



Finlay Carson MSP
Convener
Rural Affairs and Islands Committee
c/o Clerk to the Committee

Mark Ruskell MSP

22 May 2025

Dear Finlay

Greyhound Racing (Offences) (Scotland) Bill

I understand that the Greyhound Racing (Offences) (Scotland) Bill, for which I am member-in-charge, has been referred to your Committee for Stage 1 scrutiny.

The Non-Government Bills Unit (NGBU) has provided support to me in the preparation and drafting of the Bill. As part of that role, NGBU has carried out an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) for the Bill in order to ensure that best practice has been followed and that the Bill's impact has been appropriately identified and considered. I have added my comments to the EQIA.

The EQIA is attached at the Annex for the Committee's information.

Yours sincerely

Mark Ruskell

Annex

Equality Impact Assessment

Greyhound Racing (Offences) (Scotland) Bill	
(1) Aims of the Policy	
What is the purpose of the proposed policy?	<p>The purpose of this Member's Bill (introduced by Mark Ruskell MSP) is to prohibit the racing of greyhounds on oval racetracks (the most common type of greyhound racetrack used globally). Evidence suggests that racing greyhounds on curved racetracks puts them at inherent risk of injury and fatality.¹ The Bill makes it an offence to own, or be responsible for, a greyhound or a racetrack, and race, or permit the racing of, a greyhound.</p> <p>A person who commits an offence (i.e. who is responsible for racing a greyhound illegally) may be given a fine, a custodial sentence, or an order which takes the greyhound from them and/or prevents them from owning or being involved with greyhounds in a capacity specified by the court.</p>
What are the anticipated outcomes of the policy?	<p>The outcome of the Bill will be that greyhound racing on oval tracks in Scotland will be illegal. As a consequence, the one greyhound racetrack understood to be operating in Scotland will no longer be able to operate on its current basis (on an oval track). Greyhounds currently raced on that track may need to be rehomed if the owners no longer wish to keep them.</p>
Who will be affected by the policy?	<p>The Bill will affect those who currently participate in greyhound racing on oval racetracks, including greyhound owners and trainers and racetrack owners, managers and related employees (such as people who work at the racetrack in any capacity, including bookmakers). Should a greyhound which is also a family pet be rehomed or taken away, the family of the greyhound owner may also be affected. The Bill will also affect people who attend the racetrack to watch greyhound racing, and those who may place bets on races. The Bill could also affect charities/rehoming centres which may have a role in caring for greyhounds once the ban has</p>

¹ Mahdavi, F., Hossain, M. I., Hayati, H., Eager, D. & Kennedy, P. (2018) Track Shape, Resulting Dynamics and Injury Rates of Greyhounds. ASME, International Mechanical Engineering Congress and Exposition

	come into effect, as well as the services that would be engaged if a suspected offence was taking/had taken place, such as the police, prosecutors, and courts.
(2) What is known about the diverse needs of those who will be affected by the policy	
Gender* (including transgender, maternity and pregnancy)	There are no identified needs relevant to this characteristic. Note that it is understood that a majority of those who participate in greyhound racing, both as owners/trainers, and spectators/gambling participants, are men.
Religion and Belief	There are not considered to be any particular needs relevant to this characteristic.
Age*	<p>It is understood that rules vary on the age at which a person can attend a greyhound race meeting, and/or enter a greyhound for a race. However, it is not thought likely that many children and young people are directly involved in greyhound racing. It may be the case that some adults take children or young people along to greyhound races and that children/young people could therefore witness the injury or fatality of greyhounds, and an activity potentially harmful to greyhounds.</p> <p>Note that you have to be aged 18 or over in Scotland to place a bet, so no-one under that age will be affected by the removal of betting opportunities on greyhound racing on oval tracks in Scotland.</p>
Disability*	There are not considered to be any particular needs relevant to this characteristic.
Ethnicity and Race	There are not considered to be any particular needs relevant to this characteristic.
Sexual Orientation	There are not considered to be any particular needs relevant to this characteristic.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	There are not considered to be any particular needs relevant to this characteristic.
(3) Is there enough information to help understand the needs and/or experiences of those affected by the policy	
Gender* (including transgender, maternity and	There are not considered to be any particular needs relevant to this characteristic.

pregnancy)	
Religion and Belief	There are not considered to be any particular needs relevant to this characteristic.
Age*	The impacts on children and young people is considered to be minor and it is considered that enough information is available to understand the potential impacts.
Disability*	There are not considered to be any particular needs relevant to this characteristic.
Ethnicity and Race	There are not considered to be any particular needs relevant to this characteristic.
Sexual Orientation	There are not considered to be any particular needs relevant to this characteristic.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	There are not considered to be any particular needs relevant to this characteristic.
If not, what other information is required	N/A.
(4) What does the information given say about how the policy might impact positively and negatively on different groups	
Gender* (including transgender, maternity and pregnancy)	As noted above, it is broadly considered that more men than women are involved with greyhound racing (whether as owners, trainers, spectators, or gamblers).
Religion and Belief	There is considered to be a neutral impact on this characteristic.
Age*	<p>In response to the Member's consultation on his draft proposal for the Bill, it was noted by two respondents that the Bill would have a positive impact on younger people in particular as a result of demonstrating that cruelty to animals would not be tolerated. One anonymous respondent to the Member's consultation stated:</p> <p>"I also believe the proposal could have a positive impact on the wellbeing of young people and children, as they will no longer be exposed to any negative impacts on their wellbeing as a result of seeing an animal suffering an injury or fatality during a public racing event."</p> <p>The Policy Memorandum which accompanies the Bill contains a statement of compatibility under section 23(1) of</p>

	<p>the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 statement on UNCRC. Mark Ruskell states that, in his view, the provisions of the Bill have a neutral impact on compatibility with the UNCRC requirements.</p> <p>The Policy Memorandum notes that the Bill would make it a criminal offence, as the owner or responsible person, to race a greyhound and it would also make it an offence to operate a racetrack. Such offences would therefore be committed outside of family homes. However, the enforcement powers in Schedule 1 provide that a police officer could enter a family home if they were seeking evidence of such an offence but only with a warrant where admission was refused. Therefore, the family home is given higher protection than other premises and article 16 (no child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence) is respected. There is the possibility that a greyhound that is being raced is also a family pet and therefore if a deprivation order² were imposed it could potentially interfere with that child's right to play (article 31 of UNCRC) as well as amounting to an interference with the child's family as the greyhound would in effect be taken away from the family home. However, a deprivation order can only be made by a court where it is in the interests of the greyhound or necessary to ensure the welfare of the greyhound.</p>
Disability*	There is considered to be a neutral impact on this characteristic.
Ethnicity and Race	There is considered to be a neutral impact on this characteristic.
Sexual Orientation	There is considered to be a neutral impact on this characteristic.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	There is considered to be a neutral impact on this characteristic.
Completed by the Non-Government Bills Unit: May 2025	

*Although not a protected characteristic, carers should be given specific consideration in this category (e.g. the potential impact on those who care for older people)

² The Bill allows the court to make an order depriving a person of a greyhound/greyhounds present when the offence was committed.

Member's Comment on NGBU's Equalities Impact Assessment	
Evidence gaps identified	No evidence gaps were identified.
Member's comment: I am content with the commentary and information set out in this document.	
Adverse impacts identified	No adverse impacts of the Bill were identified.
Member's comment: I am content with the commentary and information set out in this document.	
Completed by: Mark Ruskell MSP	