

ROYAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS  
DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE  
INQUIRY RE:

DR NEBOJSA PETROVIC MRCVS

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DECISION OF THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

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1. The Respondent came before the Committee and faced the following charges:

*THAT, being registered in the Register of Veterinary Surgeons, you:*

1. *Between 1 June 2022 and 21 October 2022:*

*(i) imported or arranged for the importation of approximately 1950 to 2010 tablets of a medicine ("the medicine") which purported to be Norethisterone, when there had been no Special Importation Certificate ("SIC") issued by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate ("VMD") for that importation; and/or*

*(ii) supplied or arranged for the supply of some or all of the medicine to a number of greyhound trainers associated with a stadium regulated by the Greyhound Board for Great Britain ("GBGB"), with a view to the medicine being administered to greyhounds; and/or*

*(iii) supplied or arranged for the supply at 1(ii) above in circumstances where:*

*(a) you knew there had been no SIC for the importation of the medicine; and/or*

*(b) the medicine, or some of the medicine, contained substances other than norethisterone, namely cetirizine and/or beta/dexamethasone and/or atenolol and/or salbutamol and/or ethisterone and/or fluocinolone and or mefenamic acid and/or testosterone propionate; and/or*

*(c) you had made no assessment of whether any or all of the substances listed at 1(iii)(b) above were appropriate for administration to the greyhounds at 1(ii) above; and/or*

*(d) the GBGB did not permit greyhounds to race with any or all of the substances listed at 1(iii)(b) above in their system;*

*AND THAT in relation to the matters set out above, whether individually or in any combination, you are guilty of disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.*

2. Ms Curtis represented the College. The Respondent was present but not represented. A Serbian interpreter was present to assist him with any words or phrases during the hearing which he did not understand.
3. The Committee had before it an Inquiry Bundle of 391 pages and a Respondent's Bundle of 48 pages. In addition, the Committee was supplied with a Veterinary Practice Premises Inspection Report by the Respondent dated 27 August 2025 in relation to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate's most recent inspection of his Practice.

### **Admissions**

4. At the start of the hearing, the Respondent admitted all of the charges, i.e. Charge 1(i)(ii) and (iii) (a),(b),(c) and (d). The Respondent also admitted that in his view his conduct amounted to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.
5. The Committee found the facts proved, so that it was sure, on the basis of the admissions and the evidence contained in the Inquiry Bundle.

### **Background Facts**

6. The charges against the Respondent related to his importation of pharmaceutical products from India without the appropriate licence to do so and distributing them to trainers of greyhounds for administration to animals racing under the regulation of the Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB). The pharmaceutical products, which were in tablet form, purported

to be Norethisterone (a medication which is permitted by the GBGB to be given to racing greyhounds), but samples were found to contain numerous other substances which the Respondent had not assessed in terms of suitability for the greyhounds, and which were prohibited by the GBGB in racing greyhounds.

7. GBGB is the independent regulatory body for licensed greyhound racing in Great Britain. GBGB issues licences to greyhound trainers and veterinary surgeons involved in greyhound racing, and it licenses and oversees greyhound racecourses across Britain, to ensure races are run fairly and safely. It has rules and regulations in place for various aspects of the sport, and has systems in place for the regular testing of greyhounds to ensure they do not race with non-permitted substances in their systems.
8. The GBGB's rules include a provision that a greyhound taking part in a race must at that time be free of any substance that could affect its performance or well-being, the origin of which cannot be traced to normal and ordinary feeding. There are a limited number of permitted exceptions to this rule, including flea and worm treatments and a hormone suppressant to suppress a bitch's season. For many years, the drug Norethisterone, a human hormone suppressant, has been authorised by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) for the suppression of a bitch's season and has been permitted for use by the GBGB in racing greyhound bitches. It was commonly and lawfully prescribed by veterinary surgeons under the Cascade<sup>1</sup>, and administered by greyhound trainers to racing bitches to suppress their season. In 2022 there was a shortage of norethisterone for veterinary use in the United Kingdom.
9. Each licensed greyhound stadium is required by the GBGB to have an appointed veterinary surgeon, and at the material time the Respondent was a licensed GBGB Track Veterinary Surgeon (Track Vet) appointed to Harlow Stadium. He had been a GBGB licensed Track Vet since 2018 and had worked as Track Vet at other racecourses.
10. In August 2022, GBGB saw a large number of positive test results for prohibited substances in samples taken from racing greyhounds. The vast majority of these related to bitches. As norethisterone was commonly prescribed to racing bitches, GBGB officials suspected that there might be a connection between norethisterone and the positive test results. GBGB enquiries ascertained that the trainers for the relevant animals had indeed given them norethisterone. GBGB stewards asked the trainers to provide samples of the norethisterone tablets they had given their greyhounds, so that these could be tested.

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<sup>1</sup> The prescribing cascade is a risk based decision tree which should be followed in descending order of suitability, prescribing decisions in accordance with the cascade should be made on a case by case basis.

11. In August 2022, a racing greyhound named Dropdown Lovely tested positive for salbutamol, a non-permitted substance. GBGB referred Dropdown Lovely's trainer, Mr PW, for an Inquiry. On 24 January 2023, GBGB Stipendiary Steward for the region, Ms CS, visited Mr PW for a routine kennel visit. Mr PW told Ms CS that the Respondent had given him norethisterone tablets to administer to Dropdown Lovely. He no longer had any of these tablets, but showed Ms CS an empty box of norethisterone which had been prescribed and given to him by the Respondent.
12. On 26 January 2023, the Respondent telephoned Ms CS, saying that he had heard that Mr PW had told her that he (the Respondent) had sold Mr PW the tablets which had led to a positive test result for one of his dogs. The Respondent accepted that he had prescribed tablets for Mr PW's dogs, saying that he had obtained them directly from abroad, but denied that these had been responsible for the positive test. The Respondent told Ms CS that he still had some of the tablets and packaging left, and she arranged to meet him to take samples.
13. On 10 February 2023, Mrs CS met the Respondent at Harlow Stadium and took sample tablets from him as arranged.
14. All of these substances are Prescription Only Medicines. The samples taken from the Respondent were analysed on behalf of the GBGB and found to contain (as well as norethisterone) cetirizine, beta/dexamethasone, atenolol, salbutamol, ethisterone, fluocinolone, mefenamic acid and testosterone propionate.
15. On 25 May 2023, Ms CS, and a GBGB Investigator, interviewed the Respondent. A transcript was later prepared by the GBGB. During the interview, the Respondent stated that:
  - norethisterone was a human medicine, prescribed to greyhounds under the Cascade system;
  - there had been a national shortage of norethisterone;
  - Harlow Greyhound stadium was one his main sources of income and he had been worried the stadium would close within a couple of weeks, because bitches could not race as they were not being provided with norethisterone;
  - he had tried to find norethisterone tablets elsewhere and an internet search had led him to tablets produced in India;
  - he had spoken the supplier in India to confirm they could export to the UK and they had said they could;
  - he had imported two lots of tablets from the Indian supplier;
  - he had given the tablets to his trainers at the Harlow stadium but nobody else;

- he had given the tablets to “*not more than 12, 14 trainers*” in total; he named seven of these trainers;
- one of the imports was of 35 boxes and the other was either 30 or 32 boxes; there were 30 tablets per box;
- (when talking about importing without a licence), “*if you were to be squeaky clean you are applying for the licence for import [from the Veterinary Medicines Directorate]*”;
- He made a profit of about £1.15 per tablet and gave a range of suggested figures for his profit per box “when everything was finished,” including £3.00, £4.00, £5.00 and £6.00.

16. Medication may be imported from outside the United Kingdom for veterinary use, but in order to do so, the importer needs a Special Import Certificate (SIC), issued by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD). The VMD confirmed that the Respondent had no such licence to import the tablets from India; and the Respondent has admitted that he did not have such a licence.

17. The GBGB reported the matter to the VMD and the College. It also pursued its own disciplinary action. On 8 August 2023, a member of the VMD team visited the Respondent, who stated that he no longer had any of the norethisterone tablets. On 16 August 2023, the VMD wrote to the Respondent and referred to the fact that importing norethisterone without a SIC was an offence under the Veterinary Medicines Regulations (VMR). The VMD took no further action in relation to the importation.

18. On 26 March 2024, a GBGB disciplinary hearing took place remotely with regards to the Respondent, who attended and gave evidence. He admitted the tablets he had bought from India were not licensed for use in the UK. He agreed that he had not applied to the VMD for a licence, that he knew what he was supposed to do but had not done it and that he had breached the VMR. He also agreed that “*the purpose of the VMR was to safeguard this country from inappropriate or ineffective standards of production, supply and distribution*”. He made admissions to supplying the imported norethisterone to “*not more than 13/14 trainers*”. When giving evidence to the GBGB tribunal, he stated: “*I was convinced that the product which was offered through the internet or through the connections over there was genuine, I think it is genuine and registered in India no problem at all.*”

19. The Respondent also admitted in correspondence with the RCVS that he had imported the tablets without authorisation. On 17 May 2024, the College wrote to him asking him for comments with regards to the GBGB findings. He replied on 13 June 2024 stating:

*“The charges brought by the GBGB related to the unauthorised import of Norethisterone tablets in 2022. I would like to provide some context to the incident although I fully accept that I let myself down and I admitted the charges...”*

*At the GBGB hearing I was open and candid about my failings and fully admitted I had made a ‘misguided and incorrect’ decision to import an unauthorised medicine.”*

20. On 14 July 2025, once the College had taken statements from witnesses from the GBGB and VMD, they wrote to the Respondent again. He was asked for any comments on those statements. His response included the following comments:

*“Although technically in the circumstances I would have been permitted to prescribe the product under Cascade I fully accept I should have applied for a Special Import Certificate (SIC) prior to the importation to ensure due diligence with respect to the supplier and to comply with the Veterinary Medicine Regulations (VMRs). I believed the supplier to be an authorised pharmacist and had no idea the product was contaminated presumably during manufacturing process.”*

21. The GBGB has stated that at least two of the trainers (one was Mr PW) had themselves been subject to GBGB disciplinary proceedings for giving contaminated norethisterone tablets from the Respondent to their greyhounds.

22. The VMD also confirmed that the Respondent had previously applied for an SIC for neovit B in 2021.

23. The Committee were also provided with emails relating to the previous application for an SIC in relation to neovit B granted to The Respondent and his practice Anglia Veterinary Services, in June 2021. Ms AB from the VMD stated that a veterinary surgeon would have completed an online request and the certificate is assessed and further investigation performed if a novel application. In standing pre-existing authorisation, a certificate is autogenerated and emailed back to the applicant. Ms AB said that an SIC could only be applied for by a UK registered veterinary surgeon with their RCVS number.

24. The VMD has informed the College that if a veterinary surgeon applies for a SIC, the VMD would then make an assessment of whether to allow it. Reasons for refusal could include insufficient data about the product particulars. The VMD has said that they aim to undertake the assessment in 15 working days and would consider urgent requests where there is “an immediate, clinically life-threatening need”.

25. The Respondent asked Ms AB if it was possible that the SIC came by an application from the wholesaler but Ms AB said the system showed that it appeared the SIC was made by and issued directly to the veterinary surgeon, The Respondent and his practice. She could not confirm if the email sending the SIC to The Respondent was undelivered.

26. Ms AB said that The Respondent would have had to have provided his RCVS number to apply for an SIC.

## **Disgraceful Conduct in a Professional Respect**

### Summary of College's position

27. The College submitted that the Respondent's conduct amounts to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.

28. The College submitted that the Respondent's conduct constituted a breach of two of the most important principles of the profession, namely the promotion of animal welfare and the responsible use of medicines.

29. It submitted that the irresponsible approach to the importation of medicines constituted an abuse of the Respondent's position as a veterinary surgeon. It also contravened important legal provisions designed to safeguard animal health. It risked an adverse impact on animal welfare. It also put others – the trainers to whom he had supplied the tablets – in a position whereby they were liable to punitive action by the GBGB.

30. The College further relied on the following points as being relevant to this decision:

- **The promotion of animal welfare** - Animal welfare lies at the heart of the profession, and is one of the key factors set out at the beginning of the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons (the Code), both in the declaration and the introduction. It is set out in the first section of the Code.
- **Responsible use of medicines** - Section 1.5 and 6.4 of the Code makes reference to a veterinary surgeon's obligations in this regard. By virtue of their professional position, veterinary surgeons are entrusted with the power to prescribe medication to animals. It is of fundamental importance that members of the public can rely on registered veterinary surgeons not to abuse that trust. The Veterinary Medicines Regulations (VMR) includes specific legal restrictions designed to guard against the risks that unauthorised importation may present to animals. The Respondent's conduct constituted a breach of the VMR.

31. In addition, the College relied on the following:

- **Risk to other GBGB licence-holders** - The Respondent's conduct risked the position of the various trainers to whom he supplied the tablets. Mr PW and others were put at risk of disciplinary action by the GBGB on the basis that they had allowed their greyhounds to race when they had prohibited substances in their systems.
- **The reputation of the profession** - It is a matter of serious concern for a registered veterinary surgeon to have imported so many drugs and provided them to so many trainers, with a view to distribution to numerous animals. In the College's submission, the reputation of the profession would be seriously undermined by the incident, as would public trust and confidence in other veterinary surgeons, and the profession as a whole.

32. Ms Curtis on behalf of the College also invited the Committee to consider whether the following factors aggravated the conduct found proved:

- b. Risk of injury to ... an animal
- d. Recklessness
- e. Premeditated misconduct
- f. Financial gain
- m. Abuse of professional position

33. The College therefore submitted that, overall, the behaviour of the Respondent fell far below of the conduct expected of a member of the profession and amounts to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.

#### Summary of The Respondent's Evidence

34. The Respondent gave evidence to the Committee. He agreed that his conduct amounted to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.

35. He stated that he had not applied for an SIC in 2021. He said the email that the VMD sent the certificate to, was an old email address of his, and that the certificate had been applied for by National Vet Services. The Respondent accepted that there was paperwork showing

an SIC application in his name for vitamins in 2021. He said that application was made with his old email although he accepted that it used his RCVS registration number and the VMC Vet Practice number for his practice. He said the SIC must have been sent to his old email address and that he had never received it. He said that he must have applied for it but he could not remember doing so.

36. The Respondent explained that the context surrounding the charges was important because greyhound racing is often dependent upon the greyhounds running for their keep and food and that if they did not run and if the racing was stopped due to the bitches being in season, then greyhound racing would be quickly curtailed with a subsequent risk to wellbeing of the animals.

37. The Respondent said that when there was a national shortage of norethisterone, he had taken the decision to search for suppliers using Google. He believed the supplier from India was legitimate because it had said it would be responsible for all of the paperwork and the packages when they arrived had Indian customs paperwork on the front. He agreed that he had ordered two batches which amounted approximately 60-65 boxes and between 1950-2010 tablets in total and that this took place between June 2022 and October 2022 a few months after the covid restrictions had eased.

38. The Respondent said that in total the medication was delivered to about 20-30 dogs and 12-15 trainers during that period. He had recorded the names of the dogs he supplied the medication for in his diary. He said that he had no intention to harm or neglect the welfare of the greyhounds. He said that he had made in total a profit on this medication of approximately £60-65 (equating to £1.50 per box which was not properly explained in his GBGB interview). He denied having any personal financial incentive in wanting the dogs to keep running.

39. The Respondent agreed that he should have telephoned the VMD and that he should have applied for an SIC when importing these drugs from India. He said that 90 per cent of those he supplied the drug to were told by him not to use it as soon as he was aware that the norethisterone was contaminated.

40. He said he did not consider getting owners to sign an off-licence consent form at the time.

#### The Committee's Decision

41. The Committee took into account the Code for Veterinary Surgeons which was in force between June and October 2022.

42. The Committee found the following were aggravating factors which were not inherent to the charges themselves but aggravated the culpability of the Respondent in respect of the conduct it had found proved:

- b. Risk of injury to an animal or human
- d. Recklessness
- g. Breach of client trust

43. The Committee found that the Respondent had by his admitted conduct caused a risk of injury to the greyhounds, even though it accepted he had not done so intentionally. It was satisfied that he had acted recklessly and in doing so he had risked harm to animals through supplying off-licence drugs. It decided that the risk was unquantifiable at the time that the Respondent supplied the drugs because they were not licensed for use in the United Kingdom and he should have known that.

44. The Committee was also satisfied that the Respondent had acted recklessly when ordering the drugs from a supplier in India without the relevant SIC. It was satisfied so that it was sure that the Respondent knew that he should have applied for an SIC and he did not do so. It relied on his knowledge of the application process evidenced by the previous application he had made in 2021 and on what the Respondent said in his evidence.

45. The Committee decided that the Respondent had breached clients' trust in supplying an off-licence medication without specifically gaining the owners consent to do so. It was satisfied clients would not have known that the imported drugs from India could pose a risk of harm to their animals and a risk of regulatory action against them as trainers. The Committee noted that at least two trainers were disciplined by GBGB.

46. The Committee concluded that the Respondent had therefore breached clients' trust in him as a veterinary surgeon supplying unlicensed drugs for them without informing them and that this aggravated his culpability. The Committee was satisfied that clients and members of the public would expect a veterinary surgeon to follow the processes set out in the Veterinary Medicines Regulations.

47. The Committee did not find that the Respondent's conduct was aggravated by pre-meditation as was submitted by the college. It decided that this factor was inherently part of the charges and therefore was not an aggravating factor.

48. The Committee also did not find that there was any financial gain which aggravated the charges. Whilst it accepted that the Respondent had profited by £60-65 it decided the amount

and the financial gain did not aggravate his culpability. It decided that his financial gain was an inherent part of what he had done in supplying the norethisterone.

49. The Committee did not find as an aggravating factor, that the Respondent had abused his professional position by having an irresponsible approach to the importation of medicines as submitted by the College because there was no evidence before it that to order the drugs from India he had been required to rely on his professional position as a veterinary surgeon.

50. The Committee also found the following mitigating factors that reduced the Respondent's culpability somewhat. It accepted that the Respondent believed that by importing the norethisterone from India he was doing so [with a well-intentioned belief] that he was assisting the greyhounds to keep them racing. It also noted that whilst the Respondent had not acted on a single or isolated occasion he had only ordered the norethisterone twice and supplied it over a 5 month period in 2022.

51. The Committee went on to consider whether individually or cumulatively the charges amounted to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect. In its judgement, overall the charges cumulatively amounted to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect. It found the Respondent had by his conduct breached the following sections of the Code of Practice for Veterinary Surgeons applicable in 2022:

- 1.5 - Veterinary surgeons who prescribe, supply and administer medicines must do so responsibly
- 6.4 - Veterinary surgeons must comply with legislation relevant to the provision of veterinary services
- 6.5 - Veterinary surgeons must not engage in any activity or behaviour that would be likely to bring the profession into disrepute or undermine public confidence in the profession

52. The Committee decided that the Respondent had also risked the health of animals. However, since it accepted that he did so with a genuinely held belief that he was helping the animals, it did not find a breach of section 1.1 of the Code of Practice.

53. The Committee noted the Colleges submissions that the medication in question was to suppress oestrus in bitches to allow them to race and was in accordance with the GBGB Welfare rules. It was not, in the Committee's view, its responsibility to determine if the ethical question raised by the college, as to the use of this medication in these circumstances contravened Section 1.1 of the Code; that is not part of the facts of this case and the Committee is charged only with determining if the Respondent's conduct fell so far below what

a reasonable veterinary surgeon would consider appropriate by his actions admitted at an earlier stage. The Committee had sight of the GBGB rules on this matter, which make clear that the use of such medication is permitted. As such, the Committee concluded that the provision of this medication is not so wholly unusual that it would be considered behaviour falling far short of the standards of a Registered Veterinary Surgeon.

54. The Committee decided that Charge 1(i) individually amounted to conduct which fell far below the standard to be expected of a veterinary surgeon because there was a clear breach of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations which are in place to protect the health and welfare of animals and the public. The Committee decided that by importing from India without adhering to those regulations and without applying for an SIC, the Respondent was in breach of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations and the standard to be expected of a veterinary surgeon.
55. The Committee further decided that Charge 1(ii) individually amounted to conduct which fell far below the standard to be expected of a veterinary surgeon because the Respondent had acted recklessly in supplying norethisterone to trainers and their dogs in circumstances where they then risked facing regulatory action by GBGB. In the Committee's view by failing to consider the potential for the norethisterone to be contaminated and by risking the health of animals, The Respondent's conduct fell far below the standard to be expected of veterinary surgeons. In the Committee's view the Respondent should have acted in accordance with the regulations by obtaining an SIC and by asking trainers to sign a consent form for an off-licence medication.
56. The Committee further decided that Charge 1(iii)(a) individually amounted to conduct which fell far below the standard to be expected of a veterinary surgeon because it had concluded that the Respondent had knowledge of the SIC application process and he had admitted both to the GBGB disciplinary panel and before this Committee that he should have applied for an SIC. It concluded that a breach of compliance with the Veterinary Medicines Regulations was conduct which fell far below the standard to be expected of a veterinary surgeon.
57. In respect of Charge 1(iii)(b),(c) and (d), the Committee decided that individually these charges did not amount to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect. It considered them to be the consequence of Charges 1(i) and (ii) and an inherent part of the circumstances surrounding those charges. It did not find the Respondent had acted deliberately to harm animals with contaminated norethisterone and therefore it decided that individual findings on these charges were otiose bearing in mind its other findings.
58. Having found Charges 1(i)(ii)(iii)(a) fell far below the standard expected of a veterinary surgeon the Committee finds the Respondent guilty of disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.

## **Sanction**

### The College's submissions

59. The Committee was informed that the Respondent had a previous disciplinary finding against him following a disciplinary committee hearing brought by the College which concluded on 30 April 2024. This related to charges when the Respondent was acting as an Official Veterinarian and related to the taking of blood samples for horses due to be exported to Serbia. The Respondent in that case had not properly complied with checking the microchips of the horses and so had not properly identified them when checking their second blood samples and signing export health certificates for horses, certifying that they were free of Leptospirosis. By the time this was identified the horses had been exported. Those charges also involved findings of dishonesty regarding his communications with APHA about the identification of the horses by microchip.
60. The previous findings by another disciplinary committee resulted in a sanction of 6 months suspension for the Respondent and following the appeal period the suspension ran from May 2024 until November 2024.
61. The Committee heard that in respect of those previous findings the charges encompassed a time period from November 2021 to January 2022. The APHA reported matters to the College on 18 February 2022 and on 18 March 2022 the College informed the Respondent that he would be investigated and referred to the Preliminary Investigation Committee and they would consider the case in April 2022.
62. The charges that this Committee has considered took place between June 2022 and October 2022, so at that point the Respondent would have been aware that the College were looking into the previous disciplinary charges and the matters reported by the APHA.
63. The GBGB reported these matters to the College on 30 May 2023 and the GBGB disciplinary inquiry regarding these charges took place on 26 March of 2024. The GBGB panel inquiry therefore preceded the findings of the previous disciplinary Committee in April 2024.

### The Respondent's submissions

64. The Respondent made no specific submissions regarding which sanction the Committee should impose. He explained that in respect of both disciplinary matters before the College they had taken place either during Covid and Brexit or shortly afterwards when the repercussions of both had affected his work.

65. The Respondent put before the Committee his most recent VMD audit at his practice and he submitted that since these matters he had had no further problems. He said following his suspension order, he has worked without incident and this proved he could act competently as a veterinary surgeon. He said both the VMD and the GBGB were organisations that had investigated him and both had allowed him to continue working without restriction.

#### The Committee's decision on sanction

66. The Committee considered the decision of the previous disciplinary committee regarding the Respondent's previous disciplinary findings. It further considered the College's Disciplinary Committee's Sanctions Guidance for Veterinary Surgeons (updated in August 2020) (DSG).

67. The Committee reviewed whether there were any further aggravating factors to those set out at paragraph 42 above that the Respondent was reckless in that he had risked injury to animals and that he had breached client trust. It noted that the Respondent was, at the time of these charges having taken place, being investigated in respect of the previous disciplinary charges by the College. The Committee noted that he had therefore made the decision to import norethisterone without an SIC whilst he was being investigated by the College in respect of the previous disciplinary findings. It therefore decided that the previous disciplinary findings aggravated the conduct it had found proved in respect of these charges.

68. The Committee also noted that both of the disciplinary findings, those made by this Committee, and those of the previous disciplinary committee, related to the Respondent's compliance with regulatory legislation and checks which were essential to maintain the health and welfare of animals and humans. It therefore took into account the fact that the Respondent had in respect of both disciplinary cases, breached the Code of Practice for veterinary surgeons by failing to comply with regulatory matters, when he was an Official Veterinarian (in relation to the previous disciplinary findings) and when he was practising as a veterinary surgeon in respect of these matters. It considered that this increased the overall seriousness when it considered the appropriate sanction.

69. The Committee decided that the Respondent's personal mitigation was limited to the Respondent having admitted these matters to the College and before this Committee and that since these matters in October 2022, he had practised without incident. The Committee confirmed with the College that there were no outstanding disciplinary matters pending against him.

70. The Committee noted that the Veterinary Practice Premises Inspection Report supplied by the Respondent dated 27 August 2025 in relation to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate's most recent inspection of his Practice had raised four matters relating to the issuing of medication, including issues with out of date medication and complying with labelling medication supplied under the Cascade. Although the Committee accepted that the practice had been rated 4/5 it noted however there were still some issues with non-compliance with regulatory mechanisms for the provision of medicines not licenced for use in a veterinary context (off label), and that the Respondent had not remedied this.

71. The Committee decided that the matters it had found proved required a sanction due to the serious nature of them and because the Respondent had a previous disciplinary finding against him.

72. The Committee decided not to postpone judgement. Neither party invited it to do so and there was no good reason to postpone judgement.

73. The Committee considered the DSG, and the factors set out regarding whether a reprimand and/or warning letter would be appropriate as a sanction. It decided that the matters that the Respondent had admitted were not at the lower end of the spectrum of gravity for such cases taking into account the various aggravating factors it had identified. It also considered that this was not appropriate because it concluded that although the Respondent had admitted these matters he had not shown, in the Committee's view, good insight into his failings. It decided that although all of the disciplinary findings related to compliance with regulatory legislation to safeguard animal health and welfare, the Respondent had not necessarily realised the importance of compliance with regulatory legislation as he should have done. It therefore decided that a reprimand or warning would not be appropriate as it would also not meet the public interest.

74. The Committee went on to consider whether a sanction of suspension for a period was appropriate. It noted that the DSG stated that such a sanction is appropriate

*where some or all of the following apply:*

*a) The misconduct is serious, but a lesser sanction is inappropriate and the conduct in question falls short of being fundamentally incompatible with remaining on the register;*

*b) The respondent veterinary surgeon has insight into the seriousness of the misconduct and there is no significant risk of repeat behaviour;*

*c) The respondent veterinary surgeon is fit to return to practice (after the period of suspension).*

75. The Committee decided that its findings of disgraceful conduct in a professional respect were serious enough to warrant a suspension. Further it decided, that since the Respondent had

since these matters practised without incident, there was not a significant risk that he would repeat similar behaviour in the future.

76. The Committee further decided that a sanction of suspension for a period of six months would indicate that it considered that the Respondent needed further time to develop his insight and understanding of the importance of regulatory compliance and would allow him time to reflect upon his practice and the importance of medication compliance. It would also take into account the aggravating factors it had identified. Furthermore, a six month period of suspension would indicate to the public and to the wider profession that compliance with regulatory legislation was important and necessary.

77. The Committee concluded that the Respondent had, in relation to these charges, acted under a mistaken belief that he was helping the greyhounds by obtaining the norethisterone to suppress their seasons. Although the Committee had expressed no views on giving greyhounds norethisterone, (and it understood the College had not either), it was not persuaded that the Respondent had in respect of these disciplinary findings or his previous disciplinary findings properly understood the importance of regulatory compliance in veterinary medicine. It was in the Committee's view in the public interest that there was regulatory compliance to protect the health and welfare of animals and public health. It therefore concluded that during the period of suspension the Respondent should seek to develop his insight in that regard.

78. The Committee noted that the DSG defined the public interest as

- *protection and promotion of the health and welfare of animals and the protection of public health;*
- *promotion and maintenance of public confidence in the veterinary profession*
- *promotion and maintenance of proper professional standards and conduct in the veterinary profession*

and that the public interest should be considered when determining the appropriate sanction. The Committee concluded that a sanction of suspension was appropriate to protect the public interest and to demonstrate that the Committee considered that a veterinary surgeon who repeatedly does not comply with regulatory paperwork ought to face a serious sanction.

79. The Committee also took into account in mitigation that the Respondent had made early admissions to GBGB and the College and that he stopped supplying the unlicensed norethisterone when he became aware that the tablets were contaminated. Additionally, he had informed 90 per cent of the trainers that had purchased the drug from him that it was contaminated. The Committee also accepted that the Respondent had believed that the

unlicensed norethisterone would be the same as the UK authorised medication and that he believed his actions in prescribing the medication were for the welfare of the greyhounds.

80. The DSG identifies that removal could be appropriate where there was

- *a serious departure from professional standards as set out the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons and/or*
- *a deliberate or reckless disregard for the professional standards as set out in the RCVS Code and/or*
- *evidence of a harmful deep-seated personality or attitude problem*

Whilst these factors were present, the Committee decided, having considered the aggravating and mitigating factors set out above, that a sanction of removal would be disproportionately severe as a sanction for the nature of the misconduct it had found proved.

81. The Committee noted that a veterinary surgeon is likely to prescribe off-licence medication on a regular basis and so it was likely that the Respondent's practice had improved since October 2022 because he had been practising without incident. It therefore considered that a sanction of removal would be disproportionate and would not take account of the mitigating factors it had identified in this case. The Committee considered carefully whether a sanction of removal was warranted because of the aggravating factors and because the Respondent had a recent previous similar disciplinary finding against him, but it decided that the Respondent had a long career and that a sanction of removal could end his career. Similarly, it concluded that a lengthier period of suspension could be 'career ending'. The Committee therefore did not consider that the Respondent's behaviour was such as to be incompatible with remaining on the register or that removal was an appropriate sanction.

82. The Committee was significantly concerned that these findings and the earlier disciplinary finding showed a persistent disregard for regulatory legislation. It considered the sanction imposed reflected the need to protect animal welfare and confidence in the wider veterinary profession.

83. The Committee therefore directed the Registrar to suspend the Respondent from practice following the expiry of the appeal period, for a period of six months.

**DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE**

**25 MARCH 2026**

