

**ROYAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS**

**INQUIRY RE:**

**MRS ALINA GRECKO MRCVS**

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**DECISION ON  
DISGRACEFUL CONDUCT IN A PROFESSIONAL RESPECT**

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1. The Committee having found Facts proved in the Charges against Mrs Grecko went on to consider whether the Charges found proved amounted to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect. The Committee bore in mind that disgraceful conduct in a professional respect is conduct which falls far short of what is expected in the profession. It is a matter for the judgement of the Committee and not subject to any burden or standard of proof.

2. The Committee reminded itself that the following facts were found proved: that Ms Grecko:

*Being registered in the Register of Veterinary Surgeons and whilst in practice at Vets4Pets*

*Rhyl, Clwyd Retail Park, LL18 2TJ ("the practice"), you:*

*1. On or about 19 January 2022:*

*a. caused and/or allowed your colleague TLW RVN to place an order from the practice for griseofulvin, a prescription only medicine, when that griseofulvin was intended for human use rather than legitimate veterinary use;*

*b. caused and/or allowed your colleague BE SVN to record the said griseofulvin on the Practice Management System:*

*(i) in the name of your colleague TC MRCVS, when TC had not been involved in the order or prescription of griseofulvin; and/or*

*(ii) in clinical records for your dog, when the said griseofulvin was not for your dog;*

*AND that:*

2. Your conduct in relation to 1(a) and/or 1(b) above was:

a. dishonest; and

b. misleading;

3. The Committee had found that Mrs Grecko had dishonestly caused her practice colleagues to place an order for a prescription only medicine when this had not been for legitimate veterinary use, to record that medicine in the clinical records for her dog and to make an entry on the Practice Management System that another veterinary surgeon had been responsible.
4. Although the factual allegations were set out in separate particulars of the Charge, the Committee considered that this had been a single course of conduct by Mrs Grecko carried out in order to obtain the prescription only medicine for her husband and caused the practice records to be falsified.
5. Ms Curtis provided the Committee with her written submissions, a copy of which were also provided to Mrs Grecko. Ms Curtis submitted that Mrs Grecko had directly breached one of the most important principles of the profession, namely the responsible use of medicines. It was submitted that she had abused the trust placed in the profession. Ms Curtis submitted that dishonest conduct was also contrary to the fundamental principles of the profession.
6. Ms Curtis submitted that sections of the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons (“the Code”) had been breached. In addition, she submitted that honesty and integrity are key principles of the Code. The following specific Code parts were engaged:

*“1.5 Veterinary surgeons who prescribe, supply and administer medicines must do so responsibly.”*

*“6.5 Veterinary surgeons 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.”*
7. It was also submitted that public confidence in the profession would be undermined, if the public learned that a veterinary surgeon made arrangements for an order of a prescription only medicine intended human use via their practice and recorded the

drug as having been used for an animal. Ms Curtis submitted that Mrs Grecko's behaviour fell far short of the conduct expected and amounted to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.

8. Mrs Grecko submitted that she had not hurt any animal by her misconduct. She had not mistreated any animals. She submitted that she had not been thinking straight when she took the decision to order the medicine. She had wrestled with the decision what to do. Mrs Grecko further submitted that she believed that she had received permission from Ms JK to order the medication and had thought that she was 'protected'.
9. The Legal Assessor advised the Committee that its task was to consider whether the facts found proved amounted to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect. This was said to mean conduct which fell far short of what was expected of veterinary surgeons. It was a matter for the Committee's judgement, not involving a burden or standard of proof.
10. The Committee considered the Aggravating and Mitigating Factors as set out in the Disciplinary Committee Sanctions Guidance for Veterinary Surgeons (updated August 2020), as far as these applied to the facts of the misconduct, rather than personal factors. It found the following aggravating factors:
  - a. The misconduct had involved dishonesty and a lack of probity and integrity
  - b. The course of obtaining the medicine had been premeditated
  - c. There had been an abuse of her position as a veterinary surgeon by Mrs Grecko in using her ability to obtain a prescription only medicine
  - d. There had been a previous adverse regulatory finding against Mrs Grecko, also in respect of prescribing medication for human use dishonestly representing that they were for legitimate veterinary use.
11. The Committee noted that there were also mitigating factors in the facts found, as follows:
  - a. No actual harm had been caused to an animal or human by her misconduct
  - b. There had been no financial gain from the misconduct

- c. Mrs Grecko had made frank admissions to a significant part of the misconduct, at the time to Dr TC, to the College in its investigation and at the hearing
- d. Mrs Grecko had demonstrated some insight, in her admission of disgraceful conduct to the Committee in the hearing.

12. The Committee considered that the following standards from the Code of Practice were engaged:

*“1.5 Veterinary surgeons who prescribe, supply and administer medicines must do so responsibly.”*

*“2.5 Veterinary surgeons must keep clear, accurate and detailed clinical and client records.”*

*“6.5 Veterinary surgeons 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.”*

13. The Committee considered that Mrs Grecko’s conduct had breached her obligations as a veterinary surgeon to respect the proper protections that were in place for the control of prescription only medications. She had committed a serious abuse of her position in using the fact that she could obtain medications by virtue of her profession to circumvent the protections. She had been prepared to involve others in the course of the conduct. In addition, Mrs Grecko had been prepared to engage in an attempt to conceal her actions and falsify the clinical records in the process.

14. Although it was acknowledged that Mrs Grecko may have been subject to some conflicting demands, being affected by her husband’s interests and may have felt a pressure to act, the Committee considered that she had completely failed to acknowledge and respect her overriding professional responsibilities. Although Mrs Grecko submitted that she had thought she had the ‘green light’ to order the medication, she had also told the Committee that she knew it had been wrong to order a medication for human use, representing in the practice records that it was for her dog. Mr Grecko’s submission also failed to recognise that it was her responsibility as the veterinary surgeon to adhere to her professional obligations. In addition, the dishonesty indicated a lack of probity and integrity in a readiness to engage in an attempt to conceal matters.

15. The Committee noted that this was the second occasion of misconduct in respect of prescription medications and followed her having received a previous regulatory warning.
16. The Committee was satisfied, even taking into account the mitigation indicated by Mrs Grecko's expression of insight and her admissions, that the conduct reflected in the Charges fell so far short of the expected standards that it amounted to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.
17. The Committee therefore found Mrs Grecko guilty of disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.

**Disciplinary Committee**

**21 September 2023**