

PGRWB 28 Battersea Dogs & Cats Home

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

[Pwyllgor Diwylliant, Cyfathrebu, y Gymraeg, Chwaraeon, a Chysylltiadau Rhyngwladol](#) | [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee](#)

[Bil Gwahardd Rasio Milgwn \(Cymru\) | Prohibition of Greyhound Racing \(Wales\) Bill](#)

Ymateb gan | Response from: Battersea Dogs & Cats Home

1. What are your views on the general principles of the Bill, and whether there is a need for legislation to deliver the stated policy intention?

The stated intent of the policy was to ban the act of Greyhound racing in Wales, this would require legislative change, as highlighted in the Welsh Government's Explanatory Memorandum. However as highlighted in our responses to further questions we have several concerns and questions on specific aspects of the Bill. The intention of the Bill is clear, and Battersea's sole concern remains the welfare of the Greyhounds involved in racing as the legislation prior to, during and after implementation.

2. What are your views on the terms used in the Bill, whether defined or not? In particular, are they workable and will they deliver the stated policy intention?

Battersea would welcome further clarity on how the Bill intends to stop all types of Greyhound racing. For example the Bill interprets Greyhound racing as "...running around a track in pursuit of a lure activated by mechanical means...". Whilst this will stop organised racing, it would not necessarily stop impromptu racing in a field around a temporary track with a different type of lure. If the intention is to stop all Greyhound racing, then we would suggest the Bill looks beyond that which is currently undertaken in Wales, and looks to consider preventing lower welfare alternative forms of racing.

Similarly, clarity would be welcome as to why the Bill is targeted at operators of a stadium or organisers of events, and does not include participants. If the aim is to disincentivise the activity, then everyone who undertakes the activity should be prohibited from doing so. For example, after the ban there may be cases of greyhound racing taking place under the guise of exercising the dogs. If this does not take place at a stadium, it will potentially be difficult for enforcers to identify

who organised the event, and therefore no available enforcement for a prohibited activity. It is further hard to argue after all that it should be legal to attend or gamble on an activity that is illegal to carry out in Wales.

3. What are your views on the provisions set out in sections 1 – 3 and Schedule 1 of the Bill -Prohibition of Greyhound Racing? In particular, are the provisions workable and will they deliver the stated policy intention?

3. As highlighted in our response to question 2, Battersea would welcome clarity as to why individuals undertaking greyhound racing are not included in Paragraph 1 (1) of persons committing an offence. Whilst it is important under the Animal Welfare Act that Greyhounds are properly exercised, there needs to be a distinction between what constitutes exercise and a race meet, to ensure that this does not create a loophole in the legislation.

Whilst the potential use of an unlimited fine is welcome, Battersea is concerned that no mention of links to other enforcement provisions are not mentioned. For example, in cases where animal welfare has been compromised a fine may not be appropriate, instead the enforcer should instead consider if prosecution through the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act 2021¹ and Animal Welfare Act 2006.² Similarly, there will need to be robust guidance on the use of the unlimited fines.

4. What are your views on the provisions set out in section 4 and Schedule 2 of the Bill - Enforcement? In particular, are the provisions workable and will they deliver the stated policy intention?

The Bill itself provides in Battersea's view a robust description of enforcers' powers of enforcement. However, there is no mention of burden of proof for prosecution, or what is considered suitable evidence. Whilst this shouldn't be on the face of the Bill, there is little information provided in the Explanatory Memorandum. Battersea is similarly concerned that there does not appear to be any planned provisions for training of enforcers on their new powers under the Bill. This will be important, and potentially carry financial cost.

In the Explanatory Memorandum in chapter 8, the impact on Local Authorities, it only appears to discuss impacts to Caerphilly County Borough Council, where the current Valley track is located. This does not guarantee that all trainers working and racing at the track are based in that Council area. However, the ban would

¹ [Animal Welfare \(Sentencing\) Act 2021](#)

² [Animal Welfare Act 2006](#)

extend to all of Wales, therefore there will be an impact on all Local Authorities as they will have a duty to take any action against illegal activity, either at a stadium or not.

5. What are your views on the provisions set out in sections 5- 6 of the Bill – General? In particular, are the provisions workable and will they deliver the stated policy intention?

Battersea is concerned over the significant timescale in Section 5. With only one track, and an implementation group already working, it is unclear why a maximum of three years will be needed for the Bill to come into force. It will be critical once the Bill is enacted for a clear timeline for the ban to be brought into force. To ensure that the welfare of Greyhounds is safeguarded through the process it is critical to have a clear timetable, to ensure the safe rehoming of Greyhounds from the track.

There is sufficient rehoming capacity to rehome all of the Greyhound currently racing, through the Welsh Greyhound Rehoming Partnership, of which Battersea is a member. This partnership was set up following the announcement of a ban, to ensure capacity. Since the announcement and the beginning of August this year members of this partnership have facilitated the rehoming of 52 Greyhounds who had their last race at or were located at Valley stadium, however, the true number who have raced at Valley may be higher. It is also likely that without a timetable these dogs have been replaced, and other dogs may now have been recruited into racing.

6. What are the potential barriers to the implementation of the Bill’s provisions and how does the Bill take account of them?

As highlighted in the previous question, clear timelines for the implementation of the Bill are needed to ensure Greyhound welfare. From the rehoming perspective this is to ensure that organisations such as Battersea can allocate rehoming provisions to Greyhounds, which will potentially not all be rehomed to owners in Wales.

In Chapter 8 of the Explanatory Memorandum (8.56) it is highlighted that not all rehoming organisations are able to receive the bond from the Greyhound Retirement Scheme, if they are in favour of a ban. Although this is technically out of scope of the Bill, Battersea would advocate that the bond is made available to all organisations that are aiding in the rehoming of Greyhounds from the GBGB track, as this will help them with the associated increase in costs.

7. How appropriate are the powers in the Bill for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation, as set out in Chapter 5 of Part 1 of the Explanatory Memorandum)?

Battersea does not take a view on this question.

8. Are there any unintended consequences likely to arise from the Bill?

Battersea does not take a view on this question.

9. What are your views on the Welsh Government's assessment of the financial implications of the Bill, as set out in Part 2 of the Explanatory Memorandum?

Battersea does not take a view on the economic impacts of the Bill.

10. Are there any other issues you would like to raise about the Bill and the Explanatory Memorandum or any related matters?

Battersea would highlight point 8.47 in the Explanatory Memorandum, where it is raised that with the prohibition of Greyhound racing in Wales there would be a gradual decline in the requirement for Greyhound rehoming. This is unlikely to happen given Greyhound racing will continue in England with an estimate 10,000 dogs involved in the sport.³ Indeed, with no sister legislation planned in England it is possible that the overall amount of racing will hardly diminish if more racing takes place in England. This is coupled with the fact that for the last two years, over 1,500 dogs per year⁴ have been retained by the owner, potentially awaiting a rehoming place.

³ [Greyhound+Forum+160625+-+Summary.pdf](#)

⁴ [2018-2024-Injury-Retirement-Summary-FINAL.pdf](#)
