



# **Summary Report of the RSPCA Prosecution Oversight Panel**

## **Case Review Meeting of 5th February 2018**



The Panel welcomed a new Veterinarian on to the Panel.

A total of 24 cases were provided to the Prosecution Oversight Panel (POP) members in advance of the meeting held on 5 February 2018. Following the POP's pre-review procedure, 8 cases were selected by the 4 Panel members attending that meeting. The cases selected for review comprised: 2 acquittals after trial; 2 convicted after trial; 2 No Proceedings and 2 Adult Written Cautions. The Panel also reviewed responses to 3 complaints and 1 case involving Grade 4 Counsel.

On the whole, the POP considered that the prosecution decisions made in the cases reviewed were fair and appropriate and were based on a correct application of the CPS Code for Crown Prosecutors test, including the evidential stage and public interest stage. The POP identified examples of good practice demonstrating transparent and ordered decision making and evidence of independent views being sought in a transparent manner in the process of prosecution decision making.

The POP identified an instance of apparent inconsistency in prosecution decision-making and, in another instance, some weakness in evidential detail provided through the investigations process.

Overall the POP were pleased to note improvements in the consistency and quality of investigations and Decision Advice (DA) reports over the past year, supported by the introduction of the new Prosecution Policy. The POP will continue to review progress through reviews of the case documents. The POP were disappointed to note the cancellation of the annual training event as a result of the lack of capacity of the training team with vacant posts and the POP look forward to the launch of on-line training covering the investigations process.



