

CHARITIES CALL FOR END TO GREYHOUND RACING IN THE UK

Three of the UK's largest animal welfare organisations call for greyhound racing to come to an end as soon as possible to put a stop to the unnecessary and completely preventable deaths of thousands of dogs every year in the UK.



We the **RSPCA** along with **Dogs Trust** and **Blue Cross** have, as part of the Greyhound Forum, worked with the greyhound racing industry for many years to try to improve conditions for the dogs involved in the sport. While this has led to some improvements, we all believe there are still significant welfare issues for racing greyhounds which have not been resolved and cannot be resolved. Greyhound racing is inherently dangerous for the dogs involved. Running at speed around oval tracks causes significant injury to many dogs, and in some cases, the injuries are so severe that it is necessary to euthanise the dog. The **Greyhound Board of Great Britain** (GBGB) is the self-regulating organisation that governs licensed greyhound racing in Great Britain. Data from GBGB show that over **2,000 greyhounds died and nearly 18,000 injuries were recorded from greyhound racing between 2018 and 2021**, with additional dogs injured on independent tracks. Comprehensive internal reviews conducted by us, as well as Dogs Trust and Blue Cross, highlighted serious concerns at every stage of a racing greyhound's life including issues around inadequate welfare standards in kennelling and transporting the dogs. Some of the dogs used in racing are kept in poor, barren conditions, with little if any enrichment and fed a poor diet. The reviews also highlighted concerns around the general health of the dogs including the number and severity of injuries sustained during racing. There are also serious issues around the racing of greyhounds in extreme weather and the number of puppies that are unaccounted for between birth and racing registrations, so often referred to by the sector as the "wastage". The reviews also found there to be disjointed and ineffective regulation within the sector, a lack of transparency regarding industry practices, and additional concerns around the enforcement of regulatory standards. All three organisations also believe that the absence of a sustainable and consistent source of income for the industry has grossly impacted any meaningful change for the dogs involved. However, even if the considerable finances needed to continue were made available, a complete overhaul of the sport is necessary to ensure it is compatible with good welfare. We've now joined forces with Dogs Trust and Blue Cross and want to see an end to greyhound racing announced as soon as possible, and expect the phase-out to be feasible within five years to allow the racing industry and animal welfare organisations to carefully plan and coordinate the care of the many dogs affected. In 2021 there were in excess of 18,000 licensed greyhounds eligible to race in GBGB races, with additional greyhounds racing on the independent tracks. In some parts of the UK, such as in Wales where there is just one track, it is expected that the phase-out period needed will be significantly shorter. **Owen Sharp, Dogs Trust Chief Executive:** "We've worked closely with the greyhound industry for many years to try to improve welfare conditions for the dogs, but progress has not been made quickly enough, or on a big enough scale. It is simply not acceptable that at least 2,000 greyhounds died over the last four years, with close to 18,000 injuries, all in the name of entertainment. We're fully committed to the welfare of all greyhounds affected by our call for a phased end to the sport. We'll continue to work collaboratively with the industry and other stakeholders to ensure the welfare of dogs is not compromised while working towards this". **Chris Sherwood, Chief Executive of RSPCA:** "It's shocking that more than one dog a day is dying due to racing which our review has determined is inherently unsafe and compromises their welfare at almost every stage of their lives; it simply isn't acceptable. We've tried to work with the industry over the years to bring in better protection and improve welfare for the dogs but we're not satisfied that enough progress has been made. We feel that now, moving forwards, the only way we can secure good lives for these dogs is to call for the sport to be phased out and we want to see greyhound racing consigned to the past". **Chris Burghes, Chief Executive of Blue Cross:** "The consequences for dogs involved in greyhound racing are so serious, and progress in improving welfare standards is so slow, despite sustained and repeated attempts by the animal welfare sector to instigate change. We need an end to this 'sport'. With injuries and death rife on and off the track, there can be no justification given for exploiting these animals and we appeal for government to take urgent action. We're committed to working with and advising the industry and government as to the fastest, most efficient way to bring greyhound racing to an end, whilst giving the highest priority to the dogs and their welfare during this time. You can show your support for a phased end to greyhound racing across social media by using'. **#cutthechase**.

