

FARRIERS REGISTRATION COUNCIL
DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE FARRIERS REGISTRATION COUNCIL, 14 SWAN COURT,
FORDER WAY, CYGNET PARK, HAMPTON, PETERBOROUGH PE7 8GX

INQUIRY RE:

MR JACK BROWN DIPWCF

1. THE CHARGE

1.1 *That, being registered under the Farriers (Registration) Act 1975 (as amended) (the Act) you:*

1. *On 19 June 2024 at the Newcastle Crown Court, were convicted following a guilty plea, of causing serious injury by careless/inconsiderate driving, in relation to which conviction, on 19 September 2024, you received a suspended sentence (6 months suspended for 12 months), received a Rehabilitation Activity Requirement (up to 15 days), were required to undertake 180 hours of unpaid work, were disqualified from holding or obtaining a driving licence for 12 months and until an extended test has been passed, and ordered to pay a victim surcharge.*

And that in relation to the facts alleged above, whether individually or in any combination, you are guilty of serious misconduct in a professional respect.

Representation

- 1.2 Ms. Nicole Curtis appeared on behalf of the Council; the Respondent attended in person and was unrepresented.

Background

- 1.3 The Respondent was convicted of the offence referred to above following an accident which occurred at about 20.30 on 3 March 2023 on Causey Hill Road, Hexham, Northumberland. The conditions were clear and dry. As the other vehicle involved in the accident approached the crest of a hill the Respondent drove into the road from a junction without stopping at the "Give Way" road markings which governed his approach. He was driving a Nissan Pathfinder, a large vehicle, and collided with the driver's door of the other vehicle, a Peugeot 208, a much smaller vehicle, in Causey Hill Road.
- 1.4 The smaller vehicle sustained catastrophic damage. The driver had to be removed from the vehicle via the passenger door. She sustained a fractured sternum, concussion and two bleeds around her brain. She has no recollection of the accident or of the days before or after. She has endured lasting physical and mental consequences which have affected her, her husband, and her children. In addition to acute pain and headaches in the aftermath of the accident, she subsequently developed a serious stomach infection. She was off work for four months and experienced high levels of anxiety, especially about the potential consequences of her head injury. She lost her sense of taste and smell and, at the time of the sentencing hearing, six months after the accident, had not fully recovered these faculties. She was unable to drive for several months, which was a considerable nuisance as she lives in a rural area and works in Newcastle.

- 1.5 In sentencing the Respondent at Newcastle Crown Court, the Judge noted that the Respondent had been driving at a speed that was inappropriate for the road and weather conditions. An aggravating feature noted at that hearing was that a component of cocaine was detected in his body at a level which was three times the prescribed limit. A further aggravating feature was that the Respondent was driving without insurance. A sentence of imprisonment was regarded by the Judge as inevitable, suspended for the period set out in the Charge above.
- 1.6 The Respondent disclosed his conviction to the Council on his Annual Return dated 11 March 2025. In response to a request from the Council for details, he stated that he was fully to blame for the accident, had pleaded Guilty from the outset and had not driven since March 2023. He expressed his concern for the victim of the accident.

Admissions

- 1.7 The Respondent admitted the conviction and further admitted serious misconduct in a professional respect.

2. DECISION OF THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE ON THE FACTS

- 2.1 The Committee found the fact of the conviction to be Proved by admission. It noted the Certificate of Conviction which was included in the bundle of documents provided for this hearing.

3. SUBMISSIONS OF THE PARTIES ON SERIOUS MISCONDUCT IN A PROFESSIONAL RESPECT

- 3.1 Ms. Curtis, on behalf of the Council, submitted that the criminal conviction, and its underlying facts, amounted to serious misconduct in a professional respect. She referred the Committee to the transcript of proceedings at Newcastle Crown Court and, in particular, to the Judge's sentencing remarks. She reminded the Committee of Paragraph 94 of the *Farrier, Approved training Farrier & Apprentice Code of Professional Conduct* ("the Code", 2021 Edition in force at the time) which provides that:

"Serious criminal offences will usually amount to a matter of serious misconduct...as a guide, offences which.... endanger the public or bring the profession into disrepute ...may amount to serious misconduct...."

Ms. Curtis also referred the Committee to the principles set out in *Remedy (Uk) Ltd v General Medical Council* [2010] EWHC 1245, which confirm that morally culpable or disgraceful conduct falling outside the boundaries of professional practice could nevertheless bring a profession into disrepute and thereby call for action by a professional regulator.

- 3.2 The Respondent did not seek to contest that his conviction did amount to serious misconduct in a professional respect.

Evidence from the Respondent

- 3.3 The Respondent gave oral evidence to the Committee. He expressed his deep remorse for the accident. He had admitted his responsibility immediately and pleaded Guilty at the first available opportunity. He told the Committee that he had asked the police if he could meet the victim of his driving but had been advised against that. He had sent flowers and a card.

- 3.4 He had been deeply affected by the accident. He has not driven a motor vehicle since the accident and had [redacted]. He said that he often thought about the way in which the consequences of his driving could easily have been even more serious than they were. He was profoundly relieved that the victim had been able to return to work.
- 3.5 He said that continuing with his work as a farrier had been vital to him in enabling him to function following the accident. Some of his clients, with whom he had discussed the accident, had been helpful to him and he produced a number of testimonials from clients who spoke to his good character.
- 3.6 The Respondent was questioned by the Committee about the component of cocaine found in his system and about the absence of insurance.
- 3.7 So far as cocaine was concerned, the Respondent told the Committee that he had been at a party four days before the accident at which he had become very drunk and passed out. He had no recollection of taking cocaine there but assumed that he must have done so when he learned of the positive results from the tests carried out subsequently during the criminal investigation. His evidence to the Committee was that he only became aware of a component of cocaine in his system when his solicitor told him of the results of the tests. He said that he had never taken cocaine before or since and no longer socialised in the circle that had attended the party.
- 3.8 So far as insurance was concerned, the Respondent said that he had just purchased the vehicle and had wrongly assumed that his existing insurance covered it. He employed an assistant to deal with paperwork and his assistant had made the same assumption. He accepted that it was his responsibility to check the insurance position.
- 3.9 The Respondent confirmed that he had carried out the unpaid work and rehabilitative process ordered by the Crown Court.
- 3.10 He said that the accident had taught him to respect life.

4. DECISION OF THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE ON SERIOUS MISCONDUCT IN A PROFESSIONAL RESPECT

- 4.1 The legal assessor reminded the Committee that the question of serious misconduct in professional respect was a matter for its judgment, having regard to the nature of the conviction and its underlying facts.
- 4.2 The Committee noted that the Respondent had been convicted of a serious motoring offence. Driving a motor vehicle was usually an integral part of any farrier's work. In the present case the Respondent's driving had been such as to attract a custodial sentence, albeit suspended. It had caused very serious injury to another entirely innocent road user. It was liable to bring the profession into disrepute.
- 4.3 The Committee was therefore satisfied that the conviction and its underlying facts amounted to serious misconduct in a professional respect.

5. DECISION OF THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE AS TO SANCTION

- 5.1 Ms. Curtis informed the Committee that the Respondent had been admitted to the Register on 31 May 2018 and that there was no previous regulatory history.
- 5.2 In closing remarks the Respondent said that farriery was the only thing that was keeping him going.
- 5.3 The legal assessor reminded the Committee of the principles to be found in the Indicative Sanctions Guidance and of the need to arrive at a proportionate outcome to the case.
- 5.4 The Committee first considered the aggravating factors of the case. The Respondent's conduct had been reckless. His careless driving in failing to stop at a road junction had caused serious injury and emotional harm to another road user. That, in turn, had impacted upon the family life of the road user.
- 5.5 Mitigating factors were that the Respondent had behaved entirely appropriately since the accident which he had caused. He had admitted his responsibility from the outset. The accident was an isolated incident. The Respondent was otherwise of good character.
- 5.6 The most important mitigating feature, however, was the Respondent's own response to the events. The Committee was in no doubt that he suffered and continued to suffer deep remorse. He was in the Committee's judgment a credible witness who was not in any way seeking to exculpate himself in the evidence he offered. He had, in the Committee's judgment, developed full insight into the implications of his misconduct. The risk of repetition was very low. The Committee considered it to be a particularly encouraging sign that he had himself [redacted] and had discussed the circumstances of the accident with his clients.
- 5.7 In considering sanction, the Committee reminded itself that it was concerned with a case of careless/inconsiderate driving, albeit one that had had very serious consequences. It also gave credence to the evidence offered by the Respondent as to the circumstances in which a compound of cocaine was found in his body and the circumstances in which he came to be driving whilst uninsured.
- 5.8 The Committee first considered whether to take no further action. It concluded that this was not a case in which such a course could be justified.
- 5.9 No useful purpose would be served by postponing sanction.
- 5.10 The Committee next considered whether a Reprimand and/or Warning would be a proportionate response to the Respondent's criminal conviction. After careful consideration, the Committee decided that, in the particular circumstances of this case, this sanction was appropriate. In reaching this conclusion the Committee attached weight to the Respondent's level of insight and remorse and the absence of any significant risk of repetition. The Respondent's careless /inconsiderate driving had very serious consequences, but this Committee's function (as distinct from that of the Crown Court) was not to punish him for his driving. It was to arrive at a sanction which was proportionate to the public interest in safeguarding the reputation of the profession. The Committee considered that a reasonable and fully informed member of the public, familiar with all the evidence in this case, would find this sanction to be sufficient in all the circumstances.
- 5.11 In accordance with the legal advice, the Committee considered also the proportionality of the sanction immediately above that of Reprimand, namely suspension. After discussion, the Committee concluded that suspension was not required in the circumstance of this case to

safeguard the public interest. It concluded that a Reprimand and Warning was the proportionate way to achieve that result.

- 5.12 The Committee therefore directs that a Reprimand and Warning be issued to the Respondent. This will appear against his entry on the Register. The Committee warns the Respondent that any similar misconduct in future is liable to attract a very serious sanction.

Disciplinary Committee

19 November 2025