



ROYAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS
DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

INQUIRY RE:

MR MATTHEW MAKEPEACE

DECISION ON APPLICATION FOR RESTORATION

1. The Disciplinary Committee (“the Committee”) of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (“the College”), convened to consider an application for restoration to the Register by the Applicant, Mr. Matthew Makepeace. Ms. Nicole Curtis appeared on behalf of the College. Mr. Matthew Makepeace appeared and represented himself. The Applicant was removed from the Register in April 2024; this is his first application for restoration.
2. The College opposed the application, on the basis that the Applicant is not fit to be restored to the Register, due to the seriousness of his actions which saw him removed from the Register, his behaviour since he was removed from the Register which does not evidence probity, and his willingness to put other veterinary staff at risk in holding himself out as a vet without mentioning his removal from the Register.
3. In particular, the College invited the Committee to find that the Applicant’s conduct in relation to the email he sent to Chestergates Veterinary Specialists (“Chestergates”) on 5 September 2024, in referring to himself as a “vet” failing to refer to the fact that he had been removed from the RCVS register, was:
 - i. dishonest; and/or
 - ii. misleading; and/or

iii. risked an adverse impact on members of staff at Chestergates in terms of (a) their legal and/or insurance and/or other liability and/or (b) their reputation.

The Legislative Framework and Guidance Documents

4. Section 18(1) of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 provides:

"where a person's name has been removed from the Register of Veterinary Surgeons or the Supplementary Veterinary Register in pursuance of a direction under section 16 of this Act, the name of that person shall not again be entered in the Register from which it was removed unless the Disciplinary Committee on application made to them in that behalf otherwise direct."

5. The Act provides that no application for restoration shall be made within ten months of the date of removal, or the date of a previous application for restoration (s18 (3)). The Applicant has satisfied this requirement.

6. Part V of the Veterinary Surgeons and Veterinary Practitioners (Disciplinary Committee) (Procedure and Evidence) Rules Order of Council 2004 provides for the procedure at a hearing for restoration. This includes provision for the Chair and the College's Solicitor to invite the Applicant to provide evidence concerning the Applicant's character and conduct since his name was removed.

7. The Disciplinary Committee Manual (September 2013) provides:

181. Upon an application for restoration, the burden of proof is on the Applicant to satisfy the Committee that he or she is fit to be restored to the Register. Factual assertions by the Applicant (who was the Respondent at the initial hearing) may be proved on the balance of probabilities.

182. At an application for restoration hearing the Committee will be concerned to learn of the character and conduct of the Applicant since his name was removed from the Register. Every case is different and no list can be exhaustive, but reference should be made to the list of relevant factors in the Disciplinary Committee Procedure Guidance. Common matters include the following, in no particular order; the Applicant's remorse; whether on the known facts there is a likelihood of repetition and if so, what steps have been taken to guard against that; whether the Applicant has kept himself sufficiently up to date with

techniques of practice since his removal from the Register, and the repercussions of the disciplinary offence that led to his removal.

184. The Committee will be concerned to judge the weight of the case which led to the decision in the first place. In opening the case the RCVS barrister will provide the Committee with details of the case that led to the removal. The Applicant or his solicitor or barrister shall be entitled to address the Committee and adduce evidence and make such submissions on the question as he wishes. Likewise the RCVS barrister shall be entitled to address the Committee, adduce evidence and make submissions."

8. The Disciplinary Committee Guidance (August 2020) confirms that the obligation is on the Applicant veterinary surgeon to satisfy the Committee that they are fit to be restored to the Register. It also provides that the Committee will consider a number of factors when exercising its judgement as to whether to restore a veterinary surgeon (para 85) to the Register, such as:

- (a) Whether the applicant veterinary surgeon has accepted the findings of the Committee at the original inquiry hearing;*
- (b) **The seriousness of those findings;***
- (c) Whether the applicant veterinary surgeon has demonstrated insight into his or her past conduct;*
- (d) **The protection of the public and the public interest;***
- (e) The future of the welfare of animals in the event of the applicant veterinary surgeon being permitted to have his or her name restored to the register;*
- (f) The length of time off the register;*
- (g) **The applicant veterinary surgeon s conduct since removal from the register;***
- (h) Evidence demonstrating the efforts by the applicant veterinary surgeon to keep up to date in terms of knowledge, skills and developments in practice, since removal from the register (accepting that he or she must not practise as a veterinary surgeon).*

The Original Hearing

9. The original charges were heard before the Disciplinary Committee on 16-17 April 2024. The Applicant faced five charges.

10. That, being registered in the Register of Veterinary Surgeons, you:

1. On 28th of July 2022, at the Scarborough Magistrates' Court, were convicted, following a guilty plea, of assaulting by beating MH on 1 January 2022 at Blandscliff, Scarborough, contrary to section 39 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988; in relation to which offence you were sentenced to a Community Order (with an Alcohol Rehabilitation requirement and a Rehabilitation Activity Requirement, both such requirements to be completed by 27 January 2024), and a Curfew Order; and you were ordered to pay a £95 surcharge and £85 in costs; AND it is alleged that the above conviction renders you unfit to practise veterinary surgery;

And/or

At a time when there was a potential and/or actual investigation and/or proceedings by the RCVS regarding your conviction in July 2022 for an assault on MH, you:

2. On or around 26 August 2022, submitted a character reference to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) when:

(i) you did not have the consent of MH, the purported writer of that reference, to submit that character reference; and/or

(ii) the reference stated that you and MH "still live happily together" when that was not true, either at the time the reference was submitted to the RCVS or at the time it was purported to have been written; and/or

(iii) the reference purported to bear the signature of MH, when you knew it had not been signed by MH;

3. Between 14 December 2022 and 31 January 2023, sent WhatsApp messages to MH:

(i) which were offensive and/or insulting and/or abusive; and/or

(ii) which were threatening and/or intimidating, more particularly a message and/or messages sent on or around 17 December 2022, saying

(a) "Yes seems like you were in imminent danger" "Guess you still are now" and/or

(b) that you carried a knife and pepper spray around with you and/or that you did so in case MH decided to "get revenge";

4. On 22 and/or 23 February 2023, submitted a character reference to the RCVS when:

- (i) you did not have the consent of MH, the purported writer of that reference, to submit that character reference; and/or
- (ii) the reference stated that you and MH “still live happily together” when that was not true, either at the time it was submitted to the RCVS or at the time it was purported to have been written; and/or
- (iii) the reference purported to have the signature of MH when you knew that it had not been signed by MH.

5. Your conduct in relation to 2 and/or 4 above were:

- i) misleading and/or
- ii) dishonest.

AND it is alleged that in relation to the above matters, at 2, 3, 4 and/or 5 above, whether individually, or in any combination, you are guilty of disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.

11. The first matter related to a conviction for an assault on his then partner, (MH), involving his biting her, an attempt to strangle her and following her with shouted threats, which forced bystanders to intervene and call the police. Matters 2-5 related to dishonest and misleading character references purporting to be from MH, when she had not consented to this, and sending multiple insulting and intimidating messages to her in an attempt to put pressure on her to provide such consent:

- a. This included the Applicant writing text that he wanted MH to use in a reference in June and July 2022. His text included wording to the effect that they still “*lived happily together*” and that she did not feel “*any further punishment was warranted*”. When she replied to him that she was not happy with his suggested wording and removed the words “*we still live happily together*” clarifying that they had not lived together since May 2022, removing other phrases that he had suggested, namely “*his behaviour has drastically improved and continues to do so*”, and “*I believe the improvements that continue to be shown by Matt are enough that I feel no further punishment is warranted.*” In relation to the Applicant’s suggested text that he had “*not touched alcohol since the incident*”

on New Year s Eve”, she removed his suggested additional wording, namely “and don t believe that he ever will again.”

- b. The Applicant told MH that he did not consider her revised wording to be sufficient. He put pressure on her to change it to the wording he wanted but she did not agree to do so.
- c. On 26 August 2022, when the Applicant reported the conviction to the College, he attached various documents, including character references and testimonials. These included a character reference purportedly signed by MH. This character reference used the wording that the Applicant had originally suggested to MH, and did not contain the changes she had asked for. It stated, for example, that, “we still live happily together”, that she believed he “would never again touch alcohol” and that she felt “no further punishment was warranted.”
- d. MH confirmed that she had not consented to a reference using this wording being used for the criminal proceedings, and she had not consented to any reference being submitted to the College. She had not signed the document, although it purported to bear her signature and it was not true that they “still lived happily together”, as they had not lived together since May 2022.
- e. On or around 17 December 2022, the Applicant sent messages to MH which were threatening and intimidating, namely:
“Yes seems like you were in imminent danger” “Guess you still are now”

and

“I still do carry pepper spray and a knife with me... in case you decided to get revenge.”
- f. In December 2022 and January 2023, the Applicant also sent MH a number of messages which were offensive, insulting and abusive, as follows:

December 2022

- *I believe you should never have spoke to the pigs*
- *I want to hear from you that you fucked up and shouldnt have either*
- *But the shit youve caused back to me im sick of it and its a lot fuckjng worse*
- *Of i coukd trust you id have said nar fuck off pigs we were mucking around*
- *Yes messing around scsring somekne into submission is not right*
- *But also the shit ive had to go through and still am is well over the top*

- *You think because you scared someone they should take away your licence to be a physio? Something youve worked years for?*
- *Just back tracking shit you already fucked up..
And you still wont accept it*
- *You can tell the pigs to fuck off literally and they cant do shit*
- *Bean if i wanted to kill you...
Coming up behind you on a street that has no cameras with my hotel up the cliff.
I dont need to say it*

January 2023

- *Youre so unbelievably ungrateful and selfish i ask myself daily why the fuck do you still want to be around someone like that*
- *I think as a human being your behaviour is disgusting*
- *Your behaviour this year has been more disgusting than mine was over a year ago*
- *You dont put up with any shit as a woman that refuses to cook clear and suck cock good luck*
- *So yes molly you are responsible for this shit*
- *Hope when your 50 and single and your eggs have all dried up you dont look back and go ahh fuck could have had a beautiful life*
- *Hope that barn doesnt haunt you everyday when youre driving an hour and a half each day past it*
- *Just know you fucked it. You held our relationship down for 13 months till it suffocated*

12. Mr Makepeace made admissions and agreed that the conviction made him unfit to practise and that the remaining charges amounted to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.

13. Aggravating features found by that Committee included: continuing coercive and aggressive behaviour, a disregard for the RCVS process, dishonesty utilised for personal gain in an attempt to portray himself favourably, calculated dishonesty in relation to RCVS statutory purposes, repeated conduct in respect of two separate references on two separate occasions. It was found that his threatening behaviour towards MH was another example of the abuse and aggression demonstrated by his conviction.

14. Mitigating features included admissions, remorse, testimonials and treatment designed to prevent repetition: abstinence from alcohol and anger-management. The Committee considered that his insight was not developed and that he sought to downplay his violent and aggressive conduct by reference to his youth and inexperience. His attempts to address his behaviour by abstinence and anger-management did not appear to have been effective in addressing an attitudinal issue given his continued aggression to MH, albeit by text message.
15. That Committee carefully considered the sanction of removal from the RCVS Register. It found that there was a real risk of repetition of his behaviour which was a serious departure from the standards set out in the Code. The submission of the falsified character references from MH was a deliberate and dishonest disregard of the integrity of the RCVS and Disciplinary Committee's regulatory process, and such a reference was intended to be put before the latter in a final hearing. The dishonesty was repeated and was concealed until it was revealed by MH's intervention by alerting the RCVS. The dishonesty in question struck at the heart of the profession's requirement for honesty and integrity. The Committee considered that the Respondent's actions, in his dishonesty in respect of the character references, taken together with his violent behaviour and coercive and bullying approach to MH, demonstrated a deep-seated attitudinal problem which had not been addressed by his abstinence from alcohol, the anger management course or the therapy which he had undertaken.
16. In light of the above, the Committee's view was that the demands of the public interest in this case were high, and in light of all of the circumstances, removal from the register was the only means of upholding the wider public interest, which includes the need to uphold proper standards of conduct and performance, and to maintain confidence in the profession and its regulation.
17. Accordingly, he was removed from the Register.

Application for Restoration

18. Twenty-two months after he was removed from the Register, the Applicant applies to be restored to the Register. He relied in the main on his admissions, remediation, and the passage of time that has elapsed since his removal from the Register without further concern.

19. The College set out the background to this case and submissions were provided both in writing and orally.
20. An update on the Applicant's conduct since his removal from the Register was provided. It was explained that on 31 December 2024 Chestergates contacted the RCVS because of a concern about the Applicant. The Committee has seen an email dated 5 September 2024 sent to Chestergates by the Applicant asking for work-experience. He mentions within the email that he is a vet but makes no mention of his removal from the Register. Rather he mentions future intentions and opportunities to work abroad, considering applying for an internship and do more surgical work.
21. The College submits that there was an inherent risk in this position, given that Chestergates did not have indemnity insurance for the Applicant and could have faced legal liability had the Applicant done any surgical work where things went wrong. Further, that it was clear that the Applicant had sought to be misleading and dishonest in omitting such information, and that ordinary informed people would think this.
22. Drs Bode and Thomson of Chestergates had prepared statements and were on standby to give oral evidence as to the communications they had received from the Applicant. However, having had sight of the statements and the emails, neither the Applicant nor the Committee had any questions for them. The Applicant placed on the record that he had no interest in challenging what either of them said. Accordingly, the College did not call these witnesses in support of its case and the Committee allowed their statements to be read into the record. Both statements detailed that the Applicant had portrayed himself as a vet. Both witnesses considered that they had been deliberately misled and had they known the Applicant was removed from the RCVS Register, would not have been as quick to allow him to undertake work experience, or perhaps permit this at all.
23. The Applicant submitted that he was content to represent himself, and that his submissions had already been provided in written form. He said he accepted the outcomes of both the criminal and RCVS inquiries. He accepted that his behaviour fell far below the behaviour expected of a registered vet. He said that he recognised that his actions had caused harm to another, and that he had rehabilitated within 18 months. Further, it is four years since the assault and three years since the false reference and threatening texts occurred. He said that he had an unhealthy and

unsustainable relationship with his ex-girlfriend and he had a positive relationship with his current partner as his friends can attest. He said he can now recognise stress and has greater emotional intelligence. He said he was also aware of the negative impact of alcohol on him, in terms of poor decision making and that he no longer drinks at all. He said he understands now how his expectations can cause him frustration and that he should give “others a break”; he found the text messages embarrassing when they were shared and would take them back if he could.

24. He submitted that he understood that stress has a negative health aspect and does not wish to suffer from it and that he cannot excuse what he had done in the past. He understood that a false reference undermines the trust his Regulator should be able to have in him and that it is for him to convince the Committee that he is a fit person to be restored. In terms of public protection and interest, he submitted that he had continued to work until 2024 post the assault on his girlfriend without concerns for animals or other members of the public. His subsequent roles at Shell and the British Heart Foundation have seen him interact with the public without any concerns. He indicated he helps his grandparents and farmers who trust him and support his application. He applied to join the Fire & Rescue Service in January 2025 and in July 2025 was employed by them at a local and understaffed station. He indicated that he had shared his history in terms of his conviction for assault.
25. He said if he was restored to the Register he would do so with humility and uphold the necessary ethical standards. He explained that he came off the Register in April 2024 and seeks to return now in February 2026 some 22 months later. He said he fears he will become deskilled if he does not return to the Register, notwithstanding his efforts to keep up with developments via the Webinar Vet and similar. He discusses veterinary matters with his partner who is also a vet and sought work experience to refresh his skills.
26. He said that he believes his conduct since being removed from the Register was good. He said that he portrayed himself as a vet accidentally in terms of his correspondence with Chestergates. He only worked for two and half days and shadowed other vets who did surgery rather than treating or diagnosing any animal himself. He accepted that he should have been more careful. He apologised to the RCVS and said that he was not trying to mislead Chestergates. He said that he does not write well and now asks his fiancé to check his emails to avoid any repetition of being misleading which was not his intention. Additionally, he uses checkers for his spelling and grammar. He

said he now has stability in his personal life and plans to marry his fiancé and start a family.

27. The Applicant offered to answer clarification questions but did not wish to give evidence under oath or affirmation and subject himself to cross-examination.

- a) When asked about his intention to do voluntary work in his email to Chestergates, he said that he had planned to go to Fiji or Thailand or Cambodia but due to licensing and finances he did not do voluntary veterinary work but instead went on holiday and renovated their house.
- b) When asked about exercising more care in his application for voluntary work, and whether he was transparent about his status of not being on the Register, he said that he was specific about not being on the Register, albeit not why, because there are multiple reasons why he is not on the Register, given the assault, fraudulent references and the threatening texts. Rather he says that he has been volunteering, but people google his unique name, and find out about the assault. He clarified when asked by the Committee that he indicates that he is not on the Register but does not say that he has been removed from the Register. He said he did not mention at first interview his status. At the second interview he admitted the assault. He said people would work out that he had been removed from the RCVS Register for assault. He did not recall whether he had mentioned the fraudulent references but if people google his name the RCVS charges come up.
- c) When asked for an example of something he took away from an Ethics Seminar, he needed some time to consider his response. He said the Webinar was back in 2021 (albeit he marked it in his 2025 CPD as listening to it later) so it was a little time ago, but different speakers spoke for over five hours. He could not provide any headline takeaway points.
- d) When asked about other applications for voluntary veterinary work experience, he said he had not made applications to other surgeries save Chestergates in September 2024 but has applied for other work experience more recently. He offered to share subsequent emails he had written where he had taken more care. The Committee invited him to do so.
- e) When asked about how he had gone about improving his emotional intelligence, he said that he was fortunate to find a partner who had good emotional intelligence. He had been able to watch her be considerate of other people and had learnt from that behaviour. He said that he did not have good communication skills and was not a good public speaker, but he now puts out positivity to engage with others and

has changed his mindset. When asked for an example, he said that if he had a problem with a communication via a text with a partner, he would have put it down, and not think of it as his problem previously. This morning, he said he appreciated her support in this hearing. When his partner had to put down a border collie she had seen for years, he no longer felt that this had nothing to do with him as he once would have done, indicating that he had developed as a person.

- f) When asked about previous relationships, and his stated frustration over his expectations, he said he previously had high expectations of others. He said this process has grounded him and not made him so highly strung. He said that he recognises that people have their own battles and is more empathetic to others, and that he can be someone that others can come to, and disclose their problems if they want to. He said he sometimes thinks that he should have been given more of a break, but at other times accepts his own “stupidity”.
- g) When asked about his characterisation of his previous relationship as “unhealthy and unsustainable”, he said, “unhealthy” meant that he did not give her an opportunity to be the person she was. Frankly, it was physical attraction that brought them together but there was no substance there.
- h) When asked about his testimonial from his fiancé and whether he had talked to her about the contents of the reference, he said that she had provided two references for the original hearing and one for today’s hearing. For the earlier references one was professional and the other personal. For this hearing, he had not re-read any references from her.

28. The Applicant called two witnesses to speak on his behalf.

29. **Nicola Mary Walmsley** is a Veterinary Nurse. She had known the Applicant for two and a half years and had been a nurse in the practice where the Applicant and his fiancé both worked. They were both working there when she joined the practice. She knew the Applicant professionally and socially, but spoke to his fiancé more than him and only met him in passing. She was aware that the couple had taken a six month break to go to Bermuda. She was aware that animals needed to be neutered there. His fiancé was working as a vet but she was not aware of the Applicant’s status in Bermuda, save that he could not use any letters after his name because he was not on the Register. This was from September 2024-March 2025 approximately. His fiancé had asked her to write a reference in support of the Applicant. She described him as a warm, funny, kind and dedicated veterinary surgeon. When asked if she knew why the Applicant had been removed from the Register, she said that as far as she was aware

it concerned a fraudulent signature where an ex-girlfriend had written something but not signed it. She said that she had heard rumours but ignored these recognising that toxic relationships might make people behave out of character and preferred to make up her own mind about individuals. She said that nobody had told her what to write in the reference.

30. **Christopher Kirtley** was Clinical Director for the Applicant in 2019 when he first graduated. He is not in the same social circles but considers the Applicant a friend and an ex-colleague. The Applicant asked to do some shadowing work-experience and while he was supportive of that request, it was not considered to be appropriate given his removal from the Register. He said that the Applicant had also asked other practices for this opportunity. He said that he thought the Applicant had worked at Chestergates. He was aware that the Applicant and his fiancé were volunteering for a charity dealing with animals overseas, (in Granada or Grenada he thought). His understanding was that the Applicant was helping out with animals, either those that were injured or where owners could not afford to pay for treatment. He said that if the Applicant was doing veterinary work he would have had the sign-off of local authorities. He described the Applicant's past conduct as "foolishness" but when asked about the word in relation to the strangulation and biting of his then-partner, agreed that it was a poor choice of word. However, he felt that the Applicant should not drink because he could clearly not handle alcohol and had complied with the sentence pronounced by the criminal court. He said that he was approached by the Applicant to write a statement. The Applicant did not ask him to include anything in particular within that statement. When asked, he struggled to remember how he knew that the Applicant had done 100 hours of Continuing Professional Development. He said that it might have come from his fiancé in trying to persuade the practice to allow him to do work-experience and being disappointed when it was refused or been told to him by the Applicant at their Christmas Party in passing.
31. The Applicant had planned to call his fiancé as a witness but she was unwell. He was provided with the opportunity to wait until the following day for her recovery. However, he decided that he wanted to press ahead given that two witnesses had already spoken on his behalf.

Decision on Restoration

32. Once the Applicant notified the College that he wished to make an application for restoration by writing to the College, he was reminded, by letter from the College's solicitors, dated 21 January 2026, of the factors listed at paragraph 85 of the Disciplinary Committee Guidance.
33. He was also put on notice that this application was opposed and the basis for this, as contained in the letter of 2 February 2026 and set out above. It was made clear that the College would invite the Committee to find that the Applicant was not fit to be restored to the Register, on the basis of the seriousness of the index matters, the risk to the public interest and the Applicant's conduct since his removal from the Register, in relation to the email he sent to Chestergates on 5 September 2024, in referring to himself as a vet but failing to refer to the fact that he had been removed from the RCVS register, was:
- i. dishonest; and/or
 - ii. misleading; and/or
 - iii. risked an adverse impact on members of staff at Chestergates in terms of (a) their legal and/or insurance and/or other liability and/or (b) their reputation.
34. The Applicant was told that it would be a matter for the Committee's judgment as to whether he had satisfied the Committee that he was fit to be restored to the Register, taking into account the factors set out at paragraph 85 of the Guidance. As noted above, the College opposed the application, on the basis that the Applicant is not fit to be restored to the Register, given his conduct since removal from the Register is alleged to be dishonest and/or misleading

Summary of the Submissions of the Applicant

35. The Applicant provided a bundle including:
- a. His submissions for applying for restoration to the Register
 - b. Multiple CPD certificates evidencing over 100 hours of learning
 - c. 41 letters of reference
36. The Applicant provided oral submissions to the Committee and expanded on the various matters to which his documentation referred.

37. The Applicant said that being struck off the Register had been disastrous and unexpected for his career progression.
38. The Applicant said he had taken steps to address the failings found in April 2024 and felt that he deserved a second chance.
39. The Committee heard from two character witnesses under affirmation. Neither character witness had regular contact with the Applicant after April 2024 since he ceased employment as a vet. Both referenced the Applicant working overseas. Ms Walmsley appeared to think that the reason that the Applicant had been removed from the Register was to do with signing a document that his ex-girlfriend had left unsigned in error rather than indicating that she was familiar with the details of the original hearing which led to his removal from the Register.
40. The Committee did not hear from the Applicant under affirmation.

Summary of the College's Submissions

41. These are set out fully in the written submissions for the College in respect of this application. The Committee took into account the oral and written submissions and all the information within the College's bundle.
42. Ms Curtis on behalf of the College, drew the Committee's attention to the underlying facts relating to the case and the additional conduct since the Applicant was removed from the Register.
43. It was submitted that the email the Applicant sent to Chestergates on 5 September 2024, referring to himself as a vet but failing to qualify this with reference to the fact that he had been removed from the RCVS register, was:
 - i. dishonest; and/or
 - ii. misleading; and/or
 - iii. risked an adverse impact on members of staff at Chestergates in terms of (a) their legal and/or insurance and/or other liability and/or (b) their reputation.
44. It was submitted that the Applicant is not fit to be restored to the Register because of:
 - (b) the seriousness of the original findings; (d) the public interest and (g) the applicant's conduct since removal from the register, (paragraph 85 of the Guidance).

Summary of the Applicant's Submissions

45. The Applicant addressed each of the points listed within paragraph 85 of the Guidance indicating that he has accepted the findings of the Committee at the original inquiry hearing, accepts these are serious, has demonstrated insight into his past conduct and grown more emotionally intelligent, has undertaken rehabilitative steps and not placed other members of the public or animals at harm.
46. He submitted that he now presents as a stable individual who has made a mistake in the past. Restoration is a matter of confidence and trust and that sustained good conduct since his removal from the Register shows that he can be relied upon. His email to Chestergates was no more than an error with a poor choice of wording.

The Committee's Decision

47. The Committee noted that the burden of proof is on the College in respect of the behaviour that is alleged since the Applicant was removed from the Register in relation to behaving in a way that was dishonest, misleading and had disregard for placing others at risk. The Committee noted that thereafter it is for the Applicant to satisfy the Committee, on the balance of probabilities, that he is fit to be restored to the Register. The Committee noted and took into account the stance taken by the College in opposing the application. It also took into account all the material provided, including the oral submissions provided by the Applicant and the evidence of witnesses.
48. The Committee accepted the advice of the Legal Assessor who referred to the legislative framework and guidance documents that had been correctly set out by Counsel for the College.
49. In respect of the Applicant's email of 2 February 2024 to Chestergates, it reads:

"I'm a vet who used to work at Park Issa Vets in Oswestry for 5 years. I've recently finished a surgical certificate and will be volunteering abroad later this year.

I will likely see some basic orthopedic cases while away and wanted to gain further experience in relation to this and also see what its like working in a

referral practice setting as I'm considering applying for an internship when I return from volunteering.

I was wondering if I would be able to come and do some work experience for a week at your practice?"

50. On the face of the email the Applicant was calling himself a vet and that there was no qualification to this. Drs Bode and Thomson have provided statements which indicate that had they known the real position that the Applicant had been removed from the Register this would have impacted their decision to allow him to undertake work experience, so readily.
51. The Committee Determination in April 2024 made clear that the Applicant was removed from the Register. The College wrote to the Applicant on 18 April 2024 to explain what removal from the Register entailed. The Applicant was expressly told in a written communication that holding himself out as a veterinary surgeon was a criminal offence, contrary to the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966.
52. The Committee in accepting the advice of the Legal Assessor understood that the burden of proof in respect of the Applicant's behaviour since being removed from the Register was for the College, and needed to be proved so that the Committee was sure. Guidance on the meaning of dishonesty and being misleading was provided.
53. The Committee also accepted that the Disciplinary Committee Guidance (August 2020) explains that the obligation is on the applicant veterinary surgeon to satisfy the Committee, on the balance of probabilities, that he is fit to be restored to the Register. It notes that the Committee should consider the public interest, and should take into consideration any evidence (including character testimonials) on behalf of the Applicant, as well as any College submissions. It also provides that the Committee will consider a number of factors in exercising its judgment as to whether to restore a veterinary surgeon (para 85).
54. The Committee first considered the email sent by the Applicant to Chestergates. It considered this contained deliberate and careful wording. The Committee agreed with the College that this is not an error or a poorly worded communication but a calculated attempt to mislead Chestergates, which was successful. The email covers that the

Applicant is a) a vet, b) what postgraduate qualifications he has obtained and where he has worked, c) what he intends to do in the future, including seeking an internship, (which he would need to be on the Register to apply for). It carefully omits his current removal from the Register. There has been no explanation for why he did not set out the more accurate position orally or evidence under affirmation as to what was in his mind at the time that could be cross-examined. He did indicate that he was honest with the Fire & Rescue Service about his conviction understanding that a vet operates to a higher standard than non-professionals, even though it was technically spent. More significantly, when a question for clarification was asked about whether he would say he was removed from the Register, he explained that he would simply say that he was not on the Register, which would be technically accurate, if not presenting the complete picture.

55. The Committee concluded that both the email and his lack of transparency with potential employers are further examples of dishonesty as was apparent in the original hearing where references were forged. The risk of repetition of dishonesty articulated in the determination at the end of the original hearing, has been actualised, as the Applicant demonstrates that he did not appreciate how he should have behaved even after he was removed from the Register.

56. There were further remarks that further appeared to call into question the Applicant's probity. The Applicant's submissions allied his intention to volunteer abroad with the impression given that this did not occur because of licensing issues and finances, but that this was something that they were both keen to do in the future. Yet both character witnesses indicated that a lengthy period was spent abroad when at least his fiancé did veterinary work (September 2024 - March 2025), and the Applicant was believed to have been working with animals. Whether or not he did, he was not candid before the Committee about his plans and movements in relation to work or significant time abroad.

57. The Committee considers that the email to Chestergates was lacking in that:

- a. It provided information that was incomplete;
- b. It omitted a material fact;
- c. It created a distorted impression of no disciplinary concerns.

58. Accordingly, the Committee finds that the Applicant was misleading.

59. Insofar as dishonesty is concerned, the Committee applied the test in the case of *Ivey v Genting Casinos. (UK) Ltd t/a Crockfords: [2017] UKSC 67*. The Committee was of the view that the Applicant had deliberately sought to conceal the position of his removal from the Register from any future veterinary workplace. This was apparent in the Applicant indicating that he knew that on paper he made a poor prospect for an employer but that he would make a better impression if he was able to spend time with people. The deliberate subterfuge would be considered dishonest by the standards of ordinary decent people. Accordingly, the Committee find that the Applicant's conduct was both dishonest and misleading.

60. While Chestergates may well have been denied the opportunity to consider their legal liability, and the position in relation to insurance, given that they were misled by the Applicant, this does not form part of the evidence of Drs Bode and Thomson. The Committee are not satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to make it sure that the Applicant's conduct iii. risked an adverse impact on members of staff at Chestergates in terms of (a) their legal and/or insurance and/or other liability. However, the Committee does find that there is a risk of an adverse impact on members of staff at Chestergates given that their statements cover their concern about the implications of being deliberately misled about the Applicant's status, and did not know about his offending behaviour which was serious. They were both clear that this would have impacted their decision making given they would be wary of their practice being associated with such wrongdoing. Accordingly, the Committee found that there is sufficient evidence to make it sure that the Applicant's conduct iii. risked an adverse impact on members of staff at Chestergates in terms of (b) their reputation.

61. The Committee next considered the factors set out in paragraph 85 of the Guidance and the submissions of both parties.

62. The original findings were clear that the Applicant was violent in his assault, and coercive, abusive and threatening in submitting references which MH did not write or agree. The Applicant was at pains to tell the Committee that he had accepted the findings but the Committee was of the view that he focused on himself with little regard for the impact on the victim and others. He gave the impression that the ("unhealthy and unsustainable") relationship that was at fault and/or the fault of MH in some way.

63. In respect of the seriousness of the original findings, the Committee was of the view that the Applicant's focus was again on having completed his sentence from the Magistrates Court rather than acknowledging the profound unacceptability of this behaviour from a vet. He acknowledged wrongdoing but not the scale of his behaviour given the number and contents of his text messages that were grossly disrespectful and threatening, seeking to be treated more leniently than he otherwise might have been, (e.g. the suggestion that she was simply intoxicated and the police had forced her to provide her statement).
64. In respect of insight into his past conduct, the Committee recognised that the Applicant understands that there has been an assault but was less convinced that he understands his manipulative and coercive behaviour, originally directed at MH is again apparent in a different guise in his dealings with Chestergates. His use of words like emotional intelligence without being able to explain what he meant was not convincing; it gave the impression of saying what he thought the Committee wanted to hear, without being able to give meaningful concrete examples of how he had changed. This leads the Committee to share the same concerns as the original Committee that there may be deep-seated attitudinal failings.
65. In respect of the protection of the public and the public interest, MH is a member of the public. Having demonstrated violent, coercive and bullying behaviour, the Committee had to consider whether there was material before them that persuaded it that the Applicant was trustworthy under pressure. It concluded that it was more likely that the Applicant would put his own interests first, as demonstrated when he put references containing false statements before his regulator, taken alongside his efforts to pressure MH and in his dealings with Chestergates.
66. In respect of the future of the welfare of animals in the event of the applicant veterinary surgeon being permitted to have his or her name restored to the register, the Committee did not find that there is anything to suggest any harm to animals.
67. In respect of the length of time off the Register, it has been 22 months since the Applicant has been registered. A restoration application may only be made after 10 months and that criterion has been satisfied. However, the 22 months have been

insufficient for the Applicant to demonstrate that he has developed real insight into his wrongdoing and how he would behave in future when under pressure.

68. Particularly significant is the Applicant's conduct since removal from the Register. The Committee has found that his email to Chestergate was not simply an error but dishonesty where the Applicant sought to mislead for his own benefit. By portraying the email as just a "poorly worded email" the Applicant attempts again to minimise his behaviour. Accordingly, while the Committee commend the contributions that the Applicant is making to his community via his voluntary work and fundraising for charity, and the positive references provided in support of the Applicant, it remains of the view that dishonesty is capable of undermining confidence in the profession and negatively impacting the public interest. Repeated dishonesty is incompatible with registration.
69. With respect to evidence demonstrating the efforts by the Applicant to keep up to date in terms of knowledge, skills and developments in practice, since removal from the register (accepting that he must not practise as a veterinary surgeon), the Committee acknowledged that there has been a lot of CPD completed. However, it was concerned when on probing even one area of ethics that the Applicant could not mention a single headline learning point leading to uncertainty as to whether he had taken real learning and reflection from the material.
70. The Committee concluded that the Applicant lacks an understanding as to why he cannot be restored at this time. Apart from CPD, he has not set about effectively addressing the attitudinal issues identified by the original Committee. The Committee finds the Applicant does not appear to understand the purpose of regulation: protecting the public interest, upholding professional standards and maintaining public confidence in the profession.
71. Whilst the Committee recognises the Applicant's desire to advance his career and that his prospects would be enhanced by restoration of his name to the Register, that is not a factor which is relevant to his Application for Restoration to the Register. This Committee's obligations and duties are to ensure that the interests of animal welfare are properly protected by ensuring that those whose names are on the Register are properly trained, knowledgeable and experienced in the treatment of animals and that

public confidence in the standards of the profession is maintained. This Committee cannot restore someone to the Register who is not fit by virtue of their repeated dishonest and unacceptable conduct, without insight into the impact of the lack of probity by a vet.

72. For all these reasons, the Committee is not persuaded that the Applicant is fit to be restored to the Register and this application is refused.

DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

12 FEBRUARY 2026