

Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill

Bill Summary

October 2025



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This briefing provides background information on greyhound racing in Great Britain and the development of Welsh policy. It summarises the provisions of the Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill.



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1. Introduction

The Welsh Government introduced the **Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill** to the Senedd on 29 September 2025.

If enacted, the Bill will make it an offence to operate a stadium (or similar venue) for greyhound racing in Wales. It will also be an offence to be involved in organising greyhound racing in Wales. “Greyhound racing” is defined as setting greyhounds to run around a track in pursuit of a lure activated by mechanical means. This includes timing or training a greyhound as it runs around a track.

The **Explanatory Memorandum** (EM) sets out the Welsh Government’s rationale for the ban, which is based on animal welfare and ethical grounds:

There is significant stakeholder and public support for a ban on greyhound racing, driven by concerns over animal welfare. Many believe that ending the practice is necessary to protect greyhounds from harm, exploitation, and commodification. Welfare concerns cited by stakeholders include the rate of injury and fatality, euthanasia, overbreeding, and inadequate provisions for post-racing care and retirement.

Beyond welfare issues, a moral argument is also brought forward for a ban, reflecting society’s evolving values around the ethical treatment of animals and the diminishing social licence for industries that are perceived as relying on animal suffering for entertainment. As a consequence to this, it is seen as increasingly difficult to justify exposing greyhounds to harm through racing.

2. Background

The prevalence of greyhound racing

Wales is one of 10 countries worldwide where commercial greyhound racing remains legal, the others being England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Vietnam and the USA. However, bans are in place in many US states, the Australian Capital Territory and a ban is planned in New Zealand.

Greyhound racing in Great Britain is predominantly operated on a commercial basis under the auspices of the **Greyhound Board of Great Britain** (GBGB). The **GBGB website lists** “19 GBGB licensed stadia across the country”, 18 in England and one in Wales.

Historically, racing has also taken place on independent, so called “**flapping tracks**” - amateur venues where racing is conducted on a relatively informal basis. They are not subject to GBGB animal welfare standards. **Thornton Stadium in Scotland** is the last flapping track in Great Britain.

Wales has one operational greyhound track – the **Valley Greyhound Stadium** in Ystrad Mynach, which is a GBGB regulated track. The EM to the Bill indicates that this opened in 1976. It operated as a flapping track until 2023 when it became a member of GBGB.

In addition to the track, the EM says:

It is our understanding that there are currently 10 greyhound trainers based in Wales who are licensed with GBGB. These trainers predominantly race their greyhounds at Valley. In total, 12 trainers, two of which are located outside of Wales, are affiliated with the stadium, with a reported 265 greyhounds eligible to race at Valley.

Regulation of greyhound racing in Great Britain

In Wales, there is no specific legislation covering the welfare of racing greyhounds. Instead, their welfare falls under the scope of wider animal welfare legislation – particularly the **Animal Welfare Act 2006** (the 2006 Act) which applies to England and Wales.

Although non-statutory, the Welsh Government also endorses the **Voluntary Code of Practice; The Welfare of Racing Greyhounds (Wales)** produced by the **Animal Welfare Network Wales**.

The position in Scotland is similar to Wales with no specific legislation governing dog racing. Greyhounds are covered by general animal welfare legislation, particularly the **Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006**.

Additional legislation applies in England, where **the Welfare of Racing Greyhounds Regulations 2010** have been made under the 2006 Act. These provide that all operators of greyhound racing tracks must obtain a licence, to protect the greyhounds’ welfare.

The Greyhound Board of Great Britain

The Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB) is the “regulator for licensed

greyhound racing in Great Britain”. It is subject to self-regulation under the **UK Accreditation Services** (UKAS).

GBGB regulates greyhound racing at stadia through **licensing arrangements** which cover a range of areas including: **racecourses; veterinary surgeons;** and **trainers and kennel staff Greyhounds** and **greyhound owners**. must be registered.

The GBGB has established a range of **policies and procedures**, and requires compliance with its **rules of racing**. It operates welfare schemes, such as the **Greyhound Retirement Scheme** and **Injury Recovery Scheme**. It published its “long-term welfare strategy”, **A Good Life for Every Greyhound**, in 2022.

The development of Welsh policy

The Welsh Government’s **June 2021 Programme for Government (PfG) Update** for the Sixth Senedd did not include reference to banning greyhound racing, or specifically to increasing its regulation. However, it did include **a commitment to** develop “a national model for regulation of animal welfare”.

The **Animal Welfare Plan for Wales 2021 to 2026**, published in November 2021, proposed to consult on “the licensing of activities involving animals, potentially including...greyhound racing”.

Calls for a ban

In March 2022, prior to GBGB licensing of the Valley Stadium, the Senedd’s Petitions Committee began consideration of **a petition calling for a ban on greyhound racing in Wales** based on animal welfare concerns. The petition, submitted by Hope Rescue, gathered 35,101 signatures, 18,707 of which were from Wales.

After taking evidence supporting and opposing a ban it published its report, **The Final Bend**, in December 2022.

The Committee’s “majority conclusion” supported calls for a ban. One member had concerns about doing so. The Committee recommended:

- prioritisation of licensing of greyhound racing as part of the Welsh Government’s Animal Welfare Plan;

- “a phased ban,” which was supported by “a majority of members”;
- a need to “consider the whole life of dogs” and their conditions before and after racing, including those travelling through Wales to race;
- a need to ensure any changes are subject to “widespread consultation”, and that advice on compliance with any changes is provided to those in the industry; and
- in considering a ban, “the Welsh Government should also look at other sports where animals compete”.

The **Welsh Government accepted** “in principle” the majority recommendation to introduce a phased ban on racing. It committed to include questions on both a ban and a licensing option in its planned consultation on licensing animal activities. The remaining recommendations were accepted, with the exception of the recommendation to consider other “sports where animals compete” which was rejected.

The Committee’s report was **debated in Plenary** on 8 March 2023.

Counter petition in support of greyhound racing in Wales

A counter petition calling on the Welsh Government to support greyhound racing received 10,601 signatures, 2,948 of which **were from within Wales**. It was first considered by the Committee in September 2023.

The Committee **closed both petitions** in March 2025 following the announcement of the Welsh Government’s plan to ban greyhound racing (see below).

Consultation on licensing animal activities and moves to a ban

In November 2023 the Welsh Government opened a consultation on **licensing of animal welfare establishments, activities and exhibits**. This included two questions on greyhound racing:

- Question 4 asked “whether owners and/or keepers or trainers of racing dogs (including greyhounds) should be subject to licensing”; and

- Question 5 asked respondents “to submit evidence to justify or negate consideration of a phased ban on greyhound racing in future”.

The Welsh Government published the **summary of responses in** December 2024. On the question of licensing, 55.5% of respondents were in favour and 40.6% against. A majority of those not in favour were not supportive of the industry.

On the question of a ban, 64.7% were in favour of a phased ban, 25.1% against (of these 1.5% supported an immediate ban).

The EM highlights that welfare concerns, “exploitation of greyhounds” and “poor post racing career outcomes” were commonly cited by those supporting a ban. Those opposing a ban generally cited “economic and cultural impact”.

On 18 February 2025, the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, Huw Irranca-Davies MS (the Cabinet Secretary), **announced plans** to ban greyhound racing in Wales. The decision **formed part of an agreement with** Jane Dodds MS to secure the passage of Welsh Government’s 2025-26 budget.

The **Welsh Government then published its response** to the consultation in June 2025.

On 11 July the **Cabinet Secretary announced** establishment of an “implementation group to guide the transition towards a ban on greyhound racing in Wales”. He said the group will represent “a broad spectrum of the greyhound racing industry, animal health and welfare, and social and community sectors”.

On 16 May **the GBGB announced** that a judicial review of the decision to ban greyhound racing had been lodged with support from a range of industry bodies.

Scotland and England

A 2019 petition submitted to the Scottish Parliament calling for an end to greyhound racing in Scotland, has gathered over 29,000 signatures to date. The petition **has been considered by the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee**.

To support this work, the Scottish Animal Welfare Commission (SAWC) published a report on the **welfare of greyhounds used for racing in Scotland**, which

considered all aspects of the dogs' lives. The SAWC report was met by **a response from the GBCB** challenging elements of its content.

In November 2024, the Rural Affairs Committee published an **interim report on the Petition**. This reported comments from the Scottish Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity that the Scottish Government “is not persuaded of the need to ban greyhound racing in Scotland”.

In February 2024, Mark Ruskell MSP secured the right to **introduce a Members' Bill** banning greyhound racing to the Scottish Parliament. The **Greyhound Racing (Offences) (Scotland) Bill** was introduced in April 2025. If passed, it will make it illegal for someone who owns, or is responsible for, a greyhound or a racetrack, to race, or allow the racing of, a greyhound on an oval racetrack in Scotland.

The Scottish Government **wrote to the Convenor** of the Scottish Parliament's Rural Affairs Committee on 29 August to say that it will support the general principles of the Bill.

On 27 February 2025, following the announcement of Welsh plans for a ban, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, the Rt Hon Lisa Nandy MP, **told the UK Parliament** with regard to calls for a ban in England:

We have absolutely no plans whatsoever to ban greyhound racing. We appreciate the joy it brings to many, many people in our country and the economic contribution it makes.

3. The Bill

Summary of provisions

Section 1 introduces two new offences which prohibit:

- an operator of a stadium or a similar venue in Wales from using it, or knowingly permitting it to be used, for greyhound racing; and
- a person from being involved in organising greyhound racing in Wales (the Explanatory Notes state this is whether at a stadium or similar venue, or anywhere else, for example on open land).

A person guilty of these offences is liable on summary conviction to a fine (which the Bill does not cap).

Section 2 defines the terms ‘greyhound racing’ and ‘operator’.

Section 3 introduces Schedule 1 to the Bill, which makes provision about offences under section 1 committed by certain bodies.

Section 4 introduces Schedule 2 to the Bill, which makes provision about enforcing the offences under section 1.

Section 5 sets out when each provision of the Bill comes into force. The greyhound racing ban would come into force no sooner than 1 April 2027 and no later than 1 April 2030.

Section 6 provides the short title, which is the “Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Act 2026”, or “Deddf Gwahardd Rasio Milgwn (Cymru) 2026”.

Schedules:

Schedule 1 makes provision about offences under section 1:

- **Paragraph 1** sets out that certain individuals can be held criminally liable for the offence in section 1 where the offence is committed by certain bodies (a body corporate; a partnership; or an unincorporated association other than a partnership). For example, a director of a company could also be criminally liable for the offence where the company committed the offence.
- **Paragraph 2** sets out how proceedings are to be brought against a partnership or an unincorporated association where they are alleged to have committed an offence under section 1.

Schedule 2 makes provision about powers of enforcement:

- **Paragraph 1** provides interpretation of the terms ‘inspector’ (appointed by the Welsh Ministers or by county, or county borough, councils in Wales to enforce the offences in section 1), ‘power of entry’ and ‘premises’.
- **Paragraph 2** gives inspectors a power to enter premises that are not dwellings, where there are grounds for suspecting that an offence under section 1 is being, has been or is about to be committed, or that evidence may be found that an offence is being, has been or is about to be committed.
- **Paragraph 3** gives inspectors a power to enter dwellings. The inspector can only use this power if the occupier or person in charge of the premises consents, or the inspector obtains a warrant from a Justice of the Peace.

- **Paragraph 4** provides that such a warrant authorises entry on one occasion only and must be used within 28 days beginning with the date it was issued.
- **Paragraph 5, 6, 7 and 8** make further provision about the powers of entering premises. This includes that an inspector may take other appropriate persons onto the premises.
- **Paragraph 9** describes the powers of inspection, search and seizure available to an inspector when exercising a power of entry.
- **Paragraph 10** provides that a person brought onto the premises by the inspector may use the inspector's powers under paragraph 9, provided they are under the inspector's supervision.
- **Paragraph 11** makes additional provision about the power of seizure.
- **Paragraph 12** provides that a person commits an offence if they fail to comply with an inspector's request for assistance or intentionally obstructs an inspector. An offence under this paragraph is triable in the Magistrates' Court, which may impose a fine (which is not capped by the Bill) if the person is found guilty.
- **Paragraph 13** protects inspectors and people taken onto premises by inspectors from civil or criminal liability for anything done as a result of carrying out their duties. The court must be satisfied that the act was done in good faith and that there were reasonable grounds for doing it.