

**ROYAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS
INQUIRY RE:**

CHELSEA JADE STRANGWAY RVN

DECISION OF THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE ON SANCTION

1. The Committee considered whether or not, on the basis of the Respondent's Disgraceful Conduct in a Professional Respect, it is necessary to impose a sanction on the Respondent.
2. The Legal Assessor has advised the Committee that it should have in mind that the primary purpose of sanctions is not to punish the Respondent but to protect the welfare of animals, maintain public confidence in the profession and declare and uphold proper standards of conduct. The sanction which it applies must be proportionate to the nature and extent of the conduct, and weigh the public interest with the interests of the Respondent. The Committee has accepted the advice of the Legal Assessor.
3. The Committee first considered the relevant aggravating and mitigating factors in the case, when deciding the question of sanction. The Committee considered various aggravating and mitigating factors, which are set out in its decision on Disgraceful Conduct, and which the Committee does not repeat here. At this sanction stage, the Committee considered that there was an additional aggravating factor, as follows:
 - Blatant or wilful disregard of the role of the RCVS and the systems that regulate the veterinary profession (in relation to charge 6)
4. The Committee considered that there were further mitigating factors, as follows:
 - The fact that the Respondent displayed remorse, and insight into her misconduct, as explained below.
 - The fact that the Respondent apologised to the Practice, and everyone affected by her misconduct.
 - The Respondent was of previous good character.
 - The fact that the witnesses from the Practice considered that, the present conduct apart, the Respondent was a good veterinary nurse.

5. So far as the question of insight is concerned, the Committee considered that the Respondent has taken personal responsibility for her actions, had withdrawn from the veterinary profession after she resigned, has accepted that her conduct at the relevant time was very immature, and recognised and accepted the seriousness of what she had done wrong, thus demonstrating significant insight. The Respondent contacted the Committee to inform it that she would not be able to attend the hearing at 12:00, due to work commitments. However, she sent to the Committee an email in the following terms:

“Yes, again that I am sorry and I am not a bad person I wish I could go back and do it all differently. I have learnt to always be open and honest and never do anything like this again.

I understand what is coming and I am really gutted but it is the consequences of poor actions.”

In the view of the Committee, this short email demonstrated maturity, realism and reflection on her present situation.

6. The Committee next considered what further action needed to be taken. Having regard to the seriousness of the findings in this case, the Committee considered that it would be inappropriate to take no further action. The Committee then considered the available sanctions in increasing order of severity, as advised by the Legal Assessor. He advised that it is only if the Committee determines that it is not sufficient to protect the welfare of animals and serve the public interest to impose a sanction at a lower level, that it should go on to consider the next level.
7. The Committee first considered Reprimand and/or Warning, but decided that the findings of dishonesty, sustained or repeated over a period of time, required a more severe sanction in order to protect the welfare of animals and serve the public interest.
8. The Committee next considered whether suspension would be sufficient to achieve that objective. The Committee had regard to the Disciplinary Committee Guidance, which stated that suspension may be appropriate where the misconduct is sufficiently serious to warrant more than a reprimand but not sufficiently serious to justify removal from the Register. The Committee recognised the mitigating factors in this case set out above. It also took into account the Respondents open and sincere expressions of regret for her behaviour. However, the Committee noted that, if a period of suspension were to be imposed, at the end of the suspension, the Respondent would be entitled to resume practise as a Registered Veterinary Nurse, without any preconditions. The Committee notes that the Respondent is not currently working in the veterinary industry, but nevertheless, remains on the Register. The Committee has concluded that the imposition of a period of suspension in the circumstances of this case would not be sufficient as a means of protecting animals and the wider public interest, and confidence in the profession.
9. This is a case involving serious dishonesty, sustained over a period of time, and conduct potentially detrimental to animal welfare, as well as wilful disregard of professional regulations. Regrettably, the Committee has decided that, in this case, the

Respondent's misconduct is so serious that removal from the Register is the only means of protecting animals and the wider public interest.

10. Accordingly, the Committee directs the Registrar to remove the Respondent's name from the Register.

11. The Respondent has informed the Committee that, one day, she hopes to be able to return to practise in the veterinary profession. In due time, the Respondent may be able to apply to have her name restored to the Register. If she wished to do that, the obligation would be on her to satisfy the then Committee that she was then fit to be restored to the Register.

Disciplinary Committee
21 September 2022