

Independently verified track injury and retirement data for 2022

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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.

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.

The Greyhound Commitment, which sets out GBGB's blueprint for raising welfare standards, was launched in 2018. The first set of data which was impacted by the Commitment is therefore 2019.

Track Injury data

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Total number of runs*	362,427	359,083	318,346**	410,607	426,139
Total number of injuries sustained at GBGB tracks (including minor injuries)	4,354	4,422	3,575	4,970	4,963
Injury Rate (% against total dog runs)	1.20%	1.23%	1.12%	1.21%	1.16%
Total number of fatalities at GBGB tracks	99	120	200	207	242
Fatality rate (% against total dog runs)	0.03%	0.03%	0.06%	0.05%	0.06%

* Please note that the injury data refers to the number of individual injuries, rather than the number of dogs injured.

** During the pandemic, racing was suspended for over two months in Spring 2020. There were therefore fewer runs in 2020.

Retirement data

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Total number of greyhounds successfully retired from the sport	5,289 (95% of total greyhounds leaving the sport)	6,014 (94% 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

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Treatment Costs	10	9	24	123	175
No Home Found	0	0	0	0	5
Designated Unsuitable for Homing	20	13	23	83	190
Put to Sleep on Vet's Advice Away from Track	43	74	79	142	144
Put to Sleep on Humane Grounds at Track	99	120	200	207	242
Sudden Death	72	91	41	91	72
Terminal Illness / Natural Causes / Other	62	52	44	64	104

What the data shows

i) GBGB has maintained a consistently high rate of greyhounds being successfully retired from the sport

95% of greyhounds were successfully retired from the sport in 2022 – in line with the previous two years. This is partly due to the Greyhound Retirement Scheme (GRS) which ensures the costs associated with a greyhound's retirement are met before they step foot on the track. Since its launch in September 2020, over £3.3 million has been paid out through the scheme helping to home over 8,300 greyhounds. When launched, GBGB promised that the GRS would bring about a step change in the way greyhounds are homed and the data for the past couple of years shows this to be the case. The removal from GBGB's list of approved homing centres of those charities calling for greyhound racing to be banned has not made any difference to the homing data. The vast majority of retired greyhounds are looked after and found loving forever homes by independent homing centres.

ii) The injury rate remains consistent with last year

The 2022 data shows the track injury rate for the sport has remained consistent at 1.2%. Further preventing and minimising track injuries remains a key focus for GBGB and, through its work with STRI as well as training programmes for grounds staff, it continues to ensure that greyhounds run on the safest possible surfaces. Injury detection and prevention is a key strand of GBGB's welfare strategy, 'A Good Life for Every Greyhound' and over the next few years it is hoped that track injuries can be reduced.

iii) Overall deaths across the registered greyhound population are the lowest ever

In total, over the course of 2022, 306 GBGB registered greyhounds were put to sleep or died naturally. In 2021, the equivalent figure was 359 and in 2018, it was 932 representing a reduction of 67%.

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) More greyhounds are being successfully treated following a track injury

Fewer greyhounds are being put to sleep following an injury at the track. The number of greyhounds put to sleep at the track on humane grounds is 99, compared to 120 in 2021 and 242 in 2018 – a reduction of 59%. The track fatality rate is therefore 0.03% - half what it was two years ago when it was 0.06%.

Away from the track, in 2022, 43 greyhounds were put to sleep on vet's advice compared to 74 in 2021 and 144 in 2018 (a reduction of 70%). This is due to a number of factors including GBGB's Injury Recovery Scheme (IRS) which provides financial support for the veterinary treatment of injuries sustained at GBGB-licensed tracks. Since its launch in 2018, GBGB has paid out nearly £700,000 towards veterinary costs.

GBGB has also significantly enhanced its veterinary resource and expertise across the sport through the appointment of a Veterinary Executive as well as a network of Regional Regulatory Vets.

v) GBGB continues to meet its pledge around economic euthanasia

In 2019, GBGB set itself the target to halve within three years the number of greyhounds put to sleep because of the high cost of treatment or because no home could be found. Last year, GBGB met this target and decreased the number of greyhounds put to sleep for these reasons by 95% since 2018 (significantly higher than the 50% target). The 2022 data, which shows that only ten greyhounds were put to sleep on these grounds, indicates that GBGB continues to meet its pledge.

As part of its new 'Responsible Homing Policy', GBGB has made it a requirement for trainers to explain why they have not taken up financial support offered through the Injury Retirement Scheme (which

provides financial support to cover the costs of veterinary treatment for injuries sustained at GBGB-licensed tracks).

For the fourth year running, no greyhounds were put to sleep because no home could be found for them.

vi) The number of greyhounds designated 'unsuitable for homing' remains low

The number of greyhounds being put to sleep because they were deemed unsuitable for homing remains low at 20 (out of a total of 5,595 greyhounds leaving the sport) – compared to 83 in 2019 and 190 in 2018. 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). As part of its welfare strategy, GBGB is working with academics to look into the factors why a greyhound is not successfully homed.

vii) The number of greyhounds going onto breeding or independent racing following retirement from licensed racing remains low

The number of greyhounds being sold to independent racing or being sold or retained by their current owner or trainer for breeding remains low at 1.9%. As the sport's regulator, 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. To reflect this, as part of changes to the 'Green' retirement form, GBGB has removed the option of 'Independent Racing'.