



Mr Finlay Carson, Convener
The Rural Affairs and Islands Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

20th November 2025

By email
Cc Committee Clerk

Re: Greyhound Racing (Offences) (Scotland) Bill

Dear Convener

We, the undersigned, would like to thank the Committee for the time it has taken in considering the Greyhound Racing (Offences) (Scotland) Bill, and the wider issues around greyhound racing, over several years of scrutiny. In writing, we hope to reiterate a few key points we have previously made in our engagement with Members, bringing them to the forefront as you consider the Stage 1 report.

We strongly support the Bill and its scope, and hope Scotland will take this opportunity to move in line with the many other countries around the world who have outlawed greyhound racing, or are taking steps to do so, on the grounds that racing greyhounds poses an unacceptable risk to their welfare.

During evidence sessions on the 5th and 12th of November it was suggested that the proposed Bill will not improve the welfare of any dogs due to no racing currently taking place at the last remaining racetrack in Scotland. It is our understanding from written evidence provided by the track owner, Mr Paul Brignal, to the Committee (10th October 2025) that should this Bill fail, racing would recommence at Thornton.

However, the more salient point is that this Bill would provide safeguards preventing a resurgence of racing in the future, and prevent countless injuries and fatalities as a result. We point Committee members to the Welsh example at Valley Greyhound Stadium, Caerphilly, which similarly to Thornton was an independent track. Valley Greyhound Stadium had been unregulated for 47 years, since its opening, until August 2023 when it gained its GBGB licence. Between November 2023 and October 2025, GBGB-regulated racing increased more than fourfold, from 42 races (Nov 23) to 198 races (Oct 25). Prior to GBGB regulation, approximately 35-40 unregulated races per month were held at the Valley track. Without this Bill, there is nothing to prevent a similar, or worse, situation in Scotland.

To further the point on the need for legislation over regulation or licensing, we refer members to the findings of the Scottish Animal Welfare Commission (SAWC) report published in February 2023. SAWC stated it did not see any evidence that the industry was prepared to make the radical changes necessary to mitigate welfare risks and that none of the proposed measures could safeguard dog welfare appropriately. Thus, SAWC concluded welfare for dogs would be improved if they were not involved in racing, something which can only be enforced with legislation.

The committee has focussed on the lack of recent evidence of injuries and fatalities specific to Scotland, which due to the independent nature of Thornton are unknown as there is no requirement to disclose injury, death or homing figures. However, the GBGB figures relating to injuries and fatalities should not be discounted. Evidence of specific injury patterns and deaths seen in greyhounds are consistent internationally. There is no reason to believe this is any different in Scotland, as the SAWC noted.

Yours sincerely,

James Fitch, Public Affairs Manager - Dogs Trust

Kirsty Jenkins, Director of Policy - OneKind

Christine A. Dorchak, President and General Counsel - GREY2K USA Worldwide

Nicola Strachan, Head of Advocacy & Strategic Partnership - Scottish SPCA

Dr Samantha Gaines, Head of Companion Animal Science and Policy - RSPCA

Vanessa Waddon, CEO - Hope Rescue

Becky Thwaites, Head of Public Affairs - Blue Cross

Eliza Chiswell, Campaigner Scotland - League Against Cruel Sports

Gill Docherty and Jacqueline Brown - Scotland Against Greyhound Exploitation

Seonaig Johnston & Gill Donn - Say No To Greyhound Racing in Scotland

Elena Edwards, Campaigns Officer - Animal Concern

Jamie Simpson, Interim CEO - Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home