

ROYAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS

MISS JUDITH LESLEY KAY

DECISION

The Disciplinary Committee has considered the submissions made by the College and Miss Kay in the resumed hearing of the case which was heard initially on 11 December 2006. The case had been adjourned to allow Miss Kay to satisfy conditions which the Committee had laid down.

- 1) That Miss Kay does not practise veterinary medicine alone, but in a multi-vet practice or institution.
- 2) That she meets with a member of the Veterinary Surgeons Health Support Programme and accepts whatever recommendations are made by them. The Committee will require regular progress reports.
- 3) That she registers with a general medical practitioner and consults him/her on a regular basis who will report to the Committee upon her progress.
- 4) That any expenses arriving out of the above shall be borne by her.
- 5) The Committee would be helped by Miss Kay providing references from previous employers commenting upon sobriety and veterinary ability.

The Committee heard that:-

- 1) In response to condition 1, Miss Kay had failed to obtain employment in a multi-vet practice. Miss Kay had applied to a number of practices to seek employment within reasonable reach of public transport, but without success. However, she had consulted with her financial adviser, with the intention of employing extra staff, both professional and lay, within her own practice. Whilst the Committee was told of the basic principles of this proposal, no formal figures or budget were presented. In the opinion of the Committee, this was not financially viable, neither were the employment arrangements a sufficient support to Miss Kay.
- 2) The Committee heard that although Miss Kay had made contact with the Veterinary Surgeons Health Support Programme and had engaged in telephone conversations with two professionals from that organisation, for various reasons, no meetings had taken place.

- 3) Miss Kay told the Committee that she had registered with a local GP practice. She had shown no urgency in making an appointment to see the doctor and had failed to recognise the potential delays which may occur when registering with a new general practitioner.
- 4) Miss Kay has, as requested, borne all the financial costs in her attempt to comply with the conditions.
- 5) Miss Kay was able to provide only a small number of references from previous employers and clients. The employers' references related to employment which dated back in excess of eight years.

The Committee had received correspondence from a fellow Alcoholics Anonymous colleague, Mr Roger Moucher, which stated that Miss Kay had been totally abstinent from alcohol for a period of three months. However, during her evidence today, she admitted to having two incidents of 'social drinking' of wine over Christmas. In his oral evidence Mr Moucher told the Committee that Miss Kay had had a further incident less than a week ago when she had admitted to him that she had consumed a bottle of wine.

In considering its decision, the Committee has a responsibility to the welfare of animals and their owners, and to protect the reputation of the veterinary profession. It is concerned that Miss Kay has not shown sufficient effort in complying with the conditions laid out on 11 December 2006. The Committee has to be sure that Miss Kay accepts that her commitment to abstinence is an essential first step. It is clear that she is unable to satisfy that principle at this time.

The Committee was disappointed that Miss Kay had misled them in the matter of her alcohol consumption as this goes to the very heart of the problem. Miss Kay had been warned on 11 December 2006 that the consequence of not being able to comply with the Committee's conditions would result in her name being removed from the *Register*.

In the Committee's opinion, a period of time needs to elapse for Miss Kay to gain control of her addiction. We therefore consider it unsafe for Miss Kay to continue practising as a veterinary surgeon at this time.

The Committee therefore instructs the Registrar to remove the name of Miss Kay from the *Register of Veterinary Surgeons*.

DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE
26 JANUARY 2007