REACHING THE FINISH LINE:

TIME TO END DOG RACING IN THE UK



GREY2K USA WORLDWIDE

LEAGUE AGAINST CRUEL SPORTS

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Forewords



In 2014, GREY2K USA Worldwide and The League Against Cruel Sports released a report on dog racing entitled A Mandate for Change, the State of Greyhound Racing in Great Britain. Ours was the first comprehensive report on the humane and economic challenges of commercial greyhound racing in the United Kingdom. Since that time, multiple governments around the world have taken concrete steps and brought legislation forward to end this archaic activity.

In the United States, the country which invented commercial greyhound racing, the activity is now illegal in 44 of 50 states and operational in just one. Federal legislation is now pending to outlaw dog racing nationwide, bar American gamblers from betting on foreign races and block the export of American dogs for racing elsewhere. Countries such as South Africa, Jamaica, and the Philippines have refused to legalize dog racing in the first place. Presently, both New Zealand and Tasmania are in the process of phasing out their tracks and just last month, both Scotland and Wales overwhelmingly passed prohibitions into law. A true precedent has been set and it is our hope that the UK Parliament will soon follow the lead of all these jurisdictions.

Information in this new report particularly focuses on the lagging problems of UK dog racing in the years since our first joint report. There has been little progress and reform efforts have failed by every measure. Every day, greyhounds continue to suffer while concerns for their welfare remain largely ignored.

The animal welfare community is now united in its calls to wind down dog racing. Independent experts, media outlets and government analysts have emphasized its irreversible economic decline. Meanwhile, the industry's official governing and regulatory body, the Greyhound Board of Great Britain, has rebuffed all warnings, ignored popular calls for change, and failed to introduce even the most basic protections to stop the killing and cruelty of racing.

This disgraced and unpopular industry has run out of chances and should be outlawed wherever it exists.

C. A. Dorchak

Christine A. Dorchak, Esq.
President
GREY2K USA Worldwide

With the recent progress in Wales and Scotland, and around the globe, the end of greyhound racing is in sight. This is the result of decades of campaigning from organisations and individuals committed to creating a world where this cruel industry is confined to the history books. It feels closer than ever. But despite this progress we see a reoccurring reluctance from governments in Westminster to engage with this issue.



This report clearly demonstrates that despite assurances of 'welfare strategies' and 'prioritising welfare' nothing has meaningfully changed for the dogs. There continues to be extensive suffering, chronic and acute, at scale, as an inevitability. We have the opportunity to join the progress being made in other states and countries, to end this suffering. There is the chance to be on the right side of history if we can move from inaction to taking responsibility.

At The League Against Cruel Sports we are committed to seeing the end of greyhound racing. We are delighted to work with passionate and expert colleagues at GREY2K USA Worldwide in creating this report. The conclusions are clear, we need urgent action at government level. We call for legislative change to end this so-called 'sport' without delay.

Emma Slawinski

Emma Slawinski
CEO
The League Against Cruel Sports

The United Kingdom is a nation of dog lovers and we should be proud of our position of being a world leader in animal welfare. However, we cannot be complacent, and I am proud to be elected as part of a Labour Government which committed to stronger animal welfare. The cruelty of every aspect of greyhound racing is clear. Many greyhounds bred to race live in packed kennels, rather than in loving homes.

Many greyhounds are injured as a result of this 'sport', and many of these dogs tragically are killed. As this report describes, rehoming greyhounds is difficult, as animal shelters become more and more packed due to increasing demand. It is seriously concerning that a minimum of 1,000 retired greyhounds are unaccounted for every year.

It is time to end the unnecessary suffering of animals, all for the sake of human entertainment. Recently in Parliament I met with a former racing greyhound called Max, and I went on a walk with him and his guardian. I was shocked to see how his fur had been rubbed off his back, from all the years of sleeping in rough crates with no bedding. Max now lives in a warm and caring home, but not all greyhounds are this lucky.

The Welsh government announced this year that they plan to ban greyhound racing between 2027 and 2030, the Scottish government has recently given its backing to a ban, so it is time for England and Northern Ireland to follow suit. Is this entertainment really appropriate for the 21st century? I believe it is time to leave this outdated practice in the past, and to treat greyhounds with the dignity and care they deserve, and I thank The League Against Cruel Sports and GREY2K for their hard work in producing this valuable and eye-opening report.



Irene Campbell (Labour MP for North Ayrshire and Arran)
Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Dog Advisory Welfare Group



Irene Campbell ©House of Commons

Greyhound racing is cruel: pushing animals to their limits for entertainment leaves many dogs crippled with life-changing injuries, and far too often facing early death.

This report does an excellent job of cutting through the spin and shining a light on the horrific abuse suffered by greyhounds.

It leaves nowhere to hide for politicians or the public – we now know exactly what is happening, and while for too many dogs action has come too late, these recommendations would finally put welfare first as the industry declines.

I want to see an end to greyhound racing in this country, and these proposals would ensure that, during any transitional period, there is transparency and accountability.



Neil Duncan-Jordan (Labour MP for Poole)
Officer of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Phasing Out Animal Experiments in Medical Research



Neil Duncan-Jordan ©House of Commons/Laurie Noble

In recovery from addiction, I have campaigned for reforms to gambling laws and regulations in both the UK and US for the past 13 years. And in that time, I have met many other people like me who were also exploited by a ruthless sector - one that deploys cynical tactics to drive excessive engagement through addictive product design and abuse of personal data, all aimed at targetting those with gambling problems. In the process of lobbying for reform, I have come up against a sector fighting to maintain a commercial model that is reliant on those losing more than they can afford. One that would not be viable without gambling related harm.



Matt Zarb-Cousin (Gamban)

Yet it was not until I met GREY2K USA Worldwide at the Stop Predatory Gambling conference in Washington DC in 2023 that my eyes were opened to the harm this industry causes to dogs as well as people. In the pursuit of creating random betting events that that drive addiction, the mistreatment of greyhounds compounds the overall exploitation. The races are dangerous to dogs by design, meaning injuries are inevitable and fuel an already unmanageable rehoming crisis.

The true extent of the harm to dogs is unclear given the control exerted by the governing bodies over greyhound rehoming centres. The animal welfare standards in greyhound racing fall well short of the public's expectation regarding the treatment of dogs, so the more salient this issue is in the political conversation the more likely we are to see an end to greyhound racing. The gambling industry, an already deeply unpopular sector for how it treats people, should be held to account for its role in supporting an activity that is causing death and serious injury to thousands of greyhounds a year. This report provides a compelling case for immediate action to be taken to call the final lap on greyhound racing and bring to an end the toleration of cruelty to animals in the pursuit of profit.



Matt Zarb-Cousin
Founder of Gamban

Executive Summary

Greyhound racing in the UK

- There are 20 operating tracks in the United Kingdom. The Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB) is the governing body for 18 licensed tracks in England and Wales.

Animal Welfare Issues

Breeding and kennel conditions

- At each point in the breeding process, there are 'surplus' or unwanted greyhounds. Excessive breeding in Ireland has a notable impact on the rampant overpopulation problem in the UK.
- Regulations in England do not ensure the welfare of greyhounds outside of tracks. Racing greyhounds reportedly spend as much as 95% of their lives at kennels.

Injuries and poor data collection

- Between 2017 and 2024, 35,168 greyhound injuries were reported, including 1,353 track fatalities. An additional 3,278 greyhounds were destroyed for other reasons such as treatment costs or because they were judged as poor candidates for adoption.
- The GBGB's injury and retirement data are far from transparent and deliberately lack granularity. And although it is known that the charity sector is adopting out fewer greyhounds in the wake of insufficient rescue space and shrinking finances, breeding restrictions have not been considered.
- The turns or bends of an oval racetrack provide unique risks for racing dogs. Asymmetric training and racing, centrifugal force and congestion are all key contributors to the high injury rates in dog racing.
- Greyhounds have an average life span of up to 14 years, so the charity sector and individual adopters absorb most of the costs associated with post-racing life, undertaking the remedial care made necessary by the rigors and stressors of this life.

Drugs

- The Welfare of Racing Greyhound Regulations 2010 does not require mandatory drug testing for racing greyhounds.
- The GBGB has voluntarily reported hundreds of incidents of drugging between 2016 and 2022. This is despite only 3.8% of greyhounds being drug tested, based on 2021 data.

Scottish Animal Welfare Commission (SAWC) Report

- SAWC published its report on greyhound racing in Scotland in March 2023, and concluded that the end of greyhound racing is desirable and that generally, racing greyhounds have poorer welfare than other dogs.

- The Commission determined that the GBGB was not prepared to make the radical changes necessary to protect racing greyhounds.

Dogs Trust and RSPCA joint report

- These groups determined the multinational nature of the industry and inadequate and inconsistent regulatory provisions within each nation severely limit the ability to transform the industry.
- Widespread reform of the industry was found to be needed, but yet it would not be possible to protect greyhounds at every stage of their racing lives.

GBGB's A Good Life for Every Greyhound

- In 2022, the GBGB published a long-term welfare strategy called A Good Life for Every Greyhound, with the stated aim of promoting and protecting welfare across all stages of a racing greyhound's life.
- SAWC took a close look at A Good Life for Every Greyhound and specifically researched whether this strategy would have significant impact. The considered conclusion of the Commissioners was that it would not.

Challenges with greyhound adoption

- The industry relies on private rescue groups to place greyhounds in homes, and these groups are largely dependent on public support. The GBGB contributes some funding, but only to racing-friendly groups.
- The primary adoption agency for greyhounds exiting the British racing industry is the Retired Greyhound Trust. The RGT has commented on the reduced funding it has received in recent years through the GBGB's Greyhound Recovery Scheme.
- The sheer number of greyhounds churned out by the industry overwhelms charities and industry participants alike, and makes whole-of-life care a public burden, putting greyhounds in further jeopardy.

The way forward

- Following successful grassroots and legislative campaigns, the Scottish and Welsh Governments have phased out greyhound racing.
- Repurposed track sites present opportunities for housing and economic development.
- Commercial greyhound racing is an outdated and unpopular form for entertainment that causes demonstrable harm to dogs and should be phased out.

1 Overview

A phased end to greyhound racing

Greyhound racing should be phased out across the entire UK, **as is happening in Scotland and Wales and other parts of the world.** The evidence is clear: the **Greyhound Board of Great Britain cannot protect greyhounds from the welfare problems presented at every stage of a racing greyhound's life.**

2 Introduction

2.1 What is Greyhound Racing

Commercial greyhound racing began in Britain in 1926 with the opening of Belle Vue, in Greater Manchester.[1] To this day, greyhounds chase a mechanical lure – normally a stuffed toy or a windsock[2] – around a circular track in a variety of distance categories, ranging from a 208m sprint to a 1048m marathon, and wagers are placed on them.[3]

Today there are 20 tracks in operation in the UK. The GBGB is the governing body for 18 licensed tracks in England and Wales.

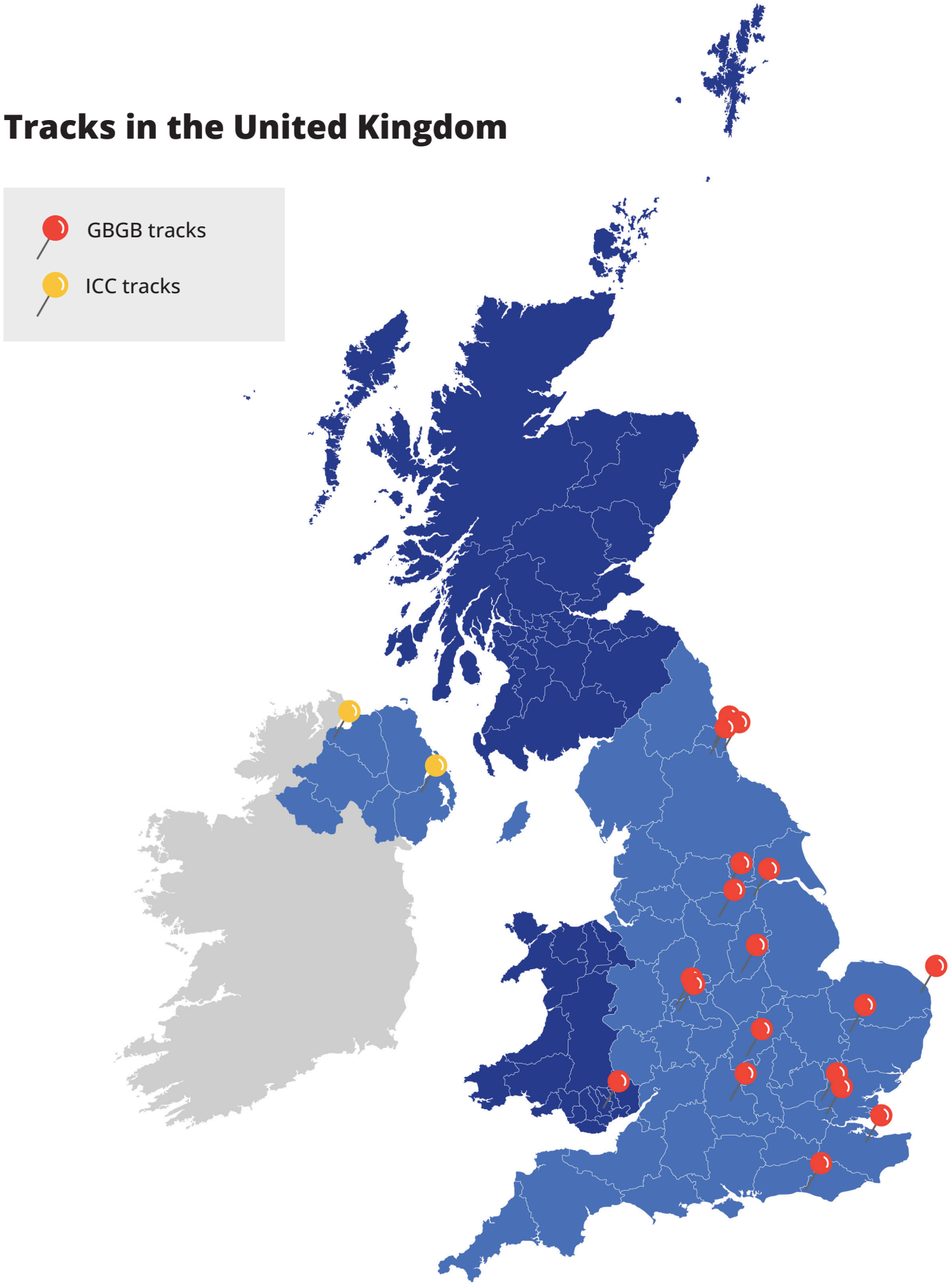
There are also two additional tracks in Northern Ireland under the auspices of the Irish Coursing Club (ICC).

The GBGB only discloses greyhound injuries and deaths as a total number in the aggregate, rather than revealing the names of injured dogs or track-specific figures. Meanwhile, non-GBGB stadiums in Northern Ireland do not publicly disclose any figures at all.



"Belle Vue Stadium," RJRoweCollection (CC BY 4.0), via Wikimedia Commons.

Tracks in the United Kingdom



2.2 Greyhounds suffer before, during and after racing

Greyhound racing is cruel and inhumane. Countless dogs suffer terrible injuries and some die because of this antiquated activity. Despite media exposés depicting the drumbeat of suffering and death, multiple damning reports and new welfare regulations, it is still not possible to fully assess the care of racing greyhounds due to the lack of independent oversight of this self-regulated industry.

Nonetheless, the information which is available demonstrates the welfare problems associated with the continuation of greyhound racing.

3 Animal Welfare Issues

3.1 Dog numbers in Britain

At each stage of the breeding process, there are 'surplus' or unwanted greyhounds. According to the 2017 IGB [Greyhound Racing Ireland] Business Model Analysis, approximately 83% of greyhounds racing in the UK are bred in Ireland, where approximately 6,000 greyhounds are killed each year for not being fast enough. In recent years, approximately 6,250 surviving greyhounds have been exported to the UK annually.[4]

Additionally, a total of 163 litters (producing approximately 1,000 pups) were reported as born in the UK in 2019, a decline of 73% since 2006.[5] Between 2012 and 2019, GBGB registration figures ranged from 7,252 and 8,094 every year - this figure dropping to 6,820 in 2019.[6] The decline in GBGB registrations has continued with 6,307 greyhound registrations in 2022 and 5,899 greyhound registrations in 2023, 82% of which were Irish imports.[7]

The GBGB provided data to Dogs Trust and the RSPCA which found that excluding the dogs that are destroyed or die, 50% of registered greyhounds are no longer participating by the age of 3.5 years old.[8]

Furthermore, around 65% of greyhounds leave the licensed racing industry between the ages of two to four years old and 90% of greyhounds are no longer racing by five years of age. Greyhounds have an average life span of up to 14 years, so the charity sector and individual adopters absorb most of the costs associated with post-racing life, undertaking the remedial care made necessary by the rigors and stressors of this life.[9]



Greyhounds bred for breeding (Judy Zatonski)

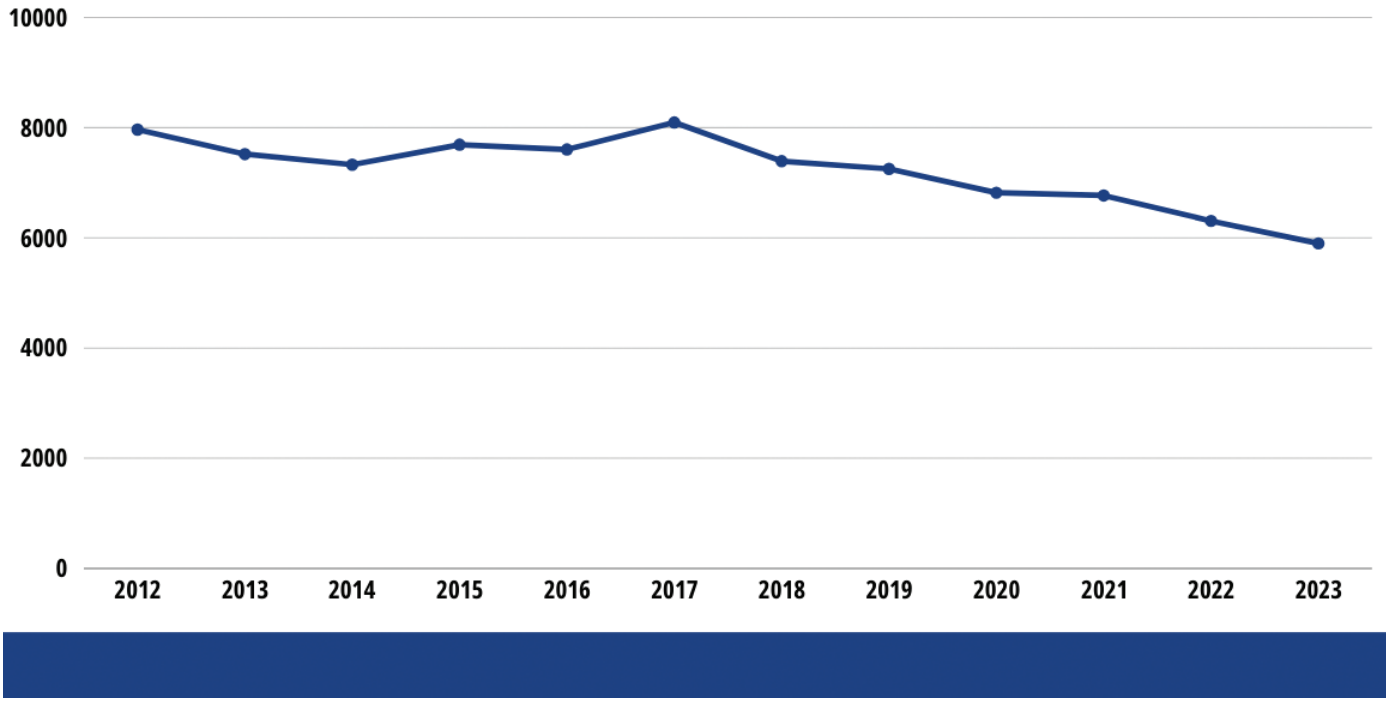
Illustrating the problem of overbreeding and wastage, Dogs Trust and the RSPCA found that in 2021, there were 12,960 Irish bred puppies registered at the time of whelping yet approximately 10% were not registered at 12 months of age -

meaning over 1,000 puppies were lost to record. In the UK similar patterns were seen with approximately 13% fewer dogs registered to race with the GBGB as compared to the number of puppies recorded in the Greyhound Stud Book.[10]

In Ireland, registration of greyhound puppies is a matter of self-reporting to the ICC, which assigns an ear mark and microchip to each puppy. There is no independent verification of the number of live births or the number of puppies per litter and a bitch can legally be bred up to eight times. Calculations based on ICC and GBGB figures suggest that about 10-20% of greyhound puppies bred in Ireland for the UK market are not licensed with the GBGB, meaning they cannot race at the 18 regulated facilities but may be produced for use at the two non-GBGB facilities.[11]

It should be noted that the number of dogs estimated to be racing at non-GBGB British tracks falls far short of the number of pups that are transferred from Ireland and not licensed by the GBGB. Thus, it remains unclear what happens to these disappeared pups. As for those spared an early death, there is no economic incentive for industry participants to retain non-racing greyhounds, so any dogs that may be spared only further challenge the capacity of charities to care for them. Clearly, excessive breeding in Ireland, which is largely invisible to UK regulators, has a notable impact on the overpopulation problem in the UK.[12]

BRITISH REGISTRATIONS



3.2 Kennel conditions and inspections



Grain Barn Kennels, Chippenham (Greyt Exploitations)

Racing greyhounds reportedly spend as much as 95% of their lives at kennels.[13] Most greyhounds are kept confined at off-track kennels owned by their trainer and brought to the track on race days. Research in Australia suggests that time spent in kennels can contribute to stress at the meets themselves.[14] Studies of other dog breeds also suggest that the biggest impact on the welfare of kenneled dogs is lack of social contact.[15]

GBGB-regulated tracks typically require dogs eligible for racing to be held in licensed kennels. There were 573 such kennels in the UK as of 2022.[16]

During its evidentiary gathering process into greyhound racing, SAWC observed barren kennels containing only wood shavings as bedding, and no evidence of toys or other enrichments. A SAWC delegation observed several dogs at the Thornton Stadium with visible stripes of missing fur, consistent with rubbing against the wire mesh of their cages either in kennels or during transport.[17]

The Scottish SPCA has received multiple complaints about conditions at racing kennels. Over a five year period, there were 21 complaints relating to kennel conditions and nine other complaints in relation to racing greyhounds. So although care may minimally qualify as adequate, racing kennels do not appear compatible with a good quality of life as expected by the general public.[18]

Evidence from the Greyhound Adoption League (GAL) suggests a minority of dogs are offloaded to charities from 'hobby' trainers, with the majority coming from more 'professional' kennels that have a larger number of dogs. GAL commented that dogs commonly arrive for adoption in poor condition and are underweight, have poor dentition, unhealthy coats and demonstrate high worm and flea burdens. In addition, GAL reported that dogs relinquished due to injuries often do not present with a veterinary care history, which could suggest inadequate treatment or no previous treatment at all. Some injuries are not reported and are

discovered upon examination after surrender, again suggesting lack of veterinary supervision. Therefore, for at least for some professional kennels once a dog's racing career has ended, there is little attention paid to nutrition and general health.[19]

Additionally, Dogs Trust and the RSPCA have highlighted the lack of rules covering trainers' kennels. Despite calls for change, regulations in England do not ensure the welfare of greyhounds outside of tracks, despite the fact that this is where they spend the majority of their time. Instead, guidance is issued within the GBGB's voluntary code of practice. This self-regulation provides no transparency and no assurance to the public as to welfare enforcement. Similarly, the GBGB does not publicly report the result of licensing inspections or residential kennel audits.[20]

Meanwhile the charity sector is at capacity, stuggling to absorb all the dogs waiting at industry kennels. In fact, the number of greyhounds retained post-racing has more than doubled from 715 in 2022 to 1,618 in 2024.[21] A managed phase-out of greyhound racing would allow for all dogs exiting the industry to be homed in a gradual and orderly manner, in contrast to how the industry offloads an endless stream of dogs at the present time.

There are numerous examples of neglect, but one particularly alarming case is that of greyhound Calzaghe Bucko. The three-year-old dog sustained an injury at Sunderland in 2016 and was subsequently brought to a trialling race in a neglected and emaciated state by his trainer Malcolm Taylor.[22] In early 2017, 58 of Taylor's greyhounds were seized after it was reported they were living in appalling conditions and were in very poor health. The GBGB elected to place these dogs with other trainers and owners instead of releasing them to rescue organisations. It later came to light that Taylor was concealing 21 additional greyhounds on his property. Thankfully, humane charities were able to provide care for these secreted hounds.[23]

Tracy Cook of Greyhound Rescue And Co-ordinated Emergencies noted that



Grain Barn Kennels, Chippenham (Greyt Exploitations)

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'There are no words for it other than horrendous. The smell alone was appalling. I walked into one of the rooms and the smell just hit me like a wall. It smelled of everything: urine, faeces, damp. It was a hellish mixture of smells.'

– Nick Weston, Head of Campaigns, The League Against Cruel Sports

this type of neglect is common, and referenced a trainer who quit racing, leaving behind the 198 dogs he kept on-site. Cook spent three months finding homes for the 'cast offs from the industry,' and cited overbreeding as the key problem within the industry.[24]

Full details of the Malcolm Taylor case were reported in late 2017, with the release of an investigators' report detailing 'an overwhelming obnoxious smell as a result of poor ventilation and drainage from the main kennel block, while greyhounds were also being kept in unlicensed dilapidated kennels which had not been cleaned for a substantial period.' Thirteen of the greyhounds were found emaciated and severely underweight.[25]

Another particularly harrowing example of poor kennel conditions was reported in 2018. Trainer Tony Taylor's (no relation to Malcolm) kennel containing more than 70 greyhounds, was found in a 'horrendous' state with faeces and claw marks on the walls and an 'overpowering' smell. Taylor did not face any disciplinary action from the GBGB.[26]

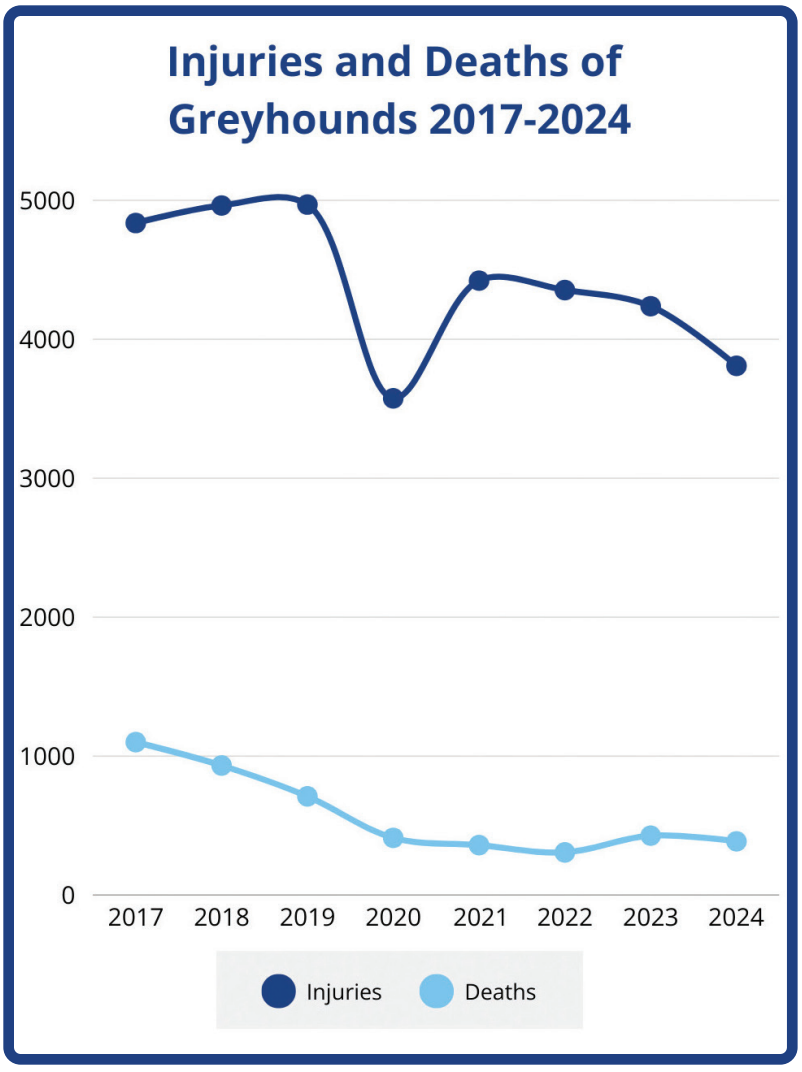
In 2020 The Ferret reported on greyhound Dudleys Forever, who was neglected so badly by trainer Chris Sillars that she was euthanised. A kennel inspector described the dog as being in 'the worst condition of a greyhound I have ever seen.'[27] Say No To Greyhound Racing in Scotland condemned the GBGB for taking nearly five months to report this serious welfare breach to law enforcement authorities.[28]

In 2023 greyhound trainer Rebecca Perkins admitted causing unnecessary suffering to more than 30 dogs. Four of her dogs were found dead in their kennels. One black greyhound was found in a 'disgraceful condition' in a portable plastic kennel and was 'so thin and emaciated' that the dog 'could hardly walk.' Additionally, several thin, grossly underweight greyhounds were found in stable blocks along with the skeleton of a small dog. The RSPCA reported that a brindle hound died before receiving treatment, two other greyhounds were euthanised immediately on veterinary advice and an additional dog was put to sleep several days later. Perkins was jailed and banned from keeping animals for life.[29]

A kennel inspector described the dog as being in 'the worst condition of a greyhound I have ever seen.' Say No To Greyhound Racing in Scotland condemned the GBGB for taking nearly five months to report this serious welfare breach to law enforcement authorities.

Kenneling large numbers of greyhounds also exposes every dog to disease, such as kennel cough, which spreads particularly quickly in multi-dog, confined settings. In 2025, a sudden disease outbreak at an Oxford trainer's kennel led to dogs becoming sick, and several dying.[30]

3.3 Injury risk and misleading GBGB data



The GBGB was first required to report greyhound injuries to the public in 2017. From that year through 2024, 35,168 greyhound injuries were reported, including 1,353 track fatalities. An additional 3,278 greyhounds were destroyed for other reasons such as treatment costs or because they were judged as poor candidates for adoption.[31]

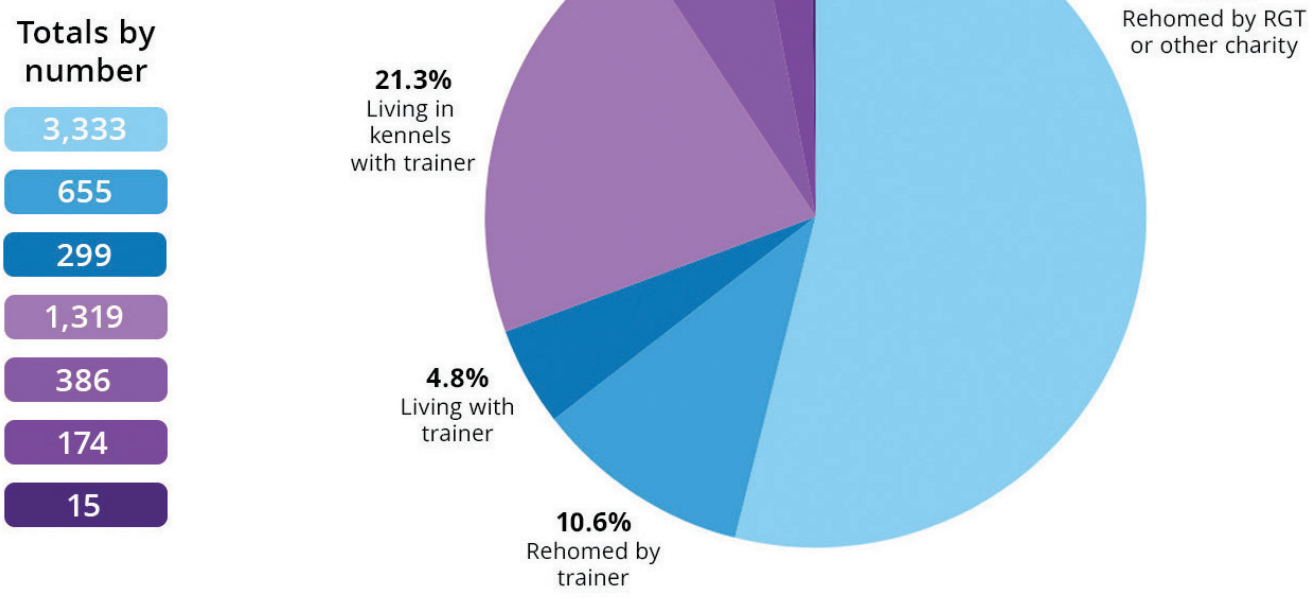
Bookmakers and the GBGB remain keen to supply continuous content to betting shops with little recognition of the dangers of racing on oval tracks. Between 2021 and 2024, the total number of annual dog runs has consistently ranged from 355,000 to 365,000, despite increasingly fewer dogs in the racing pool.[32] As greyhounds race with more frequency, the likelihood of harm increases. The GBGB's failure to consider modifying track design to reduce injury rates is notable and has drawn concerted criticism from animal welfare experts.[33]

In 2024, the GBGB reported that 5,795 greyhounds exited the industry alive and 386 died, thereby laying claim to a 93.8% 'retirement' rate in 2024. It is worth noting that the use of the word 'retire' rather than 'rescue' or 'adoption' is a commonly-used euphemism among industry supporters. This aside, an accurate accounting of the percentage of surviving greyhounds requires greater scrutiny.

The GBGB reports that 3,333 greyhounds were homed by the Retired Greyhound Trust (RGT) or by another charity. An additional 655 greyhounds fell under the vague classification of 'Rehomed by Owner/Trainer' and 1,618 were 'Retained by Owner/Trainer.' Of the latter, only 299 are said to be living with owners or trainers permanently as companion animals. This means that 1,319 would be living in trainers' kennels. The GBGB says trainers' kennels receive regular visits from industry stewards, but the data as presented does not indicate the outcomes for these dogs.[34]

An additional 174 'retired' greyhounds were classified as 'Breeding', a number which more than doubled from 84 in 2023. Fifteen greyhounds are listed as 'Other,' 14 of which were sent to Ireland for breeding or racing. Trudy Baker of Greyt Exploitations has drawn attention to the fact that the GBGB lists dogs as retired that year-on-year remain in a commercial environment, confined to industry kennels or used for breeding.[35]

Greyhounds leaving the racing industry in 2024



Thus, a more careful conclusion is that 3,333 dogs were placed by the RGT or independent rescues in 2024 out of 5,795 greyhounds that exited the industry, dead or alive, amounting to an initial live release rate of 57.5%. If the GBGB were to 'show its work' in relation to greyhounds retained by industry participants, then this percentage could rise. However, regardless of what post-racing figure is used, the GBGB fails to account for the dogs that never advance to racing because they are destroyed as puppies in Ireland. It also ignores the 10-20% of dogs exported from Ireland but never registered with the GBGB.

While the GBGB may not be able to control what happens to Irish-born greyhounds before export or in advance of registration in the UK, this only underscores the fact that the GBGB is incapable of safeguarding greyhounds from cradle to grave.

Meanwhile, the charity sector is adopting out fewer greyhounds each year (5,484 in 2020 vs 3,333 in 2024) because rescue space and finances are stretched beyond limit. This results in an increase in trainer retentions and the continuation of a relentless cycle of confinement and cruelty. Breeding restrictions would help curb this problem, but these have never been recommended, much less required, by the racing body.

The GBGB's injury and retirement data are far from transparent and deliberately lack granularity:

- The number of racing greyhounds is unclear, obscuring efforts to understand a true injury rate. SAWC was provided with a figure of 18,302 greyhounds eligible to race in 2021.[36] But by 2023, in a report prepared for the GBGB, figures of 10,483 active racing greyhounds and 1,910 non-racing greyhounds for a universe of 12,393 greyhounds, were referenced.[37] Given there were 4,354 injuries in 2022, this extrapolates to an annual injury rate of 42%, based on the GBGB numbers.
- Injury numbers are presented as a percentage of total 'dog runs' rather than as a proportion of dogs racing. This means that each individual greyhound is counted many times over in order to lower the apparent percentage of injuries to the whole. Using runs as a metric also ignores the fact that risk accumulates with each successive start. Racing greyhounds suffer microfractures as dogs grow older, and become more susceptible to 'career ending' injury or death.

In March 2022, Sports Gazette criticised the nature of the GBGB's Injury and Retirement data as political, and specifically questioned the omission of data from independent tracks.[38] Until greyhound racing comes to an end, the GBGB should be required to present accurate reporting, and an exact injury rate that accounts for the individual risk of each dog; to report true adoption figures, and to provide evidence that every dog retained or placed by an industry participant ends up in a loving home.

3.4 Injury type, severity and prevalence

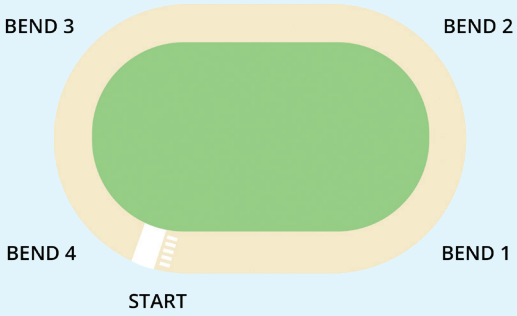
As previously stated, the data are also presented as a proportion of total dog runs and not as a proportion of dogs racing. As a result, independent analysts with SAWC were unable to accurately determine the individual risk to each dog participating in racing.[39] But based on the 2021 number of 18,302 dogs eligible to race, SAWC calculated that UK greyhounds had a 24.1% risk of injury that year. This estimate of course assumes that every greyhound eligible to race did in fact race. That said, since the risk of injury increases with age, over two years, the risk becomes 42.4%, and over three years it rises to 56.3%. This number could be even higher, as SAWC noted that estimates do not include dogs injured in training, as the GBGB does not provide or even collect information for such dogs.[40]

Greyhounds used in commercial racing are also known to sustain unique injuries which are seldom seen in other breeds of dog, particularly hock injuries to the right hind leg. Data from 2,715 companion greyhounds collected from 626 veterinary clinics in 2016 suggests that 10% of greyhounds had traumatic injuries. SAWC found that this data as compared to the GBGB data set suggests the risk of injury is significantly higher in the racing greyhound population.[41]

SAWC also deduced that minor injuries may not be recorded at all, and also found that continued racing can promote the occurrence of major injuries. Early detection to identify dogs that are at risk of sustaining injury and/or further injury would be beneficial, but racetracks lack the diagnostic tools and strategies to recognise this risk.[42]

The turns or bends of an oval racetrack provide unique risks for racing dogs.

- **Asymmetric training and racing.** Dogs usually run counterclockwise around the turns of the track, so that the greatest force will be felt on their left forelimb and right hind limb. This leads to long-term anatomical adaptations, creating imbalance and a weakening of the bones.



- **Centrifugal force.** Speeding greyhounds are pulled to the outside of the track, resulting in hard falls and impact with the outside fence.
- **Congestion.** Dogs slow down entering the bends to better see the lure, which results in bunching up. This coming together in the corners (as the lure moves out of sight around the bend) increases the risk of physical contact, collisions and falls. An Australian report calculated that approximately 80% of all catastrophic and major injuries were caused by this tendency.[43]

Track design has a significant impact on injury rate, so as an interim measure, conversion to straight tracks would be helpful. However, other problems such as equipment malfunction would not be eliminated by this change. For example, malfunctioning traps have been a significant cause of harm. This came to a head at Towcester Stadium during the 2022 English Puppy Derby, leading some trainers to pull their dogs off the track for fear of injury.[44] Another such controversy lasted for months at Oxford Stadium, culminating in Newinn Flyer sustaining facial injuries after her head became stuck in a partially open trap.[45]

Other maladies linked to greyhound racing include abdominal bleeding and sudden death caused by exercise-induced trauma (overwork) and exertional rhabdomyopathy, referred to as 'acidosis' or 'tying up.'[46]

In summary, the main concern for the welfare of racing greyhounds is the ever-present risk of serious injury and death. This is particularly exacerbated by the use of oval tracks, a design which increases the risk of collision and stress damage particularly on the first bend.[47]

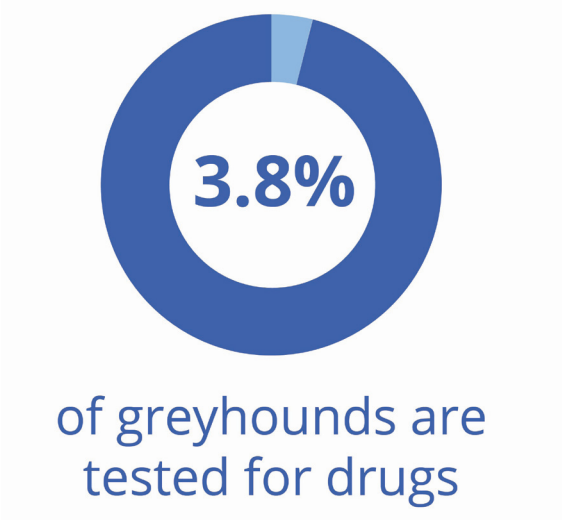
GBGB funding still leaves animal welfare charities to fundraise from the public and take on board the remaining 50% of rehabilitation costs.

In recognition of the serious injuries sustained by racing greyhounds, the GBGB did introduce an Injury Recovery Scheme in 2018. The scheme covers 50% of the treatment costs for career-ending injuries, up to £2,000 for dogs requiring specialist surgery. Whilst this is a welcome development and better than nothing, it

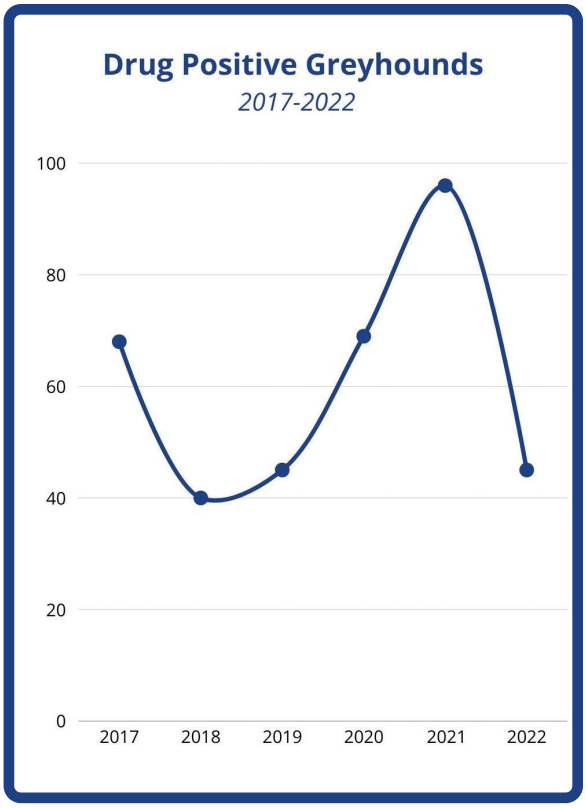
falls far short of what is necessary to ensure a good life for surviving greyhounds. GBGB funding still leaves independent charities to fundraise from the public and take on board the remaining 50% of rehabilitation costs. Private adopters then absorb the lion's share of expenses thereafter.[48]

Perhaps in response to criticism, the GBGB created a Greyhound Retirement Scheme in which owners and the GBGB co-fund a £420 bond to follow a greyhound throughout racing to assist with adoption costs post-racing. This money is only available to groups that do not criticise racing, so many independent charities have rejected the scheme for this reason.[49]

3.5 Drugs



The Welfare of Racing Greyhound Regulations 2010 does not require mandatory drug testing for racing greyhounds. In fact, the issue of doping is not mentioned in the regulations at all. The implementation of an independent regulatory body to proactively address the use of banned substances has been recommended by multiple animal welfare organisations but never adopted.[50]



GBGB voluntarily reported 318 incidents of drugging between 2016 and 2022. These included stanozolol, barbiturates, and morphine. Stanozolol is a synthetic anabolic steroid and has been banned for its performance-enhancing influence. Barbiturates are central nervous system depressants and are serious performance-affecting drugs. Additionally, morphine has been used to manage pain in greyhounds to make dogs less aware of any injuries they may have.

Under the GBGB's Point of Registration program introduced in 2017, a greyhound is screened prior to any maiden race. Between 2017 and 2022, 363 drug-positive samples were detected.

It is worth noting that the percentage of racing dogs tested for drugs is incredibly low. In 2021, 13,655 tests of greyhounds were carried out pre- or post-racing, but there were 359,083 total dog runs reported that year. This means that just 3.8% are

tested, so the actual number of drug-positive greyhounds racing is largely unknown.[51]

In this vacuum, media outlets and welfare organisations have been able to contribute some additional but limited information.

In 2016, The Sunday Post conducted a three-month undercover investigation and found that greyhounds were given dangerous drugs to fix races, either to speed them up or slow them down, a practice that is an open secret within the racing circuit.[52]

Vice reported in September 2017 that there were 261 positive tests for banned drugs between 2012 and 2016, detecting a range of sedatives, steroids, and stimulants.[53]

In April 2019, The Independent reported that there had been a spike in dogs testing positive for cocaine across the entire UK.[54] The GBGB's welfare and integrity manager Duncan Gibson was forced to concede that more and more greyhounds were in fact testing positive for cocaine and its metabolites.[55]

And, in December 2024, The Independent again reported on a major drug scandal, this time involving the illegal sale and widespread misuse of a hormone called norethisterone, administered to alter female dogs' hormonal cycle, keeping them out of heat and therefore able to continue running. The drug was illicitly imported by veterinarians and provided to trainers who were looking to suppress their dogs' biological 'season' so as to circumvent rules barring racing for up to ten weeks. Separately, Greyhound Rescue Wales identified over 30 such cases that same year, suggesting that a significant proportion of the UK's 7,900 female greyhounds have been given norethisterone.[56]

3.6 Excess Greyhounds

The overbreeding of greyhounds is a persistent problem within the greyhound racing industry, in both Ireland and the UK. In May 2016, leading independent greyhound rescues called for the imposition of breeding caps because almost twice as many greyhounds were leaving the industry as could be placed into homes.[57] More recently, Greyhound Gap in Kidsgrove, Staffordshire said they were 'drowning in dogs,' with about 60 dogs on site and a waiting list of around 100 more.[58]

The lack of homes against a continuing wave of greyhound puppies creates myriad welfare problems, including the killing of ex-racing dogs by order of racing participants who were not willing or able to maintain non-performing greyhounds in their kennels. In 2018, The Greyhound Star reported that 20% of 'economic euthanasias,' were performed by just ten trainers.[59] The GBGB would not report the names of the 20 licensees who were responsible for 43% of the total number of dogs deemed 'unsuitable for adoption' and destroyed in 2019.[60]

'Welfare organisations currently face an impossible task to find homes for the thousands of greyhounds who retire from racing each year in Britain and Ireland. Capping the numbers of litters will, over a few years, reduce the number of greyhounds, retiring each year.'

– Lindsay Jackson, Chair, Greyhound Rescue Wales

3.7 Scottish Animal Welfare Commission report



Professor Cathy Dwyer, Chair of SAWC, gave evidence before the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee on 29 March 2023

SAWC published its report on greyhound racing in Scotland in March 2023, and concluded that the end of greyhound racing is desirable and that generally, racing greyhounds have poorer welfare than other dogs.[61] The Commission recommended a moratorium on the construction of new dog tracks and a veterinary presence at the lone Scottish dog track for as long as greyhound racing continues.[62] It determined that the GBGB was not prepared to make the radical changes necessary to protect racing greyhounds.[63]

Conclusions and recommendations of SAWC

SAWC drew certain conclusions that it believed could be extrapolated to greyhounds bred for racing across the UK. These include:

- There are particular and significant challenges for the welfare of racing dogs.[64]
- The risk of injury is a key concern.[65]
- Other risks related to racing include breeding, life in kennels and the challenges of adoption. The oversupply of puppies and the conditions under which they are reared are of concern. That a significant part of a dog's life may be spent in kennels with limited socialisation opportunities, and the neglect and poor veterinary care provided to dogs post-racing were also of significant concern.[66]
- There is a lack of strong desire in the industry to make the types of very significant changes that would be needed to mitigate most welfare risks.[67]
- A greyhound would have at least equivalent opportunities for good welfare by not racing, and fewer risks of poor welfare in the absence of racing, therefore mitigate most welfare would be improved by ending racing.[68]
- When dogs are used for commercial gain and gambling, it seems likely that there are some inherent risks when there is an opportunity to save money on care.[69]
- The industry is not capable of making the radical changes that would be required to achieve improved dog welfare.[70]
- The closure of Scotland's final track would be desirable.[71]
- There is no popular interest in dog racing in Scotland.[72]

SAWC's summary

1. The risks of poor welfare outweigh the likely positive aspects. Thus, on average, a dog bred for racing in Scotland currently has poorer welfare than other dogs in the population.[73]
2. At a minimum a veterinarian must be present while dogs are racing, and independent data on injuries and fatalities should be collected.[74]
3. No further new tracks ought to be permitted in Scotland, as SAWC was not convinced that any of the current proposed measures would safeguard greyhound welfare adequately. Therefore, a moratorium on new tracks would help reduce canine suffering in Scotland.[75]
4. A scheme independent of the GBGB should be created to ensure the welfare of greyhounds, possibly through Local Authority regulation or under the auspices of the new Scottish Veterinary Service.[76]

3.8 Dogs Trust / RSPCA joint report

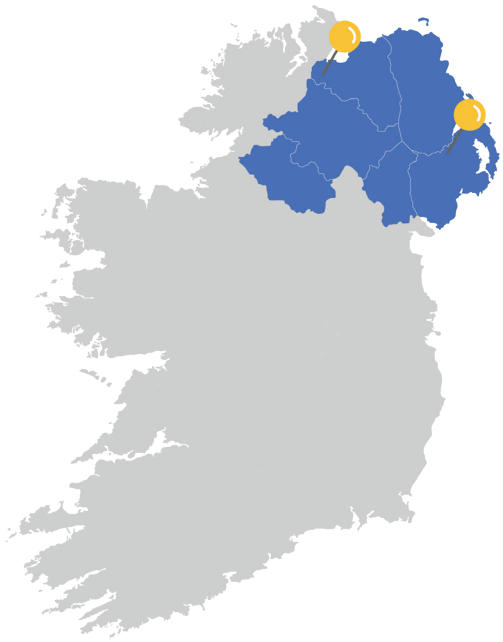
Dogs Trust and the RSPCA prepared a joint report for SAWC and identified numerous areas of concern in relation to transparency, traceability and accountability. They further determined that the multinational nature of the industry and inadequate and inconsistent regulatory provisions within each nation severely limits the ability to transform the industry. Widespread reform of the industry was found to be needed, but it would not be possible to protect greyhounds at every stage of their racing lives.[77]

The groups note that there is sound evidence from research relating to track-related risks for greyhound injury, and shared their disappointment in the GBGB for its unwillingness to release complete data. They also found that the majority of the GBGB's welfare strategies were unfunded: 46% of short term, 53% of intermediate-term and 80% of long-term needs, and that the British Greyhound Racing Fund (BGRF), through which bookmakers voluntarily contribute to greyhound care, reported a decrease of £2m a year.[78]

Dogs Trust and the RSPCA also found that the majority of the GBGB's welfare strategies were unfunded: 46% of short term, 53% of intermediate-term and 80% of long-term needs.

They found that there are a multitude of welfare issues affecting greyhounds at every stage of racing life. These include the use of artificial insemination for breeding; inadequate socialisation and habituation of puppies; tattooing of puppies for identification during rearing; poor environments during the time of schooling, trialling and racing; the use of oestrus suppressants to enable racing; the presence of dental disease; inappropriate transportation at all stages, as well as the impacts of extreme weather. Irregular oversight across the nations fails to provide a minimum standard for greyhounds that assures a life worth living.[79]

3.9 Greyhound welfare concerns in Northern Ireland



There are two greyhound stadia in Northern Ireland: Drumbo Park in Lisburn and Brandywell Greyhound Track in Derry/Londonderry. Neither facility reports information about greyhound injuries and deaths. Dog racing in Northern Ireland is not subject to the jurisdiction of the GBGB or Greyhound Racing Ireland (GRI). Instead, regulation falls under the control of the Irish Coursing Club (ICC).

Concerns have been raised as to the ICC's regulatory capacity and efficacy. For instance, it does not even appear to know how many of the dogs registered in its Stud Book are Irish bred or bred in other jurisdictions. Questions surround the ICC's role in overseeing the breeding and registration of greyhounds, whether it conducts welfare inspections of kennels or tracks, and if the entity contributes to adoption efforts at all.[80]

In 2010, Michael Watts of the Society of Greyhound Veterinarians testified before the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development regarding Irish bred greyhounds, and said:

> 'The problems arise here [in NI and ROI] with a younger cohort of greyhounds that are not fast enough or are injured and are unable to start racing. There are a large number of them, and what are we to do with them? Around 25,000 puppies are registered in Ireland every year. When I say Ireland, I mean all 32 counties. The breeding of greyhounds in Ireland is regulated by the Irish Coursing Club, which considers Ireland, for better or worse, a 32-county entity. For that reason, we have no separate figures for Northern Ireland. With England's much larger population, they have to rehome approximately 10,000 unwanted greyhounds per annum. Therefore, in a nutshell, we have more younger, less rehomable dogs, and fewer homes for them to go to.[81]'

The overproduction of greyhounds described by Mr Watts still persists to this day. In 2019, RTÉ Investigates found that nearly 6,000 greyhounds were killed annually in Ireland for not being fast enough.[82] Following this report, GRI implemented a traceability system, but 2024 reporting in The Irish Examiner found that thousands of greyhounds born in 2021 were dead or missing nonetheless.[83] It is important to note that GRI does not track puppies for the first twelve weeks of their lives, nor does it track any greyhounds bred in Northern Ireland so the universe of dogs who suffer these consequences is largely unknown and unknowable under the current system.[84] Just as Wales and Scotland have found the GBGB to be lacking as a regulator, GRI is also substantially failing to protect Irish greyhounds.

In addition to the disposal of young greyhounds failing to make the grade in Ireland, a comprehensive look at the breeding model paints an even more unsavory picture of welfare outcomes for hounds. Since Ireland supplies over 80% of greyhounds used for racing in the UK, thousands of greyhounds are exported to an uncertain fate annually.[85]

Animal charities are tasked with adopting out surviving racers, but the continuous flow of dogs significantly outpaces available homes. Given this situation, excess greyhounds stack up in greyhound kennels, something referred to in the industry as 'dog clog.'[86] Ex-racers await an adoption space that may or may not become available. As stated, the GBGB will provide partial funding to surgically repair an injured dog or to assist with adoption costs, but only if an animal charity does not publicly oppose dog racing.[87]

4 Failed oversight

4.1 Lack of transparency

The racing industry does not track or report the following key information:

- the exact number of dogs imported from Ireland and the conditions of transport
- the scale of dog injuries and the causes
- the length of each individual greyhound's racing career
- how many dogs actually find loving homes post-racing
- how many dogs are killed

In addition, specific details regarding dog injuries and their causes are absent. The impact of treatment costs and adoptability assessments on decisions to destroy greyhounds, as well as what ultimately happens to hounds reported to be retained or homed by industry participants, also remain unclear. In the absence of bona fide year-on-year and whole-of-life industry disclosure, concerned citizens have no clear way to know the fate of most dogs bred or used for racing in the UK and Ireland.

4.2 GBGB's A Good Life for Every Greyhound

In 2022, the GBGB published a long-term welfare strategy called A Good Life for Every Greyhound, with the stated aim of promoting and protecting welfare across all stages of a racing greyhound's life.[88]

SAWC took a close look at A Good Life for Every Greyhound and specifically researched whether this strategy would have significant impact. The considered conclusion of the Commissioners was that it would not.[89] As a threshold matter, SAWC found that the strategy does not consider whether it is acceptable to expose dogs to the known risk of racing. Additionally, criticism was offered about the GBGB's failure to consider alternatives to the standard track design, its lack of accountability for the majority of dogs imported from Ireland, the refusal to provide funding for greyhounds in the care of anti-racing charities, and the limited attention given to the behavioural and mental state of dogs in general.[90]



SAWC also criticised the backwards methodology of the GBGB approach to improving welfare

1. The GBGB attempts to modify the dog to better meet the environmental stressors of racing life, rather than addressing the environmental factors that lead to high levels of stress and injury. In animal welfare science the driver is always the opposite, i.e. to improve the environment in order to benefit animal welfare.[91]

2. The Welfare Strategy takes very preliminary data and extrapolates it to suggest that genomic selection would make significant impacts on the breeding of healthy greyhounds. But the strongest genetic associations are with racing speed, which is likely to have detrimental impacts on welfare and injury rates.[92]

3. Even if well-construed, the methods of greyhound breeding and the time required to bring about genetic changes suggest that this is, at best, a very long-term strategy and unlikely to have a significant impact on injury rates in dogs in the foreseeable future.[93]

Darcy dislocated her hip in her second race.

Darcy (Judy Zatonski)

SAWC also found that the stated objectives of the Welfare Strategy simply cannot be achieved. Funding for more than half of the goals, as sourced from voluntary contributions by bookmakers, is speculative. In fact, the GBGB itself conceded that it did not have commitments to secure full funding.[94] The GBGB's jurisdiction is limited to the time greyhounds spend on track, so it has no authority for enforcing welfare standards and cannot require financial contributions from stakeholders.[95] SAWC also noted that after an initial request for input, the GBGB restricted the practical involvement of animal charities in drawing up its scheme.[96] For all these reasons, the idea that the GBGB's Welfare Strategy could ensure a good quality of life for greyhounds was found to be unconvincing.

Significant gaps, both in funding and support as well as approaches, resign greyhound racing to continue much as it has before without better safeguards or standards for racing and greyhound care. SAWC was particularly concerned that there is no effort to change track design to reduce injury risk, and the behavioural and psychological health of dogs is given little weight.[97]

Dogs Trust and the RSPCA have also expressed their own concerns around the GBGB's Welfare Strategy. As longtime members of the Greyhound Forum, they were not invited to comment on any early drafts of the strategy and were unaware of its publication until public release was imminent.[98] The groups agree with SAWC that GBGB gives insufficient attention to behavioural and psychological health.[99] The need for greyhounds to be psychologically and physically resilient puts the onus on dogs to adapt to the industry rather than changing the industry to ensure it is welfare compatible.[100]

Animal welfare charities agree with SAWC that GBGB gives insufficient attention to behavioural and psychological health.

The groups underscored that since greyhound racing is inherently dangerous for the dogs involved, and running at speed around oval tracks results in significant injury and sometimes death, the failure to look at changing the shape of the racetrack leaves greyhound racing open to injuries to dogs and unnecessary deaths.[101] Additionally, any new commitment to greyhound welfare post-racing is also undermined by GBGB's decision to limit its program benefits through a political lens. Assistance should be offered regardless of a rescue group's position on racing.[102] That said, Dogs Trust and the RSPCA noted that the average cost to rehabilitate a greyhound can reach over £1,000, so charities and adopters cover the majority of costs even given the £420 industry stipend.[103]

4.3 Lack of welfare funding from bookmakers

There is constant tension between the GBGB and the bookmakers surrounding voluntary contributions to greyhound care. In 2016, Ben Webster of The Times reported that leading gambling companies refused to pay into a welfare fund for greyhounds despite making millions of pounds from dog racing. Betting companies profited £237 million from dog racing in 2012 but contributed just £2.9 million to welfare in 2015.[104]

MPs from the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee released a report calling

for a statutory levy on bookmakers after it was determined that more than 40,000 dogs were injured at tracks in a decade and up to 3,700 greyhounds were unaccounted for each year.[105] In January 2017, animal welfare organisations urged the government to apply greater pressure on bookmakers to support welfare, but with no success.[106]

Today greyhound racing in the UK is controlled by three large corporations: Premier Greyhound Racing (part of Entain and the Arena Racing Company) owns the racetracks. The GBGB promotes the industry, handles political affairs, and acts as a self-regulator. And Sports Information Services (SIS) offers the races to gambling companies overseas.

While Premier Greyhound Racing and the GBGB both have high profiles, SIS works quietly to make gambling deals and sell access to UK dog races to various gambling entities around the world. For example, in April 2023, SIS announced that it had reached an agreement with gambling company Jade Entertainment and Gaming Technologies to bring UK dog races to the Philippines.[107] Jade Entertainment is a top promoter of cockfighting. In September 2024, Jade Entertainment CEO Joe Pisano told the Manila Bulletin that 'Sports betting on cockfighting would be natural on what we do today...We want cockfighting to be treated like any other sport and go through the same treatment as any other sport.'[108] In February 2022 the Philippines Senate Committee on Public Order and Security asked the government to suspend Jade Entertainment's gambling license for cockfighting, along with the licenses of six other companies, after 31 people working in the online cockfighting industry were abducted.[109]

Premier Greyhound Racing and the GBGB have also actively recruited political leaders and members of the animal welfare community to provide political cover for its activities. Notable figures including former MP Angela Smith, retired RSPCA Chairman Jeremy Cooper, Lord David Lipsey, and former Dogs Trust CEO Clarissa Baldwin are key examples of this strategy at work.

4.4 Challenges with greyhound adoption

The industry relies on private rescue groups to place greyhounds in homes, and these groups are largely dependent on public support. As stated, the GBGB contributes some funding, but only to racing-friendly groups.[110]

The competition for good quality homes is high. A survey conducted by Dogs Trust revealed that 49,292 stray and abandoned dogs were picked up or surrendered to local authorities across the UK between July 2019 and June 2020. These dogs directly compete with unwanted greyhounds for an extremely limited number of suitable homes. Moreover, the survey figure only included dogs given up to local authorities and did not include dogs directly relinquished to adoption charities, so the true figure is much higher.

The primary adoption agency for greyhounds exiting the British racing industry is the Retired Greyhound Trust (RGT), with over 33 branches across Britain.[112] The RGT placed 2,853 greyhounds in 2021, and it must be understood that these lucky dogs took the place of other companion animals in need.[113] Independent rescues homed a further 1,444 greyhounds that year.[114]

In 2024, Dr Moe Kaur conducted a study of independent rescues that were not part of GBGB's retirement funding scheme. Key findings included:

- There was an average of 30 greyhounds on each waiting list, with a wait time of three months for rescue space to open.
- Of the 410 greyhounds covered in the study, 11% (45) had been at risk of being killed.
- Greyhound racing is part of a multibillion pound gambling industry, yet it relies on the public to fund millions of pounds every year to home greyhounds. The average cost to rescue groups for adopting out a healthy greyhound free of injuries was £1,625. A total of 93% of this or £1,511 was absorbed by the public. Minor injuries added additional costs ranging from £300 to £3,000 and major injuries increased the burden on charities to as much as £8,000.
- 50% (203) of greyhounds had minor dental disease for an average treatment cost of £500. 35% (142) had major dental problems requiring payment of £800 to £1,500 for proper care.
- According to the RGT, its average adoption cost per greyhound in 2023 was £1,625. Therefore, the £400 Greyhound Recovery Scheme bond left 75% of funds to be in dependently raised, amounting to more than £1.5 million.
- There are simply not enough rescue organisations, participating in the scheme or otherwise, available to home greyhounds being discarded by the racing industry, thus creating a perpetual greyhound adoption crisis.[115]

In recent years, the RGT's average adoption cost per greyhound has also increased considerably, from £1,069 per dog in 2019 to £1,625 in 2023. This increase in costs has coincided with a decrease in the 0.6% voluntary levy paid by bookmakers to BRGF.[116] In 2019, the £1.3 million allocated to the RGT was sufficient to home 1,216 greyhounds. In 2023, this same BRGF allocation would fund the adoption of 800 greyhounds.

The RGT has commented on the reduced funding it has received in recent years through the Greyhound Recovery Scheme. It found that the GBGB's GRS accounted for only 14% of the RGT's total income in 2021, whereas funding from all GBGB sources accounted for 37% of the RGT's funding in 2019.[117]

> 'The current model of commercial greyhound racing is, put simply, unsustainable. The sheer numbers of dogs required to fulfill livestreaming contracts (which now make up the bulk of the audience for greyhound racing) is vastly in excess of the number of people coming forward to rehome them once they are no longer active.'
>
> – Tim Doyle, Former CEO of Greyhound Rescue Wales

Industry publications including the Racing Post have acknowledged the lack of space at adoption kennels and that trainers have many greyhounds waiting to be homed. Greyhounds are increasingly stacking up in trainers' kennels, as evidenced by the skyrocketing number of greyhounds listed as 'Retained by Owner/ Trainer' in the GBGB's 2023 and 2024 data figures. The sheer number of greyhounds churned out by the industry overwhelms adoption groups and trainers alike, externalises the true whole-of-life costs of greyhound racing on to the charity sector and the public and puts greyhounds in difficult periods of limbo.[118]

Greyhound rescue charities have repeatedly expressed that the current model is unsustainable, and that the 'sheer numbers of dogs required to fulfill livestreaming contracts is vastly in excess of the number of people coming forward to adopt them.'[119] In the words of Greyhound Rescue Wales, 'Trying to solve the rehoming crisis without stopping the influx of dogs is like trying to fill a bath with the plug out, it is futile and wasteful.'[120]

4.5 Friction between the RGT and the GBGB

In February 2019, it was reported that the RGT had distributed a leaflet that acknowledged greyhounds need 'more safe places to go' and 'have limited and sometimes lonely lives...from the kennel to the track and back.'

Days later, two GBGB directors published an open letter expressing deep concerns with the RGT leaflet, demanding an apology and threatening to sever the GBGB's association with the RGT.[121] The bullying continued in August, when GBGB Director John Curran was quoted as saying that there was a growing feeling that the GBGB could operate its own adoption scheme more efficiently than the RGT, and that the RGT was standing on the cliff edge looking down.[122] Greyhound Star Editor Floyd Amphlett claimed that the RGT had lost the trust of the great majority of industry stakeholders, describing the concerns raised by the RGT as opaque, arrogant and aloof and suggesting that the GBGB should consider directing its funding elsewhere.[123]

In April 2020, the GBGB alleged financial irregularities and leadership instability at the RGT. It directed the BGRF to refrain from providing its annual contribution of £108,000 and to pay monies directly to trainers' kennels at 50p per greyhound per day. The RGT, which had already suffered a £100,000 reduction in GBGB funding the previous year, could not understand why the racing industry had chosen to publicly attack the very charity that ensures the adoption of roughly 3,500 surrendered greyhounds per year.[124]
In August, an official Charity Commission review found that the allegations made against the RGT were unfounded, and the Retired Greyhound Trust continued on as the industry's primary adoption arm.[125]

Greyhound Trust

'It is a shame and frustrating that the GBGB have decided, for reasons that we do not understand, to publicly attack the very charity that ensures the homing of 3,500 greyhounds retiring from grey-hound racing every year.'

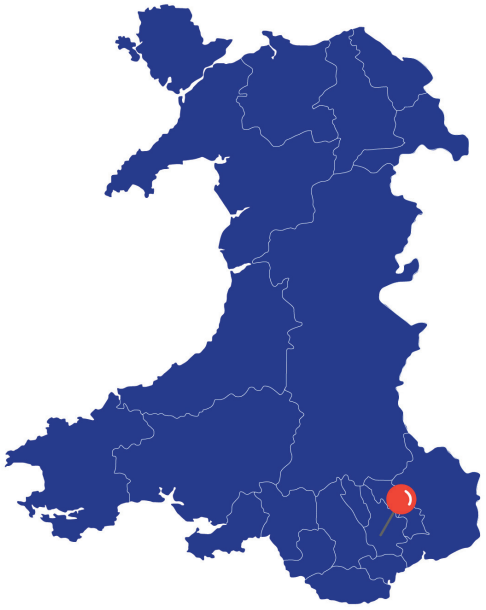
– Lisa Morris, Chief Executive, Greyhound Trust

4.6 Failure of the Greyhound Forum

The Greyhound Forum was created in 1994 in recognition of the fact that greyhounds constituted a large proportion of the UK's stray, abandoned and unwanted dogs.[126] The Forum comprised industry and animal welfare representatives, including the Dogs Trust and the RSPCA. Both groups had been working with the greyhound racing industry for many years with the goal of improving humane conditions and policies.

But over time, the two groups found that suggestions for better animal welfare were largely dismissed, overridden or simply unachievable by the GBGB. Recommendations for changing the shape of tracks from oval to straight and improving data collection were never realised. They were left unconvinced that the current structure of the Forum would ever be sufficient to achieve the significant change needed to protect dogs. Additionally, they questioned the failure to include representatives from Ireland in the Forum given the clear breeding link and the multinational nature of the industry.[127]

In September 2022, the RSPCA and the Dogs Trust officially withdrew from the Forum.[128] The RGT and the Kennel Club have retained membership.[129]



5 A way forward

5.1 Wales bans greyhound racing

In 2021, Welsh dog rescue charity Hope Rescue launched a petition campaign to prohibit dog racing in Wales. The petition 'Ban greyhound racing in Wales' earned over 35,000 signatures, making it the most signed parliamentary petition in Welsh history.[130] The campaign gained the early support of prominent community leaders and lawmakers, including Mick Antoniw MS, Jane Dodds MS, and Alex Davies-Jones MP.[131] Opposition to the proposed licensing of Valley Greyhounds in Caerphilly County drew more public attention to the petition early the following year, and Peredur Owen Griffiths MS joined the growing voices in support in February 2022.[132] The following month, Hope Rescue officially submitted its petition, alongside Greyhound Rescue Wales and Forever Hounds Trust. Vanessa Waddon, founder of Hope Rescue, testified that licensing Valley Greyhounds would only lead to more injuries and deaths and surplus dogs needing adopting, increasing the burden on rescue groups such as hers.[133] In December 2022, the Senedd Petitions Committee concluded that greyhound racing should be banned in Wales.[134]

Polling commissioned by GREY2K USA Worldwide and conducted by Panelbase in February 2023 found that 57%

of Welsh residents would support lawmakers voting to phase out greyhound racing, while only 21% are opposed.[135] A March Senedd debate revealed overwhelming cross-party support. The Welsh Government accepted the Petitions Committee's recommendation for a phased ban.[136]

In early July, Alain Thomas, founder and chairman of Greyhound Rescue Wales, stated that after his organisation publicly supported Hope Rescue's petition, the Valley track stopped releasing dogs to the charity. Additionally, the GBGB stopped providing financial assistance to home greyhounds to Greyhound Rescue Wales at this time.[137]

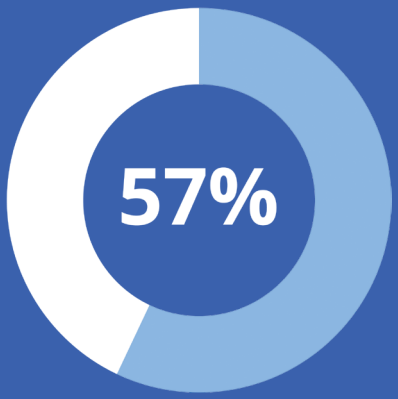
Also in July, and despite the welfare concerns of animal charities, plans to further entrench Wales' only greyhound stadium were approved.[138] In August, Valley Greyhound Stadium was granted a GBGB license for the first time. Multiple greyhounds were injured at its re-opening event.[139]

In February 2025, the Welsh Government announced that it intended to implement a ban on dog racing as soon as practically possible. This decision followed an animal

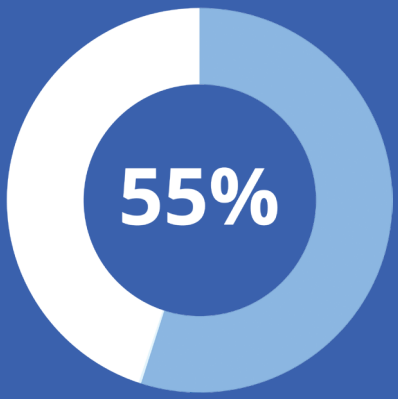
In February 2025, the Welsh Government announced that it intended to implement a ban on dog racing as soon as practically possible.

welfare consultation in which nearly two-thirds of responders supported the government's new position on greyhound racing.[140] In July, Deputy First Minister Huw Irranca-Davies MS announced further details, including the creation of an implementation body for the transition towards a ban. Davies confirmed that legislation would be brought forward in the Autumn, and that the group would safeguard the welfare of the dogs within the industry, while ensuring a minimal impact on the local community and economy.[141] Davies referenced the campaign work of the Cut the Chase Coalition and the global trend away from greyhound racing as key factors in the decision.[142] Following the publication of the Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill by the Welsh Government, it passed Stage 1 in the Senedd in December 2025 by a vote of 36-11.[143] The Senedd formally approved the bill at Stage 4 on 17 March 2026 by a vote of 39-10.[144]

GREY2K asked Welsh residents what they think of dog racing.



want lawmakers to phase out greyhound racing.



think greyhound racing is not important to Wales' economy.

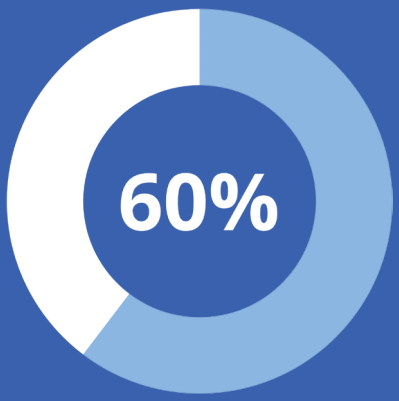
5.2 Bill to end greyhound racing in Scotland passes



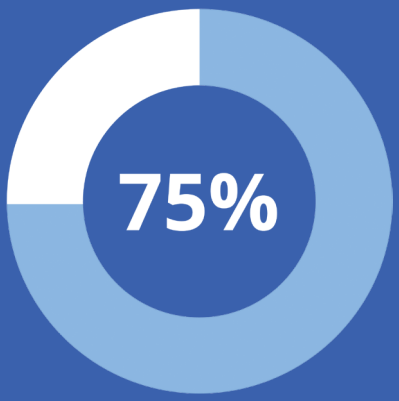
In February 2019, Scotland Against Greyhound Exploitation (SAGE) lodged a petition in the Scottish Parliament to end greyhound racing which subsequently became the most signed parliamentary petition in Scottish history, securing 29,686 signatures.[145] PE1758 prompted an official review by the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee, with Mark Ruskell MSP coming forward to champion the cause in March 2022. The following month, SAGE officially presented to the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee in support of the measure.[146]

In October 2022, a group of cross-party MSPs backed the call for greyhound racing to be banned in a Holyrood debate. Impassioned speakers including Ruth Maguire, Annie Wells, Christine Grahame, Rona Mackay and Emma Harper joined with Mark Ruskell in support.[147] The Scottish Government confirmed later that month that it was open to all options, including new

GREY2K asked Scottish residents what they think of dog racing.



think lawmakers should vote to phase out greyhound racing.



believe dog racing is not important to the Scottish economy.

legislation to address 'shared concerns' over the welfare of dogs.[148]

In January 2023, polling commissioned by GREY2K USA Worldwide and conducted by Panelbase showed that 60% of Scots would support lawmakers voting to phase out greyhound racing, while only 20% oppose.[149]

In a Committee evidence session held in April 2023, MSPs were warned by the GBGB and the owner of Thornton Stadium, Paul Brignal, that regulating the dog track would be a 'death knell' leading to its closure. Brignal also repeated his position that paying for a veterinarian to be on site during races was unnecessary.[150]

In June, GREY2K USA Worldwide and The League Against Cruel Sports joined eight other animal welfare organisations to launch the Unbound the Greyhound Campaign, led by OneKind, with an aim to raise public awareness and put pressure on key policy makers to introduce a phased end to greyhound racing in Scotland.[151]

In September 2023, greyhound advocates from around the world gathered in Edinburgh for GREY2K USA Worldwide's Third International Greyhounds Around the Globe Conference. Lawmakers and advocates from ten countries were in attendance.[152]

Just a few months later, MSP Mark Ruskell announced his intention to propose legislation to outlaw greyhound racing in Scotland.[153]

The Scottish Parliament formally approved the bill at Stage 3 on 18 March 2026 by a vote of 70-27.

Mark Ruskell MSP formally published his Bill to end greyhound racing in Scotland in April 2025.[154] Of the 789 responses to the Bill consultation, over 86% supported a ban on dog racing.[155] In September, the Scottish Government committed to backing the general principles of Ruskell's bill to phase out greyhound racing.[156] In January 2026, the Greyhound Racing (Offences) (Scotland) Bill passed Stage 1 by a vote of 69-27.[157] The Scottish Parliament formally approved the bill at Stage 3 on 18 March 2026 by a vote of 70-27.[158]



Unbound the Greyhound Coalition at the Holyrood, 23 April 2025 (Edinburgh Photographic)

5.3 Momentum for greyhounds at Westminster

In 2019, a parliamentary petition received over 100,000 British signatures, thus triggering a formal debate in March 2022. Christina Rees MP and John McNally MP spoke in support of a ban on dog racing, while Andrew Rosindell MP and Ian Lavery MP argued in favor of continuing the activity.[159]

In December 2021, Dr Lisa Cameron MP tabled an Early Day Motion calling for regulations designed to improve the lives of greyhounds including implementing a statutory levy on bookmakers; ending the self-regulation of greyhound racing; implementing whole-of-life tracking; issuing a moratorium on the construction of new tracks, and prohibiting the re-licensing of old tracks. Twenty MPs signed onto her motion, including MPs of the Scottish National Party, Democratic Unionist Party, Conservative, Green Party, Labour, Alliance, and Plaid Cymru.[160]

After concluding they could not effectively reform greyhound racing from within the Greyhound Forum, the Dogs Trust, Blue Cross, and RSPCA formed the Cut the Chase Coalition in September 2022, calling for a phased end to dog racing.[161]

Two years later, in September 2024, Green Party members voted to support an immediate prohibition on greyhound racing, becoming the first political party in the UK to do so.[162] This successful effort was spearheaded by greyhound rescuer, campaigner and winner of the 2026 Gorton and Denton by-election, Hannah Spencer MP.

In July 2025, Liz Jarvis MP tabled an Early Day Motion calling for a ban on greyhound racing in the UK, which has been signed by 34 MPs. She urged the Government to follow the lead of New Zealand and Wales to wind down the activity.[163]



Adrian Ramsay ©House of Commons/Roger Harris

> 'We are the first party to pledge to ban greyhound racing, a position supported by the RSPCA, Dog's Trust, Blue Cross, and a majority of the public. Preventing greyhounds from being raced for the benefit of the betting industry and commercial gain would bring an end to the unnecessary deaths and suffering of these dogs.'
>
> – Adrian Ramsay MP

The following month, Animal Aid launched its Hounds of the Underground campaign which featured a two week exhibition in major London underground stations, with placards depicting the stories of industry survivors. Peaceful demonstrations were also held at every single active racetrack in England, and a government petition was launched.[164]

5.4 Economic assessment and repurposed tracks

In 2024, GREY2K USA Worldwide commissioned BiGGAR Economics to investigate the financial viability of racing. In its report entitled Economic Impact Assessment of Thornton Greyhounds and Alternative Uses BiGGAR found that the dog track has a limited economic footprint, contributing a total economic impact of just £62,000 GVA and the equivalent of less than one full-time job in County Fife. It concluded that if the site were repurposed and used for housing, for example, the land would bring far greater economic benefit to the community and to the nation.

Specifically, the development of new housing at the site of Thornton Stadium would generate a range of economic impacts in Fife, and across Scotland, including:

- a construction impact of £1.5 million GVA and 18 job years in Fife, and £3.2 million GVA and 53 job years in Scotland
- an annual impact from resident expenditure of £137,000 GVA and one job in Fife, and £209,000 GVA and two additional jobs in Scotland

In addition, the council tax raised from the occupants of the new houses could also generate annual revenues of £49,600 for Fife Council. Further, the development of new houses would add to the capital stock of Fife, amounting to a capital asset value of £5.9 million.[165]

A 2023 report prepared by Oliver & Ohlbaum offered similar findings, citing 'declining attendances' and economic conditions making it 'more lucrative to close the track and develop the land' as key reasons for the closure of seven GBGB tracks between 2014 and 2022.[166] Following this trend, in 2024 it was revealed that greyhound racing at Swindon's Abbey Stadium would cease at the end of 2025 with plans for a housing development on the track land. A planning application included proposals for the development of 130 homes, including shops and food outlets.[167]

Other examples of repurposing of tracks include:

1. Henlow Greyhound Stadium, UK (Last Race Date: January 21, 2024) Planning permission for housing
2. Shawfield Stadium (UK) (Last Race Date: March 2020) Planning for housing, hotel and retail space
3. Portsmouth Stadium, UK (Last Race Date: 2010) Housing



'Over the years most greyhound tracks in Scotland have been successfully repurposed for housing. The owners of Thornton should weigh up their options for the future alongside the local community.'

– Mark Ruskell MSP

4. Walthamstow, UK (Last Race Date: 2008) Housing
5. Catford Stadium (UK) (Last Race Date: November 5, 2003) Housing development, retail and community space
6. Borough Park, Blackpool (UK) (Last Race Date: November 28, 1997) Car park, health club and cinema complex
7. Cork Greyhound Stadium, IRE (Last Race Date: 1996) Western Gateway Building (science building of the University College Cork)
8. Ayr (Tams Brig) Greyhound Stadium (UK) (Last Race Date: December 30, 1972) Ayr Curling Club and ice rink - operated from 1972 until 2023
9. Caemawr Greyhound Stadium (UK) (Last Race Date: Early 1970s) Housing

Despite annual attendance of UK sport activities reaching a record 76.2 million in 2022, greyhound racing attracted only around 800,000, well below the two million figure of 2013.[168] And while betting turnover increased significantly for horse racing and football to 2021, betting on greyhound racing has only declined since 2015.[169] Oliver & Ohlbaum find greyhound race betting is likely to appeal to an older demographic, and is otherwise a filler for gamblers between betting events of greater interest.[170]

Today just over 1,500 full-time jobs are associated with greyhound racing.[171] The number of trainers has fallen from 835 in 2013 to 500 in 2023, a decline of 40%.[172]

According to a 2022 YouGov poll commissioned by the RSPCA, only 1% of the British public follow and participate in greyhound racing and think that dog racing is culturally important. And when queried on which is more important, 81% choose the welfare of greyhounds over just 5% who emphasised jobs associated with the industry.[173]

6 Conclusion

Greyhounds suffer serious injuries, some of which are fatal, and the GBGB cannot safeguard their welfare.

Overbreeding in Ireland burdens the UK charity sector with the financial and emotional costs of attempting to save dogs caught up in a relentless cycle of cruelty.

Animal welfare experts have determined the end of greyhound racing is desirable and that racing greyhounds have poorer welfare than other dogs.

Jurisdictions around the world are making the responsible decision to phase out dog racing, and protect greyhounds. The UK should take the necessary steps to end this outdated and unpopular form of entertainment which causes demonstrable harm to dogs.

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Formed in February of 2001, GREY2K USA Worldwide is the largest greyhound protection organization in the world. As a non-profit enity, the group promotes the adoption of ex-racers and works to pass laws to end the cruelty of dog racing across the globe.

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