

PGRWB 29 League Against Cruel Sports

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: Y Gynghair yn Erbyn Chwaraeon Creulon | Response from: League Against Cruel Sports

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 League Against Cruel Sports welcomes the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee consultation on the Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill.

The League has long campaigned for a ban on greyhound racing and consistently highlighted the harm inflicted on greyhounds by the industry. As early as 2014, our report [“*The State of Greyhound Racing in Great Britain: A Mandate for Change*”](#) uncovered deeply concerning issues, including poorly maintained tracks, excessive racing schedules leading to serious injuries such as broken backs and limbs, the abandonment of unwanted dogs, and, tragically, cases of greyhounds being killed.

In addition, the Welsh Government’s consultation on the licensing of animal welfare establishments, activities and exhibits, including greyhound racing, demonstrated strong public support for ending the practice. [Almost two-thirds \(64.69%\) of respondents](#) favoured either a phased or an immediate ban on greyhound racing. Of the **1,180 total responses**, **292** came from League Against Cruel Sports supporters, with **234** of those responses originating from people in Wales. This clearly highlights how strongly the Welsh public cares about preventing needless suffering, injuries, and deaths of greyhounds.

The League fully supports the Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill and its overall intent to prohibit the commercial racing, training, and trialling of greyhounds at stadiums and similar venues in Wales. This is a particularly positive

step, as it not only addresses commercial racing but also prevents dogs from being schooled or trialled in Wales for use in races elsewhere.

There are several key areas where we believe the legislation should go further to ensure it achieves its aims effectively and without unintended consequences.

Timescale for Implementation

The League strongly supports the position of the *Cut the Chase* Coalition and other animal welfare organisations preparing to rehome affected dogs, in calling for greyhound racing in Wales to be ended **within 12 months of the legislation coming into force**.

In its current form, the Bill could allow greyhound racing to continue until 2030, which is far too long. Each additional year that racing remains legal will result in more dogs being bred, raced, injured, and killed. A drawn-out transition period of up to four years would also enable the replenishment of racing stocks, putting even more animals at risk and placing further strain on rescue and rehoming organisations.

Evidence from both Wales and abroad shows that the longer a phase-out period is allowed, the greater the welfare risks become:

- Alarming, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals New Zealand (SPCA) expressed concern that in the penultimate year of racing (2024 – 2025) before the ban takes effect, injuries to greyhounds rose sharply: more than 800 dogs were injured, including 114 broken bones, and 17 deaths. This demonstrates that racing can often intensify when under threat, and swift implementation is therefore important to prevent similar outcomes.
- To illustrate this point, Wales's last remaining track, Valley Greyhound Stadium, has already indicated plans to increase the number of race days. This could heighten risks to greyhounds as the volume of races and betting opportunities rise in the lead-up to the end of racing.

By contrast, experience shows that track closures can be delivered effectively within shorter periods. For example, the Swindon Abbey Stadium closure in England is set to complete a full wind-down within nine months of its closure announcement in March 2025.

The Wales Greyhound Partnership (WGP) was established shortly after the ban was announced in February and brings together nine animal welfare organisations, including members of the *Cut the Chase* Coalition. The partnership currently has the capacity to rehabilitate and rehome up to 258 dogs, with an

average rehoming time of just two months. Since its formation, 120 greyhounds have already been successfully rehomed, clearly demonstrating that it is both realistic and achievable to rehome dogs affected by the ban within a much shorter timeframe than that currently provided for in the legislation.

The passing of the Bill in 2026 could see racing end in Wales by 1 of April 2027. A clear and firm end date would give both the industry and the rehoming sector the certainty they need to prepare for rehoming responsibly, while ensuring dogs are not exposed to further harm.

Strengthening Enforcement and Preventing Unintended Consequences

The League welcomes the Bill's proposal for unlimited fines, which would give magistrates the appropriate and necessary flexibility to impose meaningful penalties that act as a genuine deterrent against illegal racing and minimise the risk of repeat offences.

The proposed legislation currently covers the operator or track/similar venue and any persons involved in organising greyhound racing. This risks leaving key individuals who are responsible for greyhounds taking part in racing, outside the scope of enforcement. To mitigate any unintended consequences that could arise such as the facilitation of illegal/underground racing, we feel it is important that the legislation is applicable to individuals, including trainers and owners, of any greyhound raced or trialled in Wales, as well as track operators/owners.

As currently drafted, the Bill defines greyhound racing as dogs running around a track in pursuit of a mechanical lure. However, the meaning of "*track*" is not defined. Whilst it is understandable that the Welsh Government wishes to avoid inadvertently capturing everyday dog exercise or activities such as fun runs at agricultural shows, the lack of a clear definition creates the potential for loopholes. For example, it could allow straight-track racing to continue legally.

Running around oval-shaped tracks and negotiating bends at speeds of up to 40 miles per hour is inherently dangerous for greyhounds. However, other factors such as the starting box, the lure mechanism, and the quality of track preparation and maintenance also all contribute to the likelihood of serious injury. This is why clear definitions are essential to prevent loopholes that allow dangerous commercial racing to continue.

Clear definitions, appropriate enforcement, and robust penalties are all crucial to ensure that this legislation achieves its purpose and that no opportunities remain for greyhound racing to continue in a way that puts greyhounds at risk of injury.

Conclusion

The Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill marks a pivotal moment for animal welfare in Wales. By ensuring the ban is fully implemented within 12 months of the Act coming into force, Wales can lead the UK in ending this outdated and inhumane industry. As seen in New Zealand, when change is needed, people and organisations come together to make it happen – Wales can do the same. We urge the Committee to recommend strengthening the Bill to ensure a swift and effective transition away from greyhound racing that prioritises the welfare, safety, and future of every greyhound affected.
