

## Submission in support of petition PE 01758

### End greyhound racing in Scotland

30 March 2022



As an organisation working to protect and enhance the lives of all of Scotland's animals, OneKind is opposed to the exploitation of animals for human entertainment. The greyhound racing industry is a worrying example of just that.

It is hard to give a comprehensive account of our concerns due to the lack of regulation and transparency within the industry. The information that is available is mostly for Britain as a whole, so our comments reflect that. Of the two remaining tracks in Scotland, one is licensed by the Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB), meaning that it should meet their minimal requirements, but the other is unlicensed and therefore completely unregulated.

Welfare concerns for the dogs used in this industry include:

- A restricted existence that involves spending most of their time in kennels. The GBGB requirements ensure that their physical needs are at least being met (though it is questionable that a life in a kennel allows a dog to thrive), but there is evidence that these standards are not met in many cases. In the worst instances, dogs can live in dank, dirty kennels, suffer from untreated wounds and injuries, receive inadequate veterinary care, and be shouted at or roughly treated<sup>1</sup>. They may also be constantly muzzled, which is stressful for them<sup>2</sup>.
- High numbers of injuries and deaths. GBGB has only been required to publish these data since 2017. For the four years that figures are available, there were 18,345 injuries and 3361 deaths reported at licensed tracks. There is no independent validation of these data (meaning figures could potentially be even higher). The figures for Shawfield, Scotland's GBGB licensed stadium, are as follows:

	2020	2019	2018	2017
Total Runs	813	5597	5620	6791
Total Injuries	12	70	45	70
Total Euthanasia	0	5	2	8

These figures show that the injuries, as a percentage of runs, increased in the last three years, and in 2019 and 2020 were higher than the Great Britain average.

<sup>1</sup> [greyhound 2015.pdf \(dogstrust.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [greyhound report 2014 league against cruel sports.pdf](#)

Shawfield closed early in 2020 (thus the relatively low numbers for that year) due to the pandemic and has not re-opened.

- A culture of drugging dogs to enhance or impair performance (to rig races). Substances found in samples taken from dogs running at Shawfield include cocaine, amphetamine, steroids, beta blockers, and prohormones<sup>3</sup>. All of these can have harmful side effects, some severe. There is no drug testing at Thornton, Scotland's unlicensed track, raising a grave concern about the level of drug use there.
- The fate of dogs once their 'career' is over is unregulated and frequently either unacceptable or unknown. GBGB does not share microchip records allowing individual dogs to be traced. 668 of the dog deaths from 2017 – 2019 were dogs that were killed due to the cost of treatment to rehabilitate them following an injury. This lack of valuing a dog's life, after exploiting that life, is repugnant. In other cases, dogs are sold to universities for dissection or sent abroad to continue racing<sup>4</sup>. In 2006 it was discovered that one man had shot and buried more than 10,000 'surplus' greyhounds<sup>2</sup>. The fate of many is unknown.

Many dogs are rehomed, and the industry relies on the many charities who provide this service. The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee point out that: "*The decoupling of industry responsibility for greyhound's post-racing welfare means that industry demand for greyhounds does not take into consideration the cost and number of rehoming placements available in the market.*"<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, many of these dogs are relatively unhandled and not house-trained, and so may struggle to adapt to life in a home environment.

The industry has demonstrated that it has neither the willingness nor ability to self-regulate. As the petitioners point out, the decline of racing in Scotland demonstrates a lack of public support for this practice and provides an opportunity to bring it to an end rapidly and relatively easily.

The EFRA committee states that: "*Greyhounds are bred for the sole purpose of racing, that is, to provide a racing product.*"<sup>5</sup> OneKind fundamentally rejects the notion of a living animal being a 'product', and an industry that treats them as such. It is time to end greyhound racing in Scotland.

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<sup>3</sup> [Dozens of dogs doped at Scots greyhound track - The Sunday Post](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Written evidence - League Against Cruel Sports \(parliament.uk\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> Greyhound welfare Report (parliament.uk) Copy and paste link below into browser to access: [www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/commons-committees/environment-food-rural-affairs/2nd-report-greyhound-welfare.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/commons-committees/environment-food-rural-affairs/2nd-report-greyhound-welfare.pdf)