



Independently verified track injury and retirement data for 2021

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About the data

GBGB's published data covers all registered greyhounds racing at its 20 licensed tracks in Britain. The published data goes beyond what has been asked for by DEFRA in that it provides a full breakdown of injuries and retirement destinations. Ministers and officials at DEFRA receive the data in advance of publication and have welcomed GBGB's commitment to transparency and accountability.

Whilst injury and track fatality data can be collected instantly, owners have three months in which to inform GBGB of the retirement destinations of greyhounds leaving the sport. The data is then collated and analysed before being sent to independent auditors Barnes Roffe LLP who audit and verify the data. DEFRA have requested that GBGB publish the final data by 30th June of the following year. We have set out below the summary track injury and retirement data since the launch of the Greyhound Commitment in 2018.

Track Injury data

	2021	2020	2019	2018
Total number of runs	359,083	318,346	410,607	426,139
Total number of injuries sustained at GBGB tracks (including minor injuries)	4,422	3,575	4,970	4,963
Injury Rate (% against total dog runs)	1.23%	1.12%	1.21%	1.16%
Total number of fatalities at GBGB tracks	120	200	207	242
Fatality rate (% against total dog runs)	0.03%	0.06%	0.05%	0.06%

* During the pandemic, racing was suspended for over two months in Spring 2020. There were therefore fewer runs in 2020. Please note that the injury data refers to the number of individual injuries, rather than the number of dogs injured.

Retirement data

	2021	2020	2019	2018
Total number of greyhounds successfully homed or retained within the sport upon retirement	6,014 (94.4% of total greyhounds leaving the sport)	7,089 (95% of total)	6,460 (90% of total)	6,773 (88% of total)

Fatalities across the registered racing greyhound population

	2021	2020	2019	2018
Treatment Costs	9	24	123	175
No Home Found	0	0	0	5
Designated Unsuitable for Homing	13	23	83	190
Put to Sleep on Vet's Advice Away from Track	74	79	142	144
Put to Sleep on Humane Grounds at Track	120	200	207	242
Sudden Death	91	41	91	72
Terminal Illness / Natural Causes / Other	52	44	64	104
TOTAL	359 (5.6%)	411 (5.5%)	710 (9.9%)	932 (12.1%)

What the data shows

i) GBGB has met its welfare targets

In 2019, GBGB set itself two challenging targets to be achieved within the next three years. The targets used the 2018 data as their baseline. The data for 2021, which represents Year 3, shows that GBGB has met both targets:

- To halve, by the end of 2021, the number of greyhounds put to sleep because of the high cost of treatment or because no home could be found. In 2018, this figure was 180 and in 2021, just nine greyhounds were put to sleep for this reason with none put to sleep because no home could be found. This is a decrease of 95% - significantly higher than the 50% target. GBGB's ultimate aim is to bring this figure down to zero.

- To halve, by the end of 2021, the number of greyhounds being put to sleep on humane grounds at the track due to injuries. In 2018, this figure was 242 and in 2021 it was 120 – a decrease of 50%. This is a fatality rate of 0.03% down from 0.06% in 2018.

ii) GBGB has maintained a consistently high homing rate

GBGB has maintained a consistently high homing rate with 94.4% of greyhounds successfully homed on retirement in 2021. This is partly due to the Greyhound Retirement Scheme which ensures the costs associated with a greyhound's retirement are met before their racing career begins. Since its launch in September 2020, over £2 million has been paid out through the scheme helping to home over 5,400 greyhounds.

iii) Overall deaths across the registered greyhound population continue to fall significantly

In total, over the course of 2021, 359 GBGB registered greyhounds were put to sleep or died naturally. This number is down from 411 in 2020 and 710 in 2019.

GBGB records all deaths of registered greyhounds including for reasons unrelated to racing. This data therefore includes deaths due to long-term illness or natural causes which affect working and non-working dogs alike.

iv) The injury rate for the sport remains consistent whilst the track fatality rate has significantly reduced

The 2021 data shows the track injury rate for the sport has remained consistent at 1.23%. Further preventing and minimising track injuries remains a key focus for GBGB and it is hoped that, through many of the initiatives being introduced through its new welfare strategy, 'A Good Life for Every Greyhound', this figure can be brought down in the next few years.

In addition to this, the track fatality rate has halved from 0.06% in 2018 to 0.03% in 2021. This is due to several factors including safer racing surfaces, enhanced veterinary expertise and GBGB's Injury Recovery Scheme (IRS) which provides financial support for the veterinary treatment of career-ending injuries sustained at GBGB-licensed tracks. Since its launch in 2018, GBGB has paid out nearly £427,000 as part of the scheme.

The success of the IRS is further demonstrated by the significant decrease in the number of greyhounds put to sleep due to the high costs of veterinary treatment. This has fallen from 175 in 2018 to just nine in 2021. GBGB does not find it acceptable that any dog should be put to sleep on economic grounds and is working to bring this figure down to zero.

v) Fewer greyhounds are being put to sleep following a poor prognosis away from the racecourse

In some cases, following an injury at the track and an initial examination by the track veterinarian, a greyhound will be taken home by its owner or trainer to be examined by another veterinarian who will either advise further treatment or for the greyhound to be put to sleep. The data for 2021 shows that the number of cases where euthanasia is prescribed following a poor prognosis by an external veterinarian away from the racecourse has fallen from 144 in 2018 to 74 in 2021 (a reduction of 49%).

As well as seeking to prevent injuries occurring, a key aspect of GBGB's new welfare strategy is to expand the sport's veterinary expertise and resources so that more greyhounds can be treated following an injury. To support this work, GBGB will continue to share best practice and educate trainers and owners so that more greyhounds can lead fulfilling lives as pets following a career-ending injury.

vi) For the third year running, no greyhounds were put to sleep because no home could be found for them

GBGB is committed to ensuring that every greyhound that can be homed, should be homed. Over the past few years, we have further embedded this commitment within the sport and are pleased that, for the third year running, no registered greyhound was put to sleep because no home could be found for it after it retired from racing.

vii) Fewer greyhounds are being designated 'unsuitable for homing'

The number of greyhounds being put to sleep because they were deemed unsuitable for homing has decreased by 93% from 190 in 2018 to just 13 in 2021. GBGB does, however, recognise that there will always be rare cases where a greyhound is behaviourally unsuited to life in a domestic environment (e.g. because they have displayed aggressive or dangerous behaviour). GBGB will continue to work with its homing partners so that these greyhounds can be properly assessed by expert canine behaviourists.

viii) Fewer greyhounds are going onto breeding or independent racing following retirement from licensed racing

The number of greyhounds being sold to independent racing or being sold or retained by their current owner or trainer for breeding has decreased by nearly 40% from 365 in 2018 to 221 in 2021. As GBGB's new welfare strategy states, GBGB does not find it acceptable that greyhounds should be leaving a regulated environment with clear safeguards around environmental standards and kennel inspections to enter an unregulated environment in which such protections are not required and where welfare standards cannot be verified.