



## **Greyhound Racing Consultation: Ban Greyhound Racing in Wales**

### **Senedd Petitions Committee 2022.**

Dogs Trust and the RSPCA welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation on a petition seeking to ban greyhound racing in Wales. Both organisations have worked on the issue of greyhound welfare for a number of years and we have raised areas of concern during this time. As well as being part of the International Greyhound Forum, we are also a member of the UK Greyhound Forum which seeks to engage with the greyhound industry to encourage improvements to animal welfare for these animals and ensure that greyhound welfare is adequately safeguarded.

In light of our concerns about racing greyhound welfare, we have jointly commissioned an independent review which will allow us to take an evidence-based position. We have provided responses to the best of our ability and without pre-empting any potential policy changes.

#### **1. What is your response to the petition?**

Animal welfare organisations have long been raising concerns about racing greyhounds in Wales and so we are not surprised to see a petition of this nature.

In Wales, there are no greyhound specific regulatory instruments with only the Animal Welfare Act (2006) and the statutory Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs offering legal protection. Given this, and as the Valley Racetrack is independent, we welcome discussions around how best to protect racing greyhound welfare.

#### **2. From a dog welfare perspective, what impact would a ban on greyhound racing in Wales have?**

It should be noted that there is limited data available specific to the welfare of dogs raced in Wales although much which exists has been provided to the petitions committee in earlier evidence by a number of animal welfare organisations. This was in relation to current concerns about the sourcing of dogs for the Valley racetrack, injuries sustained during racing and life after the dogs' racing career has ended ([Transcript available here](#)). Globally, there is also well documented information about the welfare of Greyhounds which apply across all of their life stages.

If a ban were to be implemented, consideration needs to be given as to how to rehome the dogs currently racing in Wales and also those who are in the system. This will include dogs outside of Wales and at various different stages of the greyhound career path. For example, dogs who have been bred to race in Wales as well as those being reared or just entering schooling or trialing. There is, though, a lack of information to quantify the number of dogs likely to be affected. It is important this number is quantified as it would impact the implementation timeline if a ban were introduced to ensure that every dog is cared for.

### **3. What other impacts – social, economic, etc – might it have?**

A ban will impact the trainers, those employed by and associated with running the track and the betting industry. However, we don't have figures to quantify this impact.

The overall trend of attendance at greyhound racing is one of decline (Indecon, 2019) but again, we don't have data to quantify the impact of a ban on those who attend greyhound racing in Wales.

### **4. Are there actions short of an outright ban on greyhound racing, eg regulation, which would make a difference?**

Actions which have the potential to improve welfare specifically during racing in Wales include veterinary and local authority attendance at each race meet. However, in order to ensure that each and every racing greyhound in Wales can experience at least a life worth living, their welfare must be considered at each stage of their life cycle e.g. breeding, rearing, schooling and trialling, with appropriate actions taken. Actions taken would need to be considered to ensure they would provide adequate levels of welfare. These aspects will be considered as part of the independent review we have commissioned on greyhound welfare.

References:

- [Indecon \(2019\). Indecon Independent Strategic Review of Irish Greyhound Racing Stadia to Underpin a Viable Long Term Sustainable Industry.](#)