

Welsh Parliament

**Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport,  
and International Relations Committee**

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# **Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill**

## Stage 1 Report

December 2025



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# **Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill**

## Stage 1 Report

December 2025



# About the Committee

The Committee was established on 23 June 2021. Its remit can be found at:  
**[www.senedd.wales/SeneddCulture](http://www.senedd.wales/SeneddCulture)**

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Current Committee membership:



**Committee Chair:  
Delyth Jewell MS**  
Plaid Cymru



**Mick Antoniw MS**  
Welsh Labour



**Alun Davies MS**  
Welsh Labour



**Gareth Davies MS**  
Welsh Conservatives



**Heledd Fychan MS**  
Plaid Cymru



**Lee Waters MS**  
Welsh Labour

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The following Member attended as a substitute during the scrutiny of the Bill.



**Llyr Gruffydd MS**  
Plaid Cymru

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## Chair's foreword

I am pleased to present this report, which sets out the Committee's consideration of the general principles of the Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill. The Bill was introduced by the Welsh Government in September 2025 with the aim of bringing greyhound racing in Wales to an end, primarily on animal welfare grounds.

Our scrutiny has taken place within a shorter timeframe than usual, which was a result of the Welsh Government's decision to prioritise this Bill within a busy legislative timetable as part of a political agreement. This decision has undoubtedly made our task as a Committee challenging. We have had to grapple with incomplete and fiercely contested evidence from both sides of the debate, without the time we would have preferred to examine it. This experience has underlined the importance of strong, well developed policy foundations before legislation is introduced.

From the outset, the Committee has been deeply aware that views on this issue are strongly held and often polarised. We have sought to consider all perspectives carefully and objectively. Some stakeholders expressed reservation about the need for legislation, questioning whether enhanced regulation could provide an alternative, and indeed raised concerns about the economic effects and unintended consequences of a ban. Others pointed to a significant level of public support for prohibition. Many witnesses, as well as a number of Members of the Committee, believe that prohibition is a necessary and important step towards protecting the welfare of racing greyhounds, citing concerns about the level of injuries and fatalities on the track. No amount of regulation could ever eliminate the inherent risk to greyhounds from this sport. As such, it is the belief of a number of Members that a ban is necessary.

At the heart of our discussions, though, was a shared understanding that, whatever the differences of opinion on the Bill, the welfare of the dogs must remain paramount. This point notwithstanding, we do acknowledge the concerns of those whose livelihoods may be affected if the Bill passes. The potential consequences for those who work at Wales's only commercial track deserve careful consideration.

Our scrutiny has also highlighted the fact that the narrow focus of this Bill addresses only part of a much broader picture. Whilst the proposed ban seeks to prevent harm to greyhounds on the racing track, evidence suggests that welfare

concerns extend across the lifetime of a racing greyhound, including at the stages of importation, breeding, kennelling, and rehoming. These issues will require further attention if meaningful improvements in welfare are to be achieved.

We are grateful to all those who contributed evidence and shared their perspectives to our Committee, whether in support of or opposed to the Bill. This engagement has been invaluable in helping us understand the range of views on this subject, as well as the implications of the proposed legislation. We hope this report will assist Members in reaching an informed decision on the general principles of the Bill and we encourage the Welsh Government to adopt a comprehensive, evidence-led approach to legislative proposals in the future.



**Delyth Jewell MS**

Committee Chair

## Recommendations

- Recommendation 1.** We recommend the Welsh Government undertake a comprehensive assessment of the economic and social implications of the Bill before it is brought into force. ....Page 51
- Recommendation 2.** We recommend the Welsh Government fully assess the needs of affected workers as a consequence of the Bill and put in place targeted support to mitigate hardship before it is brought into force.....Page 51
- Recommendation 3.** We recommend the Welsh Government closely monitor the potential displacement of racing activity across borders and engage with Animal Licensing Wales as necessary to assess and mitigate potential welfare impacts. ....Page 60
- Recommendation 4.** We recommend the Welsh Government engages with the Sentencing Council before the Bill takes effect to develop clear sentencing guidelines. .... Page 64
- Recommendation 5.** We recommend the Cabinet Secretary tables an amendment to the Bill to enable the Welsh Government to issue statutory guidance to inspectors in relation to enforcement of the offences in the Bill. ....Page 66
- Recommendation 6.** We recommend the Welsh Government establishes national agreements to support evidence-led investigations and collaboration between enforcement agencies and the Police.....Page 66
- Recommendation 7.** We recommend the Welsh Government undertakes a detailed assessment of enforcement capacity, including training needs, and ensures that local authorities have access to adequate funding and support to implement the legislation. ....Page 66

# 1. Introduction

## The Bill

1. On 29 September 2025, the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, Huw Irranca-Davies MS (“the Cabinet Secretary”), introduced the Welsh Government’s Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill (“the Bill”) to the Senedd.<sup>1</sup> On the same day, he laid an accompanying Explanatory Memorandum (“the EM”) incorporating the Regulatory Impact Assessment (“RIA”) and Explanatory Notes (“EN”)<sup>2</sup>, and published a written statement.<sup>3</sup> On 30 September 2025, he made an oral statement in Plenary.<sup>4</sup>
2. In accordance with Standing Order 26.9, the Senedd’s Business Committee referred the Bill to the Committee for Stage 1 scrutiny of the Bill’s general principles with a reporting deadline of 5 December 2025.

## Terms of reference

3. On 25 September 2025, we agreed to consider:
  - The general principles of the Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill and whether there is a need for legislation to deliver the Bill’s stated policy objective, which is to prohibit greyhound racing in Wales.
  - The terms used in the Bill, whether defined or not. In particular, are they workable and will they deliver the stated policy intention.
  - Any potential barriers to the implementation of the Bill’s provisions, and whether the Bill and accompanying Explanatory Memorandum and Regulatory Impact Assessment take adequate account of them.
  - Whether there are any unintended consequences arising from the Bill.
  - The Welsh Government’s assessment of the financial and other impacts of the Bill as set out in Part 2 of the Explanatory Memorandum.

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<sup>1</sup> Information about the Bill and its passage through the Senedd is available on the [Bill’s webpage](#)

<sup>2</sup> Welsh Government, Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill: [Explanatory Memorandum incorporating the Regulatory Impact Assessment and Explanatory Notes](#), 29 September 2025

<sup>3</sup> Welsh Government, Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill: [Written statement](#), 29 September 2025

<sup>4</sup> [Plenary, Record of Proceedings, 30 September 2025](#) – paragraphs 119-126

- The appropriateness of the power in the Bill for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation (as set out in Part 1: Chapter 5 of the Explanatory Memorandum).
- Matters relating to the competence of the Senedd including compatibility with the European Convention on Human Rights.
- The balance between the information contained on the face of the Bill and what is left to subordinate legislation.
- Any matter related to the quality of the legislation.
- Any other matter related to the constitutional or other implications of the Bill.

## **Our approach**

**4.** In accordance with Standing Order 26.10, our role is to consider the general principles of the Bill and report to the Senedd in order to inform decisions about whether the Bill should proceed to the next stages of the legislative process.

**5.** On 29 September 2025, we received a private technical briefing on the Bill from Welsh Government officials. We are grateful to the Cabinet Secretary for facilitating this.

**6.** On 30 September 2025, we issued a general call for written evidence. To ensure the evidence received could inform our oral evidence sessions, the deadline was 17 October 2025. We received 29 responses.<sup>5</sup>

**7.** Between 2 October and 6 November 2025, we held oral evidence sessions with the Cabinet Secretary on the Bill and key stakeholders.<sup>6</sup> A list of witnesses can be found at Annex A. A list of consultation responses and written evidence can be found at Annex B.

**8.** The Senedd's Citizen Engagement Team facilitated an online survey, shared publicly between 2 and 19 October 2025. The intention of the survey was to complement the call for written evidence, by providing an accessible opportunity for the public to contribute views on the Bill, the sport of greyhound racing, and

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<sup>5</sup> The written responses we received may be read in full on the [Bill's webpage](#).

<sup>6</sup> Details of the oral evidence sessions, including links to the transcripts and Senedd.tv broadcasts, are available on the [Bill's webpage](#).

related issues such as animal welfare. A summary of the views gathered through the survey was published on 3 November 2025.<sup>7</sup>

**9.** We have engaged in correspondence and received supplementary written evidence from a range of relevant stakeholders.<sup>8</sup>

**10.** In addition to the Committee's scheduled activities, individual Members visited the Valley Greyhound Stadium in Ystrad Mynach during a race day, providing an opportunity to observe the operations of the stadium in a live setting, and gain a deeper understanding of the practices and conditions associated with greyhound racing. The insights gathered from these visits have informed the Committee's ongoing consideration and discussions on the Bill.

**11.** We recognise that views on the Bill are strongly held and often polarised. We are grateful to those who have shared their experiences, evidence, and expertise with us. Throughout our scrutiny, we have sought to consider all perspectives carefully and objectively. Whilst we acknowledge that not all contributors will agree with our conclusions, we assure them that every contribution has informed our deliberations and shaped this report.

### **Scrutiny of the Bill by other Senedd committees**

**12.** In line with their usual practice, the Finance Committee and the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee scrutinised the Bill on their respective areas of interest. Information about their work, and their reports, can be found on the Bill's webpage.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> [Citizen Engagement Team: Prohibition of Greyhound \(Racing\) Bill: Engagement findings - November 2025](#)

<sup>8</sup> All of the correspondence is available on the [Bill's webpage](#).

<sup>9</sup> All of the information on their work is available on the [Bill's webpage](#).

## 2. Background to the Bill

### Greyhound racing across the world

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**13.** Wales is among a small number of countries where commercial greyhound racing continues to operate. The proposed ban in Wales reflects a wider international trend to phase out what is now a marginal sport. Although commercial greyhound racing still takes place in 10 countries,, it has ceased or is being phased out in most, with operational tracks now limited to Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, the United States, and the UK.<sup>10</sup> New Zealand has announced plans to close the greyhound racing industry by July 2026, citing persistent welfare concerns despite regulatory reforms. Several Australian states have also reviewed the sport, with the Australian Capital Territory banning greyhound racing in 2018.

### Greyhound racing across Great Britain

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**14.** In Scotland, the Greyhound Racing (Offences) (Scotland) Bill was introduced in April 2025 following a review commissioned by the then Rural Affairs, Islands and Natural Environment Committee of the Scottish Parliament as part of its consideration of a petition calling for a ban. If passed, Scotland could join Wales in ending the practice, leaving England as the only nation in Great Britain without a ban.

**15.** Greyhound racing in Great Britain is primarily operated on a commercial basis under the Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB). GBGB licenses 19 stadia, 18 in England and one in Wales. Scotland's only GBGB-regulated stadium closed in 2020.

**16.** Historically, racing also occurred at informal “flapping tracks” outside of GBGB regulatory oversight, but these have almost entirely disappeared. Following more recent closures in England and Wales, Thornton Stadium in Scotland is the last remaining flapping track in Great Britain, although its website confirms that no greyhound racing currently takes place there.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Grey 2K USA Worldwide. Greyhound racing around the world. Available at <https://www.grey2kusa.org> (Accessed: 11 November 2025)

<sup>11</sup> Thornton Greyhound Stadium. Available at <https://thorntondogs.wixsite.com> (Accessed: 11 November 2025)

## **Greyhound racing in Wales**

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**17.** Greyhound racing has taken place in Wales for around a century,<sup>12</sup> but only one track remains operational: Valley Greyhound Stadium (“VGS”) in Ystrad Mynach. According to the EM, VGS opened in 1976, historically operating as a flapping track with one race day per week. Following its acquisition in 2021, VGS was redeveloped to meet GBGB licensing standards, becoming GBGB-licensed in August 2023, with professional racing commencing in November 2023. VGS now hosts three race meetings a week, each comprising 11 to 12 races with up to six greyhounds per race. There are currently 10 GBGB-licensed trainers based in Wales, predominantly racing at VGS, alongside two trainers from outside Wales, with a reported 265 greyhounds eligible to race. Attendance figures are unknown,<sup>13</sup> but races are live-streamed, and in 2019 the UK Government described greyhound racing as the sixth most watched sport in Britain.<sup>14</sup>

## **Greyhound racing regulation in Great Britain**

### **Statutory regulation**

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**18.** There is no legislation in Wales specifically governing the welfare of racing greyhounds; their welfare is addressed by general animal welfare law. The Animal Welfare Act 2006 (“the 2006 Act”) applies in England and Wales, and enables enforcement action to be taken where there is evidence of cruelty to an animal or a failure to provide for an animal’s welfare needs. The 2006 Act also provides powers for Welsh Ministers to introduce licensing schemes and statutory guidance. Using these powers, the Welsh Government has issued the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs<sup>15</sup>, which provides general guidance applicable to all dogs rather than specific provisions for racing greyhounds. The Welsh Government has also endorsed a voluntary code of practice for the welfare of racing greyhounds produced by the Animal Welfare Network Wales.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> [Petitions Committee: Record of Proceedings - 13 June 2022](#), paragraph 159

<sup>13</sup> [Welsh Government: Prohibition of Greyhound Racing \(Wales\) Bill: Explanatory Memorandum incorporating the Regulatory Impact Assessment and Explanatory Notes - 29 September 2025](#), paragraph 3.5-3.6

<sup>14</sup> [UK Government: Press release, Greyhound welfare boosted through multi-million pound deal with gambling industry](#), 10 January 2019

<sup>15</sup> [Welsh Government: Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs](#), 2018

<sup>16</sup> [Animal Welfare Network Wales, Voluntary Code of Practice: The Welfare of Racing Greyhounds \(Wales\)](#), August 2019



**19.** Additional legislation relevant to greyhound welfare includes:

- The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (Wales) Order 2007, which makes it an offence to transport animals in a way that causes or is likely to cause injury or unnecessary suffering;
- The Microchipping of Dogs (Wales) Regulations 2015, which require all dogs to be microchipped; and
- The Animal Welfare (Breeding of Dogs) (Wales) Regulations 2014, which provide for the licensing of dog breeders.

**20.** The position in Scotland is similar, with racing greyhound welfare being covered under general animal welfare legislation.

**21.** In England, additional legislation applies through the Welfare of Racing Greyhounds Regulations 2010 (“the 2010 Regulations”), made under section 13 of the 2006 Act. The 2010 Regulations require all operators of greyhound racing tracks to obtain a licence from their local authority, unless they are regulated by a United Kingdom Accreditation Service (“UKAS”) accredited body (or EU equivalent) and meet the conditions set out in the Schedule to the 2010 Regulations.

**22.** A post-implementation review of the effectiveness of the 2010 Regulations reported in 2016 that they had been successful in establishing minimum welfare standards at English racetracks. It also identified areas for further action beyond the scope of the 2010 Regulations, including tackling standards at trainers’ kennels and addressing issues of transparency around injury and retirement rates. The review noted actions for GBGB relating to data publication and independent monitoring of compliance.<sup>17</sup> GBGB began publishing injury and retirement data at a national level in 2018 and is now accredited by UKAS.<sup>18</sup>

## **Self-regulation**

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**23.** GBGB regulates licensed greyhound racing in Great Britain under a system of self-regulation accredited by UKAS. The UK Government Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) monitors injury data published by

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<sup>17</sup> Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Policy paper, Welfare of racing greyhounds: post implementation review of 2010 Welfare of Racing Greyhounds Regulations, 15 September 2016

<sup>18</sup> A body appointed by the UK Government to assess and accredit organisations that provide services.

GBGB for trends. GBGB licenses racecourses, trainers, kennel staff, and veterinary surgeons, requiring compliance with its Rules of Racing, which GBGB state reflect section 9 of the 2006 Act and the six conditions that constitute the 2010 Regulations.<sup>19</sup>

**24.** GBGB's Greyhound Commitment includes schemes for retirement and injury recovery, kennel inspections, and integrity measures. In 2022, GBGB launched its five-year welfare strategy, A Good Life for Every Greyhound ("the Welfare Strategy"), aimed at improving welfare throughout a greyhound's life.<sup>20</sup> Two progress reports were published in 2024.<sup>21</sup>

### **Funding for regulation**

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**25.** Regulation is funded through GBGB licensing fees and voluntary contributions from the betting industry via the British Greyhound Racing Fund (BGRF). The BGRF collects a voluntary levy from bookmakers, currently set at 0.6 per cent of turnover on licensed greyhound racing, and allocates funds through grants for welfare, regulation, and other industry purposes. A report published by the UK Parliament Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee in 2016 recommended a statutory levy if voluntary arrangements proved insufficient. In 2019, the UK Government announced a voluntary commitment worth around £3 million annually. GBGB's Welfare Strategy noted that long-term funding from the betting industry is essential. In January 2025, GBGB launched a petition calling for a statutory levy; the UK Government's response is pending.

### **The evolution of policy in Wales**

**26.** The Welsh Government's 2021 Programme for Government did not reference banning greyhound racing but committed to developing a national model for animal welfare regulation. The Welsh Government's Animal Welfare Plan for Wales 2021-2026, which sets out a vision for all animals to have a good life and be protected from harm, included plans to consult on licensing animal activities, potentially including greyhound racing.

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<sup>19</sup> [Greyhound Board of Great Britain: Rules of Racing – 13 September 2024](#)

<sup>20</sup> [Greyhound Board of Great Britain: A Good Life for Every Greyhound – 2022](#)

<sup>21</sup> [Greyhound Board of Great Britain: Delivering 'A Good Life for Every Greyhound' – February 2024](#), [Greyhound Board of Great Britain: Delivering 'A Good Life for Every Greyhound' – December 2024](#)

## Public support

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### Senedd petitions

**27.** A petition calling for a ban on greyhound racing in Wales was submitted to the Senedd in 2021 and received 35,101 signatures. The petition was considered by the Petitions Committee in its report, *The Final Bend?*, which was debated in Plenary on 8 March 2023. The report recommended a phased ban alongside wider measures to improve greyhound welfare.<sup>22</sup> A counter-petition supporting the continuation of greyhound racing gathered over 10,000 signatures. Both petitions were closed by the Petitions Committee in March 2025, following the Welsh Government's announcement of its intention to legislate.

### Senedd consultation

**28.** In addition, the Welsh Government's consultation on the Licensing of Animal Welfare Establishments, Activities and Exhibits (December 2023–March 2024) (the 2023 consultation) sought views on greyhound racing. Of the 1,031 responses to the question on a phased ban, 64.7 per cent supported a ban, with 25.1 per cent opposed and 10.2 per cent undecided.

### Decision

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**29.** In February 2025, the Welsh Government confirmed its intention to legislate to ban greyhound racing in Wales.<sup>23</sup> In March 2025, a Budget Agreement for the 2025-26 Final Budget (the 2025-26 Final Budget Agreement) was published which included a 'move to ban greyhound racing in Wales'.<sup>24</sup> The decision preceded publication of the Welsh Government's response to the consultation on the Licensing of Animal Welfare Establishments, Activities and Exhibits in June 2025, and no further White Paper or consultation followed.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> [Petitions Committee: The Final Bend? P-06-1253 Ban greyhound racing in Wales – December 2022](#)

<sup>23</sup> [Welsh Government. Press release: Wales moves to ban greyhound racing – 18 February 2025](#)

<sup>24</sup> [Welsh Government. Budget Agreement for 2025-26 Final Budget – March 2025](#)

<sup>25</sup> [Welsh Government. Written statement: The Welsh Government response to the consultation on the 'Licensing of animal welfare establishments, activities and exhibits, including greyhound racing' and our next steps – 24 June 2025](#)

### 3. General principles and the need for legislation

#### Purpose and effect of the Bill

**30.** The policy objective of the Bill is to prohibit greyhound racing in Wales.

**31.** The Bill seeks to make it an offence for an operator of a stadium or similar venue in Wales to use it, or knowingly permit it to be used, for greyhound racing. The Bill also seeks to make it an offence to be involved in organising greyhound racing in Wales. “Greyhound racing” is defined as setting greyhounds to run around a track in pursuit of a lure activated by mechanical means and includes timing or training a greyhound as it runs around a track.

#### The Welsh Government’s rationale for a ban

**32.** The EM sets out the Welsh Government’s rationale for the ban, which is based on animal welfare and ethical grounds as follows:

*“There is significant stakeholder and public support for a ban on greyhound racing, driven by concerns over animal welfare. Many believe that ending the practice is necessary to protect greyhounds from harm, exploitation, and commodification. Welfare concerns cited by stakeholders include the rate of injury and fatality, euthanasia, overbreeding, and inadequate provisions for post-racing care and retirement.*

*Beyond welfare issues, a moral argument is also brought forward for a ban, reflecting society’s evolving values around the ethical treatment of animals and the diminishing social licence for industries that are perceived as relying on animal suffering for entertainment. As a consequence to this, it is seen as increasingly difficult to justify exposing greyhounds to harm through racing.”<sup>26</sup>*

**33.** The Welsh Government also stated there is strong public and political support for prohibiting greyhound racing in Wales. The Cabinet Secretary

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<sup>26</sup> Welsh Government, Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill: Explanatory Memorandum incorporating the Regulatory Impact Assessment and Explanatory Notes, 29 September 2025

highlighted that debates in the Senedd have demonstrated clear, though not unanimous, cross-party support for moving towards prohibition. He noted that this consensus, combined with the evidence presented through petitions and consultation responses, provides a robust mandate for legislative action.<sup>27</sup>

## Overview of evidence

**34.** There was a divergence of views on the need for the Bill reflecting broader tensions between animal welfare priorities and the interests of those involved in the greyhound racing industry.

**35.** Those advocating for the Bill argued that greyhound racing is “inherently dangerous” and cannot be made safe through regulation.<sup>28</sup> From this perspective, prohibition was seen to be a necessary step to align legislation with contemporary values. Supporters emphasised that incremental reforms would fail to address the fundamental risks posed by the sport and called on the Welsh Government to show ethical leadership.

**36.** Opponents of the Bill questioned whether an outright ban on greyhound racing was justified or proportionate. These views highlighted the potential economic and social consequences of prohibition, the progress already made in improving welfare standards, and the belief that regulation offers a more balanced and effective approach. Opponents also warned of unintended outcomes, such as unregulated racing, and emphasised the cultural significance of the sport for some communities.

## Ethical considerations

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**37.** Many respondents supporting the Bill expressed strong moral objections to greyhound racing, viewing it as unacceptable to use animals for entertainment or financial gain. Comments described the practice as “inhumane”, “based on animal cruelty”, and incompatible with a “civilised society”<sup>29</sup>. For some, the Bill was seen as

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<sup>27</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings - 2 October 2025](#), paragraphs 15 and 55, [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings - 6 November 2025](#), paragraphs 35 and 39

<sup>28</sup> For example [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings - 6 November 2025](#), paragraph 11

<sup>29</sup> [PGRWB 12 - Manuela Vogler](#)

an opportunity for Wales to show ethical leadership and “be on the right side of history”, positioning the nation as a leader in compassion and animal welfare.<sup>30</sup>

**38.** Rights-based arguments also featured prominently, with contributors asserting that animals have a fundamental right to life and freedom from suffering, which should not be compromised for cultural or economic interests. Dr Rebekah Humphreys explained that, from this perspective, greyhound racing cannot be justified under any circumstances.<sup>31</sup>

**39.** Opponents argued that the case for a ban on ethical grounds had not been made. Professor Madeleine Campbell questioned the assertion that using animals for sport is uniquely unethical, noting that other common uses, such as for food or companionship, also provide non-essential benefits and expose animals to harm.<sup>32</sup>

**40.** The Countryside Alliance Wales warned that the ethical reasoning behind the Bill could logically extend to other activities, such as horse racing, and suggested that the proposal reflects an ideological position rather than a focus on animal welfare.<sup>33</sup>

**41.** Others adopted a more pragmatic approach, weighing harms against benefits. GBGB argued that a ban would be a “disproportionate interference” with the rights of those employed in the sport.<sup>34</sup>

## **Welfare considerations**

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**42.** Supporters of the Bill argued that, even under licensed conditions, injuries and fatalities persist, suggesting that harm is intrinsic to the sport. The Cabinet Secretary told us:

*“What we know from the evidence is we still have a large and concerning number both of fatalities and of injuries on licensed*

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<sup>30</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings - 2 October 2025](#), paragraph 89

<sup>31</sup> [Written evidence: Dr Rebekah Humphreys - 3 October](#), page 2

<sup>32</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings - 23 October 2025](#), paragraph 184

<sup>33</sup> [PCRWB.02 - Countryside Alliance Wales](#), page 1

<sup>34</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings - 23 October 2025](#), paragraph 391

*greyhound tracks...regardless of improvements, the fatalities continue.”<sup>35</sup>*

**43.** The Cut the Chase Coalition (“the Coalition”), a group of animal welfare charities calling for an end to greyhound racing in Wales, highlighted the extent of injuries and fatalities:

*“GBGB’s own figures show that over 4,000 greyhounds died and over 35,000 injuries were recorded as a result of licensed greyhound racing between 2018 and 2024.”<sup>36</sup>*

**44.** Survey and consultation respondents expressed strong views on the issue, with one stating:

*“The sheer number of dogs who are injured or put to sleep through the racing industry is disgusting.”<sup>37</sup>*

**45.** RSPCA Cymru explained that, despite years of working with the industry to improve welfare standards, an unpublished, internal review in 2022 concluded that there were “inherent dangers” with racing and “significant welfare challenges” throughout a greyhound’s life. As a result, its policy had shifted from advocating for improved regulation to supporting prohibition.<sup>38</sup>

**46.** For many, the inability of regulation to prevent injuries and fatalities was the primary reason for supporting a ban. Hope Rescue told us:

*“... we can talk about breeding, we can talk about kennels, we can talk about transparency, but ultimately, it’s about the number of dogs that are being injured and killed every single year as a consequence of racing.”<sup>39</sup>*

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<sup>35</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings - 2 October 2025, paragraph 15

<sup>36</sup> PCRWB.11 - Cut the Chase Coalition, page 2

<sup>37</sup> Citizen Engagement Team: Prohibition of Greyhound (Racing) Bill: Engagement findings - November 2025, page 8

<sup>38</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings - 15 October 2025, paragraph 15

<sup>39</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings - 15 October 2025, paragraph 121



**47.** Similarly, Dogs Trust said:

*“...the key point is that no amount of regulation could possibly make an inherently dangerous activity safe enough to safeguard the welfare of these animals.”<sup>40</sup>*

**48.** Many witnesses emphasised that welfare concerns extended beyond racing to the entire lifecycle of greyhounds, including breeding, kennelling, and retirement care. The Coalition described “a myriad of welfare issues” including:

*“... inadequate socialisation and habituation of puppies as well as tattooing of puppies for identification during rearing, poor environments during schooling, trialling and racing, inappropriate transportation at all stages, presence of dental disease and impacts of extreme weather.”<sup>41</sup>*

**49.** Professor Andrew Knight described a ban on greyhound racing as “long overdue,” citing persistent welfare harms that regulation has failed to address.<sup>42</sup> He highlighted high rates of catastrophic injuries and sudden deaths, poor kennelling and husbandry standards, inadequate socialisation leading to behavioural problems, and deficient diets causing dental disease. Professor Andrew Knight also raised concerns about the lack of transparency and traceability for thousands of dogs bred, but not deemed competitive, many of which disappear without record.<sup>43</sup>

**50.** Dr Emily Blackwell supported this position, concluding that a ban is warranted on animal welfare grounds and emphasising that regulation cannot adequately mitigate risks throughout the greyhound’s lifecycle, from breeding and kennelling to racing and retirement.<sup>44</sup> The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals New Zealand echoed this noting:

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<sup>40</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings - 15 October 2025](#), paragraph 40

<sup>41</sup> [PCRWB 11 - Cut the Chase Coalition](#), page 2

<sup>42</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings - 23 October 2025](#), paragraph 15

<sup>43</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings - 23 October 2025](#), paragraph 45

<sup>44</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings - 23 October 2025](#), paragraph 22



*“... systemic issues inherent in commercial greyhound racing... After decades of attempted reform, the New Zealand Government concluded that these harms could not be eliminated through regulation alone.”<sup>45</sup>*

**51.** Opponents of the Bill acknowledged that injuries occur, but argued that welfare standards within the industry had improved significantly under GBGB’s oversight. GBGB highlighted measures such as enhanced veterinary care, mandatory injury reporting, and rehoming initiatives as evidence of a commitment to continuous improvement and promoting animal welfare across a greyhound’s lifetime.

**52.** GBGB described the Bill as “not a serious piece of animal welfare legislation” but an “animal rights view”, maintaining that regulation and “societal scrutiny” best protect welfare.<sup>46</sup> The Racecourse Promoters’ Association (RPA) echoed these concerns, warning that the Bill prioritises prohibition over “ways to promote and protect greyhound welfare”, and highlighted the economic, cultural, and social implications of a ban.<sup>47</sup>

**53.** Rather than a ban, which was seen as disproportionate, opponents argued that stronger regulation, robust licensing, stricter enforcement, and transparent monitoring could address welfare concerns effectively without dismantling the sport.

**54.** Some challenged the interpretation of injury and fatality data, suggesting that figures should be considered in context. Industry representatives noted the majority of injuries recorded are minor and treatable, and argued that the reporting system demonstrates transparency, rather than failure.<sup>48</sup>

**55.** Opponents also warned that prohibition could lead to unintended consequences, potentially worsening welfare outcomes. Several stakeholders and survey respondents said prohibition risks driving the activity underground, where there is no oversight and welfare standards would deteriorate<sup>49</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> PGRWB 26 - SPCA New Zealand, page 1

<sup>46</sup> Written evidence: Greyhound Board of Great Britain – 9 October 2025, page 2

<sup>47</sup> Written evidence: Racecourse Promoters’ Association – 15 October 2025, page 1

<sup>48</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraphs 235 and 237

<sup>49</sup> Citizen Engagement Team: Prohibition of Greyhound (Racing) Bill: Engagement findings – November 2025, page 22

## **Our view**

**56.** The Committee considered extensive evidence on the principles of the Bill and acknowledges the strongly held views of both animal welfare and industry representatives.

**57.** Whilst ethical principles often underpin legislation, decisions to legislate must be grounded in robust evidence and data. Ethical questions, such as whether using animals for entertainment is inherently wrong, should properly rest with individual Members when determining their position on the general principles of the Bill, guided by their personal values and beliefs. The Committee's role in scrutinising legislation is to ensure proposals are evidence-based, proportionate, effective, and democratically legitimate.

**58.** On this occasion, the Committee concluded that it was unable to reach an informed view on the Bill because the evidence base was so highly contested and insufficiently robust. Whilst strong arguments were made in support of the Bill on animal welfare grounds, significant questions remain about:

- the adequacy and reliability of the data;
- the adequacy of the Welsh Government's 2023 consultation;
- the potential unintended consequences of a ban;
- the effectiveness of the Bill in improving welfare across a racing greyhound's life; and
- the economic impact on the local community and those involved in the industry.

**59.** The Committee notes that the Bill was prioritised within the legislative timetable as part of the Welsh Government's 2025-26 Final Budget Agreement. Whilst we acknowledge the political context for bringing forward the legislation, in our view, the accelerated process has compromised the quality of legislative development and left important questions unresolved.

**60.** In these circumstances, the Committee does not take a definitive position on the general principles of the Bill due to the lack of a clear and robust evidence base to support the Welsh Government's decision to legislate. This reflects the complexity of the issues and the contested nature of the evidence. It also highlights the need for a more rigorous, evidence-led approach to policy

development to safeguard scrutiny and legislative integrity. Our detailed consideration is set out in the Our View sections in the remainder of this report.

## 4. Evidence of animal welfare issues

### Early years and breeding

**61.** Evidence presented to the Committee highlighted significant concerns about the origins and breeding practices of greyhounds used for racing in Great Britain. Many contributors noted that around 85 per cent of greyhounds racing in Great Britain are bred in Ireland,<sup>50</sup> where breeding regulations were described by Hope rescue as not being “as good”<sup>51</sup>. Hope Rescue referred to industry “wastage” and the fate of dogs bred for racing that “don’t make the grade”, citing a 2019 RTÉ documentary, *Running for their Lives*, which reported that around 6,000 were killed annually, and the industry breeds approximately 1,000 more puppies than it requires each year.<sup>52</sup>

**62.** Professor Andrew Knight echoed concerns about the “wastage of dogs” stating that thousands are thought to “disappear each year across the United Kingdom, and there’s a lack of transparency about where they go and traceability”. He said that dogs that do not make it to the track are “effectively invisible”. He also raised concerns about breeding bitches including “the ages at which they’re being bred; sometimes too young, sometimes too old and sometimes too often”<sup>53</sup>.

**63.** GBGB told us that, although its remit does not extend to breeding, it is “committed to further its support of high-welfare British breeding”. GBGB noted that the “overall number of Irish greyhounds entering racing in Britain has decreased by 26% since 2021”<sup>54</sup>. It added that it has developed “incredibly comprehensive” guidance on early years care, including breeding, which is shared with Irish counterparts, alongside educational programmes for breeders.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025](#), paragraph 338

<sup>51</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 15 October 2025](#), paragraph 180

<sup>52</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 15 October 2025](#), paragraph 182

<sup>53</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025](#), paragraphs 16 and 45

<sup>54</sup> Both [Written evidence: Greyhound Board of Great Britain – 9 October 2025](#), page 3

<sup>55</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025](#), paragraph 348

**64.** GBGB acknowledged historical welfare concern in relation to Ireland but said the regulatory regime has strengthened substantially in recent years. GBGB further noted that:

*“Since 2021, Greyhound Racing Ireland, the semi state-run regulator, has a full traceability system in place, to make sure all their dogs, from birth to when they finish racing, are accounted for.”<sup>56</sup>*

**65.** Greyhound Action Ireland disputed GBGB’s evidence, stating that analysis of Greyhound Racing Ireland’s Rásaíocht Con Éireann Traceability System (RCETS), showed that, of greyhounds born in 2021, 41 per cent (5,150 dogs) are dead or unaccounted for, despite being under five years old. They noted this figure excluded dogs exported to the UK.<sup>57</sup>

## Kennelling

**66.** The Committee considered a range of evidence on the welfare standards and living conditions of racing greyhounds, including kennelling practices, husbandry, and regulatory oversight. Some witnesses raised concerns about the conditions in which greyhounds are kept while others highlighted compliance with existing legislation and improvements in monitoring.

**67.** RSPCA Cymru expressed concerns that some racing greyhounds spend up to 95 per cent of their time in trainers’ kennels with little opportunity for social interaction or enrichment. Professor Andrew Knight reported his experience of deficiencies in residential kennelling and husbandry standards, with dogs often housed in environments that limit opportunities for socialisation with people and other dogs. He explained that this lack of early socialisation was linked to behavioural problems, some of which result in euthanasia at tracks. Further concerns included poor dietary provision, with ex-racing greyhounds frequently exhibiting dental problems attributed to inadequate nutrition during their racing careers.<sup>58</sup>

**68.** Industry representatives outlined the measures in place to regulate kennels and promote welfare. GBGB stated that trainers’ kennels are subject to annual

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<sup>56</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025](#), paragraph 339

<sup>57</sup> [Written evidence: Greyhound Action Ireland – 27 October 2025](#), paragraph 3

<sup>58</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025](#), paragraph 16

veterinary inspections and random visits by stipendiary stewards, alongside checks by independent auditors. GBGB also highlighted welfare initiatives, including guidance on enrichment and socialisation, and work with veterinary behaviour specialists to improve kennel environments and prepare greyhounds for transition to domestic homes.

**69.** Mike Burton, a greyhound trainer, illustrated efforts to maintain welfare standards in practice by describing daily routines involving medical checks and opportunities for greyhounds to “roam and play” for much of the day.<sup>59</sup>

Welfare during racing

**70.** Issues relating to greyhound welfare while racing were a significant focus during the inquiry, with evidence pointing to the inherent risks associated with the sport and differing views on the effectiveness of existing regulation.

**71.** Many witness noted GBGB’s own published statistics for 2024, during which 346 greyhounds died from causes other than natural illness, and 3,809 injuries were recorded across licensed tracks. Having declined since 2018, track fatalities increased from 99 in 2022, to 109 in 2023 and 123 in 2024, (see Table 1). This upward trend in fatalities was described by Blue Cross as deeply concerning and indicative of systemic welfare risks.

Table 1 - GBGB Track Injury Data

Reference	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total number of runs	426,139	410,607	318,346	359,083	362,427	364,981	355,682
Total number of injuries sustained at GBGB tracks	4,963	4,970	3,575	4,422	4,354	4,238	3,809
Injury rate (% against total dog runs)	1.16%	1.21%	1.12%	1.23%	1.20%	1.16%	1.07%
Total number of fatalities at GBGB tracks	242	207	200	120	99	109	123

<sup>59</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 463

Reference	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Fatality rate (% against total dog runs)</b>	0.06%	0.05%	0.06%	0.03%	0.03%	0.03%	0.03%

Source: reproduced directly from GBGB [Licensed Greyhound Racing: Independently Verified Track Injury and Retirement Data for 2024](#).

**72.** In the absence of track-level injury data published by GBGB, Greyhound Rescue Wales also provided a detailed analysis of the VGS using race card data between November 2023 and October 2024.<sup>60</sup> This revealed that 601 dogs raced, with 267 adverse events, equating to a 44.4 per cent annual incidence of injury or compromised fitness, rising to 73.9 per cent for Valley-attached dogs. Of these, 35 injuries were career-ending, and 7 per cent of falls resulted in permanent incapacity.<sup>61</sup>

**73.** Many witnesses highlighted the inherent dangers associated with oval race tracks, noting that stresses in bends and congestion at the first corner increase the likelihood of high-speed collisions and serious injuries.<sup>62</sup> Greyhound Rescue Wales and Professor Andrew Knight, detailed the types of injuries incurred, from milder abrasions, wounds, bites, and transient soft tissue injuries to more catastrophic limb injuries such as hock fractures, joint injuries and polytrauma. Greyhounds also suffer from stress-related injuries that develop over time from running repeatedly around an oval track.<sup>63</sup> The expert witnesses explained that these were conditions rarely seen in domestic pets. Injuries extend beyond race day, with the potential for osteoarthritis and long-term chronic pain continuing after a greyhound's racing career has ended.<sup>64</sup>

**74.** GBGB highlighted improvements in welfare outcomes since the introduction of its Welfare Strategy.<sup>65</sup> GBGB reported that the fatality rate at licensed tracks had halved since 2018 to 0.03 per cent per run, and the injury rate had fallen to

<sup>60</sup> Race card data in greyhound racing is a comprehensive set of statistics and information, provided in the official race program, which helps spectators and bettors assess the potential performance of each greyhound in a race.

<sup>61</sup> [Written evidence: Greyhound Rescue Wales – 7 October 2025](#), page 8

<sup>62</sup> For example [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 15 October 2025](#), paragraph 11

<sup>63</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 15 October 2025](#), paragraphs 126-131

<sup>64</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 15 October 2025](#), paragraph 131

<sup>65</sup> Greyhound Board of Great Britain: A Good Life for Every Greyhound

1.07 per cent per run in 2024, down from 1.21 per cent in 2021, which is the lowest on record. Economic euthanasia cases had dropped from 175 in 2018 to three in 2024, largely due to its Injury Recovery Scheme, which funds veterinary treatment for career ending injuries.<sup>66</sup> GBGB also compared greyhound racing to British horseracing<sup>67</sup>, noting that the latter has a significantly higher fatality rate in reported data of 0.25 per cent in 2024.<sup>68</sup>

**75.** GBGB detailed the steps taken to improve welfare, including veterinary oversight, independent audits, and investment in track safety. It emphasised that its regulatory regime is accredited by UKAS, providing external assurance of compliance.<sup>69</sup>

**76.** GBGB also highlighted infrastructure upgrades at VGS following licensing:

*"Since 2023—the tail-end of 2023 was when the track was actually licensed by the GBGB... there was a substantial upgrade on the track itself, with £2 million spent there, because that involved the building of air-conditioned kennels, a vet's room—all those sorts of things that weren't there when the Valley was an unregulated track."*<sup>70</sup>

**77.** When asked, VGS told us that the stadium had not been the subject of any enforcement action, but said it had invited Trading Standards officers to visit as part of its engagement with the Welsh Government consultation process.<sup>71</sup>

**78.** However, Caerphilly County Borough Council confirmed that inspections had been carried out under the 2006 Act, primarily in response to complaints. Caerphilly County Borough Council said:

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<sup>66</sup> Written evidence: Greyhound Board of Great Britain – 9 October 2025, page 5

<sup>67</sup> Fatality data for horseracing and greyhound racing appear to be based on different methodologies so that care should be taken in drawing comparisons. For example, GBGB data reports "total number of fatalities at GBGB tracks". Whilst the British Horseracing Authority says that from 2021 horses "fatally injured or euthanised on welfare grounds as a direct result of their injuries on raceday or within 48 hours of raceday" were captured in the reported data.

<sup>68</sup> British Horseracing Association: Making horseracing safer

<sup>69</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 274

<sup>70</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 257

<sup>71</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 284



*“There have been no criminal proceedings, but some breaches of the Animal Welfare Act were identified as a consequence of our visits in response to those complaints. I understand these related to cleanliness of kennels, but this was addressed with advice and written warnings.”<sup>72</sup>*

**79.** Animal Licensing Wales (ALW) indicated that inspections of planned kennels were undertaken in 2023, at the request of the Chief Veterinary Officer, and were found to be “alarmingly small”. ALW expressed surprise that these had been permitted by GBGB.<sup>73</sup>

**80.** Dr Ellie Wigham noted that most evidence around greyhound racing is focused on welfare at the racetrack, which is a relatively small proportion of what the dogs spend their time doing, with limited evidence available on wider welfare issues.<sup>74</sup>

## Retirement and rehoming

**81.** The Committee received evidence of concerns about the welfare of greyhounds once their racing careers end. Whilst the industry reports improvements in retirement rates, witnesses and animal welfare charities described persistent challenges in rehoming retired dogs, including behavioural issues, health problems, and the growing strain on rescue centres.

**82.** Dr Rebekah Humphreys told us that organisations “are already heavily burdened by the number of animals discarded by the sport” and “face significant pressure” to accept as many dogs as possible, as the alternative often presented by the industry is euthanasia.<sup>75</sup>

**83.** She further noted that retired greyhounds frequently exhibit an elevated prey drive and limited socialisation skills with other animals, making them challenging to rehome. Greyhound Rescue Wales added that chronic pain and behavioural

<sup>72</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 593. See also Written evidence: Caerphilly County Borough Council – 10 November 2025, page 2 and Written evidence: Greyhound Rescue Wales – 21 November 2025

<sup>73</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 605

<sup>74</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 19

<sup>75</sup> Written evidence: Dr Rebekah Humphreys – 3 October, page 2

issues can result in increased costs for adopters, creating additional barriers to successful rehoming.<sup>76</sup>

**84.** RSPCA Cymru referred to data published by GBGB which indicated that 51 dogs were designated unsuitable for rehoming and were therefore euthanised in the previous year. This figure had increased for two consecutive years (see Table 1).

**85.** GBGB outlined the measures it has implemented to support the retirement and rehoming of greyhounds. These include:

- The Greyhound Retirement Scheme which provides financial assistance to support for rehoming.
- Follow-up checks to ensure welfare standards are maintained.
- Guidance on the care of dogs remaining at trainers' kennels pending rehoming, supported by visits from GBGB's Regional Regulatory Vets.

**86.** GBGB reported that the retirement rate has improved from 88 per cent in 2018 to 94 per cent in 2024.<sup>77</sup> In oral evidence, RPA rejected claims that registered greyhounds are in poor condition when rehomed, stating that it requires greyhounds to arrive at its two affiliated homing centres ready for adoption.<sup>78</sup>

**87.** Both GBGB and the Betting and Gaming Council expressed concern that a ban on greyhound racing would dramatically and suddenly increase the amount of dogs needing homes, disrupting GBGB's efforts to achieve a "sustainable scheme where the amount of greyhounds entering racing is equal to those being rehomed once retiring from the sport"<sup>79</sup>.

**88.** In written evidence, RSPCA Cymru noted that GBGB's Greyhound Retirement Scheme does not extend to rehoming centres that support a ban on greyhound racing.<sup>80</sup>

**89.** GBGB said it "continues to work closely with Greyhound Racing Ireland (GRI) to ensure the traceability of greyhounds entering GBGB racing from Ireland or

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<sup>76</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 15 October 2025, paragraph 135

<sup>77</sup> Written evidence: Greyhound Board of Great Britain – 9 October 2025, page 8

<sup>78</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 311

<sup>79</sup> PCRWB.13 – Betting and Gaming Council, page 4

<sup>80</sup> Written evidence: Cut the Chase Coalition – 5 November 2025, page 1

returning to Ireland for racing or breeding”<sup>81</sup>. In August 2025, GBGB also announced that it is developing a registration system for British-bred greyhounds to ensure greater oversight by GBGB from a greyhound’s birth.<sup>82</sup>

**90.** The Coalition provided detailed case studies for three dogs surrendered to Greyhound Rescue Wales in this year requiring significant ongoing veterinary care for which no financial support was received from GBGB’s Greyhound Retirement Scheme.<sup>83</sup>

## The quality of the evidence

**91.** The Committee received extensive and often conflicting evidence on animal welfare standards within the greyhound racing industry. Both industry representatives and animal welfare charities submitted rebuttal letters challenging the accuracy and interpretation of each other’s evidence.<sup>84</sup>

**92.** Greyhound Rescue Wales contended that GBGB’s injury reporting underestimates harm because it is limited to capturing injuries evident immediately after a race. It said muscular and stress-related injuries however, often emerge later, leaving a gap in understanding.<sup>85</sup>

**93.** Although GBGB provides aggregate figures for injuries and fatalities, animal welfare charities, including Greyhound Rescue Wales, Dogs Trust, and RSPCA Cymru, criticised GBGB for failing to publish:

- Track-level injury data.
- Detailed injury breakdowns by type, severity and cause.
- Outcomes of kennel audits and licensing inspections.

**94.** Dogs Trust also noted a lack of transparency and traceability around breeding, imports, and racing careers.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Written evidence: Greyhound Board of Great Britain – 9 October 2025, page 4

<sup>82</sup> Written evidence: Greyhound Board of Great Britain – 9 October 2025, page 4

<sup>83</sup> Written evidence: Cut the Chase Coalition – 5 November 2025, page 1

<sup>84</sup> All of the correspondence is available on the [Bill’s webpage](#).

<sup>85</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 15 October 2025](#), paragraph 126-131

<sup>86</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 15 October 2025](#), paragraph 59-60

**95.** Blue Cross said the lack of transparency prevents identification of high-risk race tracks for targeted improvements. It also noted an absence of information on how GBGB uses the data it collects to drive meaningful welfare changes.

*“There is no evidence provided to demonstrate how such information is collated and how that informs industry development to ensure meaningful changes are actually then made.”<sup>87</sup>*

**96.** International comparisons were highlighted to illustrate alternative approaches. For example:

- In New Zealand, introduced rules in 2018 require reporting of injuries outside race days, though enforcement of that remains challenging.<sup>88</sup>
- Australia and New Zealand also publish detailed Stewards’ Reports for each race meeting, listing individual injuries, which GBGB does not.<sup>89</sup>

**97.** GBGB’s published data for 2024, refers to a track fatality rate of 0.03 per cent. Greyhound Rescue Wales described this as misleading because it relates to the risk per run rather than the risk to individual dogs. It also noted that the total number of racing dogs is not disclosed by GBGB.

**98.** When giving oral evidence, GBGB was asked whether it agreed with an analysis of its data published by the Scottish Animal Welfare Commission (SAWC) in 2023, which suggested that there was a 24 per cent risk of a dog taking part in regulated racing incurring an injury in a year.<sup>90</sup> GBGB said it could not confirm whether it agreed with this analysis and was unable to state the percentage of actively racing dogs that sustain injuries.<sup>91</sup>

**99.** GBGB strongly rejected claims by animal welfare charities that its published statistics understate injury and fatality risks. GBGB asserted that standards had improved under its regulatory framework and criticised analyses based on extrapolated figures from racecard notations (see paragraph 74) rather than veterinary records which it described as “wholly improper.”<sup>92</sup> It also explained that

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<sup>87</sup> Written evidence: Blue Cross – 6 October 2025, page 3

<sup>88</sup> Written evidence: Greyhound Rescue Wales – 7 October 2025, page 5

<sup>89</sup> Written evidence: Greyhound Rescue Wales – 7 October 2025, page 5

<sup>90</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 204

<sup>91</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 215

<sup>92</sup> Written evidence: Greyhound Board of Great Britain – 20 October 2025, page 2

the published injury data records the number of injuries, not the number of individual dogs injured, meaning figures can be misleading if presented as dog counts. It said:

*“The appropriate way of measuring the risk of injury or fatality to a greyhound is by assessing the total number of injuries or fatalities sustained compared to the total number of runs, as is presented through GBGB’s independently verified annual data.”<sup>93</sup>*

**100.** GBGB emphasised that its data is independently audited and presented in line with DEFRA requirements, showing measurable improvements in welfare outcomes. GBGB maintained that comparisons or interpretations outside this verified framework misrepresent the true picture of regulated racing.

**101.** GBGB acknowledged that it does not publish track-level data but explained that this was due to concerns about misuse and potential targeting of individual race tracks by campaign groups. GBGB said it had offered the Welsh Government an oral briefing on VGS specific data, but this had not gone ahead after the decision to legislate was announced. It indicated that the mean number of dog fatalities across all licensed tracks in 2024 was six, and that the average for VGS was below this, though the relative frequency of racing across tracks was unclear.<sup>94</sup>

## Our view

**102.** The Committee finds that the evidence on animal welfare is incomplete and heavily contested, as evidenced by the extensive exchange of stakeholder correspondence we received. Whilst we heard compelling veterinary evidence about the nature of injuries sustained on the track and the long-term welfare outcomes for racing greyhounds, the precise scale of these harms and the degree to which regulation could have mitigated them remains unclear. The Committee considers that the Welsh Government should have undertaken a thorough evaluation of the welfare issues and data and done more to establish a robust evidence base before taking the decision to legislate. We regret that this was not done and, in our view, the resulting uncertainty undermines our confidence in the policy rationale for the Bill proposal.

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<sup>93</sup> Written evidence: Greyhound Board of Great Britain – 20 October 2025, page 2

<sup>94</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 200

**103.** The Committee also notes that the Welsh Government has proposed a shorter reporting deadline for stage 1 scrutiny of this Bill, that being eight sitting weeks instead of the usual 13. We would have preferred more time to examine these issues fully before coming to a conclusion on the Bill's general principles.

**104.** The Committee also recognises that the Bill addresses only part of a much broader picture. Evidence presented to us focused primarily on what occurs on the track, yet concerns have been raised about welfare issues throughout the lifetime of a greyhound, including breeding practices and cross-border movements from Ireland. Welfare organisations have argued that there are systemic welfare challenges throughout the lifecycle of a racing greyhound, and this legislation alone will not resolve those wider issues, particularly as dogs may continue to race in England. Although commissioning further work at this stage would not be relevant to the Bill currently before us, the Committee is strongly of the view that the Welsh Government should have taken a comprehensive view of the lifetime welfare of racing greyhounds before deciding to legislate.

## 5. Regulation of greyhound racing

**105.** The Committee explored the Welsh Government’s decision to prohibit greyhound racing rather than strengthen regulation.

**106.** The Cabinet Secretary’s position is unequivocal: the central issue driving this legislation is the unacceptably high levels of injuries and fatalities among greyhounds participating in racing. The Cabinet Secretary acknowledged improvements in welfare standards at licensed tracks, but emphasised that fatalities and injuries remain at high levels. He told the Committee it is “the categoric, clear evidence that there are... unacceptably high levels of fatalities and injuries with greyhound racing”, which cannot be justified under any threshold of acceptability.<sup>95</sup>

**107.** When challenged on whether tighter regulation could address these concerns, the Cabinet Secretary said “this option had been thoroughly considered and discounted”<sup>96</sup>. He explained that attempts to impose stricter conditions, going further than GBGB licence conditions, such as banning mechanical lures or changing the track design, would effectively amount to a ban, as such measures would render racing commercially unviable. International examples, notably New Zealand, were cited where regulatory approaches had failed to reduce injuries and fatalities, ultimately leading to a decision to legislate to prohibit racing.<sup>97</sup> The Cabinet Secretary said that the consultation responses and publicly available data from GBGB reinforced this conclusion, indicating that regulation alone would not prevent harm.<sup>98</sup>

**108.** The Cabinet Secretary further noted that the existing GBGB licensing regime has not eliminated injuries and fatalities at VGS, despite improving welfare standards.<sup>99</sup> Moreover, the race frequency at VGS had increased from one to three days per week since becoming a GBGB-licensed race track.<sup>100</sup> Based on patterns

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<sup>95</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 6 November 2025, paragraph 31

<sup>96</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 6 November 2025, paragraph 63

<sup>97</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 6 November 2025, paragraph 46

<sup>98</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 6 November 2025, paragraph 59

<sup>99</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 2 October 2025, paragraph 17

<sup>100</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 2 October 2025, paragraph 17



observed elsewhere in the UK, the Cabinet Secretary said this correlates with a higher propensity for injuries and fatalities. Subsequently, in written evidence, the Cabinet Secretary clarified that, “an increase in the number of races will lead to a higher number of injuries and fatalities, if the fatality rate remains constant or shows only a minor variation”<sup>101</sup>.

**109.** Welsh Government officials confirmed that no reliable data exists for the period when VGS operated as an unlicensed track, but aggregated GBGB data consistently shows ongoing harm. Officials further advised that introducing a licensing regime in Wales would largely replicate existing GBGB arrangements, rather than deliver significant additional safeguards.<sup>102</sup>

### **The effectiveness of current regulation**

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**110.** Animal welfare charities raised significant concerns about the current regulatory framework operated by GBGB, despite its accreditation by UKAS. The Dogs Trust highlighted potential conflicts of interest as GBGB oversees both commercial operations and welfare standards.

**111.** Dogs Trust also challenged GBGB’s reliance on UKAS accreditation. It said “UKAS certification does not provide an assessment of greyhounds or their welfare. It’s purely a document-auditing certification”, rather than verifying welfare conditions or outcomes for dogs.<sup>103</sup> In written evidence, UKAS confirmed that its role is to accredit certification bodies like GBGB and its auditors, Supply Chain In-Sites Limited, ensuring they are technically competent and impartial to carry out inspections under their respective schemes.<sup>104</sup> Animal welfare charities were concerned that the approach appears to provide independent assurance without addressing real welfare risks.

**112.** GBGB’s written and supplementary evidence outlines in detail measures taken to improve welfare standards and emphasises that all licensed stadia and kennels undergo annual independent inspections. Caerphilly County Borough

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<sup>101</sup> Written Evidence: Welsh Government – 24 November 2025, page 2

<sup>102</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 2 October 2025, paragraph 22

<sup>103</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 15 October 2025, paragraph 65

<sup>104</sup> Written Evidence: UKAS – 10 November 2025, page 2



Council acknowledged UKAS accreditation offers some assurance, but said it does not equate to a fully independent regime.<sup>105</sup>

### **The potential for further regulation in Wales**

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**113.** The Committee explored whether enhanced regulation could have provided an alternative to an outright ban on greyhound racing. Unlike England, Wales currently has no statutory framework for the sport. Some stakeholders suggested that licensing might have been considered as the initial step. Caerphilly County Borough Council noted that whilst licensing might have been a proportionate first step, it was unlikely to address the core welfare concerns. ALW agreed that a phased approach through licensing could have tested compliance before moving to a ban.<sup>106</sup>

**114.** SAWC suggested that meaningful regulation would need to be independent of GBGB and require “a joined-up approach across countries, as well as really radical changes in track design”<sup>107</sup>. SAWC concluded that these changes could not be delivered through regulation.<sup>108</sup> Similarly, the Dogs Trust argued that “no amount of regulation” could make an “inherently dangerous activity safe enough to safeguard the welfare of these animals”<sup>109</sup>. Professor Andrew Knight said that “the biggest single positive change for welfare in terms of reducing injury and death” would be to straighten the track which required substantial investment.<sup>110</sup>

**115.** Other stakeholders, including the Kennel Club and Countryside Alliance Wales, felt a regulatory solution should have been attempted before an outright ban. The Countryside Alliance Wales added “It is surprising ... that the Welsh Government has not brought in a statutory code”<sup>111</sup>.

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<sup>105</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 603

<sup>106</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 532

<sup>107</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 33

<sup>108</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 34

<sup>109</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 15 October 2025, paragraph 40

<sup>110</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 115

<sup>111</sup> PGRWB 02 - Countryside Alliance Wales, page 2

**116.** GBGB said “the Welsh Government had the opportunity to look at the potential for greater regulation” which both GBGB and VGS would have welcomed.<sup>112</sup>

## **Our view**

**117.** Whilst there was broad agreement among the Committee that the welfare of greyhounds must be safeguarded, we were not able to reach a collective position on whether prohibition is the most appropriate and proportionate mechanism to achieve this.

**118.** Given the contested and insufficient nature of the data, the Committee was not able to determine with any certainty the extent to which improved regulation has delivered better welfare outcomes. Although some evidence suggests that welfare standards have improved under GBGB licensing, the persistence of injuries and fatalities raises questions about the effectiveness of regulation as a long-term solution.

**119.** The Committee also notes that there is no clarity on what constitutes an “unacceptably high” level of injuries and fatalities, nor at what point such levels might be considered acceptable, making this a subjective judgement.<sup>113</sup> This lack of defined thresholds makes it difficult to assess whether improvements in regulation could ever meet an agreed standard of welfare protection.

**120.** Some Members accepted, despite the difficulties with data and the approach taken, GBGB’s own data evidences that the risks inherent in the sport cannot be eliminated through regulation and therefore support the decision to legislate for a ban.

**121.** Other Members were unclear on the basis for going straight to a ban and considered that the Welsh Government should have explored a phased approach, introducing enhanced regulation or a statutory licensing regime before moving to prohibition.

**122.** Another Member expressed the view that the rationale for the Welsh Government’s decision was clear, and that tighter regulation would be neither

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<sup>112</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 391

<sup>113</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 6 November 2025, paragraph 91

effective in addressing welfare concerns nor proportionate given that only one stadium remains active in Wales.

## 6. Approach to policy development

**123.** The Committee examined how the Welsh Government had developed its policy to ban greyhound racing given that the Final Budget for 2025–26 was reached further to an agreement with the Welsh Liberal Democrats on a number of policy issues including “a move to ban greyhound racing in Wales”.

**124.** When asked by the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee whether the Final Budget for 2025–26 would have passed without an agreement to introduce the Bill, the Cabinet Secretary responded, “I have no idea. It’s not pertinent to my consideration of this legislation”<sup>114</sup>. He later acknowledged the link to budget discussions but emphasised that it had no bearing on the policy decision as a Minister:

*“... my bringing this forward is based on the ethical considerations, the injuries, the fatalities—all of the other things we’ve touched on.”<sup>115</sup>*

**125.** Industry representatives questioned the process and the timing of the Bill. GBGB said that the Welsh Government had not engaged in the “necessary collaborative working” with its Implementation Group before bringing the legislation forward, noting for example that the cost implications of the Bill could have been fully outlined if the industry had been consulted effectively.<sup>116</sup> The RPA also highlighted that the Implementation Group has yet to report and echoed concerns about inadequate consultation. RPA said:

*“We do not believe that the Welsh Government has carried out the necessary consultation or adequately worked with the RPA, the Valley Greyhound Stadium or those impacted directly by this Bill.”<sup>117</sup>*

**126.** The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) said local authorities contributing to the 2023 consultation had identified gaps in legislation, but did not “specifically request” a ban.<sup>118</sup> It also noted that animal welfare gaps raised by

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<sup>114</sup> [Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee: Record of Proceedings – 20 October 2025](#), paragraph 55

<sup>115</sup> [Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee: Record of Proceedings – 20 October 2025](#), paragraph 90

<sup>116</sup> [Written evidence: Greyhound Board of Great Britain – 9 October 2025](#), page 12

<sup>117</sup> [Written evidence: Racecourse Promoters’ Association – 15 October 2025](#), page 12

<sup>118</sup> [Written evidence: Welsh Local Government Association – 6 October 2025](#), page 3

the Directors of Public Protection Wales, including unlicensed ancillary breeding services and unlicensed grooming, remain relevant and still need to be addressed.<sup>119</sup>

## Our view

**127.** The Committee is concerned that the timing of the decision to legislate has curtailed the normal process of policy development. As one member observed, “A Bill should be based on policy development; this is policy development based on a Bill”. In this case, the scheduling and sequencing of decisions have been far from ideal. Evidence and consultation should precede legislation, yet the Bill was introduced without an agreed evidence base, complete impact assessments, or comprehensive public engagement. Indeed, the consultation evidence which the Cabinet Secretary uses is derived from a single question seeking views on a ban which was included within a consultation on licensing of animal welfare establishments, activities and exhibits.

**128.** There is also significant concern that the timing appears to have been influenced by political and budgetary considerations rather than the conclusion of a robust policy development process. The Committee regrets that the Welsh Government has not been transparent about these drivers and emphasises that future legislation should be grounded in a clear, evidence-based rationale. Whilst these shortcomings cannot now be remedied, in our view they undermine confidence in the legislative process and should serve as a lesson for future policymaking.

**129.** The Committee also recognises that the Welsh Government has relied on an ethical argument as a key component of the rationale for this Bill and notes that some witnesses drew comparisons with other sports, such as horse racing, where fatality rates are reported to be significantly higher. We are mindful that the Committee’s role is to consider the proposal before us and scrutinise its merits within the scope of the Bill. However, the selective application of an ethical framework to one activity raises questions about consistency across other sports and leisure activities, also highlighting the need for a clear and coherent approach to the use of ethical arguments in future policymaking.

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<sup>119</sup> Written evidence: WLGA – 6 October, page 3

## 7. Public appetite for greyhound racing

**130.** The Committee examined the level of public support for the sport and the Welsh Government’s decision to ban greyhound racing.

**131.** The Cabinet Secretary stated that racing in Wales has been in decline “over many years,” citing a sustained fall in attendance across Wales and the UK.<sup>120</sup> However, he noted that commercialisation through gambling has driven increased activity in some areas.

**132.** A Welsh Government official said they were still waiting for confirmation of footfall at VGS but, “having canvassed people through work, and through people we know”, anecdotal feedback suggests the sport is less attractive than other leisure activities.<sup>121</sup>

**133.** Industry representatives acknowledged a long-term decline but argued the sport remains viable. GBGB said the reduction in tracks since the Second World War was largely due to redevelopment but added “The smaller it has become, the more sustainable as a sport it’s become as well”<sup>122</sup>.

**134.** The RPA acknowledged that tracks had closed but said that there was continued demand, noting that Oxford has reopened and Dunstall Park has launched, while Romford’s restaurant is “virtually full on Friday and Saturday night”<sup>123</sup>.

**135.** Sports Information Services (SIS) emphasised that “at an economic and cultural level, it’s still at the heart of betting-shop life”, citing Gambling Commission data that greyhound racing accounts for “12 per cent of over-the-counter cash across betting shops”<sup>124</sup>. SIS also reported that the sport ranks sixth

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<sup>120</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 2 October 2025, paragraph 68

<sup>121</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 2 October 2025, paragraph 77

<sup>122</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 174

<sup>123</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 180

<sup>124</sup> Both Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 176

among spectator sports, attracting 1.2 million attendees annually, and providing “over 22,000 greyhound races a year to over 400 customers in 50 countries”<sup>125</sup>.

**136.** VGS described modest local attendance, averaging around 200 people weekly, with “around 150” at Saturday evening meetings and strong turnout for National Greyhound Week events.<sup>126</sup>

## **Our view**

**137.** Whilst the Committee recognises the strength of feeling within both the animal welfare and racing communities, it must also consider the wider public interest. Evidence indicates that the sport is on a trajectory of long-term decline, and greyhound racing remains a marginal activity in Wales, centred on a single stadium.

**138.** The Committee is mindful of the potential impact on those directly involved, particularly individuals whose livelihoods may be affected, and has approached its scrutiny role with diligence and care. However, based on the evidence available, this does not appear to be an issue of broad public concern requiring immediate legislative action.

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<sup>125</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 169

<sup>126</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 161

## 8. Public support for the Bill

**139.** Many stakeholders pointed to the petition and the 2023 consultation as “irrefutable evidence” of strong public support for an end to greyhound racing in Wales. The Coalition also referenced polling showing:

*“... 77% of people either fully support (52%) or somewhat support (25%) the coalition’s calls for Welsh Government action.”<sup>127</sup>*

**140.** GBGB however, argued that public opinion has been misrepresented by the Welsh Government in the case for prohibition. GBGB challenged the claim that the petition evidences “overwhelming public support for a ban” which it described as misleading. It highlighted the following:

- The claim that “35,000 people across Wales” called for an end to greyhound racing is inaccurate as only 53 per cent of the signatories were based in Wales.
- The petition predates licensing of VGS and therefore does not reflect awareness of current welfare standards or regulated racing.
- A counter-petition supporting greyhound racing, with over 10,000 signatures, was not considered until after the Cabinet Secretary announced the intention to legislate, demonstrating a lack of balance in considering public opinion.

**141.** GBGB also questioned the Welsh Government’s reliance on the 2023 consultation as a basis for legislating. It said:

- The 2023 consultation webpage did not explicitly seek views on banning greyhound racing.
- The 2023 consultation received just 1,180 responses overall which is less than 0.04 per cent of the Welsh population.
- 40 per cent of those supporting a ban (28.32 per cent of all responses) were duplicates from an orchestrated campaign by an animal welfare

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<sup>127</sup> [PCRWB 11 - Cut the Chase Coalition](#), page 7



group. Excluding duplicates, only 36 per cent supported a phased ban, while 35 per cent opposed or were undecided.<sup>128</sup>

**142.** GBGB argued that the limitations of the consultation undermine its validity and said the voices of those directly involved in the sport, as well as the communities and businesses that rely on it, had been sidelined in the process.

**143.** Countryside Alliance Wales said the absence of further consultation after the decision to legislate was a missed opportunity to gather more balanced evidence.<sup>129</sup>

**144.** When challenged, the Cabinet Secretary defended the 2023 consultation process and said:

*“But there was that key and clear question on views and seeking evidence on a ban, and the views were quite compelling, and 65 per cent is not to be sniffed at in terms of responses, but also the evidence being put forward.”<sup>130</sup>*

## Our view

**145.** The Committee is concerned that the Welsh Government has relied heavily on the headline figures from the 2023 consultation to suggest that there is a strong level of public support in Wales for prohibiting greyhound racing. We note that the consultation was not primarily focused on this specific proposal, and that it relied on a self-selecting methodology, which is inherently vulnerable to bias and does not provide a representative measure of public opinion. This approach, combined with the volume of duplicate responses, undermines the robustness of the evidence base for legislative decisions. In our view, further meaningful and targeted consultation should have taken place alongside the development of a robust evidence base before a decision was taken to legislate.

**146.** The Committee considers its own engagement work to carry equal weight to the Welsh Government’s 2023 consultation. Unlike the Welsh Government’s exercise, the Committee’s survey was specifically designed to explore views on the Bill and related welfare issues. It adopted a mixed-method approach, combining

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<sup>128</sup> [Written evidence: Greyhound Board of Great Britain – 14 October 2025](#), page 1

<sup>129</sup> [PCRWB 02 – Countryside Alliance Wales](#), page 5

<sup>130</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 2 October 2025](#), paragraph 58

structured questions with open-text responses to capture reasoning and lived experiences. Although not intended to be statistically representative, the Committee's engagement achieved broad participation across all Welsh local authorities and adult age groups, generating 815 responses, and revealing a near-even split in views. This compares to 1031 responses to the Welsh Government consultation question on a ban, 291 of which were campaign responses mirroring that submitted by the League Against Cruel Sports.<sup>131</sup> These findings highlight the complexity and nuance of public opinion, contrasting with the headline figures presented by Welsh Government. This confirms our view that rigorous and transparent consultation is essential before seeking to legislate.

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<sup>131</sup> Citizen Engagement Team: Prohibition of Greyhound (Racing) Bill: Engagement findings - November 2025

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## 9. Economic and cultural impact

**147.** The Committee considered the potential economic and social consequences of prohibiting greyhound racing in Wales. The Cabinet Secretary confirmed that work is underway to assess employment and economic impacts, stating, “we have a very good track record in Wales, when we do these transitions” in terms of re-skilling workers.<sup>132</sup>

**148.** Industry representatives expressed concern that these impacts have not been fully explored. RPA said:

*“The economic impacts of this Bill have not yet been sufficiently explored or worked through, despite the Valley Greyhound Stadium providing information to support this work.”<sup>133</sup>*

**149.** VGS told us that it had invested £2 million in upgrade works to become a regulated track.<sup>134</sup> Greyhound Rescue Wales said this claim was not supported by VGS’s published accounts for the relevant period which showed a total of just £167,681 spent on improvements.<sup>135</sup>

**150.** SIS estimated that media rights could deliver a conservative estimate of £15 million to VGS over five years, with most of this benefiting the local community. GBGB reported that 85 individuals are directly or indirectly employed in staging racing at VGS including trainers, kennel hands, and hospitality staff, warning that most will lose their jobs.<sup>136</sup>

**151.** Beyond economics, GBGB highlighted the “cultural, social and community benefits brought by the Valley stadium” and its historic role in rural communities.<sup>137</sup> VGS representatives emphasised uncertainty over retraining plans:

<sup>132</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 6 November 2025, paragraph 164

<sup>133</sup> Written evidence: Racecourse Promoters’ Association – 15 October 2025, page 12

<sup>134</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 257

<sup>135</sup> Written evidence: Greyhound Rescue Wales – 7 October 2025, page 12

<sup>136</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 372-373

<sup>137</sup> Written evidence: Greyhound Board of Great Britain – 9 October 2025, page 13

*"There has not been one word mentioned in the implementation group or outside of that on what that will be, how that will be funded, are their salaries going to be matched?"<sup>138</sup>*

**152.** SIS added:

*"... there has been no serious conversation about economic impact. It seems very much to be an afterthought for the millions of pounds that have already been invested...and what the compensatory and impact costs would be if racing was to be banned."<sup>139</sup>*

**153.** The Cabinet Secretary told us the Welsh Government is "still not clear on the number of people who are actually employed at the track, as opposed to a headline figure"<sup>140</sup>. Although the Implementation Group had repeatedly information had been requested repeatedly from VGS, it has not been provided. The Cabinet Secretary noted this level of granular detail was needed as Companies House data showed that VGS had one employee. As a result, a more detailed impact assessment and proposals for retraining and reskilling had not yet been developed.

**154.** Subsequently, VGS informed the Committee that had not been formally approached by the Implementation Group to provide evidence on the economic and social impacts of a proposed ban until 7 November 2025, which was one day after the Cabinet Secretary gave evidence to the Committee. Upon receiving a written request, VGS confirmed that it has "now fully responded"<sup>141</sup>.

## Our view

**155.** The Committee notes some disparity between the economic impacts assessed by the Welsh Government and those claimed by the industry. We regret that Welsh Government did not undertake a robust and detailed assessment before deciding to legislate, which makes the true scale of impact uncertain. Without granular data, including verified employment figures and financial

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<sup>138</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025](#), paragraph 383

<sup>139</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025](#), paragraph 394

<sup>140</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 6 November 2025](#), paragraph 154

<sup>141</sup> [Written evidence: Valley Greyhound Stadium – 2 December 2025](#)

information, it is not possible to produce an informed impact assessment. For example, the estimated £15 million in future revenue cited cannot be meaningfully evaluated without understanding local economic dependencies, such as the effect on communities in Caerphilly.

**156.** Whilst the available evidence does not suggest to us that a broad transition fund will be necessary, the Welsh Government needs to strengthen its economic analysis of the implications of the Bill as it is likely that targeted support for affected workers will need to be considered to mitigate hardship.

**Recommendation 1.** We recommend the Welsh Government undertake a comprehensive assessment of the economic and social implications of the Bill before it is brought into force.

**Recommendation 2.** We recommend the Welsh Government fully assess the needs of affected workers as a consequence of the Bill and put in place targeted support to mitigate hardship before it is brought into force.

**157.** Cultural arguments for retaining greyhound racing are becoming less significant in the context of the sport's long-term decline, but the Committee acknowledges the importance of monitoring and reporting on cultural impacts as part of the implementation process.

## 10. Implementation

**158.** The Bill will be brought into force in an order made by Welsh Ministers no sooner than 1 April 2027, and no later than 1 April 2030, with the intention of giving sufficient time to manage the impacts on the industry, local communities, and animal welfare charities.

**159.** An Implementation Group was established on 11 July 2025 to oversee the transition towards the prohibition of greyhound racing in Wales. Its role is to provide advice and practical guidance to Welsh Ministers, ensuring that the welfare of greyhounds currently within the industry is safeguarded and that the impacts on local communities and the economy are managed effectively. The group is tasked with identifying best practice for the transition, drawing on approaches from other jurisdictions, and offering practical solutions to mitigate social and economic consequences. Membership includes representatives from VGS, animal health and welfare organisations, social and community sectors, the WLGA, Caerphilly County Borough Council, and media stakeholders such as SIS.

**160.** The Committee examined the proposed implementation period and its implications for animal welfare and the racing industry.

**161.** The Cabinet Secretary said:

*“Let’s not do it in haste, which might have negative consequences, either for the greyhounds, or alternatively for the people who are working there.”<sup>142</sup>*

**162.** The Cabinet Secretary indicated that he would be taking advice from the Implementation Group on the transition, particularly on rehoming capacity, and expressed confidence that charities could expand rehoming capacity during the transition. The Cabinet Secretary confirmed his “intent would be to move to a prohibition of greyhound racing as soon as is practically possible”<sup>143</sup>.

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<sup>142</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 2 October 2025, paragraph 100

<sup>143</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 2 October 2025, paragraph 100

**163.** Industry representatives argued for a longer timeframe, warning of disruption to rehoming and livelihoods. RPA said that “a phased ban would be akin to an immediate one”<sup>144</sup>.

**164.** Those supporting the ban favoured a shorter period, often around 12 months, citing welfare concerns. Greyhound Rescue Wales warned:

*“An implementation date of 2030 could result in an additional 480 greyhounds, many of which will have suffered significant injuries, needing to be rehomed.”*<sup>145</sup>

**165.** The League Against Cruel Sports highlighted evidence from New Zealand that injuries “rose sharply” before its ban, while academics proposed measures such as cutting off new registrations.<sup>146</sup> Battersea Dogs & Cats Home confirmed capacity exists to rehome all greyhounds currently racing through the Welsh Greyhound Rehoming Partnership which “was set up following the announcement of a ban, to ensure capacity”<sup>147</sup>.

## Our view

**166.** The Committee is satisfied that the proposed lead-in period is sensible, as the decision to bring the Bill into force needs to be a fully informed one. It allows the necessary preparatory work to take place and provides time to manage the impacts on the industry, local communities, and animal welfare charities. We are reassured by the Cabinet Secretary’s confirmation that the Bill will be brought into force at the earliest practicable opportunity within the specified timeframe.

**167.** The establishment of the Implementation Group is a positive step, and we welcome its role in advising on rehoming capacity, economic impacts, and best practice for transition. The Committee notes, however, that such a long lead-in period might not have been necessary for the Implementation Group to do its work had more preparatory work been undertaken before the decision to legislate was taken.

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<sup>144</sup> [Written evidence: Racecourse Promoters’ Association – 15 October 2025](#), page 10

<sup>145</sup> [Written evidence: Greyhound Rescue Wales – 7 October 2025](#), page 1

<sup>146</sup> For example [PCRWB 21 - Angela Shearing](#), page 2

<sup>147</sup> [PCRWB 28 - Battersea Dogs & Cats Home](#), page 3

## 11. Definition of “greyhound”

**168.** The Committee considered whether the Bill should define “greyhound” and the implications of leaving this undefined.

**169.** The Cabinet Secretary explained that discussions with stakeholders, including the Kennel Club, indicated “a fair degree of acceptance of what a greyhound is and isn’t”<sup>148</sup>. A Welsh Government official acknowledged that other breeds such as lurchers and whippets do race but said:

*“... we don’t have the evidence or strength of feeling, through consultation stakeholders, that that happens a lot in Wales, or leads to a high number of injuries and deaths.”<sup>149</sup>*

**170.** Some witnesses argued for a broader definition to prevent loopholes. Professor Andrew Knight suggested including “sighthounds, and potential crossbreeds with sighthounds”<sup>150</sup>. Dr Rebekah Humphreys said a wider definition would stop the industry “breeding crossbreeds that are not technically classified as greyhounds but still share significant characteristics”<sup>151</sup>.

**171.** Blue Cross indicated it was comfortable with the current wording. GBGB noted that nothing in the Bill prevents crossbreeds or other breeds from being raced, while SIS commented that “greyhounds would be the only commercially viable form of a betting opportunity”, though warned of possible “unintended consequences for coursing and illegal activities”<sup>152</sup>.

### Our view

**172.** The Committee is satisfied with the evidence provided by the Welsh Government and agrees that the term “greyhound” does not require further definition in the Bill. Stakeholder feedback indicates a broad and consistent understanding of what constitutes a greyhound, and there is insufficient evidence

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<sup>148</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 2 October 2025](#), paragraph 146

<sup>149</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 2 October 2025](#), paragraph 149

<sup>150</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025](#), paragraph 61

<sup>151</sup> [Written Evidence: Dr Rebekah Humphreys – 3 October 2025](#), page 3

<sup>152</sup> Both [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025](#), paragraph 360



to suggest that racing of other breeds or crossbreeds is, or is likely to be, prevalent in Wales or poses significant welfare concerns.

**173.** Whilst we acknowledge arguments for a broader definition to avoid potential loopholes, we are not persuaded that this is necessary at present. Expanding the definition could introduce complexity and unintended consequences without clear evidence of need. The Committee therefore supports the current approach, which provides clarity and aligns with the Bill's policy intention.

## 12. Definition of “greyhound racing”

**174.** The Committee considered whether the Bill’s definition of “greyhound racing” is sufficiently clear and whether it should extend to straight tracks.

**175.** The Bill defines greyhound racing as:

*“... setting greyhounds to run around a track in pursuit of a lure activated by mechanical means (and this includes timing or training a greyhound as it runs around a track).”*

**176.** The Cabinet Secretary explained that the ban does not apply to straight tracks, as “the prevalence of injuries and fatalities” occurs on curved tracks.<sup>153</sup> A Welsh Government official emphasised the need to avoid “unintended consequences” from terminology that could restrict informal activities such as fun runs at agricultural fairs.<sup>154</sup>

**177.** Dr Rebekah Humphreys supported the definition, saying it “gives precision to the policy’s intention”<sup>155</sup>. Professor Andrew Knight argued that straight tracks would “have a significant beneficial impact” but would not eliminate welfare concerns, suggesting wording such as “around or along a track”<sup>156</sup>. Blue Cross noted the absence of evidence on straight tracks but said it would welcome their inclusion.<sup>157</sup>

**178.** The League Against Cruel Sports warned that “the lack of a clear definition creates the potential for loopholes”, including straight tracks, and highlighted other risk factors such as the lure, starting box, and track surface.<sup>158</sup> GBGB stated that straight tracks are discussed in its welfare strategy, but argued most UK

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<sup>153</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 2 October 2025, paragraph 157

<sup>154</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 2 October 2025, paragraph 160

<sup>155</sup> Written Evidence: Dr Rebekah Humphreys – 3 October 2025, page 3

<sup>156</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 68-70

<sup>157</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 15 October 2025, paragraph 75

<sup>158</sup> PGRWB 29 - League Against Cruel Sports, page 3

venues could not accommodate them. GBGB also suggested “there’s been a significant increase in injuries in Australia on the straight track”<sup>159</sup>.

## Our view

**179.** The Committee is satisfied that the definition of “greyhound racing” provided in the Bill is sufficiently clear and aligns with the policy intention. We agree that the definition should not extend to straight tracks. Evidence presented to us does not demonstrate a compelling welfare case for their inclusion, and we are not persuaded that straight tracks are commercially viable proposition for the gambling industry.

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<sup>159</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 261

## 13. Unintended consequences

**180.** The Committee considered whether the ban could lead to unintended consequences, including dogs being raced outside Wales and illegal, unregulated activity.

### Racing dogs over the border

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**181.** The Bill does not prohibit breeding, kennelling, or training (except as specified in the definition of “greyhound racing”) of greyhounds, meaning dogs could still be kept in Wales but compete elsewhere. The Cabinet Secretary acknowledged this risk, noting that “dogs are already trained in Wales and raced in England”, and said he was “very alive” to the possibility of increased travel.<sup>160</sup> He stressed that existing animal transport regulations apply and indicated that wider licensing and regulation work may address related issues.<sup>161</sup>

**182.** RSPCA Cymru supported the scope of the ban but emphasised the need to safeguard other aspects of dogs’ welfare under the 2006 Act.<sup>162</sup> RSPCA Cymru noted that, once the planned closure of the race track in Swindon takes place, the nearest track will be over three hours away, making racing in England less practical.<sup>163</sup>

**183.** Both animal welfare representatives and GBGB warned that the ban could undermine welfare aims. The Kennel Club said the ban “has the potential to result in negative outcomes for the dogs currently racing in Wales” and welcomed the Implementation Group’s role in addressing these risks.<sup>164</sup> GREY2K warned that cross-border racing could undermine the Bill’s welfare objectives.<sup>165</sup>

**184.** SIS said “those dogs that currently race at Valley will simply race across the border”, and argued that restricting training would either force longer travel,

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<sup>160</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 2 October 2025, paragraph 108-109

<sup>161</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 2 October 2025, paragraph 108-109

<sup>162</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 15 October 2025, paragraph 224

<sup>163</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 15 October 2025, paragraph 110

<sup>164</sup> PGRWB 20 - The Kennel Club, page 2

<sup>165</sup> PGRWB 03 - GREY2K USA Worldwide, page 4

creating welfare risks, or reduce training opportunities, increasing injury risk.<sup>166</sup> The Countryside Alliance agreed with this view and said:

*“The ban will do little beyond increasing the distances greyhounds will have to travel to train and compete.”<sup>167</sup>*

**185.** GBGB also warned the ban could “flood rehoming centres”<sup>168</sup>.

### Driving racing ‘underground’

**186.** GBGB warned that a ban “runs the risk of greyhound racing occurring illegally, out of public view with no regulation”, drawing comparisons with hare coursing.<sup>169</sup> This concern was echoed by the RPA and the Betting and Gaming Council.

**187.** Animal welfare charities disputed this risk. Blue Cross stated:

*“There is little evidence to support the theory that greyhound racing will move ‘underground’ and is not, in our opinion, a valid reason to not take steps to protect the welfare of racing greyhounds in Wales.”<sup>170</sup>*

**188.** The Coalition added that illicit racing would be “very obvious” given the infrastructure required and noted that the industry depends on streaming revenue, which would be impossible to replicate covertly.<sup>171</sup> Caerphilly County Borough Council supported this view.<sup>172</sup>

**189.** The Cabinet Secretary agreed with this view and said, “It will be very, very difficult to move to an underground form of greyhound racing”<sup>173</sup>.

<sup>166</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 375

<sup>167</sup> PCRWB 02 - Countryside Alliance Wales, page 2

<sup>168</sup> Written evidence: Greyhound Board of Great Britain – 9 October 2025, page 11

<sup>169</sup> Written evidence: Greyhound Board of Great Britain – 9 October 2025, page 2

<sup>170</sup> Written evidence: Blue Cross – 6 September 2025, page 4

<sup>171</sup> PCRWB 11 - Cut the Chase Coalition, page 5

<sup>172</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 576

<sup>173</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 2 October 2025, paragraph 112

## Our view

**190.** The Committee recognises that there is a potential risk of displacement, with greyhounds being raced outside Wales following the ban. This raises welfare concerns due to increased travel distances, but we note that existing legislation provides safeguards. Evidence on the likelihood of racing moving across the border is mixed. Whilst some stakeholders anticipate increased travel, we consider this risk to be limited given the practical challenges and distances involved. At present, we are not persuaded that additional legislative measures are required.

**Recommendation 3.** We recommend the Welsh Government closely monitor the potential displacement of racing activity across borders and engage with Animal Licensing Wales as necessary to assess and mitigate potential welfare impacts.

**191.** Concerns were raised about the possibility of greyhound racing being driven underground. The Committee does not consider this to be a credible risk. Greyhound racing is heavily dependent on gambling revenue and streaming infrastructure, making it difficult to see how it would be commercially viable as an illicit activity. We agree with the Cabinet Secretary and welfare organisations that the logistical requirements of racing would also make covert operations highly impractical.

## 14. The offences

**192.** The Committee considered whether the scope of the offences under the Bill are sufficient to deter illegal greyhound racing.

**193.** The Bill makes it an offence for an operator of a stadium or similar venue in Wales to use it, or knowingly permit it to be used, for greyhound racing. It also makes it an offence to be involved in organising greyhound racing in Wales.

**194.** The Cabinet Secretary explained that the focus on the organisers of an event was not dissimilar to the approach taken in other legislation related to illegal gathering and was designed “to be quite targeted, and also fair, and proportionate and enforceable” for enforcement authorities.<sup>174</sup>

**195.** Several stakeholders called for the offence to be widened. Greyhound Racing Wales and the League Against Cruel Sports argued that trainers and owners should be included. Battersea Dogs & Cats Home suggested extending liability to attendees, noting:

*“It is hard to argue after all that it should be legal to attend or gamble on an activity that is illegal to carry out in Wales.”<sup>175</sup>*

**196.** The Coalition highlighted that hare coursing legislation includes attendees, whilst the WLGA said:

*“Expanding the scope to include participation would help prevent circumvention or unintended loopholes and ensure the legislation is enforceable if illegal activities arose because of the ban.”<sup>176</sup>*

**197.** WLGA also noted the concern raised by enforcement officers about identifying organisers of informal events.<sup>177</sup> This view was supported by Caerphilly County Borough Council.<sup>178</sup>

<sup>174</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 2 October 2025](#), paragraph 167

<sup>175</sup> [PCRWB 28 - Battersea Dogs & Cats Home](#), page 2

<sup>176</sup> [Written evidence: WLGA – 6 October 2025](#), page 2

<sup>177</sup> [Written evidence: WLGA – 6 October 2025](#), page 2

<sup>178</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025](#), paragraph 557

**198.** ALW proposed including those who finance races, while the Countryside Alliance Wales raised concerns about clarity in the Bill's wording.<sup>179</sup> GREY2K, however, felt the offence was clearly defined.<sup>180</sup>

## **Our view**

**199.** The Committee is satisfied that the scope of offences set out in the Bill meets the policy objective in a proportionate and enforceable way. Targeting organisers and venue operators strikes an appropriate balance between deterrence and practicality for enforcement authorities.

**200.** Whilst we acknowledge stakeholder suggestions to widen the offence to include trainers, owners, attendees, or those who finance races, we are not persuaded that this is necessary at this stage. Expanding liability could introduce complexity and unintended consequences, particularly for informal or incidental involvement, without clear evidence of need.

**201.** The Committee agrees with the Cabinet Secretary that the current approach is consistent with other legislation addressing illegal gathering which provides clarity for enforcement. We expect the Welsh Government to monitor the effectiveness of these provisions and consider further measures only if evidence emerges of loopholes or enforcement challenges.

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<sup>179</sup> [PCRWB.02 - Countryside Alliance Wales](#), page 2

<sup>180</sup> [PCRWB.03 - GREY2K USA Worldwide](#), page 2



## 15. The penalty

**202.** The Committee considered whether the proposed penalty provisions are proportionate and effective.

**203.** Under the Bill, a person guilty of an offence is liable on summary conviction to a fine, which the Bill does not limit.

**204.** The Cabinet Secretary explained this approach “would give magistrates maximal opportunity for flexibility within sentences”<sup>181</sup>. He noted that similar legislation in Scotland includes imprisonment for up to five years, or a fine, or both.

**205.** Views on the proposed penalty were mixed. The League Against Cruel Sports and RSPCA Cymru welcomed the penalty of unlimited fines, although RSPCA Cymru asked whether custodial sentences should also be considered. Battersea Dogs & Cats Home stressed the need for “robust guidance” on applying unlimited fines.<sup>182</sup>

**206.** ALW proposed introducing fixed penalties, arguing these have been successful in other legislation as a proportionate enforcement mechanism which does not over-burden courts, and results in better welfare outcomes.<sup>183</sup>

### Our view

**207.** The Committee is satisfied that the provision for unlimited fines on summary conviction is proportionate and provides sufficient deterrence to meet the policy objectives of the Bill. We agree with the Cabinet Secretary that this approach offers flexibility for Magistrates and aligns with enforcement principles applied in similar legislation.

**208.** However, the Committee emphasises the need for robust guidance on the application of unlimited fines to ensure consistency and fairness and to engage with the Sentencing Council before the Bill takes effect to develop clear sentencing guidelines.

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<sup>181</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 2 October 2025](#), paragraph 169

<sup>182</sup> [PCRWB 28 – Battersea Dogs & Cats Home](#), page 2

<sup>183</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025](#), paragraph 169

**Recommendation 4.** We recommend the Welsh Government engages with the Sentencing Council before the Bill takes effect to develop clear sentencing guidelines.

## 16. Enforcement

**209.** The Committee considered whether the enforcement powers proposed under the Bill are adequate and proportionate.

**210.** Schedule 2 to the Bill provides inspectors appointed by a county council or county borough council in Wales or the Welsh Ministers with powers of entry, inspection, search, and seizure, although not a power to seize dogs.

**211.** Most agreed the provisions are workable. Countryside Alliance Wales and GREY2K said they were sufficient. Dr Rebekah Humphreys described them as “workable and proportionate”<sup>184</sup>. Caerphilly County Borough Council considered Schedule 2 fit for purpose but highlighted challenges around entering dwellings.<sup>185</sup>

**212.** Some organisations called for stronger measures. Caerphilly County Borough Council and ALW argued for powers to remove suffering animals without relying on the 2006 Act, which they described as “difficult to use, expensive and time consuming”. Battersea Dogs & Cats Home raised concerns about the lack of clarity on burden of proof and evidence requirements, and stressed the need for training.<sup>186</sup>

**213.** Stakeholders also emphasised the importance of guidance. Caerphilly County Borough Council and ALW called for statutory guidance, while WLGA urged intelligence-led investigations, collaboration with the Police, and adequate funding for training and inspector capacity.<sup>187</sup> It recommended national agreements to clarify roles and strengthen inter-agency cooperation.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Written evidence: Dr Rebekah Humphreys – 3 October 2025, page 3

<sup>185</sup> Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 556

<sup>186</sup> PCRWB 28 – Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, page 2

<sup>187</sup> For example Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 564

<sup>188</sup> Written evidence: WLGA – 6 October 2025, page 3

**214.** The Welsh Government said it believes compliance will be high given the visibility of greyhound racing, resulting in minimal enforcement burden.<sup>189</sup> This view was supported by Caerphilly County Borough Council.<sup>190</sup>

## **Our view**

**215.** The Committee is satisfied that the enforcement powers set out in Schedule 2 to the Bill are proportionate and broadly fit for purpose. Providing inspectors with powers of entry, inspection, search, and seizure is consistent with similar legislation and should enable effective enforcement. We note that the absence of a power to seize dogs is mitigated by existing provisions under the 2006 Act, although stakeholders have highlighted that these provisions can be complex and resource-intensive.

**216.** The Committee agrees with stakeholders that statutory guidance will be essential to ensure clarity on roles, evidence requirements, and enforcement processes. We also support calls for intelligence-led investigations and inter-agency collaboration, including agreements between local authorities and the Police. Finally, the Committee notes that effective enforcement will depend on local authorities being properly resourced.

**Recommendation 5.** We recommend the Cabinet Secretary tables an amendment to the Bill to enable the Welsh Government to issue statutory guidance to inspectors in relation to enforcement of the offences in the Bill.

**Recommendation 6.** We recommend the Welsh Government establishes national agreements to support evidence-led investigations and collaboration between enforcement agencies and the Police.

**Recommendation 7.** We recommend the Welsh Government undertakes a detailed assessment of enforcement capacity, including training needs, and ensures that local authorities have access to adequate funding and support to implement the legislation.

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<sup>189</sup> [Welsh Government: Prohibition of Greyhound Racing \(Wales\) Bill: Explanatory Memorandum incorporating the Regulatory Impact Assessment and Explanatory Notes - 29 September 2025, page 21](#)

<sup>190</sup> [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 23 October 2025, paragraph 576](#)

## Annex 1: List of oral evidence sessions

The following witnesses provided oral evidence to the Committee on the dates noted below. Transcripts of all oral evidence sessions can be viewed on the [Committee's website](#).

Date	Name and Organisation
02 October 2025	<p><b>Huw Irranca-Davies MS, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs,</b> Welsh Government</p> <p><b>James Morris, Bill Facilitator,</b> Welsh Government</p> <p><b>Jackie Price, Head of the Greyhound Team,</b> Welsh Government</p> <p><b>Elizabeth Thomas, Lawyer,</b> Welsh Government</p>
15 October 2025	<p><b>Vanessa Waddon, Chief Executive Officer,</b> Hope Rescue</p> <p><b>James Fitch, Public Affairs Manager,</b> Dogs Trust</p> <p><b>Chris Burghes, Chief Executive Officer,</b> Blue Cross</p> <p><b>Dr Sibylle Kuonen,</b> Greyhound Rescue Wales</p> <p><b>Billie-Jade Thomas, Senior Public Affairs Manager,</b> RSPCA</p>
23 October 2025	<p><b>Dr Emily Blackwell, Senior Lecturer in Animal Behaviour and Welfare,</b> University of Bristol, and Chair of the Welsh Government's Implementation Group</p> <p><b>Dr Ellie Wigham,</b> Scottish Animal Welfare Commission</p> <p><b>Dr Rebekah Humphreys, Animal Ethics Specialist,</b> University of Wales Trinity Saint David</p> <p><b>Professor Andrew Knight,</b> University of Winchester</p>

Date	Name and Organisation
	<p><b>Mark Bird, Chief Executive Officer,</b> Greyhound Board of Great Britain</p> <p><b>Madeleine Campbell, Board Director,</b> Greyhound Board of Great Britain</p> <p><b>Katie Bennison, General Manager,</b> Valley Greyhounds</p> <p><b>Simon Franklin, Company Director,</b> Racecourse Promoters' Association</p> <p><b>Richard Brankley, Head of Greyhound Operations,</b> Sports Information Services</p> <p><b>Anna Jeffrey,</b> Greyhound Trainer</p> <p><b>Steve Howard,</b> Greyhound Trainer</p> <p><b>Mike Burton,</b> Greyhound Trainer</p> <p><b>Robert Hartshorn, Executive Director for Education &amp; Social Services,</b> Caerphilly County Borough Council</p> <p><b>Zoe Phillips, Project Manager,</b> Animal Licensing Wales</p>
06 November 2025	<p><b>Huw Irranca-Davies MS, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs,</b> Welsh Government</p> <p><b>Jackie Price, Head of the Greyhound Team,</b> Welsh Government</p> <p><b>Elizabeth Thomas, Lawyer,</b> Welsh Government</p>

## Annex 2: List of written evidence

The following people and organisations provided written evidence to the Committee. All Consultation responses and additional written information can be viewed on the [Committee's website](#).

Reference	Organisation
<b>PGRWB 01</b>	Premier Greyhound Racing
<b>PGRWB 02</b>	Countryside Alliance Wales
<b>PGRWB 03</b>	GREY2K USA Worldwide
<b>PGRWB 04</b>	Alison Littlejohn
<b>PGRWB 05</b>	Les Penry
<b>PGRWB 06</b>	Dianne Lewis
<b>PGRWB 07</b>	Robert Williams
<b>PGRWB 08</b>	Christine Evans
<b>PGRWB 09</b>	Jane Hurley
<b>PGRWB 10</b>	Dr Huw Jones Jenkins
<b>PGRWB 11</b>	Cut the Chase Coalition
<b>PGRWB 12</b>	Manuela Vogler
<b>PGRWB 13</b>	Betting and Gaming Council
<b>PGRWB 14</b>	Individual
<b>PGRWB 15</b>	Lorraine Czaja
<b>PGRWB 16</b>	Ken Needham
<b>PGRWB 17</b>	Ruth Joseph
<b>PGRWB 18</b>	Alain Thomas
<b>PGRWB 19</b>	Jenny Lloyd
<b>PGRWB 20</b>	The Kennel Club
<b>PGRWB 21</b>	Angela Shearing

Reference	Organisation
<b>PGRWB 22</b>	Mike Doughty
<b>PGRWB 23</b>	Melanie Jenkins
<b>PGRWB 24</b>	Linda Leeves
<b>PGRWB 25</b>	Sheila Andersen
<b>PGRWB 26</b>	SPCA New Zealand
<b>PGRWB 27</b>	Arena Racing Company
<b>PGRWB 28</b>	Battersea Dogs & Cats Home
<b>PGRWB 29</b>	League Against Cruel Sports

## Additional Information

Title	Date
Statement of policy intent	29 September 2025
Written evidence: Dr Rebekah Humphreys	3 October 2025
Written evidence: Welsh Local Government Association	6 October 2025
Written evidence: Blue Cross	6 October 2025
Written evidence: RSPCA Cymru	6 October 2025
Written evidence: Greyhound Rescue Wales	7 October 2025
Written evidence: Greyhound Board of Great Britain	9 October 2025
Written evidence: Professor Andrew Knight	13 October 2025
Written evidence: Greyhound Board of Great Britain	14 October 2025
Written evidence: Racecourse Promoters' Association	15 October 2025
Written evidence: Greyhound Board of Great Britain	20 October 2025
Written evidence: RSPCA Cymru	22 October 2025
Written evidence: Greyhound Action Ireland	27 October 2025
Written evidence: Cut the chase coalition	5 November 2025
Written evidence: Caerphilly County Borough Council	10 November 2025
Written evidence: UKAS	10 November 2025
Written evidence: UKAS	18 November 2025
Written evidence: Welsh Government	18 November 2025



<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Written evidence: Greyhound Rescue Wales	21 November 2025
Written evidence: Welsh Government	24 November 2025
Written evidence: Valley Greyhound Stadium	2 December 2025