



# Summary Report of the RSPCA Prosecution Oversight Panel

## Case Review Meeting of 13 June 2023



### General Matters

Hayley Firman (HF) updated the Panel on the progress of the planned transfer of prosecution work from the RSPCA to the CPS. HF updated the POP on the projects that she was now leading to improve efficiency and use of current resources in advance of the transition. In particular the Panel noted the new system being developed to provide earlier advice to Inspectors, based on the CPS Direct process.

HF provided the POP with an activity update and the increase in activity for this year to date was noted. The Panel also recognised staff changes over the coming year and the need for HF to ensure continuity of a good quality prosecution service during the period of change.

### Case Review

There were a smaller number of cases reviewed on this occasion as agreed with the Panel in advance, as a result of changes within the Prosecutions Team and, in particular, the new pilot projects aimed at modernising processes.

The POP reviewed the response to one complaint involving a crown court case and two convictions after trials; The POP also reviewed three cases that had been processed within the pilot referenced above.

The POP considered the response to the complaint from HF to be clear, fair and entirely appropriate. On the whole, the Panel considered that the prosecution decisions made in the two cases reviewed were appropriate and were based on a correct application of the CPS Code for Crown Prosecutors test, including the evidential stage and public interest stage. However, the Panel identified issues with documentation, including the standard of presentation of information and, on occasions, lack of clarity in the process of decision

making. The Panel were pleased to note that the current pilot with the Inspectorate and Prosecutions Team should improve these issues.

The Panel were pleased to note the three cases presented as part of the new pilot project and fully support the aims of this pilot. The Panel will review those three cases in full at the next meeting.

### **Revised POP Membership**

The Panel noted that Matthew Hardcastle had now resigned from the Panel and he was thanked for his contribution. HF would now identify a potential criminal law practitioner as a replacement member.