



## **Submission relating to Petition PE1758 End greyhound racing Rural Affairs and Islands Committee - evidence session on 3 May 2023**

The Scottish SPCA, RSPCA and Dogs Trust have a duty to ensure that all dogs are provided with at least a life worth living and are not being exploited for human gain or profit.

The Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB) reported that from 2017 to 2020, 197 injuries were reported at Shawfield with 15 deaths. It's probable that the number of injuries and deaths would have continued if the pandemic hadn't forced the closure of the licensed stadium. These figures highlight that the legislation in place to protect all dogs, the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006, is not effective.

This is why these organisations are calling for an end to greyhound racing.

There was great emphasis during the session on welfare issues at the unlicensed track in Scotland. It is a serious concern that the unlicensed track does not have any vets onsite to treat injured greyhounds, to determine the health of racing dogs or to assess conditions that may warrant the cancellation of a race. This should be addressed with urgency. However, the organisations would like to reiterate that the call to ban greyhound racing is due to the danger of the activity itself, which is apparent in the number of injuries and deaths caused; there is an expectation that dogs will be injured and may die due to being involved in a race. This is an issue inherent with any greyhound racing track, whether licensed or unlicensed. The Scottish SPCA very much appreciates the invite by Thornton to attend their premises, but this will not address the risks to the welfare of the dogs involved in greyhound racing.

### **1. Legislation**

**During the Committee, it was incorrectly stated that racing greyhounds are specifically mentioned in the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006. There are no provisions within this Act which specifically cover racing greyhounds.**

However, while racing greyhounds are not specifically mentioned in the 2006 Act, the provisions within the Act protect all dogs, including greyhounds used for racing, from birth to death. Under the Act, greyhounds are protected from unnecessary suffering, from failure to seek veterinary treatment and from the administration of poisonous or injurious drugs. The legislation places responsibility on the person caring for a dog, and in the case of a racing greyhound, this would be a trainer or owner.

In England, the use of racing greyhounds is also subjected to the Welfare of Racing Greyhounds Regulations, 2010. In Scotland, however, there are no special provisions or legislation to cover the commercial use of animals in racing. A statutory Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs also applies to all dogs in Scotland as part of the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006.

Greyhounds are also subject to a number of other pieces of legislation, including:

The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (Scotland) Regulations 2006; Microchipping of Dogs (Scotland) Regulations 2016; Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Scotland) Regulations 2021. None of these pieces of legislation specifically covers welfare



issues relating to dog racing, but they do provide some protections for dogs in all contexts in Scotland.

Greyhound racing is currently legal, so entering a dog into a race where the risk is unacceptable is not in itself illegal. Should a case involving a racing greyhound ever proceed to the Courts, then the Sheriff would have to determine whether unnecessary suffering had been caused during the activity of greyhound racing. The injuries and deaths associated with greyhound racing may not be accepted for any other domestic dog so it is important to consider this comparison.

## 2. Number of calls to the Scottish SPCA about racing greyhounds

Calls to the Scottish SPCA's animal helpline relating to racing greyhounds are relatively low, with only three calls per year from 2018 to 2022. As discussed during the evidence session, there have been 21 reports regarding the same address since 2015 about greyhounds that are reportedly raced at the remaining unlicensed track in Scotland. On each visit by a Scottish SPCA Inspector, conditions at the premises have met the minimum requirements as outlined in the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006, so there has not been sufficient evidence to progress this investigation further and advice has been given.

The Scottish SPCA's special investigations unit has worked on intelligence to investigate greyhound trainers in relation to administering illegal substances to greyhounds. These include illegal veterinary medicines and performance enhancing drugs such as steroids and caffeine based substances. Unfortunately, due to issues around the testing of the substances at the time, the Procurator Fiscal was not able to take the cases forward.

## 3. Requests from the RAI Committee

This section addresses questions raised by Members at the evidence session on 3 May 2023.

### 3.1 Number of calls about dogs per year compared to greyhounds

This table shows the number of calls the Scottish SPCA has received each year regarding dogs compared to the number of calls about greyhounds.

	2018		2019		2020		2021		2022	
	Dog	G'hound	Dog	G'hound	Dog	G'hound	Dog	G'hound	Dog	G'hound
Jan	1970	0	1965	0	1725	0	1763	0	1815	0
Feb	1799	0	1957	0	1652	2	1663	1	1804	2
Mar	2040	1	2173	0	1635	1	2174	0	2204	1
Apr	2188	1	2353	0	1555	0	2105	0	2096	0
May	2689	0	2338	0	1828	0	1989	0	2206	0
Jun	2982	1	2210	1	1745	0	2098	0	2238	0
Jul	3238	0	2673	1	1935	0	2211	1	2527	0
Aug	2577	0	2524	1	2177	0	2442	0	2585	0
Sept	2120	0	2237	0	1934	0	2119	0	2158	0
Oct	2204	0	2049	0	1811	0	1861	1	2042	0





### 3.3 Number of Greyhounds Rehomed by Dogs Trust

As requested, the following table shows how many racing Greyhounds Dogs Trust has received as handovers, broken down by country and handover type.

Ex-racer intake	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (Jan-Mar)
England	207	210	172	274	171	147	44
Scotland	0	14	10	30	9	7	0
Wales	29	17	10	3	8	11	0
N. Ireland	51	50	57	86	150	92	3
ROI	3	4	1	7	0	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>47</b>
Greyhound Trainer	136	149	111	203	120	67	19
Other Organisation	101	98	92	173	183	132	17
Individual Handover	53	48	47	24	35	59	11

Further to this, intake data shows Greyhounds have been in Dogs Trust Top 12 intake since 2017. In 2022, ex-racing greyhounds made up 88% of total greyhound handovers.

Rank	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1	Crossbreed	Crossbreed	Crossbreed	Crossbreed	Crossbreed	Crossbreed
2	Terrier (Jack Russell)	Terrier (Jack Russell)	Terrier (Jack Russell)	Terrier (Jack Russell)	Terrier (Jack Russell)	Terrier (Jack Russell)
3	Lurcher	Lurcher	Lurcher	Greyhound	Terrier (Staffordshire Bull)	Lurcher
4	Terrier Cross	Collie Cross (Border)	Terrier Cross	Lurcher	Lurcher	Terrier (Staffordshire Bull)
5	Collie Cross (Border)	Terrier (Staffordshire Bull)	Collie Cross (Border)	Terrier (Staffordshire Bull)	Greyhound	Collie (Border)
6	Terrier (Staffordshire Bull)	Terrier Cross	Terrier (Staffordshire Bull)	Staffordshire Cross (Sbt)	Terrier Cross	Retriever (Labrador)
7	Beagle	Collie (Border)	Staffordshire Cross (Sbt)	Terrier Cross	Shih Tzu	Spaniel (Cocker)
8	Lab Cross	Lab Cross	Collie (Border)	Collie Cross (Border)	Collie (Border)	German Shepherd Dog
9	Collie (Border)	Staffordshire Cross (Sbt)	Lab Cross	German Shepherd Dog	Staffordshire Cross (Sbt)	Terrier Cross
10	Staffordshire Cross (Sbt)	Retriever (Labrador)	Terrier (Yorkshire)	Collie (Border)	Retriever (Labrador)	Greyhound
11	Retriever (Labrador)	Greyhound	Greyhound	Retriever (Labrador)	German Shepherd Dog	French Bulldog



12	Greyhound	German Shepherd Dog	Retriever (Labrador)	Lab Cross	French Bulldog	Bulldog
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The Scottish SPCA, RSPCA and Dogs Trust hope this addresses the questions raised by Members of the Committee during the evidence session.

Please don't hesitate to contact [public.affairs@scottishspca.org](mailto:public.affairs@scottishspca.org) should you need any further information.

Kind regards,

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