

## Standards Committee

### Agenda for the meeting to be held on 14 November 2022 at 10.00am

|    |                                                                                                                                                                       |                  |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. | Apologies for absence, declarations of interest.                                                                                                                      | Minutes attached |
| 2. | Matters for decision                                                                                                                                                  |                  |
|    | a. Fish Health Inspectors review – <b>confidential</b>                                                                                                                | Paper attached   |
|    | b. Remote certification – <b>confidential</b>                                                                                                                         | Paper attached   |
|    | c. Certification of regular vet visits – <b>confidential</b>                                                                                                          | Paper attached   |
|    | d. Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme (GEFS) annual report (for note) – <b>confidential</b>                                                                          | Paper attached   |
|    | e. E-certification (for note) – <b>confidential</b>                                                                                                                   | Paper attached   |
| 3. | Matters for report                                                                                                                                                    |                  |
|    | a. Disciplinary Committee Report                                                                                                                                      | Oral update      |
|    | b. Riding Establishments Subcommittee Report                                                                                                                          | Paper attached   |
| 4. | Confidential matters for report                                                                                                                                       |                  |
|    | a. Routine Veterinary Practice Subcommittee Report                                                                                                                    | Paper attached   |
|    | b. Ethics Review Panel Report                                                                                                                                         | Paper attached   |
|    | c. Certification Subcommittee Report                                                                                                                                  | Paper attached   |
| 5. | Risk and equality                                                                                                                                                     | Oral update      |
| 6. | Any other business and date of next meeting on 5 December 2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 May 2023 meeting date</li> <li>• Quinalbarbitone</li> </ul> | Oral update      |

**Standards Committee 2022/2023****Chair:**

Miss Linda Belton BVSc MRCVS

**Members:**

Dr Louise Allum VetMB MRCVS

Ms Belinda Andrews-Jones DipAVN (surgical) RVN

Mr Mark Castle OBE

Dr Danny Chambers BVSc MRCVS

Dr Olivia Cook MRCVS

Dr Matshidiso Gardiner MRCVS

Ms Claire-Louise McLaughlan MA LLB(Hons)

Mrs Claire Roberts DipAVN (surgical) RVN

Mr Will Wilkinson MRCVS

| <b>Summary</b>     |                                                                                             |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Meeting            | Standards                                                                                   |
| Date               | 14 November 2022                                                                            |
| Title              | Disciplinary Committee Report                                                               |
| Summary            | Update of Disciplinary Committee since the last Standards meeting                           |
| Decisions required | None                                                                                        |
| Attachments        | None                                                                                        |
| Author             | Yemisi Yusuph<br>DC Clerk<br><a href="mailto:y.yusuph@rcvs.org.uk">y.yusuph@rcvs.org.uk</a> |

| <b>Classifications</b> |                                   |                               |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Document</b>        | <b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b> | <b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b> |
| Paper                  | Unclassified                      | n/a                           |

**<sup>1</sup>Classifications explained**

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Unclassified | Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.                                                                                                                                                        |
| Confidential | Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication. |
| Private      | The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.      |

**<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Confidential | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li> <li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li> <li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li> <li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li> </ol> |
| Private      | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                             |

## Report of Disciplinary Committee hearings since the last Standards meeting on 12 September 2022

### Hearings

#### Sue Dyson

1. Between Wednesday 31 August and Friday 2 September, the Disciplinary Committee met to hear the Restoration Application of Dr Sue Dyson. Dr Dyson was originally removed from the register following her Disciplinary hearing in July of 2021, in relation to her dishonest actions and statements.
2. In considering Dr Dyson's application for restoration, the Disciplinary Committee considering the application had to take into account a number of factors: her acceptance of the findings of the Committee at the original hearing; the seriousness of the original findings; public protection; risks to animal welfare if she were to be allowed to practise again; the length of time off the Register; her conduct since being removed; her efforts to keep up to date in terms of knowledge, skills and developments in practice; the impact of the sanction on her; and public support for her.
3. The Committee considering her restoration application found that, while Dr Dyson had demonstrated some insight into her misconduct, had expressed remorse and admitted dishonesty, this was undermined by her continuing denial that she had been knowingly dishonest in her conduct, having attributed her actions to being in a dissociative state at the time.
4. In terms of seriousness, the Committee considered that Dr Dyson's misconduct was at the highest end of the spectrum, having involved being dishonest with multiple people on multiple occasions, and then inventing a fictitious Home Office Inspector to continue the deceit. The Committee also considered that public confidence in the profession and the RCVS as the regulator would be undermined were Dr Dyson to be allowed to be restored to the Register without genuinely accepting full responsibility for her actions.
5. In her favour, the Committee considered that there was no risk to the health and welfare of animals and that she had provided ample evidence of her efforts to keep up to date in terms of knowledge, skills and developments in practice should she be allowed to practise again. In addition, she had made some progress, for example she was able to show some insight by the steps she had taken to avoid finding herself in such a stressful environment in the future. The Committee also considered the many positive testimonials it received from professional colleagues and clients.

6. The Committee decided to refuse Dr Dyson's application. Judith Way, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: "*The Committee considered that public confidence in veterinary surgeons and the profession will not be maintained if a veterinary surgeon who has been found to have committed very serious acts of dishonesty refuses to genuinely accept that that is the case.*"
7. The Committee full decision can be found here: [Dyson, Sue September 2022 Decision of Disciplinary Committee on Application for Restoration - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)

#### Chelsea Jade Strangeway RVN

8. The RVN Committee met virtually between Tuesday 20 September and Wednesday 21 September, to hear and Inquiry into Miss Strangeway. The Inquiry was in relation charges that alleged she had falsified records and was practising whilst unregistered.
9. The first five charges related to separate occasions in 2020 where Miss Strangeway falsely claimed on hospitalisation records that she had attended the practice where she was employed to monitor hospitalised animals overnight, when she had not in fact done so. In two of the cases Miss Strangeway also recorded on the form that she had provided the prescribed medication.
10. The sixth charge was that between 1 January and 10 February 2020, she had held herself out and practised as a registered veterinary nurse, despite not being on the RCVS Register at the time. The remaining two charges related to the fact that her conduct as described in the previous charges was dishonest, misleading and potentially detrimental to animal welfare.
11. The Committee first went on to establish whether the facts can be proved. After seeing CCTV evidence and hearing Miss Strangeway's admissions, the Committee found all factual allegations proved.
12. The Committee then went on to establish whether Miss Strangeway's conduct amount to serious professional misconduct. In doing so the Committee took account of the *Code of Professional Conduct*, with particular reference to the requirements for prioritising animal health and welfare, honesty, accurate clinical records, providing appropriate and adequate veterinary nursing care, and being properly registered.
13. The Committee found that Miss Strangeway's conduct did amount to serious professional misconduct based on her dishonesty and the fact the conduct was sustained and repeated and created a risk to animal health and welfare.

14. The full decision on facts and disgraceful conduct can be found here: [Strangeway, Chelsea Jade September 2022 Decision of Disciplinary Committee on Facts and Disgraceful Conduct in a Professional Respect - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)
15. Having found serious professional misconduct proven, the Committee went on to consider the most appropriate sanction for Miss Strangeway, taking into account the relevant aggravating and mitigating factors. In terms of aggravating factors, the Committee considered that there was a risk of injury to animals, the sustained nature of the misconduct, that there was actual or potential financial gain, that there was an abuse of a position of trust and responsibility, and that she had shown a wilful disregard of the RCVS and the systems regulating the veterinary nursing profession.
16. In mitigation, the Committee considered that there had been no actual harm to animals, that admissions to the allegations had been made at an early stage, that the respondent had displayed both remorse and insight regarding her conduct, including apologising to the practice, that she was of previously good character, and that she was ordinarily a good veterinary nurse.
17. Ultimately, the Committee decided that Miss Strangeway should be removed from the register. They stated that *"This is a case involving serious dishonesty, sustained over a period of time, and conduct potentially detrimental to animal welfare, as well as willful 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."*
18. The full decision on sanction can be found here: [Strangeway, Chelsea Jade September 2022 Decision of Disciplinary Committee on Sanction - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)

#### Stephen Prichard

19. The Committee met between Tuesday 20 to Thursday 22 September 2022, to consider the Inquiry into Mr Stephen Prichard. The Committee proceeded in his absence after he mainly failed to respond to numerous attempts to contact him about the hearing and engage him in the process including by email, post, telephone and personal service of documents. In its decision to proceed in Mr Prichard's absence the Committee confirmed that it would not hold his non-attendance against him or attach any adverse inference to that fact.
20. The first set of charges against Mr Prichard were that he, on occasions between 1 April 2016 and 29 April 2021, taken quantities of the prescription-only medication and the controlled drug Vetergesic from the practice's stock other than for legitimate veterinary use. And that on 30 April took Vetergesic from the practice by drawing it into a syringe for the purposes of

self administration. In doing so, his conduct was dishonest. Another set of charges were that, on five separate occasions between 5 December 2019 and 29 April 2021, Mr Prichard had attended the practice to work as a veterinary surgeon whilst unfit to do so. The final charge related to Mr Prichard's failure to respond adequately or at all to all reasonable requests from the RCVS for his response to concerns raised about his conduct.

21. At the beginning of the hearing Nicole Curtis, acting on behalf of the College, read the written evidence from 11 separate witnesses outlining the facts related to the charges against Mr Prichard, including the record of an investigative meeting held by the practice in which he admitted his theft and use of the controlled drug and following which, he was dismissed from his employment.
22. Having considered the evidence from the witnesses, the Committee then considered whether they found the charges against Mr Prichard proven. All the charges were found proven by the Committee which then went on to consider if the proven charges, individually or in any combination, amounted to serious professional misconduct. In doing so, the Committee took into account both aggravating and mitigating factors. In terms of aggravating factors the Committee found that there was a risk of injury, recklessness, premeditated and sustained misconduct, and that there was an abuse of his professional position in accessing prescription-only controlled drugs for reasons other than legitimate veterinary use. In mitigation, the Committee considered that he had made admissions as part of the practice's internal disciplinary investigation.
23. Overall, the Committee found he had breached aspects of the *Code of Professional Conduct* related to honesty and integrity, making animal health and welfare his priority, appropriate use of veterinary medicines, taking steps to address physical and mental health conditions that could affect fitness to practise, responding to reasonable requests from the RCVS, and bringing the profession into disrepute. Therefore, the Committee found him guilty of serious professional misconduct in relation to all of the charges.
24. In considering its sanction, the Committee having carefully considered all possible alternative sanctions that were available felt that, considering the seriousness of the misconduct, removal from the Register was the most appropriate decision. Austin Kirwan, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: "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.



25. The full decision can be found here: [Prichard, Stephen September 2022 Decision of the Disciplinary Committee - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)

#### Katherine Heyes RVN

26. The Committee Met between Wednesday 26 and Thursday 27 September, to hear an Inquiry into Miss Heyes. The Inquiry was in relation to a previous conviction against her, for entering an aircraft when drunk / being drunk in an aircraft. In July 2020, Miss Strangeway plead guilty to the charges against her.
27. At the Disciplinary hearing, Miss Heyes was not legally represented, although she was assisted by a friend.
28. At the start of the hearing, Miss Heyes admitted the facts of her 2020 conviction, for which she had been sentenced to a community order consisting of unpaid work for 80 hours and ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £80 and £250 in costs, but denied that the conviction rendered her unfit to practise as a veterinary nurse.
29. The Committee found that the facts of the case were proved, on admission by Miss Heyes and on the basis that the certificate of conviction referred to the criminal offence which Miss Heyes had pleaded guilty to.
30. In reaching its decision, the Committee took into account the evidence before it and the advice of the Legal Assessor. The Committee went on to consider whether Miss Heyes conduct amounted to serious professional misconduct. In doing so the Committee noted that the Disciplinary Guidance stated "A conviction may be related to professional or personal behaviour and whether it renders a respondent veterinary surgeon unfit to practise is a matter of judgment for the Disciplinary Committee. Behaviour unconnected with the practice of veterinary surgery can cause concerns about the protection of animals or the wider public interest."
31. The Committee concluded that the conviction and underlying behaviour was sufficiently serious that it required a finding that Miss Heyes was unfit to practise veterinary nursing on public interest grounds and that it also breached Code 6.5 of the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses which states: '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'.

32. Having found serious professional misconduct proven, the Committee went on to consider the most appropriate sanction for Miss Heyes, taking into account the relevant aggravating and mitigating factors. In terms of the aggravating factors, the Committee considered that the nature of the conviction would have caused a risk to passengers, including children and that Miss Heyes had behaved recklessly, falling far below the standard to be expected of a member of the veterinary nursing profession.
33. In mitigation, the Committee considered this was a single and isolated incident, Ms Heyes had no previous disciplinary findings against her and following her conviction she had shown developing insight. It noted that she had continued to practise as a competent and dedicated veterinary nurse.
34. On deciding to reprimand Miss Heyes in respect of the charge and to warn her as to her future conduct, Cerys Jones, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: "The Committee decided to reprimand Ms Heyes because of its finding that the charge amounted to disgraceful conduct and rendered Miss Heyes unfit to practise. Such a sanction was necessary in the Committee's view because the conviction brought the profession into disrepute. Whilst the charge was not so serious as to require suspension or removal from the register, the Committee decided it is necessary to issue a formal warning to Ms Heyes as to her future conduct.
35. The full decision can be found here: [Heyes, Katherine September 2022 Decision of the Disciplinary Committee - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](https://www.rcvs.org.uk/disciplinary-committee-professionals/hey-katherine-september-2022)

#### A, Registered Veterinary Nurse

36. The Committee met between 1-2 November, to hearing the Inquiry into a Registered Nurse following their conviction case.
37. A, who was granted anonymity by the Committee to protect their and their family members' safety, had been convicted in court in March 2022 of three charges related to indecent images of children. As a result, A was sentenced to eight months' imprisonment suspended for 24 months, with rehabilitation activities of a maximum 35 days, 12 months mental health treatment, 100 hours unpaid work, 10 years sexual harm prevention order, their name was placed on the sex offenders' register for 10 years and they were ordered to pay £425 prosecution costs.

38. At the outset of the Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee hearing, which took place on 25 and 26 October, the individual, A admitted the convictions and that the conviction rendered A unfit to continue to work as a veterinary nurse.
39. In considering the sanction for the individual, the Committee took into account aggravating factors including that their conviction involved behaviour which increased the risk of harm or injury to human beings, the fact that viewing such images fuelled demand for such exploitative images, and that the conviction related to premeditated sexual misconduct which was sustained or repeated over a period of time.
40. In mitigation the Committee considered that A had taken a number of steps to address the root cause of the offending behaviour, had recognised the seriousness of these offences and had engaged fully with the College throughout the disciplinary process.
41. Paul Morris, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: “The Committee decided that the only appropriate and proportionate response to the respondent’s convictions was a removal order. Convictions of this kind are fundamentally incompatible with being a registered veterinary nurse. At this point in time, a removal order is the only sanction capable of satisfying the public interest in safeguarding the reputation of the profession of veterinary nursing and ensuring that public confidence in the profession is maintained.”
42. The full details of the hearing and the Committee’s decision can be found at [www.rcvs.org.uk/disciplinary](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/disciplinary)

#### Upcoming DC cases

43. The DC currently have 2 hearings listed
- 7-11 November & 22-28 November
  - 20-24 February 2023
44. There are currently two referred hearings which will be listed shortly.

| <b>Summary</b>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Meeting            | Standards Committee                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Date               | 14 November 2022                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Title              | Riding Establishments Subcommittee report                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Summary            | Standards Committee is asked to note this brief update on the work and considerations of the Riding Establishments Subcommittee. The topics discussed are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Q&amp;A sessions;</li> <li>• Feedback to Defra - review of Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) Regulations</li> <li>• Annual Meeting;</li> <li>• Audit; and</li> <li>• Advice queries.</li> </ul> |
| Decisions required | None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Attachments        | None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Author             | Vicki Price<br><br>Senior Standards and Advice Officer<br><br>v.price@rcvs.org.uk                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

| <b>Classifications</b> |                                   |                               |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Document</b>        | <b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b> | <b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b> |
| Paper                  | Unclassified                      |                               |

| <b>1Classifications explained</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Unclassified                      | Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.                                                            |
| Confidential                      | Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant |

|         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|         | committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Private | The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council. |

## 2Classification rationales

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| Private      | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                             |

## Annual Q&A sessions

1. The Riding Establishments Subcommittee (RESC) ran Annual Q&A sessions for the first time in November 2022. Two online sessions took place on 1 and 3 November. The sessions were open to all members of the Riding Establishments Inspectorate on a voluntary basis, and were held in order to provide inspectors with a further opportunity to interact with the Subcommittee in addition to the annual Induction and Refresher Training course.
2. Inspectors were invited to pre-submit written questions and to ask further questions during the live sessions, which were addressed by Subcommittee members during each 1.5-hour session. 39 inspectors attended representing 20% of the Inspectorate. Questions covered a wide range of issues, including: requirements for meeting the optional higher standards in England; riding hats; polo saddles; first aid training; inspecting beach donkeys; use of Bute; fencing; inspector's fees; and the RESC's annual audit process.

## Feedback to Defra – review of Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) Regulations

3. In October Defra released a set of stakeholder surveys seeking feedback on the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) Regulations 2018 (England) for the purposes of its five-year post-implementation review of the legislation.
4. The Subcommittee sought feedback from members of the Inspectorate on some issues. The Subcommittee provided a written response to Defra with a focus on Schedule 5 of the legislation relating to the hiring out of horses which reflected the Subcommittee's joint views and the feedback received from inspectors.
5. The response expressed the view that whilst the legislation had not led to a significant increase in horse welfare, it has increased awareness among riding establishments of the need to undertake and document routine care and biosecurity procedures and therefore was a small improvement on the previous legislation. Areas for improvement highlighted by the Subcommittee included:
  - a. In section 6(8)(a) of Schedule 5 the age limit of three years is too low and bad for equine welfare, and should be urgently amended to provide that no horse aged under four years may be hired out;
  - b. Further clarity on the designation of roles between the veterinary inspector and local authority inspector is needed to reduce duplication/overlap and the time and cost of inspections. At present it is not clear what matters the veterinary inspector is

responsible for checking and the RESC would like clarification that this should be limited to those matters directly relevant to horse management and welfare;

- c. There should be a standard rather than optional requirement for saddle fit to be checked by a saddle fitter, and a clear requirement for the saddle fitter to be qualified;
- d. The exemption from licensing and inspection for small riding establishments with less than £1000 gross trading income should be removed in the interests of animal welfare and rider safety; and
- e. Increased specificity would be useful to reduce ambiguity around some requirements, such as what a preventative healthcare plan needs to cover.

### Annual Meeting

3. The RESC Annual Meeting will be held on 22 November. Matters to be discussed include the 2023 Training and Induction course format, further feedback to Defra in relation to its review of the Regulations applicable in England in addition to the RESC's written survey response noted above, the 2022 audit of Inspector's reports, and the content of the 2023 REIN newsletter.

### Audit

4. A number of inspectors have been selected at random and contacted to participate in the annual audit, and the inspector report forms and accompanying documents are currently being collated for consideration by the Subcommittee in advance of the Annual Meeting.

### Advice queries

5. The Standards and Advice Team continue to receive a steady number of enquiries from local authorities, veterinary surgeon inspectors and the owners of riding establishments.
6. In addition to the questions raised in the Q&A sessions as discussed above, recent queries have related to the following topics:
  - a. Queries regarding the Annual Q&A sessions and the annual Training and Induction Course for Riding Establishment Inspectors;
  - b. Requirement to inspect charity premises;
  - c. Star ratings;
  - d. Retirement from inspection work;
  - e. Local Authority queries.