

ROYAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS
INQUIRY RE:

[REDACTED] RVN

FULL COMMITTEE DECISION

1. The Respondent appeared before the Disciplinary Committee to answer the following charges:

That being registered in the Register of Veterinary Nurses, and whilst in practice at [REDACTED] ("the practice"):

1. On or around 16 or 17 February 2022, while at the practice, you removed body parts from feline cadavers other than for legitimate veterinary purposes; and / or
2. Between around 16 February 2022 and 8 March 2022, you transported feline body parts away from the practice other than for legitimate veterinary purposes;

And that in relation to the above, whether individually or in any combination, you are guilty of disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.

Application for Anonymity

2. At the outset, the Respondent made an application that her name be anonymised so that she could not be identified on the following grounds:

- a. Although it was not illegal and no animals were harmed, the shock factor of the removal of the feline heads regardless of context or who I am as a person may greatly upset members of the public and veterinary staff as it has done so already.
- b. The concern of the publicity leading to backlash against me by the profession and the public has made me question my safety and I feel very concerned that I could be at risk of harm whether that is verbal and / or physical both in my personal and work life.
- c. Due to fears of the publicity aspect, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

After 18 months of this investigation, I truly understand the gravity of the situation and would ask the RCVS to be empathetic in considering my application for anonymity.

3. Ms Curtis on behalf of the College opposed the application. She referred to Rule 21 of the Veterinary Surgeons and Veterinary Practitioners (Disciplinary Committee) (Procedure and Evidence Rules Order of Council 2004 (Statutory Instrument 2004/1680), which provided as follows:

21.1. Subject to paragraphs 21.2 and 21.3, all proceedings before the Committee shall take place in the presence of all parties who appear and shall be held in public.

21.2. The Committee may direct that the public shall be excluded from any proceedings or any part of any proceedings, where it appears to the Committee that this would be in the interests of justice. The Committee shall not make any direction under this paragraph excluding the public from the announcement of a finding, determination or judgment of the Committee under these Rules.

21.3. Subject to the provisions of paragraph 6 of Schedule 2 to the Act and of any rules made thereunder, the Committee may deliberate in private (with or without the Legal Assessor) at any time and for any purpose during or after the hearing of any proceedings.

And the Disciplinary Committee Manual (November 2022) which provides as follows:

Public Hearing

105. The Procedure and Evidence Rules 2004 provide that, in principle, all proceedings before the Committee shall take place in the presence of all parties who appear and shall be held in public.

106. The Human Rights Act 1998 (specifically Article 6 of the ECHR) provides a Respondent with a right to a public hearing. It is regarded as an important principle that regulatory hearings take place in public to provide transparency and ensure accountability for decisions taken. Conducting hearings openly also maintains confidence that the regulatory process is fair and robust.

107. Notwithstanding the above, there are some circumstances where it might not be appropriate for the whole of proceedings to take place in public. As such, the Rules allow the Committee to direct that the public be excluded from the proceedings, or any part of them (other than the announcement of a finding, determination or judgment), where it appears to the Committee to be in the interests of justice to do so.

108. The “interests of justice” are not defined in the Rules and the Committee is likely to interpret this in a narrow sense in light of the need for transparency in all publicly important affairs. Examples of when the Committee might consider that it is not in the interests of justice to hear proceedings in public are where evidence is being given by young children, or where evidence refers to medical records or other confidential data about a person. However, this list is not exhaustive and the Committee should always consider whether the issue could be addressed in other ways, for example by use of anonymisation of witness’ names or places, or by hearing only the relevant part of the evidence in private.

109. Arguments such as potential adverse publicity arising from the case, damage to reputation or embarrassment to the Respondent's family or associates will be common to virtually all Respondents who appear before disciplinary committees and as such, are unlikely to be successful.

110. In any event, the Rules provide that the public may not be excluded from "the announcement of a finding, determination or judgment of the Committee", so there is no question of complete confidentiality for the Respondent. In exceptional circumstances the Respondent's identity may be anonymised and/or the hearing may not be publicised ahead of time where it is a possibility that such an application is going to be made. This will however be highly exceptional and a formal application will require to be made for consideration by the Committee

111. Exclusion of the public from the hearing would, of course, include any representatives of the press who are present to report the case. The Committee should be aware that members of the press may object to being excluded from what would otherwise be a public hearing, unless good and sound reasons are given to them. The Committee may consider it is necessary to hear submissions from the press representatives before making a decision to exclude them from the hearing."

4. For the broad proposition of the importance of open justice, Ms Curtis relied upon the following authorities: *In re S (FC)(a child)* [2005] 1 AC 593, *Yassin v GMC* [2015] EWHC 2955, Cranston J stated (para 59) and *Lu v SRA* [2022] EWHC 1729 (Admin). However she acknowledged that there could be exceptions to this approach where there is evidence of a real risk of a violation of an individual's rights under the European Convention on Human Rights as result of their identity being published as in the case of RCVS –v- X (4 March 2021).
5. Ms Curtis submitted that there is a general public interest in the public being able to know the identities of those who have been subject to disciplinary proceedings, and caution should be exercised before curtailing that principle: justice must not only be done but also be seen to be done. She asserted that these proceedings are brought in the public interest and should be open and transparent. It is important that a regulatory body such as the College is publicly seen to be performing its functions properly and in accordance with its statutory duties, and thereby held to public scrutiny. There is further a general public interest in the public being able to know the identity of veterinary nurses who are subject to the profession's regulatory proceedings.
6. She stated that there would need to be compelling grounds to invoke the "interests of justice" factor in Rule 21.2 in order to set aside the presumption that the proceedings are held in public (and by analogy, that the identity of a respondent is made known). She submitted that there has been insufficient evidence to support the suggestion that it is necessary in the interests of justice for the Respondent's name to be anonymised in any decision.
7. The Committee accepted the legal advice of the Legal Assessor who confirmed the importance of the broad principle of open justice but reminded the Committee that there

could be exceptions to that principle; for example where there was a risk of disproportionate damage if a Respondent's name were published arising out of potential personal harm or damage to a person's livelihood, and providing there was cogent evidence in support of the request for anonymity.

[REDACTED]

9. The Committee also noted that the nature of the case could easily be misconstrued as representing conduct of a scandalous nature when in reality it may have only been a matter of inappropriate behaviour. The Committee was anxious that the Respondent should not be exposed to misplaced interpretation of her actions. The Committee reflected that it was able to discharge its obligations to protect the public interest and the welfare of animals and uphold the reputation of the profession if it allowed the application for anonymity. Accordingly it determined to hold the entirety of the hearing in private, to anonymise the Respondent's name from its determinations and to redact any information in those determinations which may lead to the Respondent being identified.

The Facts

10. The Respondent admitted the charges and the Committee accepted those admissions and found the facts proved.
11. Ms Curtis then referred to her written opening statement. She submitted that:

The charges against the Respondent relate to her conduct in February 2022 when working at [REDACTED]. The allegation is that, during a night shift in mid-February 2022, the Respondent removed the heads from the dead bodies of cats, other than for legitimate veterinary purposes, and that she then took the heads home. The evidence indicates that the Respondent decapitated two cats in this way.

At the material time, the Respondent worked as a locum veterinary nurse at [REDACTED]. On 16 February 2022, she started a night shift, completing the shift in the morning of 17 February 2022. [REDACTED] was located in the same building as the [REDACTED] and the two practices shared the space overnight. Also working during that shift was an RVN, who was a permanent employee of [REDACTED]. Others on duty that night were a veterinary surgeon and two veterinary care assistants (VCAs) who worked for [REDACTED], together with an animal care assistant (ACA) who worked for the [REDACTED]. The veterinary surgeon was not required for work at the time of the incident with the cats, and was asleep in a separate part of the building.

One of the tasks that night for the RVNs and assistants was to sort out the animal cadavers that were stored in a walk-in refrigerator. The fridge contained numerous bodies of patients from both [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED], and they needed to be separated, ready for collection in the morning for cremation.

At one point, as the RVNs and assistants were sorting the cadavers, the Respondent asked if she could remove the heads from dead stray cats. The Respondent has asserted that she was given permission by a permanent member of [REDACTED] staff to do so, and the College is not in a position to contradict this assertion. The Respondent then took two cat bodies and went to the prep room where she removed their heads with a scalpel. She then took home the heads.

12. Ms Curtis stated that the Respondent was interviewed about the matter in February or March 2022 by the [REDACTED] district manager (“the district manager”). Ms Curtis summarised the interview as follows

The Respondent said that she had been present with two other [REDACTED] employees (an RVN and an ACA) as well as an ACA from the [REDACTED]. She told the district manager that the four of them had been sorting out the bodies in the cold store when she had asked if she could take a couple of skulls from the strays. She said that she had asked because she had a friend who “*cleaned up*” dead strays and wildlife and displayed the skulls at home. The Respondent said that she had asked the RVN if she could take the heads and had been told by her that she could do so.

The district manager asked the Respondent to clarify the reason for taking the heads. She responded in effect to say that both she and a friend had an interest in them, and she explained that her friend owned some mealworms which ate away at the cat’s flesh, leaving the skull. When the district manager asked her how she had decapitated the cats, the Respondent said she had used a scalpel, and that although she had thought it would be difficult, it was in fact easy. She told the district manager that nobody had helped her, but one of the ACAs had been present.

The district manager asked if the Respondent was aware of biosecurity issues involved in removing body parts from the clinic and not disposing of them in the correct way. The Respondent said she was not. When asked if in her opinion, stray animals should be treated with the same dignity as those that had previously been domestic pets, she said that strays were not anyone’s property and that she did not think about them being [REDACTED] property.

At the end of the meeting, the district manager asked if there was anything she wanted to add. The Respondent said that she did not consider what she had done as disrespectful; she suggested that it was a way of appreciating the body. She accepted, however, that others might have a different view.

13. Ms Curtis explained that the matter was reported to the College, and the Respondent was asked for her comments. On 18 May 2022, she wrote to the College, setting out an account similar to that given to the district Manager.

Disgraceful Conduct in a Professional Respect

14. In her written statement to the Committee, the Respondent stated:

I totally accept that my actions fell short of the standards to be expected of a RVN. I have no experience to judge whether they reached the threshold of being far short, as the RCVS are arguing. I am content to trust the Disciplinary Committee's reasoning on that point and I will respect its judgment.

Submissions on behalf of the College

15. Ms Curtis referred to the written statement which she had prepared in relation to this issue. She stated:

The College submits that the conduct found proved amounts to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect. "*Disgraceful conduct in a professional respect*" has been defined as conduct falling far short of that which is expected of a member of the profession¹. The issue is a matter for the Committee's judgment. There is no burden or standard of proof to be applied at this stage.

The College submits that the Respondent failed to afford due respect to animals and that she risked the spread of disease by transporting animal parts to her home. It is submitted that her conduct overall risked undermining public confidence in the profession and brought the profession into disrepute.

Respect for animals

Affording due respect to animals, in death as well as life, is a key element of promoting animal welfare and ensuring that animals are treated appropriately. It is important that the bodies of domestic animals such as dogs and cats are treated in a dignified and respectful way, just as animals should be treated humanely during the course of their lives. Animal welfare includes disposing of the remains of animals responsibly and with dignity.

Animal welfare lies at the heart of the profession, and is one of the key factors set out at the beginning of the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses ("the Code"), both in the declaration and the introduction outlining the principles of practice:

"Rights and responsibilities go hand in hand. For this reason, on registration with the RCVS, and in exchange for the right to practise veterinary nursing in the UK, every registered veterinary nurse makes a declaration, which, since 1 April 2012, has been: I PROMISE AND SOLEMNLY DECLARE that I will pursue the work of my profession with integrity and accept my responsibilities to the public, my clients, the profession and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, and that, ABOVE ALL, my constant endeavour will be to ensure the health and welfare of animals committed to my care. Veterinary nurses seek to ensure the health and welfare of animals committed to their care and to fulfil their professional responsibilities, by maintaining five principles of practice."

By decapitating the cat cadavers, the Respondent failed to afford the level of respect and dignity that the animals deserved. The College submits that this is true regardless of whether an animal is a stray or has previously been a domestic pet: a member of the profession should demonstrate the same level of respect towards such animals regardless of the lives they have led. The College submits that it is also the case whether or not another member of staff has given consent to such conduct.

Risk to human health

The Respondent's conduct also raised risks to public health, by failing to comply with the necessary biosecurity measures when dealing with animal body parts.

As the Respondent herself accepted in one of her communications with the College, if the body parts or bodily fluids from the cats were not properly contained, particularly if the cats in question had been diseased, there was a consequent risk to human health.

The reputation of the profession

The Code also provides that:

"6.5 Veterinary nurses must not engage in any activity or behaviour that would be likely to bring the profession into disrepute or undermine public confidence in the profession."

The College submits that it is important that members of the public have confidence that, should their pet die, its body will be treated with dignity and respect when at a veterinary practice. That confidence should extend to members of the public who might lose their pet and have concerns that it might become a stray. The Respondent's behaviour risked compromising the public's trust in the profession as a whole, and undermining its reputation.

Summary

In summary, the Respondent's conduct failed to afford sufficient respect to animals, risked the spread of disease and had the potential to undermine public confidence in the profession. Her behaviour thereby fell far short of the conduct expected of a member of the profession and amounts to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.

The Respondent's submissions

16. In response, the Respondent relied upon her written statement in which she stated:

At the outset I wish to say I do not agree that there were any negative animal welfare consequences of my actions for the two cats involved, because they were already dead. I am passionate about upholding animal welfare for all creatures, both as a veterinary nurse and as a pet owner. While I agree with RCVS' submission to the extent that the remains of animals should be disposed of responsibly and with dignity, I do not understand their argument that animal welfare considerations are relevant to that obligation.

In regards to respect for animals, I would like to make it clear that I have the utmost respect for animals and actually consider cats to be my favourite domestic animal and I

own three cats myself. I consider my own cats to be family members and am incredibly attached to them. I do my best every day to make sure they are happy and healthy.

Professionally, I am hugely interested in anatomy and learn best visually, so have always been interested in and keen to be involved with veterinary post-mortems. Bones and skulls are especially interesting to me.

As the cats were going to be cremated regardless, at the time I did not feel I was being disrespectful to them. For me the keeping of ashes and bones are meant to be an appreciation of the animal or person, it was in no way meant to be disrespectful.

I can empathise that it may not come across that way after reflecting since this incident and it has caused intense guilt and shame that I would be viewed in a way that is so contrary to the genuine affection I have for the feline species and my own pets.

Since speaking about this situation to others, I have heard many stories of other professionals unknown to me who do similar things in various ways, which include taking whole skeletons from strays, bringing in road kill and dealing with them in a veterinary environment, taking strays and/or wildlife to be used for taxidermy, also of cat cadavers used in approved educational ways to be dissected.

Alongside this, I have seen adverts for live human and animal dissection that is used for entertainment on TV, and am aware of celebrated artworks involving body parts of animals and cadavers.

None of this is presented as an excuse but I hope it offers some context as to why my actions did not alarm me the way I now see they should have.

I can see clearly now that what I have done may upset members of the public who would not view this as appreciating an animal in death in the same way that I did.

I understand that one of the charges is in regard to potentially undermining public health, I admit I did not consider that it could have become a biohazard. At the time the cadavers' heads were placed and contained in a cremation bag that was tied shut with a cable tie.

For myself and my own home, I would not have wanted to have any spillage or leaks, so I made sure that that would not have been possible. It did not occur to me at the time that I may have been risking the undermining of public health. On reflection I can see now how it might be considered that I did, although I do think the actual risk of this in fact was extremely low in the circumstances.

I understand that veterinary nurses should not bring shame upon the profession and this was never my intention nor was it my intention to upset the staff members around me.

I have repeatedly reflected over the last 18 months about what my actions have caused and how it can be seen by not just staff members but the public and can see that regardless of my intent, my actions would reflect poorly in many people's eyes.

In hindsight, I'm glad that this was an isolated event, and that it was brought to my attention before repeat mistakes could have been made.

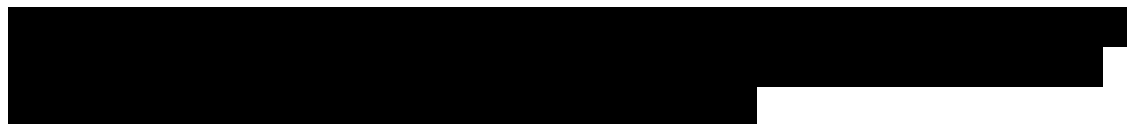
I totally accept that my actions fell short of the standards to be expected of a RVN. I have no experience to judge whether they reached the threshold of being far short, as the RCVS are arguing. I am content to trust the Disciplinary Committee's reasoning on that point and I will respect its judgment.

After researching other cases brought to a public hearing, I can see my case is quite unusual. I have not failed in my professional care of patients, no animals were harmed or put at risk of harm, no members of the public were harmed, there was no dishonesty, recklessness or financial gain, I have no convictions and it is an isolated case. I had no intention of being disrespectful to the two cats as I have previously explained, although I can appreciate why some may feel it was.

I have consistently been honest and owned up to my actions throughout this investigation and hope the DC can see that.

I have worked hard for my career since I was young, and although it is incredibly mentally and physically difficult, the passion and rewards balanced my love and devotion to my job as a nurse, even while graduating and working through Covid.

I still have a lot of love for my job but it has given me very little back over the last 18 months. I'm hoping to find my passion for it again in the future if I am allowed.



The guilt, shame and embarrassment I feel are exponential and I would never intentionally bring shame on the profession. I am deeply apologetic for my actions, my huge misjudgment and the disrepute it could bring.

17. In response to the College's submissions, the Respondent stated:

- She had a lot of respect for animals;
- She had three cats of her own. They are her world;
- Her actions were about appreciation, not about disrespect;
- She hoped people would not understand her actions as malicious but as a misjudgement;

18. In response to the Committee's questions, the Respondent stated:

- She did not consider that the cats may have had owners as they were due to go to the crematorium. She did not give heavy thought to this as no owner would be able to see or identify the cats;
- She saw her former colleague quite often. She dealt with a lot of wildlife. She was not disrespectful. She did charity work with wild life conservation. She was both respectful and hardworking. The practice where she worked knew what she was doing and had no problem with that.

Decision

19. The Committee accepted the advice of the Legal Assessor. It accepted that the relevant test was whether the conduct fell far short of the standard expected of a member of the veterinary nursing profession. The question of whether conduct amounts to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect is a matter of judgment for the Committee, not a matter which is to be decided upon by reference to a burden or standard of proof.
20. The Committee considered that it could take into account aggravating and mitigating features insofar as they related to the conduct in question as opposed to matters relating to the Respondent herself.
21. The Committee considered the following to be aggravating features:
 - a. The Respondent's conduct represented a bio-security risk. Any body part would be in some degree of decomposition. If the cats were strays, they may not have been in good health. Although the Respondent transferred the body parts to her home and kept them in the freezer in cadaver bags, there was a risk that they could leak. In short her actions were not without risk to human or animal health.
 - b. The Respondent abused her professional position. She had an obligation to treat the cadavers with respect. Her professional position gave her access to the cadavers. She abused her professional position by severing the cats heads and, using a scalpel, body bags and other equipment she pursued an interest of her own, rather than performed the role she was employed to undertake. Although she may say that she obtained permission to remove the cats heads from a permanent member of staff, she was a Registered Veterinary Nurse and therefore an autonomous professional. Whatever permissions she received should not have made her believe she had a licence to act as she did.
22. The Committee considered the following to be mitigating factors:
 - a. There was no financial gain;
 - b. This was a single isolated incident.
23. The Committee found that the Respondent was in breach of the following paragraphs of the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses:

6.1 Veterinary nurses must seek to ensure the protection of public health and animal health and welfare, and must consider the impact of their actions on the environment;

6.5 Veterinary nurses must not engage in any activity or behaviour that would be likely to bring the profession into disrepute or undermine public confidence in the profession.

24. In respect of her breach of paragraph 6.1, the Committee considered that she ought to have recognised her actions raised bio-security issues. It was unprofessional of her not to recognise that risk; she would have been trained in that respect. She should have realised the potential for human and conceivably animal harm. Moreover she kept the cats heads in her freezer for some three weeks.

25. In respect of her breach of paragraph 6.5, the Committee accepted that the Respondent was not caring for a live animal; her actions were in respect of two cadavers which were on the threshold of being cremated. It also accepted that her actions were misguided, rather than anything contemptuous. There was no malice in her behaviour. She did not realise that she was doing anything wrong. It accepted that, when she severed the heads of the two cats, she did so carefully, clinically and respectfully; she did not do so in a jesting manner. Nevertheless she ought to have realised that she would be bringing the profession into disrepute by her actions. She was not upholding the reputation of the profession. Whilst the matters in question were not of a sinister nature – the purpose of the Respondent's actions was not to detract from the dignity of the animal - still clients would be horrified if they understood that veterinary professionals treated cadavers in this way, even if such behaviour related only to stray animals. Likewise fellow professionals would view the Respondent's behaviour with dismay.

26. Taking all these matters into account, the Committee was satisfied that the appropriate finding in this case was that the Respondent's behaviour amounted to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect. She fell far short of that which is to be expected of a member of the veterinary nursing profession.

Sanction

27. The Committee received no submissions from the College and no further submissions from the Respondent. It received and accepted advice from the Legal Assessor. The decision as to what if any sanction it should impose is a matter for the Committee exercising its own independent judgement. It should at all times apply the principle of proportionality.

28. The Committee does not repeat the expressions of remorse and contrition submitted by the Respondent in respect of her conduct, recited elsewhere in this determination, nor the expressions of her insight. They are taken as having been advanced in this stage of the hearing.

29. The Committee first considered whether there were any personal mitigating features which it should take into account when considering sanction. It considered that there were, as follows:

- Her youth and inexperience. The Respondent was in the early stages of her career in February 2022, having qualified in 2020. She was in practice as a locum;
- The Respondent made open and frank admissions at an early stage. She was interviewed by the district manager at [REDACTED] in late February / March about these matters and was completely open about them, just as she was when she wrote to the College in May 2022, and in her statement for the benefit of this Committee. Not only did she make frank admissions but she maintained an entirely consistent and credible account of what happened;
- The Respondent has made significant efforts to avoid a repetition of her behaviour. In particular she has developed a good understanding of how her behaviour could have been perceived by others and have damaged the reputation of the profession. The Committee was satisfied that it was highly unlikely that she would repeat that behaviour;
- In the view of the Committee eighteen months, the amount of time which has elapsed since the events in question, should be understood to be significant in the context of a career that is less than four years duration. The Respondent was moved to note the following about this in her statement as follows:

I still have a lot of love for my job but it has given me very little back over the last 18 months. I'm hoping to find my passion for it again in the future if I am allowed.

There has, of course, been no repetition of her conduct during that period, and she has had this case hanging over her for all of this time. Moreover she lost her locum position in [REDACTED] on account of this matter.

- In respect of insight, the Committee considered that the Respondent was initially surprised by the concern about the biohazard that she created as she had taken steps to mitigate the risk by using cadaver bags and leaving them in her freezer. Moreover, she felt that she had done nothing wrong as the cats were to be cremated the following day and there were no owners to claim them. However, the Committee was satisfied that she has come to fully understand how the public and members of the profession might view her behaviour and why that behaviour could damage the reputation of the profession. Her level of insight now makes it extremely unlikely that she would repeat her behaviour. That insight has developed through this regulatory process.

30. The Respondent has placed before the Committee seven character references, five of which were written by RVNs who have trained and/or worked with her. The Committee take from them the following:

- All have known her for a number of years;
- All state that they are aware of the proceedings/charges brought against her;
- All of the testimonials highlight the Respondent's caring characteristics such as her patience, empathy, kindness as well as her professionalism, respect and dignity in the

way that she treats patients and clients. All agree that she has the animals best interests at heart.

- One was from an RVN who was a member of the senior management team at the practice where she worked;
- Two stated that the Respondent was offered a permanent position when she worked at the practice with them as a locum
- One stated: *"During my seven years working at [a particular practice], she was one of, if not, the best locum we employed."* "[The Respondent] *is the perfect example of the type of veterinary nurse I would want to take care of my pets undergoing veterinary treatment.*"
- Another stated:
"[The Respondent] as a work colleague was supportive, kind and patient and was also very loved by clients, many of them requesting her specifically ... due to the high standard of care she gave their pets."
"I can without any doubt say that [the Respondent] would never hurt another living thing and I have previously trusted her with my own animals."

31. The Committee turned to consider what if any sanction it should impose. It began by addressing whether it should take no further action. It considered this outcome carefully since it was satisfied that there was effectively no risk of repetition and no ongoing threat to animal or human health. Moreover it reflected that the Registrant now has on her registration a finding that she was guilty of disgraceful conduct in a professional respect. However, ultimately, it rejected this outcome on account of the perception which the public is likely to have about a veterinary nurse who conducted herself in the way the Respondent has admitted, and in order to protect the reputation of the profession.
32. Next the Committee considered whether it should postpone judgement. However it did not consider that this was an appropriate disposal. Neither party propounded it. Further the Committee was not engaged in imposing a sanction upon a Respondent who had anything to learn; postponing judgement was not therefore warranted.
33. The Committee considered that a reprimand was the sanction it should impose. A reprimand marks the Committee's view of the Respondent's behaviour, thereby satisfying the public interest.
34. The Committee did consider issuing a warning as to future conduct, but as stated, it had no concerns that the Respondent would fail to follow the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses in the future. It therefore rejected a warning as an appropriate alternative.
35. The Committee also considered directing a suspension. However it regarded such a sanction in this case as disproportionate, indeed punitive. It would remove the Respondent from practise wholly inappropriately. The testimonials suggest that she is a Registered Veterinary Nurse with a bright future. In the circumstances she ought to be allowed to continue in practise.

36. The determination of the Committee is to direct the Registrar to issue a reprimand.

Disciplinary Committee

7 November 2023