



The case for an end to greyhound racing in the UK



Contents

Executive summary	4	4.6 Transparency, visibility and traceability is lacking	29
1. Introduction and aims	6	4.7 Requirements and provisions to protect greyhound welfare are lacking	30
2. Introduction to the greyhound racing industry	8	4.7.1 National regulation is inconsistent	30
2.1 What is greyhound racing?	8	4.7.2 Industry regulation can't guarantee good welfare	30
2.2 How is the greyhound industry regulated?	8	4.7.3 UKAS accreditation can't guarantee good welfare	31
2.2.1 Industry regulated tracks in the UK	8	4.7.4 Industry regulation cannot safeguard welfare from cradle to grave	31
2.2.1.1 Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB)	8	4.7.5 Disciplinary cases highlight a domination of substance violations and persistence in welfare cases	32
2.2.1.2 The Irish Coursing Club	8	4.7.6 Money available for welfare funding continues to reduce	33
2.2.2 The independent sector in the UK	8	5. How does greyhound racing contribute to the UK economy?	34
3. What is the typical career path for a racing greyhound?	10	5.1 Greyhound racing is undergoing sustained economic decline	34
3.1 Breeding	12	5.2 Greyhound racing occupies a niche and declining position as a sport	35
3.2 Rearing	14	5.3 The greyhound industry impacts on the economic costs of others	35
3.3 Schooling	15	6. What is the economic impact of ending greyhound racing?	36
3.3.1 Non chasers:	15	6.1 Repurposing sites would offer greater benefits for employment	36
3.4 Trials and sales	15	6.2 Repurposing sites unlocks greater economic opportunity	37
3.5 Race training	16	7. Greyhound racing is a dying industry	38
3.6 Racing	18	8. Ending greyhound racing is the only way to safeguard dog welfare	40
3.6.1 Race types	18	Table 9 Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB) national statistics for injuries, retirement and deaths: 2017 to 2025	43
3.6.2 Race frequency	19		
3.6.3 Career longevity	19		
3.7 Life after exiting the greyhound racing industry	20		
3.8 Transportation	21		
4. What are the key concerns associated with the greyhound industry?	22		
4.1 Welfare issues affect greyhounds at every stage of their life cycle.	22		
4.2 Greyhound racing is inherently dangerous	24		
4.3 There is no consistent and secure funding source	28		
4.4 Wastage levels are high	28		
4.5 Reliance upon the rescue sector is high and uncompensated	28		

Public support for greyhound racing is lacking. **91%** of respondents said that they neither follow or participate in greyhound racing⁹⁵

Executive summary

Blue Cross, Dogs Trust, Hope Rescue, and the RSPCA believe that commercial greyhound racing is incompatible with contemporary values towards animal welfare and regulation does not and cannot safeguard welfare. Phasing out the activity is the only effective way to protect the welfare of all racing greyhounds.

The report documents the rise and sustained decline of greyhound racing in the UK over the past century, demonstrating that the industry remains rooted in a moral framework incompatible with modern animal welfare standards, such as those established by the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and the Animal Sentience Act 2022. Political scrutiny has increased alongside public concern, leading to legislative bans in Wales and Scotland in 2026, leaving only England, Northern Ireland, Australia, the Republic of Ireland, and the United States where commercial racing remains legal.

Key Concerns Associated with Greyhound Racing:

Welfare issues are pervasive across the greyhound's entire career path:

Breeding and Rearing: The vast majority of dogs licensed to race on the Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB) tracks are Irish bred (84.5% in 2024). Practices like Surgical Artificial Insemination (SAI), prohibited for dogs in the UK, remain legal for greyhounds in the Republic of Ireland (RoI) while outdated and painful practices are used to identify puppies. Many greyhounds are reared in rural settings, lacking the habituation and socialisation needed to adapt successfully to a companion home environment post-racing.

Confinement: Racing greyhounds spend an estimated 95% of their time in kennels. Footage of poor kennelling practices persists across the industry, despite industry standards.

Disciplinary Issues: Disciplinary committee cases consistently highlight issues such as increasing substance-related violations (83% of cases in 2025) and persistent welfare violations like neglect and cruelty (10% of cases in 2025).

Racing at high speed around oval tracks is inherently dangerous, leading to high levels of injury and death:

Injury and Death Data: Data from GBGB licensed tracks between 2017 and 2025 show nearly 4,400 greyhounds died or were put to sleep and over 38,000 injuries were recorded.

Since the GBGB launched their 'A Good Life for Every Greyhound' welfare strategy in May 2022, euthanasia at the trackside has increased from 99 to 161 dogs; a shocking 62% rise.

Track Design: Curved tracks pose significant danger, particularly the first bend where most incidents are recorded due to congestion and high speeds.

There is a critical lack of oversight, transparency, and accountability throughout the industry.

Traceability Gaps: No comprehensive, mandatory, and independently verified traceability system tracks every greyhound from birth to retirement, including health and injury events. The fate of approximately 10% of Irish bred puppies registered at whelping is unknown as they are not subsequently registered at 12 months of age, suggesting high levels of wastage.

While welfare relevant information is published by the industry, the absence of publicly available data about destinations of retired dogs, reasons for career ending events and individual injury and euthanasia records prevents external scrutiny and welfare oversight.

Inconsistent Regulation: The multi-nation nature of the industry leads to significant regulatory inconsistencies, severely restricting the GBGB's ability to safeguard welfare from 'cradle to grave,' particularly for dogs bred and reared in the Republic of Ireland. Furthermore, UKAS accreditation only verifies process, not actual welfare protection.



Reliance on Charities: The industry places a heavy, uncompensated reliance on the charity sector for rehoming. The Greyhound Retirement Scheme releases only £420 per dog to participating organisations, which is significantly lower than the true cost of rehoming (which ranges from £1,976 to £2,800 per dog). Access to the scheme is prohibited for those who publicly call for an end to racing.

Greyhound racing is undergoing a sustained economic decline, occupying a niche and shrinking position as a sport.

Shrinking Industry: The number of GBGB licensed tracks has fallen by 30% in the last decade to just 18. Annual attendance has dropped rapidly to less than a million in recent years.

Betting and Funding: Greyhound racing accounts for only about 10% of UK betting turnover and betting income has not recovered to pre-COVID levels. Welfare funding, derived from voluntary bookmaker contributions to the British Greyhound Racing Fund (BGRF), is inconsistent and declining, dropping to £6.75 million in 2024–25. The lack of a statutory levy raises serious questions about the long-term sustainability of welfare standards.

Economic Opportunity: Repurposing greyhound stadia sites for alternative uses, such as housing or mixed-use redevelopment, is generally more economically viable. Economic assessments show that such redevelopment creates substantially greater and more sustainable economic returns and employment benefits compared to the limited, declining contribution of continued racing.



There is only one way forward:

Over the past four years, the number of dogs euthanased trackside has increased despite GBGB's welfare strategy 'A Good Life for Every Greyhound'. Racing is getting more dangerous. The breadth and persistence of welfare issues across every life stage demonstrate that, without radical and systemic change, it is impossible to ensure every racing greyhound experiences at least a life worth living.

While a number of systemic changes are needed – such as a single, fully transparent, UK-wide and Republic of Ireland-compatible traceability database; independently funded regulatory oversight; and action on racetrack safety to mandate a transition to straight tracks – the means and appetite to achieve this level of change are clearly lacking.

Given the industry's decline, the lack of public support (81% of the public prioritize welfare over employment opportunities created by racing), and the inability of current mechanisms to protect dog welfare, the report concludes that ending greyhound racing is the only way to safeguard dog welfare.

We call on policy and key decision makers to commit to a phased end to greyhound racing across the UK.

1 Introduction and aims



Welfare issues affect every stage of a racing greyhound's life

1. Laybourn, K. (2019) *Going to the Dogs: A History of Greyhound Racing in Britain, 1926-2017*. Manchester University Press.
2. There are currently 19 licensed tracks in Great Britain. www.gbgb.org.uk
3. Jim Power Economics. *The Economic and Financial Significance of the Irish Greyhound Industry*. July 2021.
4. Wastage can be considered as the number of individual animals bred for a purpose who are subsequently discarded from an industry.
5. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/inquiry-launched-into-mass-killing-of-greyhounds-j9q0tmzctzm>
6. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYTb2qBjIMM>
7. <https://www.thejournal.ie/readme/cruelty-to-greyhounds-in-clare-6995306-Mar2026/>
8. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-02-17/making-a-killing/6127124>
9. A life worth living is one in which positive experiences predominate. For animals living under human management to achieve this quality of life, mandatory standards must ensure positive experiences.

Commercial greyhound racing, the chasing of a mechanical hare around an oval track, has been a feature in Great Britain since 1926.

It originated from coursing where greyhounds chase live game animals e.g. hares, in open spaces. In its early days, greyhound racing was hugely popular; within a decade of its introduction, there were 200 racecourses attracting over 32 million spectators each year.¹ One century later, the number of race tracks has fallen around ten fold² and attendance has rapidly dropped to less than a million in recent years.³ Internationally, the same trend is evident. **In 2026 two bans were introduced making greyhound racing illegal in Wales and Scotland.** This leaves only Australia, the Republic of Ireland, the United States of America, England and Northern Ireland where commercial racing is legal.

Several factors have contributed to the global decline of greyhound racing, not least the change in British animal welfare standards across the past 100 years. In 1926 animal welfare existed in a rudimentary, pre-modern legal and ethical framework. Protections were limited, enforcement was weak, and animals were viewed through the lens of utility and property rather than welfare and sentience. Fast forward 100 years, and the protections afforded to both people and animals are significantly improved, reflecting shifts in societal values, beliefs, and norms of acceptability. **For animals in particular, the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and the Animal Sentience Act 2022 have marked a significant step forward by recognising animals as sentient beings and establishing clearer legal and policy safeguards for their welfare.**

Greyhound racing meanwhile remains rooted in a social and moral framework incompatible with contemporary values and attitudes towards animal welfare. Welfare issues affect every stage of a racing greyhound's life and are heightened by a host of additional issues, including the inherent risk of injury and death associated with the high-speed racing on oval tracks, a lack of transparency and traceability of individual dogs from birth to death, and persistently high levels of wastage.⁴ In Great Britain, these problems are worsened by the absence of a secure



Above: Racing at Park Royal Stadium c1950 and Harringay c1960 (Wikicommons)

and consistent funding stream to support greyhound welfare standards, alongside a continued reliance on the charity sector to rehome retired greyhounds.

In addition to this lack of regulatory oversight, a number of welfare cases have entered the public domain, prompting widespread public concern and contributing to the erosion of the industry's social licence to operate. Examples include media coverage of mass greyhound killings and inappropriate disposal practices in County Durham, England⁵; evidence of overbreeding highlighted in RTÉ Investigates' *Running for Their Lives in Ireland*⁶; poor kennelling conditions⁷ and training practices exposed by ABC Australia's *Four Corners: Making a Killing*⁸, which led to a temporary ban and a comprehensive review of greyhound racing in New South Wales. Over the years, political scrutiny has increased and growing calls for the activity to be banned have been made. The breadth and persistence of these issues demonstrate that, without radical and systemic change, it is impossible to ensure that every racing greyhound can experience even a life worth living⁹.

Animal welfare organisations have, for decades, sought to improve standards through engagement with the industry. However, progress has been slow and insufficient. **For these reasons, the organisations contributing to this report firmly believe that the only effective way to safeguard the welfare of all racing greyhounds is to phase out the activity entirely.**



This report provides an overview of the industry focussing predominantly on the UK and the various stages across a racing greyhound's career path. It presents the concerns associated with greyhound racing and reviews its economic contribution to the UK. It documents its rise and fall across the past 100 years as well as public perception and political activity. Together, it presents the case for a phased end to greyhound racing across the UK.

2 Introduction to the greyhound racing industry



2.1 What is greyhound racing?

Commercial greyhound racing, the chasing of a mechanical hare around an oval track, has been a feature in Great Britain since 1926. It originated from coursing where greyhounds chase live game animals e.g. hares, in open spaces. Currently, greyhounds are raced in groups of 6. During the race, each dog is released from a trap and races in pursuit of a mechanical hare (the lure). Race distances vary between 210 and 1100m and are run anti-clockwise on oval tracks without lane fences or boundaries.

2.2 How is the greyhound industry regulated?

In the UK there are two different types of greyhound racing regulation: 1) tracks regulated by an industry body and 2) tracks independent of a regulated body.

2.2.1 Industry regulated tracks in the UK

See opposite for an overview of the number of regulated and independent racetracks in the UK.

2.2.1.1 Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB)

The Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB) currently has 18 licensed tracks in Great Britain¹⁰. GBGB is responsible for regulating the welfare and care of all racing greyhounds that race on these tracks as well as overseeing all areas of administration and licensing for greyhounds from registration to retirement and industry participants. All tracks licensed under GBGB must abide by the GBGB Rules

of Racing, which include references to Section 9 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and the Welfare of Racing Greyhounds Regulations 2010. The GBGB Rules of Racing set the standards for greyhound welfare and integrity and through the Greyhound Regulatory Board and disciplinary committee.

2.2.1.2 The Irish Coursing Club

The Irish Coursing Club (ICC) licences 2 tracks in Northern Ireland (Drumbo Park, Lisburn and Brandywell, Derry~Londonderry). They are responsible for oversight of the breeding and registration of racing Greyhounds in the industry. It also provides the racing industry regulations under the Greyhound Racetrack (Northern Ireland) Racing Regulations (1962 & 2007). The Regulations are enforced by the ICC Executive Committee and has the power to take disciplinary action for non-compliance.

2.2.2 The independent sector in the UK

Independent or flapping tracks are licensed by the local authority within which they are located and are not subject to GBGB or ICC rules. There is no formal monitoring system or centralised register of data relating to independent racing e.g. number of dogs racing, number of injuries, where dogs go after racing, and no accountability for greyhound injuries or deaths. There is currently one flapping track in Great Britain: Thornton, Scotland. Legislation has recently been passed to prohibit greyhound racing in Scotland so this track will cease to operate¹¹.



¹⁰. There are currently 18 licensed tracks in Great Britain.
<https://www.gbgb.org.uk/racing/race-courses/>

¹¹. <https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/s6/greyhound-racing-offences-scotland-bill>

3 What is the typical career path for a racing greyhound?

Many of the concerns associated with greyhound racing are a result of experiences and events within and across various life stages. This section introduces each of the life stages to help illustrate what the typical career path looks like for a greyhound before examining key welfare and wider concerns associated with the industry in [section 4](#).

2024 data was prioritised to provide the most current overview, but to ensure the analysis remains comprehensive, 2021 figures are also included as not all 2024 data was made available by the industry.

The life stages of a racing greyhound

Breeding

Once whelped, puppies remain with their dam indoors until ~ 8 weeks of age.

Number of litters: In 2021, there were **2,160** Irish bred litters registered at the time of whelping. In GB, there were **189** litters.

Estimated number of puppies: Based on an average of six pups per litter, this equated to **12,960** puppies in the RoI and **1,134** in GB.

Data for 2024 is unknown.



Rearing

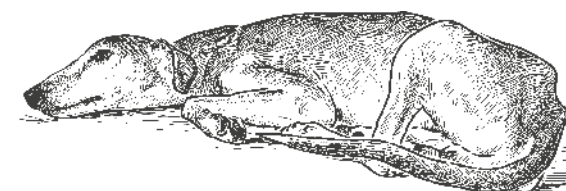
Once weaned, puppies are usually kept with some littermates until around 6 months when they are then split into smaller groups of pairs.*

Early education (schooling, trials and sales)

Schooling starts at approximately 12 months of age. No data on scale or outcomes known.*

Leave the racing industry

Around **65%** of greyhounds leave the licensed racing industry between the ages of 2-4 years¹⁴.



Career longevity: By 3.5 years of age, 50% of greyhounds registered to race have left the licensed racing industry and by the time greyhounds are 4 years old, only 30% remain.

Leaving the industry:

In 2021, 6014 dogs left the industry
In 2024, 5795 dogs left the industry

Transfer to charities for rehoming:

In 2021, 4,297 dogs were transferred to charities for rehoming
In 2024, 3333 dogs were transferred to charities for rehoming

Racing (race training and racing)

For dogs to race on regulated tracks in Great Britain, they *cannot be under 15 months of age*¹².

In **2021**, approximately 6000 dogs were transferred from the RoI to race in the UK. The outcomes of those dogs who remained in the RoI are unknown. The number of dogs transferred from the RoI to the UK in 2024 is unknown.

Racing population:

In **2021**, the number of licensed greyhounds eligible to race in GBGB races was **18,302**. Of these dogs, **6,769** were newly registered to race (37%). **5,882** dogs came from the ICC = 86.7%.

In **2024**, the number of licensed greyhounds is unknown but there were **5133** new registrations with **84.5%** Irish bred¹³.

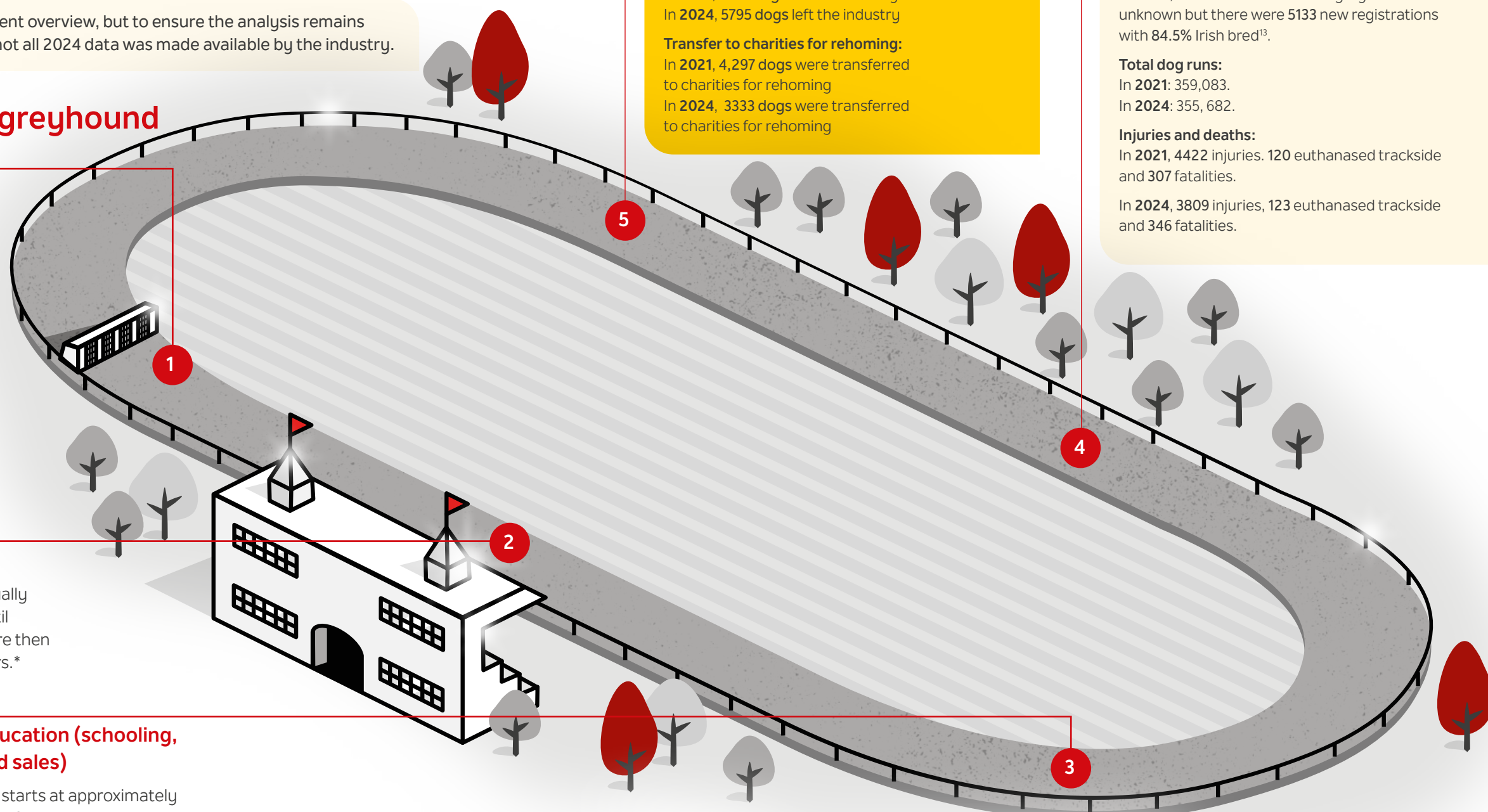
Total dog runs:

In **2021**: 359,083.
In **2024**: 355,682.

Injuries and deaths:

In **2021**, 4422 injuries. 120 euthanased trackside and 307 fatalities.

In **2024**, 3809 injuries, 123 euthanased trackside and 346 fatalities.

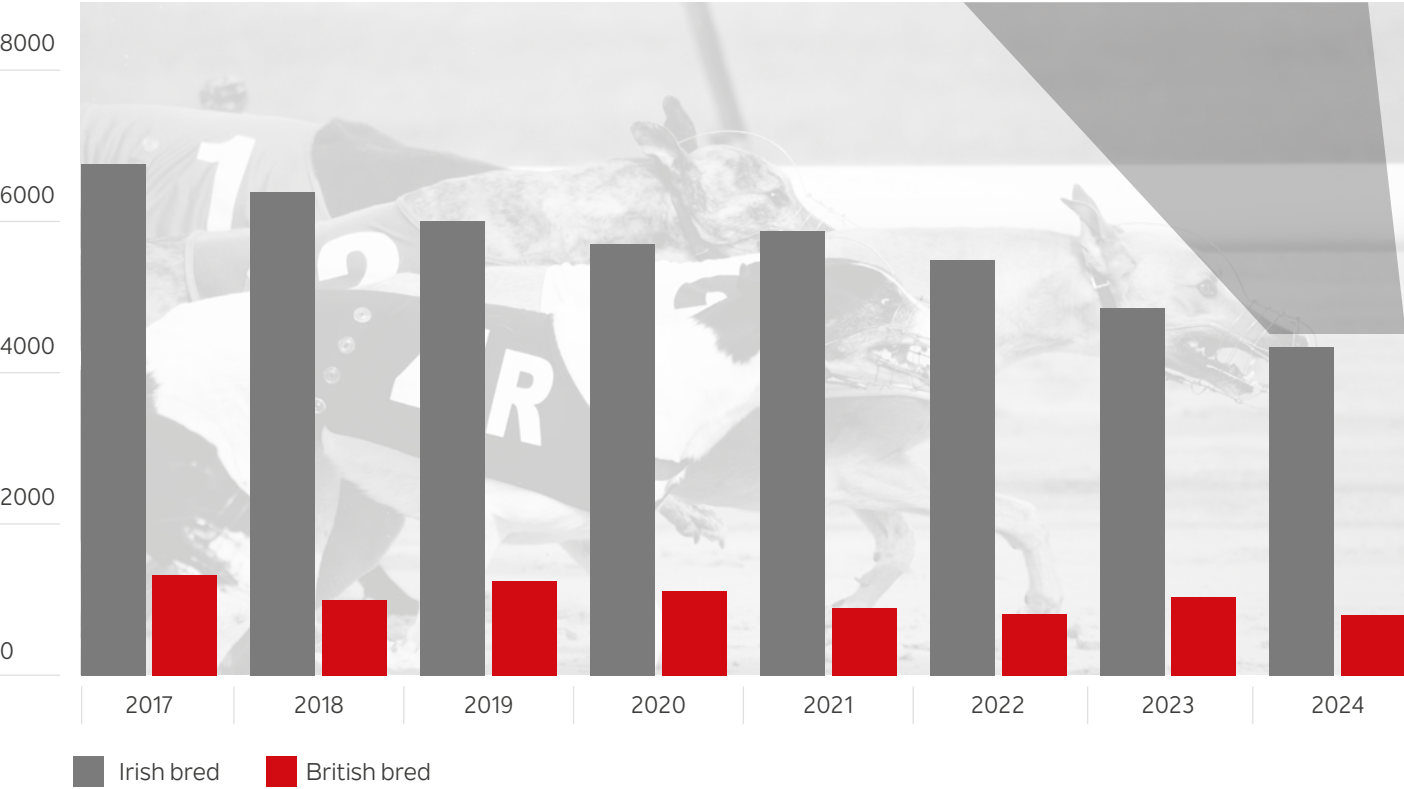
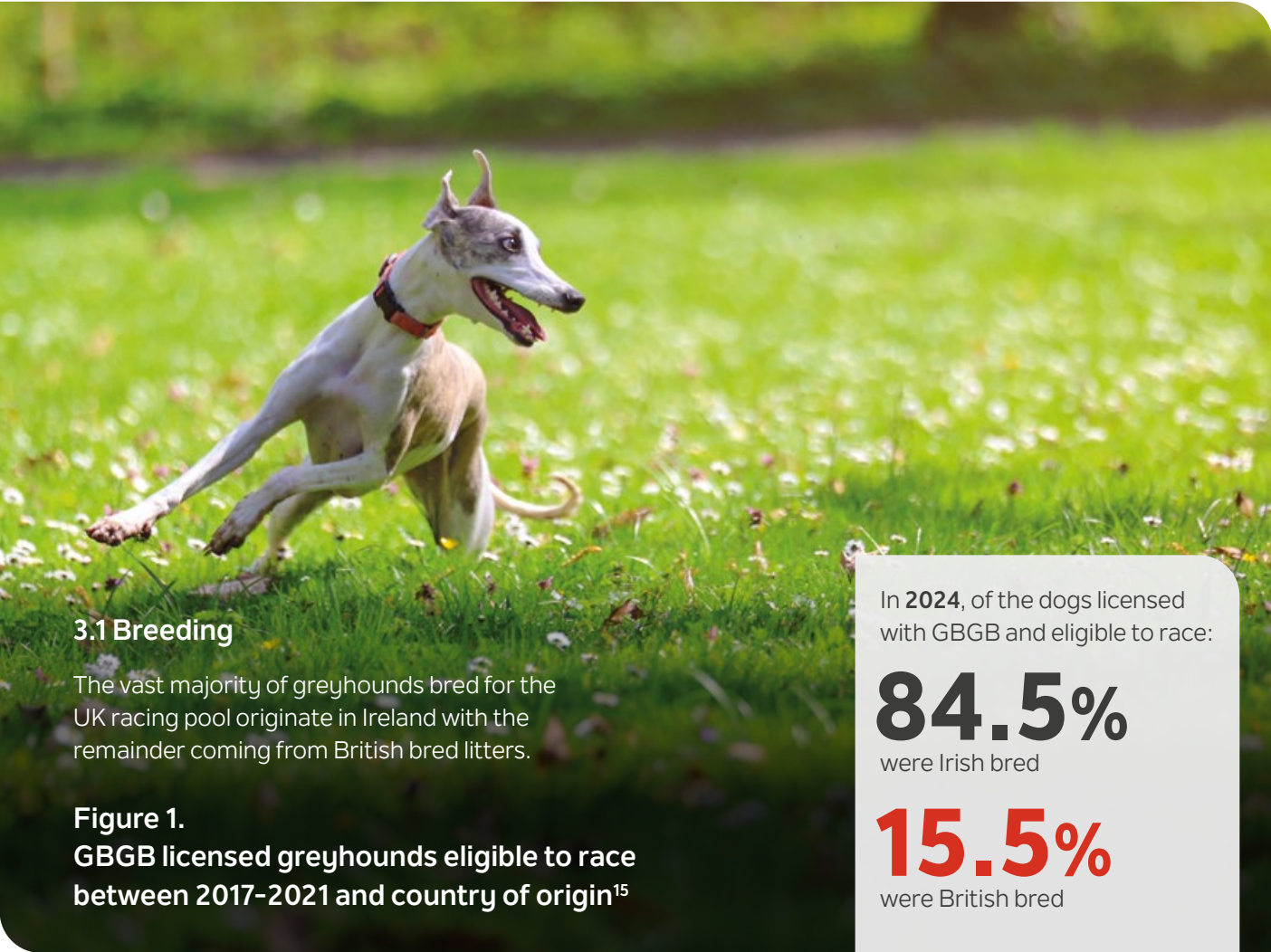


12. GBGB Rules of Racing

13. <https://gbgb-prod-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/08140710/A-Good-Life-for-Every-Greyhound-Progress-Report-October-2025.pdf>

14. Based on data between 2017 and 2021 provided by the GBGB

* No data on scale or outcomes known.



15. Up until 2022: GBGB via email, post. 2022 GBGB welfare strategy progress report October 2025.
 16. <https://www.rspca.org.uk/documents/1494939/0/Living+with+rabbits+and+hares+-+updated+March+2022.pdf/2ca7ac96-4c14-1f37-3c7c-839bfc18c129?t=1659516578947>
 17. Irish Coursing Club Rules
 18. <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/veterinary-professionals/conduct-and-guidance/supporting-guidance/27-miscellaneous-procedures-legal-and-ethical-considerations>
 19. <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2005/si/561/made/en/print>



Breeding in Ireland:

In Ireland, the Irish Coursing Club (ICC) is the country's controlling authority for the registration and identification of thoroughbred greyhounds. It also controls matters relating to coursing; an activity which is prohibited in Great Britain¹⁶.

Litter registration is self-reported by breeders and does not require independent verification of the number of live births. There is no independent record of the number of pups born in each litter.

Litters must be registered within 14 days after the whelping of a litter or within 77 days of mating, whichever is the earlier. An earmark and microchip for each pup is allocated by the Keeper of the Stud Book with tattooing and chipping carried out by the Official Steward at 12 weeks from the date of whelping¹⁷.

Use of Surgical Artificial Insemination (SAI):

SAI is an invasive procedure requiring general anaesthesia to locate the uterus and inject semen.

In the UK, its use is prohibited by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons¹⁸ and considered a surgical mutilation under the Animal Welfare Acts. In the Republic of Ireland, its use is also banned for all dogs except greyhounds where a vet is allowed to perform the procedure under the Artificial Insemination of Greyhounds Regulations 2005¹⁹. In 2024, the Irish government consulted on the use of SAI in greyhounds. 99% of respondents supported a ban highlighting animal welfare concerns in relation to the use of surgical artificial insemination, the need to give greyhounds equal protection to other breeds of dog, and the legal status of surgical artificial insemination in other countries in which the procedure is banned in dogs²⁰. Despite the overwhelming support of a ban, this practice remains legal for greyhounds in the RoI²¹.

20. <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-agriculture-food-and-the-marine/publications/animal-welfare/#surgical-artificial-insemination-in-greyhounds-consultation-results>

21. [https://naturewatch.org/ireland-must-end-greyhound-breeding-loophole/#:~:text=In%20Ireland%2C%20surgical%20artificial%20insemination%20\(SAI\)%20is,the%20Artificial%20Insemination%20of%20Greyhounds%20Regulations%202005.](https://naturewatch.org/ireland-must-end-greyhound-breeding-loophole/#:~:text=In%20Ireland%2C%20surgical%20artificial%20insemination%20(SAI)%20is,the%20Artificial%20Insemination%20of%20Greyhounds%20Regulations%202005.)

22. Greyhound Stud Book, 2022.



Breeding in Great Britain:

In Great Britain, the National Coursing Club (NCC) registers all British-bred greyhounds including those who are intended to race as well as those kept as pets in the Greyhound Stud Book (GSB).

All British-bred greyhounds must be registered with the GSB to be earmarked (this typically takes place between 12 and 16 weeks of age) and eligible for racing on GBGB tracks²².

The number of British-bred litters and individuals registered in the Greyhound Stud Book (GSB) with the NCC have shown a steady decline and reflects a **46% decrease** in individual greyhounds registered from 2,204 in 2010 to 1,196 in 2021 and a **44% decrease** in the number of litters registered, from 339 in 2010 (average litter size registered, 6.5), to 189 litters in 2021 (average litter size registered, 6.3).

Tattooing:

Ear marking is achieved via tattooing, a procedure which is invasive and potentially painful.

The Greyhound Board of Great Britain wants this method of identification to be replaced for British born dogs but this requires legislative change. Until such a point that this is possible, all British-bred puppies need to be provided with pain relief when tattooed. This requirement does not affect puppies bred in RoI who will continue to be identified by a tattoo.



Ear tattoo © Blue Cross



Puppies surrendered for rehoming, a burden which falls on animal welfare charities throughout different stages of a greyhound's life. © Blue Cross

3.2 Rearing

Greyhounds are normally whelped in whelping boxes and remain with their dam and littermates until weaning - in some cases up to 12 weeks of age.

Puppies are then typically raised as litter groups before being split into smaller groups/pairs at 6 months old. From 12 weeks old, puppies enter a rearing programme. In Ireland, this is in a free-ranging environment (paddocks, woodlands), sometimes with a portion of their time spent in a barn or kennel where they gain physical strength through playing and exercise.

Some breeders and trainers provide opportunities for habituation to the stimuli encountered during racing, such as starting traps and vehicles. However, many dogs are kept in rural settings without experiencing varied environmental or social stimuli. This can have a significant detrimental effect on their long term development as well as the ability to adapt to a home setting.

As many dogs are transferred to rescue and rehoming centres at the end of their racing life, it is this sector which ends up providing the rehabilitation to help ensure dogs can be successfully rehomed (see [section 4.5](#)).

3.3 Schooling

This stage usually occurs from 12 months of age, and is when greyhounds are given their first opportunity to chase on a track or gallop. This process takes place in an environment away from rearing causing an abrupt transition in physical and social environment for young greyhounds. Dogs are provided with opportunities to develop their instinct to chase while exposed to stimuli associated with the racetrack to aid habituation. Encouragement to run after a mechanical hare involves rags or similar objects to encourage chasing. Next, dogs will be taken to a gallop before progressing to a schooling track or licensed track. Once the dog is successfully chasing the lure, the starting trap is introduced to build confidence.

3.3.1 Non chasers:

Greyhounds who do not show interest, instinct or aptitude for chasing are known as non-chasers. Fear-inducing experiences of transportation, new people and an unfamiliar location after the rearing period may contribute to this. Other potential reasons for non-chasers include undetected eye defects, genetic predisposition, or lack of competence from the people responsible for educating young greyhounds to use appropriate methods²³.

Long-term concerns have been held for the welfare and outcomes of non-chasers as they are perceived to hold no value to the greyhound racing industry.

3.4 Trials and sales

Many dogs are pre-ordered before or soon after birth in the UK. They are bought privately straight from the breeder or via advertisements. There are also many dogs purchased through sales trials at venues in Ireland and the UK, these dogs are typically sold via an auction following several trials to test their ability.

FOR SALE

It is at this stage, before dogs start race training, where the greyhound population in the Republic of Ireland diverges with some dogs remaining in the country to race and others transported to regions including the UK. The lack of a unified, tracking database covering the different jurisdictions makes it difficult to understand the number of dogs transferred, where they go to and their eventual fate especially when racing greyhounds are regularly moved between countries. In addition to these traceability gaps, separate regulatory bodies with different standards also create issues around accountability. This is discussed further in [section 4.6](#).



Once the dog is successfully chasing the lure, the starting trap is introduced to build confidence.

23. Rooney, N.J. (2010) Racing Greyhounds - welfare concerns. Report to the RSPCA.

3.5 Race training

Trainers are responsible for the care, management and racing preparation of the dogs in their care. This typically takes place in a kennel environment where it is estimated that racing greyhounds spend 95% of their time²⁴. This is a considerable welfare concern.

British greyhound racing (licensed under the Greyhound Board of Great Britain) saw a significant drop of almost 25% in licensed trainers between 2022 and 2025, from 615 to 472 (Table 1). This reduction is part of a wider trend that includes track closures, the end of racing in Scotland, a ban in Wales as well as general economic, social, and development pressures.

Table 1. The number and percentage change of licensed trainers and stadia between 2022 and 2025.

	2022	2023	2024	2025	Change
 Licensed trainers	615	506	472	472	-23% ▼
 Licensed stadia	20	21	20	18	-10% ▼

At the time of writing, as of April 2026 two more GBGB tracks have ceased racing (<https://www.gbgb.org.uk/gbgb-trainer-list/>)



Examples of suffering caused to greyhounds in trainer's kennels. (© RSPCA and Clare Animal Welfare)

Kennelling:

Kennelling is widely recognised to be stressful for dogs²⁵ and introduction to a kennel for the first time particularly so²⁶. Although greyhounds are born into a kennelled environment, many are reared in free-ranging, group-living conditions so the transition into kennels at the point of schooling is likely to be considerably challenging.

In 2015, Dogs Trust published a report titled *'The Greyhound Industry: don't bet on fair treatment'* which found evidence of welfare concerns in greyhound trainers' kennels.

While the GBGB has since introduced standards for trainer's residential kennels and a code of practice, there are concerns associated with these documents including the extent to which they reflect good practice, are implemented, and checked (see section 4.7.2).



Furthermore, across the industry, cases of poor kennelling practice persist. In 2022, a greyhound trainer admitted to causing tens of greyhounds to suffer unnecessarily due to failing to secure veterinary attention.

They also admitted causing several greyhounds to suffer after failing to ensure vet care to address lameness and sores, and to failing to provide a suitable, hygienic environment.



Footage from a Greyhound Racing Ireland licensed kennels in March 2026²⁷, showed four greyhounds housed singly in small, dark kennels, one wearing an anti bark muzzle.

In response to the footage, officers visited the premises and determined the conditions to be acceptable. This resulted in public outcry. Following significant pressure from the public and politicians, the greyhounds were surrendered for rehoming.

A recent report published by Grey2KUSA Worldwide and the League Against Cruel Sports also detail several cases of neglect²⁸. Similarly, disciplinary committee cases (see section 4.7.5), suggest a persistence in welfare and neglect cases despite significant investment in oversight infrastructure.



It is estimated that racing greyhounds spend 95% of their time in kennels

24. Pitt, C. (2013). Old graders don't just fade away. BOS Magazine, June 4th.

25. Hiby, EF, Rooney, NJ, and Bradshaw, JWS, (2006). Behavioural and physiological responses of dogs entering rehoming kennels. Physiology and Behaviour. 89. 385-391. *

26. Rooney, NJ, Gaines, SA, and Bradshaw, JWS, (2007). Behavioural and glucocorticoid responses of dogs (Canis familiaris) to kennelling - Investigating mitigation of stress by prior habituation. Physiology and Behavior. 92. 847-854.

27. <https://www.facebook.com/clareanimalwelfare/videos/update-these-dogs-have-been-surrenderedthank-you-so-much-to-everyone-whos-been-s/953045280919943/>

28. GREY2K USA Worldwide & The League Against Cruel Sports (2026) Reaching the Finish Line: Time To End Dog Racing In The UK.

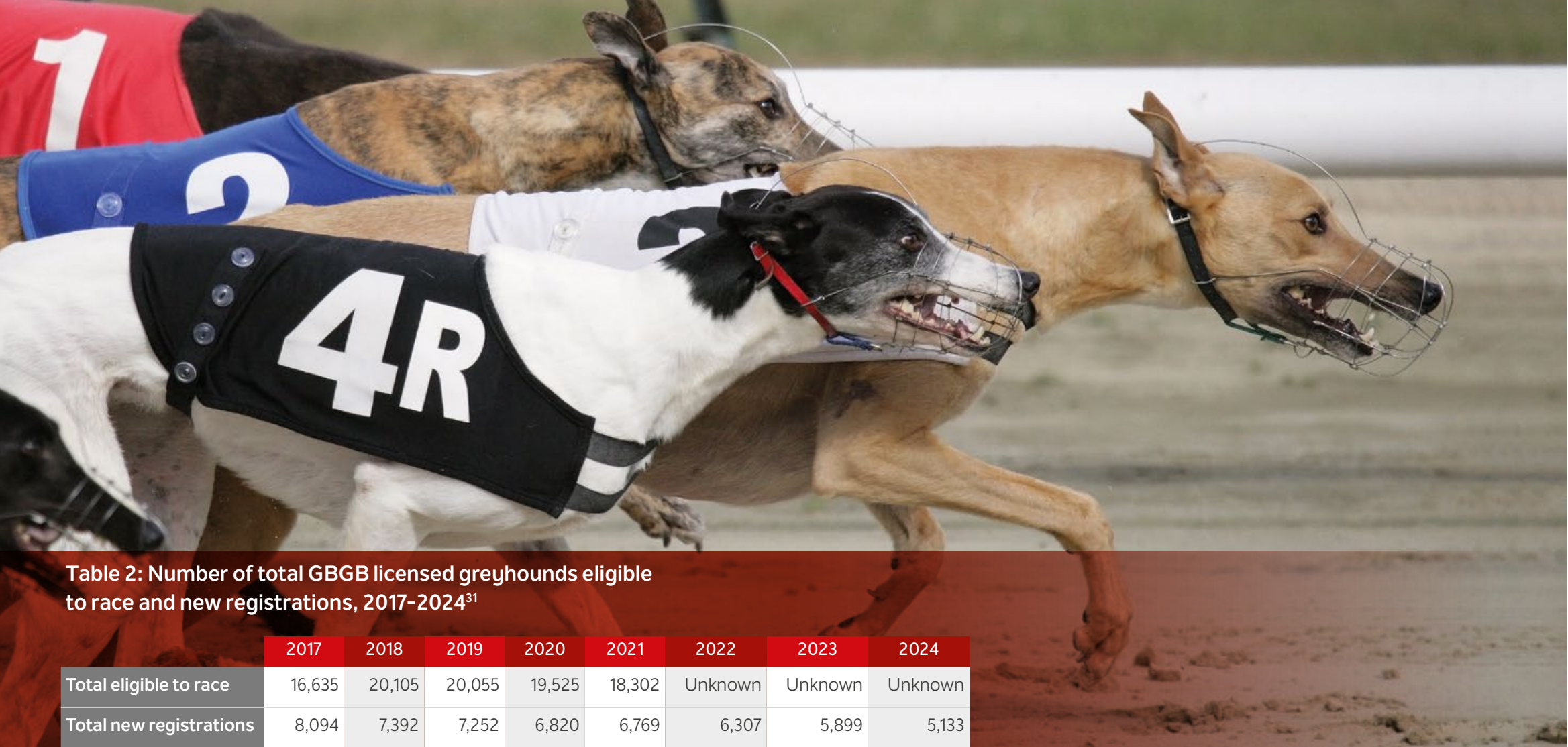


Table 2: Number of total GBGB licensed greyhounds eligible to race and new registrations, 2017-2024³¹

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total eligible to race	16,635	20,105	20,055	19,525	18,302	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Total new registrations	8,094	7,392	7,252	6,820	6,769	6,307	5,899	5,133

3.6 Racing

For dogs to race on regulated tracks in Great Britain, they cannot be under 15 months of age²⁹ and they must be registered with GBGB. Before being allowed to race on licensed tracks, dogs will undergo a series of time trials to ensure they are of sufficient speed and to allow grading into the correct racing category and raced in future against dogs of a similar ability³⁰.

Data shared by the Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB) show that the number of licensed greyhounds eligible to race in GBGB races in 2021 was 18,302 (Table 2). Of these dogs, 6,769 were newly registered to race. With total new annual registrations in 2021 representing over a third (37%) of GBGB licensed greyhounds eligible to race, this data also highlights the high proportion of greyhounds exiting the racing industry each year.

Since 2021, the total number of new registrations has continued to fall.

Whether this trend is the same for those dogs eligible to race is unknown. GBGB was approached for data for this period but it was not provided.

3.6.1 Race types

Classifications of races differ depending on age and capabilities of the runners with graded racing forming the bulk of what is offered daily.

Contracted trainers provide runners for a particular track and many of the meetings are televised for Bookmakers Afternoon Greyhound Service.

The Racing Manager decides which dogs will race against each other based on their qualifying trials or recent form, with the grades ranging from A1 (highest) to A12 depending on the capabilities of the dogs on offer at each track. Decisions will also be made by the Racing Manager as to whether each dog is a rails, middle or wide runner as well as positioning the dog in the correct trap (starting box).

3.6.2 Race frequency

Following concerns around the high racing demand leading to increased injury rates, greyhounds are limited to run not more than once in any four-day period and may only run a maximum of six times in any 28-day period.

Entire female greyhounds are not permitted by GBGB to race on licensed tracks for 21 days after the onset of oestrus (coming into season). Suppressants are subsequently used by participants to prevent oestrus, so bitches can keep racing and their racing career is not interrupted by absence from the track during their season.

Around 65% of greyhounds leave the licensed racing industry between the ages of 2-4 years

Table 3. Career longevity shown as age and percentage of greyhounds exiting the licensed racing industry, 2017-2021.³³

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
< 2 years	8.0%	7.3%	6.9%	6.4%	7.6%
2 - 2.5 years	11.9%	12.9%	13.8%	11.8%	12.9%
2.5 - 3 years	16.7%	15.4%	13.1%	14.7%	17.3%
3 - 3.5 years	17.2%	16.6%	18.2%	18.1%	18.6%
3.5 - 4 years	16.7%	16.8%	17.5%	17.4%	16.6%
4 - 5 years	21.6%	24.2%	23.0%	24.3%	21.3%
5 years +	7.9%	6.8%	7.5%	7.3%	5.8%

Data from 2021 was requested from GBGB but was not made available.

3.6.3 Career longevity

Dogs who remain in the Republic of Ireland typically race from 24 to 48 months of age at which point they will be retired³².

Data from between 2017 and 2021, excluding the dogs who are euthanased or die, shows that by 3.5 years of age, 50% of greyhounds registered to race have left the licensed racing industry and by the time greyhounds are 4 years old, only 30% remain.

Around 65% of greyhounds leave the licensed racing industry between the ages of 2-4 years (Table 3).

As highlighted in the figures above, most greyhounds have left the racing industry by the time they are four years old. With a typical lifespan of 10 to 14 years of age³⁴ more of their life is spent away from the racing industry than in it, yet most of their early life experiences prepares them for a life of racing, not for a home environment which is the outcome for many greyhounds post retirement.

29. GBGB Rules of Racing
30. Rooney, N.J. (2010) Racing Greyhounds - welfare concerns. Report to the RSPCA.

31. Up until 2022: GBGB via email, post 2022 GBGB welfare strategy progress report October 2025
32. <https://www.grireland.ie/About-GRI/reports/the-economic-financial-significance-of-the-irish-greyhound-industry-july-2021/>
33. GBGB via email, 2022
34. <https://towcester-racecourse.co.uk/what-is-the-typical-lifespan-of-a-racing-greyhound/>

3.7 Life after exiting the greyhound racing industry

Rescue and rehoming agencies play a significant role in preparing greyhounds for adoption, transitioning them from a kennel environment to a home setting once they have left GBGB-licensed racing (Figure 2).

Compared to other types of dog, rehoming times for greyhounds is reported to be slightly longer than average, with Association of Dogs and Cats Homes members reporting an average length of stay of between 71 and 87 days.

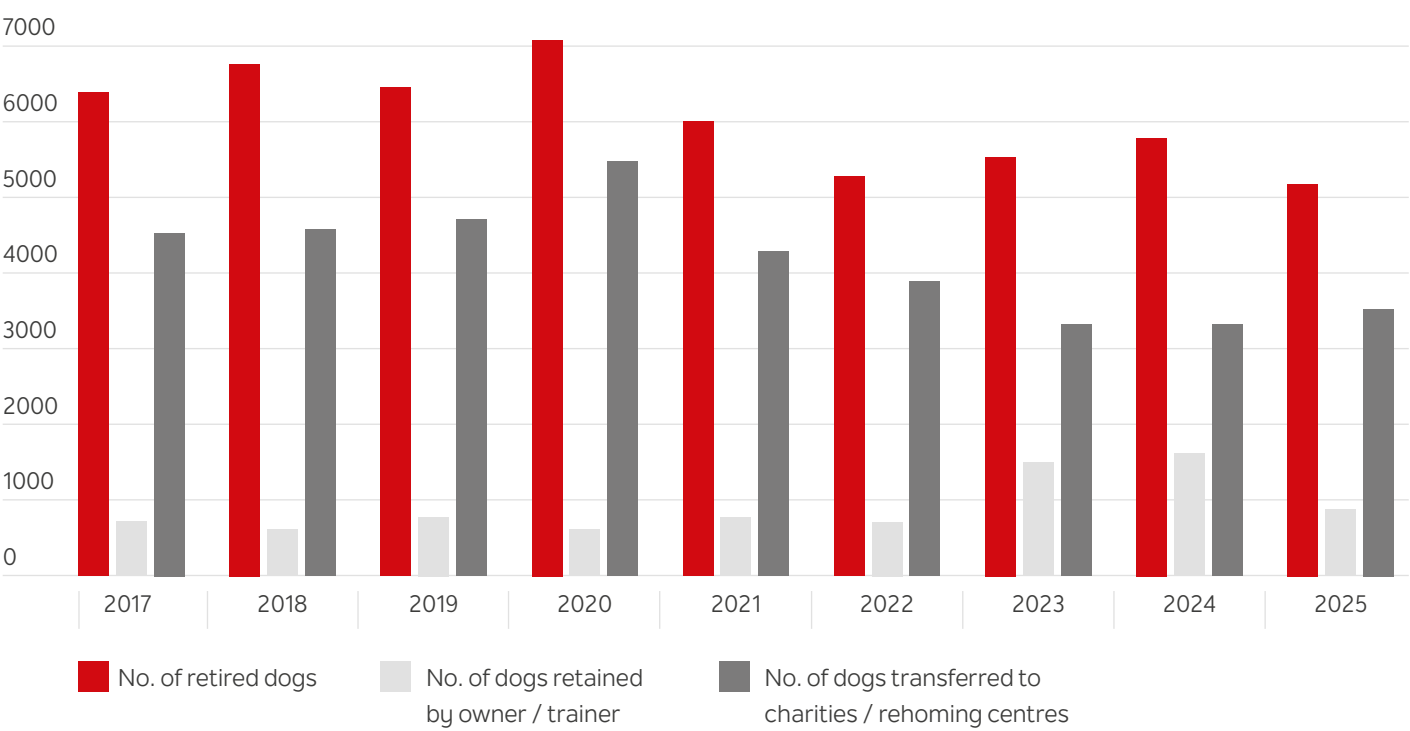
When dogs registered with GBGB finish racing, a ‘Green Form’ is completed by the owner or trainer and returned to GBGB. This contains information about the dog’s destination which can include retention by the owner, transfer to a rehoming organisation or racing on an independent track.

Although dogs may travel to and from The Republic of Ireland and the UK during and after racing, the ICC does not have records to reflect numbers of retired and rehomed greyhounds. Additionally, the Animal Plant and Health Agency does not collect or report on the number of greyhounds being imported into the UK.

The lack of registration and documentation for this part of a greyhound’s life likely affects some of the ‘unaccounted for’ greyhounds that exit racing in the UK.



Figure 2. GBGB national data for retirement: 2017 to 2025³⁵



35. GBGB national statistics on injuries, retirement and deaths.



3.8 Transportation

Transportation in vehicles occurs regularly throughout a greyhound’s life, occurring in most life stages (rearing, early education, schooling, sales, trials, training, and racing).

Greyhounds originating in Ireland will usually be transported to the UK by a transportation company. This journey may include several collection/drop-off locations and a ferry ride, sometimes taking more than 24 hours, during which dogs are generally not unloaded.

Once in active training and racing, most dogs will be transported two to three times a week, with journeys generally taking 50-75 minutes. Track closures have resulted in some trainers now transporting greyhounds over longer distances than was historically practiced to access racetracks.

Greyhounds can be transported by vehicle in a variety of means. This ranges from travel trailers, crates/cages to open plan vans, sometimes with tethering present. They may be facing the direction of travel, side-facing, or rear-facing.



4 What are the key concerns associated with the greyhound industry?

Within the greyhound industry there are a range of concerns including:

- Significant welfare challenges for greyhounds at all stages of the dogs' lives.
- An inherent danger to the dogs by participating in greyhound racing.
- An inconsistent and inadequate funding stream.
- High levels of wastage.
- The heavy reliance on the rehoming sector to prepare dogs once they leave the racing industry.
- A lack of transparency, traceability and visibility.
- Disjointed and ineffective regulation within the sector and across the different nations within which racing takes place.

This section explores each of these concerns in more detail.

4.1 Welfare issues affect greyhounds at every stage of their life cycle.

There are a myriad of welfare issues reported to affect greyhounds at every stage of their life cycle. These have been well documented in a range of sources and so not all are discussed at length in this report³⁶. Instead, these issues, and the life stage they apply to, are summarised in table 4 using the five domains model of animal welfare. Where issues are discussed in this report, the relevant sections are referenced.

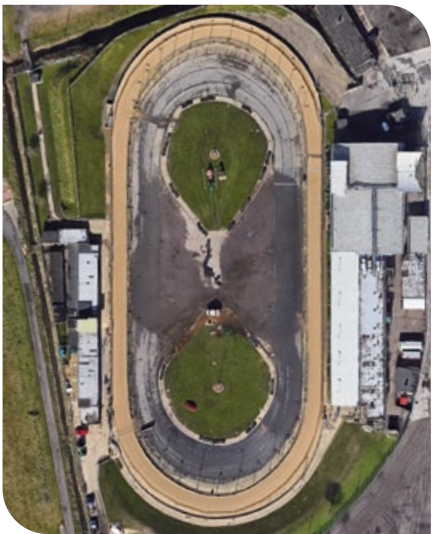
Table 4. Key welfare issues affecting racing greyhounds across each of the life stages and grouped using the five domains model for animal welfare.

	Breeding	Rearing	Early education	Training	Racing	Post racing
Domain						
Nutrition						
Lack of education provided to participants	●	●	●	●	●	●
Lack of a complete and balanced diet	●	●	●	●	●	●
Environment						
Inadequate housing conditions and lack of compensatory environmental enrichment (see section 3.5)	●	●	●	●	●	●
Impacts of extreme weather (hot and cold)	●	●	●	●	●	●
Lack of education provided to participants	●	●	●	●	●	●
Transportation (see section 3.8)	●	●	●	●	●	●
Sudden transitions/lack of habituation (see section 3.2 and 3.3)	●	●	●	●	●	●
Competition for shared resources (e.g., bed)	●	●	●	●	●	●
Exercise frequency / type (e.g., walker limits interaction)			●	●	●	●
Health						
Significant overbreeding (see section 4.4)	●					
Mating practices (Lack of natural mating practices) (see SAI box in section 3.1)	●					
Breeding practices (Regulation, inbreeding, etc.)	●					
Lack of education provided to participants	●	●	●	●	●	●
Administration of illicit drugs and other banned substances (see section 4.7.5)	●	●	●	●	●	●
Injuries/pain suffered by greyhounds (see section 4.2)		●	●	●	●	●
Lack of appropriate treatment for injuries	●	●	●	●	●	●
Dental disease		●	●	●	●	●
Transportation (see section 3.8)	●	●	●	●	●	●
Use of oestrus suppressants			●	●	●	●
Limited finances lead to diagnosis and treatment without veterinarian oversight	●	●	●	●	●	●
Behavioural interaction						
Inadequate socialisation of greyhound puppies during critical socialisation period (see section 3.3)	●					
Lack of education provided to participants	●	●	●	●	●	●
Inadequate socialisation and habituation of greyhounds impacts their ability to adapt as companions in new homes (see section 3.2)						●
Transportation (see section 3.8)	●	●	●	●	●	●
Handling style (use of force) by people	●	●	●	●	●	●
Training methods utilised		●	●	●	●	●
Use of punishment rather than positive reinforcement	●	●	●	●	●	●
Muzzles, in some kennels, applied full time to facilitate pairing			●	●	●	●
Mental experiences						
Tattooing of puppies (see section 3.1)	●					
Lack of education provided to participants	●	●	●	●	●	●
Confinement	●	●	●	●	●	●
Cruelty and neglect (see section 4.7.5)	●	●	●	●	●	●
Transportation (see section 3.8)	●	●	●	●	●	●
Myths re: characteristics/traits that impact dogs (e.g., high pain threshold)	●	●	●	●	●	●

36. The information has been gathered from reports online - RSPCA UK, Dogs Trust, Scottish Animal Welfare Commission, RSPCA Australia, the DEFRA Post Implementation Review (2016), World Animal Protection, Sight Hound Welfare, Greyhound Coalition, Greyexploitations, Global Justice for Greyhounds and All Dogs, League Against Cruel Sports, Forever Hounds, and Grey2K USA Worldwide, Rooney (2010).



Star Pelaw, England © Google Earth



Yarmouth, England © Google Earth



Nottingham, England © Google Earth

4.2 Greyhound racing is inherently dangerous

Racetrack design, preparation and maintenance are all significant factors that make greyhound racing inherently dangerous.

Curved tracks pose a significant danger due to the forces exerted on dogs negotiating the bends and the increased risk of high-speed collisions caused by congestion³⁷. The first bend is particularly hazardous as it typically sees the most congestion, where dogs are travelling fastest, and where the majority of incidents are recorded³⁸. Figure 3 maps the distribution of incidents along the Ystrad Mynach track layout

between the 11 October and 29 December 2023. It suggests a clustering effect of bumps and falls at bends and an increased number at the first. Research into greyhounds' running paths indicates they typically follow a route that minimises energy wastage, often a smooth, non-linear path resembling an easement curve³⁹ as the track transitions between straights and semi-circular bends⁴⁰. While straight tracks would eliminate the high proportion of injuries associated with track bends⁴¹, and tracks incorporating clothoid curvature (a transition curve) could also enhance safety⁴², other design elements still pose a risk. These include the design of the track itself, the starting box and its operation, the lure⁴³.

Figure 3. Incidents along the Ystrad Mynach track (11 Oct - 29 Dec 2023)



The first bend is particularly hazardous as it typically sees the most congestion, where dogs are travelling fastest

Figure 3 demonstrates the distribution of incidents during races and trials (grouped), between 11 October and 29 December 2023, mapped along the Ystrad Mynach Valley track layout. © Sibylle Kuonen © Google Earth



Table 5. GBGB data on racing greyhound injuries and euthanasia for 2017 to 2025.⁴⁴

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total injuries	4837	4963	4970	3575	4422	4354	4238	3809	3648
Total dog runs	419,385	426,139	410,607	318,346	359,083	362,427	364,981	355,682	330,836
Total injuries against total runs (%)	1.15	1.16	1.21	1.12	1.23	1.20	1.16	1.07	1.10
Number of dogs euthanased on humane grounds trackside	257	242	207	200	120	99	105	123	161
Number of fatalities (not including terminal illness or other causes)	937	828	646	367	307	244	359	346	365
Total deaths/fatalities against total runs (%)	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.05

Between 2017 and 2025

nearly

4,400

greyhounds died or were put to sleep⁴⁵

38,000+

injuries⁴⁵



Further to the track shape and design there are additional concerns about the suitability of the surface during inclement weather conditions and the risk this poses. Monitoring and maintenance of consistent surfaces is critical to avoid injury. GBGB publishes a 'Track Maintenance Guide'⁴⁶ which details considerations for surface maintenance, however these remain just guidelines and it is unclear to the extent to which these are enforced.

The industry's own data (Table 5) illustrates the inherent risk posed by greyhound racing and the ineffectiveness of regulation for safeguarding greyhound welfare.

Since 2022, when GBGB launched their 'A Good Life for Every Greyhound' welfare strategy, euthanasia at the trackside has increased year on year, from 99 to 161, a 62% rise.

37. <https://www.andrewknight.info/reports/injuries-in-racing-greyhounds/>

38. <https://www.grnz.co.nz/Files/Health%20%26%20Welfare%20Page/Greyhound%20Racing%20Welfare%20Report%202017.pdf>

39. This is typically a specialized, non-linear track designs used to bridge the straight sections to the tight semi-circular bends

40. Eager D, Hossain I, Ishac K, Robins S. (2021). Analysis of Racing Greyhound Path Following Dynamics Using a Tracking System. Animals. 11(9):2687. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani11092687>

41. Eager D, Hayati H, Mahdavi F, Hossain MI, Stephenson R, Thomas N. (2018). Identifying optimal greyhound track design for greyhound safety and welfare-Phase II-Progress Report-1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017. Eager D, Hayati H, Hossain M. Identifying optimal greyhound track design for greyhound safety and welfare. 2017.

42. <https://greyhoundcoalition.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/The-Case-for-Straight-Tracks-Version-1.0-March-2020.pdf>

43. Eager D, Hayati H, editors. Understanding greyhound race track risk factors. GRV On-Track Veterinarians Conference; 2020.

44 & 45. GBGB national statistics on injuries, retirement and deaths

46. <https://gbgb-prod-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/04154844/GBGB-Track-Maintenance-Manual.pdf>

Data from the Republic of Ireland shows a similar risk. In 2024, 8 greyhounds died on Greyhound Racing Ireland licensed tracks or shortly after a race as a result of injuries sustained. A further 194 were euthanised by track vets, totalling 202 track related deaths⁴⁷. 2024 is reported as the worst year for deaths at greyhound races since records began in 2014⁴⁸.

The types of injuries sustained by racing greyhounds are covered in detail by Knight⁴⁹ including fractures, tendon and ligament injuries. It is noted that stress fractures seen in racing greyhounds are rarely seen in companion or working dogs⁵⁰.

Injuries caused by greyhound racing can result in fore and hind leg amputations. Images of Jilly (right) and Joy (below) © Paul Fears © Scottish Greyhound sanctuary



Fatality and injury data:

In 2019, GBGB made the commitment to publish annual, independently verified injury and retirement data for all GBGB registered greyhounds. While this commitment was welcomed, the data made available is problematic.



For example, the total number of greyhounds raced each calendar year is not available, only the total number of race starts for all dogs. The risk to each dog of taking part in racing cannot be determined and the definition and explanation of categories for fatalities make it difficult to make comparisons of change or progress over multiple years, challenging, if not impossible.

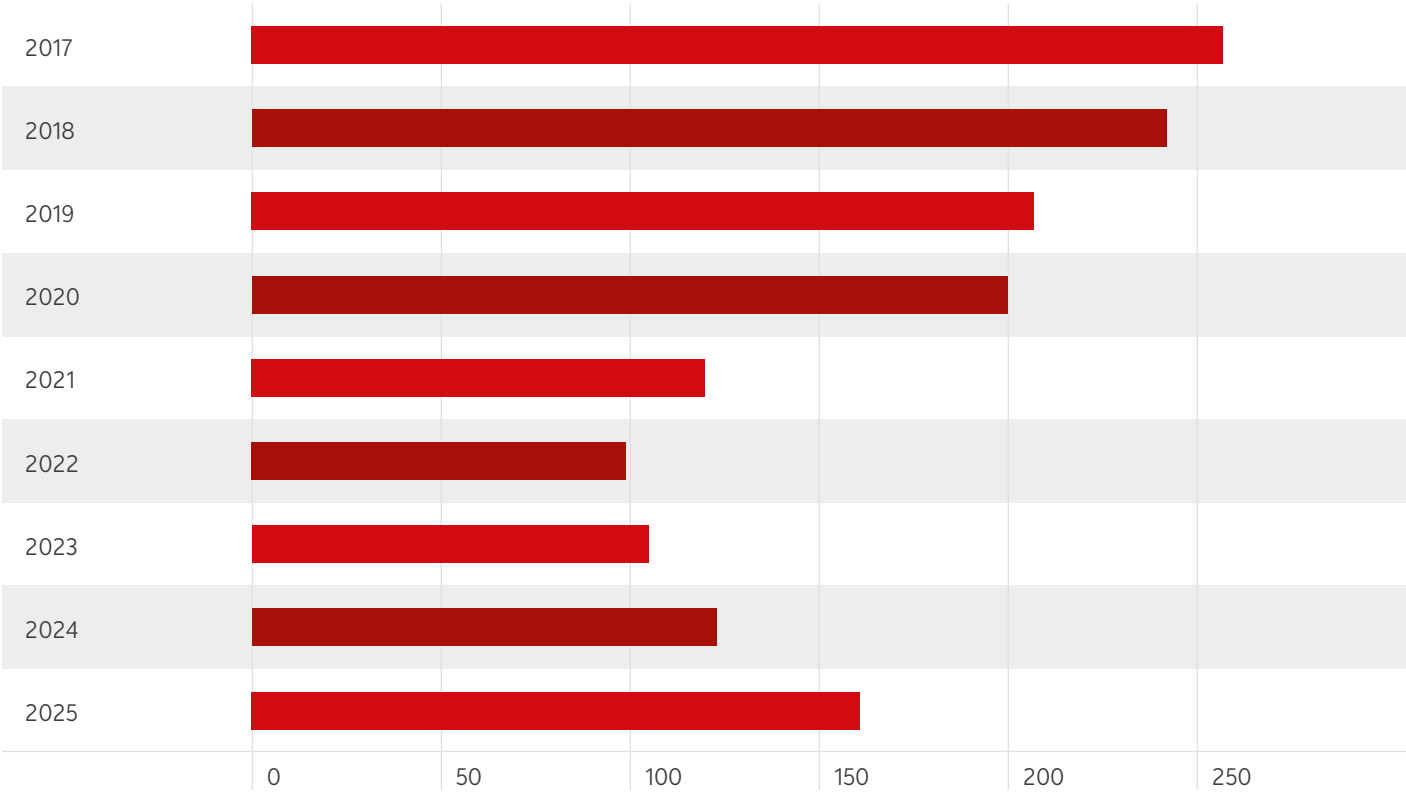
In addition, injury data only relates to the number of race day injuries. This means it does not include those picked up by the vet immediately post race.

This approach underestimates the true number of injuries as many will only become apparent once the dog has left the track.

Further, the way in which the data is presented can mask patterns across time offering a false representation of the risk posed to the dogs.

While the headline data from 2022 to 2024 suggests a stable fatality rate of 0.03% across the three years, research published in 2026⁵¹ has shown how the industry’s reporting practice of rounding this figure to two decimal places masks the trend. When expressed to a greater number of decimal places, on track fatality rates have actually risen from 0.027% to 0.035% of starts which represents a 30% increase.

Dogs euthanased on humane grounds (trackside)



Injuries are categorised by GBGB according to type e.g. hock, wrist, hind long bone, fore long bone with a further category of ‘other’. Grouping injuries according to type differs from the approach of other regulatory bodies. For example, the New South Wales Greyhound Welfare & Integrity Commission publishes injuries according to severity with categories ranging from minor to catastrophic which are publicly available⁵². This injury classification has been agreed to by the greyhound racing controlling bodies in Australian states and territories, and New Zealand via Greyhounds Australia, enabling national benchmarking and international comparisons⁵³.

This type of outcome based approach has been adopted by Greyhound Watch Wales, a group who analyse races to provide information about the injuries sustained by dogs racing at Ystrad Mynach in Wales. From the 1st November 2023 to 31st October 2024, 267 adverse effects (such as fall, documented lameness, etc) were identified from GBGB and the Valley track’s own published material⁵⁴. Outcomes after these adverse events were categorised according to their calculated stand-down time (period of incapacitation): 127 categorised as Transient; 105 Serious; and 35 Career-ending⁵⁵.

Importantly, the difference in approach of injury recording and reporting between Great Britain and Australasian regulatory bodies raises questions about the extent to which Great Britain can state that their injury rates remain the lowest in the world⁵⁶.

The absence of data and clarity around definitions and criteria used by the industry highlights clear issues surrounding transparency. Examples of extra information that could be provided by GBGB in the annual injury and retirement data report that would assist with understanding the results is not limited to, but include:

- The number of tracks
- The number of dogs
- The number of race meetings
- The number of races
- The number of times that an individual dog raced
- The frequency with which an individual dog is raced
- Identification of the tracks at which injury and deaths occurred

47. <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2025-05-20/170/>
48. <https://m.independent.ie/irish-news/record-number-of-greyhounds-euthanised-at-races-in-ireland-last-year/a681438367.html#>
49. <https://www.andrewknight.info/reports/injuries-in-racing-greyhounds/>
50. Hayati, H, Eager, D and Walker, P (2019). “The effects of surface compliance on greyhound galloping dynamics.” Proceedings of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, Part K: Journal of Multibody Dynamics 233, no. 4 (2019): 1033-1043.

51. Cobb, M,L and Coghlan, S (2026). Using AI agents to assemble population-level data for visibility and animal welfare insights: a case study of greyhound racing in the UK. Frontiers in Animal Science. 7:1868726. doi: 10.3389/fanim.2026.1868726
52. <https://www.gwic.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-10/Standards-for-reporting-greyhound-racing-injuries-Revised-April-2022-.pdf>
53. <https://www.gwic.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-10/Standards-for-reporting-greyhound-racing-injuries-Revised-April-2022-.pdf>
54. <https://greyhoundrescuewales.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/GWW-Briefing-No3-Final.pdf>
55. Transient = stand-down time from racing 21 days or less; Serious = standdown time 22 days or more and Career-ending = never raced again.
56. <https://www.gbgb.org.uk/about/the-greyhound-commitment/>

4.3 There is no consistent and secure funding source

According to Deloitte 2014⁵⁷, core industry income is obtained via off-course betting, on-course betting, other racegoer expenditure, owner’s gross expenditure and commercial revenue. A voluntary contribution of 0.6% of greyhound racing turnover is paid by all Betting and Gaming Council members⁵⁸ to the British Greyhound Racing Fund (BGRF) and payments from bookmakers for media rights to the Bookmakers Afternoon Greyhound Service racing. A proportion of this income is then provided to GBGB for welfare purposes. However, the voluntary nature of these contributions places the industry in a precarious situation. The contribution from the bookmakers has been set at 0.6% for many years, which at the end of March 2020 equated to £8.8m. At the end of March 2021, BGRF reported a decrease of £2m a year although this had increased to £7.65m at the end of September 2022.⁵⁹ BGRF income for the year 2024–25 totalled £6.75m, a drop of 7.5% from 2023–24 (£7.3m). This pattern demonstrates the inconsistency in funding levels and the overall downward trend in money available for welfare purposes.

A more consistent source of income would be achieved through the establishment of a statutory levy, as is the case for horse racing, but this has not been successful despite much discussion with GBGB and the UK Government departments including the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. A petition calling for a statutory levy in 2025, part of GBGB’s ‘Keep welfare on track’ campaign⁶⁰, achieved less than 5,000 signatures⁶¹. As such the lack of a secure funding source raises serious questions about the ability to improve greyhound welfare.

4.4 Wastage levels are high

Wastage can be considered as the number of individual animals bred for a purpose who are subsequently discarded from an industry. In greyhound racing this can refer to the number of dogs who fail to become racers, are excess to a participant’s needs or unable to be rehomed. The lack of a single UK-wide identification and fully transparent traceability database makes it impossible to understand the journey of individual greyhounds within the racing industry and the numbers who leave at each stage. However, as an example, based on data from 2017 to 2021 made available by the ICC, it is suggested that around 10% of Irish bred puppies registered at the time of whelping

are not subsequently registered at 12 months of age when naming occurs (Table 6). At this moment in time it is impossible to know the fate of these dogs. As such, there have been concerns for the welfare and outcome of these missing dogs. This has been compounded by media exposes which show that greyhounds, have on occasion, been killed inhumanely once they no longer have economic value⁶².

Table 6. ICC Registered Breeding, Naming and Transfer Figures 2019-2021 (source: ICC).

	2019	2020	2021
No. of Greyhound Litters	2,324	1,962	2,160
No. of Pups* (based on average of 6 pups/litter)	13,944	11,772	12,960
No. Adult Greyhounds Registered and Named	12,793	12,930	10,493
No. Transferred (Approx. 60% to UK)	9,877 (~5,926)	8,597 (~5,158)	10,023 (~6,014)

Data from 2021 was requested from the ICC but was not made available.

4.5 Reliance upon the rescue sector is high and uncompensated

As seen in section 3.7, many greyhounds are retired and transferred into the care of rehoming organisations and typically spend longer with them than other types of dog. Taking into account this longer stay in kennels, the cost of rehoming can range from between £2,200 – £2,800 per dog.

The GBGB, through its Greyhound Retirement Scheme (GRS) releases £420 to participating rehoming organisations for each greyhound rehomed. However, this is often significantly lower than the cost of rehoming, especially for injured greyhounds with any additional costs falling to charities to cover. Not all charities can access the GRS though, including those whose policies call for a phased end to greyhound racing. Nonetheless, charities continue to rehabilitate and rehome ex racing greyhounds. For example, in 2022, Dogs Trust was removed from the GRS following a change in their policy on greyhound racing. They have continued to rehome ex racers, in excess of 727 dogs, the vast majority of which (89%) have been handed over by trainers or greyhound rescue organisations.

The financial impact on rehoming organisations can be significant. Analysis by Greyhound Rescue Wales reveals that direct costs attributable to the rescue and rehoming of 110 dogs adopted between 2022 and 2023 totalled £217,370 giving an average cost of £1,976 per dog rehomed. Similarly, the average rehoming cost for Greyhound Trust of 1,098 greyhounds in 2024 was estimated as £2,027.81⁶³. This highlights not only the true costs but how the bond provided by the industry, when made available, falls well short of that required to rehabilitate and rehome a typical ex-racing greyhound.

4.6 Transparency, visibility and traceability is lacking

Without full transparency relating to the number of dogs being born in, or imported to the UK, registered, and entering the racing industry each year, their subsequent racing longevity and clear exit data (i.e., in clearly defined, explainable and stable categories over time) it is challenging to understand the passage of individual greyhounds and their welfare experience.

With most dogs bred, reared and educated on private properties outside of the UK, there is little or no visibility of the whole life experience of greyhounds in the UK racing on GBGB tracks. There is no UK-wide (compatible with Ireland) database for greyhounds and while the traceability system promised by the Greyhound Racing Act 2019 was meant to track greyhounds’ entire lives and all life events, this failed to deliver and excluded data on injury, illness, and performance⁶⁴. Given these deficiencies, there is no comprehensive, mandatory, and independently verified traceability system to track every greyhound from birth to end of life, including all health and injury events.

Tracks governed by GBGB do not publicly display or release injury data by racetrack, outcomes of licensing inspections or residential kennel audits. Additionally, no evidence is provided to demonstrate how such information is collated and informs industry development to ensure meaningful changes are made.



Perseus
Perseus is a beautiful 5-year-old greyhound who came into Dogs Trust Cardiff Rehoming Centre along with 11 other Greyhounds. All were collected directly from a UK trainer with minimal history – just their names, microchips and tattoos.

His racing name was *Pasburgers*. Dogs Trust carers discovered Perseus’ racing records, which showed he was likely to be born in Ireland but owned and raced in the UK. He has tattoos on both his ears – English-bred racers usually only have tattoos in their right ear.

During his intake assessment it seemed there was pain on his spine, a sore left shoulder and scars on his feet from corns, his teeth were also of concern. He was put on pain medication immediately.

He had 6 teeth missing, a further 17 teeth were extracted and gums repaired, in addition to a scale and polish treatment. Following the procedure, and to help with recovery, he was placed on restricted exercise. He was closely monitored for any signs of pain, stiffness, limping etc in his legs or reluctance to exercise.

57. <https://www.scribd.com/document/211479827/The-Economic-Impact-of-the-British-Greyhound-Racing-industry-2014>
58. <https://sbcnews.co.uk/retail/2022/05/11/gbgb-to-probe-benefits-of-increased-betting-industry-welfare-contributions/>
59. <https://bgrf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/BGRF-RA-2022-to-2023-WEB.pdf>

60. <https://www.gbgb.org.uk/petition-launched-to-introduce-a-statutory-levy-on-bookmakers-to-fund-greyhound-welfare/#:~:text=3%20Jan%202025-,Petition%20launched%20to%20introduce%20a%20statutory%20levy%20on%20bookmakers%20to,time%20to%20make%20yourselves%20heard.>
61. <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/702202>
62. <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/13086085/british-greyhounds-racing-dogs-mass-graves-bolt/>
63. https://www.greyhoundtrust.org.uk/assets/000/004/323/Annual_Report__Accounts_2024_original.pdf
64. <https://greyhoundaction.ie/greyhound-traceability-in-ireland/>

4.7 Requirements and provisions to protect greyhound welfare are lacking

4.7.1 National regulation is inconsistent

Greyhound racing currently operates legally across five nations: the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland, and England, although legislation to prohibit racing in Scotland and Wales will reduce this to three in the future. Nonetheless, this multi-nation industry leads to significant inconsistencies in regulation. For example, the Welfare of Racing Greyhound Regulations (2010)⁶⁵ are exclusive to England and only cover the time greyhounds spend at the race track, ignoring the crucial period spent at trainers' kennels where they live most of their lives.

Discrepancies also exist within nations. Scotland's sole remaining independent track, for instance, has no oversight: it is not covered by the English regulations, is not regulated by the GBGB, and requires no Local Authority licensing. The inconsistency in regulation compounds issues surrounding traceability, transparency and visibility.

4.7.2 Industry regulation can't guarantee good welfare

The Greyhound Board of Great Britain is the body responsible for regulating licensed greyhound racing in Great Britain and is also responsible for regulating the welfare and care of all greyhounds who race on their tracks.

There are a range of instruments used to protect the welfare of racing greyhounds by GBGB. For example, GBGB's rules of racing reflect the statutory provisions within The Welfare of Racing Greyhounds (2010) and Section 9 of the Animal Welfare Act. Standards for greyhound trainers' residential kennels are set out within a British Standards Institute (BSI) Publicly Available Specification (PAS) and the provision of enrichment for greyhounds within a code of practice.

Despite the range of instruments available, the level of protection afforded to greyhounds is impacted by the inverse relationship between the regulatory power and the level of detail included in the regulatory instruments. For example, codes

of practice have lower levels of regulatory power than Acts of Parliament but provide higher levels of detail about greyhound care and welfare. The enrichment guide for retired greyhounds in residential kennels⁶⁶ illustrates this point well. The document shows clear understanding of the latest approach to animal welfare and the importance of behavioural interactions for good welfare. However, as a guidance document, and therefore voluntary in whether it is followed or not, its effectiveness is limited in ensuring retired greyhounds can genuinely experience positive welfare.

Keeping up to date with emerging knowledge:

The specification for greyhound residential kennels has recently been withdrawn by the British Standards Institute meaning that it no longer holds current standard status. The industry is continuing to base its kennel scheme on the standard but withdrawal means that there is no ability to update the specification in line with emerging best practice.

This failure to keep welfare standards up to date is at odds with other schemes such as RSPCA Assured⁶⁷ whose standards are continually developed and improved using a range of information, including the latest scientific research and practical farming experience. This helps to ensure that they are at the forefront of farm animal care and welfare.

When the kennel standard is intended to support good welfare, the withdrawal from a process which enables it to stay abreast with good practice, poses welfare assurance and governance risks.

4.7.3 UKAS accreditation can't guarantee good welfare

As required under The Welfare of Racing Greyhounds Regulations (2010), GBGB is accredited by UKAS. While this accreditation might provide confidence around welfare oversight, it is important to recognise that accreditation verifies process, not welfare protection. It confirms that GBGB's inspection and licensing processes meet required standards for procedural competence, documented impartiality safeguards and systematic record keeping; but it is no guarantee that greyhound racing is safe or compatible with good welfare. It doesn't certify the accuracy of injury and fatality statistics, whether kennels meet welfare standards in practice or the factual correctness of inspection reports or welfare data.

Furthermore, GBGB employs the inspectors, contracts the 'independent' auditors, reviews its own impartiality, makes all enforcement decisions and has no independent verification. This system allows the industry to mark its own homework whilst displaying a government-recognised accreditation badge that may create a false impression of independent oversight.

4.7.4 Industry regulation cannot safeguard welfare from cradle to grave

The number of nations across which greyhound racing operates severely limits the capacity of regulatory bodies to safeguard a greyhound's welfare throughout every life stage. For example, while GBGB can implement welfare standards for dogs in Great Britain, with 85% of greyhounds typically being born and raised in the Republic of Ireland until they are a year old, GBGB's influence over the overall standard of welfare throughout a greyhound's entire life is very restricted and vice versa.

The need for cradle to grave protection is recognised by the industry with GBGB's welfare strategy acknowledging the crucial role of breeding decisions and early years husbandry in lifelong welfare and the strategy's focus on a greyhound's entire lifespan, not just its racing career. However, the GBGB explicitly states that it can only implement its substantial proposals within its own jurisdiction: Great Britain and the licensed sector. They cannot afford any protections over those dogs who are bred, reared and raced in the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland.



65. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2010/9780111489727/contents>
66. <https://www.gbgb.org.uk/new-enrichment-guide-for-retired-greyhounds-in-residential-kennels/>
67. 2025 data is up to December 5th 2025

4.7.5 Disciplinary cases highlight a domination of substance violations and persistence in welfare cases

Disciplinary committee case analysis has shown that substance violations dominate (71% of cases in 2022 rising to 83% of cases in 2025) and are increasing, which suggests persistent issues. Welfare cases through neglect and/or cruelty are likewise, persistent (10% of cases in 2025) and false retirement/fraud (7% of cases in 2025) is also a concern for the disciplinary committee.

Some patterns emerge that highlight the low level of care for racing greyhounds within these cases, including the use of non-pharmaceutical grade drugs imported by vets, feeding greyhounds

meat from chemically euthanised animals, and overfeeding them before a race to enable race fixing by reducing performance. Furthermore, cases of cruelty such as starvation and unacceptable delays in providing veterinary treatment have been observed, and local inquiries frequently reveal stadium procedural failures, including the incorrect identification of a greyhound or allowing a dog to race more than once at a single meeting.

The persistence of disciplinary cases (Table 7 and 8) raises further questions around the extent to which the regulatory body can safeguard the welfare of dogs and the efficacy of sanctions to deter and punish offenders.

4.7.6 Money available for welfare funding continues to reduce

The British Greyhound Racing Fund (BGRF), funded by voluntary bookmaker contributions, provides money for welfare and support within the sport.

In 2023-24, around £3.1 million was made available for greyhound welfare out of a total BGRF income of £7.3 million⁶⁹. In the 2024-25 financial year, the British Greyhound Racing Fund (BGRF) collected £6.75 million in income from voluntary bookmaker contributions, down from £7.3 million the previous year⁷⁰. Whilst the majority of the fund was still directed towards welfare purposes, the amount has not been disclosed.

The decline in income highlights a consistent decline in the sport's popularity and income generation, raising questions about the long-term sustainability of welfare funding and the economic viability of greyhound racing in its current form.

Table 7. Total volume of disciplinary cases

	2022	2023	2024	2025 ⁶⁸
Disciplinary committee hearings	21	31	43	29
Local inquiries	38	57	46	52
Total cases	59	88	89	81
Change		+49%	+51%	+37%

Table 8. Case by case breakdown

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Disciplinary Committee Case Breakdown				
Substance-related violations	15 (71%)	25 (77%)	30 (70%)	24 (83%)
Welfare violations (neglect/cruelty)	3 (14%)	2 (6%)	4 (9%)	3 (10%)
False retirement/fraud	-	-	3 (7%)	2 (7%)
Improper conduct	2 (10%)	2 (6%)	-	-
Performance manipulation	-	1 (3%)	-	-
Procedural violations	-	-	1 (2%)	-
Other	-	2 (6%)	2 (5%)	-
Cases closed/withdrawn	-	-	3 (7%)	-
Local Inquiry Case Breakdown				
Improved performance	11 (29%)	19 (33%)	18 (39%)	18 (35%)
Stadium procedural failures	15 (39%)	10 (18%)	7 (15%)	7 (13%)
Unauthorised withdrawals	1 (3%)	12 (21%)	9 (17%)	8 (15%)
Vomiting	7 (18%)	2 (4%)	3 (7%)	3 (6%)
Improper conduct	6 (16%)	4 (7%)	6 (13%)	6 (12%)
False retirement/rehoming	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	6 (13%)	6 (12%)
Procedural (wrong dog, ID failures)	3 (8%)	2 (4%)	5 (11%)	0 (0%)
Other	3 (8%)	9 (16%)	5 (11%)	7 (13%)



68. 2025 data is up to December 5th 2025

69. <https://bgrf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/22414-BGRF-2023-24-24pp-web-r3.pdf>

70. <https://bgrf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/22506-BGRF-2024-25-24pp-web.pdf>

5 How does greyhound racing contribute to the UK economy?



Racing venues continue to disappear as public interest in greyhound racing has reduced.

5.1 Greyhound racing is undergoing sustained economic decline

In 2025, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport used greyhound racing's contribution to the UK economy as a reason not to ban it in England⁷¹.

Similarly, GBGB claims that greyhound racing is 'one of the best attended sports in Great Britain and is present in communities across the country, creating employment and driving economic benefits'⁷². However, these claims are questionable given the decline in tracks and betting income, which has not yet returned to pre-COVID levels.

In 2022, greyhound racing delivered around £96 million to the UK economy; £18.7 million of this was from profit, £52.0 million from tax and £25.1 million in employee income⁷³.

Further economic contribution came from industry expenditure in its own supply chain (known as indirect value) and subsequent expenditure in the supply chains of those in greyhound racing's supply chain (known as induced value). This resulted in the greyhound racing's total economic contribution in 2022 at over £164.0 million.

However, the sector has shown a shrinking trend over the last decade. There are currently 18 GBGB licensed greyhound racecourses across the country⁷⁴, down from 26 in 2016, a 30% drop in the last decade.

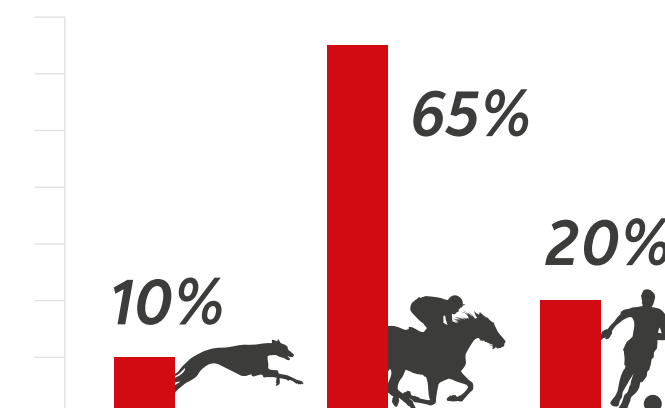
This is a stark reflection of closures driven by declining attendance, reduced betting income and changing entertainment preferences within these local communities. These racing tracks employ around 300 full time and 1,600 part time employees⁷⁵, meaning that the sport continues to support jobs locally, but in the wider context of the UK economy its overall contribution to the UK economy is minor. Given the modest and declining scale the industry has, its overall economic importance is limited.

Betting income has not recovered to pre-COVID levels, and the closures of racecourses have concentrated economic activity into fewer locations, reducing local economic benefits. While the sector generates revenue, much of it circulates within the betting systems, raising questions about whether the resources and land used for greyhound racing could deliver higher economic returns if repurposed for housing, retail, or other community investments.

Between April 2023 and March 2024, the annual turnover of off-course greyhound race betting in Great Britain was £794 million, down from £803.91 million in the previous year⁷⁶, further highlighting the industry's declining economic significance. This continues a longer-term trend, with 2024 turnover at approximately half of its 2008 level, indicating a substantial historical contraction. Similarly, on-course betting has experienced an even sharper decline, falling by around 80% since 2008⁷⁷. From April 2008 to March 2024, greyhound betting income has fallen significantly, dropping from approximately £3-4 million in 2008 to £0.9 million in 2024⁷⁸. Together, these figures reinforce the view that greyhound racing is undergoing sustained economic decline rather than maintaining a stable or growing position within the UK betting market.

5.2 Greyhound racing occupies a niche and declining position as a sport

It accounts for only around 10% of UK betting turnover, significantly behind horse racing (65%) and football (20%)⁷⁹, which dominate the sector. The sport also has a limited footprint, with just 18 GBGB-licensed stadia⁸⁰ down to 26 in 2016, and has experienced falling attendance alongside ongoing track closures. Furthermore, betting activity, one of its primary economic drivers, has decreased over time, with total bets falling from £1.68 billion in 2009 to £1.49 billion in 2023⁸¹. Taken together, these trends indicate a sport in long-term decline, rather than one holding a prominent or growing role in the UK sporting landscape.



Above: Distribution of UK betting turnover

5.3 The greyhound industry impacts on the economic costs of others

The UK Government reports that the Greyhound Trust alone rehomes over 4,000 ex-racing greyhounds each year, supported by around £3 million in levy-funded welfare spending alongside additional charitable fundraising and volunteer efforts⁸². At the same time, economic assessments of track closures indicate that alternative land uses, such as housing, can generate significantly greater economic benefits than continued racing (see [section 6](#)). This suggests that the ongoing welfare and rehoming costs associated with greyhound racing may represent an opportunity cost⁸³, potentially limiting the use of resources and land for activities that could deliver greater overall benefits to local communities.

71. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c93kkln14yo>

72. <https://gbgb-prod-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/04091651/OO-GBGB-Report.pdf>

73. <https://gbgb-prod-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/04091651/OO-GBGB-Report.pdf>

74. <https://www.gbgb.org.uk/racing/race-courses/>

75. <https://gbgb-prod-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/04091651/OO-GBGB-Report.pdf>

76. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/469762/gambling-turnover-dogs-in-great-britain-betting/>

77. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/469762/gambling-turnover-dogs-in-great-britain-betting/>

78. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/469798/gross-gambling-yield-dogs-on-course-in-great-britain-betting-uk/>

79. <https://oxford-stadium.co.uk/blog/how-popular-is-greyhound-racing-in-the-uk/>

80. <https://www.gbgb.org.uk/racing/race-courses/>

81. <https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/uploads/Economic%20Impact%20Assessment%20of%20Thornton%20Greyhounds%20and%20Alternative%20Uses%20Final%20Report%2008.10.2024%20%281%29%20%281%29%20%282%29.pdf>

82. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/greyhound-welfare-boosted-through-multi-million-pound-deal-with-gambling-industry>

83. <https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/articles/greyhound-track-site-could-add-ps59m-to-fife-economy-if-repurposed-for-housing>

What is the economic impact of ending greyhound racing?



6.1 Repurposing sites would offer greater benefits for employment

In 2012, over 7,000 people were reported to be employed by the licensed greyhound industry⁸⁴. In 2022, this number had fallen to over 5,400 jobs. Over 1,500 of these are full time positions, and there are a further 3,900 part time positions in direct employment across the industry as a whole⁸⁵.

The greatest number of staff are employed by trainers including themselves at around 500 with approximately 2660 kennel staff. This is followed by the racetracks who employ approx 1,900, split between c.300 full time staff, and c.1,600 part time and seasonal staff. There are around 150 British breeders and 90 kennel staff. Employment of around 100 staff is also provided through the media who produce and distribute greyhound racing content to the betting industry.

Lastly, approximately 40 people are employed for the administration, regulation and governance of the industry. The end of greyhound racing will clearly affect several thousand people although many are seasonal staff. However, an economic impact assessment conducted by BIGGAR economics at Thornton Greyhounds, Scotland's last remaining greyhound racing track, found that the venue supported only 2 full-time equivalent jobs and generated £62,000 in Gross Value Added⁸⁶, indicating a very limited direct economic contribution from the greyhound racing industry. The same study concluded that repurposing the site for housing would create significantly greater employment, both through short-term construction activity and longer-term jobs in retail and services, compared to those sustained by racing. This suggests that alternative or mixed-use development of such sites is likely to deliver stronger and more sustainable employment benefits.

6.2 Repurposing sites unlocks greater economic opportunity

Repurposing greyhound racing stadia is generally more economically viable than retaining them in their existing use because the underlying land use characteristics of modern greyhound racing tend to produce relatively low and declining economic output, while alternative uses – particularly housing and mixed-use redevelopment – generate substantially higher and more sustainable economic returns.

Greyhound stadia typically operate with limited revenue streams, increasingly reliant on broadcast or media rights, and often experience minimal or negligible on-site attendance. This results in low Gross Value Added and limited employment generation relative to the size and strategic location of the land they occupy. As operational costs rise and demand continues to decline, many venues become structurally unviable without external support or diversification.

By contrast, redevelopment of these sites for residential or mixed-use purposes unlocks significantly greater economic value. Residential development delivers large-scale upfront investment through construction activity, followed by long-term benefits such as council tax receipts, resident consumer spending, and increased local economic activity. In addition, redevelopment typically generates a substantial uplift in land value, reflecting the higher productivity of housing and mixed-use urban land compared with specialist sporting uses.

The same analysis by BIGGAR economics reveals the significant economic and community benefits that could be achieved through the redevelopment of Thornton as an example. It is suggested that repurposing Thornton as a housing development would support more than twice as much economic activity than under its current use as a greyhound racing facility with ongoing opportunities for employment and to the wider community⁸⁷. At a time when affordable housing is at crisis point and following the Labour Government pledge to deliver 1.5m homes over the next five years⁸⁸, as well as their acknowledgement of the need for public access to leisure facilities⁸⁹, the repurposing and redevelopment of greyhound racetracks provides a means of contributing to these policies.

Exploring the ways in which other tracks have been repurposed or redeveloped highlights their various alternative uses including the development of mixed and affordable housing, community facilities, green space, logistic hubs and urban regeneration (see case studies below).

CASE STUDIES

Peterborough racetrack

The Peterborough racetrack first opened in 1931 but closed in 2020 due to the pandemic. In 2021, the site was bought as a job creating industrial hub with planning for nine commercial units with outline permission granted for up to 11 industrial units. It is suggested that the site will create 65 construction jobs on site and 260 jobs once the project is finished⁹⁰.

Wimbledon racetrack

The last race took place at Wimbledon in 2017⁹¹ after which it was demolished and replaced with a 20,000 seat football arena, over 600 shared ownership and residential homes and leisure facilities⁹².

Poole racetrack

Unlike other tracks, it is only greyhound racing which has ceased. The track itself has remained open with speedway continuing to take place⁹³.

While the general trend for racetracks is closure, there have been proposals to develop new tracks. For example, in 2021 there was a proposal to develop a new track in Wallyford, East Lothian. However, the developer discontinued the business plan citing among others, society's changing relationship with animals⁹⁴.

⁸⁴. Deloitte (2014) Economic impact of the British Greyhound Racing Industry 2014.

⁸⁵. Oliver & Ohlbaum Associates Ltd (2023). The economic impact of greyhound racing in the UK. Accessed 30th April 2025.

⁸⁶. <https://files.grey2kusa.org/pdf/Economic-Impact-Assessment-of-Thornton-Greyhounds-and-Alternative-Uses.pdf>

⁸⁷. <https://files.grey2kusa.org/pdf/Economic-Impact-Assessment-of-Thornton-Greyhounds-and-Alternative-Uses.pdf>

⁸⁸. https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/lln-2024-0039/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

⁸⁹. <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-04-17/46020>

⁹⁰. <https://www.peterboroughtoday.co.uk/news/politics/council/in-pictures-demolition-of-peterboroughs-historic-greyhound-stadium-begins-4932638>

⁹¹. <https://www.standard.co.uk/going-out/attractions/gone-to-the-dogs-a-farewell-to-wimbledon-greyhound-stadium-a3498816.html>

⁹². https://developmentfinancetoday.co.uk/article-desc-6262_Galliard%20and%20Catalyst%20to%20transform%20former%20Wimbledon%20dog%20track#:~:text=Jordan%20Williams%20%7C%2016:59%20Monday,forward%20with%20this%20exciting%20development.

⁹³. <https://www.bournemouthecho.co.uk/news/18745615.greyhound-racing-closed-permanently-poole-stadium/>

⁹⁴. <https://www.eastlothiancourier.com/news/19557481.wallyford-greyhound-stadium-plan-officially-scrapped-20-years/#:~:text=Wallyford%20greyhound%20stadium%20plan%20officially%20scrapped%20after%2020%20years,-3rd%20September%202021&text=PLANS%20for%20a%20controversial%20greyhound,they%20were%20first%20put%20forward.>

Greyhound racing is a dying industry

The last 100 years has seen a significant change in greyhound racing going from large numbers of racetracks and record levels of attendance to widespread track closures and a dramatic drop in the number of people watching racing at the track.

In the last twenty five years, major welfare concerns have increased leading to media exposes, public outcry and political enquiries. These welfare concerns coupled with a change in how animals are viewed and used in society has slowly eroded the social licence previously granted to the greyhound racing industry such that only a handful of countries remain where greyhound racing is legal.

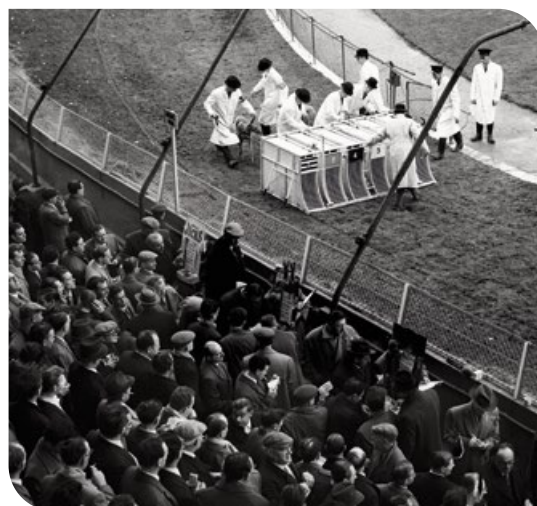
What do the public think of greyhound racing?

Public support for greyhound racing is lacking. **91%** of respondents said that they neither follow or participate in greyhound racing and **64%** of respondents rated it as unimportant to British culture. When asked what was more important; welfare of the dogs or the employment opportunities greyhound racing creates, **81%** said welfare with only **5%** stating jobs⁹⁵. Likewise, **55%** of respondents said that greyhound racing was unacceptable to them⁹⁶.

This lack of support is reflected in the dwindling attendance figures which have shown a significant long term decline.

1926

Greyhound racing first introduced with the first race taking place in Belle Vue Manchester on 24 July.



1946

The industry hits its pinnacle with attendances estimated at around 75 million, a figure that would never be matched again



75

million



10

million

1961

Betting and Gaming Act legalises high-street bookmakers, leading to a long-term decline in on-track attendance.



1960s & 70s

Greyhound racing sees a marked decline with mass track closures, including 8 of London's 17 tracks between 1966 and 1974. By the end of the 1960s, greyhound racing attendances had plummeted to around 10 million annually.

CLOSED



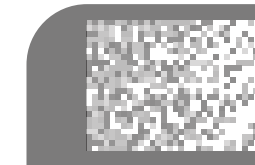
Greyhound racing across the world

The 2020s has seen the greyhound racing industry rapidly decline. Since 2024 we have seen commitments to ban greyhound racing in New Zealand, Wales, Tasmania and Scotland leaving racing legal in England, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, USA, Australia and Vietnam.



1980s

Industry endures a brief resurgence due to media coverage of revered star greyhounds like Ballyregan Bob and Scurlogue Champ.



1990s

Long term slump in interest resumes as terrestrial TV coverage stops late in the decade.

2000s

Track closures continue as animal welfare concerns about dog racing become widespread, including major London tracks such as Catford (2003) and Walthamstow (2008).

2006

The Sunday Times exposes David Smith, a builder's merchant in Seaham for running a disposal service for retired or injured racing dogs, that allegedly resulted in the deaths of around 10,000 greyhounds. **The incident leads an inquiry into the welfare of racing dogs and increased calls for an end to the practise altogether.**

2007

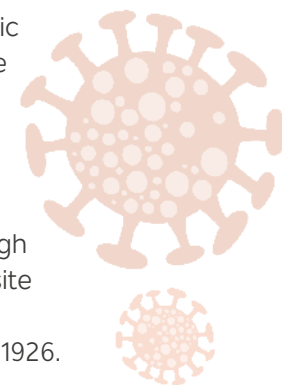
APGAW report concludes that the events uncovered at Seaham represented 'a major failing for the regulation of the greyhound industry and that it must be a matter of extreme priority for the industry to improve its tracking of dogs. Donoghue report also published with recommendations across breeding, tracking and retirement.

2010s

The Welfare of Racing Greyhounds Regulations (England) 2010 enacted. Annual attendance continues to drop from 2 million in 2010 to 1.4 million in 2018. Investigative documentaries such as *Drugs and Money: Dog Racing Undercover* (2014) and *RTE Investigates: Greyhounds Running for Their Lives* (2019) draw public attention to the extent of welfare abuses within the industry.

2020

COVID-19 pandemic accelerates decline amid rising animal welfare protests. Continued track closures including Poole, Peterborough and Belle Vue the site of the UK's first greyhound race in 1926.



2025

The Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill is introduced to the Senedd, marking the Welsh government's move to outlaw the practice by 2030.

The Scottish government backs the Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Scotland) Bill which seeks to ban racing on oval tracks due to welfare concerns.

25% drop in licensed trainers between 2022-2025, outlining the accelerated decline of the industry since the pandemic.

2026

Scotland and Wales vote to ban greyhound racing. Only 18 venues are licensed by the Greyhound Board of Great Britain, a figure that contrasts starkly with the peak 77 licensed tracks operating in the 1940s.

18

GBGB-licensed venues remain



⁹⁵. https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/5ue6z1j8dd/RSPCA_Greyhound_220914_W.pdf

⁹⁶. The Vegan Society. (September 12, 2024). "How far are the following activities acceptable or unacceptable to you personally?" [Graph]. In Statista. Retrieved March 26, 2026, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1546416/uk-animal-use-attitudes-survey/>

Ending greyhound racing is the only way to safeguard dog welfare



© Scotland Against Greyhound Exploitation

2026 marks 100 years since greyhound racing was first introduced to the UK. This report has illustrated a range of concerns associated with greyhound racing and has clearly shown that it is impossible for each and every greyhound to experience a good life.

Welfare issues are abundant and continuous, impacting every life stage of a racing greyhound. Breeding of greyhounds is closely linked to activities illegal in the UK including hare coursing and use of surgical artificial insemination. Further concerns include the inherent danger and risk of injury and death caused by racing at speed around oval tracks, persistent low levels of care, a lack of transparency across the industry and traceability of individual dogs from birth to death and high levels of wastage.

In Great Britain, there are issues around the lack of a secure and consistent income stream to raise and maintain welfare standards and a reliance on the charity sector for rehoming. There have also been some reprehensible cases involving racing greyhounds

as well as several media exposés. These have caused public outcry, eroding the industry's social licence to operate and resulted in an upsurge in political activity including calls to ban the activity.

In seeking to address these growing concerns, in 2022, the GBGB published a long term welfare strategy: *A Good Life For Every Greyhound*. While its intention was laudable there is a lack of consideration of all factors likely to affect the welfare and quality of life of racing greyhounds. For example, actions which would provide behavioural opportunities and improve the dog's emotional state are lacking in comparison to the focus on health and nutrition. Furthermore the need for greyhounds to be psychologically (adaptable to new environments and stressful situations) and

physically resilient (breed for resilience rather than speed) suggests that the dog needs to adapt to the industry rather than changing the industry to ensure it is welfare compatible.

There are also very clear omissions from the strategy which, if included, could better protect the welfare of the dogs involved. It is without doubt that greyhound racing is inherently dangerous for the dogs involved and running at speed around oval tracks causes significant injury to many dogs, and in some cases death.

In the time that the strategy has been published, the number of dogs who have been euthanased trackside has risen from 99 to **161**, a shocking **62%** increase.

More greyhounds died in 2025 than they did in 2022 despite fewer races showing that the situation is getting worse for dogs, not better.

The failure to look at changing the shape of the racetrack and in the absence of radical change leaves greyhound racing open to injuries to dogs and unnecessary deaths.

Given the current state of the greyhound racing industry it is clear that radical and systemic change is needed to safeguard the welfare of racing greyhounds.

This includes:

- Compulsory and independently enforced five domains model-based animal welfare standards for all greyhounds
- A single UK wide, Republic of Ireland compatible, microchip based identification and fully transparent database allowing real time data to be accessed online and publicly accessible across all life stages.
- Transparent collection and independent verification of birth, death and injury data.
- Accountability for dogs exiting racing
- Independently funded regulatory oversight and enforcement
- Unannounced animal welfare checks and enforcement
- Address oversupply and wastage of greyhounds
- Mandatory education and background animal welfare checks for all participants
- Disciplinary matters to operate independently from commercial and oversight bodies
- Independent regulatory body to proactively address the use of banned substances
- Public reporting of enforcement outcomes
- Action on racetrack safety to eliminate the danger of injury and death. The evidence base indicates an industry-wide transition to racing on straight tracks is required.
- Export of greyhounds outside of the UK to be banned
- Funding security for greyhound welfare assurance

The means to achieve this level of change are absent and the appetite clearly lacking. Public and political activity have indicated that there is no longer a place for greyhound racing in a modern compassionate society. In the UK, Scotland and Wales have joined this trend, it is critical that the rest of the nations follow suit.

The only way to safeguard the welfare of greyhounds is to end racing. We are calling on policy and key decision makers to support our call and to commit to phasing out greyhound racing.

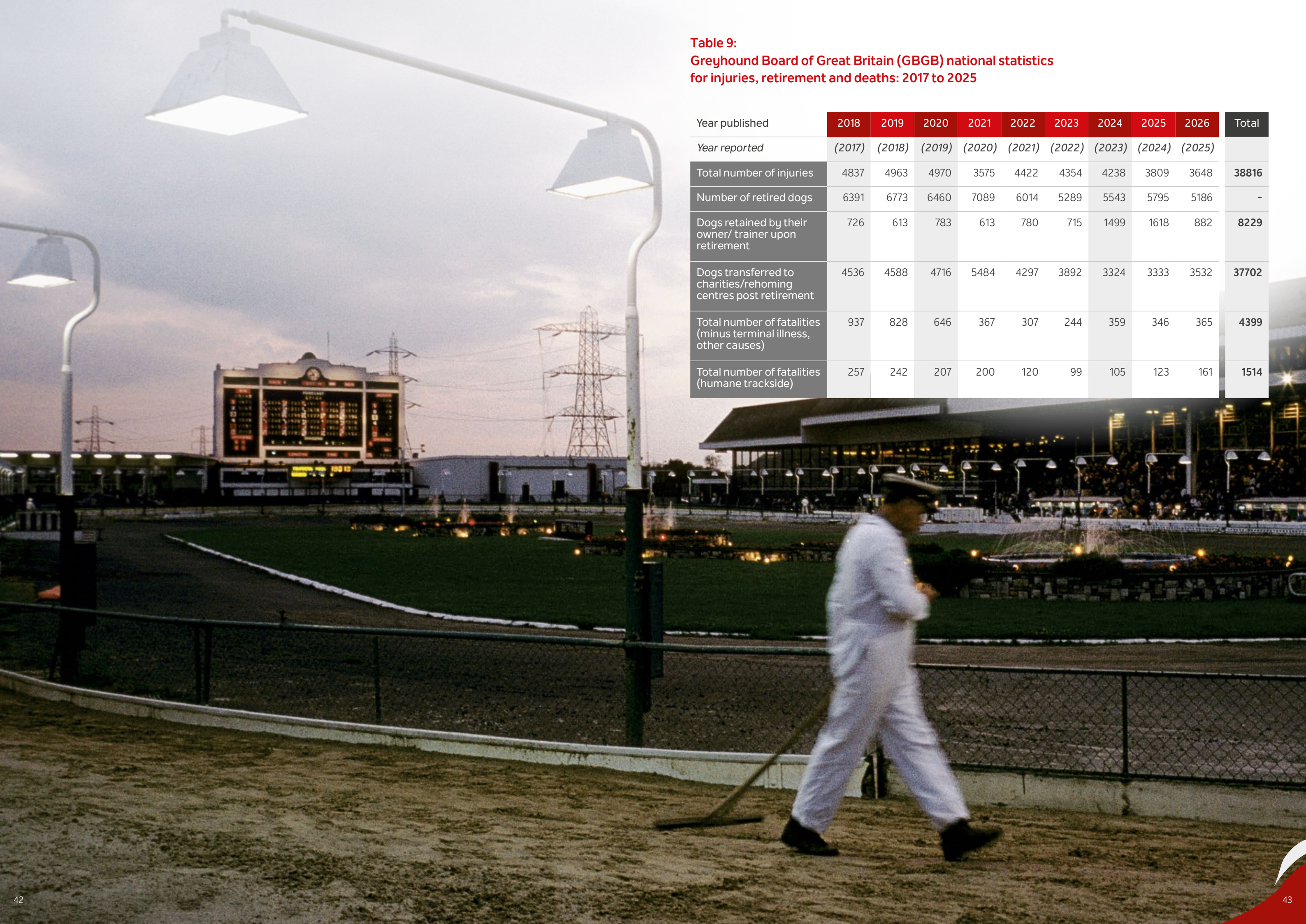


Table 9:
Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB) national statistics
for injuries, retirement and deaths: 2017 to 2025

Year published	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
Year reported	(2017)	(2018)	(2019)	(2020)	(2021)	(2022)	(2023)	(2024)	(2025)	
Total number of injuries	4837	4963	4970	3575	4422	4354	4238	3809	3648	38816
Number of retired dogs	6391	6773	6460	7089	6014	5289	5543	5795	5186	-
Dogs retained by their owner/ trainer upon retirement	726	613	783	613	780	715	1499	1618	882	8229
Dogs transferred to charities/rehoming centres post retirement	4536	4588	4716	5484	4297	3892	3324	3333	3532	37702
Total number of fatalities (minus terminal illness, other causes)	937	828	646	367	307	244	359	346	365	4399
Total number of fatalities (humane trackside)	257	242	207	200	120	99	105	123	161	1514

For more information about how we are campaigning
to end greyhound racing in the UK, please visit:

bluecross.org.uk/campaign/EndGreyhoundRacing

dogstrust.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/our-views/greyhound-racing

hoperescue.org.uk/Listing/Category/campaigns

rspca.org.uk/getinvolved/campaign/greyhounds

