

The Greyhound Commitment

Putting greyhound welfare at the heart of our sport



ANNUAL UPDATE – JUNE 2021

Caring for our Dogs and Protecting our Sport

The March 2020 Lockdown put the future of greyhound racing in the UK in doubt.

As all grassroots sports and activities found, a prolonged period without spectators, participants, income or activity threatened their very livelihoods.

The loss of greyhound racing would have been detrimental to thousands of people's livelihoods in the UK and would have threatened the health, wellbeing and lives of our racing greyhounds, who rely on a thriving sport for survival.

With no racing, the health and wellbeing of our greyhounds would be put at serious risk.

Across the country, owners, trainers, kennels and stadia rallied together with emergency financial support from the British Racing Greyhound Fund (BGRF) to keep dogs fed, exercised and ready to return to their racing as soon as possible.

And, thankfully, our sport survived. Greyhound racing was the last sport to operate before the first Lockdown. And it was the first sport to reopen last summer. Its return was widely welcomed by sports and animal lovers across the country as one small step towards a return to normality.

Had our sport not returned, the impact would have included:

- **Thousands of jobs sacrificed;**
- **Millions of pounds lost to HM Treasury;**
- **Areas of deprivation losing yet another community asset;**
- **And thousands of fit, healthy and much-loved racing greyhounds being left with no direct means of being supported.**

As a direct consequence of Covid-19, three GBGB-licensed stadia were forced to close – representing a significant economic, employment, hospitality and heritage loss for each of their communities.

Through the hard work and fortitude of everyone within greyhound racing, our remaining 19 stadia have either reopened or are in the process of doing so. Many stadia are in areas of the country which have suffered the greatest through unemployment, poverty and lack of government investment over the past 30 years – areas which the government is committed to supporting as part of their levelling up agenda post-pandemic.

By reopening, our stadia continue to provide direct employment to thousands of stadia staff, trainers and kennel hands, as well as many others in the supporting industries of hospitality, tourism and bookmaking. Greyhound stadia play a vital role locally in supporting some of most under-served communities. They are a focal point for local families in places where restaurants, cinemas and other forms of hospitality and entertainment have long closed.

Many GBGB-licensed tracks are independent, family-run businesses that employ directly from their local communities. They are historic venues that have been and continue to be hubs of hospitality, entertainment and shared enjoyment.

That these stadia have survived, generating local jobs and income is testament to the continued popularity of the sport in these communities and the dedication and investment of those involved at all levels of the sport.

As this Update sets out, welfare standards within the sport are world-class and improving year on year. Our targets remain ambitious – but are being reached.

There is always more to be done and our sport is committed to doing so.

It became clear during the pandemic that the British people want greyhound racing to thrive and that the impact of anything that threatens its survival would be devastating; economically, culturally and in terms of animal welfare.

As the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) puts it *"greyhound racing is seen as a valuable cultural activity that is worth protecting"*.



Introduction

For most people across the world, the last year has been one in which Covid-19 has dominated their lives. It has shaken world economies, put best-laid plans on hold indefinitely and turned many people's personal and professional lives upside down. The impact has been felt no less strongly amongst the greyhound community; there have been periods when no racing could take place, when owners could not visit their greyhounds and when stadia have had to close their doors to spectators. Put simply, the financial and emotional impact of Covid on everyone within our sport cannot be underestimated.

That said, Covid-19 has not defeated us and has neither diverted nor delayed us as we work towards meeting each of the eight pledges of the Greyhound Commitment. Launched over three years ago, the Commitment is the blueprint for our sport and ensures that greyhound welfare underpins all we do. Upholding the very highest standards of greyhound welfare is non-negotiable and, as the past year has demonstrated, our greyhounds will always come first no matter what. This unwavering commitment has been apparent on a daily basis; trainers and their staff have worked tirelessly to give their greyhounds the care and attention they deserve, owners have played an active role in the welfare of their greyhounds and stadia have made their tracks as safe as possible for our canine athletes.

At an organisational level, we are proud of the leading role GBGB played in safeguarding welfare throughout this period. As well as providing trainers with £338,000 in Emergency Welfare Payments to ensure they could meet the needs of their greyhounds, we published advice on how to keep greyhounds fit and healthy throughout the periods of Lockdown. Our team of Stipendiary Stewards and vets also continued their visits to kennels to support trainers and check on welfare. We represented the sport in discussions with the DCMS and Local Authorities in order to get greyhounds back racing as quickly as possible as this was vital for their health and fitness. We developed a comprehensive Covid-19 Operational Policy to ensure a safe return to racing and we were pleased that greyhound racing was the first professional sport to return on 1 June 2020.

Delivering on our welfare commitments

Beyond Covid, we are pleased that GBGB has delivered on its own welfare commitments. This past year has seen us deliver a host of new initiatives including the launch of the Greyhound Retirement Scheme, the publication of a comprehensive Code of Practice for Residential Kennels and the introduction of external kennel assessments by independent auditors. Each of these initiatives had been a long time in the planning and it was not an option for us to delay them on account of Covid. But with the support of the entire greyhound community as well as our wider stakeholders, these initiatives have been widely welcomed and are already having a positive impact on greyhound welfare.

Our Greyhound Retirement Scheme (GRS), which ensures the costs of a greyhound's retirement are met before they even step foot on the track, has been a particular success story of the past year. Whilst there are a number of excellent retirement schemes already run by trainers and stadia, we have never had an industry-wide scheme and been able to provide such funding. Not only have just over 2,000 greyhounds already benefited from the GRS, we have also forged constructive relationships with 125 homing charities across the country which will lead to even more successful homing stories in the years to come.



Further evidence of the success of the Greyhound Commitment is demonstrated through our sport's track injury and retirement figures for 2020. The figures show a decrease in the number of greyhounds sustaining injuries at GBGB-licensed tracks; the number of track injuries has fallen from 4,970 in 2019 to 3,575 in 2020. Whilst there were fewer runs as a result of Covid, the injury rate is still lower at 1.12% compared to 1.21% in 2019. The track fatality rate remains consistent with last year at 0.06%. In a year when greyhounds were at greater risk of injuries as a result of long periods away from the track during Lockdown, this fall in injuries shows that the exercise regimes followed by trainers, with the support of GBGB's Stipendiary Stewards and vets, were effective in keeping greyhounds fit and healthy. We continue to work towards the target we set ourselves in 2019 to reduce the number of greyhounds put to sleep at the track on humane grounds.



The figures also show significant improvements in the number of greyhounds being homed on retirement. 95% of greyhounds leaving the sport were homed - up from 90% in 2019. The vast majority of these greyhounds were homed by homing charities or by their owner or trainer. Importantly, the figures show that the number of greyhounds put to sleep because of the high cost of treatment has fallen significantly; from 123 in 2019 to just 24 in 2020. For the second year running, no greyhounds were put to sleep because no home could be found for them.

In 2019, GBGB set itself and the sport the target to halve, within three years, the number of greyhounds put to sleep because of the high cost of veterinary treatment or because no home could be found for them. In 2018, 180 greyhounds were put to sleep for these reasons and, as such, the 2020 data being released today shows the sport has already met this target. Our ultimate goal is to eliminate these unnecessary deaths entirely.

There has also been a decrease in the number of greyhounds put to sleep because they were designated unsuitable for homing; this number has fallen from 83 in 2019 to 23 in 2020. Finally, the 2020 data shows a 42% reduction in overall deaths across the registered greyhound population - from 710 in 2019 to 411 in 2020. In 2018, this figure was 932. It should be noted that not all greyhound deaths are related to racing; many racing greyhounds sadly die for reasons that equally affect working and non-working dogs of all breeds, including long-term health conditions and sudden death.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to meeting the challenging targets we set ourselves two years ago. The determination of everyone within the sport is certainly there and we remain hopeful that we can secure the much-needed long term funding from our partners in the betting industry so that we can properly meet our welfare ambitions.

Whilst the Greyhound Commitment is a GBGB-led initiative, its continued success would not be possible without the support and hard work of everyone within the greyhound community, our animal welfare partners, the betting industry and Ministers and officials within DEFRA and DCMS. We greatly value the part everyone plays in helping licensed greyhound racing uphold the very highest standards.

Whilst it is impossible to predict the next 12 months, one thing is for certain; greyhound welfare will always remain at the heart of our sport and the Greyhound Commitment will continue to drive our sport forward. As the country continues to take steps back towards normality, we look forward to making ever greater strides towards meeting our welfare ambitions.



Jeremy Cooper
Chairman



Mark Bird
Managing Director

1. Greyhound welfare and safety is at the heart of everything we do

We do this by:

- Maintaining a zero-tolerance policy on the mistreatment of greyhounds;
- Enforcing a rigorous, independent disciplinary process with strong sanctions for any individual who is found to be in breach of the GBGB Rules of Racing;
- Having an annually-reviewed, evidence-based Policy for Racing in Weather Extremes;
- Having a named Welfare Officer at all GBGB tracks;
- Providing a thorough, evidence-based Code of Practice for residential kennels so that everyone working in a kennel has access to the latest advice and guidance on greyhound welfare;
- Providing funds for trainers to maintain and improve their facilities; in 2020, we awarded over £300,000 in Trainers' Assistance Grants as well as £12,500 towards the cost of travel cages and air management systems for transporting greyhounds to and from the track.

What greyhound welfare means for the racing community

Greyhound welfare has always been at the very heart of the racing community; people become involved in greyhound racing because they are animal lovers and, as such, will always act in the best interests of their dogs. Any individual who does not share and uphold these values or our Rules of Racing will be subject to our robust disciplinary process.

We actively work in collaboration with people across the sport to identify areas for improvement, develop new welfare initiatives and roll them out effectively. Involving all sections of our sport is key to the success of the Greyhound Commitment and we are fortunate to enjoy the support of trainers, owners, promoters and of course, our dedicated and enthusiastic Greyhound Ambassadors, who share our welfare ambitions.

"The Greyhound Commitment has been pivotal in setting better standards throughout all areas of the industry. This year, the Greyhound Retirement Scheme in particular has been a game changer and this should help to ensure that all of our canine athletes are found their perfect forever homes upon retirement."

Kim Sanzone, Greyhound Ambassador

"It is wonderful to see more aspects of the Greyhound Commitment become reality, particularly during the obvious barriers created by Covid. It is good to see developments in track safety and small steps towards improved funding for the sport. Through social media, the profile of our sport has been raised and the love shown to our hounds is there for all to see."

Gail May, Greyhound Ambassador

"Without a doubt, the Greyhound Commitment has been one of the best things that has ever happened in greyhound racing. As an owner, I don't care if my greyhound wins or loses a race; my overriding priority is that they are well looked after and that they go on to excellent homes when they retire. This is a sentiment which is shared across the sport and it's fantastic that the overwhelming majority of people in the sport put greyhound welfare above all else."

Kevin Perisi, Greyhound Owner

"The care of our greyhounds during an extremely testing year for all hasn't faltered. I would go so far as to say the trainers and kennel hands I am involved with have gone above and beyond in keeping owners up-to-date with photos or video clips via social media when kennel visits were restricted. When racing was behind closed doors it was wonderful to receive a post race photo of your dog where possible. The passion and dedication I have witnessed over the years shows how highly respected our racers are within the industry."

Lorraine Hyde-Banning, Greyhound Owner



Building on this, we will:

- Provide financial assistance to support trainers to upgrade their vehicles so that they meet our new air-con regulations which come into place in 2023;
- Review the role of Welfare Officers at our tracks to further safeguard welfare.

2. Every racing greyhound is treated with care and respect throughout its career



We do this by:

- Making compliance with the PAS:251 a condition of licensing for trainers under our Rules of Racing;
- Conducting a minimum of two unannounced visits by GBGB Stipendiary Stewards to residential greyhound kennels every year; in addition, all residential kennels are externally audited and the outcomes of these inspections are used to inform decisions around licensing;
- Licensing and inspecting stadia through government-approved, UKAS accredited methods;
- Using an online registry system to track all greyhounds racing on GBGB tracks, from registration to retirement;
- Providing a Welfare Hotline so that anyone concerned about the welfare of registered racing greyhounds can report information anonymously.

Demonstrating the very highest standards of greyhound welfare

To ensure consistently high standards of welfare across the sport, this year we made significant changes to the issuing of trainers' licences and the inspection processes for residential kennels.

As well as regular visits from Stipendiary Stewards and annual veterinary inspections, licensed trainers also now receive independent inspections from external auditors, NSF International which has extensive experience of conducting animal welfare audits. The findings of these audits are used to inform decisions on the issuing of trainers' licences.

The new audits are based on the PAS:251 'Specification for Trainers Residential Kennels' and compliance is now a condition of licensing within our Rules of Racing. The PAS is based on collective experience of animal welfare organisations, veterinarians, government and industry specialists.

These new external audits will form part of GBGB's UKAS accreditation which had previously only covered the licensing of stadia. The extension of our UKAS accreditation will

demonstrate our firm commitment to upholding the very highest standards right across the sport.

Welcoming the new inspections, Trainer Peter Harnden whose kennels were part of the pilot audits by NSF, said:

"Having these inspections in place is a hugely positive thing for the sport. It means that our kennels are being externally rubber-stamped as being top-quality which is something that no one, inside or outside greyhound racing can argue about."

To help trainers prepare for these new inspections, GBGB published a comprehensive Code of Practice bringing together best practice in greyhound care from across the sport. The Code, which covers all aspects of caring for a greyhound's mental and physical health, includes recommendations on the construction, maintenance and management of kennels as well as guidelines on environmental enrichment, exercise, nutrition and dental care.

Produced in consultation with trainers, veterinary professionals and animal welfare charities, the Code has been designed to be a helpful and practical tool for all those working in residential kennels. The vast majority of the content of the Code was already familiar to trainers but by bringing everything together into one accessible document, we can ensure that everyone has access to the knowledge and advice they need in order to provide the very best standards of care.

GBGB also changed the way trainer licences were structured and consolidated all licences into one single Professional Greyhound Trainer licence. This change means that GBGB can now hold all licensed trainers to the same standards and inspect them fairly and effectively under the Rules of Racing.

Building on this, we will:

- Work with Trainer and Owner Representatives to create an Owners' Charter and Owners' Contract setting out an owner's rights and responsibilities around the safeguarding of their greyhound;
- Seek to further our UKAS accreditation so that this also covers our licensing of trainers' residential kennels.

3. Our independently verified injury rates remain the lowest in the world and will improve further still

We do this by:

- Having an independent Veterinary Surgeon at all GBGB tracks to check the health and wellbeing of every greyhound, both before and after racing, and to provide emergency care in the event that any greyhound needs it;
- Working with STRI consultants to promote best practice in track preparation and maintenance across all our stadia;
- Commissioning an academic investigation into risk factors around injuries sustained at the track;
- Setting ourselves challenging targets to reduce injuries further.

Working with experts to improve track safety

Correct track maintenance and preparation is vital to ensuring the safety of greyhounds whilst racing. To achieve consistently high safety standards across our licensed tracks, GBGB works with STRI (formerly known as The Sports Turf Research Institute) team of scientific advisers.

STRI visits each GBGB track once a year to inspect tracks and advise ground staff on how best to prepare and maintain the racing surface. Given the varying locations and racing schedules of the tracks, there is no one-size-fits-all solution and STRI will always tailor its advice to meet the specific requirements of each track.

STRI's work focuses on creating track surfaces that are first and foremost safe. All other objectives are secondary and all its recommendations seek to ensure that each greyhound that steps foot on the track leaves that track fit and healthy.

Describing the impact of their work with tracks, Dr Christian Spring, Research Operations Manager at STRI, said:

"Whenever we visit a track, we seek to gain a thorough understanding of the racing surface's composition as well as the processes that are followed to keep it in top condition. All of our advice is based on the data we collect and our focus is on helping tracks maintain surfaces that are as safe as possible for their racers."

"We talk to people across the industry including grounds staff, track management and trainers to understand how the track operates. In the past few years, we have noticed a real emphasis within the sport towards improvements in track safety. Whilst safety has always been a priority, there is now a much greater understanding of how careful track preparation and maintenance can lead to improved safety standards. Across the tracks, grounds staff are becoming ever more receptive to our advice and it is great to see them taking our recommendations on board and making the racing surfaces even safer."

"There is, of course, always more that can be done and we look forward to working with everyone across greyhound racing to improve safety standards further."

One track which is benefitting from STRI's specialist advice is Monmore Green Stadium in Wolverhampton which took the decision to re-lay its entire track this year.



Following a comprehensive audit by STRI which identified areas for improvement, the stadium, which is run by Entain, added over 1,000 tonnes of new sand and installed a new drainage system.

Since the new track was laid, there has been a significant decrease in injuries as described by Ian Smyth, Entain's Director of Stadia:

"The re-lay has been, without a doubt, a thoroughly worthwhile investment. Whilst we have always ensured our track was safe to race on, the improvements we have made mean that greyhounds are running on the safest possible surface. This has given trainers and owners the confidence to allow their dogs to race here which has led to an increase in the number of open race entries."

To keep the track in optimum condition, the grounds team measures the moisture levels across the circuit each day and takes the necessary action to ensure it is as safe as possible.

Building on this, we will:

- Appoint a Non-Executive Veterinary Director who will undertake a comprehensive review into track injuries and identify initiatives to bring about long term, sustainable change;
- Appoint a Track Liaison Officer to work across all GBGB tracks;
- Organise training seminars for grounds staff, provided by STRI, to extend the professional development opportunities available to them.

4. Wherever possible, every dog leaving racing enjoys a long and happy retirement

We do this by:

- Running a successful Greyhound Retirement Scheme that attaches a financial bond to each greyhound at the point of registration, paid for jointly by the owner and GBGB;
- Working in partnership with animal welfare charities to find suitable homes for greyhounds that have raced on GBGB licensed tracks and further promote their excellence as family pets;
- Giving all greyhound owners access to our national Injury Recovery Scheme which provides financial support so that career-ending injuries need not be life-ending; in 2020 GBGB provided over £90,000 in payments to fund the treatment of nearly 300 greyhounds.

Securing a greyhound's retirement before they even step foot on the track

September 2020 saw the launch of our long-awaited Greyhound Retirement Scheme (GRS) which signalled a step change in the way our retired racers are re-homed. Under the scheme, owners pay £200 towards their greyhound's retirement at the point of registration with GBGB. This money is released and then matched by GBGB when a greyhound enters a GBGB-approved homing centre. The £400 bond is used to cover any costs associated with the greyhound's stay in a homing centre.

The GRS got off to a flying start with nearly 7,000 greyhounds signed up to the Scheme in the first eight months and over 2,000 have found places in homing centres. Only greyhounds registered with GBGB after September 2020 were required to sign up to the scheme but over 1,850 greyhounds registered before this date have been voluntarily signed up by their owners.

"Being an owner isn't just about celebrating when your greyhound wins a race; it is a commitment to care for their health and wellbeing from the day they are registered until the day they are found a loving home on retirement. I am pleased to have been able to sign my greyhounds up to the scheme; I know the money I have paid into the bond will stay with them throughout their racing careers and will be put to good use upon their retirement."

"Securing a greyhound's future retirement is a key aspect of responsible ownership and I am pleased that GBGB is promoting it in this way. I encourage everyone I speak to to sign their greyhounds up to the GRS!"

Valerie Lambe, Owner

Only homing centres which uphold the highest welfare standards are eligible to receive the GRS funding. We are quickly creating a growing network of GBGB-approved centres through which we are sharing ideas and best practice on how to look after retired greyhounds and prepare them for life in a home environment.



Barnsley and District Animal Welfare (BADAW) is one of 125 centres who have gone through the approval process and will benefit from the GRS funding. Describing the approval process, Ann Taylor, Secretary and founder member of BADAW, said:

"We have always welcomed greyhounds from Kinsley Stadium but over the past year, we have begun working with Doncaster Stadium and are now finding homes for many more greyhounds than we used to. Out of the 160 dogs we homed last year, 129 of them were greyhounds."

"We were really flattered to be approached by GBGB who had heard about the work we were doing. The approval process was very straightforward and fairly quick. A Stipendiary Steward from GBGB visited us to measure the kennels and check everything was in order. We also had lengthy conversations with the GRS Co-ordinator about our approach to rehoming and how we welcome back any greyhounds who do not settle easily into their new homes."

"The GRS funding will be a big help for us particularly since we haven't been able to do our weekly fundraising activities as a result of Covid. Most of the trainers whose dogs we have homed have always made a donation which we put towards meeting some of our neutering, vaccination, veterinary and kennelling costs but this £400 bond will make a big difference. We're really grateful to GBGB for setting up this scheme and we look forward to finding more loving homes for greyhounds in this part of Yorkshire."

As well as ensuring the funding is in place so that thousands of greyhounds can move quickly into homing centres upon retirement, the scheme has helped to spread the word about what great pets greyhounds make. Working with homing charities up and down the country as well as our Greyhound Ambassadors, we are showcasing how our ex-racers make lovable, fun and affectionate pets.

Building on this, we will:

- Continue to promote the Greyhound Retirement Scheme and reach out to homing centres who have never previously homed racing greyhounds;
- Continue to work towards achieving our mission of reducing the number of dogs being put to sleep on economic grounds or because no home was found to zero;
- Conduct a thorough review of Rule 18 of our Rules of Racing which covers the responsible rehoming of greyhounds;
- Extend the Injury Recovery Scheme to cover the costs of more expensive veterinary treatments;
- Work with our welfare charity partners to establish an assessment protocol for those dogs deemed unsuitable for homing.

5. Every race is run fairly and safely and attending a race meeting is an enjoyable and fun experience for all involved

We do this by:

- Using our regulatory powers to ensure that all involved in GBGB licensed stadia follow the Rules of Racing, and using a rigorous, independent disciplinary process – with appropriate sanctions – where the Rules are breached;
- Having a robust anti-doping strategy - 6,288 samples were analysed between 1 January and 31 December 2020. These were independently tested by LGC, a world-renowned forensic laboratory. Only one sample was found to be directly related to doping;
- Working closely with the Gambling Commission to safeguard the integrity of the sport;
- Implementing a strict Covid Operational Policy to ensure tracks and residential kennels follow stringent hygiene and social distancing measures to protect the health of all those visiting or working at stadia.

Operating in a new normal

Since sport was allowed to return on 1 June 2020 after the first Lockdown, greyhound stadia across the country have had to adapt their ways of operating. They have needed to respond to the ever changing government guidance around social distancing, capacity and hygiene whilst continuing to deliver the same level of care and attention to greyhounds.

Alongside following national and local government guidelines, our tracks and licence holders have closely followed GBGB's Covid Operational Policy. This has enabled them to maintain a competitive racing schedule whilst keeping their staff and visiting trainers safe.

Whilst spectators were unable to watch greyhounds in person, it became more important than ever that we promoted the sport in national and local media as well as on social media. These channels provided a vital vehicle for keeping people connected with the sport and ensuring they could still enjoy the thrill of greyhound racing.

Likewise, with owners unable to visit stadia or trainers' kennels, the sport needed to find a way of keeping them connected with their beloved racers. Owners are central to the success of our sport and across our stadia every effort was made to welcome them back to the track as quickly as possible. In every case, this was done in consultation with the Local Authority who had the final say over when owners and other spectators could attend in person.

Explaining how tracks maintained an important link with their owners, Karen McMillan, Stadium Manager at Romford Greyhound Stadium, said:

"With our owners not being able to visit our stadium we wanted to ensure we did everything possible to keep them in touch and up-to-

date with every event. Romford and our sister tracks launched our new websites last year which meant we could put racing and trial results up after every meeting. We also began uploading videos of races and trial sessions onto YouTube so owners could view and replay as and when suits them. Feedback was so positive that we decided to continue this even after spectators were allowed to return."



Building on this, we will:

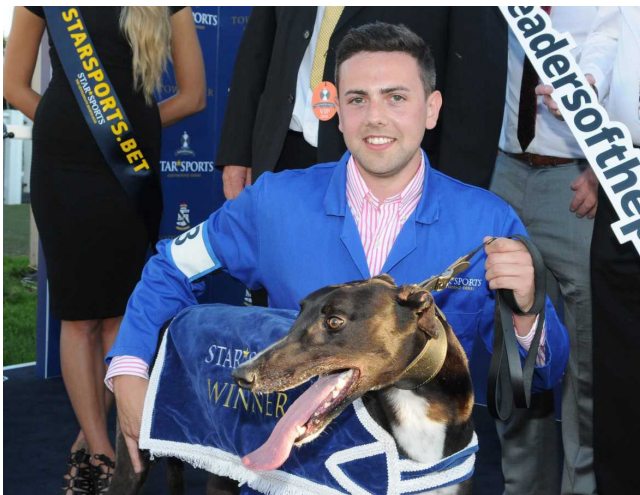
- Work with stadia to broaden their appeal to new audiences;
- Explore more avenues for showcasing greyhound racing following the increase in online content during the Lockdown period;
- Continue to be at the forefront of scientific innovations so that our antidoping systems remain robust and effective.

6. Those working within the sport have access to training at the beginning of their careers and ongoing, accredited professional development

We do this by:

- Providing those working within our sport with access to a library of up-to-date, innovative research on best practice;
- Holding an Annual Vets' Conference and organising an informal vets' network;
- Providing training for track preparation and grounds staff at GBGB licensed stadia;
- Offering an Animal Care and Welfare Assistant Apprenticeship;
- Creating and sharing a series of 'how-to' videos giving trainers and owners useful and specialist advice and guidance in specific areas of greyhound care;
- Running regular greyhound welfare campaigns giving veterinary advice on the care and treatment of racing greyhounds.

Nathan Hunt: from Apprentice to Professional Trainer



For many, the greyhound industry offers a job for life. Part of the fabric of Britain's sporting landscape for a century, greyhound racing boasts trainers, kennel hands and stadia staff who have spent their whole careers in racing and whose families' involvement stretches back through the generations. But the industry is always pleased to welcome newcomers keen to join the growing greyhound racing community. Whether or not someone has grown up in the sport or is completely new to it, it is vital that everyone receives extensive training opportunities - specifically around greyhound welfare - throughout their careers.

Whilst much of this training is carried out 'on-the-job' at kennels and stadia, as regulator, GBGB believes it is important there is industry-wide continuous professional development to ensure welfare standards are consistently high across the sport. In recent years, we have sought to formalise this training by running training days for trainers, vets and track staff as well as creating new interactive educational resources on all matters relating to greyhound care.

One of the key new initiatives introduced through the Greyhound Commitment has been the Animal Care and Welfare Assistant Apprenticeship. Focusing on greyhound welfare, the Apprenticeship is open to newcomers to the sport as well as those keen to progress their careers.

Nathan Hunt is one such apprentice who has seen his career kick-started through the scheme. Originally from Merthyr Tydfil in Wales, Nathan was the first in his family to get involved in the sport and joined Phil Simmonds's kennels in Cambridge as a kennel hand. Eager to improve his skills and learn everything he could about greyhound welfare, Nathan enrolled on the Apprenticeship which allowed him to combine full time work at the kennels with additional training.

Through the Apprenticeship, Nathan received expert and specialist training in animal welfare. Through sessions led by vets, animal welfare charities and professional trainers, Nathan gained a comprehensive understanding of all aspects of greyhound welfare. He was also given an insight into how other aspects of the sport are run such as drug testing and rehoming.

When the time came for Phil to retire and to hand over the reins of his kennels, Nathan - who was coming to the end of the Apprenticeship - was the obvious choice. As one of the youngest professional greyhound trainers in the country, Nathan is now in charge of a team caring for 70 racing greyhounds.

Talking about his rapid journey from apprentice to professional trainer, Nathan said:

"When I joined Phil's kennels just over five years ago, I would never have believed that I would be running the kennels now. This really is a profession where you learn on the job and Phil gave me every opportunity to get involved with all aspects of running the kennels.

"That said, the Apprenticeship taught me the theory behind greyhound welfare and gave me a comprehensive understanding of the best way to care for a greyhound. The Apprenticeship has given me a firm foundation in greyhound welfare which I hope to build on in the coming years and share with my own staff at the kennels."

Building on this, we will:

- Provide ongoing professional development for vets;
- Hold further training sessions for greyhound trainers on injury detection and the latest veterinary research.

7. Funding received from the betting industry significantly contributes to greyhound welfare

We do this by:

- Directing at least 75% of the funding received from the betting industry to animal welfare;
- Working with government to maximise income from the betting industry.

Welcoming new members into the British Greyhound Racing Fund

With welfare holding such a central role in our sport and with so many important welfare initiatives underway or in the pipeline, it is essential that we have access to the necessary funding.

Unlike horse racing, we are reliant on voluntary funding from the bookmaking industry to fund our welfare work. Over the past few years we have welcomed a growing number of Betting and Gaming Council (BGC) members who are paying into the British Greyhound Racing Fund (BGRF). This year we were pleased that the remaining members agreed to pay into the fund.

The contribution of the remaining members - BetVictor, Kindred, 888 and Betway - amounts to approximately £1 million. This funding will be directed wholly towards our welfare and integrity initiatives including the Greyhound Retirement Scheme and the Injury Recovery Scheme.

Announcing the news in March, Brigid Simmonds, Chairman of the BGC, said:

"It is vitally important that 100% of members of the BGC who benefit from income from greyhound racing also support the industry, and in particular dog welfare, whilst racing and when the dogs retire."

"I am delighted that our members have stepped up their financial support and the BGC will remain keen supporters of the BGRF and the many charities it supports."

Whilst very welcome, the additional funding will only go some way in meeting GBGB's welfare objectives. We will continue to maintain a constructive dialogue with the betting industry so that we can fully realise our welfare ambitions and safeguard the health and wellbeing of our racing greyhounds.

Building on this, we will:

- Seek to secure future funding to allow a fuller and more sustainable roll-out of the Injury Recovery Scheme, which has the potential to put an end to dogs being put to sleep for financial reasons;
- Continue to work with the bookmaking industry so that their concern and priority for welfare translates into the funding that we all know our sport needs.



8. Together, we continue to promote our sport and nurture the public's love of greyhounds

We do this by:

- Educating the public about greyhound racing and promoting greyhounds as a proud and historic breed;
- Publishing videos to promote the sport and retired greyhounds;
- Promoting the considerable economic contribution of our sport;
- Facilitating the Greyhound Ambassador Scheme to actively support and promote both racing and the successful retirement of greyhounds;
- Employing a Commercial Director whose remit is to explore new partnerships and sponsorship opportunities to widen our audience base;
- Producing 'Out of the Traps' - a podcast focusing on the latest news from across the sport.

Getting Back on Track

From being the first sport back after the Lockdown of Spring 2020 to releasing a full racing calendar for 2021, licensed greyhound racing has shown tremendous resolve to overcome any obstacles put in its way. At every stage, working closely with trainers, owners, stadia as well as the DCMS, DEFRA and local authorities, GBGB has sought to ensure that racing continues to entertain and excite existing audiences whilst attracting new ones.

To support this work, we were pleased to appoint Mark Moisley as GBGB's first Commercial Director in Summer 2020. With a strong track record in sports sponsorship, Mark is exploring all the commercial opportunities available and is forging partnerships with new sponsors.

As part of this, GBGB has introduced the Corporate Partners Club – an exclusive entry level corporate partnership opportunity for businesses looking to invest in our sport. There are a range of different ways partners can become involved. We are very excited about the opportunities presented by the Club and look forward to increasing the membership further over the coming year.

Chicubes, one of the founding members of the Greyhound Corporate Partners Club, said:

"We are delighted to be working with GBGB as a corporate partner. We are very excited and are proud to be able to be involved so early in the new scheme. We look forward to working closely with GBGB and continuing to provide excellent kennelling systems."

Building on this, we will:

- Explore further commercial and sponsorship opportunities to diversify the greyhound racing product and appeal to new audiences;
- Recruit additional Greyhound Ambassadors to further their work;
- Continue to produce and promote content that showcases the value of the sport and the enjoyment it brings to our greyhounds and our people.