

**Mr Finlay Carson MSP**  
**The Scottish Parliament**  
**Edinburgh**  
**EH99 1SP**

**14th November 2025**

Dear Mr Carson,

**Greyhound Racing (Offences) (Scotland) Bill**

I wanted to write following the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee's hearing with the Minister for Agriculture on 5<sup>th</sup> November as part of your scrutiny of the Greyhound Racing (Offences) (Scotland) Bill. This hearing clearly demonstrated the lack of evidence base underpinning the Government's support for the proposed Bill to ban greyhound racing. As you rightly said, the word of the Member who introduced the Bill is not appropriate evidence to support a Government position.

I was pleased to see your reference to GBGB's 2024 data which showed a record low injury rate and a fatality rate consistent with the previous year. We did, however, note the Minister's references to the Scottish Animal Welfare Commission's 2023 report as part of his evidence base, and thought your Committee may be interested to see the recent comments from one of its authors in [this recent Senedd Culture Committee hearing](#). Dr Ellie Wigham made clear that rather than finding a strong evidence base for a ban, the authors of the report found what they described as "*a distinct lack of evidence around greyhound racing*" at the time it was written.

Dr Wigham repeated during the Senedd Committee hearing that the report is now several years old and "*information might have changed*" since, particularly with regard to GBGB's long-term welfare strategy 'A Good Life for Every Greyhound'. This Strategy was introduced only shortly before the SAWC report was written. Dr Wigham noted that "*there were some aspects of the strategy that were very positive and they have taken some of the issues very seriously*" such as "*a major focus on things like veterinary care, stakeholder education and also the nutrition of dogs*".

As Dr Wigham suggested, these workstreams have progressed significantly over the past three years. I have therefore attached the latest **Progress Report on 'A Good Life for Every Greyhound'** for your reference which shows the work undertaken in many of the areas which the SAWC report references, and evidences the considerable progress which has been made since in all areas of greyhound welfare.

The Minister and his officials also noted that they felt the consultation with the industry as part of this process had been '*broad*'. To this point, while the Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB) was pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the targeted call for views on Mark Ruskell MSP's Member's Bill to ban greyhound racing, I would be grateful if you could confirm the rationale behind those contacted as part of the targeted survey. In particular, I note that those organisations which are listed as respondents to the survey are almost all publicly opposed to greyhound racing, and two such

organisations are not even based in the UK or involved in any way with British greyhound racing. I know that many GBGB-licensed greyhound trainers and greyhound owners have concerns about the Bill, as well as other related organisations in Scotland, and I would be grateful for some clarity on how these important stakeholders will be consulted as part of the Committee's consideration.

Finally, I wanted to address the Minister's comments about evidence hearings which took place previously, including those with GBGB and representatives from the greyhound industry in Scotland. Contrary to the Minister's comments, these hearings were of course not directly connected with Mr Ruskell's Bill, and instead were part of the Scottish Government's consultation on this topic and its response to a Petition to ban greyhound racing. GBGB would of course be willing to provide further evidence to the Committee as needed in direct response to Mr Ruskell's Bill as it differs from the Government's initial consultation on greyhound racing which considered licensing of the sport.

As you know, GBGB firmly believes that a ban would only jeopardise animal welfare and would do nothing to protect it. Introducing licensing, in contrast, would secure the necessary oversight to ensure the highest standards of greyhound welfare. We would urge the Committee to strongly consider the benefits of licensing compared to this Bill which has an almost non-existent evidence base.

Yours sincerely,



**Mark Bird**

CEO, Greyhound Board of Great Britain