

DELIVERING 'A GOOD LIFE FOR EVERY GREYHOUND'

Progress Report: October 2025

GBGB launched its long-term welfare strategy, *A Good Life for Every Greyhound*, in May 2022. This sets out GBGB's commitment to further strengthen the welfare of its canine athletes within all five domains of animal welfare, throughout each stage of their lives – from birth, throughout their racing career and into retirement. The strategy is divided into short, medium and long-term objectives, and GBGB has published regular updates on the implementation and impact of each initiative. Just over three years since the strategy was launched, this report reflects on the impact of the medium-term objectives and sets out how GBGB will now begin to meet the long-term objectives.

Education

Education and knowledge sharing underpin good welfare practice and the provision of free CPD opportunities for all stakeholders and licence holders is a key commitment within the strategy. In 2023, GBGB appointed a Learning and Development Manager to further develop and oversee our CPD programme. This programme continues to be delivered in collaboration with nationally and internationally recognised specialists in animal welfare, behaviour and veterinary science.

In 2024 alone, stakeholders across the sport accrued 582 hours of free CPD.

Since the launch of the strategy, GBGB has delivered the following education events to licence holders:

- **Two in-person trainer workshops** with talks by Dr Teresa Hollands (Surrey University) on greyhound nutrition and Dr Richard Payne (Nottingham University and GBGB Veterinary Advisor) on maintaining the greyhound athlete.
- **11 webinars for trainers and kennelhands** on topics including greyhound behaviour and emotional health (delivered by Dr Sarah Heath, internationally recognised Veterinary Specialist in Behavioural Medicine), breeding (by Professor Gary England, internationally recognised Veterinary Specialist in Reproduction), kennel biosecurity and early lameness detection (by Dr Richard Payne) and parasitology (by Dr Ian Wright, Chair of The European Scientific Counsel Companion Animal Parasites).
- **Seven in-person training days for racecourse veterinarians** with presentations delivered by external speakers including Professor Emmeline Hill (racing greyhound genetics); Linda Belton (RCVS - guidance); Dr Sarah Heath (homing greyhounds and assessing suitability); Dr Emma Punt (BARTA) and James Russell (Vetlife).
- **11 online workshop sessions for track maintenance staff** held by GBGB's

Track Liaison Officer and independent experts the Sports Turf Research Institute. These are complemented by GBGB's new '*Track Maintenance Guide*', which is now used by all staff involved in preparing and maintaining the track running surface at GBGB-licensed greyhound racecourses.

GBGB also holds monthly training sessions for Stipendiary Stewards on policy and the Rules of Racing as well as joint training sessions with the auditors of our UKAS-approved kennel inspections, SCI.

Despite the scheduling constraints faced by greyhound trainers, live online attendance at webinars (which offers a Q&A opportunity with experts) is steadily growing. To improve access for those who cannot attend the live sessions, where possible and in response to stakeholder requests, GBGB-run sessions have also been made available 'on demand' and shared with international greyhound regulators through the International Regulators' Welfare Forum.

In addition to GBGB-organised events, several GBGB licensed racecourses have organised their own welfare workshops for their trainers, owners and staff, which have incorporated talks from GBGB Regional Regulatory Vets (RRVs) and track surface experts from the Sports Turf Research Institute.

Training for racecourse staff

In March 2025, GBGB launched a new

online course for racecourse staff on greyhound handling at the track. This course is available free of charge to anyone working with greyhounds at a GBGB-licensed stadium. As of mid-August 2025, 102 individuals have enrolled on this course, and 64 have so far completed it. GBGB issues CPD certificates to attendees and is continuing to encourage participation in upcoming events.

New qualification for kennelhands

To further extend its education offer, in September 2025, GBGB launched a new, fully funded *training course* for licensed kennelhands, aimed at enhancing their professional skills and promoting the highest standards of greyhound welfare. Open to all experience levels, the course is designed to provide the specific skills and knowledge required for the day-to-day care of racing greyhounds within GBGB-licensed residential kennels.

Incorporated into the wider programme is the *Level 2 Certificate of Technical Competence in Animal Health, Husbandry and Handling*, meaning that learners who successfully complete the course will also receive a nationally recognised and transferable qualification which is respected across the animal care sector. This certification is accredited by *City & Guilds*, a leading awarding body for vocational qualifications.

A Winning Start

Whilst GBGB’s regulatory remit does not extend to the breeding and rearing of greyhound pups in Britain, the GBGB Board believes that it shares responsibility with breeders, rearers and owners to ensure that all racing greyhounds have the best possible start to their lives. Through the welfare strategy, GBGB committed to furthering its support of high-welfare British breeding, providing education opportunities for breeders and rearers and developing consistent welfare standards between Great Britain and Ireland.

GBGB will shortly be publishing a new comprehensive Code of Practice for Breeders and Rearers of Racing Greyhounds, informed by research field visits to established greyhound breeders and rearers and developed with expert welfare and veterinary input. This document provides advice and guidance for raising healthy and well-socialised greyhounds and will be shared with our international regulator colleagues to promote best practice. The draft contents were discussed at the 2025 International Greyhound Regulators’ meeting.



Registrations

As the table below illustrates, the number of greyhounds being registered each year has steadily declined since 2021, in line with GBGB’s ambition (and that of other international greyhound regulators) to move the sport to a sustainable position

British-bred greyhounds and minimise the potential welfare and biosecurity risks associated with international transportation of greyhounds. GBGB continues to work closely with Greyhound Racing Ireland (GRI) to ensure the traceability of greyhounds entering GBGB racing from Ireland or returning to Ireland for racing or breeding.

Earmarking

As set out in the strategy, GBGB ultimately wants earmarking removed as an identification method for British-bred greyhounds. Under the UK’s Welfare of Racing Greyhounds Regulations 2010, GBGB cannot enact this change itself and so continues to pursue this issue with Defra in an attempt to drive legislative change.

Whilst awaiting government action, to safeguard greyhound welfare during the earmarking process, in January 2025 GBGB announced the requirement for all British-bred pups to be provided with appropriate veterinary analgesia, as recommended and prescribed by their veterinary surgeon. Across the medium term of the welfare strategy, GBGB has

Year	New greyhounds registered with GBGB	British-bred	% British-bred	Irish-bred	% Irish-bred
2021	6769	887	13.1%	5882	86.9%
2022	6307	810	12.8%	5497	87.2%
2023	5899	1038	17.6%	4861	82.4%
2024	5133	795	15.5%	4338	84.5%

Pleasingly, the success of British-bred greyhounds on the track has continued to follow an upward trajectory. Led by the Greyhound Stud Book and the British Greyhound Racing Forum, several competitions are open to British-bred greyhounds exclusively to showcase their quality. During 2024, around 20% of all Category One finals were won by British-bred greyhounds. GBGB continues to celebrate the achievements of British-bred greyhounds on the track, with Queen Jessie winning Best Dam of British Bred title at the GBGB Greyhound of the Year Awards 2024 and Romeo Command being named the British Bred Greyhound of the Year 2024 for the second year running.

where the number of greyhounds entering the sport each year is no greater than the number of homes that can be found for those retiring from the sport. To safeguard against greyhounds over-racing, GBGB introduced the ‘four-day rule’.

In 2024, 15.5% of the greyhounds registered with GBGB were from British-bred litters (up from 13.1% in 2021), with the remainder originating from either Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland. The overall number of Irish greyhounds entering racing in Britain has decreased by 26% since 2021. These changes are in alignment with GBGB’s welfare strategy which sought to increase the number of

continued to explore a higher-welfare alternative to earmarking to be used when legislation allows. It is running a project to develop the necessary technology to implement nose-print recognition throughout the industry.



Research

Funding research by independent academics to increase the evidence base to optimise greyhound welfare is a core commitment within GBGB's welfare strategy. During the medium-term strategy period, academics from the University of Surrey, University of Nottingham and University College Dublin have undertaken research on:

- Greyhound nutrition;
- Mapping inbreeding levels to understand the impact of inbreeding on health and welfare traits and longevity in greyhounds;
- Possible genetic causes of predisposition to injury;
- The adoption of modern veterinary technologies to detect subclinical injuries and facilitate early treatment to prevent them from becoming clinically significant;
- Ways of improving data collection and analysis to better understand and address the multifactorial causes of injury.

Preliminary results from these studies have been shared with stakeholders nationally and internationally, to inform discussions around best practice, and are currently in the process of peer-review for publication and presentation at national and international conferences. Links to publications and presentations will be disseminated to stakeholders as they become available.

Welfare at Kennels

Increased kennel inspections

In February 2024, GBGB achieved United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) accreditation for its Greyhound Trainers' Residential Kennels Scheme. This extension means that independent assessments against recognised standards are now carried out for both residential kennels and racecourses (including stadia paddock kennels). GBGB's continued commitment to welfare and care is upheld through applied and annually inspected independent standards. Enforcement of standards is via the Greyhound Regulatory Board's independent disciplinary process.

In 2024, £503,910 was awarded via the Trainers' Assistance Fund for trainers to upgrade their kennel and paddock facilities.

In 2024, on average, each licensed trainer received three visits to their kennels by GBGB field staff as well as an audit inspection by SCI and an external veterinary kennel inspection. In addition to routine visits, GBGB carries out risk-led more frequent monitoring visits of specific kennels if it is deemed necessary.

Enhanced veterinary oversight

Through the strategy, GBGB has appointed a new team of Regional Regulatory Vets (RRVs). One part of their role is to ensure that any Rules of Racing relating to greyhound welfare are being upheld both at the racecourse and trainers' residential kennels. Their remit is also to monitor the welfare of all greyhounds at those premises. Each RRV is responsible for a dedicated geographical area, within which they provide an additional source of veterinary oversight and advice to trainers and racecourse licensees.

The RRVs have been given explicit responsibility for oversight of the welfare of any retired greyhounds within residential kennels who, unlike active racers, are not regularly seen by a veterinary surgeon during visits to a racecourse. During the medium-term delivery period, RRVs have worked with trainers and owners – using the framework of GBGB's [Guide to Enhancing the Welfare of Retired Greyhounds in Racing Kennels](#) (which was developed with input from canine charities within the Greyhound Forum and published in June 2025) to maximise positive, as well as minimise negative, welfare impacts.

In 2023, the first-appointed RRVs began routine kennel visits at trainers' kennels. The full team was in place and working in the field from June 2024, which has

significantly increased the number of visits those trainers receive throughout the year from GBGB field staff.

Since the launch of the welfare strategy in 2022, there has been a 73.2% increase in the total number of routine GBGB visits to residential kennels.

New annual veterinary kennel inspections

In January 2025, GBGB's team of RRVs began conducting their trainers' annual veterinary kennel inspections, which were previously carried out by either a veterinarian from the trainer's local practice or a track veterinarian. The new RRV annual veterinary kennel inspections are in a more thorough format than previously used and include, for example:

- An inspection of every greyhound accommodated within the kennels;
- A review of the trainer's husbandry and management practices, such as preventative healthcare protocols, nutrition and environmental enrichment plans;
- Review of the trainer's medicine management;
- Promotion of anti-microbial stewardship, in line with British Veterinary Association (BVA) guidance.

Welfare at Kennels (cont...)

Following their inspection, trainers must provide evidence that any remedial action required by the RRV has been undertaken, within the time period specified by the RRV. It is a condition

of licence that every trainer must have an in-date annual veterinary residential kennel inspection. If a trainer fails to carry out any required remedial action requested by the RRV, the matter will be

referred to their Stipendiary Steward and onward through the independent Greyhound Regulatory Board disciplinary process as appropriate.

Safety at the Track

GBGB works closely with its licensed racecourses to ensure that greyhounds run on the safest possible track surfaces. GBGB's comprehensive [Track Maintenance Guide](#), published in 2024 and shared with international greyhound regulators, is the central reference document for the preparation and maintenance of greyhound racing surfaces.

Expert oversight

Consultants from track surface experts, STRI, visit each racecourse multiple times a year to review their track preparation and maintenance. As part of the welfare strategy, within the medium-term delivery period the number of visits each racecourse receives has doubled to four per year allowing independent experts to assess the track in all seasons.

Each licensed racecourse has an annual certification inspection by a GBGB Stipendiary Steward to meet its UKAS licence requirements. In addition, they receive routine visits from their allocated GBGB Stipendiary Steward and their allocated RRV. In 2024, GBGB began a process whereby racecourse Improvement Notices can be issued by a racecourse's allocated Stipendiary Steward following routine racecourse inspections, so that any concerns can be promptly acted upon.

Investment in track safety

Each racecourse has access to GBGB's Track Safety Committee Fund, which funds investments into track equipment and safety infrastructure. In 2024, grants totalling £168,000 were issued for new wall safety padding, track plates, watering bowsers, pickup curtains and Verti Drain and Terra Spike

decompaction machines, as well as two sand cleaning machines which can be used by any stadium that requires them. The Track Safety Committee has also supplied each racecourse with an inclinometer and penetrometer (which assess track conditions) to support their track monitoring and decision-making.

GBGB's Track Liaison Officer worked alongside STRI and Arena Racing Company to support a new greyhound racecourse, Dunstall Park in Wolverhampton, as it prepared to open its doors to the public in September 2025, ensuring that the track was developed and maintained to the highest evidence-based standards.

Injury Retirement Scheme

The GBGB aims to constantly continue to drive down injury rates, and some examples of the research which the GBGB are funding to enable this are detailed above. Where a greyhound sustains a career-ending orthopaedic



injury at a GBGB-licensed racecourse, GBGB provides funding through its Injury Retirement Scheme (IRS) to support veterinary treatment so that these greyhounds can go on to enjoy a full and active life in retirement. Since its launch in 2018, GBGB has paid over £1.4 million through the Injury Retirement Scheme (IRS) to support the veterinary treatment of greyhounds.

In line with the strategy's key theme of shared responsibility, to further ensure that cost is not a barrier to veterinary treatment, within the medium-term funding period, GBGB decided that every racecourse must also have its own injury scheme in place to supplement GBGB's IRS assistance. This requirement is currently going through the Greyhound Regulatory Board process and will become a Rule of Racing in 2026.



Life after Racing

In 2023, the GBGB launched its **Responsible Homing Policy** which sets out the standards every owner must follow when finding a suitable home for their greyhound when they retire from racing. Every owner must inform the GBGB of the retirement destination of their greyhounds, meaning that the GBGB has traceability of all registered greyhounds as they exit the sport. Once a greyhound officially retires from racing, its microchip information is transferred to another government-approved pet database.

Strengthening oversight of retirements

In 2024, GBGB strengthened the follow-up procedures it uses to check that retired greyhounds are settling well into their new retirement placement. This is especially vital for those greyhounds that are found a new home by their racing owner or trainer to ensure that the placement is suitable and successful. Owners of greyhounds homed privately now receive multiple follow-up communications from the GBGB's Welfare Department at 2, 6 and 12 months after homing.

To enhance the welfare of those greyhounds remaining at their trainer's residential kennels while they await homing, with input from the Greyhound Forum, GBGB developed **new guidelines** for trainers and their staff, focusing on delivering tailored environmental enrichment to all retired greyhounds remaining in kennels. The welfare of these retired greyhounds is a particular focus of GBGB's RRVs (see above).

In alignment with the stated aim of the welfare strategy, GBGB has removed the option for greyhounds to be retired to participate in unlicensed (unregulated) racing from its retirement reporting form. Any licensee involved in such activity is subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Exportation of greyhounds

GBGB continues to work with the British government and canine charities within the Greyhound Forum to promote the enforcement of relevant national legislation around the issue of greyhound exportation. The scope of GBGB's regulatory remit means it has

no legal powers to stop a greyhound being exported once they have retired. Nonetheless, GBGB has worked within the medium-term delivery period to strengthen the systems and enforcement which it is able to use to safeguard the welfare of greyhounds during exportation.

In January 2025, **new stakeholder guidance** around the export of retired greyhounds outside of Great Britain was issued. This was accompanied by the introduction of a new procedure whereby owners must inform GBGB before the greyhound's proposed movement abroad using a newly developed form and review system to ensure the necessary due diligence has been carried out regarding the ongoing care of their greyhound. Failure to comply with this new system may subject owners to disciplinary procedures.

Behavioural assessments

In most cases, greyhounds retiring from the sport can transition successfully from a kennel environment to life in a domestic setting. The ease of this transition can be enhanced by early familiarisation with domestic environments. During the medium-term delivery period, Dr Sarah Heath FRCVS, an RCVS and European Veterinary Specialist in Behavioural Medicine, has provided educational opportunities about how this can best be done for national and international stakeholders within the sport of greyhound racing (see 'Education' above).

Even when early years preparation has been appropriate, a small number of greyhounds can still find the transition to domestic retirement life more challenging. Early identification of and provision of appropriate support for such greyhounds is an important part of responsibility sharing for greyhound welfare. GBGB already supports trainers to enlist the assistance of specialist homing centres who can offer help with these individual greyhounds, but to further this, GBGB is working with Dr Heath to develop a standardised behavioural assessment for racing greyhounds to ensure these greyhounds are given the correct support. As part of this work, Dr Heath has run training sessions with the GBGB veterinary team.

Greyhound Retirement Scheme

In the medium-term, GBGB's focus has been on:

- (i) Promoting positive welfare by ensuring greyhounds are optimally prepared for the transition to a domestic environment (as explained above).
- (ii) Increasing the number of homes offered to retired greyhounds.

Now in its fifth year, GBGB's Greyhound Retirement Scheme (GRS) plays a key role within both focus areas. The scheme attaches a financial bond, paid jointly by a greyhound's racing owner and GBGB, to each greyhound when they are first registered to race. The bond money is released upon a greyhound's retirement to a GRS-approved homing centre to help pay for the costs associated with their homing journey. To apply to become a GRS-approved centre, the homing charity must meet specific welfare standards (aligned with Association of Dogs and Cats Homes (ADCH) standards) and receives a site visit from GBGB.

In 2025, the total GRS combined contribution increased from £400 to £420 per greyhound. Any owners who show they have privately placed their greyhound in a suitable pet home and can provide evidence that neutering and any required dental work have taken place can have their contribution refunded.

In line with the aim of promoting British breeding, GBGB announced the continuation of a special dispensation for British-bred greyhounds joining the GRS, whereby GBGB pays the larger share of the bond money.



Life after Racing (continued)

GBGB continues to work closely with its growing list of over 100 approved homing centres to support their work and find as many loving homes for retiring greyhounds as possible. This has included granting over £73,000 to GRS-approved centres since 2018 to make improvements to their kennel and paddock facilities.

Share Your Life with a Greyhound

In November 2024, GBGB launched a nationwide marketing campaign called 'Share Your Life with a Greyhound' to promote the adoption of retired greyhounds. Since its launch, the campaign has secured wide-ranging press coverage and achieved significant reach across social media. As part of the campaign, GBGB created a new dedicated website (www.withagreyhound.org.uk) which links individuals to their closest GRS approved homing centre so they can take the first step toward welcoming a greyhound into their home. The site also provides adoption stories and key welfare information for new or prospective greyhound owners.



As of August 2025, the campaign website had received over 12,400 unique visitors. Of these, 38% have navigated to the page detailing where to find their nearest GRS adoption centre. From all visits to the 'Adoption Centres' page, 42% of users clicked through to a GRS homing centre's website.

In January 2025, GBGB teamed up with former England rugby star Joe Marler to help promote greyhound adoption. The campaign video, themed '*Adopt a Sporting Legend*', features Joe with a retired greyhound and received widespread media coverage, including in publications such as The Telegraph, The Sun, The Daily Express and the New York Times.



Outreach and events

Throughout the medium-term period, GBGB has been delighted to continue supporting GRS-approved homing centres with ongoing PR support and attendance at public events. This has included attendance at horseracing meetings as well as greyhound stadia across the country as part of GBGB's annual *National Greyhound Week*. Importantly, these events promote the breed and the essential work of homing centres, while also providing an opportunity for the public to meet the GBGB team and ask questions about the lives of greyhounds before, during, and after their racing careers.

Increase in Adoptions

While the full outcomes of the various workstreams in the medium-term of the strategy are not yet measurable, GBGB is pleased to see an uplift in homing numbers during 2025. Comparing January – June 2024 to January – June, adoptions from GRS-approved homing centres are up by 37%.

