PROHIBITION OF GREYHOUND RACING (WALES) ACT 2026

EXPLANATORY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. These Explanatory Notes are for the Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Act 2026 which was passed by Senedd Cymru on 17 March 2026 and received Royal Assent on 27 April 2026.

2. They have been prepared by the Climate Change and Rural Affairs Group of the Welsh Government to assist the reader of the Act. The Explanatory Notes should be read in conjunction with the Act but are not part of it.

SUMMARY

3. The Act has six sections and two Schedules. It prohibits greyhound racing (as defined) in Wales.

COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

Section 1 – Prohibition of greyhound racing

4. Section 1(1) introduces two new offences. First, section 1(1)(a) makes it an offence for an operator of a stadium or a similar venue in Wales to use it, or knowingly permit it to be used, for 'greyhound racing'. 'Greyhound racing' and 'operator' are defined in section 2 (see 'Section 2 – Interpretation' below).

5. Secondly, section 1(1)(b), makes it an offence for a person to be involved in organising 'greyhound racing' (as defined in section 2) that takes place in Wales or is intended to take place in Wales. This second offence applies to anyone (unlike the first offence, it is not limited to 'operators' of stadiums or similar venues) and the racing could take place anywhere (not just in a stadium or similar venue).

6. The effect of section 1(2) is that these are summary offences and so will be heard in Magistrates' courts. If someone is found guilty, the court may impose a fine (which the Act does not cap).

Section 2 – Interpretation

7. 'Greyhound racing' and 'operator' are defined in section 2.

8. The term 'greyhound racing' is relevant to both offences created by section 1(1). As defined by section 2(a), it means: 'setting greyhounds to run around a track in pursuit of a lure activated by mechanical means (and this includes timing or training a greyhound as it runs around a track)'. As well as covering racing greyhounds against each other, the definition includes the following activities (provided they involve setting one or more greyhounds to run around a track after a mechanically activated lure):
    a. 'trials' (where a greyhound is timed for the purpose of determining its position, or race category, either in relation to a subsequent race, or for the purpose of selling the greyhound);
    b. training a greyhound to run after a mechanically activated lure.

9. The term 'operator' only applies to the offence created by section 1(1)(a). Under section 2(b), 'operator' means the owner of the stadium or venue and, if different from the owner, a person who is responsible for the operation of the stadium or venue (this will either be the person with 'overall responsibility' or, if that person is not present in the United Kingdom, the person in the United Kingdom who is responsible).

10. See also paragraphs 11, 15 and 16 of these Explanatory Notes for information about individuals who may be liable where the offence is committed by certain bodies such as companies, partnerships etc.

Section 3 – Offences by bodies corporate etc.

11. This section introduces Schedule 1 of the Act which makes provision about cases where an offence under section 1 is committed by a body corporate, partnership or unincorporated association other than a partnership (see 'Schedule 1 – offences by bodies corporate etc.' below).

Section 4 – Enforcement of prohibition of greyhound racing

12. This section introduces Schedule 2 to the Act which makes provision about enforcing the offences under section 1 (see 'Schedule 2 – powers of enforcement' below).

Section 5 – Post-legislative review

13. This section requires the Welsh Ministers to review the operation and effect of, and the compliance with, the Act. The review must be completed before the end of the 3 year period beginning with the day when the ban under section 1 comes into force. The Welsh Ministers are required to publish a report on the review.

Section 6 – Coming into force

14. As a result of section 6(2), the greyhound racing ban must be brought into force no sooner than 1 April 2027 and no later than 1 April 2030.

Schedule 1 – Offences by bodies corporate etc.

15. Paragraph 1 provides that certain individuals can be held criminally liable for the offences under section 1 where they are committed by, for instance, a company, partnership or unincorporate association. This means, for example, that a director of a company could be criminally liable for the offence where the company that the person is a director of committed the offence.

16. Paragraph 2 sets out how proceedings are to be brought against a partnership or an unincorporated association where they are alleged to have committed an offence under section 1.

Schedule 2 – Powers of enforcement

17. Schedule 2 confers powers on inspectors (appointed by the Welsh Ministers or by county, or county borough, councils) to enforce the offences under section 1. It also creates offences where a person impedes an inspector (see paragraph 27 below).

18. Paragraph 2 gives inspectors a power to enter premises that are not dwellings, where there are grounds for suspecting that an offence has been or is about to be committed on the premises, or that evidence may be found that an offence has been or is about to be committed.

19. Paragraph 3 gives inspectors a power to enter dwellings. The inspector must only use this power if the occupier or person in charge of the premises consents, or the inspector obtains a warrant from a Magistrate (justice of the peace). Paragraph 4 provides that such a warrant authorises entry on one occasion only and must be used within 28 days beginning with the date it was issued.

20. Paragraph 5 requires an inspector, if asked by a person on the premises, to show evidence of their identity before using a power of entry and to say why the power is being used. If entering a dwelling under a warrant, the inspector must, if asked, show a copy of the warrant to anyone on the premises, and provide a copy to the occupier or to a person who appears to be in charge of the premises. If neither is present, the inspector must leave a copy of the warrant in a prominent place and leave the premises as effectively secured against unauthorised entry as they were when the inspector arrived.

21. Paragraph 6 requires an inspector to only use a power of entry at reasonable times, unless they believe that, by waiting for a reasonable time, their purpose for requiring entry (e.g. looking for evidence) would be frustrated.

22. Paragraph 7 allows an inspector to, if necessary, use reasonable force to enter premises.

23. Paragraph 8 allows an inspector to take onto the premises other persons and equipment and materials to assist in their duties. That could, for example, include a police constable.

24. Paragraph 9 describes the powers of inspection, search and seizure available to an inspector when exercising a power of entry. Paragraph 9(c) requires any person on the premises to assist the inspector. An inspector could, for example, require a person to provide access to kennels or to vehicles. These powers do not extend to allowing an inspector to seize a dog.

25. Paragraph 10 provides that a person brought onto the premises by the inspector may use the inspector's powers under paragraph 9, provided the person is under the inspector's supervision.

26. Paragraph 11 makes additional provision about the power of seizure. Seized items can be retained as long as necessary; records of seized items must be kept (and shared, if that is requested by an occupier or someone who had possession or control of the item), and inspectors are not allowed to seize items covered by legal professional privilege, for example, confidential communications between a lawyer and client.

27. Paragraph 12 provides that a person commits an offence if, without reasonable excuse, they fail to comply with an inspector's request for assistance, or if they intentionally obstruct an inspector. An offence under this paragraph will be heard in the Magistrates' court, which may impose a fine (which is not capped by the Act).

28. Paragraph 13 protects inspectors and people taken onto premises by inspectors from legal liability for anything done or not done as a result of carrying out their duties. But this does not apply if they acted in bad faith or there were no reasonable grounds to act in the way they did.

Section 7 – Short title

29. This section establishes the Act's title as the 'Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Act 2026', by which it may be known and referred. Either the Welsh or the English language title of the Act may be used, including as a citation in other enactments.

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS IN SENEDD CYMRU

30. The following table sets out the dates for each stage of the Act's passage through the Senedd. The Record of Proceedings and further information on the passage of this Act can be found on the Senedd website at: https://business.senedd.wales/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=46468

Stage	**Date**
Introduced	29 September 2025
Stage 1 - Debate	16 December 2025
Stage 2 Scrutiny Committee – consideration of amendments	28 January 2026
Stage 3 Plenary - consideration of amendments	10 March 2026
Stage 4 Approved by the Senedd	17 March 2026
Royal Assent	27 April 2026