

Greyhound Racing Ban Implementation Group

First Report



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Background

The non-statutory Implementation Group (“the Group”) was established in July 2025 by the former Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, Huw Irranca-Davies MS.

Membership of the Group

The Implementation Group is made up of dedicated individuals, representing a broad spectrum of the industry, animal health and welfare, and social and community sectors:

- **Dr Emily Blackwell** (Chair) (Associate Professor in Companion Animal Behaviour & Welfare, Bristol Veterinary School)
- **Allan Dallimore** (Caerphilly County Borough Council)
- **Dr Sam Gaines** (RSPCA & Cut the Chase Coalition)
- **Dr Sarah Carr** (Veterinary surgeon and Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group)
- **Gareth Walters** (Welsh Local Government Association)
- **Katie Bennison** (Valley Greyhound Stadium)
- **Professor Tim Parkin** (Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons)
- **Richard Brankley** (Sports Information Services (SIS) Ltd) representative
- **Scott Fryer** (Battersea Dogs and Cats Home)
- **Vanessa Waddon** (Hope Rescue & Cut the Chase Coalition)

Aims and objectives of the group

The Group supports the effective implementation of a ban on greyhound racing in Wales. To achieve this the group provides strategic advice and practical guidance to the Welsh Ministers, as officials oversee the transition away from greyhound racing. They do this with the welfare of dogs as a priority throughout the transition, whilst mitigating the impacts on the local community and economy.

Objectives

The Group will ensure all perspectives are considered in the implementation of the ban. They will achieve this by providing information and practical advice to the Welsh Ministers to fulfil the following objectives:

- Protect the welfare of those racing dogs currently in the industry and during the implementation of the ban.
- Protect the potential increased pressure on the rescue sector brought about by a ban.
- Setting out the best practice for the transition, by considering approaches of similar proposals and bans in other countries.
- Offer potential practical solutions to mitigate the social and economic impacts of the consequences of a greyhound racing ban and suggest potential practical solutions to address these issues.
- Assist and support the transition of the industry owners and workers away from greyhound racing. Further actions for the Group, the details of which will be agreed in due course, include:
 - Identifying a critical path and timeline for the implementation of a ban.
 - Advising through the stages of implementation.
 - Supporting the Welsh Government to engage stakeholders and communities.

Meetings and issues arising

The Group met monthly in July, August, September, October, November and December 2025 and January, February, March and June 2026.

At the inaugural meeting held in July 2025, members of the group agreed the Terms of Reference and developed a priorities document to provide an agreed record of the potential issues that could arise as a result of a ban on greyhound racing being introduced in Wales. The document was intended to capture those matters that had been identified, discussed, and formally endorsed by members of the Group, throughout the lifetime of the group.

Five principal priority areas were determined: the welfare of the dogs; enforcement considerations; the economic impact on the local area; the social impact on the local area; and the cultural impact of a ban on greyhound racing in Wales. A summary of the discussions relating to each of these topics is presented under the corresponding objectives below.

Objective 1: Protect the welfare of those racing dogs currently in the industry and during the implementation of the ban.

As the welfare of the dogs was identified as a priority, initial discussions focused on the outcomes of the dogs affected by a ban which included rehoming of the dogs currently racing at the Valley track, Wales's only active greyhound track.

Obtaining accurate information about the number of dogs likely to be affected by a ban on

greyhound racing in Wales was considered a priority. Figures from the Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB) indicate that there are 364 dogs currently registered with the Valley track (n.b. this number does fluctuate and higher figures have been estimated by the Cut the Chase Coalition). To ascertain the number of greyhounds likely to continue to race outside of Wales when a ban comes into place, and the medical status of those dogs requiring rehoming, researchers at University of Bristol Veterinary School (BVS) have launched a survey of the eighteen trainers currently registered to race dogs at the Valley track. Findings will be included in the next Group report.

Objective 2: Protect the potential increased pressure on the rescue sector brought about by a ban.

To examine the potential increased pressure on the rehoming sector as a result of the ban, the Group requested formal plans outlining how the large number of dogs affected by a ban would be rehomed. Evidence has been provided to the Group by Battersea Dogs and Cats Home and the Cut the Chase Coalition (Blue Cross, Dogs Trust, Greyhound Rescue Wales, Hope Rescue and the RSPCA) on behalf of the Welsh Greyhound Partnership Group, comprising nine members, which was formed in March 2025 to help manage dogs affected by the Welsh Government's announcement to prohibit racing. The information provided supports the assertion that the rehoming of all Greyhounds currently racing at the only Greyhound racing track in Wales, the Valley track, could be achieved by the existing network of rehoming organisations working collaboratively, without any lead time.

However, given the estimated number of dogs involved in racing in Wales throughout 2025 and an average rehoming kennel stay of two months, to facilitate a phased end to racing, it is recommended that a twelve-month period be allowed, to enable a more practical and welfare-focussed rehoming timetable (see Recommendation 1). However, this view was not shared by all members of the group. Owing to the practical considerations of the business operation, Katie Bennison considered a gradual "winding down" of racing to be impractical. Instead, she proposed that a specific commencement date should be set after which racing would cease entirely. The exact date would need to be agreed, but it should be no earlier than one year after the Bill has received Royal Assent, rather than implementing a phased withdrawal of racing.

Rehoming time for greyhounds was reported to be slightly longer than average, with Association of Dogs and Cats Homes (ADCH) members reporting an average length of stay of between 71 and 87 days. Taking into account the longer stay in kennels, the cost of rehoming was calculated as between £2,200 - £2,800 per dog. Although the rehoming organisations have agreed to cover the costs of rehoming if necessary, with no ask to the Welsh Government, it would help alleviate these costs if they received the GBGB retirement bond for each dog they rehome. GBGB have been asked by the Group whether they would be willing to pay the £420 retirement bond to all eligible rehoming organisations (to be used towards costs associated with a greyhound's stay in the homing centre until a permanent home can be found) (see **Recommendation 2**).

The longer stay in rehoming kennels for ex-racing greyhounds was associated with both the delayed neutering of females due to the ending of oestrus suppression and the lack of medical records for the dogs, in particular their vaccination history. An estimate of the number of dogs affected by this will be determined by the BVS trainer survey. To facilitate

the rehoming process, the rehoming organisations require veterinary histories for the dogs (see Recommendation 3). Continued oestrus suppression would shorten the period before spaying for entire female greyhounds by at least three months, however the long-term effects of this are unknown and this should therefore be decided on a case-by-case basis.

To protect the welfare of the dogs during rehoming, it was agreed that welfare-compatible requirements should be specified for, and adopted by, any organisation involved with rehoming the dogs. For example, membership of ADCH or an organisation specialising in greyhound rehoming. To safeguard the welfare of the dogs being rehomed, the Group recommends that there should be independent monitoring of the welfare standards of organisations involved in the rehoming process (see Recommendation 4). To expedite the rehoming process the Group also recommend that a bespoke campaign is launched to maximise rehoming opportunities and minimize length of stay, underpinned with evidence-based guidance about ex-racing greyhounds (see **Recommendation 5**).

There is a need to understand the cross-border impact on the welfare of dogs arising from the ban. Members of the Group raised concerns about dogs being bred/reared in Wales for racing in other countries, as this may necessitate long journeys for the dogs. In Australia, the New South Wales Greyhound Racing Ban Bill 2025 prohibits the breeding of dogs for racing purposes, as well as the transfer or export of dogs for racing in other jurisdictions. The Group therefore recommends that the cross-border impact is included in a post implementation review (see **Recommendation 6**).

Members of the Group also expressed concerns regarding the backfilling of the existing cohort of dogs and proposed that new registrations at the Valley track be discontinued in advance of a ban taking effect. Other members, however, considered that such action could progressively constrain trainers' income streams and would be difficult to enforce given that greyhounds are not registered to race at specific tracks. No consensus was reached on this matter.

To avoid trainers using the rehoming scheme to rehome dogs not associated with the Valley track, or simultaneously retiring all dogs, the Group are developing a document outlining eligibility for rehoming, which may include pre-approval prior to the ban. This will also help to ensure that the dogs have been given any necessary medical treatment prior to retirement and are handed over with relevant medical information. The issue of how recently the dogs need to have been raced at the Valley track and other eligibility criteria is being explored. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Welsh Government, Wales Greyhound Partnership and Valley Greyhound Stadium has been suggested to facilitate the transition, and safeguard the welfare, of dogs from the industry into the rehoming sector, the details of which are currently being discussed by the Group.

Objective 3: Setting out the best practice for the transition, by considering approaches of similar proposals and bans in other countries.

The Group are developing a protocol for identifying dogs that are eligible for rehoming (i.e. dogs currently registered to race at the Valley track) and efficiently rehoming them, based on the Group members' experiences from the closure of the Swindon greyhound racing track.

An information request has been sent to GBGB for information about current processes in place for track closures, along with compensation data.

Enforcement of the ban

In New Zealand the policing of illegal racing falls upon local authorities, with monitoring by charities. Local authorities in Wales have the power to enforce the ban and Caerphilly County Borough Council has confirmed that no additional resources are required to enforce a ban at this time. The Group has suggested that illegal hare coursing should be monitored, however members feel that this can be mitigated by ensuring appropriate rehoming channels. The Group believe that any person found to be racing greyhounds in Wales following a ban coming into force should have their license revoked by GBGB (see **Recommendation 7**).

Objective 4: Offer potential practical solutions to mitigate the social and economic impacts of the consequences of the greyhound racing ban and suggest potential practical solutions to address these issues.

The Group has identified economic impacts on the local area arising from a greyhound racing ban on:

- Suppliers to the Valley track
- Suppliers to the greyhound trainers e.g. Food for the dogs, veterinary care
- Contractors working at the Valley track e.g. veterinary surgeons
- Staff directly employed by the Valley track
- Local businesses e.g. hoteliers and fuel retailers

These costs have yet to be quantified and the Group are currently exploring the need for more information on this in order to provide mitigation if necessary. Industry forecasts suggest the media contract for the Valley track would amount to £15 million over the next five years, potentially continuing on a rolling basis thereafter.

Social impacts of a ban include the impact on members of the public who visit the track. The Group has received estimated footfall data from the Valley track, but the number of in-person visitors is unverified to date. Footfall figures are not formally recorded; however, this will be implemented by the Valley track going forward. Valley track has also been asked for details of the venue capacity.

There are also potential repercussions on members of the public who watch racing at the Valley online, although online streaming of greyhound races outside of Wales will still be accessible to them. Online viewing figures have been provided from the Sports Information Services Ltd (SIS Ltd) racing website. Valley races contributed 4.2% of this year's global viewership, equating to 326K visitors and 1.6M views across UK, with 13.4k visitors and 78k views originating in Wales.

Social media (the Valley Greyhound Stadium Facebook page) is another indicator of public engagement with the track. Metrics for overall visibility have been provided by the Valley, with the page attracting 5,245 unique followers, a measure of content appearing on screen (views) of 691,000 and engagement (likes, reactions, comments, shares, clicks, and saves) of 21,000.

Objective 5: Assist and support the transition of the industry owners and workers away from greyhound racing.

The Group is considering how the transition away from greyhound racing has been managed during the introduction of bans in other countries and the closure of tracks within the United Kingdom, and the arrangements in place for greyhound trainers in countries where greyhound racing has discontinued.

Information on targeted support available to affected employees and greyhound trainers who currently race dogs at Valley has been identified. The Welsh Government has highlighted the existing support available to affected employees of Valley and trainers in Wales, via the Group. This includes the [Working Wales](#) website, which provides a national gateway to advise and support on employability, redundancy, and retraining. Details have been shared with all trainers. This site includes information on the range of support available and how staff at Valley can access support.

Subject to eligibility, those affected would be able to access these programmes, with Welsh Government facilitating engagement where appropriate (see **Recommendation 8**). The research project being run by University of Bristol Veterinary School seeks to engage the trainers currently racing dogs at the Valley track in conversation about their intentions following a ban.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

That the Welsh Government implements a wind down/phase out of racing over a twelve month period, to facilitate rehoming of the greyhounds currently racing at the Valley track.

Recommendation 2

The implementation group would like the support of the Welsh Government in securing the GBGB retirement bond for every greyhound being retired by an eligible rehoming organisation, not limited to those approved under the GBGB retirement scheme.

Recommendation 3

The greyhound trainers/owners should be required by Greyhound Rehoming Scheme approved homing centres, Cut the Chase Coalition members, the Welsh Greyhound Partnership Group and any other organisation rehoming greyhounds associated with the Valley track to arrange for their dogs to be neutered wherever possible and to provide up to

date veterinary histories for the dogs they put forward for rehoming.

Recommendation 4

Welfare compatible standards are specified and adopted by any organisations rehoming greyhounds with independent monitoring implemented. The development of Terms of Reference and a Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate information sharing, ensure alignment on welfare standards, and support formal sign-up by participating organisations. It is recommended that Animal Licensing Wales (ALW) is asked to monitor the welfare standards, with the rehoming organisations reporting back to the Group monthly.

Recommendation 5

The Cut the Chase Coalition, Welsh Greyhound Partnership Group and GBGB launch a rehoming campaign to identify homes for ex-racing greyhounds and guidance specific to rehabilitation of racing greyhounds is provided to new owners.

Recommendation 6

That the Group is part of any post-implementation review of the legislation undertaken by the Welsh Government to assess the effectiveness and impact of the legislation, including the cross-border impact of ending greyhound racing in Wales.

Recommendation 7

GBGB should revoke the license of any trainer found to race greyhounds in Wales following the ban coming into force.

Recommendation 8

The Welsh Government should support those individuals affected by the prohibition of greyhound racing through enabling access to employability support programmes. This should include signposting to relevant services, guidance on eligibility, and support to navigate available provision. The Group will assist this recommendation by helping to identify those affected by the ban through their own links with the industry. Such measures would help affected workers transition into alternative employment, minimise the socioeconomic impacts of the ban, and support labour market adjustment while ensuring that the policy objectives of the ban are achieved.

Next steps

The Group have discussed that it is not in a position to propose social and economic impact mitigation measures, as the necessary level of detail is not currently available. While the issue has been raised and discussed, the absence of further information limits the Group's ability to fully understand or assess the potential social and economic impacts of a ban. Welsh Government has already undertaken assessments based on the publicly available data, and any further assessment may face the same constraints unless additional evidence is provided. Although undertaking an economic impact assessment has been suggested, this too may be limited by the lack of readily available data needed to evaluate the wider effects. Should the Group consider that further analysis is possible, it may wish to set out how this could be achieved with the information currently available.

Identifying a critical path and timeline for the implementation of a ban

The Group will now focus on developing a clear and deliverable implementation plan to transition to a ban. This work will support Welsh Ministers in making an informed and evidence-based decision on when to bring the prohibition into force, within the window provided for in the legislation. A plan for implementation will be provided in the Group's autumn report.

The Group will focus on identifying and advising on the practical steps required to implement the ban and ensuring that any impacts arising from it are fully understood and appropriately mitigated where possible. The Group will also continue to take forward work to fulfil the recommendations set out in this report, including those which are relevant to their ongoing work.

This will include:

- identifying a critical path and proposed timeline for implementation, including key milestones and dependencies;
- considering and providing advice and guidance on setting out how economic and social impacts could be managed and mitigated in practice;
- continue monitoring and reporting the impact of the legislation becoming an Act and then coming into force, to include staffing, trainer numbers, and the number of dogs which require rehoming (and where they go);
- engaging with Welsh Government officials on employability and skills support services to ensure appropriate provision is in place for employees and others affected by the transition;
- working with rehoming organisations to support delivery at scale, including exploring mechanisms to support funding and capacity, such as access to neutering services and the GBGB retirement bond;
- supporting the development of welfare-compatible standards for organisations rehoming greyhounds, including the development of Terms of Reference and a Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate information sharing, ensure alignment on welfare standards, and support formal sign-up by participating organisations (**Recommendation 4**);
- supporting delivery of a coordinated rehoming campaign, in collaboration with the Cut the Chase Coalition, the Wales Greyhound Partnership and GBGB, to identify suitable homes for ex-racing greyhounds and to provide guidance specific to their rehabilitation to new owners; (**Recommendation 5**).
- engaging with trainers to understand and support their transition, including consideration of future activities and options available to them;
- considering the future use of the Valley site and its implications for the local community and economy;

- identifying any further targeted information required to support delivery, particularly in relation to rehoming and transition planning.

This work will underpin a robust and evidence-based implementation plan, demonstrating that all necessary considerations have been considered and that appropriate mitigations are in place where possible to support an effective and managed transition.