

Greyhound racing started in Great Britain in the early 20th century. There were once 77 tracks but by May 2025, there are fewer than 20. Crowds have dwindled significantly in the last few decades, with the industry now mainly serving online streaming contracts. This 'sport' involves greyhounds being forced to chase a mechanical 'hare' anti-clockwise around oval tracks.

The dogs' speed (which can reach up to 45mph) coupled with the unique shape of the track and the unequal forces exerted on the dogs' bodies, leads to an astonishingly high injury rate. Dogs are often doped with harmful substances (including cocaine) to maximise performance and are made to race in dangerous temperatures.

Thousands of dogs have died at the hands of this industry in the past few years, and there have been tens of thousands of recorded injuries. More than 4,000 dogs died across the regulated racing greyhound population between 2017-2023. This figure includes dogs who died after racing at regulated tracks, and dogs who were killed because:

- their treatment costs were deemed too high
- no home could be found for them
- they were deemed 'unsuitable' for homing

Between those same dates, dogs endured more than 31,000 recorded injuries.

Dogs forced to race can endure injuries including rib fractures, broken necks, internal haemorrhaging, ruptured blood vessels, torn tendons, flesh wounds and spinal paralysis, to name a few.

Though tragic, these deaths and injuries are only part of the story. There is no knowing how many dogs are 'culled' between birth and registration – reportedly known to the industry as 'wastage'. A 2019 RTÉ documentary reported around 6,000 dogs are killed each year for not running fast enough. The number of dogs who go 'missing' each year is unknown.

During their racing lives, dogs live in kennels, which can be cramped, dark, damp and dirty. Their lives are absent of the enrichment and socialisation dogs should experience, with greyhounds spending most of their days confined to kennels. If housed in pairs, they are likely to be constantly muzzled. There are countless tales of cruelty towards greyhounds, with dogs living in squalid conditions and suffering neglect, malnourishment and abuse.

Around ten times more dogs are bred each year than are required to race. Around 15,000-20,000 dogs are bred in Ireland each year, with an approximate further 1,000 bred in Britain. Over 80% of dogs who race in Britain have come from Ireland. A greyhound's racing life is relatively short, with most dogs being 'retired' between ages three to five. This creates a huge 'surplus' of dogs who need to be rehomed, putting immense pressure on rescue centres - who already struggle with the number of animals in their care. A recent industry estimate claimed that around 2,500 dogs are waiting in trainers' kennels for a place at a rescue centre to become available. A trainers' kennel is not the home these dogs deserve.

Dogs are, generally, not viewed as sentient animals by the racing industry – but as commodities to be bought, sold, and raced for profit. This is why so many industry people become immune to their suffering, and turn a blind eye to the inherent exploitation they endure. Due to their industry-imposed commodity status, once dogs are no longer of 'use' or 'profitable' to the industry, they find themselves vulnerable to the cruelest of ends. They may be shot with a bolt-gun and buried in mass graves, drowned in the sea or a canal, or shipped to countries with few or no animal welfare laws to be bred from or raced. Greyhounds have been found within the Chinese meat trade.

The Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB), the industry's governing body, is self-regulating, and by effectively condoning systemic cruelty, has failed these dogs on an unprecedented scale.

Anyone lucky enough to have met a greyhound will know them to be sweet, gentle, affectionate dogs, who love nothing more than a long snooze on a comfy sofa. These dogs deserve to live free from harm, free from exploitation, and free from the racing industry.

No animal should suffer for sport.
It's time to end greyhound racing now.

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These resources are not exhaustive. Cases of greyhound cruelty and abuse are prolific – further research and reading is recommended.