

Welsh Government - Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd

Dear Minister,

As concerned animal lovers, we are writing to you to welcome the inclusion of a question relevant to racing greyhounds in the Welsh Government's latest consultation on animal welfare. We are among the many members of the public who wish to see a ban on this outdated activity in Wales, to protect the welfare of countless dogs at risk of injury - or worse.

Once deeply ingrained in British culture, interest in greyhound racing has thankfully dwindled over the years - demonstrating the emergence of a modern, more compassionate society. Still, this activity enables animal welfare to be jeopardised for entertainment purposes by bookmakers, as well as racing greyhound owners and trainers.

Sadly, the regulation of greyhound racing - by the Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB) or otherwise - is not enough to protect the welfare of the dogs affected. Racing greyhounds often comes at the expense of their welfare, with GBGB's [most recent statistics](#) confirming that thousands of injuries occur at licensed race tracks every year. These statistics also prove that at least 244 racing greyhounds died for reasons other than illness or natural causes in 2022 alone.

As you will be aware, Wales' only remaining track - the Valley Greyhounds Stadium in Ystrad Mynach - recently obtained a licence from GBGB. While the industry considers this to be adequate in terms of protecting the welfare of greyhounds raced in Wales, we wholeheartedly disagree.

There have also been reports that there are ongoing issues for GBGB in terms of securing a sustainable income to deliver their welfare strategy, which casts significant doubt on its ability to protect greyhound welfare.

Greyhound racing comes at far too high a price for the dogs used, both during and after their racing careers have ended - if they make it that far. However, it is reassuring that Wales - a nation with high standards of animal welfare - is further exploring the issues around greyhound racing.

Wales is one of ten countries where commercial greyhound racing still takes place - alongside England, Scotland and Ireland. As a result of the launch of the aforementioned consultation, Wales is now in the perfect position to stop greyhound racing in its tracks. Not only would this set a precedent for higher standards of dog welfare, but it would also put pressure on other GB nations to follow suit.

More than 5,000 greyhounds exit the licensed industry each year, with many suffering from long-term physical and/or mental trauma as a result of their experiences. This leaves charities and the rescue sector to pick up the pieces - with more than two thirds of retired racing greyhounds currently handed over to such organisations at the end of their careers*. The majority of animal centres in Wales are currently full - raising questions over the validity of purposely creating more dogs in need of rescue as a result of greyhound racing.

Because of this - and the aforementioned safety concerns - dog welfare experts including the RSPCA, Blue Cross, Dogs Trust, Greyhound Rescue Wales and Hope Rescue have united to call for a phased-end to greyhound racing. Such action from the Welsh Government would end this exploitative 'sport' in Wales, while also putting provisions in place for the rehoming of the dogs that are currently being raced.

We are sure you will agree that greyhounds' lives are not to be gambled. We hope this letter further demonstrates the public's ongoing support for an end to greyhound racing in Wales and encourages the Welsh Government to progress a much-needed ban - it is long overdue.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Slawinski
Director of Policy, Prevention and Campaigns at the RSPCA

*69.9% of retired racing greyhounds are currently handed over to trusts and charities at the end of their careers - GBGB [statistics](#)