



## **Racist, Discriminatory and Abusive Messages: Guidance for the Licensed Greyhound Racing Community**

As the regulator of licensed greyhound racing, the Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB) seeks to promote and protect the welfare of everyone involved in the sport at all times. This means treating everyone with respect and calling out any instances of racist, discriminatory or abusive behaviour.

Someone who receives racist, discriminatory or abusive messages will find it very distressing and the GBGB is prepared to take the necessary action against those who behave inappropriately.

If you find yourself a recipient of such a message, please read the guidance below on how to report the issue and how to access the support which is available to you.

### **When should I report abuse to the police?**

The police have specific powers to investigate people for sending or making abusive messages which can lead to them being cautioned, fined or facing more serious consequences.

The laws are specific and the police are likely to take action only in the most serious of cases. It is still advisable to report abuse to them when it falls into any of the three categories outlined below.

### **How do I contact the police?**

You can report abuse to your local police force:

<https://www.police.uk/pt/contact-the-police/>

You can also phone 101 for non-emergencies.

If you feel you are at any immediate risk of harm, you should call 999.

### **Will the police take action?**

The most relevant law covers malicious communications. These are messages posted on social media or sent via email, text message, telephone or post and can be a criminal offence. There are three main situations in which police will consider acting under this law:

1. Is the message indecent, grossly offensive, obscene, racist, homophobic, threatening or menacing?
2. Is this a case of harassment? To establish this there must be two or more related occurrences. The messages do not necessarily have to be violent in nature but would need to have caused some alarm or distress.
3. Where the message is thought to be based on someone's prejudice towards the victim because of their race, sexual orientation, religion, disability or because they are transgender. If you are attacked verbally for your race, your sexuality, your religion or because you have a disability or are transgender, the police can charge someone with an offence under laws related to hate crime or racial hatred.

Find out more about this here: <https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/hco/hate-crime/what-is-hate-crime/>

If you think you have received an abusive message in any of these categories, you should report it to the police and the GBGB. The GBGB may be able to assist the police although the police will decide whether to take action. This is usually in the most serious cases only.

### **What action will the police take?**

The police will assess the seriousness of the case and decide whether to investigate or not. In some cases, they may issue a caution or warn the offender not to make further contact with the victim.

If someone is charged, the case is likely to come before a court. If convicted of an offence, a fine is the most likely outcome, though this would typically be accompanied by a warning not to repeat the offence.

In the most serious cases, which are likely to include threats of serious violence and hate crime, a prison sentence may be considered.

### **What information will they want from me?**

The more information and evidence you can provide, the more the police will have to work with. This includes (though not exclusively) such things as screen shots, recorded time and date, content of messages and any details of the sender.

You should report the matter as soon as you are able. If it has taken a number of weeks or months for something to be reported, then the police are less likely to commit a great deal of resource to the complaint.

### **When should I report abuse to the GBGB?**

The GBGB wants to protect our community from abusive messages, wherever possible. Our sport believes in mutual respect for each other, our rules, our officials, our participants and for our greyhounds. We expect people who come to our racecourses or engage with our participants on social media to show the same level of respect. We expect the same for our participants and those who work in racing.

The GBGB would like to know about those cases which have been reported to the police. The more serious the matter, the more likely that the GBGB would wish to act. However, our powers under our rules are much more limited than the police.

### **How do I contact the GBGB?**

You can contact the GBGB via [complaints@gbgb.org.uk](mailto:complaints@gbgb.org.uk) or call the GBGB Office on 020 7822 0900.

### **When will the GBGB take action?**

If a case has been reported to the police, we will want to work with them to support any action they decide to take. We also want to ensure that we have a clear picture of who is offending and how, so that we can take our own action to protect our participants and community.

If they are licensed with the GBGB we can still take action, as well as the police, though we have fewer powers, and the punishment may be lighter.

### **When should I report abuse to social media and email platforms?**

Social media platforms have their own codes of conduct for their users and have the power to take down posts and to bar people from using their service. They will take action but generally only after a complaint has been made to them.

### **How do I contact social media and email platforms?**

Social media platforms are coming under increasing pressure to ensure that they protect their users from harmful content, which includes abusive messages. Most will provide their users with tools to protect themselves and report inappropriate content anonymously. Please see below for where to report if the abuse is posted on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat.

**Facebook** allows you to report content that goes against their community standards, whilst also providing practical advice about how users can protect themselves from future communications from that sender:

<https://facebook.com/help/1417189725200547>

**Twitter** offers a reporting tool where multiple messages can be included in the same report to ensure that a pattern of behaviour can be included:

<https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security/report-abusive-behavior>

**Instagram** asks that all abusive behaviour is reported to them to help them regulate their platform:

<https://help.instagram.com/contact/584460464982589>

**Snapchat** hosts a support site where you can contact the company using its 'I need help' page. It also has a function to report individual snaps as well as troublesome accounts: <https://support.snapchat.com/en-GB/a/report-abuse-in-app>

**Gmail** and **Hotmail** have a reporting process for reporting abusive emails that come from senders using their services.

### **Will social media and email platforms take action?**

When signing up to use a social media platform or creating an email address, users will be required to agree to the terms and conditions of that platform. These will often include a way of regulating behaviour such as community standards or guidelines. If the messages that are sent are in breach of these terms and conditions, the platform has the power to block access to certain features, disable an account or contact the police.

### **Additional support**

Receiving abusive messages can be extremely disturbing and upsetting. If you or anyone you know has been affected by such messages, please make use of the support available below:

**Mind** provides a confidential information and support line: 0300 123 3393  
(lines open 9am – 6pm, Monday – Friday)

**The Samaritans** works to make sure that there's always someone there for anyone who needs someone. Call 116 123 anytime day or night.

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