

**ROYAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS**

**V**

**SILKE BIRGITT LINDRIDGE MRCVS**

**SANCTION**

1. The Committee subsequently received further written evidence, submissions from Counsel and advice from the Legal Assessor on the sanction it should impose in the light of its findings. The Committee has had in mind that the primary purpose of the sanctions is not to punish but to protect the welfare of animals, maintain public confidence in the profession and declare and uphold proper standards of conduct. The Committee has considered the Disciplinary Committee Guidance on Outcomes and Sanctions, and paid particular regard to the aggravating and mitigating factors contained in the guidelines.
2. The Committee has taken into account the matters put before it in mitigation by Mr Edis QC, on behalf of Mrs Lindridge. She has been the principal of the practice in Consett, Co Durham and Winlaton, Tyne and Wear since about 2001. She is married with 3 children and employs 2 veterinary surgeons. Her husband, who is not a veterinary surgeon, works in her practice. Her own veterinary practice is presently limited to evenings and weekends. The Committee has read a large number of testimonials, in particular from clients of the practice, which attest to the regard with which she is held by them. There have been no previous disciplinary findings against her. The Committee gives her credit for the preparation of a schedule which volunteers the full extent of her practice as a veterinary surgeon during 2007.
3. By its findings the Committee has already expressed its strong disapproval of the circumstances in which Mrs Lindridge failed to take any proper measures to make sure that the annual retention fees were paid and that her name remained on the register. The Committee would like to make it clear that it is the personal responsibility of every practising veterinary surgeon to ensure that the annual retention fee is paid and that their names are on the register. It is not the responsibility of the College. The Guide to Professional Conduct (2006 Edition) makes it clear that the relationship between veterinary surgeon and client is one of mutual trust and respect. Clients are entitled to rely upon veterinary surgeons making sure that they are registered with the College, and that proper arrangements for professional indemnity insurance are in place. Whilst the underlying purpose of registration is to prevent unqualified persons practising as veterinary surgeons, it is also in the public interest that clients should be assured that the practitioner is a regulated person, who is capable of providing valid certificates. The record of Mrs Lindridge's practice during 2007 discloses that she was providing certificates for

horses and small animals whilst she was unregistered. Those certificates are invalid. She was also prescribing prescription only drugs when she was not entitled to do so.

4. The Committee considered whether it was appropriate to postpone judgment in this case for a period of up to 2 years and concluded that this was not a case where undertakings as to further training or monitoring were required. It then considered the sanctions in order beginning with a reprimand or warning. It concluded that in view of the circumstances in which Mrs Lindridge was practising in 2007 that a reprimand or warning would not maintain public confidence or uphold proper standards of conduct in the profession. The Committee has considered that a short period of suspension is proportionate to the nature and extent of the charge, the public interest, and the interests of Mrs Lindridge. The decision of the Committee is that Mrs Lindridge should be suspended from the Register for a period of 3 months.

**DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE**  
**9 SEPTEMBER 2009**