

# The fate of racing greyhounds and working lurchers in Wales



All Party Group for Animal Welfare

A survey of greyhounds and lurchers entering local authority pounds in Wales



In association with  
Greyhound Rescue Wales  
Registered charity no. 1059733

It is feared that many greyhounds will be killed by their owners once they retire from the track.





EMPICS

Introduction	4
Executive summary	6
The study	8
The context of the study	10
Findings – greyhounds	12
Findings – lurchers	14
Main conclusions	16
Recommendations	18
Appendix one: Survey questions	20
Appendix two: Abandoned greyhounds in relation to population	21
Appendix three: Abandoned lurchers in relation to population	22
References	23

# Introduction

---

Lorraine Barrett AM,  
Chair of the All Party Group for Animal Welfare  
in the National Assembly for Wales

The All Party Group for Animal Welfare was the first All Party Group to be set up in the Assembly and I have been privileged to have chaired it from its inception. I would like to record my thanks here to members of the other political parties who have given me support over the past four years as officers of the group.



Lorraine Barrett AM, chair and Geraint Davies AM, vice-chair, with Annette Crosbie and members of Greyhound Rescue Wales at the launch.

All Party Groups have a long history in Westminster and exist both there and in the Assembly to allow members of all political parties to discuss issues that are usually not specifically covered by statutory committees. The RSPCA has supplied the administration and secretariat for both Groups and we have the support of many AMs across the four political parties and an associate membership of over 40 animal welfare charities and organisations, and the list is growing.

We decided to use the official launch of the All Party Group for Animal Welfare in February 2001 to highlight the fate of greyhounds once they were no longer wanted for racing. Annette Crosbie, known for her highly popular acting portrayal of Mrs Meldrew in the BBC's *One Foot in the Grave*, has long been an active and enthusiastic campaigner for greyhounds and she agreed to attend the launch. It was her presentation at our meeting and the information provided by Greyhound Rescue Wales, an associate member of the Group, that prompted us to find out more information and produce a report that could provide us with the hard facts. You will see those hard facts when you read this report. We all want the information contained in the report to be the foundation for cooperation between all interested parties to work together to improve the welfare of greyhounds in Wales.

Lorraine Barrett AM

Many racing greyhounds and working lurchers are successfully rehomed.



GEOFF DU FEU/RSPCA PHOTOLIBRARY

# Executive summary

---

The 'nine fates' of the racing greyhound and working lurcher. A racing greyhound or a working lurcher can expect to meet one of nine fates at the end of its working life, some of these are acceptable others are unacceptable.

The 'nine fates' of racing greyhounds and working lurchers

---

## Unacceptable

---

- 1 Abandoned and taken to local authority pound.
- 2 Abandoned and die without being found.
- 3 Euthanased by vet.
- 4 Killed by racing/working owner.
- 5 Abandoned, then found and kept by a member of the public.
- 6 Abandoned, then taken and rehomed directly by a rescue organisation.

---

## Acceptable

---

- 7 Kept by racing/working owner as a pet.
- 8 Handed to rescue organisation by racing/working owner, then rehomed successfully by rescue.
- 9 Rehomed successfully to a good home by racing/working owner.

**Hard facts.** This survey of local authority pounds allows an absolute score to be put on the first of these nine fates. It is the first time that research has been carried out on this issue in a rigorous way, by a near-complete survey of local authority pounds in a discrete geographical area.

**A major animal welfare problem exists.** The study shows that large numbers of greyhounds and lurchers are abandoned once they are no longer useful and proves beyond doubt that a major animal welfare problem exists. The study shows that the argument that most are kept as pets by their owners cannot be sustained.

**140 greyhounds are abandoned in Wales, and 2,800 in Britain, every year.** 140 greyhounds are abandoned and collected by local authority pounds in Wales each year. This suggests that about 2,800 greyhounds are abandoned and taken in to local authority pounds in Britain. The numbers of greyhounds taken into local authority pounds alone therefore shows that abandonment of former racing greyhounds constitutes a major animal welfare problem.

**Many more die in other ways but more research is needed.** Many more greyhounds will meet other unacceptable fates such as being abandoned and dying without being found or being killed by their owners. This makes it likely that the total number of greyhounds killed, or discarded in other ways at the end of their racing career in Wales is closer to 400 to 600 per year. This suggests that between 8,000 and 12,000 are probably killed or discarded in other ways in Britain as a whole. More research is needed to verify these estimates.



The abandonment of greyhounds and lurchers costs local authorities in Wales almost £100,000 a year.



ROBIN CULLEY/RSPCA PHOTOLIBRARY

**The research shows that the Swansea area is Wales' hotspot for abandoned greyhounds.**

The research shows that Swansea is by far the worst area for abandoned greyhounds in Wales. Wrexham, Flintshire, Merthyr Tydfil and Neath Port Talbot have the next highest figures for abandoned greyhounds.

**The greyhound racing industry is inextricably linked to the plight of these animals.** There is an independent greyhound track in, or adjacent to, each of the worst areas for abandoned greyhounds. This indicates a clear relationship between the existence of a greyhound track and the abandonment of greyhounds.

**The abandonment of these animals costs local authorities in Wales more than £30,000 a year, and local authorities in Britain more than half a million pounds a year.** The greyhounds taken into pounds in Wales will cost local authorities about £32,000 per year. Transposed to Britain as a whole this amounts to a total cost of £600,000. This cost falls to local authorities because the racing industry, and in particular the independent sector, fails to make proper provision for greyhounds when they retire.

**New controls are needed on independent greyhound racing.** The report calls upon the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the National Assembly for Wales to control the independent greyhound racing sector through new legislation in the forthcoming Animal Welfare Bill. It specifically calls for all independent tracks to be licensed by local authorities.

**The independent racing industry must take full responsibility for the costs of racing.** The report calls upon the independent greyhound racing industry to take full responsibility for the welfare of greyhounds through helping to raise funds to care for retired dogs and by taking effective action to stamp out abuse.

**Almost 300 lurchers are abandoned in Wales each year.** 290 lurchers are abandoned and collected by local authority pounds in Wales each year. There is therefore an even bigger problem with abandoned lurchers than with abandoned greyhounds.

**The research shows that the Merthyr Tydfil area is Wales' hotspot for abandoned lurchers.** Merthyr Tydfil has about three times as many lurchers per head of population being taken into the local pound as the next highest placed authority. Wrexham, Pembrokeshire, Powys and Blaenau Gwent have the next highest figures.

**Abandoned lurchers cost local authorities in Wales almost £70,000 a year, and local authorities in Britain well over a million pounds a year.** The lurchers taken into pounds in Wales will cost local authorities about £67,000. Transposed to Britain as a whole this amounts to £1,350,000. This cost falls to local authorities, largely because of the widespread abandonment of working lurchers once they are no longer able to hunt successfully.

**Action is needed to help lurchers.** The report also highlights the need to address the problem of abandoned lurchers. It calls upon established greyhound rescue organisations to take in lurchers as well as greyhounds and identifies the need for a dedicated 'lurcher rescue' organisation in Wales.

# The study

---

The study was carried out through the All Party Group for Animal Welfare at the National Assembly for Wales in association with Greyhound Rescue Wales.

This report of a survey of local authority pounds in Wales fills an important gap in our knowledge of the scale of the problem of abandoned greyhounds by presenting the total numbers of greyhounds taken in by local authority pounds in Wales over a 12-month period. The survey also asked about numbers of lurchers (greyhound cross-breeds) taken in by local authority pounds. These figures are shown separately.

The total numbers of greyhounds entering and leaving the greyhound racing industry in Britain has been estimated. However, until now, there have been no figures available for greyhounds meeting different fates once their racing career was over. This absence of hard figures has allowed some people to claim that only very small numbers of greyhounds were not properly cared for once their racing career ended.

However, Greyhound Rescue Wales' (GRW) experience since the organisation began in 1993, is that large numbers of greyhounds are abandoned once they finish racing, and that large numbers are also destroyed. Other greyhound rescue organisations have made similar arguments. However, in the absence of hard figures, neither the industry's nor the rescue organisation's claims could be substantiated. The need for credible research has therefore been clear for a long time.

This study is based on a questionnaire (appendix one). This was administered by post and follow-up telephone calls were made to maximise response. Nineteen out of the 22 Welsh local authorities responded, a response rate of 86 per cent. The figures are for a full 12-month period over 2000-2001. The study is based on Wales but findings are extrapolated to Britain as a whole where appropriate.





Many greyhounds and lurchers are abandoned and are then rehomed by a rescue organisation.

CHERYLA ERTELT/RSPCA PHOTOLIBRARY

# The context of the study



A racing greyhound or working lurcher will meet one of nine fates at the end of its working life.

DAVID DALTON/RSFCA PHOTOLIBRARY

## The nine 'fates' of the racing greyhound and working lurcher

Greyhounds, once they finish racing (and lurchers when they finish working) can expect to meet one of nine 'fates'. Some of these are acceptable, some are not. However some unacceptable fates, through good luck, have positive outcomes, for example, an abandoned greyhound may be taken into a local authority pound or a rescue organisation's kennels and eventually be found a home as a pet.

This study identifies how many greyhounds and lurchers are abandoned and subsequently go through local authority pounds in Wales each year (fate number one). However this is only part of the problem of abandoned and unwanted greyhounds and lurchers. Many will meet other fates which can be even worse.

Figure one summarises these fates.

### Fig one

#### The 'nine fates' of racing greyhounds and working lurchers

---

##### Unacceptable

---

- 1 Abandoned and taken to local authority pound.
- 2 Abandoned and die without being found.
- 3 Euthanased by vet.
- 4 Killed by racing/working owner.
- 5 Abandoned, then found and kept by a member of the public.
- 6 Abandoned, then taken and rehomed directly by a rescue organisation.

---

##### Acceptable

---

- 7 Kept by racing/working owner as a pet.
- 8 Handed to rescue organisation by racing/working owner, then rehomed successfully by rescue.
- 9 Rehomed successfully to a good home by racing/working owner.

The experience of GRW since 1993 has allowed the charity to gather a good deal of information, and to arrive at some tentative conclusions about the numbers of greyhounds meeting each fate.

---

Many greyhounds will be abandoned and die without being found. However, it is very difficult to estimate how many will meet this end (fate number two).

Some owners are also known to take unwanted greyhounds to the vet's to be euthanased (fate number three), although a common complaint among some owners is that this costs too much (about £40).

It is the fear of greyhound rescue organisations, that as many greyhounds will be killed by their owners once they 'retire' as are taken to local authority pounds. There has been information handed to rescue organisations about regular shootings of unsuccessful greyhounds after race nights in Wales (fate number four).

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility towards stray dogs. Many larger, longer-established animal welfare organisations will therefore allow stray dogs to spend a seven-day period in a local authority pound before taking them into their care. This is because the local authority may, after seven days, legally transfer ownership of the animal to a third party such as a welfare organisation. This avoids future complications as legal ownership of the animal is clearly established (if a dog does not go through a local authority pound a minimum period of 28 days is required before a member of the public or welfare organisation can claim ownership). However, many people are not aware of the legal situation. Consequently members of the public will frequently rescue a stray dog and keep it themselves and many smaller welfare organisations will take in strays directly and rehome them themselves without the dog ever entering a pound (fates five and six). Again there are clear indications that large numbers of greyhounds and lurchers meet

these fates, which although they may have a positive outcome, remain unacceptable because the dog is initially abandoned.

Greyhound Rescue Wales is also increasingly being asked to take retired dogs by their racing owners (fate number eight). The charity currently takes into its care about as many dogs directly from owners as are accepted from local authority pounds. The charity welcomes such requests and gladly takes the dogs when possible, but its ability to respond to this need is limited by resources.

*Of course, some racing owners take responsibility for their dogs and either keep them as family pets or take care to find them a good home as a family pet when they retire. However these are just two out of the nine fates that will befall a racing greyhound when it retires.*

This survey of local authority pounds then allows an absolute score to be put on one of these nine fates. It is the first time that such research has been carried out in a rigorous way by a near complete survey of local authority pounds in a distinct geographical area. Previous surveys have used large-scale postal surveys which resulted in a low response rate<sup>1</sup>.

Further research will be necessary to fill more of the remaining gaps. Nevertheless the findings of this survey mean that for the first time it is possible to prove beyond doubt that a major animal welfare problem exists.

## **The structure and scale of the greyhound racing industry**

Greyhound racing in Britain is divided into the registered sector and the independent (or unregistered) sector. Dogs racing in the registered sector

receive some protection from regulations designed to reduce the risk of injury while racing and to achieve acceptable kennelling standards. Many are also found homes on retirement by the Greyhound Trust which receives substantial funding to find homes for ex-registered sector dogs.

The independent sector is completely unregulated and standards are entirely dependent on the track manager. The independent sector makes no organised provision for the welfare of the dogs on retirement and their fate is entirely dependent on their owner. In its defence the independent sector has argued that most dogs are kept as family pets by their owners when they retire. However, the findings of this study will show that this argument cannot be sustained.

There are 31 registered greyhound tracks in Britain<sup>2</sup>, and 21 unregistered tracks<sup>3</sup>. Of these, four of the independent tracks are either in Wales or very close to Wales. They are: Bedwellte (near Tredegar), Ellesmere Port, Swansea, and Valley Stadium (near Caerffili). There are no registered tracks in or adjacent to Wales. The nearest registered tracks to Wales are in Manchester, Birmingham and Swindon.

Estimates about the total number of greyhounds leaving the industry each year vary between about 20,000 and about 30,000. For example, Greyhounds UK, using figures provided by the registered racing industry say that 9,000 greyhounds leave the registered sector each year and about the same number probably leave the independent sector<sup>4</sup>. Another group, Greyhound Action, estimate that about 30,000 greyhounds leave both sectors of the industry each year<sup>5</sup>. Historically, Greyhound Rescue Wales has used the more conservative estimate of 20,000

# Findings – greyhounds

## Overview

Figure two lists all the Welsh local authorities and the total number of greyhounds abandoned in each area over a 12-month period.

The local authorities are listed in ranked order according to the number of greyhounds abandoned each year in relation to the total population. So Swansea, ranked at number one has more abandoned greyhounds in relation to population than Flintshire ranked at number two. For example Swansea has a population of 223,300 and 32 abandoned greyhounds giving a ratio of one abandoned greyhound for every 6,978 people while Flintshire has a population of 148,600 and 12 abandoned greyhounds giving a ratio of one abandoned greyhound for every 12,383 people. Merthyr Tydfil which has a relatively small population is ranked in fourth place, above Neath Port Talbot even though more greyhounds in total were abandoned in Neath Port Talbot, because Neath Port Talbot has a much larger population.

Fig two: Greyhounds taken into local authority pounds in Wales

Local authority	Total no of greyhounds	Rank
Swansea	32	1
Flintshire	12	2
Wrexham	10	3
Merthyr Tydfil	4	4
Neath Port Talbot	9	5
Monmouthshire	5	6
Gwynedd	6*	7*
Ceredigion	4*	7*
Torfaen	4*	7*
Powys	6	10
Denbighshire	4	11
Carmarthenshire	7	12
Conwy	4	13
Pembrokeshire	4	14
Bridgend	4	15
Anglesey/Ynys Mon	2	16
Caerffili	5	17
Cardiff	9	18
Rhondda Cynon Taff	6	19
Blaenau Gwent	1	20
Vale of Glamorgan	1	21
Newport	0	22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>139</b>	

\*Estimates for non-respondent local authorities.

The three non-respondent authorities of Ceredigion, Gwynedd and Torfaen are assigned the average rate of abandonment in relation to population and are ranked accordingly. The full population figures and ratios upon which this table is based are shown in appendix two.

## The scale of the problem

- About 140 greyhounds are abandoned and collected by local authority pounds in Wales in a one-year period.
- Given that Wales has about five per cent of the population of Britain, it is therefore likely that about 2,800 greyhounds are abandoned and taken into local authority pounds in Britain. The number of greyhounds taken into local authority pounds alone therefore shows that abandonment of former racing greyhounds constitutes a major animal welfare problem.
- However, these figures do not include all the greyhounds meeting other unacceptable fates ie those that are abandoned and die without being found, those euthanased by vets and those killed by their owners. If these fates were included the total number of dogs killed, or discarded at the end of their racing career in Wales would probably be several times the 140 figure quoted. This suggests that a total figure of between 400 and 600 greyhounds meeting unacceptable fates in Wales each year and between 8,000 and 12,000 in Britain as a whole would be a conservative estimate.

## The location of the problem – five hotspots for abandoned greyhounds

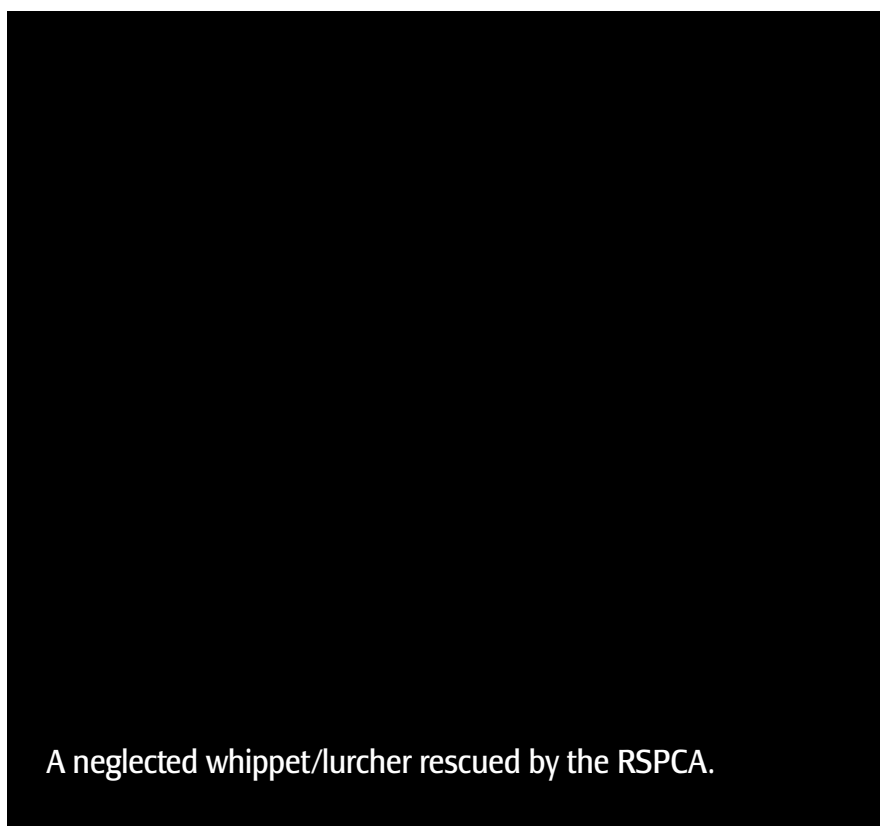
- Swansea stands out as a hotspot as it is by far the worst area for abandoned greyhounds in Wales. Swansea has one of the three greyhound tracks in Wales.
- Flintshire and Wrexham come second and third indicating a real problem in north-east Wales close to the independent greyhound track at Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, just over the border in England.

- Other areas where there is a significant problem are Merthyr Tydfil in fourth place, which is close to the two other Welsh greyhound tracks in Ystrad Mynach and Bedwellte, and Neath Port Talbot in fifth, which is close to the Swansea track.
- This pattern suggests a direct relationship between proximity to a greyhound track and the numbers of greyhounds being taken into pounds.
- Questions remain about the outcomes regarding Caerffili and Blaenau Gwent (close to two of the three Welsh tracks) which have an apparently low ratio of abandonment. However Greyhound Rescue Wales is aware that these are areas where the shooting of unsuccessful dogs could be commonplace. Responsible owners repeatedly provide information to Greyhound Rescue Wales about greyhounds being taken to isolated rural properties in this area, often immediately after failing in a race, where they are later shot and disposed of in return for a small cash payment.

### The financial cost

Local authorities in Britain spend a total of £27 million on stray dogs each year. This is the equivalent of £230 for every stray dog<sup>1</sup>.

- The greyhounds taken into pounds in Wales will cost local authorities about £32,000 per year.
- Transposed to Britain as a whole this amounts to a total cost of £600,000.
- This cost falls to local authorities because the racing industry, and in particular the independent sector, is failing to make proper provision for all greyhounds when they retire.



RSPCA

# Findings – lurchers

## Overview

Although the majority of dogs rescued by Greyhound Rescue Wales are pure-breed greyhounds, Greyhound Rescue Wales also aims to rescue greyhound cross-breeds (lurchers) whenever possible. Lurchers are traditionally bred and kept for hunting rabbits and also have a limited ‘useful working life’.

The survey therefore also enquired about the numbers of lurchers going through local authority pounds.

Figure three lists all the Welsh local authorities and the total number of lurchers abandoned in each area over a 12-month period.

As with figure two (greyhounds), the local authorities are listed in ranked order according to the number of lurchers abandoned each year in relation to the total population (full population figures etc are listed in appendix three).

**Fig three**  
Lurchers taken into local authority pounds in Wales

Local authority	Total no. of lurchers	Rank
Merthyr Tydfil	39	1
Wrexham	30	2
Pembrokeshire	24	3
Powys	17	4
Blaenau Gwent	9	5
Caerffili	20	6
Carmarthenshire	20	7
Bridgend	14	8
Gwynedd	12*	9*
Torfaen	9*	9*
Ceredigion	8*	9*
Neath Port Talbot	13	12
Newport	12	13
Cardiff	25	14
Denbighshire	6	15
Monmouthshire	5	16
Conwy	6	17
Vale of Glamorgan	6	18
Flintshire	7	19
Swansea	8	20
Anglesey/Ynys Mon	2	21
Rhondda Cynon Taff	1	22
<b>Totals</b>	<b>293</b>	

\*Estimates for non-respondent local authorities.



Greyhound Rescue Wales aims to rescue cross-breeds (lurchers) as well as pure-bred greyhounds.



## The scale of the problem

- More than twice as many lurchers as greyhounds are taken into local authority pounds in Wales.

Number of greyhounds going through local authority pounds	139
Number of lurchers going through local authority pounds	293

- The abandonment of lurchers also constitutes a major animal welfare problem in Wales. GRW suspected there was a significant problem in relation to lurchers being abandoned once they were no longer useful for working (hunting). However, the number of lurchers being taken into pounds was much larger than expected. This does not diminish the seriousness of the numbers of greyhounds being abandoned, but it actually means that there is an even bigger problem in relation to lurchers.
- There is a need for a dedicated Welsh lurcher rescue organisation. GRW takes in lurchers as well as greyhounds but many other greyhound rescue charities only accept pure-bred greyhounds. However, the sheer number of lurchers entering local authority pounds calls for a dedicated organisation to address the problem.

## The location of the problem – five hotspots for abandoned lurchers

- Merthyr Tydfil stands out as a hotspot with about three times as many lurchers per head of population being taken into the local pound as the next highest placed authority. Blaenau Gwent is also in the top five local authority areas for abandoned lurchers suggesting a major problem in the Heads of the Valleys area where ‘lamping’ (hunting rabbits at night with lurchers) is a well-established activity.
- Wrexham is ranked second and obviously also has a serious problem. Given that Wrexham was ranked third for abandoned greyhounds (Flint, also in north-east Wales was ranked second), this indicates a major problem with the abandonment of both greyhounds and lurchers in the north-east Wales region.
- Two rural local authority areas, Pembrokeshire and Powys, are ranked third and fourth indicating a major problem in rural areas where hunting with lurchers is also well established.

## The financial cost

- The lurchers taken into pounds in Wales will cost local authorities about £67,000.
- Transposed to Britain as a whole this amounts to £1,350,000.
- This cost falls to local authorities, largely because of the widespread abandonment of working lurchers once they are no longer able to hunt successfully.

# Main conclusions

---

- 1) The fate of former racing greyhounds constitutes a major animal welfare problem because of the large numbers that are discarded by the racing industry and the suffering that results. Although many dogs will die, local authorities, together with animal rescue charities and organisations, bear the cost of rescuing as many as possible of these dogs. Both should not be expected to cope with a problem of this scale created by unregulated commercial interests.
  - About 140 greyhounds are abandoned and collected by local authority pounds in Wales in a one-year period.
  - Across Britain as a whole, it is likely that about 2,800 greyhounds are abandoned and taken in to local authority pounds.
  - The number of greyhounds discarded without proper provision by the industry each year is likely to be several times these figures, a conservative estimate being 400 to 600 in Wales and 8,000 to 12,000 in Britain. This is because these figures do not include all the greyhounds meeting other unacceptable fates eg those that are abandoned and die without being found, euthanased by vets, and killed by owners.
- 2) In Wales there are particularly high numbers of abandoned greyhounds in south-west Wales, in north-east Wales and in the south Wales valleys – this suggests a link between abandoned greyhounds and the proximity of an unregistered greyhound track.
  - The worst five areas for abandoned greyhounds are all close to unregistered tracks: Swansea and Neath Port Talbot (Swansea), Flintshire and Wrexham (Ellesmere Port), and Merthyr Tydfil (Ystrad Mynach and Bedwellte).
  - There are reasons to be concerned that large numbers of greyhounds are also being shot once they retire in some parts of Wales.
- 3) Local authorities bear the cost of abandoned greyhounds.
  - The greyhounds taken into pounds in Wales will cost local authorities about £32,000. Transposed to Britain as a whole this amounts to £600,000.
  - These costs fall to local authorities because the racing industry, and in particular the independent sector, is failing to make proper provision for all greyhounds when they retire.
- 4) The fate of former working lurchers also constitutes a major animal welfare problem.
  - Twice as many lurchers as greyhounds are taken into local authority pounds in Wales.
  - There is a need for a dedicated Welsh Lurcher Rescue organisation to address this problem.
- 5) In Wales there are particularly high numbers of abandoned lurchers in the heads of the valleys, in rural areas and in north-east Wales where hunting with lurchers is a well established activity.
- 6) Local authorities bear the cost of abandoned lurchers.
  - The lurchers taken into pounds in Wales will cost local authorities about £67,000. Transposed to Britain as a whole this amounts to £1,350,000. Many of these dogs will be working lurchers abandoned when they are no longer able to hunt successfully.





GREYHOUND RESCUE WALES



ANDREW FORSYTH/RSFCA PHOTOLIBRARY

The fate of former racing greyhounds and working lurchers constitutes a major animal welfare problem.

# Recommendations

---

This report calls upon:

## **The National Assembly for Wales and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)**

- 1) To include the independent or unregistered greyhound racing sector within the scope of the forthcoming Animal Welfare Bill, or to apply appropriate measures through specifically designed legislation to promote the welfare of racing greyhounds and retired greyhounds from the independent sector.
- 2) Specifically to require that independent greyhound tracks obtain a licence to operate from their local authority and that the granting of such a licence be conditional to the track meeting specific requirements including:
  - that the track satisfies the local authority that it is taking appropriate measures to enable proper provision to be made for greyhounds on retirement eg operating an adequate system of fundraising to meet the costs of rehoming greyhounds when they retire
  - that regulations to prevent injury to dogs in force in the registered sector also apply to the independent sector
  - that any kennels at independent greyhound tracks meet the standards applied to other commercial boarding kennels
  - that an independent veterinary surgeon, appointed by the local authority in which the greyhound track is located, is present throughout the duration of the greyhound races, to ensure all dogs receive any necessary veterinary treatment and to prevent any undue suffering
  - that a proper system (for example microchipping) is in place at the track to record ownership of greyhounds in order to allow abandoned or maltreated dogs to be traced to their most recent owner
  - that tracks cooperate in placing appropriate sanctions on greyhound owners found to have failed to make proper provision for their dogs (eg abandonment) on retirement.

## **The independent greyhound racing industry**

- 4) To take full responsibility for the welfare of greyhounds when they retire after racing on independent tracks. Specifically:
  - that independent tracks put in place an adequate system of funding to pay for the rehoming costs of retired greyhounds, for example through introducing an additional levy on entrance fees to race meetings
  - that independent tracks cooperate fully with statutory authorities and voluntary greyhound rescue organisations to prevent the abandonment and ill-treatment of greyhounds and to make proper provision for them on retirement.

## **Established greyhound rescue organisations**

- 5) To extend their remit to rescue and rehome greyhound cross-breeds as well as pure-bred greyhounds if they do not already do so.

## **Any interested person or organisation in a position to help**

- 6) To take steps to establish a dedicated lurcher rescue organisation in Wales.
- 7) To provide resources to enable further research to be carried out to investigate the numbers of greyhounds meeting fates two, three, four, five and six (abandoned and die before being found, euthanased, killed by owners, abandoned and taken in by members of the public or animal welfare organisations).

## **Anyone who cares about the fate of greyhounds and lurchers**

- 8) To consider adopting a former racing greyhound or lurcher and to become involved with a greyhound and lurcher rescue organisation.
- 9) To publicly express support for these recommendations.



Anyone who cares about the fate of greyhounds and lurchers should consider adopting one.

ANDREW FORSYTH/RSPCA PHOTOLIBRARY

# Appendix one – survey questions

Please complete the following questions. If you are unable to complete a question for any reason please answer as many as you can.

- 1) Name of local authority \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Name and contact details of local authority officer dealing with this questionnaire \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Name and address of local authority pound and/or other kennels used by the local authority \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Name and position of person completing this questionnaire (if different to question two above) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Date on which the questionnaire is being completed \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) What is the last complete 12-month period for which you have a record of dogs entering and leaving you local authority pound kennels?  
Start date \_\_\_\_\_ End date \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) During this 12-month period how many greyhounds in total came into your local authority pound kennels? Total number \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) During this 12-month period how many greyhound cross-breeds (lurchers) in total came into your local authority pound kennels? Total number \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) How many greyhounds (if any) are in your local authority pound kennels today? Total number \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) Please give the following information for each greyhound in your local authority pound kennels today: \_\_\_\_\_

NB – we appreciate that some pounds will keep dogs at their own expense for longer than the minimum number of days required by the local authority. The "due out" date in questions 10 & 11 may therefore be earlier than today's date.

	Male/female	Date in	Date due out
GH 1	_____	_____	_____
GH 2	_____	_____	_____
GH 3	_____	_____	_____
GH 4	_____	_____	_____
GH 5	_____	_____	_____
GH 6	_____	_____	_____

Continue if necessary

- 11) How many greyhound cross-breeds (lurchers) if any, are in your local authority pound kennels today? \_\_\_\_\_
- 12) Please give the following information for each greyhound in your local authority pound kennels today:

	Male/female	Date in	Date due out
GHX 1	_____	_____	_____
GHX 2	_____	_____	_____
GHX 3	_____	_____	_____
GHX 4	_____	_____	_____
GHX 5	_____	_____	_____
GHX 6	_____	_____	_____

Continue if necessary

# Appendix two – abandoned greyhounds in relation to population

Figure one lists the Welsh local authorities and the total number of greyhounds abandoned in each area over a 12-month period. The population of each local authority area is shown and the local authorities are ranked according to the number of greyhounds taken into local authority pounds in relation to the total population. The local authority with the highest abandoned greyhound to population ratio is therefore listed first.

Fig one: Greyhounds taken into local authority pounds in Wales (respondent authorities only)

Rank	Local authority	Population	No of greyhounds	Ratio: pop' to gh
1	Swansea	223,309	32	6,978
2	Flintshire	148,594	12	12,380
3	Wrexham	128,476	10	12,848
4	Merthyr Tydfil	55,981	4	13,995
5	Neath Port Talbot	134,468	9	14,940
6	Monmouthshire	84,885	5	16,977
10	Powys	126,354	6	21,059
11	Denbighshire	93,065	4	23,266
12	Carmarthenshire	172,842	7	24,692
13	Conwy	109,596	4	27,399
14	Pembrokeshire	114,131	4	28,532
15	Bridgend	128,645	4	32,161
16	Anglesey/Ynys Mon	66,829	2	33,414
17	Caerffili	169,519	5	33,904
18	Cardiff	305,553	9	33,950
19	Rhondda Cynon Taff	231,146	6	38,524
20	Blaenau Gwent	70,064	1	70,064
21	Vale of Glamorgan	119,292	1	119,292
22	Newport	128,645	0	---
Totals		2,611,394	125	20,891

Figure two lists the three non-respondent local authorities and estimates the numbers of greyhounds taken in to the local authority pounds in each case using the average figure of one greyhound per 20,891 population from the respondent local authorities.

Fig two: Estimated number of greyhounds taken into local authority pounds in non-respondent local authorities in Wales.

Rank	Local authority	Population	Estimated number of greyhounds	Ratio pop' to gh
=7	Ceredigion	74,941	4*	20,891
=7	Gwynedd	116,843	6*	20,891
=7	Torfaen	90,949	4*	20,891
Totals:		282,733	14	20,891

\*Calculation for non-respondent local authorities based on one greyhound abandoned for an average of 20,891 people.

# Appendix three – abandoned lurchers in relation to population

Figure three lists the Welsh local authorities and the total number of lurchers abandoned in each area over a 12-month period. The population of each local authority area is shown and the local authorities are ranked according to the number of lurchers taken into local authority pounds in relation to the total population. The local authority with the highest abandoned lurcher to population ratio is therefore listed first.

Fig three: Lurchers taken into local authority pounds in Wales (respondent authorities only)

Rank	Local authority	Population	No of lurchers	Ratio: pop' to lchr
1	Merthyr Tydfil	55,981	39	1,435
2	Wrexham	128,476	30	4,282
3	Pembrokeshire	114,131	24	4,755
4	Powys	126,354	17	7,433
5	Blaenau Gwent	70,064	9	7,785
6	Caerffili	169,519	20	8,476
7	Carmarthenshire	172,842	20	8,642
8	Bridgend	128,645	14	9,189
12	Neath Port Talbot	134,468	13	10,344
13	Newport	128,645	12	10,720
14	Cardiff	305,553	25	12,222
15	Denbighshire	93,065	6	15,511
16	Monmouthshire	84,885	5	16,977
17	Conwy	109,596	6	18,266
18	Vale of Glamorgan	119,292	6	19,882
19	Flintshire	148,594	7	21,227
20	Swansea	223,309	8	27,914
21	Anglesey/Ynys Mon	66,829	2	33,415
22	Rhondda Cynon Taff	231,146	1	231,146
Totals		2611,394	264	9,892

Figure four lists the three non-respondent local authorities and estimates the numbers of lurchers taken in to the local authority pounds in each case using the average figure of one lurcher per 9,892 population from the respondent local authorities.

Fig four: Estimated number of lurchers taken into local authority pounds in non respondent local authorities in Wales.

Rank	Local authority	Population	Estimated number of lurchers	Ratio pop' to lurcher
=9	Ceredigion	74,941	8*	9,892
=9	Gwynedd	116,843	12*	9,892
=9	Torfaen	90,949	9*	98,992
Totals:		282,733	29	9,892

\* Calculation for non-respondent local authorities based on 1 lurcher abandoned for an average of 9,892 people.

# References

---

## The context of the study

- 1) See for example Greyhounds UK Monitoring Survey 1999. This was a survey of greyhounds taken into rescue centres in the UK between August 1998 and July 1999. 177 rescue centres and 52 dog wardens (out of 432 local authorities in the UK) took part. Participants reported a total of 1,546 greyhounds taken into their care, but the survey concluded that because not all organisations that take greyhounds participated, these data underestimated the true figures.
- 2) [www.thedogs.co.uk](http://www.thedogs.co.uk) (British Greyhound Racing Board website).
- 3) [www.pelawgrange.co.uk/trackguide](http://www.pelawgrange.co.uk/trackguide) (a guide to independent tracks in England, Scotland and Wales).
- 4) Greyhounds UK, The Greyhound Business – Fat Cats and Dead Dogs – Response to UK government consultation on animal welfare bill, 2001.
- 5) [www.connectotel.com/greyhoundaction](http://www.connectotel.com/greyhoundaction)
- 6) Greyhound Rescue Wales, Briefing Notes, Greyhound Racing and Greyhound Rescue in Wales, 2000.

## Findings – greyhounds

- 1) National Canine Defence League/National Dog Wardens Association, Stray Dogs Survey, 2002.

October 2003

All Party Group for Animal Welfare, c/o Claire Bryant, APGAW Secretariat, RSPCA Cymru, PO Box 27, Brecon. LD3 8WB.

Tel: 0870 753 1916 [cbryant@rspca.org.uk](mailto:cbryant@rspca.org.uk)

COVER PHOTO: ROBIN CULLEY/RSPCA PHOTOLIBRARY