

## **Regulation of the greyhound racing industry**

The racing greyhound industry in England and Wales consists of National Greyhound Racing Club (NGRC) registered tracks and independent tracks.

The industry currently regulates itself. However, the RSPCA has long had grave concerns about the welfare of racing greyhounds and is of the opinion that that self-regulation has not worked and is unlikely to work in the future.

The Environment Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Select Committee considered this issue when they held an inquiry into the Animal Welfare Bill in 2004-2005. The Committee of MPs stated that they "*consider external, independent regulation of these [greyhound racing] tracks is essential, and we do not consider that it would be fair to exclude NGRC-registered tracks from such regulation.*"<sup>1</sup> The RSPCA is also opposed to self-regulation of the racing greyhound industry.

The RSPCA believes that Government regulation of the racing greyhound industry (both NGRC registered and independent tracks) by means of secondary legislation must ensure the highest standards of welfare for all racing greyhounds by:

- registration of all tracks (either by the NGRC or some other responsible body)
- the introduction of a set of national standards that ensure the welfare of racing greyhounds to the same standard at all tracks
- the enforcement of those standards by means of annual licensing and risk-based inspection system
- accountability of the enforcement system, including publication of objective data
- euthanasia only to be undertaken on welfare grounds by a veterinary surgeon (or on the advice of a veterinary surgeon by a suitably qualified person)

In particular the following issues should be addressed to ensure high welfare:

- independent veterinary attendance at all greyhound race meetings and trials
- microchipping of all racing greyhounds
- proper consideration must be given to the track design and conditions by the licensing body to reduce track injuries
- restriction on the number of greyhounds entering the sport
- an adequately funded retirement scheme

The RSPCA believes that these points must be addressed in secondary legislation attached to the Animal Welfare Bill to ensure that the greyhound racing industry is open and accountable and that the public has confidence that the dogs' welfare is protected.

Please go to [www.greyhoundpetition.org](http://www.greyhoundpetition.org) and sign the RSPCA greyhound petition that is calling on the government to introduce regulation to protect the welfare of racing greyhounds.

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<sup>1</sup> Para 392, EFRA Select Committee Report on the Draft Animal Welfare Bill HC 52-I