

### **Decision of the Charter Case Committee in respect of Miss Jayne Pettitt RVN**

The Charter Case Committee (the Committee) met remotely on 28 April 2025 to consider the following allegation against the Registrant:

*That on 20th May 2024, at North & East Devon Magistrates' Court, pleaded guilty to driving a motor vehicle on a road when the proportion of a controlled drug (cocaine) in [their] blood exceeded the specified limit - Contrary to section 5A(1)A and (2) of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and Schedule 2 to the Road Traffic Offenders Act, and was disqualified from driving for 12-months, fined £200, costs £85, victim surcharge £114 and 12-month community order for up to 10 days rehabilitation activities.*

#### **Background:**

1. Miss Pettitt (the Registrant) is a registered veterinary nurse.
2. On 23 June 2024, an anonymous report was made to the College's confidential reporting line raising regulatory concerns about the Registrant.
3. The Registrant contacted the College via email on 19 August 2024 to declare a conviction and provide supporting documentation which included a written reflection and two positive character references from professional colleagues at her current place of employment.
4. In her reflections the Registrant provided details of the conduct for which she had been convicted, and said, in summary:
  - The incident occurred on 20 November 2023, and she had been convicted on 20 May 2024.
  - She had been stopped for speeding but was then found to have drugs (cocaine) in her system.
  - She had received a 12-month driving ban, had been fined £399 and had received a 12-month community order which included completing rehabilitation activity.
  - She felt shame at being arrested.
  - She had been naïve about the drugs and not realised the seriousness of the offence, but her actions were not intentional and she had not intended to put other road users at risk.
  - She detailed the impact the incident had had on her health, her finances and her life, and that of her immediate family.
  - She provided reflections on the importance of her profession and her pride in her work.
  - She apologised for what had happened, which she stated was a "*mistake*" that would not be repeated, noting "*it was a horrible lesson I have learnt and I am fully aware of what my actions have done*".

- She also apologised for the time it had taken to notify the College of the conviction, which she said was due to her [REDACTED] but also due to her concerns about the impact of this incident on her career.
5. On 3 September 2024, the RCVS contacted Exeter Magistrates' Court requesting a certified copy of the certificate of conviction. This confirmed that on 18 April 2024 the Registrant had pleaded guilty and was convicted of driving a motor vehicle on a road on 20 November 2023 when the proportion of a controlled drug (cocaine) in her blood exceeded the specified limit. The RCVS Assistant Registrar determined that, due to the serious nature of the Registrant's conviction, the case should be fast-tracked to the Stage 2 Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee (S2 VN PIC)
  6. At a meeting on 12 November 2024, the S2 VN PIC considered all the evidence before it regarding the Registrant's conviction and concluded that there was a realistic prospect of the concerns being proved, and of them amounting to serious professional misconduct. It proposed referring the matter to the Committee. The Registrant confirmed her agreement to this approach in December 2024.
  7. On 3 December 2024 the Registrant provided further written reflections for consideration by the Committee and three further character references from colleagues at her place of work. In summary the Registrant outlined:
    - her deep regret for the incident for which she takes full responsibility.
    - her pride in her chosen career.
    - her ongoing professionalism in her role as a veterinary nurse.
    - the active steps she has taken, through therapy, to ensure a similar incident does not happen again.
    - recognition of the impact of her actions upon the profession; and
    - her ongoing commitment to the health and welfare of animals.
  8. On 12 December 2024, the Registrant sent an additional character reference from a current work colleague.
  9. The matter was initially considered by a Charter Case Committee in February 2025 but, following a review by the Registrar, it was determined to refer the matter back to a differently constituted Committee. The matter is now being considered anew by this Committee.

### **Decision**

10. The Committee has been provided with a Certificate of Conviction dated 28 August 2024, confirming the Registrant's conviction on 18 April 2024, and the sentence imposed on 20 May 2024. The Registrant had pleaded guilty to the criminal offence, reported the conviction to the

College and not challenged the accuracy of the Certificate of Conviction. The Committee therefore accepted the Certificate of Conviction as proof of the conviction and did not seek to go behind this. The Committee noted a minor typographical error in the College's allegation, in that it referred to the date of the sentencing hearing (20 May 2024) rather than the date of the conviction (18 April 2024). However, the Committee was of the view that such an error could be easily and uncontroversially corrected. On that basis, the Committee was satisfied that there was a realistic prospect of the College being able to prove the allegation.

11. The Committee then considered whether it would be appropriate to conclude this matter by issuing the Registrant with a warning, either public or confidential, without the need for a referral to the Disciplinary Committee for a hearing.
12. It bore in mind that the overarching remit of the RCVS was to protect animal welfare and to act in the public interest, which included protecting the public, maintaining proper standards within the profession and maintaining public confidence in the profession. The Committee therefore considered whether a Warning would meet these criteria.
13. In reaching its decision the Committee had regard to the RCVS Charter Case Committee Protocol.
14. The Committee took into account the seriousness of the allegation. The Registrant had been convicted of driving a motor vehicle on a road when the proportion of a controlled drug (cocaine) in her blood exceeded the specified limit. As a result, the Registrant had been disqualified from driving for 12 months, fined £200, required to pay costs of £85 and a victim surcharge of £114, and 12-month community order for up to 10 days rehabilitation activities. The Committee considered that the sentence reflected the seriousness of the offence.
15. The Committee reminded itself that the Registrant's actions, in driving a car while under the influence of drugs, could have resulted in serious harm to both the Registrant and to other road users. In this case no one had been injured, but there had been a significant risk of harm. The Committee had to consider the impact of the Registrant's actions on the public and on the wider public interest, and that included protecting the public, maintaining proper standards within the profession, and maintaining public confidence in the profession,
16. The Committee took into account a number of mitigating factors, namely that:
  - The Registrant had accepted responsibility for what had happened. She had pleaded guilty to the offence and had continued to accept responsibility for her actions within the two written reflections she had provided. In her reflections dated December 2024, the Registrant had expressed her deep regret for the events in November 2023 noting that *"this was an incredibly irresponsible act and one that could have devastating consequences on not only my own life*

*but endangering others around me. There is no excuse for what I did and I continue to take full responsibility for my actions”.*

- The Registrant had shown an increasing insight into the events leading to her arrest and conviction and its subsequent impact. She had acknowledged the seriousness of her conduct and its potential impact on other individuals, her profession and her career. The Registrant had also outlined the steps she had taken to seek to avoid any repetition in the future, including the CPD and personal therapy.
  - The Registrant had shown remorse for her actions and the impact this had had. In her second submission in December 2024, she had provided further reflections on the value she placed on her career and her wish to continue, stating “ *I am confident to say this experience has taught me never to engage in any form of activity again I as would never want to bring the profession into disrepute or undermine public confidence in the profession”....*
  - The Registrant had also provided a number of positive references from colleagues at her place of work attesting to her character and her performance at work.
17. The Committee took into account that the Registrant had notified the College of her conviction and had engaged with the regulatory process. She had accepted responsibility for her actions and had also shown an understanding of the impact of her offending behaviour on other road users, the public and the profession. Overall, the Committee was satisfied that the Registrant had demonstrated genuine remorse for what had happened and had sought to take steps to ensure that a similar event would not occur in the future.
18. The Committee also took into account the references submitted by the Registrant. There were six in total, and it appeared that most appeared to be aware of the conviction. The Committee gave greater weight to those where the referee’s relationship to the Registrant was clear, for example a work colleague, but it noted that all were positive and spoke positively about the Registrant’s genuine concern for animals, her work ethic and her excellent professional skills.
19. The Committee was satisfied that, while the offending behaviour leading to the conviction was serious, the Registrant had since demonstrated appropriate insight and remorse. There was no information to suggest any previous or subsequent concerns, and so this appeared to be an isolated incident. In the circumstances, the Committee considered that the likelihood of repetition was low and that there was little future risk of any harm being caused by the Registrant to animals, the public, or the wider public interest.
20. On that basis, the Committee was satisfied that it was reasonable and proportionate and in the public interest to conclude this matter by issuing Ms Pettitt with a Warning as to her future conduct, as set out below. The Warning will remain on Ms Pettitt’s record for a period of 6

months from the date of issue. The Committee considered that this duration was proportionate bearing in mind the seriousness of the conviction.

21. The Committee then considered whether the Warning should be confidential or public. It noted that the Registrant had provided details regarding the impact that the conviction and the subsequent events had had on her [REDACTED] and on her career. She submitted that publication of the Warning would exacerbate these issues and that, for this reason, the Warning should remain confidential. The Registrant's submissions were supported by a letter dated 18 February 2025 from [REDACTED]

22. The Committee acknowledged the impact of these regulatory proceedings on the Registrant. However, it reminded itself that the purpose of a regulatory sanction is not to punish the Registrant but to protect the public and to protect the public interest, which includes maintaining public confidence in the profession and maintaining proper professional standards. The decision to issue a Warning was, therefore, both to warn the Registrant as to her future conduct but also to inform members of the public and members of the profession. As such, transparency and accountability were important, and the general principle was that such matters should be publicly available unless there was an exceptional reason not to do so.

23. The Committee gave careful consideration to the Registrant's submissions on publication but, having balanced the interests of the Registrant with the public interest, it did not consider that there was sufficient evidence that this was an exceptional case that warranted keeping the Warning confidential. It noted in summary:

a) The conviction was already a matter of public record, and this decision did not therefore disclose to the public any material new facts regarding the conviction itself. The new information being made public would be the College's decision to refer the conviction for the consideration of the Committee, the Committee's decision to impose a Warning, and the Committee's reasons for doing so.

b) The Committee had taken into account the Registrant's concerns regarding the potential impact of publication on [REDACTED]

Furthermore, the Committee considered



that the Registrant's privacy [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] could be protected by making appropriate redactions of any [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] matters within the decision.

c) The Committee had also taken into account the Registrant's submissions that publication may adversely affect her employment, both now and in the future. The Committee, however, noted that publication would be for a limited period of time – six months - and considered that it would therefore be unlikely to have a long-term impact on her career.

d) The Committee had regard to the fact that keeping the Warning confidential would mean that the public would not be made aware that the College had taken regulatory action against the Registrant in relation to the conviction. The Committee considered that there was a strong public interest in such regulatory action being made public, in order to ensure transparency and accountability of the College's regulatory activities, and also to maintain public confidence both in the profession itself and in the College's ability to effectively regulate the profession.

- 24. The Committee therefore requested the Registrar to conclude this case by issuing the registrant, Ms Jayne Pettitt RVN, with a Warning as to her conduct in respect of the matters set out in the allegation and to note that this Warning will be taken into account by any future Committee which has to consider imposing a sanction. The Warning will remain on her record for a period of 6 months from the date of issue.**