

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 GEORGE EVEREST DIPWCF

1. THE CHARGE

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

1. *On 11 September 2024 at the Southampton Magistrates Court, were convicted following a guilty plea, of driving a motor vehicle, namely a Mercedes GLA registration HW68 FNY, on 18 January 2024, on a road, namely the Red Funnel Ferry Terminal entrance, when the proportion of a controlled drug, namely Benzoyllecgonine, in your blood, namely 240 microgrammes per litre of blood, exceeded the specified limit, and you were disqualified from holding or obtaining a driving licence for 12 months, fined £120 and ordered to pay costs and a surcharge, and*
2. *On 23 December 2024 at the Merthyr Tydfil Magistrates Court, were convicted in your absence of keeping or using an unlicensed vehicle LD61 MKM on 8 August 2024 at Kings Road PO32 contrary to Section 29 (1) of the vehicle Excise and Registration Act 1994 and you were ordered to pay an excise penalty of £220, pay back duty of £83.75 and costs:*

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; Ms. Louise Hartley appeared on behalf of the Respondent.

Admissions

1.3 The Respondent admitted both Convictions, which the Committee found Proved by admission. The Committee noted the Certificates of Conviction.

Background

1.4 The Respondent was approached by police officers when he disembarked from the Red Funnel ferry from the Isle of Wight to Southampton. He was driving a motor vehicle. He admitted to having taken cocaine. He was arrested. Subsequent testing indicated that the Respondent had 240 microgrammes of a component of cocaine in a litre of blood. The legal limit is 50 microgrammes.

1.5 In relation to the second offence, the vehicle was being kept on Kings Road on the Isle of Wight. The previous licence expired on 30 March 2024.

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

- 2.1 Ms. Curtis submitted that the convictions amounted to serious misconduct in a professional respect. She referred the Committee to Paragraph 95 of the *Farrier, Approved Training Farrier & Apprentice Code of Professional Conduct 2024* ("the Code") which provides that,

"Serious criminal offences will usually amount to a matter of serious misconduct.... offences whichendanger the public or bring the profession into disrepute....may amount to serious misconduct."

- 2.2 Ms. Curtis also reminded the Committee of the principles set out in *Remedy (UK) Ltd v General Medical Council* [2010] EWHC (Admin) to the effect that morally culpable or otherwise disgraceful conduct may call for action by a professional regulator as such conduct may prejudice the reputation of the profession. Ms. Curtis accepted that the second conviction listed above might not individually amount to serious misconduct but invited the Committee to assess it in the light of the previous conviction for a matter linked to road safety.

The Respondent's evidence

- 2.3 The Respondent gave oral evidence to supplement his written witness statement. He told the Committee that he accepted full responsibility for these convictions and that he was ashamed and embarrassed by them. [Redacted]. He emphasised that his court appearance in relation to the first conviction had been a turning point and that he was now managing his life with proper regard to his own interests rather than seeking to please other people.
- 2.4 In relation to the second conviction, he told the Committee that this related to a vehicle he had used for work but was not used in 2024. He had not renewed his registration with the Farriers Registration Council in 2024 as he did not consider that he was fit to work as a farrier. The vehicle had been parked outside his former partner's house, and he had entrusted her with the task of renewing the licence, providing her with the money to do so. She had not done so.
- 2.5 In answer to questions from the Committee, the Respondent said that he had never been involved with drugs before commencing the damaging relationship which had led to his first conviction. He maintained that he had taken cocaine two days before his arrest and had not thought his ability to drive was impaired. He emphasised that his personal situation was now much better than it had been. He was in a different relationship and had good support around him. He had been drug-free for more than a year and said that he would never return to taking drugs. He had let his registration lapse in January 2024 as he was not practising as a farrier but had renewed it at the beginning of 2025 and was greatly enjoying his return to farriery, relying on his current partner to drive him to work.
- 2.6 Ms. Hartley reminded the Committee that any misconduct had to be connected in some way to the obligations of the profession and that not every conviction would necessarily satisfy that test. She invited the Committee to consider carefully whether convictions for these offences could properly be said to be serious misconduct in a professional respect. In this connection she referred to the case of *Benn v General Medical Council* [2025] EWHC 87 (Admin).

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

- 3.1 The legal assessor advised that serious misconduct in a professional respect was a matter for the Committee's judgment. The Committee needed to consider the nature of any linkage between the convictions and the requirements of practice as a registered farrier.
- 3.2 The Committee considered that the first conviction was a conviction for a serious offence. It had regard to Paragraph 95 of the *Code*. It was also of significance that driving a motor vehicle was an integral part of almost every farrier's working life. This was inevitable in view of the remote locations at which work was often carried out. Such work also often involved liaising with younger horse owners. The Committee considered that a serious criminal conviction for a drug-related and driving offence was liable to bring the profession into disrepute and was properly characterised as serious misconduct in a professional respect.
- 3.3 The Committee did not, however, consider that the second conviction warranted the same description. Having heard the Respondent's evidence about the circumstances in which this conviction occurred, the Committee was content to regard it as a regrettable oversight and omission rather than a matter of serious professional misconduct. It was also a conviction of a wholly different type and could not readily be regarded as part of a pattern which had begun with the first conviction.

4. DECISION OF THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE AS TO SANCTION

- 4.1 Ms. Curtis informed the Committee that the Respondent was admitted to the Register on 21 June 2012 and that there were no previous regulatory findings.
- 4.2 Ms. Hartley stated that the Respondent's personal position was now very different to what it had been at the time of his offending. She referred the Committee to the impressive testimonials submitted on his behalf and to the efforts the Respondent had made to ensure that there was no repetition of his misconduct. She invited the Committee to consider whether this was a case in which it could properly take no further action. Alternatively, she submitted that the appropriate sanction was a reprimand or warning.
- 4.3 The legal assessor reminded the Committee of the principles contained in the Indicative Sanctions Guidance and of the need for proportionality in sanction.
- 4.4 The Committee first considered aggravating factors. The conduct which led to the Respondent's conviction carried a risk of injury to humans and was also reckless.
- 4.5 Mitigating factors were that it was a single, isolated incident in a long and previously unblemished career. The Respondent had made early admissions. [Redacted].
- 4.6 A very important mitigating factor was the good level of insight which the Respondent had developed since his conviction. He had taken appropriate steps to avoid the risk of repetition. [Redacted]. This enabled the Committee to conclude that the risk of any further misconduct of this type was low.
- 4.7 The Committee also attached weight to the testimonial evidence which showed the regard in which the Respondent was held by the authors of the testimonials.
- 4.8 The Committee first considered whether this was a case in which it could take no further action. It concluded that this would be inappropriate. The conviction was sufficiently serious to require a sanction from the Respondent's regulator.

- 4.9 No useful purpose would be served by postponing sanction.
- 4.10 The Committee next considered whether a reprimand and/or warning would be a sufficient, proportionate response. In view of the mitigating factors which it had identified the Committee concluded that a reprimand and warning was the appropriate sanction in this case. It gave weight to the level of insight which the Respondent had now demonstrated and [Redacted].
- 4.11 In accordance with the legal advice it had received, the Committee also considered whether a suspension order could be justified. It concluded that such an order would be disproportionate in view of the mitigating factors it had identified.
- 4.12 The Committee therefore issued a Reprimand which would appear against the Respondent's entry on the Register. It also issued a Warning to the Respondent that any similar misconduct in future would be liable to attract a very serious sanction.

Disciplinary Committee

20 November 2025