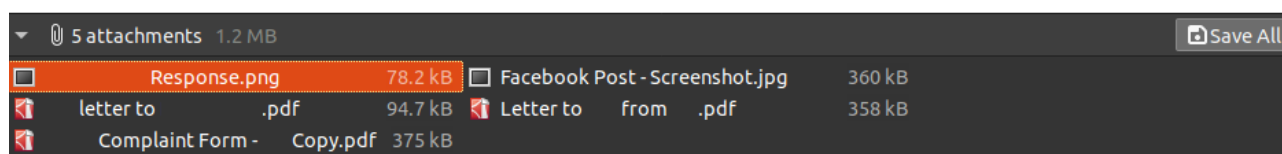


Figure F.3: Email received by the author from another organisation 2016.

## G. SJA policy proposals & errata

[P.S. This appendix gets rather technical, but the basic thrust can perhaps be best summed up as this: SJA has gone all-in on hammers and is finding that everything looks like a nail.

What I mean by this is that there are two types of investigation: one in which various people who each hold a piece of the puzzle get together to try and assemble the most accurate model they can of something that has happened, so they can learn from it; and one in which someone is trying to hide something and an inquisitor must uncover the truth of the matter.

The current SJA procedures only suit the latter situation. This is evidenced by the fact that at every turn of this process, my willingness to share information without reservation and be maximally transparent has only got me into more trouble. In contrast, had I denied everything and shared nothing I would probably still be in the organisation now.

I do not have any figures for this, but I would be highly surprised to find that the second type of situation represents anything less than a small minority of these situations in actuality. ‘Almost no-one is evil. Almost everything is broken.’<sup>1</sup> Treating every investigation as an adversarial process optimises for minimising false negatives (i.e., bad actors who are not detected as such) at the expense of ensuring a greater rate of false positives (i.e., honest actors who are punished unfairly). This problem is particularly acute for SJA due to the nature of what I expect will form a large proportion of the issues the organisations has to investigate: they will usually be a case of he-said, she-said, with minimal supporting evidence. In the case of an ambulance crew, there will, by the very nature of the work, only be two witnesses, with perhaps one reasonably-detailed but low-resolution PRF if you are lucky.<sup>2</sup>

The solution is simple: assume that everyone is on the same team until you have reason to think otherwise. Get everyone together to assemble a view of the events. Where accounts conflict, encourage both parties to discuss the conflict and see if they can come to a mutually-acceptable consensus.

<sup>1</sup>‘Almost No One is Evil. Almost Everything is Broken.’ (<https://blog.jaibot.com/>) accessed 27 August 2020.

<sup>2</sup>As an aside, this makes it doubly vital to avoid putting crewmates into a Prisoner’s Dilemma situation, as was done with Crewmate F and myself. Once both crewmates have signed off the PRF, both must accept joint responsibility for everything that occurred on the job. Don’t like it? Don’t sign it. I would imagine that the police, who are also used to operating in two-person teams under intense scrutiny, will have considered this problem in more depth than the ambulance services.

Only in cases where this is not possible should it be considered that somebody may be acting in bad faith, in which case the adversarial investigative approach is appropriate.]

This appendix contains more detailed suggestions for ways to improve the existing SJA policies and procedures. It also contains smaller corrections which I thought might be helpful for me to jot down whilst I was deep-diving into the documents; they are not to be considered exhaustive.

## G.1 Policy proposals

First, a note on the volunteer and employee procedures: Currently, the volunteer procedures are not made as easy-to-find as the employee ones; it was quite a while before I realised there even *were* separate volunteer grievance and disciplinary procedures, as the only mentions of them is in the *Conduct and Performance Policy*.<sup>3</sup> The current version of the *Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure* (2.0) went live in 2015 and was due a review in 2017;<sup>4</sup> the current version of the *Volunteer grievance procedure* (1.1) went live in 2013 and has no mention of a review date.<sup>5</sup> This does not exactly challenge my sense that volunteers are being neglected.

Regardless of how ancient the procedure documents are, links should be added to the following pages on CONNECT (as well as any others I may have missed):

- “How to speak up” (Contact: the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian);
- “HR policies and procedures” (Contact: presumably HR);
- “Grievance Procedure” (Contact: presumably HR);
- “Volunteer grievance procedure” (Contact: Volunteering);
- “Disciplinary Procedure” (Contact: presumably HR);
- “Volunteer disciplinary procedure”<sup>6</sup> (Contact: Volunteering);

I would propose that these not be separate documents at all, however. At the least disruptive, this would mean appending one to the other into a single Grievance or Disciplinary Procedure, divided into an ‘Employee Procedure’ and ‘Volunteer Procedure’.<sup>7</sup> Better still would be to have a single procedure for both. Whilst a handful of points will only apply to employees (e.g., union representation), these can be clearly specified as employee-only; where it is possible to apply a rule to both, this should be done. I believe this will help to

<sup>3</sup> *C&P Policy* (n 24) ss 2.14, 5.1.2, 5.1.11 & 7.1.1.1.

<sup>4</sup> *Vol. Disc. Proc* (n 35) p 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Vol. griev. proc.* (n 5) p 3.

<sup>6</sup> Although top marks for including a link to the *Conduct and Performance Policy*.

<sup>7</sup> See *Children and Young People’s Work - Volunteer Involvement Policy* (n 83) for an example of this approach.

ensure that volunteers are treated with the same respect as employees, despite lacking the same legal protections.

Also, each procedure document describes the manner by which various processes (e.g., investigations) are to be conducted, and the treatment of these differs slightly in each. Within software development we are particularly sensitive to this problem; we try to follow the DRY principle (for ‘Don’t repeat yourself’), as opposed to producing WET solutions (for ‘Write everything twice’, ‘We enjoy typing’ or ‘Waste everyone’s time’).<sup>8</sup> With this in mind, I would strongly advise that shared procedures are extracted and placed into their own documents (e.g., an ‘Investigations Procedure’) that can then be referred to by all other documents; this appears to be the approach adopted by the ambulance service I reviewed in § 3.9. This ensures consistency of practice throughout the various SJA ‘speak up’ processes. I would also suggest doing this for Definitions; whilst (almost) every document I’ve seen includes a Terminology section that defines ‘will/must’ and ‘should’, only the Feedback & Complaints Procedure has a list of technical definitions.<sup>9</sup>

In a similar vein, the terminology used to describe who the different policies and procedures apply to is inconsistent; this is why I did not initially realise that there existed a separate *Volunteer grievance procedure*, as I assumed the *Grievance Procedure*’s use of ‘employees’ throughout was just another choice of terminology. Generally the terms ‘SJA people’, ‘SJA personnel’ or ‘employees and volunteers’ (delete as appropriate) are used. My preference is for the use of ‘SJA personnel’ to refer to all types, with ‘employee’ and ‘volunteer’ only used when something applies only to one or the other; this would go hand-in-hand with the above-proposed separate ‘Definitions Guide’.

Finally, towards the end of my investigation I came to the conclusion that incremental change may not be sufficient to affect the cultural and psychological transformation I believe to be truly necessary. I would like to propose a radical yet powerful solution: the opening up of the IMF database to *all* SJA personnel.<sup>10</sup> In the system I envisage, anyone would be able to log on to CONNECT and access the IMF system, much as Assurance staff et al. can currently. New IRFs would be received by Assurance, who would review them as they do now, except with the end result being that (unless claiming a pressing need for something to be kept confidential) they would then edit out any names, times, dates and locations and upload the IRF to the system, notifying anyone involved.

This may sound bizarre, but I feel that it would systematise the openness that the process should absolutely represent. It would also have positive knock-on effects. It is obviously impossible to teach somebody how to do every part of their job in training alone; other-

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<sup>8</sup>‘Don’t repeat yourself’ (*Wikipedia*) ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don%27t\\_repeat\\_yourself](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don%27t_repeat_yourself)).

<sup>9</sup>*Feedback & Complaints Procedure* (n 6) Appendix 1.

<sup>10</sup>This could also be extended to complaints, but I suspect that grievances (being more personal in nature) would not suit such a system. That said, the *Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure* does state that one can appeal a decision to challenge the level of disciplinary sanction imposed ‘if there is evidence that SJA acted differently in past similar cases’ (*Vol. Disc. Proc* [n 35] s 2.13.4), but it is not clear how one is supposed to discover that when past records are not publicly available.

wise, we would not value experience. It is also unavoidable that SJA personnel (particularly volunteers) receive far less training than professional healthcare workers. This results in an increased emphasis on learning-on-the-job, which invariably consists primarily of making mistakes and (if lucky) being corrected immediately, (if unlucky) getting pulled up on it months later or (if very unlucky) making a potentially harmful, or even fatal, mistake.

The benefit of providing a searchable database of mistakes is threefold. First, it drives home the reality that everyone makes mistakes, and helps to foster a culture of critical friendship and understanding. Second, it lessens the pressure on new clinicians to be ‘perfect’, which is likely to lead to panicking and overthinking things (and, then, mistakes). Third, if someone can learn from a mistake somebody else has made rather than having to make it again, you end up with half as many mistakes. It should not need to be stressed how rapidly this reduction in mistakes would scale, even if only a small proportion of people ever take the time to interact with the system.

As stated in Appendix A, it is common in the tech. world for the results of a post mortem to be shared within the organisation to allow others to learn from it.<sup>11</sup> If, in my more optimistic moments, I imagine that this report is received enthusiastically and its full suite of recommendations adopted, I would be more than happy for it to be shared more widely as a trial of the new way of doing things.

## G.2 Errata

The remainder of this appendix consists of errata for the current range of SJA policies and procedures.

### ***Conduct and Performance Policy***

- On p 3, the link to Volunteer Rights Inquiry final report is broken;
- on p 4, the Amendment Table is broken;
- in s 5.1.7, ‘...and the “Three R Promise” under the Volunteer Rights Enquiry (National Council for Voluntary organisations)’ should just be ‘...and the Volunteer Rights Inquiry’s “3R promise”’;
- in s 5.1.7, the link to Volunteer Rights Inquiry final report is broken;<sup>12</sup> and

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<sup>11</sup>In some famous cases, post mortem reports are made publicly accessible as well—sometimes called ‘fearless post mortems’—though I am sympathetic to the argument that this may be where the applicability to a healthcare provider like SJA runs out. However, if anyone is interested, Google have a post about this concept including a number of high-profile examples; see Adrian Hilton and Gwendolyn Stockman, ‘Fearless shared postmortems — CRE life lessons’ (*Google Cloud Blog*) (<https://cloud.google.com/blog/products/gcp/fearless-shared-postmortems-cre-life-lessons>) accessed 17 June 2020.

<sup>12</sup>The correct link is [https://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/policy\\_and\\_research/volunteering-policy/](https://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/policy_and_research/volunteering-policy/)



- whilst ss 2.14 & 5.1.11 make it clear that volunteers should use the volunteer procedures and employees should use the employee procedures, it does not state what to do when a volunteer raises concerns about an employee or vice versa.

### ***Incident Management Framework (IMF) policy***

- The document title should be fully-capitalised for consistency;
- on p 2, the table of contents is a mess:
  - the ‘Accounting and responsibilities’ section is missed out in the numbering;
  - the first Appendix is labelled as section 7 rather than Appendix A;
  - the second Appendix isn’t labelled as either; and
  - there is a superfluous blank section listed at the end of the table of contents.
- on p 3, the version in the Document Control table should be 4.0, not 3.0.

### ***Volunteer grievance procedure***

- The document title should be fully-capitalised for consistency; and
- for as long as there is a separate procedure for employees, this document should reference that for employees who have found themselves in the wrong place.

### ***Grievance Procedure***

- For as long as there is a separate procedure for volunteers, this document should reference that for volunteers who have found themselves in the wrong place.

### ***Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure***

- There are two s 2.11.2s;
- in s 2.16, the title should be changed from ‘Suspension and standing down’ to ‘Standing down and suspension’ to show that standing down precedes suspension; and
- for as long as there is a separate procedure for employees, this document should reference that for employees who have found themselves in the wrong place.



***Disciplinary Procedure***

- For as long as there is a separate procedure for volunteers, this document should reference that for volunteers who have found themselves in the wrong place.

***Feedback Policy***

- On every page, there is some sort of grey dashed line watermark in the centre of the page.

***Feedback & Complaints Procedure***

- On p 4, the Amendment Table is broken; and
- on p 3, the 'For information' box is empty, which seems a little harsh;
- in s 1.1, the 'HR Grievance Policy and Procedure' is referenced, but no such policy exists and it does not clarify which of the two grievance procedures to use; and
- s 3 details the complaints procedure in the form of lengthy, unenumerated bullet-point lists, where this format would be more appropriate for an Appendix.

## H. [P.S. Excerpts from the author's response to the *Investigation Report*]

This appendix collects relevant excerpts from the author's response to the *Investigation Report*,<sup>1</sup> addressed to the Cumbria & Lancashire District Manager (DM).

The first version of this response was submitted on Jul 3,<sup>2</sup> three days after receiving the *Report*. The second version was never submitted<sup>3</sup> as (limited) evidence was finally shared with me prior to doing so. The third version was submitted on Jul 15 and was the final version.<sup>4</sup> Redacted copies are available from the author.

One point to note is that I initially assumed that the Investigating Officer was responsible for writing the *Report*, but in retrospect I believe that it was actually the work of the DM.

The first version of the response declared the following in its introduction:

I would like to believe that you and others are honest actors. Unfortunately, as I will explain in my conclusion, I have a strong suspicion that I am in fact being scapegoated by North Region. This may sound paranoid, but it is the most logical explanation I can find for what has been an absolutely incomprehensible pattern of behaviour from yourself and others over the last six weeks.

However, I appreciate I may be wrong. I am willing to attend the hearing on Jul 7, on the condition that I be allowed to record it. It would be lawful for me to do so without permission, but I would consider you explicitly granting me this to be a positive signal of your willingness to act honestly and a compelling counterargument to my conspiracy hypothesis. Please let me know as soon as you can whether you accept this condition.

If you are not willing to allow this, I will be forced to conclude that you are not willing to act honestly, which will further support my conspiracy hypothesis. In that case, I refuse to be scapegoated or go quietly, and will use every avenue of appeal available to me. If this is how it will be, please hurry up and find me guilty

---

<sup>1</sup>District Manager (n 38).

<sup>2</sup>Goldsworthy, *Investigation Response* (n 221).

<sup>3</sup>Ben Goldsworthy, *Investigation Response* (v 2).

<sup>4</sup>Goldsworthy, *Investigation Response* (n 40).

so I can get on with appealing.<sup>5</sup>

The conclusion was as follows:

As I have hopefully shown, I do not believe I have breached any IPC procedures that I or others can identify. I may have breached what some believe those procedures to be, but that is none of my concern. I do not see any evidence that I failed to protect patient confidentiality or dignity. Where doubts exist as to my clinical competency, I am more than willing to undertake clinical supervision shifts or further training. Etc. Etc.

I don't think any of this matters though. Reading this report, and finally seeing the full(ish) picture, I can only find one explanation for why absolutely nothing has made a lick of sense and why everyone has been acting so seemingly insane.

I am not prone to conspiracy theorising, but it is a testament to the absolute clusterfuck that this process has been that I find the most believable explanation to be just that.

I believe I'm being hung out to dry to spare North Region's blushes.

Let me present *my* conclusion:

I was honest with [the then-Regional Ambulance & Clinical Training Officer, now Regional Ambulance Lead] about my relative lack of prior patient contact when applying for the EMT course.

[They] accepted me on.

Me and my crewmate passed three of the four assessments with Excellent ratings and failed the third. We were allowed to retake it and passed (I believe with Excellent ratings).

[The RACTO] sits on the RMT.

Then I did the MRT initial training, and [the Regional MRT Lead] said I had been successful and commented that I had 'Good clinical skills and knowledge, able to make clear decision plans.'

[The Regional MRT Lead] sits on the 'rmt'.

Then I did the EE 1 & 2, and had my operational check drive. I was honest with [the Regional Driver Training Lead] about my inexperience, I did not exaggerate my abilities or lie that I had completed any assessments or training when I had not. [They] signed me off as an (exceptional, due to COVID-19) operational driver anyway.

[The RDTL] sits on the RMT.

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<sup>5</sup>Goldsworthy, *Investigation Response* (n 221) pp 1–2.

Then the North ROCC sent me out without my usual supernumerary shifts. I managed to fight them to get one, but that was it.

[The ROCC Tactical Commander] (I assume) sits on the RMT.

I was willing to accept that it was not ideal, but that we were in unprecedented times. I acknowledged my responsibility to ensure that I learned the ropes as fast as I possibly could, and aimed to maximise this speed by asking crewmates for feedback, filling in copious reflective logs (4 in the month and a half I was crewing) and devouring educational material (24 items in my CPD learning log since Apr 1).

I made myself as available as humanly possible to ensure I got hours under my belt and could close the skill gap as quickly as possible. I took one month off work, and then three. I remained in the North, alone in my flat, rather than heading down to the Midlands to be with family because I knew I had better access to a train station in Lancaster. I bounced across the North, from Liverpool to Newcastle; wherever the ROCC needed me.

I did over 200 hours in April alone, and received a letter of commendation from the COVID-19 National Tactical Commander.

I was aware of my own limitations and tried to mitigate them. Under the assumption, based on an early-April call from [the Cheshire & Merseyside Ambulance Unit Manager], that I was being paired up with experienced crewmates, I tended to defer to them. After the incident with [Crewmate F] on Apr 29 I realised that length of experience did not necessarily match nature of experience, and raised this to the North ROCC in an email on May 2.

Of course I made mistakes, particularly at the beginning. Mistakes that would have been fixed had they been mentioned at the time, and which were fixed by the time I was pulled up on them because I was lucky enough to have subsequent crewmates who provided feedback and support. And by mid-May, when things were starting to calm down, I set about catching up on the support I had missed. The great irony is that just before I was suspended, I was trying to arrange some clinical supervision shifts.

But at the very beginning, people reported those mistakes to [the C&M AUM]. Instead of behaving like a grown adult, reasonable colleague or decent human being and mentioning them to me, [they] 'started an informal information gathering exercise'. I do not know how long this two-bit Sherlock's 'exercise' lasted, but I imagine it either concluded around the time I stopped working with Cheshire & Merseyside Ambulance Unit members (Apr 10, until I crewed with [Crewmate I] on May 18) or con-

tinued up until [they] thought [they] had enough rope to hang me with. If [they were] so concerned that I did not understand the oh-so-obvious IPC procedures, why did [they] not say anything after the U-turn incident on Apr 10? [Their] inaction resulted, just as much as anything [Crewmate F] or I did, to the exposure of the neighbours on Apr 29 and 30.

But things were ticking along, and there were no further issues, until suddenly I find myself crewing with [the Regional Facilities Coordinator, Crewmate I]. I had been booked on to crew out of Stockport that week, the trains and hotels were paid-for, when [the ROCC Travel Coordinator] suddenly cancelled them and asked if I could work out of Preston instead. Odd, but I didn't think too much of it at the time.

Then whilst we were crewing, [Crewmate I] behaved strangely. Apropos of nothing, sat in the vehicle cabin, 'can you take a manual BP'? [They] seemed very acquainted with the concept of malicious IRF submission. Then, out of the blue, [they] suddenly [decide] we should return to the ROCC to change vehicles, and then [disappear] upstairs whilst I inspect the new one. [They] eventually [come] down and we've apparently been stood down by [ambulance service]—something that has never happened to me before. Then later that night, [they have] to pull out of the next day's shift for vague reasons. In actuality, [they submit] an IRF accusing me of much the same things I was being accused of in early Apr by [their] fellow C&M Ambulance Unit members, but in just vague enough a way that I can't outright deny any of them.

[Crewmates I] sits on the RMT.

Then the ROCC start messing with my shifts, and I complain. Then I find out I'm suspended and under investigation. At every step of the way, the most bizarre decisions are made and zealously defended. I am told to prepare evidence, but not told what the allegations are. I am told I can't record my interview, and then the transcript is a garbled mess. My mounting frustration is used as further evidence of my guilt. When it becomes clear that I am at wit's end, [the Investigating Officer] (moved, I think, by a level of decency that far exceeds [their] investigative ability) contacts [the Regional HR/Admin. Manager], who confirms that I'm not to be told anything.

[The Regional HR/Admin. Manager] sits on the RMT.

Then, just as we're seemingly about to wrap things up, with [the IO] having told me that [their] conclusion will be one of 'you've been chucked in at the deep end very quickly and, had you had a bit more third-manning opportunity and development time, I don't think things like this will have

been raised', two new allegations come in from the MRT. They make no sense; one is utter bollocks, and one is saying nothing I don't already know and (for all the complainant knows) may have already been IRF'd. But they add to the pile. Who do we know in the MRT? [Cremate C], of the C&M Ambulance Unit.

And [the Regional MRT Lead], who sits on the RMT.

Here's what I think: someone realised they screwed the pooch. You got caught up in the COVID-19 hysteria and were so eager to get wheels on the road that you rushed me out underprepared and undersupported. Someone realised this may look bad for North Region when errors were reported in early April, so [the C&M AUM] started digging for dirt. Then I moved out of Cheshire & Merseyside and that fell through, so eventually [Crewmate I] decided to see what [they] could do [themselves].

[They] poked and prodded where [they] thought [they] might find something juicy; for example, knowing about the allegation I failed to take a manual BP, [they] tried [their] luck with that.

Failing to get anything concrete, though, [they] had to settle for bizarre interpretations that alleged I did not know what a stroke was, or that I wandered off and left [them] in A&E (yet somehow managed to break into the ambulance without a key).

Regardless, with a good set of worrying-looking allegations in hand, an investigation could be started. The intention was never to give me a fighting chance, so best to withhold as much information as possible and keep me constantly on the back foot.

But I keep meticulous logs, and records, and evidence. I sent [the IO] a 7.3 MB folder of supporting evidence following our interview: 53 files ranging from certificates, testimonials, all the way to a 7-year-old article from an obscure enthusiast car magazine about the vehicles I learned to drive in.

And [the Regional MRT Lead]'s feedback following the MRT assessment. *Oh shit.*

Cardinal Richelieu famously said that 'If you give me six lines written by the hand of the most honest of men, I will find something in them which will hang him'. I'm not claiming to be the most honest of men, but clearly they hadn't quite got their six lines yet. A few spurious allegations from the MRT group chat ought to give them some more time, keep things ticking over. It didn't matter that they were nothing new and wouldn't hold up to much scrutiny, they would still add to that total number of allegations, and [the IO]'s generous approach to mathematics could always add a few more on top.

And then I joined the final dots for them by bringing to their attention the [ambulance service] complaint that [the North East ALM] had called me about. I acted in good faith, believing I would be receive a fair trial. My willingness to trust has been used against me.

Things were good to go, but they were wary. *Best to keep delaying things, get him more frustrated, maybe he'll do something drastic and save us the trouble.*

Then I said I'd quit SJA if my demands weren't met by Friday. *Great! Just the thing!* So they waited. Monday came and went. Tuesday was drawing to a close. *Only three more days to go.*

But unbeknownst to them, I had not been idle. I had been talking to the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, who said [they] would make some calls and see if [they] could get anything moving for me.

*Uh-oh. We forgot that he keeps a mean paper trail. Why is he talking to the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian? Does he have something embarrassing to share? If we just wait for him to resign of his own accord, reputation intact, what might he do with it?*

Shortly after my conversation with the Guardian, you suddenly emailed me a copy of the report and a summons to a hearing on Jul 7. I had previously asked you if you would just email me over whatever you wanted to talk about in the hearing, and you said no. Why the change of heart?

Perhaps you thought I'd read the report, doubt my own recollections and accept my guilt.

Perhaps you thought anything I said would sound like the words of someone who'd say anything to avoid being held accountable.

Perhaps you thought I'd had enough, that I'd just make good on my threat and leave.

Or perhaps I'm way off the mark, that there has been no conspiracy to make me a scapegoat for the mistakes of the Region and that this last six weeks has just been a perfectly innocent cavalcade of gob-smacking incompetence and indifferent cruelty.

Maybe all of the above sounds crazy or paranoid, but if so it as a result of your actions; your choices.

All I know is that I'm meticulous, motivated, and really *fucking* mad.

Ben<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Goldsworthy, *Investigation Response* (n 221) pp 25–29, emphasis mine in original.

The DM and HR Advisor proceeded to ignore this request until three minutes before the deadline given (which was two hours before the scheduled disciplinary hearing), whereupon they refused to allow recording (citing no basis). I then escalated the matter.

Later, having finally received access to some (small) portion of the evidence on which the report had been based, it became apparent that I had erred; the third version concluded as follows:

As I have hopefully shown, I do not believe I have breached any IPC procedures that I or others can identify. I may have breached what some *believe* those procedures to be, and I am happy to have that discussion, but the breach of unwritten rules not a punishable offence. I do not see any evidence that I failed to protect patient confidentiality or dignity, though it may be that I (and [Crewmate F]) have been more willing to accept consent (and the consent of next of kin) than people with more training and familiarity in these matters would—again, I am happy to have these discussions in a non-adversarial setting, where I'm sure I will find them highly rewarding.

Where doubts exist as to my clinical competency, I am more than willing to undertake clinical supervision shifts or further training. Etc. Etc. These are all things I have been saying since the beginning, but nobody has been listening.

Version 1 of this response concluded with a lengthy explanation of why I could not accept that my treatment during the past seven-and-a-half weeks could have possibly been the result of mere incompetence. I outlined my case for believing that such incomprehensible behaviour could only be the result of a conspiracy. This seemed to me to be so obviously the case that I made the extreme step of contacting the CEO and Director of People & Organisation with my worries.

In Version 2, I maintained this. I wrote that 'incompetence alone could not possibly produce inaccuracy of this scale, any more than a gang of chimps could "accidentally" construct a cathedral.'

Having finally seen some small portion of the evidence, I can safely say that I have never been so horrified at having been proven wrong. I now believe that the requisite level of ability required to successfully organise a conspiracy is lacking at every level, and that this is, in fact, a chimp-built cathedral. Except the cathedral is a perfectly-tuned mechanism of abuse, score-settling and false results.

I consider myself a highly mentally-robust person, but last Sunday was a definite low point for me. I can think of friends, even specific colleagues within SJA, who would have been absolutely broken long before reaching this point. Whereas a few days ago I concluded that I was no longer fighting to remain in the organisation, but merely to leave it with the clean record that I deserve, I now believe that I have to remain and try, through whatever meagre means are available to me,



to assist in tearing this awful system down and rebuilding something better in its place.

The first step is to finally conclude this farce. That's on you.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, to give some flavour of just how easy the upheld allegations were to disprove, take the following (allegation 4.2B, from Crewmate I's never-shared-with-me IRF 76723) from the *Report*:

It is alleged on the 18th of May you failed to carry out any observations or document these on a PRF...you also did not obtain or document any previous medical history or allergies information.<sup>8</sup>

Damning stuff, and upheld later in the report:

It is clear by looking at the PRF that his[sic] was in part the case and key information was not recorded...<sup>9</sup>

Except:

Originally, I had partially-upheld this allegation. Having now finally got my hands on a copy of PRF 192598 I have to question whether the IO even looked at it, and find the allegation entirely unsubstantiated. The difference between my handwriting and that of my crewmate could not be more stark—just *look* at our respective comments in the 'Additional Notes' field. My crewmate writes in cursive doctor-esque script, whilst I alternate between block capitals and frankly pretty ugly lower-case writing. Numbers are harder to distinguish, but my '8's generally have larger top halves than bottoms<sup>10</sup>, my '0's have tassles[sic] at the top and my '7's have dashes through them.

Based on this, we can see that the penicillin allergy, 7 items of past medical history and ~12 medication names are all my doing, as is the full set of obs. The same is true of the N2O we administered and all of the additional notes bar my crewmate's re-iteration of my event history, the self-administration of paracetamol (though I did list paracetamol under 'Past Medical History') and the fact that the patient had no COVID-19 symptoms. **Allegation spurious.**<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Goldsworthy, *Investigation Response* (n 40) pp 29–30, emphasis mine in original.

<sup>8</sup>District Manager (n 38) p 2.

<sup>9</sup>*ibid* p 5.

<sup>10</sup>This was first pointed out to me by the Investigating Officer; see Phone call between Investigating Officer and author (n 187).

<sup>11</sup>Goldsworthy, *Investigation Response* (n 40) p 22, emphasis mine in original.

The other prime example is the accusation that I falsified Crewmate F's signature on the Apr 30 job, which I first heard about when receiving a copy of the *Report*:

It was[sic] also become clear during the investigation talking to Ben[sic] crew mate, that Ben has falsified [their] signature on PRF 136891, you can see the differences, looking at the two other PRF's[sic] in the evidence folder.<sup>12</sup>

Again, damning. Alas:

In v1 of this response, I provided 10 paragraphs of circumstantial evidence to suggest that this would have been highly unlikely. However, having now finally got my hands on the PRFs, I see that this is completely unnecessary. Only someone of profound, baffling incompetence (or with a preconceived notion and overwhelmed by confirmation bias) could possibly reach such a conclusion.

Across the three PRFs included in the document 'PRF info for reflective practice log'<sup>13</sup> we have 9 examples of my crewmate's signature and 44 of mine. Of the 30 additional notes on PRF 136891, only two are unsigned: the final one from me, recording that the patient has headed to hospital in another vehicle; and the sole note from my crewmate, with the doctor's name and GMC PIN.

Spot the difference:

[P.S. I would obviously be unwise to reproduce the nine instances of Crewmate F's signature here; suffice it to say that they are all somewhat different.]

Which one of these am I being accused of falsifying?

Point 1: there is natural variation to signatures. This can be behavioural (e.g. tiredness) or environmental (e.g. writing at a weird angle, on an awkward surface, etc.).

Point 2: the signature that I am being accused of falsifying (despite having no reason to at the time; despite years of consistent, verifiable integrity; despite the fact that [Crewmate F] is also under investigation; despite the fact that I then shared a report of the job into a 50-colleague groupchat when I would have presumably not wanted to draw attention to my misdeed) came at the end of a highly-taxing three-hour job. You can see the gradual deterioration in my own signature as it wears on.

Point 3: It is clear from the rounded 'E' and 'A' that I did not write the role next to the signature.

Compare mine:

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<sup>12</sup>District Manager (n 38) pp 5–6.

<sup>13</sup>This document collected Goldsworthy and Crewmate F, *PRF 136891* (n 275); Ben Goldsworthy and Crewmate F, *PRF 136889* (2020); Ben Goldsworthy and Crewmate F, *PRF 136890* (2020).

**Role**



To [Crewmate F]'s:

**Role**



Point 4: I do not know [Crewmate F]'s ID number.

I don't know who is more pathetic: my crewmate, for being so bereft of integrity that [they] would make such an allegation in order to duck accountability; or the IO, for believing it.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Goldsworthy, *Investigation Response* (n 40) pp 23–24.

## I. [P.S. Excerpts from the author's appeal letter]

This appendix collects relevant excerpts from the author's appeal letter, addressed to the Head of Volunteering. The first version of this letter was submitted on Jul 23,<sup>1</sup> with the second version submitted on Jul 26.<sup>2</sup> Redacted copies are available from the author.

The introduction to the appeal letter concluded with the following:

I have not been treated fairly. I have not been treated fairly since Mar. This has been a highly disturbing nine weeks and, at the moment, the thought of just throwing in the towel and leaving this organisation for good is incredibly tempting. My stubbornness will be the death of me yet.

I am hoping that you are a fair and decent person, although very few in this organisation seem to be. I will continue to follow your advice and to play the game until there is no more game to play.<sup>3</sup>

Under the first ground of appeal—'SJA did not follow its own Disciplinary Procedure'—I presented 14 examples from the *Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure* that had been either broken, flaunted or ignored between the start of the process (with the opening of the covert investigation on Apr 10<sup>4</sup>) and its conclusion:

1.2.2 – Where under-performance in volunteers is caused by lack of skill and/or capability, it will not be dealt with under the Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure

2.3.1 – The volunteer should always be given an opportunity to state their case on the matter

2.4.1 – As a first step, line managers will always attempt to deal with minor misconduct or underperformance through the day to day management processes

2.10.2 – ...HR will appoint the Investigating Officer

2.10.3 – If at any point in an investigation it becomes apparent that allegations of misconduct are unfounded, the volunteer concerned will be informed in writing, as soon as practicable

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<sup>1</sup>Appeal letter (n 300).

<sup>2</sup>Appeal letter (n 306).

<sup>3</sup>*ibid* p 1.

<sup>4</sup>See Appendix B, ¶¶ 54–55.

2.10.5 – Volunteers who are being investigated may access support and guidance from a ‘Volunteer Support Officer’...HR will appoint the Volunteer Support Officer

2.11.1 – The investigation shall be timely and proportionate to the case in scale. It will be conducted as thoroughly as possible

2.11.2 – Interviews...can take place either in a number of formats, e.g. face to face...over Skype...or, if there are only a few basic questions to ask, via e-mail

2.11.2 (the second instance) – ...The report will be a factual account of the investigation

2.12.2 – The letter to the individual will confirm...relevant evidence arising from the investigations

2.18.1 – This is not a confidential process...

2.12.8 – [In the case of] a volunteer who is not able to attend a hearing...the panel will also consider any written statement that the volunteer has submitted

2.16.4 – A volunteer may be suspended from SJA activity whilst the allegation is investigated, however suspension should only be considered in serious circumstances

2.17.1 – If a volunteer who is subject to disciplinary proceedings raises a grievance it will usually be heard before the disciplinary process is concluded...

The letter as a whole concluded as follows:

This entire process has been an absurd trainwreck from start to finish. This is my opinion, as well as that of every single person who has any aspect of it described to them. This is also clearly visible in the fact that 12 allegations have been whittled down to 3, as well as copious examples of procedural errors and outright lies from [the Investigating Officer], [the Cumbria & Lancashire District Manager], [Crewmate F] and [Crewmate I] and [the HR Advisor].

Of the six grounds for dismissal stated in [the Regional Volunteer Manager's] letter, three are completely unsubstantiated (grounds 3, 5 & 6) whilst one is partially unsubstantiated and partly unfair (ground 2).

Of the remaining two-and-a-half grounds, there are exceptional mitigating circumstances in the form of the coronavirus pandemic. Specifically:

- SJA's need to have 100 crews on the road per day resulted in my being paired up with equally-inexperienced crewmates;
- I was approved as an operational driver without completing any training;

- I was provided no support, with my usual minimum of three supernumerary shifts having been waived by the ROCC;
- I was aware that resources were incredibly tight, having had to wait 4 hours to clear with control on my first shift and having heard paramedics talking about [ambulance service] being at 200% capacity and arriving at cardiac arrests only to find that they were non-viable due to the delay; and
- the IPC guidance and considerations were constantly changing, with twelve versions of the document *COVID-19 Infection Prevention & Control Ambulance Service and Community First Responders Guidance* having been released in the space of a month-and-a-half.

There are also claims that I have breached procedures and protocols that nobody has been able to cite evidence of. In addition, where no evidence exists and it is only my word against my crewmate's, theirs has been taken as more truthful than my own.

This is despite the fact that I have been as transparent as I possibly can throughout this process, despite the fact that I have made no effort to deny my responsibility for errors I have actually made and despite the fact that I have mounds of circumstantial evidence and the testimony of colleagues in support of my clinical competency and personal integrity.

Summing up, I am more than willing to accept capability-based responses. If it was decided that the conditions are no longer extreme enough to require my continued services as a driver without having completed any training, I would happily have relinquished the role until I could attend some. If I was deemed clinically inexperienced, I would have happily accepted clinical supervision shifts (which I was trying to arrange prior to my suspension) and the supernumerary shifts that were waived by the ROCC in early April.

But the only appropriate *disciplinary* outcome is a finding of 'no action', and for 'all records of the hearing and investigation [to] be removed from the volunteer's personal file and destroyed' (see *Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure*, s 2.12.20).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Appeal letter (n 306) p 14, emphasis mine in original.

## J. [P.S. Against note-taking]

This appendix presents examples from the official minutes of my disciplinary and appeal hearings (and a follow-up call with the Head of Volunteering).

Unlike in these cases, I was shown the minutes of my initial interview to approve before they became the official record. This allowed me, at least, to address some of the most obvious inaccuracies at the time.<sup>1</sup> I also did not record the interview, so cannot directly compare the minutes to what was actually said. For these reasons, I have omitted it here.

However, I chose to record (my side only of) the disciplinary hearing and appeal hearing (and follow-up call). I did so in full knowledge that this would prejudice my chance of a successful appeal, because after seeing the *Investigation Report* on Jul 30 that became a goal secondary to generating evidence for this report.

In this appendix I will repeatedly compare what has been recorded in the official notes to what I actually said. You may think that the discrepancies are not a major problem, and that those who were present will know what the notes meant. I thought the same too, following my interview.

Bearing in mind that this process, by its end, has been handled by four different people (i.e., the Investigating Officer, the Cumbria & Lancashire District Manager, the Regional Volunteer Manager and the Head of Volunteering), with each meeting recorded by a separate person (i.e., District HR Lead for the initial interview, the HR Advisor for the disciplinary hearing and the HR Manager for the appeal hearing (and follow-up call)), all across a timescale of thirteen weeks.

Put yourself in the shoes of someone like the Regional Volunteer Manager, parachuted in the day before the hearing and having to get yourself up to speed using these notes.

### J.1 Disciplinary hearing

We shall start with the Jul 16 disciplinary hearing (the notes of which I didn't receive until Aug 24, at the outcome of my appeal).

The HR Advisor writes the following:

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<sup>1</sup>See Appendix D, fig. D.14.

Check that they have access to the disciplinary procedure and HEART competency policy on SJA Connect[sic]. In addition, check they have a copy of the report – **Yes Volunteer disciplinary, but first he has heard of HEART** – [HR Advisor] explained HEART is everywhere with SJA its our vales and available on connect – **he is aware of HEART values yes**<sup>2</sup>

Considering I have made repeat reference to the HEART Values<sup>3</sup>, it seems strange I would have claimed to be unfamiliar with them here. So what did I *actually* say?

I've got a copy of the *Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure*, I didn't catch what the other thing was.

[RVM's response not recorded, but from memory [they] referred to the HEART Values as the 'competency policy' (sans the 'HEART'), which I have never heard anybody use before and which isn't even accurate]

Uhh, that's the first I've heard of that.

Is this the *Capability[sic] and Performance Policy*? Or is it something else?

[HR Advisor's response about 'HEART being everywhere' not recorded]

Oh, what, 'humanity', oh yeah yeah, yeah yeah.<sup>4</sup>

Something less trivial, perhaps?

**During a pandemic lockdown what was your rationale for using a neighbour to help with manual handling when government advice is to only meet with members of your own house hold[sic] and to remain 2 meters apart from other households?** – in position he was in government advice doesn't apply in this case – practical so much strain on NHS – so busy for the nature of the job on 29<sup>th</sup> April – practical grounds – which was a hold you hands nearby – when became they then did call for ambulance back up – might have made a mistake in this case<sup>5</sup>

Again, imagine you are having to pick this up weeks or months down the line, having not been present during the hearing. These notes would be borderline unusable.

Whereas, through the magic of recording, we can see that I actually said the following:

Um, so obviously in the position we were in, um, government advice doesn't apply 100% of the time, um, we weren't staying just within our own families, I

<sup>2</sup>HR Advisor (n 283) p 2, formatting theirs in original.

<sup>3</sup>See fig. D.31; see also Appendix B, ¶ 293.

<sup>4</sup>Disciplinary Hearing (n 283) 04:27–05:06.

<sup>5</sup>HR Advisor (n 283) p 3, formatting theirs in original.



understand that that's because we were key workers, but there are clearly practical considerations to be made and those practical considerations are what I said previously, the fact that there was so much strain on the [ambulance] services, on our first shift on April 1<sup>st</sup> we, uh, spent four hours trying to get through to control to clear because it was so busy, um, for the nature of the job, particularly on April 29<sup>th</sup>, it seemed massively unnecessary on a practical ground to burden the service with sending out another crew to assist us with what was effectively a 'hold your hands nearby in case anyone tumbles', and in the case of the April 30<sup>th</sup> job, when it became clear that it was a more complex extrication and medical issue we did then call for ambulance service backup...we might have done something someone might not like or made a mistake, but we did so in good faith...<sup>6</sup>

Another example of this ambiguity at play:

**Did you believe they[the patient] would be acutely unwell** – this is 2 months ago – hard to recall – he was talking to us cracking jokes about his holiday...<sup>7</sup>

I was talking about the patient cracking jokes about their holiday, but one could just as easily interpret this *me* cracking jokes about *my* holidays.

There is also the HR Advisor's characterisation of the end of the hearing, when I challenged them on the fact that evidence was still being withheld. For example, they write that I first raised it as follows:

One question – been asking to see evidence and had refuse – or on connect – or ignored and gave five of those 18 – and based on this in his email

Why evidence withheld for so long – and [Crewmate F] alleged of a crime – all in an email – he has not has the response he would like only had a reply when [the Director of Governance] emailed about his attendance, he has had to fight for this information for weeks now<sup>8</sup>

What evidence was I asking for? Who had refused it? What emails am I going on about? Has Crewmate F also been alleged to have committed a crime? These are not exactly unimportant questions.

Meanwhile, in the recording:

Um, one question I do have: so I've been asking for seven and a half weeks to see the evidence against me, to see the allegations, I've had it repeatedly refused. I

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<sup>6</sup>Disciplinary Hearing (n 283) 16:41–17:48.

<sup>7</sup>HR Advisor (n 283) p 4.

<sup>8</sup>*ibid* p 7.

then asked to see the 18 files of evidence listed in the *Investigation Report* that weren't available on CONNECT or submitted by myself, this was ignored until, I believe, [the DoG] made some calls and then [the DM] gave me 5 of those 18. I then asked for the additional ones so that I could see them, as I believe is both St John procedure and basic common sense—it's hard to defend yourself when you're boxing against shadows. Uh, [HR Advisor], you said yesterday that because we'd be looking at them in this hearing I wouldn't be receiving them, uh, although you didn't cite any sort of procedural basis for doing so. I now note that we appear to be at the end and we haven't looked at any of them, uh, so I just want to know why that remaining, sort of, 12 or so bits of evidence have been withheld from me for so long? This included the statements of my first three crewmates, this includes [Crewmate F]'s statement where [they] alleged me[sic] of a crime, this includes...various other bits and bobs, they're all in an email that I sent to [the DM] and [the HR Advisor], so I don't know who wants to answer this but I would quite like to know why there is this extreme level of obfuscation.<sup>9</sup>

A slight difference, don't you think? The notes then go on to convey the HR Advisor's responses in detail, without any indication that they were avoiding answering the questions I had actually asked. At one point, after the DoG has intervened, they have written the following:

**[DoG] - have you had enough Ben? Ben** - Kinda of, he wants to see the [Crewmate F] statement, talked about he MSY report, (that he has sight of as he read this out)<sup>10</sup>

How strange that I would have talked about one of the few pieces of evidence I actually *had* been shown. Almost as though that's not what happened:

*Kind of...* Um, I understand there was a secret investigation taken place I believe by [the C&M AUM] in early April, [they] then produced a report from that that [they] gave to [my DM]—at some point, I don't know when—which concluded that I could do with some driver mentoring, um, and stuff like that. No action seems to have been taken on that. We then wait until [Crewmate I] submits an IRF in mid-May, which then, [my DM] jumps on and suspends me and investigates. The investigation drags on, a bizarre spurious allegation comes out just as it's about to close from the MRT group, as well as a less-spurious clinical one (but one that seems strange to have put through the IRF process), so it's just been a constant stream of things that's[sic] all got very complicated, but there are specifically

<sup>9</sup>Disciplinary Hearing (n 283) 01:08:34–01:10:05.

<sup>10</sup>HR Advisor (n 283) p 7, formatting theirs in original.

eight files listed on that appendix [s 8, *Investigation Report*] that I believe I have a grounds to see, and they are: 'Info from [Crewmate B]', who is one of my crewmates from the first couple shifts which, I've spoken to [them] independently and [they've] confirmed that it does say, like, 'yep, no, he was rough, rough around the edges but he was sent out too early, um, he requires mentoring', which, again, doesn't seem to have been acted on; there's 'Info from [Crewmate A]', which presumably contains details about the vehicle incident [on Apr 4]; there's 'Info from [Crewmate C]', which, I don't know what that includes; 'Evidence from [then-Regional Ambulance & Clinical Training Officer, now-Regional Ambulance Lead] for EMT course', um, that might not be relevant, I'm happy for that one to be dropped off the list; 'Evidence...'

[DoG's interjection not recorded]

Well, hi-I, yeah, I dunno [laughs]

[DoG not recorded]

Yeah...

[DoG not recorded]

Well, that's, that's not happened, but I don't know if it[the secret early-April investigation that led to *MSY Investigation Report*] only concluded just as I got suspended and so this *is* the outcome of that, but it seems bizarre that that would have started in early April when my last shift with anyone from that Ambulance Unit was April 10<sup>th</sup> and then not done anything with it until May 19<sup>th</sup>, um, but there's specifically two files: one is 'Evidence from [the C&M AUM] reference support'...which I don't know if that claims that I was given support, but I wasn't, and if it does claim that then I'd like to dispute that; and the other one is just called '[Crewmate F]', which like I said I assume is [their] certainly a grounds for me to see, and we have mentioned that specifically in this hearing.<sup>11</sup> (DoG's question not recorded)

It is quite a feat of compression to fit all of that into the HR Advisor's two lines, but it turns out all you have to do is jettison all of the content and embarrassing bits and just make it sound like I'm unreasonably demanding things I already have.

Last but by no means least from this hearing, we have the following:

### **Do you have any questions?**

Response

Not really not – has said everything he has had to say in response – previously one was ignored and [SJA colleague] character reference his frustrations, now

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<sup>11</sup>Disciplinary Hearing (n 283) 01:27:08–01:30:03.

best part of 8 weeks, been absolute process and hostility – apologise – and why ask if he fraud someone signature

[Investigating Officer]’s report mis aligned could’ve come back in first week – yes he went out unprepared and trained to arrange that – get fact of the a matter but in the arse<sup>12</sup>

I’m not even going to tell you what that word salad is trying to capture.

Recall, again, that I was not shown these notes until the outcome of my appeal, *five and a half weeks later*.

## J.2 Appeal hearing (and follow-up call)

To the HR *Manager*’s credit, the notes for the appeal hearing (and follow-up call) are leaps and bounds ahead in terms of accuracy. Additionally, as the appeal stage marks the final (official) stage of the process, it is arguable that the notes are less important.

Even so, it is again a highly flawed method of recording. For example, the HR Manager writes that I gave the following answer:

I sent another e mail on 27. I don’t have a clue what I was alleged to have done. I can’t make this clearer, I am not comfortable to counter allegations on a teams call without prior knowledge. I checked with [the Regional HR/Admin. Manager] who still said No<sup>13</sup>

These are perhaps not major discrepancies in terms of affecting the final outcome, but the ‘27’ leaves it unclear as to what month the date refers to, and it is claimed that I contacted the Regional HR/Admin. Manager, when in fact it was the Investigating Officer who claimed to have done so. Additionally, the line ‘I can’t make this clearer...’ was me quoting from my May 27 email to the IO<sup>14</sup>, not something I said to the hearing.

Later, they write:

The character reference said no bravado. There is a gap between where I am at and where I need to be and I am working hard to fill it<sup>15</sup>

It’s subtle, but this, viewed in isolation, gives the impression that I claimed to be still aware of and working to fill the gap between ideal and reality. Obviously, having been suspended or dismissed for each of the past thirteen weeks, this does not make much sense.

<sup>12</sup>HR Advisor (n 283) p 7, formatting theirs in original.

<sup>13</sup>HR Manager, *Appeal against dismissal Ben Goldsworthy 12 August 2020* (n 331) p 2.

<sup>14</sup>See Appendix D, fig. D.13.

<sup>15</sup>HR Manager, *Appeal against dismissal Ben Goldsworthy 12 August 2020* (n 331) p 4.

Firstly, the second line is actually a continuation of me quoting my friend's character reference:

He has never shown any bravado or complacency regarding his abilities as an EMT[sic] to me - my impression was that he knew it would be a steep learning curve but that he was excited to rise to the challenge and give it his all.<sup>16</sup>

Specifically, I said the following:

...the person's just said 'Ben has never shown any bravado about the ambulance work, he's been very conscious of the fact that there is a big gap between where he's at and where he needs to be and [he] has worked hard to fill that', something to that effect, which I think is the case.<sup>17</sup>

However, this *is* a sentiment that I myself expressed, in the conclusion of version 1 of my response to the *Investigation Report*:

I was willing to accept that it was not ideal, but that we were in unprecedented times. I acknowledged my responsibility to ensure that I learned the ropes as fast as I possible could, and aimed to maximise this speed by asking crewmates for feedback, filling in copious reflective logs (4 in the month and a half I was crewing) and devouring educational material (24 items in my CPD learning log since Apr 1).

I made myself as available as humanly possible to ensure I got hours under my belt and could close the skill gap as quickly as possible. I took one month off work, and then three. I remained in the North, alone in my flat, rather than heading down to the Midlands to be with family because I knew I had better access to a train station in Lancaster. I bounced across the North, from Liverpool to Newcastle; wherever the ROCC needed me.

I did over 200 hours in April alone, and received a letter of commendation from the COVID-19 National Tactical Commander.<sup>18</sup>

However, it is worth noting the past tense of both that passage and my friend's character reference. As I then go on to explain:

Of course I made mistakes, particularly at the beginning. Mistakes that would have been fixed had they been mentioned at the time, and which *were* fixed by

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<sup>16</sup>Character reference from author's friend (3 July 2020).

<sup>17</sup>Appeal Hearing (n 319) 56:58–56:14.

<sup>18</sup>Goldsworthy, *Investigation Response* (n 221) p 26.

the time I was pulled up on them because I was lucky enough to have subsequent crewmates who provided feedback and support. And by mid-May, when things were starting to calm down, I set about catching up on the support I had missed. The great irony is that just before I was suspended, I was trying to arrange some clinical supervision shifts.<sup>19</sup>

However, after reviewing these notes one would think I had claimed, in the hearing, that I was still working to close the gap.

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<sup>19</sup>Goldsworthy, *Investigation Response* (n 221) p 26, emphasis mine in original.

## K. [P.S. Author's response to the appeal outcome letter]

This appendix contains the author's response to the Head of Volunteering's appeal outcome letter, which was received on Aug 24.

This two-page letter presents fairly detailed justifications for the HoV's decision to uphold the original decision (dismissal from the organisation), dismiss the author's appeal on all four grounds and absolve SJA of any wrongdoing (though they will apparently be noting some 'learning points'). This is in comparison to the original one-page (and typo-ridden) outcome letter from the Regional Volunteer Manager, which presented the six grounds for dismissal as a bullet-pointed list, with one—'professional misconduct'—given no further elaboration.

First, the good: though I believe this journey was always leading to one outcome, the behaviour of the HoV during the appeal was a welcome breath of fresh air. They were friendly, kept me informed on what was happening and kept their pledges to update me at certain points. They was the first person involved in this whole process (excluding the two Freedom to Speak Up Guardians) who treated me like a colleague and a human being, and I thank them for that.

However, the journey had to end at some point. The primary goal of many of my actions following receipt of the *Investigation Report* on Jun 30 has been to generate evidence of the myriad shortcomings of SJA's procedures for the benefit of this report (and, it is hoped, those who are still with SJA). This makes this detailed breakdown of justifications a valuable primary source.

Which makes it alarming just how often it directly contradicts SJA policy and procedure. This may be for one of three reasons, none of them good, and it is up to the reader to decide which they think most likely:

1. the HoV is unfamiliar with SJA policy and procedure;
2. there is a bulk of 'shadow procedure' that is not made available to everyone in the organisation; or
3. the HoV is a company (wo)man through-and-through and chose to protect SJA at all costs.

A note on that third possibility, though: I was saying as early as June that I was being hung

out to dry so that the Regional team responsible for sending me out underprepared and undersupported could avoid accountability for their errors.<sup>1</sup> The RVM avoided making it clear through the sheer brevity of their outcome letter, but perhaps, here at the very end of the process, the mask has finally slipped.

After an introductory preamble, the letter moves onto the first ground of appeal: 'SJA did not follow its own volunteer disciplinary procedure':

I have carefully reviewed what happened and I believe you had a fair disciplinary hearing.<sup>2</sup>..

The question asked was not how fair they believe the hearing to have been, but whether or not SJA correctly followed its disciplinary procedure, from the initial covert April investigation onwards. In my appeal letter I presented at least fourteen procedures that had clearly been breached (from the *Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure* alone), and they go mostly unmentioned here. These are not mere technicalities I am attempting to worm through. These include the provision of evidence and the appointment of the Volunteer Support Officer at the start of the process to provide support and guidance.

They continue:

...you mentioned not having all the information made available to you, whilst I appreciate some of this information took time to reach you and you had to chase this which is a learning point for the organisation. I am satisfied that you had the opportunity to discuss the allegations relevant to this disciplinary hearing.<sup>3</sup>

Limiting our scope to only those allegations discussed during the disciplinary hearing, we have the following:

- allegation 4.1A, the Apr 4 driving incident;<sup>4</sup>
- allegation 4.2B, that I did not clean the ambulance on May 18;<sup>5</sup>
- allegation 4.3, the Apr 30 job, including the signature falsification allegation;<sup>6</sup> and
- allegation 4.4, the Apr 29 job.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Goldsworthy, *Investigation Response* (n 221).

<sup>2</sup>Letter from Head of Volunteering to author (n 331) p 1.

<sup>3</sup>*ibid* p 1.

<sup>4</sup>District Manager (n 38) pp 2 & 5; HR Advisor (n 283) pp 2–3.

<sup>5</sup>District Manager (n 38) pp 2 & 5; HR Advisor (n 283) p 6.

<sup>6</sup>District Manager (n 38) pp 3 & 5–6; HR Advisor (n 283) pp 3–6.

<sup>7</sup>District Manager (n 38) pp 3 & 6; HR Advisor (n 283) pp 3.



Beyond those specific allegations, we also touched on my making of recordings<sup>8</sup> and whether or not I was open with colleagues about my lack of experience and discussed ‘support or learning opportunities’.<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile, the supporting evidence that I had not been shown by this point included:

- a document called ‘Info from [Crewmate A]’, presumably relating to the Apr 4 incident;
- two documents called ‘Info from [Crewmate B]’ and ‘Info from [Crewmate C]’, which presumably showed their awareness of my lack of inexperience (and Crewmate B confirmed this when I asked them);
- a document called ‘Evidence from [the Regional Driver Training Lead] Reference Driving’, presumably also relevant to the Apr 4 incident and to my openness about my inexperience;
- a document called ‘Evidence from [the Cheshire & Merseyside Ambulance Unit Manager] reference support’, presumably demonstrating [their] awareness that I could do with support;
- a document called ‘Information from ROCC ref 3<sup>rd</sup> crewing’, presumably again relevant to the experience and support question; and
- a document called simply ‘[Crewmate F]’, which by process of elimination must’ve contained the signature falsification allegation.<sup>10</sup>

These are only the documents listed in s 8 of the *Investigator Report*; the document ‘Feedback from [the Regional Clinical Lead]’ referenced ‘the formal report from [the Regional Professional Lead (Paramedics)]’—clearly relevant to the Apr 30 job—and there were multiple PRFs I was not privy to. The existence of these additional items of evidence also suggested that the list in the *Report* was not exhaustive; I had no idea just how much evidence was being withheld from me.

Now, perhaps those presumptions are wrong on my part. When I was finally shown ‘[Crewmate F]’ (the only one of those aforementioned documents I was eventually shown) I was astonished to find that it only related to the Apr 29 job and contained nothing about signature falsification.<sup>11</sup> But the point is that I could not have possibly known that at the time. Not only that, but it is not for the prosecution to decide which items of information they think have relevance to my defence; I will be aware of things that they are not.<sup>12</sup> The easiest way to put my mind at ease would have been to just share them from the get-go.

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<sup>8</sup>HR Advisor (n 283) p 1.

<sup>9</sup>*ibid* p 5–6.

<sup>10</sup>Email to HR Advisor from author (n 291).

<sup>11</sup>See Appendix B, ¶¶ 249 & 386.

<sup>12</sup>‘Discovery (law)’ (*Wikipedia*) <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discovery\\_%28law%29](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discovery_%28law%29)>.

This does not even address the fact that, at the time of the hearing, every allegation had been upheld by the investigation<sup>13</sup> except for 4.2C ('it is alleged that you were unaware of what a CVA was...'<sup>14</sup>).

With regards to your suspension, you were not fully suspended from the organisation, to clarify you were suspended from carrying out clinical duties. If you had been suspended in full you would have been given a support officer, as it was you were able to remain in the organisation and in contact with people.<sup>15</sup>

There is no process for a clinical-only suspension laid out in *any* SJA procedure or policy I have access to. The word 'suspension' does not even appear in the *Conduct and Performance Policy*, the *Feedback & Complaints Procedure*, the *Feedback Policy*, the *Grievance Procedure* (either employee or volunteer) or the *Incident Management Framework (IMF) Policy*.

The only suspension that could be applied to me is the suspension laid out in the *Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure*, 'where volunteers are temporarily stopped from performing their role, or engaging in SJA activities, whilst an investigation into their alleged misconduct takes place'.<sup>16</sup>

However, the *Disciplinary Procedure* (for employees, not volunteers) *does* include a process for placing an employee on 'Restricted Activities' in which they are 'asked to refrain from operating within a certain sector of the Organisation, or carrying out certain duties until the conclusion of the investigation and/or disciplinary'.<sup>17</sup>

Could it be that they have been mistakenly dealing with me under the employee procedure this whole time? After all, the HR Advisor did mistakenly write that I was 'AO crew' (i.e., paid ambulance crew) in the disciplinary hearing minutes,<sup>18</sup> and it's only during the coronavirus pandemic that they have moved to cover volunteers as well as employees.<sup>19</sup> However, for obvious reasons, the employee procedure does not mention a 'Volunteer Support Officer', so I don't think that's it.

This is all beside the point, however. The claim that I was 'able to remain...in contact with people' is disingenuous. I was told by the Investigating Officer at the very beginning that I couldn't involve anyone in my line management chain. Add to this that I was not told what the allegations were for the first week, I could have no idea of knowing who I could safely talk to. Add to this further that, as the MRT reflective report fiasco shows, talking to people within this organisation is an activity fraught with risk.

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<sup>13</sup>District Manager (n 38) pp 5–6.

<sup>14</sup>*ibid* p 2.

<sup>15</sup>Letter from Head of Volunteering to author (n 331) p 1.

<sup>16</sup>*Vol. Disc. Proc* (n 35) s 2.16.

<sup>17</sup>*Disc. Proc.* (n 52) s 5.2.

<sup>18</sup>HR Advisor (n 283) p 1.

<sup>19</sup>See Appendix B, ¶ 238.

But this is all, again, beside the point. There is absolutely no ambiguity in the *Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure* in this case: ‘Volunteers who are being **investigated** may access support and guidance from a “Volunteer Support Officer”’.<sup>20</sup> Not only was I investigated three times during this period (covertly in April,<sup>21</sup> and then overtly by both the IO<sup>22</sup> and the North East ALM<sup>23</sup> in May–June), but the provision of the VSO was completely unrelated to the nature of my suspension, and one would hope that the *Head of Volunteering* would know this.

On to the second ground: ‘Evidence that SJA took disciplinary action on an unfounded allegation’:

A number of initial allegations were made, not all of them were upheld by both the Investigating Officer and the Chair of the disciplinary hearing [the Regional Volunteer Manager], which is why not all of these featured during the disciplinary hearing. This is why you did not receive these for the disciplinary hearing as they were irrelevant to the process. I was unable to find any evidence to suggest that the allegations were unfounded.<sup>24</sup>

The first part obscures the fact that of 12 total allegations in the *Investigation Report*, 10 were initially upheld either in whole or in part. Of those, 4 were discussed during the disciplinary hearing. Of those, 3 were upheld in the original outcome, either in whole or in part.

At no point was I ever told that these allegations were being sloughed off like wet tissue paper; it was only when I received the outcome that it became clear that 9 allegations had been silently dropped, including the most serious—that I had falsified my crewmate’s signature. This was a blatant breach of the *Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure*,<sup>25</sup> unless the HoV wishes to argue that the outcome of my appeal was ‘as soon as practicable’.

I also reiterate my appeal letter’s argument that I could not have ‘breach[ed] confidence & trust’ in an explicitly non-confidential process,<sup>26</sup> and where trust was clearly not reciprocal.

Finally, the claim in the RVM’s letter that we ‘took [the] word of [the] neighbour that they was[sic] a practicing[sic] Doctor with no evidence when on scene’ is not true. Our evidence was that the patient’s wife was familiar with the neighbour, and they put their name, address and GMC PIN down on our PRF. We also *did* escalate to ambulance control that the patient was deteriorating.<sup>27</sup>

The HoV has disputed none of this in their letter.

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<sup>20</sup> *Vol. Disc. Proc* (n 35) s 2.10.5, emphasis mine.

<sup>21</sup> *MSY Investigation Report* (n 41).

<sup>22</sup> District Manager (n 38).

<sup>23</sup> North East Ambulance Locality Manager (n 274).

<sup>24</sup> Letter from Head of Volunteering to author (n 331) p 2.

<sup>25</sup> *Vol. Disc. Proc* (n 35) s 2.10.3.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid* s 2.18.1.

<sup>27</sup> Letter from Regional Volunteer Manager to author (n 39).

The third ground of appeal is 'Challenge to the level of sanction imposed':

The actions you took, the risk to patients/public and the reputation of St John Ambulance and your conduct, I am upholding the level of sanction as being appropriate<sup>28</sup>

In this brief sentence, the HoV is claiming the following (formatted as a more formal logical argument):

1. a disciplinary response to my actions is appropriate:
  - 1.1. I put members of the public at risk:
    - 1.1.1. enlisting the help of bystanders (rather than requesting an additional crew) on Apr 29 & 30 put them at risk;
    - 1.1.2. doing so also put SJA's reputation at risk;
    - 1.1.3. the decision to do this was caused by 'negligence and/or non-compliance';<sup>29</sup>
    - 1.1.4. therefore, the decision was either based on ignorance of the risks (in the case of negligence) or wilful disregard for procedure (in the case of non-compliance);
    - 1.1.5. I have shown repeatedly that I was aware of the risks, so it was not negligence;
    - 1.1.6. therefore, it must have been non-compliance; and so, therefore,
    - 1.1.7. there exists a procedure or protocol, available to me, that states additional crews are to be used for all support jobs.
  - 1.2. my conduct during this process has been unprofessional:
    - 1.2.1. I have used unprofessional language and made unprofessional statements;
    - 1.2.2. recording conversations and meetings is misconduct.
2. there are no 'exceptional mitigating circumstances'<sup>30</sup> in either case:
  - 2.1. the coronavirus pandemic is not an exceptional mitigating circumstance in the first case;
  - 2.2. SJA's conduct over the last 13+ weeks is not an exceptional mitigating circumstance in the second.
3. this conduct is 'so serious that it is impossible or inappropriate to allow the volunteer to continue with SJA'.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Letter from Head of Volunteering to author (n 331) p 2.

<sup>29</sup>*Vol. Disc. Proc* (n 35) s 1.2.1.

<sup>30</sup>*ibid* s 2.12.20.

<sup>31</sup>*ibid* s 2.9.2.

There is some subjectivity here, particularly on some points. For my part, I agree with points 1.1.1 & 1.1.2; these *were* risks, but risks can be mitigated and must be balanced against other factors. I completely disagree with points 1.1.3 & 1.2.2. Point 1.1.7 is demonstrably untrue. Finally, I do not expect many, if any, readers would agree with point 2; see Appendix E for evidence.

However, I believe this brief excerpt from my concluding remarks in the appeal hearing follow-up call shines some light into the HoV's thinking here, which predominantly hinges on point 3:

...whether [my treatment by SJA is] a sufficient or not mitigating circumstance, I have been though a, a bit of an ordeal, so my patience is not what it once was, um, but in terms of looking forwards, I don't think there's any reason to expect that, if this appeal was successful, I'd then go off any keep doing that. I'd be like 'right, okay, can I stay in this organisation, or is it, is the relationship too poisoned? shall I just go?'<sup>32</sup>

The HR Manager's minutes don't record the HoV's response; they gave a knowing 'mmm'.

Finally:

It is my view that if you did not feel confident or competent in your role of ETA[sic], I would of[sic] expected you to speak to and escalate through your line manager and not just the ROCC in this case. As a Volunteer you also have the right to stand down or not proceed with any shifts if you did not feel fully able to carry out the role. One of the mitigations you presented was the lack of supernumerary opportunities you received, despite asking for this, however you continued to carry out a significant number of ambulance shifts<sup>33</sup>

This paragraph is a complete betrayal of the compact between SJA and its volunteers.

The SJA Volunteer Charter states the following:

**What we commit to do for you:**

- Welcome you to St John Ambulance with an appropriate induction to your role.
- Provide the resources and training you need to carry out your role along with opportunities to develop your skills.
- Provide you with support...

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<sup>32</sup>Videocall between Head of Volunteering and author (n 329) 20:18–21:51.

<sup>33</sup>Letter from Head of Volunteering to author (n 331) p 2.

### What you commit to do for us:

- Uphold our values and help us deliver our charitable mission.
- Actively engage in or support the delivery of our charitable services.
- Undertake training and maintain competency required for your role.<sup>34</sup>

Clearly, it was SJA's duty to provide appropriate support and training. It was my duty, as I made clear all the way back in *March*<sup>35</sup>, to step up and support the organisation as best I could during a national emergency, though it was not an ideal situation. It was my duty to volunteer hundreds of hours across a month-and-a-half, on top of the hundreds I have given to the organisation previously. It was my duty to put my personal safety at risk *pro utilitate hominum*.

Where I felt things were clearly unsafe, I *did* withdraw from shifts; e.g., when I felt too fatigued to drive for three shifts in a row.<sup>36</sup> When it became clear that I was not being put with experienced crewmates as promised, I wasted no time in raising my concerns.<sup>37</sup>

I had taken three months off work to put myself at SJA's disposal. People higher up than me, more experienced than me and (in many cases) paid to know what they are doing were happy for me to go out without supernumerary shifts, so why would I have second-guessed them without a clear reason? I did my part, making absolutely sure that nobody—not the ROCC, not my crewmates, not my District Manager—was under any illusions about my level of skill and experience.<sup>38</sup> Demanding someone with no prior experience, already operating outside of their area of expertise, to have perfect self-awareness of their own abilities and shortcomings, when told by those in positions of responsibility to crack on, is nothing short of absurd.

And do you know where my line manager was during all this? Taking a step back from SJA to focus on their] job in the NHS.<sup>39</sup> The ROCC was, for all intents and purposes, my manager during this period. That was the whole point of the ROCC.

In the end of the letter, HoV writes that I 'have made vitriolic comments about colleagues and questioned their integrity throughout'. In fact, I did not question anyone's integrity for the first five weeks. I bent over backwards to assume incompetence and bad procedures, rather than malice, was at play.<sup>40</sup>

Then I saw the *Investigation Report* on Jun 30, which accused me of (amongst other things) criminal dishonesty. Even then, I said that 'I may be wrong', and offered the Cumbria &

<sup>34</sup> *Vol. Charter* (n 20), formatting theirs in original.

<sup>35</sup> See Appendix D, fig. D.4.

<sup>36</sup> See Appendix B, ¶ 103.

<sup>37</sup> See Appendix B, ¶ 97.

<sup>38</sup> See Appendix B, ¶¶ 13–14, 17, 20, 27, 28–29 & 46.

<sup>39</sup> See Appendix B, ¶ 80.

<sup>40</sup> See § 2.4, written at this time; see also Character reference from author's friend (n 16); see also Appendix B, ¶ 149.

Lancashire District Manager and HR Advisor an easy opportunity to provide ‘a compelling counterargument to my conspiracy hypothesis’.<sup>41</sup>

They spat the opportunity back in my face, the DM ran away and the HR Advisor proceeded to lie to my face throughout the hearing. Yet I am at fault for ‘questioning their integrity’? I have acted with ‘vitriol’?

The HoV’s statement is false, but not for the reason you may think.

These people were never my colleagues.

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<sup>41</sup>Goldsworthy, *Investigation Response* (n 221) p 1.

## L. Data Protection

The following data is held securely by the data controller:

- all SJA correspondence (emails, WhatsApp messages, etc.);
- all shared evidence;
- recordings of all phone calls indicated;
- recordings of the author's side only of all hearings indicated;
- all relevant SJA policy and procedure documents.

The data controller is the author.

The data subjects are the author, along with any individuals featured on recordings or in correspondence or items of evidence.

The lawful basis for processing under the GDPR is 'legitimate purposes'; that is, the production of this report and the provision of evidence to back up its claims if challenged.<sup>1</sup> For email correspondence and one phone call recording,<sup>2</sup> there is an additional basis of 'consent'.<sup>3</sup> For the hearing recordings, the author is the only data subject and so data processing is at his discretion.

Any data subject is entitled to receive a copy of any document that features them from the author.<sup>4</sup> The right to erasure does not apply due to the legitimate purposes basis for processing,<sup>5</sup> but requests will nonetheless be considered on a case-by-case basis.

After 90 days from the release date on the cover page of this report, provided they are not currently serving or likely to serve any evidential purpose, the characterisations given here will be taken to be accurate and the phone call recordings and shared evidence will be destroyed. All email correspondence will be stripped of personal information and archived

<sup>1</sup>Regulation on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) [2016] OJ L119/1 (GDPR) art. 6, s 1(f).

<sup>2</sup>Phone call between Investigating Officer and author (n 114).

<sup>3</sup>GDPR, art. 6, s 1(a).

<sup>4</sup>GDPR, art. 15.

<sup>5</sup>GDPR, art. 17.



securely. The SJA policy and procedure documents will be disposed of. The hearing recordings will remain available indefinitely.

## Acronyms

**A&E** Accident & Emergency. 192

**Acas** Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service. 3, 30, 31, 131, 179

**AFA** Advanced First Aider. 52, 117

**ALM** Ambulance Locality Manager. 23, 25, 26, 78, 79, 81, 101, 105, 142, 143, 193, 213

**AM** Area Manager. 52, 53, 58, 64, 65, 77, 83, 87, 91, 99, 119

**AM** Assembly Member. 20

**AO** Ambulance Operations. 50, 212

**ASAP** as soon as possible. 116, 119, 120

**AU** Ambulance Unit. 57, 64, 74, 190–192, 205

**AUM** Ambulance Unit Manager. 18, 55–57, 62–65, 69, 88, 90, 92, 93, 100, 134, 137, 141, 143, 190, 192, 204, 205, 211

**BLUF** Bottom Line, Up Front. 137

**BP** blood pressure. 55, 62, 191, 192

**BYM** Britain Yearly Meeting. 35

**C&L** Cumbria & Lancashire. 11, 64, 150, 188, 199, 201, 216

**C&M** Cheshire & Merseyside. 18, 56, 57, 62–65, 69, 88, 90, 92, 100, 134, 141, 143, 190–192, 204, 205, 211

**CC** carbon copy. 68, 109, 145

**CC** Chief Commissioner. 98

**CCA** Civil Contingencies Act 2004. 118

**CEO** Chief Executive Officer. 94, 98, 137, 159, 194

**CFR** Case Fatality Rate. 118

- CMO** Chief Medical Officer. 50
- CoP** College of Paramedics. 21
- COVID-19** Coronavirus disease 2019. 6, 15, 19, 23, 24, 49, 51–53, 55–57, 73, 76, 82, 90, 117, 118, 138, 139, 189, 190, 192, 195, 200, 207
- CPD** Continuous Professional Development. 100, 190, 207
- CPG** County Priory Group. 35
- CV** Curriculum Vitae. 135
- CVA** Cerebrovascular accident. 212
- DHRL** District HR Lead. 66, 67, 72, 124, 125, 201
- DM** District Manager. 11, 52, 54, 56, 59, 64, 73–76, 79, 80, 83–88, 90–94, 96–99, 101, 102, 104, 126, 129–132, 134, 137, 138, 140, 141, 150, 188, 194, 199, 201, 204, 216, 217
- DoG** Director of Governance. 96, 98, 99, 102–106, 110–112, 143–145, 150, 203–205
- DP&O** Director of People & Organisation. 94, 96–98, 137, 194
- DVSA** Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency. 23
- EAC** Emergency Ambulance Crew. 53, 55, 58, 119, 148
- ED** Emergency Department. 117
- EE** Essential Education. 52, 53, 116, 119, 189
- EMT** Emergency Medical Technician. 49, 50, 52, 75, 77, 116, 117, 119, 120, 141, 143, 189, 205, 207
- ETA** Emergency Transport Attendant. 61, 215
- FA** First Aider. 52, 117, 118, 136, 146
- FSU Guardian** Freedom to Speak Up Guardian. 76, 85–87, 90, 93, 94, 96, 98, 108, 137–139, 145, 183, 193
- GCS** Glasgow Coma Score. 73, 125
- GDC** General Dental Council. 21
- GDPR** General Data Protection Regulations. 96, 103, 108, 218
- GMC** General Medical Council. 15, 21, 42, 99, 108, 196, 213

**GP** General Practitioner. 58, 61

**HCA** Healthcare Assistant. 59, 117

**HCP** Healthcare Professional. 59, 76, 78, 80, 91, 117, 118, 128

**HEART** Humanity, Excellence, Accountability, Responsiveness, Teamwork. 104, 144, 202

**HoV** Head of Volunteering. 11, 18, 90, 91, 109–114, 145–149, 164, 198, 201, 209, 213–217

**HR** Human Resources. 26, 27, 34, 35, 70, 71, 77, 78, 82–87, 89, 90, 93, 94, 96, 97, 102–106, 109–112, 130, 131, 142–144, 146, 148–150, 156, 159, 183, 191, 194, 198, 199, 201–206, 212, 215, 217

**ICL** Imperial College, London. 50

**ID** Identification. 197

**IMF** Incident Management Framework. 7, 8, 13, 15, 17–19, 23, 41, 54, 64, 66, 68, 69, 74, 77, 83, 84, 86, 115, 121, 124, 127–130, 140, 184, 186, 212

**IO** Investigating Officer. 11, 12, 18–20, 22, 23, 25, 27, 29, 66–77, 79–81, 83–88, 90, 92, 95, 100, 105, 122, 123, 125–129, 131, 134, 135, 137, 140–144, 146, 148, 153, 188, 191, 192, 195, 197–199, 201, 206, 212, 213

**IPC** Infection Prevention & Control. 24, 46, 82, 101, 103, 189, 191, 194, 200

**IRF** Incident Report Form. 6, 8, 13, 18, 22–26, 42, 54, 56, 62, 63, 66, 70, 74, 77, 79–83, 86, 88, 94, 100, 102, 115, 125, 128, 129, 141, 143, 184, 191, 192, 195, 204

**JOCC** Joint Operational Coordination Cell. 51, 52, 56, 120

**JRCALC** Joint Royal Colleges Ambulance Liaison Committee. 125

**LA** Local Authority. 69

**LGO** Local Government Ombudsman. 43

**LOP** Local Operating Procedure. 24

**M&H** Moving & Handling. 142

**MRT** Medical Response Team. 5, 6, 50–53, 69, 76–80, 93, 117, 125, 127, 148, 189, 192, 204, 212

**MSY** *Unknown*. 100, 140, 204, 205

**NHQ** National Headquarters. 70

- NHS** National Health Service. 15, 23, 42–44, 50, 51, 58, 92, 117, 118, 202, 216
- NMC** Nursing & Midwifery Council. 21
- PACE** Probe, Alert, Challenge, Escalate. 70, 137
- PHSO** Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. 43
- PIN** Personal Identification Number. 99, 108, 196, 213
- PM** Prime Minister. 53
- PPE** Personal Protective Equipment. 117, 119, 143
- PRF** Patient Report Form. 18, 25, 79, 80, 84, 88, 99, 101–103, 106, 108, 109, 111, 125, 140, 142, 143, 146, 148, 150, 182, 195, 196, 211, 213
- RACTO** Regional Ambulance & Clinical Training Officer. 75, 189, 205
- RAL** Regional Ambulance Lead. 75, 141, 143, 189, 205
- RAQO** Regional Assurance & Quality Officer. 82
- RCL** Regional Clinical Lead. 24, 83, 100, 140, 143, 211
- RDTL** Regional Driver Training Lead. 53, 54, 56, 62, 81, 125, 141, 143, 189, 211
- RMT** Regional Management Team. 126, 136, 137, 189–192
- ROCC** Regional Operational Coordination Cell. 25, 52–54, 56–66, 69, 71, 77, 81, 83, 120, 121, 126–128, 132, 141, 143, 148, 190, 191, 200, 207, 211, 215, 216
- RPL (Paramedics)** Regional Professional Lead (Paramedics). 100, 143, 211
- RVM** Regional Volunteer Manager. 18, 102–106, 108, 109, 144, 145, 148–150, 199, 201, 202, 209, 210, 213
- SJA** St John Ambulance. 1, 3–15, 17–21, 23–34, 36–39, 41, 45–47, 49–55, 57–59, 61, 68, 70, 72, 78, 81, 82, 85, 86, 89, 90, 92, 94, 96–98, 103, 104, 108, 110, 111, 117, 118, 127, 130–133, 137–139, 142, 144–146, 151, 182–185, 193, 194, 198, 199, 202, 205, 209, 210, 212–216, 218, 219
- TC** Tactical Commander. 25, 51, 56, 57, 62, 64, 76–78, 83, 90, 128, 138, 139, 190, 207
- UK** United Kingdom. 49–52, 56, 61
- UM** Unit Manager. 58, 64–68, 71, 77–79, 90, 91, 99, 136, 146
- URL** Uniform Resource Locator. 54

**VDI** Vehicle Daily Inspection. 55

**VDR** Vehicle Defect Report. 55, 56, 81, 125

**VSO** Volunteer Support Officer. 67, 199, 210, 212, 213

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