IN THE COUNTY COURT AT PLYMOUTH
SITTING AT EXETER

Case No. L00TQ030

Exeter Law Courts
Southernhay Gardens
Exeter
EX1 1UH

Friday, 10th July 2026

Before:
DISTRICT JUDGE EATON-HART

B E T W E E N:

CHIEF CONSTABLE OF DEVON & CORNWALL POLICE

and

SHORTHOUSE

MS M O'BRIEN appeared on behalf of the Claimant
MR C CUDDIHEE appeared on behalf of the Defendant

JUDGMENT
(Approved)

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DJ EATON-HART:

1. Ms Shorthouse, you have admitted, through counsel, breaching Judge Mitchell's order of 11 May 2026. The particulars of the breach is that on evening or night of 6 July 2026, you entered the area of Torbay in breach of that provision of the injunction order, and that admission is supported by the evidence of Constable Hazelwood, who saw you and arrested you in Shakespeare Close, an address in Torquay which is very familiar to you as being in Torquay.
2. I am going to sentence for that admitted breach. I make it clear that I sentence you on the basis of the claimant's actual evidence, and not on additional statements that are not included in the police statement of PC Hazelwood.
3. I start by assessing the seriousness of the breach in consideration of your culpability and the consequence of your breach on harm.
4. For culpability, there is a sad and serious chronology of previous breaches. I agree with your counsel, Mr Cuddihee, that it is not measured up to 16 because some of the breaches resulted in the application being dismissed. However, I have counted this to be your twelfth significant breach of injunctive orders. Within those breaches you have been sentenced to custody for breaches on five occasions. The culpability, therefore, is that you are persistently in breach of very clear orders and that that history of breaches spans back to 28 February 2025, so this is chronic and continuing situation. The highest level of culpability A would be for very serious breaches or persistent, serious breaches. You meet the second of those elements but not the first. Therefore, on balance, I am satisfied that you come within Category B on culpability.
5. In relation to harm, as I have indicated, I have to consider only the evidence that is put forward by the claimant, that is the basis for your admission. There is no clear evidence from the police officer of actual distress, you are well known in Shakespeare Close because of the previous involvement that you have had with that address and Mr Radford. Therefore, this comes within Category 3. It is a real significant breach, but it has not, on the evidence, caused real harm or distress to an individual.
6. I next move on to consider then the starting point for a Category B3 breach. The starting point is adjourned consideration with a range from that to one month.
7. The factors that increase the severity of your breach, and therefore the sentence that goes with them is your substantial history of disobedience, coupled with the short period of time between your last release, on or about 30 June, and this breach on 6 July.
8. The mitigating factors that might reduce your culpability or the severity of your breach. Your chaotic circumstances, the absence of any secure housing for you, your cellulitis which causes you pain and discomfort, the loss of your phone, the inability of you to access your banking and your documents. In my judgment, those do not significantly or at all reduce the severity of the aggravating features that I have outlined.
9. There is a question mark as to whether alcohol interferes with your judgment and whether you have addressed that. However, there is no direct evidence from the claimant on this breach that you were found intoxicated. Therefore, I do not consider that as part of my decision.
10. Therefore, in my judgment, although the starting point is for adjourned consideration, this case comes at the upper end of the three and the initial sentence would be 30 days in custody.
11. From that, I give you credit for the admission that you have made today. You were not able to make that admission on the day of your presentation on 7 July, but I accept that you did not have representation from the legal team that you previously used, BTL, and counsel.

Therefore, I do not reduce the credit for your admission on that basis. Therefore, I give you one-third credit against the 30 days, taking you down to 20 days.

12. I have to formally consider whether there is any suspended sentence that needs to be activated and consider the totality principle. However, there is no suspended sentence to consider and there are no other breaches to be considered alongside this one.
13. The next step I have to take is to consider whether it is appropriate to suspend the sentence of committal to prison. The factors against suspending in your case are your history of very poor compliance with orders, your history of multiple breaches even after sentences of imprisonment, such that only immediate custody would satisfy the need for you to be appropriately punished for this contempt of court.
14. Sadly, I cannot find that there are any factors in favour of the order being suspended. I do not find any realistic prospect of you addressing in a period of suspension your breaching behaviour. In addition, the mitigations that you have put forward through counsel do not satisfy me that a suspended order is appropriate.
15. Therefore, from the 20-day period, after credit for your admission, I will give you credit for double the remand days, so that is 10 days credit, which takes you down to 10 days of sentence and committal to custody. It is likely under current rules that you would be released or eligible for release after half of that, in five days' time on 15 July. If for any reason you are not eligible for that early release, you will serve that committal order until 20 July.
16. Thereafter, Ms Shorthouse, you must comply with the order, stay away from the prohibited zones, and comply with the other provisions of the order. A space in Inverness would achieve that and give you a chance to have a period of peace without the involvement of police and courts.
17. I need to tell you that you do not need my permission to appeal this decision, you may appeal this as of right, and the period within which you can appeal is 21 days, which is longer, in fact than the sentence of committal which I have passed.
18. You may also, within the period of your imprisonment apply to the Court to purge your contempt and the Court will then consider that application, if you make it.
19. If you make no applications, you will be released by no later than 20 July, and if you qualify for the early release at half-time, you will be released on 15 July.
20. That is the order that I make, and you will be provided with the order in custody.

End of Judgment.

Transcript of a recording by Acolad UK Ltd
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This transcript has been approved by the judge.