

Written submission: The Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill

Introduction

RSPCA Cymru welcomes the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee on the Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill. We have been calling for a phased end to greyhound racing since September 2022, predominantly through our work as part of the Cut the Chase coalition which comprises Blue Cross, Dogs Trust, Greyhound Rescue Wales, Hope Rescue and ourselves.

Prior to the formation of this coalition, we undertook a detailed and intensive policy review which led to us determining that only an end to greyhound racing in Wales - and throughout the UK - can adequately protect dog welfare. This came following many years of attempting to work alongside the industry to secure much-needed improvements. While some progress was made through this approach - such as the publication of annual injury and retirement data, for example - we have determined that there are a myriad of issues that cannot be solved by regulation, via the Greyhound Board of Great Britain or otherwise (GBGB), as detailed within this response.

As well as having strong support among organisations such as ourselves, there is clear public support for a ban on greyhound racing too. Towards the end of 2024, a [summary of responses](#) to the Welsh Government's consultation on the licensing of animal welfare establishments, activities and exhibits was published demonstrating that almost two thirds (64.69%) of respondents either support a phased or imminent ban on greyhound racing. Importantly, it was found that support for a phased ban was stronger than support for the licensing of keepers, owners and trainers of racing dogs, which was also considered. While 55.52% of respondents supported the licensing of greyhound keepers, owners and trainers, a clear majority of those (31.88%) were also in favour of a phased ban. As such, the outcome of this consultation provided irrefutable evidence of the strength of support for an end to greyhound racing in Wales.

Concerns relevant to greyhound racing in Wales

We strongly support an end to greyhound racing in Wales to prevent the unnecessary and preventable deaths of hundreds of dogs every year, while concurrently eradicating thousands of individual injuries. Running around oval-shaped tracks at speeds of up to 40mph is inherently dangerous for the dogs involved, as demonstrated by data from GBGB. According to the [latest statistics](#) published in June 2025, 346 dogs involved in racing died for reasons other than natural causes/illness in 2024, while 3,809 injuries were also recorded. For the first time since the publication of these statistics began, the number of track fatalities increased, with 123 dogs having died at tracks licensed by GBGB - up from 109 the previous year. Negotiating bends during racing, and especially the first one, causes areas of congestion which increase the unavoidable risk of high speed collisions although it should be noted that, there are other factors associated with race tracks which also pose risk including design of the track, starting box and lure as well as the track's preparation and maintenance. Injuries experienced by greyhounds are unique and are seldom seen in other breeds of dog. While the aforementioned data covers tracks in both Wales and England - with GBGB regulating 19 at present - they are the first set of statistics that cover a full year of racing at the Valley Greyhound Stadium in Ystrad Mynach which became regulated by GBGB in 2023. A concerning lack of transparency remains as to the exact numbers of dogs injured and/or killed in Wales as GBGB does not publish track level statistics. However, with GBGB regulating 19 tracks at present, it would be reasonable to suggest that each track sees an average of at least six deaths and

200 recorded injuries a year. This in itself demonstrates that participating in racing poses a serious and unmitigated risk to animal welfare that regulation cannot prevent. It is our view that the death of one dog in the name of entertainment and profit is one too many, hence why we strongly support a ban on greyhound racing in Wales.

While the statistics above provide solid evidence that greyhound racing poses an unnecessary risk to animal welfare - a risk that is present each and every single time a dog is raced - our concerns extend beyond this data. In 2024, [5,795 dogs](#) left the racing industry, 55.7% of whom were handed over to trusts and charities. The animal rescue sector is currently working under significant and unprecedented pressure with the greyhound racing industry's undeniable reliance upon the sector placing further strain on our already stretched resources. Like many others, the RSPCA is having to rely upon private animal boarding establishments to assist with our capacity issues as our centers in Wales - and further afield - are full. As such, we are concerned that allowing greyhound racing to continue - and become more frequent in Wales, if current trends continue - creates a permanent problem for the rehoming sector. GBGB's latest statistics also demonstrate a concerning trend of more dogs being used for breeding purposes once they exit the industry, with the number of dogs being repurposed for breeding having almost doubled in comparison to the previous year (174 in 2023 vs 84 in 2024). The more greyhounds being bred, the more that will inevitably require assistance from charities and trusts further down the line.

We also hold concerns around the lack of statutory regulation for trainers' kennels and the reliance on voluntary compliance with the Greyhound Board of Great Britain's standards to safeguard welfare. It has been previously found that some dogs used for greyhound racing spend [95% of their time](#) in trainers' kennels with little opportunity for social interaction with people and an absence of enrichment. The manner in which racing dogs are kept - along with the frequent risks they are exposed to - differentiates them from other dogs covered by the Animal Welfare Act 2006 such as companion animals, for example. Kenneling dogs for long periods of time can have detrimental effects on their welfare and behaviour, which when coupled with the dog's early life experiences which are typically outside of a home setting, has the potential to make them more challenging to rehome in the future.

The industry's funding model relevant to greyhound welfare is also insecure, as it is heavily reliant on voluntary contributions from bookmakers. For the period 2023-24, this totalled [£7.3m](#) - a 4% reduction on the previous year. In comparison, the horse racing income derived from its statutory levy totalled [£105m](#) in 2023/24. The lack of any statutory levy being made available for GBGB to implement its animal welfare strategic improvements restricts the industry's ability to ensure that each and every greyhound involved in racing can experience a life worth living. As such, this remains a significant concern around allowing the greyhound racing industry to continue.

With there being only one remaining greyhound stadium in Wales, it is likely that the vast majority of people in Wales do not attend or participate in greyhound racing. Spectator numbers at greyhound tracks on a UK wide basis have decreased significantly in recent years from [2 million in 2010 to 800,000 in 2022](#). A number of tracks have closed through the UK in recent decades, including a number in Wales. According to polling undertaken by Cut the Chase in 2024, only 5% of people in Wales follow or participate in greyhound racing. Furthermore, less than a quarter of respondents (23%) stated that they consider greyhound racing to be important to Welsh culture¹. It is our firm view that greyhound racing is not ethically justifiable because of the aforementioned welfare and governance issues and that it has lost its social license to operate in a modern-day Wales. We also believe that the animal welfare benefits that banning greyhound racing would secure far outweigh any potential cultural, social or economic benefits.

¹ Savanta interviewed 1,030 UK adults aged 18+ online between 10 and 21 February 2024. Data was weighted to be representative of the UK population by age, sex, region and social grade.

[The Prohibition of Greyhound Racing \(Wales\) Bill](#)

In its current form, the Bill should prohibit the commercial racing of greyhounds at stadiums and similar venues while, by definition, also outlawing training and trialling of greyhounds for racing purposes as this is also classed as 'greyhound racing'. This is particularly positive as the schooling of greyhounds for racing purposes carries the same inherent risks as racing on a commercial basis. The proposed legislation currently covers the operator or track/similar venue and any persons involved in organising greyhound racing. To mitigate any unintended consequences that could arise such as the facilitation of illegal/underground racing, it is highly important that the legislation is applicable to individuals as well as track operators/owners.

Positively, the passing of this Bill in 2026 could see racing end in Wales by the 1st of April 2027 and the RSPCA is highly supportive of such action. However, in its current form, its provisions may also see greyhound racing continue here until April 2030. As members of the Cut the Chase coalition and others across the animal welfare sector are actively preparing to rehome the dogs affected, we question whether such a long timeframe is necessary. To support the rehoming, rehabilitation and treatment of any dogs impacted by the end of greyhound racing in Wales, the Wales Greyhound Partnership (WGP) was established shortly after the ban was announced in February. The WGP comprises nine animal welfare organisations - including our coalition's members - and at this current time has the capacity to rehome up to 258 dogs. With an average length of time for rehoming of two months and 120 dogs rehomed since its conception, the partnership has clearly demonstrated that it is highly possible to rehome dogs affected by the ban in a much shorter time period than the current legislation would allow for. As such, our coalition is actively calling for greyhound racing to be ended in Wales within 12 months of passing of the relevant legislation. It is our view that such a timeframe will enable the dogs affected to be treated, rehomed and rehabilitated by ourselves in a safe and realistic manner, while minimising the harm racing poses to dogs. Inevitably, the longer that racing continues legally in Wales, the more dogs that will be put at risk of injury, or worse. A timeframe which could enable racing to continue on a legal basis for up to four years will see racing stocks replenished on a repeat basis, putting more animals at risk as well as additional pressure on the rescue sector. However, ending greyhound racing in a year will give both the rescue sector and industry a definitive deadline to work towards, which should simplify the implementation of the ban for all. This approach has also shown to be achievable elsewhere when tracks have been closed by the industry. For example, the closure of a track in Swindon was announced in March 2025, with racing to cease at the end of December 2025¹.

As it stands, a person found guilty of an offence under the Bill in its current format would be liable on summary conviction (i.e. those that can only be heard by a Magistrates' Court) to an unlimited fine. It is important that the penalties relevant to the legislation act as enough of a deterrent to prevent racing from continuing on an illegal basis while also minimising the risk of any potential repeat offences. We therefore welcome the Bill's intention to introduce unlimited fines for the relevant offences. However, we still question whether the potential for custodial sentences should also be considered to fully ensure that the legislation has the desired effect.

[Conclusion](#)

RSPCA Cymru strongly supports an end to greyhound racing in Wales and the provisions of the proposed Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill. It is our firm view that only an end to greyhound racing via this legislation can protect and future-proof the welfare of the dogs who are put at risk through racing. As it stands, Wales is currently among only a small handful of countries where commercial greyhound racing still takes place. However, the passing of the aforementioned Bill could see Wales become the first UK nation to end greyhound racing, thus building upon the many achievements made for animal welfare in recent years. We now look forward to providing oral evidence to the committee later this month and to supporting this Bill as it makes its way through the Senedd's legislative process. With the evidence in favour of an end to greyhound racing, and the support for such action both strong, we urge the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee to join us in supporting the Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill.