Changes to Legislation: as of 13 October 2026, this Act is up to date with all changes known to be in force.



Number 29 *of* 2011

WELFARE OF GREYHOUNDS ACT 2011

REVISED

Updated to 2 April 2025

This Revised Act is an administrative consolidation of the *Welfare of Greyhounds Act 2011*. It is prepared by the Law Reform Commission in accordance with its function under the *Law Reform Commission Act 1975* (3/1975) to keep the law under review and to undertake revision and consolidation of statute law.

All Acts up to and including *Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Accidents) Act 2025* (2/2025), enacted 14 April 2025, and all statutory instruments up to and including *Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024 (Commencement) Order 2025* (S.I. No. 107 of 2025), made 2 April 2025, were considered in the preparation of this Revised Act.

Disclaimer: While every care has been taken in the preparation of this Revised Act, the Law Reform Commission can assume no responsibility for and give no guarantees, undertakings or warranties concerning the accuracy, completeness or up to date nature of the information provided and does not accept any liability whatsoever arising from any errors or omissions. Please notify any errors, omissions and comments by email to revisedacts@lawreform.ie.

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WELFARE OF GREYHOUNDS ACT 2011

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Number 29 *of* 2011

WELFARE OF GREYHOUNDS ACT 2011

REVISED

Updated to 2 April 2025

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE WELFARE OF GREYHOUNDS, REGULATE THE OPERATION OF GREYHOUND BREEDING ESTABLISHMENTS AND ESTABLISH A REGISTER OF GREYHOUND BREEDING ESTABLISHMENTS.

[16*th November*, 2011]

BE IT ENACTED BY THE OIREACHTAS AS FOLLOWS:

PART 1

Preliminary and General

Short title and commencement.

1.— (1) This Act may be cited as the Welfare of Greyhounds Act 2011.

(2) This Act comes into operation on such day or days as the Minister may appoint by order either generally or with reference to any particular purpose or provision and different days may be appointed for different purposes or different provisions.

Definitions.

2.— In this Act—

"Act of 1986" means Control of Dogs Act 1986;

"Board" means Bord na gCon;

"Club" means Irish Coursing Club;

"greyhound" means a dog (including a bitch) entered in the Irish Greyhound Stud Book or the pup of a greyhound dog and greyhound bitch so entered;

"greyhound breeding establishment" means a premises used, in whole or in part, for breeding greyhounds at which not less than 4 greyhound bitches are kept, each of which—

(*a*) is more than 15 months old, and

(*b*) has been or is being used for breeding purposes,

but does not include a premises at which not less than 6 bitches (other than greyhound bitches), each of which is more than 6 months old and is capable of being used for breeding purposes, are also kept;

"Irish Greyhound Stud Book" means the stud book in which thoroughbred greyhounds are registered and identified under the Constitution of the Club;

"local authority" has the same meaning as in the Local Government Act 2001;

"Minister" means Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine;

"operator" means, in relation to a greyhound breeding establishment, the person who owns or manages the establishment or is otherwise responsible for the running of the establishment;

"premises" includes any land, building, dwelling or temporary construction;

"prescribed" means prescribed by regulations made by the Minister;

"register" has the meaning assigned to it by *section 12*;

"registration certificate" has the meaning assigned to it by *section 12*;

"veterinary practitioner" means a person registered under Part 4 of the Veterinary Practice Act 2005;

"welfare officer" means a person appointed under *section 17*.

Service of notifications, notices and documents.

3.— (1) A notification, notice or other document that is required to be given to or served on a person under this Act shall be addressed to the person by name and shall be given to or served on the person in one of the following ways—

(*a*) by delivering it to the person,

(*b*) by leaving it at the address at which the person ordinarily resides or carries on business or, in a case in which an address for service has been given, at that address, or

(*c*) by sending it by post in a pre-paid registered letter addressed to the person at the address at which the person ordinarily resides or carries on business or, in a case in which an address for service has been given, to that address.

(2) For the purposes of *subsection (1)*, a company registered under the Companies Acts is deemed to be ordinarily resident at its registered office, and every other body corporate and every unincorporated body is deemed to be ordinarily resident at its principal office or place of business.

Expenses.

4.— The expenses incurred by the Minister in the administration of this Act shall, to such extent as may be sanctioned by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, be paid out of moneys provided by the Oireachtas.

Regulations.

5.— (1) The Minister may by regulations provide for any matter referred to in this Act as prescribed or to be prescribed.

(2) Without prejudice to this Act, regulations under this Act may contain such incidental, supplementary and consequential provisions as appear to the Minister to be necessary or expedient for the purposes of the regulations.

(3) Every regulation made under this Act shall be laid before each House of the Oireachtas as soon as may be after it is made and, if a resolution annulling the regulation is passed by either such House within the next 21 days on which that House sits after the regulation is laid before it, the regulation is annulled accordingly, but without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under it.

PART 2

WELFARE GENERALLY

Codes of practice.

6.— (1) The Board, having regard to the functions of the Club and after consultation with the Club, and with the consent of the Minister, shall—

(*a*) establish a code of practice, or

(*b*) adopt a code of practice published by another person (whether within the State or otherwise),

for the purpose of providing practical guidance relating to the welfare of greyhounds and related matters.

(2) The Board shall publish a code of practice on the internet in such form or manner as it thinks appropriate, specifying the date from which the code shall have effect.

(3) A code of practice may include different provisions in respect of different classes of greyhound.

(4) A person who keeps, trades, transports, rears, trains, races or courses a greyhound shall have due regard to a code of practice in so far as the code relates to a greyhound or class of greyhound kept, traded, transported, reared, trained, raced or coursed by the person.

(5) Before establishing or adopting or amending a code of practice the Board—

(*a*) shall publish on the internet a draft of the proposed code or amendment and shall give persons one month from the date of publication to make written representations to the Board in relation to the draft code or draft amendment, and

(*b*) may, having considered any representations received under *paragraph (a)*, establish or adopt the draft code or draft amendment, with or without modification.

(6) The Board shall make available for public inspection, without charge, on the Board's website on the internet and, during normal working hours at the principal office of the Board—

(*a*) a copy of a code of practice established or adopted by it, and

(*b*) where a code of practice has been amended by it, a copy of that code as amended,

and which is for the time being in force.

(7) A code of practice established or adopted by the Board which is in force immediately before the commencement of this section is deemed to be a code of practice under this section and may be amended or revoked in accordance with this section.

(8) In this section "code of practice" means a code of practice established or adopted under *subsection (1)* and any amendment to it.

Specific welfare standards.

7.— (1) A person who keeps, trades in, transports, breeds, rears, trains, races or courses a greyhound shall ensure that—

(*a*) the greyhound is kept at all times in accommodation that is suitable as respects construction, size of quarters, number of occupants, exercise facilities, temperature, lighting, ventilation and cleanliness,

(*b*) the greyhound is adequately supplied with suitable food, drink, and bedding material,

(*c*) the greyhound is adequately exercised,

(*d*) the greyhound is inspected at suitable intervals regarding its welfare,

(*e*) all reasonable measures are taken to prevent and control the spread among greyhounds of infections and contagious diseases, and

(*f*) appropriate measures are taken for the protection of the greyhound in case of fire or other emergency.

(2) A person shall, for the purposes of this section, keep such records as may be prescribed and shall make them available for inspection by a welfare officer at the request of the welfare officer.

(3) Records to which *subsection (2)* applies shall be in such form as may be prescribed.

Regulations regarding welfare and related matters.

8.— (1) The Minister may, after consultation with the Board and the Club, by regulations make provision for the protection and enhancement of the health, welfare and care of greyhounds.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of *subsection (1)*, regulations under this section may make provision in relation to—

(*a*) the provision of a proper supply of food and liquid to a greyhound,

(*b*) the housing of greyhounds, including—

(i) the dimensions and layout of housing,

(ii) the materials to be used in constructing housing, and

(iii) lighting, heating, cooling and ventilation,

(*c*) the operation, management and supervision of a premises (other than a dwelling) where a greyhound is kept, traded, bred, reared, trained, raced or coursed,

(*d*) the standards and maintenance of premises (other than a dwelling) where a greyhound is kept, traded, bred, reared, trained, raced or coursed and equipment, facilities and amenities used in connection with a greyhound, including the implementation of biosecurity measures,

(*e*) the provision and maintenance of drainage, water supply or other facilities for a greyhound, the sanitation and hygiene of premises (other than a dwelling) where a greyhound is kept, traded, bred, reared, trained, raced or coursed and equipment used in connection with a greyhound,

(*f*) the form, content and maintenance of records in respect of which matters to which *paragraph (a)*, *(b)*, *(c)*, *(d)* or *(e)* relates,

(*g*) the protection of greyhounds from adverse environmental conditions,

(*h*) the keeping, breeding or rearing, training, racing or coursing of a greyhound in such a manner as to avoid unnecessary suffering,

(*i*) the provision of veterinary or other specialist treatment of a greyhound, where necessary,

(*j*) the transport of a greyhound, including—

(i) equipment, a vessel, vehicle, container, trailer or other thing used for, or ancillary to, the transport of a greyhound, or

(ii) care of the greyhound, including feeding, watering and rest periods,

(*k*) the information to accompany a greyhound or to be provided before or after the greyhound is transported, including the person to whom, and manner in which, the information is to be provided, or

(*l*) the isolation, segregation, treatment (including disinfecting and cleaning and treatment with an insecticide or other substance), disposal or destruction of a greyhound.

(3) Regulations under this section may—

(*a*) apply to greyhounds generally or to greyhounds of a particular class or description,

(*b*) apply to premises generally or to premises of a particular class or description,

(*c*) apply to vehicles, vessels or equipment generally or to vehicles, vessels or equipment of a particular class or description, and

(*d*) apply to persons generally or to persons of a particular class or description.

(4) A person who contravenes or fails to comply with a regulation made under this section stated in the regulations to be a penal provision commits an offence.

Irish Greyhound Stud Book and identification of greyhounds.

9.— (1) The Club may maintain the Irish Greyhound Stud Book in non-legible form if it is capable of being reproduced in legible form.

(2) Notwithstanding any rules of the Club, the Minister may, after consultation with the Board and the Club, make regulations regarding—

(*a*) the identification and traceability of a greyhound by means of a tattoo, document, genetic or electronic means or otherwise including—

(i) the manner in which the greyhound is to be identified,

(ii) the period within which, and the circumstances where, the greyhound is to be identified,

(iii) the person responsible for identifying the greyhound, and

(iv) the form, content and maintenance of records relating to the identification or traceability of the greyhound,

or

(*b*) the entry in the Irish Greyhound Stud Book of information obtained under the regulations.

Notification of sale or transfer of greyhound.

10.— (1) A person who sells or transfers ownership of a greyhound shall, within 14 days of the sale or transfer, give notice in writing to the Club of the fact, the identification of the greyhound and the name and address of the person to whom the greyhound is sold or transferred.

(2) A person to whom a greyhound is sold or transferred shall, within 14 days of the sale or transfer, give notice in writing to the Club of the fact, the identification of the greyhound and the name and address of the person from whom the greyhound was bought or transferred.

(3) If a greyhound dies, the person whose name is entered in the Irish Greyhound Stud Book as the owner of the greyhound shall, within 14 days, give notice in writing to the Club of the fact, the identification of the greyhound and the date of death.

(4) If more than one person is entered in the Irish Greyhound Stud Book as the owner of a greyhound, each person so entered is responsible for giving notice under this section.

(5) The secretary of the Club shall amend the Irish Greyhound Stud Book in accordance with a notice under this section.

(6) A person who contravenes *subsection (1)*, *(2)* or *(3)* commits an offence.

(7) In this section "identification" in relation to a greyhound, means identification of the greyhound in accordance with any regulations made under *section 9(2)* or otherwise in accordance with rules of the Club.

PART 3

Greyhound Breeding

Restriction on breeding.

11.— (1) A person who causes or permits a greyhound bitch to be mated, inseminated or otherwise used for breeding purposes unless the bitch has reached the age of 15 months commits an offence.

(2) A person who causes or permits a greyhound bitch to give birth to more than 6 litters during her lifetime or, if *subsection (3)* applies, 8 litters, commits an offence.

(3) A person may permit a greyhound bitch to give birth to no more than two additional litters to the 6 litters referred to in F1**[**subsection (2)**]** if, prior to a mating or insemination leading to such birth—

(*a*) a veterinary practitioner certifies that the pregnancy and birth do not present a risk to the health or welfare of the bitch, and

(*b*) the certificate is lodged with the Club.

F2**[**(3A) Only the progeny from the first 6 litters, or the first 8 litters where *subsection (3)* applies, of a greyhound bitch may be registered in the Irish Greyhound Stud Book.

(3B) A person who attempts to register a greyhound in contravention of *section (3A)* commits an offence.**]**

(4) The keeper of the Irish Greyhound Stud Book shall not enter in the Irish Greyhound Stud Book the progeny of mating or the product of breeding which is the result of mating, insemination or breeding in contravention of this section.

Register of greyhound breeding establishments.

12.— (1) The Club shall establish and maintain a register of greyhound breeding establishments to be known as the register of greyhound breeding establishments (in this Act referred to as the "register").

(2) Where a person proposes to operate a greyhound breeding establishment, he or she shall, in accordance with this section, apply to the Club to have the premises at which it is proposed to operate the greyhound breeding establishment registered in the register.

(3) A person who, immediately before the commencement of this section, was operating a greyhound breeding establishment shall, if he or she wishes to continue operating the establishment after such commencement, apply not later than 3 months after such commencement, to the Club to have the establishment registered in the register.

(4) An application under this section shall—

(*a*) be in writing,

(*b*) specify the name of the applicant and the address at which he or she ordinarily resides,

(*c*) specify the address of the premises at which the applicant intends to operate a greyhound breeding establishment or is operating a greyhound breeding establishment,

(*d*) contain such other information as may be prescribed, and

(*e*) be accompanied by such fee (if any) as may be prescribed, after consultation with the Board and the Club.

(5) Where the Club receives an application under this section it shall, subject to *subsections (6)* and *(7)*, register the premises in respect of which the application is made in the register and, accordingly, shall enter the following in the register:

(*a*) the name of the applicant and the address at which he or she ordinarily resides,

(*b*) the address of the premises to which the application relates,

(*c*) the maximum number of bitches capable of being used for breeding purposes that may be kept at the premises, and

(*d*) any conditions attaching to the registration in accordance with *subsection (9)*.

(6) The Club shall not register a premises under this section if—

(*a*) the application does not comply with *subsection (4)*, or

(*b*) it is of the opinion that the premises, the subject of the application, is not suitable for the operation of a greyhound breeding establishment.

(7) The Club may refuse to register a premises under this section if, by reason of—

(*a*) the commission by the applicant of—

(i) an offence under this Act or the Act of 1986, or

(ii) an offence involving cruelty to an animal,

or

(*b*) the contravention by the applicant of—

(i) this Act or any regulations under this Act, or

(ii) the Act of 1986 or any regulations or bye-laws under that Act, or

F3**[**(iii) Part 2 or 3 or regulations made under section 36 of the Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013,**]**

the Club considers that such refusal is necessary to safeguard the health and welfare of a greyhound.

(8) The Club shall not make a decision to refuse to register a premises or greyhound breeding establishment under this section until it has considered any representations made by the applicant in accordance with *section 13*.

(9) The Club may, after considering any representations made by an applicant in accordance with *section 13*, attach such conditions as it considers appropriate to the registration of a premises or greyhound breeding establishment under this section having regard to the need to protect and maintain the health and welfare of greyhounds.

(10) Without prejudice to the generality of *subsection (9)*, conditions attached to registration in the register may—

(*a*) relate to the construction of the premises,

(*b*) limit the number of bitches or pups that may be on the premises,

(*c*) relate to the housing, bedding, feeding or exercising of bitches and pups,

(*d*) relate to the training and competence of persons employed at the establishment, or

(*e*) detail records, and the form and maintenance of records.

(11) The Club shall notify an applicant under this section of—

(*a*) a decision to grant an application under this section,

(*b*) a decision to grant such application subject to conditions, or

(*c*) a decision to refuse an application,

not later than 14 days from the making of the decision.

(12) Upon the registration of a premises under this section, a certificate (in this Act referred to as a "registration certificate") of such registration shall be issued to the applicant for registration by the Club containing the information entered in the register.

(13) The operator of a greyhound breeding establishment registered under this section shall display the registration certificate issued to him or her in respect of it in a prominent position at the establishment.

(14) If a particular entered in the register is incorrect, the operator of the greyhound breeding establishment to which the particular relates shall, as soon as may be after becoming aware of its being incorrect, inform the Club of it accordingly.

(15) The Club shall, upon becoming aware that any particular entered in the register is incorrect or has ceased to be correct, make such alterations to the register as it considers necessary.

(16) The Club shall publish the register in such manner as it thinks fit, and make it available for inspection at all reasonable times by members of the public.

(17) A person who in purported compliance with *subsection (4)* knowingly or recklessly provides information or a particular to the Club that is false or misleading in a material respect commits an offence.

(18) A person who contravenes *subsection (13)* commits an offence.

(19) The Club may maintain the register in a form that is not legible if it is capable of being converted into legible form.

(20) The operator of a greyhound breeding establishment registered under this section whose name is entered in the register in respect of that establishment may apply to the Club to have the establishment removed from the register.

(21) Upon the Club removing a greyhound breeding establishment from the register in accordance with an application under *subsection (20)*—

(*a*) the person named in the register shall immediately surrender the registration certificate in respect of the establishment to the Club, and

(*b*) the Club shall enter a statement in the register that the removal is at the request of the person formerly named in the register.

Representations made by applicant for registration.

13.— (1) Where the Club proposes to—

(*a*) refuse to register a premises in accordance with *subsection (6)* or *(7)* of *section 12*, or

(*b*) register a premises subject to conditions in accordance with *subsection (9)* of *section 12*,

it shall notify the applicant in writing of the proposal.

(2) An applicant under *section 12* on whom a notification under *subsection (1)* is served may, not later than 14 days after receiving the notification, make representations in writing to the Club in relation to the proposal.

Appeal to District Court against decision of Club.

14.— (1) A person whose application for registration of a premises under *section 12* is refused may appeal the refusal to a judge of the District Court sitting in the district court district in which the premises is situated, not later than 14 days after service on the person of a notification in writing of the refusal.

(2) A person whose application for registration of a premises under *section 12* is granted subject to conditions in accordance with *subsection (9)* of that section may appeal the attachment of any one or more of those conditions to a judge of the District Court sitting in the district court district in which the premises is situated, not later than 14 days after service on the person of a notification in writing of the conditions.

(3) Upon an appeal under *subsection (1)*, a judge of the District Court may make an order—

(*a*) requiring the Club to register the premises in the register,

(*b*) requiring the Club to register the premises in the register subject to the appellant's complying with such conditions as are specified in the order, or

(*c*) affirming the refusal.

(4) Upon an appeal under *subsection (2)*, a judge of the District Court may make an order—

(*a*) removing one or more conditions attached to the registration of the premises as are specified in the order, or

(*b*) affirming the decision by the Club to attach the conditions concerned.

(5) The Club shall comply with an order under this section.

Removal of greyhound breeding establishment from register.

15.— (1) Where there has been a relevant contravention, a welfare officer or the Club may make an application for the removal of a greyhound breeding establishment from the register to the judge of the District Court sitting in the district court district in which the establishment is situated.

(2) Where a welfare officer or the Club proposes to apply to the District Court for an order under this section, the officer or the Club shall notify the person named in the register in relation to the greyhound breeding establishment in writing setting out the reasons for the application.

(3) If, by reason of a relevant contravention, the District Court considers that the removal of a greyhound breeding establishment from the register is necessary to ensure the safeguarding of the health and welfare of a greyhound, the court shall make an order directing the Club to remove the greyhound breeding establishment from the register.

(4) If the District Court is satisfied that there has been a relevant contravention in relation to a greyhound breeding establishment and is of the opinion that the

safeguarding of the health and welfare of a greyhound or any other dog (including a bitch) kept at the establishment can be secured by means other than the making of an order under *subsection (3)*, it may, for the purpose of safeguarding such health and welfare, make an order requiring the operator of that establishment to comply with such conditions as it considers appropriate.

(5) Where in accordance with this section, a greyhound breeding establishment is removed from the register—

(*a*) the Club shall enter a statement in the register that the greyhound breeding establishment has been so removed and a statement of the reasons for its removal, and

(*b*) the person named in the register in relation to the establishment shall immediately surrender the registration certificate in respect of that establishment to the Club.

(6) The Club shall comply with a direction in an order under this section.

(7) A person who contravenes *subsection (5)(b)* or a condition in an order under this section commits an offence.

(8) In this section "relevant contravention" means, in relation to a greyhound breeding establishment—

(*a*) the commission by the operator of the establishment of—

(i) an offence under this Act or the Act of 1986,

(ii) an offence involving cruelty to an animal, or

F4**[**(iii) an offence under the Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013 relating to a contravention of Part 2 or 3 or regulations made under section 36 of that Act,**]**

(*b*) the commission of—

(i) an offence under this Act or the Act of 1986 in relation to the establishment,

(ii) an offence involving cruelty to an animal at the establishment, or

F4**[**(iii) an offence under the Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013 relating to a contravention of Part 2 or 3 or regulations made under section 36 of that Act,**]**

(*c*) the contravention of this Act by the operator of the establishment or in relation to the establishment, or

(*d*) the contravention, in relation to the establishment, of—

(i) a condition attached to the registration of the establishment under *section 12(9)*,

(ii) a condition referred to in *section 14(3)(b)*,

(iii) a welfare notice under *section 20*,

(iv) a direction under *section 21(4)(c)*, or

(v) a condition specified in an order under *subsection (4)*.

Prohibition on operating unregistered greyhound breeding establishment.

16.— (1) The operator of a greyhound breeding establishment that is not entered in the register commits an offence.

(2) This section does not apply to the operator of a greyhound breeding establishment to which *section 12(3)* applies—

(*a*) during the period referred to in that subsection, or

(*b*) where the operator of a greyhound breeding establishment has made an application under that subsection, during that period and such further period as begins on the expiration of the first-mentioned period and ends when the Club notifies the operator in writing of its decision in relation to that application.

PART 4

Enforcement

Appointment of welfare officer.

17.—(1) A local authority may, by instrument in writing, appoint such and so many officers of the authority as it thinks fit to be welfare officers for the purposes of this Act.

(2) The chief officer of the Board or secretary of the Club may, by instrument in writing, appoint such and so many persons, as he or she thinks fit to be welfare officers for the purposes of some or all of the functions conferred on a welfare officer by this Act as may be specified in the instrument.

(3) A person appointed under this section may perform the functions of a welfare officer but where, in accordance with the instrument of appointment, the person's appointment is in relation to certain functions only of a welfare officer he or she shall not perform any function other than those specified in the instrument.

(4) A local authority may terminate the appointment of a welfare officer appointed by the authority under *subsection (1)* whether or not the appointment was for a fixed period.

(5) The chief officer of the Board or secretary of the Club may terminate the appointment of a welfare officer appointed by him or her under *subsection (2)* whether or not the appointment was for a fixed period.

(6) An appointment as a welfare officer ceases—

(*a*) if it is terminated pursuant to *subsection (4)* or *(5)*,

(*b*) if it is for a fixed period, on the expiry of that period, or

(*c*) if the person appointed is an officer of a local authority, or a servant, agent or employee of the Board or the Club upon the person ceasing to be such an officer, servant, agent or employee.

(7) A welfare officer appointed under *subsection (1)* may exercise any of the functions conferred on a welfare officer under this Act within—

(*a*) the functional area of the local authority which appointed the welfare officer, or

(*b*) the functional area of another local authority if an agreement exists for the exercise or performance of those functions by welfare officers of the first-mentioned authority in the functional area of the other authority.

(8) Nothing in *subsection (6)* prevents a local authority, the chief officer of the Board or the secretary of the Club from reappointing as a welfare officer a person to whom *subsection (6)* relates.

(9) A person appointed to be a welfare officer under this section shall on his or her appointment be furnished with a warrant of his or her appointment and when exercising a function conferred by this Act shall, if requested by any person thereby affected, produce the warrant to the person for inspection.

Functions of welfare officers.

18.— (1) For the purposes of his or her functions under this Act, a welfare officer or member of the Garda Síochána may—

(*a*) subject to *subsection (5)*, enter and inspect at all reasonable times a premises—

(i) which he or she has reasonable grounds for believing are being used for the operation of a greyhound breeding establishment,

(ii) in respect of which an application has been made under *section 12*, or

(iii) where he or she has reasonable grounds for believing a greyhound is kept, traded, bred, reared, trained, raced or coursed,

(*b*) examine a greyhound or animal feed, a vessel, vehicle, container or other thing used in connection with a greyhound,

(*c*) require—

(i) the operator of a greyhound breeding establishment,

(ii) an applicant for registration under *section 12*, or

(iii) a person on the premises,

to produce to the welfare officer or member such books, records, or other documents (and in the case of documents or records stored in non-legible form, produce to him or her a legible reproduction of them) or any such equipment or machinery that are in that person's possession or procurement, or under the person's control, as the officer or member may reasonably require,

(*d*) inspect and take copies of, any books, records, or other documents (including books, records, or documents stored in non-legible form) or extracts from them, that he or she finds in the course of his or her inspection,

(*e*) inspect any equipment or machinery used in connection with a greyhound, or

(*f*) require—

(i) the operator of a greyhound breeding establishment,

(ii) an applicant for registration under *section 12*, or

(iii) a person on the premises,

to give the welfare officer or member such information and assistance and answer such questions as the welfare officer or member may reasonably require.

(2) For the purposes of his or her functions under this Act, a welfare officer or member of the Garda Síochána may require a person in control of a greyhound in a public place to permit the greyhound to be examined by the officer, member or a veterinary practitioner.

(3) A welfare officer or a member of the Garda Síochána may require a person to give information regarding the ownership and identity of a greyhound or animal feed

or drink, ownership of a vessel, vehicle, container, equipment, machinery or other relevant thing relating to a greyhound as is in the person's knowledge or procurement.

(4) Where a welfare officer or member of the Garda Síochána has reasonable grounds for believing that—

(*a*) an offence is being or has been committed under this Act,

(*b*) there has been a contravention of this Act or regulations under this Act, or

(*c*) there may be evidence relating to such an offence or contravention,

the officer or member may, in addition to the powers exercisable by him or her under *subsection (1)* or *(2)*—

(i) search a vehicle, container or vessel where the officer or member considers it necessary and require a person in charge or control of the vessel, vehicle or container to refrain from moving it and to give information concerning its destination,

(ii) take samples from a greyhound, animal feed or drink or an article relating to a greyhound, substance or liquid as he or she may reasonably require and carry out or cause to be carried out on a sample such tests, analyses, examinations or inspections as he or she considers necessary or expedient and mark or otherwise identify the sample, or

(iii) remove any equipment or machinery, books, documents or records and detain them for such period as he or she reasonably considers to be necessary for the purposes of his or her functions under this Act.

(5) When performing a function under this Act, a welfare officer or member of the Garda Síochána may, subject to any warrant under *section 19*, be accompanied by such number of other persons as he or she considers appropriate and may take with him or her, or those persons may take with them, any equipment or materials to assist the officer or member in the exercise of the function.

(6) A welfare officer or a member of the Garda Síochána shall not enter a dwelling, other than—

(*a*) with the consent of the occupier, or

(*b*) pursuant to a warrant under *section 19*.

(7) A welfare officer or member of the Garda Síochána may, if necessary to enter a premises to exercise his or her powers under this section, use reasonable force.

(8) Where in the course of exercising any powers under this Act a welfare officer or a member of the Garda Síochána finds or comes into possession of any thing that the officer or member believes to be evidence of any offence under, or a contravention of, this Act, the officer or member may seize and retain it for use in evidence in proceedings under this Act.

(9) A member of the Garda Síochána may stop a vehicle or vessel for the purposes of this section and may require it to be moved for inspection to such place as he or she directs.

Search warrant.

19.— Upon the sworn information of a welfare officer or member of the Garda Síochána, a judge of the District Court may, for the purposes of enabling a welfare officer or member of the Garda Síochána to carry out an inspection of a premises—

(*a*) on which the officer or member has reasonable grounds for believing that a person is committing or has committed an offence under this Act or evidence of such an offence may be present, or

(*b*) where the officer or member has been refused entry to a premises—

(i) which he or she has reasonable grounds for believing are being used for the operation of a greyhound breeding establishment,

(ii) in respect of which an application has been made under *section 12*, or

(iii) where he or she has reasonable grounds for believing a greyhound is kept, traded, bred, reared, trained, raced or coursed,

issue a warrant authorising a named welfare officer or member accompanied by such other persons as may be necessary, at any time or times, within one month of the date of issue of the warrant, to enter the premises and perform the functions of a welfare officer or member under *section 18*.

Welfare notice.

20.— (1) Where a welfare officer is of the opinion that—

(*a*) in relation to a greyhound breeding establishment there has been a contravention of this Act or a condition attaching to the registration of a greyhound breeding establishment in the register,

(*b*) that a greyhound breeding establishment or other premises where a greyhound is kept, traded, bred, reared, trained, raced or coursed is being maintained in a manner that poses or is likely to pose a threat to the health or welfare of a greyhound,

(*c*) that a vehicle, vessel, container or equipment used in connection with the transport of a greyhound is being maintained in a manner that poses or is likely to pose a threat to the health or welfare of a greyhound,

(*d*) a contravention of this Act or regulations under this Act, may have taken place or may be taking place, or

(*e*) the conditions under which a greyhound is kept, traded, transported, bred, reared, trained, raced or coursed, may give rise to unnecessary pain, suffering or other risk to the health or welfare of the greyhound,

the welfare officer may serve a notice ("welfare notice") on the—

(i) operator of the establishment,

(ii) person in control of the greyhound,

(iii) person in control of a premises where a greyhound is being traded, bred, reared, trained, raced or coursed, or

(iv) person in control of a vehicle, vessel, container or equipment used in connection with the transport of a greyhound.

(2) A welfare notice shall—

(*a*) state the grounds for the welfare officer being of the opinion referred to in *subsection (1)*,

(*b*) require the operator of the establishment or premises or person concerned to take such measures as are specified in the notice to cease the contravention or avoid or prevent the threat concerned or the risk to the health or welfare of the greyhound,

(*c*) specify the period within which those measures shall be taken,

(*d*) inform the operator of the establishment or premises or person concerned that he or she may appeal the welfare notice to the District Court under *section 21*,

(*e*) in the case of a greyhound breeding establishment registered in the register, state that if the measures concerned are not taken within the period so specified an application may be made to the District Court to have the greyhound breeding establishment removed from the register, and

(*f*) state that if the operator of the establishment or premises or person concerned fails to comply with a welfare notice, he or she commits an offence and is liable to a penalty set out in *section 26(2)*.

(3) A welfare notice may—

(*a*) where the officer is satisfied that the requirements of *section 11* are not being complied with, require, on the advice of a veterinary practitioner, that the greyhound bitch concerned is neutered or not used for breeding purposes as specified in the notice,

(*b*) require that an ill or injured greyhound be cared for in such manner as is specified in the notice,

(*c*) require, on the advice of a veterinary practitioner, that the greyhound be disposed of or destroyed in a manner and at the place specified (if any) in the notice,

(*d*) require that veterinary advice or treatment or other specialist advice or treatment be obtained or given in relation to a greyhound,

(*e*) require that a greyhound be provided with such food and drink at such intervals and in such quantity as may be specified,

(*f*) require that no more than a specified number (including zero) of greyhounds or greyhounds of a particular class or description be kept on a premises,

(*g*) prohibit the transport or the further transport of a greyhound or prohibit such transport or further transport other than in accordance with such conditions as may be specified in the notice,

(*h*) require that alterations or additions be made to the accommodation, means of transport, machinery or equipment used in respect of a greyhound and, if considered appropriate, require that alternative suitable accommodation for the greyhound be provided pending the alterations or additions,

(*i*) require a person to secure, isolate or segregate a greyhound in a manner specified in the notice, or

(*j*) require a person to clean and disinfect a vehicle, vessel, premises or container or part of the vehicle, vessel, premises or container used in connection with a greyhound.

(4) A welfare officer may withdraw or vary a welfare notice.

(5) A person who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with a welfare notice commits an offence.

Appeal against welfare notice, etc.

21.— (1) The person on whom a welfare notice is served may, not later than 7 days from the service of the notice appeal the notice to a judge of the District Court sitting in the district court district in which the greyhound breeding establishment or the premises concerned is situated.

(2) Where a person proposes to appeal under *subsection (1)*, he or she shall notify the welfare officer who served the notice and that officer is the respondent in the appeal.

(3) Subject to *subsection (4)*, a welfare notice in respect of which an appeal is brought under this section shall have effect pending the making of an order under

subsection (4), unless the judge of the District Court before whom the appeal is brought, having regard to safeguarding the health and welfare of greyhounds, directs that the operation of the notice be suspended or varied pending determination of the appeal.

(4) On an appeal under this section, a judge of the District Court may—

(*a*) affirm the notice,

(*b*) revoke the notice, or

(*c*) revoke the notice and order the person concerned to comply with such directions as may be given by the judge.

Notice to local authority, etc.

22.— If a welfare officer inspects a greyhound breeding establishment or other premises or serves a welfare notice, he or she shall, not later than 7 days after the inspection or service of the welfare notice, send a report of the inspection or copy of the welfare notice to the chief executive of the Board, the secretary of the Club and the local authority in whose functional area the inspection occurred or the welfare notice was served.

Destruction of detained greyhounds which are in pain, distress or acute state of neglect, etc.

23.— (1) Where after the veterinary examination of a greyhound, it is the opinion of a welfare officer that the greyhound is in such pain or distress or state of acute neglect or so severely injured or diseased that it would be in the interests of the welfare of the greyhound, or the safety, health or welfare of other animals or persons it might come into contact with, to have it receive immediate veterinary treatment or be humanely destroyed, the welfare officer may seize and detain the greyhound for either such purpose.

(2) The cost of any veterinary treatment or destruction of a greyhound under this section may be recovered from the owner of the greyhound as a simple contract debt in any court of competent jurisdiction.

Forgery.

24.— (1) A person who forges or utters knowing it to be forged—

(*a*) the register, an entry in the register or a document purporting to be an extract from the register (in this section referred to as a "forged register"), or

(*b*) a notice, certificate or other document purporting to be issued, granted or given under this Act (in this section referred to as a "forged document"),

commits an offence.

(2) A person who alters with intent to defraud or deceive, or utters knowing it to be so altered—

(*a*) the register, an entry in the register or a document purporting to be an extract from the register (in this section referred to as an "altered register"), or

(*b*) a notice, certificate or other document issued, granted or given under this Act (in this section referred to as an "altered document"),

commits an offence.

(3) A person who, without lawful authority, has in his or her possession a forged register, a forged document, an altered register or an altered document commits an offence.

Obstruction, etc.

25.— (1) A person commits an offence if he or she—

(*a*) obstructs or interferes with a welfare officer or member of the Garda Síochána or a person who accompanies such officer or member in the course of exercising a function conferred on the officer or member by this Act or a warrant under *section 19* or impedes the exercise by the officer, member, or person, as the case may be, of such power,

(*b*) fails or refuses to—

(i) comply with a requirement of a welfare officer or member of the Garda Síochána under *section 18(1)(c)* or *(f)*, *(2)*, *(4)(i)* or *(9)*, or

(ii) answer a question asked by a welfare officer or member of the Garda Síochána under *section 18(3)*,

or

(*c*) in purported compliance with a requirement or in answer to a question referred to in *paragraph (b)* gives information to the officer or member that he or she knows to be false or misleading in any material respect.

(2) A statement or admission made by a person pursuant to a requirement under *section 18(1)(f)* shall not be admissible as evidence in proceedings brought against the person for an offence (other than an offence under this section).

Penalties and proceedings, etc.

26.— (1) A person who commits an offence under *section 10(6)*, *12(17)* or *(18)* or *15(7)* is liable on summary conviction to a class A fine.

(2) A person who commits an offence under *section 8*, F5**[***11(1), (2)* or *(3B)***]**, *16*, *20(5)*, *24* or *25* is liable on summary conviction to a class A fine or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or to both.

(3) An offence under this Act may be brought and prosecuted by—

(*a*) the Board,

(*b*) the Club,

(*c*) the local authority in whose functional area the offence is alleged to have been committed, or

(*d*) a member of the Garda Síochána in accordance with F6**[**section 10 of the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024**]**.

(4) Notwithstanding section 10(4) of the Petty Sessions (Ireland) Act 1851, proceedings for an offence referred to in *subsection (1)* may be instituted within 12 months of the commission of the offence.

(5) Where an offence under this Act is committed by a body corporate and is proved to have been so committed with the consent, connivance or approval of, or to have been attributable to the wilful neglect on the part of any person, being a director, manager, secretary or other officer of the body corporate or a person who was purporting to act in any such capacity, that person, as well as the body corporate, commits an offence and is liable to be proceeded against and punished as if he or she committed the first-mentioned offence.

(6) A fine imposed on conviction for an offence under this Act shall be paid to the prosecutor, other than a member of the Garda Síochána, and disposed of in a manner that such prosecutor determines.

(7) Where a person is convicted of an offence under this Act, the court shall, unless it is satisfied that there are special and substantial reasons for not doing so, order the person to pay to the prosecutor or other person the costs and expenses, measured by the court, incurred by the prosecutor or other person in relation to the

investigation, detection or prosecution of the offence, including costs and expenses incurred in relation to—

(*a*) the taking of samples, and

(*b*) the carrying out of tests, examinations and analyses.

Fixed payment notice.

27.— (1) Where a welfare officer or member of the Garda Síochána has reasonable grounds for believing that a person has committed an offence under *section 10(6)*, *12(17)* or *(18)* or *15(7)*, he or she may serve a notice in writing (in this section referred to as a "fixed payment notice") on that person stating that—

(*a*) the person is alleged to have committed the offence,

(*b*) the person may during the period of 28 days from the date of the notice make to the Board, the Club or the relevant local authority, as the case may be, at the address specified in the notice, as the case may be, a payment of €250 (or such other amount, being an amount not exceeding €1,000, as stands prescribed) accompanied by the notice,

(*c*) the person is not obliged to make the payment specified in the notice, and

(*d*) a prosecution in respect of the alleged offence will not be instituted during the period of 28 days specified in the notice and, if the payment specified in the notice is made during that period, no prosecution in respect of the alleged offence will be instituted.

(2) Where a fixed payment notice is given under *subsection (1)*—

(*a*) a person to whom the notice applies may, during the period of 28 days specified in the notice, make to the Board, the Club or the local authority named in the notice at the address specified in the notice the payment specified in the notice accompanied by the notice,

(*b*) the Board, the Club or the local authority, as the case may be, may upon receiving the payment, issue a receipt for it and any payment so received is not recoverable in any circumstances by the person who made it, and

(*c*) a prosecution in respect of the alleged offence shall not be instituted in the period specified in the notice, and if the payment so specified is made during that period, no prosecution in respect of the alleged offence shall be instituted.

(3) In a prosecution for an offence under this Act, the onus of proving that a payment pursuant to a notice under this section has been made lies on the defendant.

(4) In proceedings for an offence under *section 10(6)*, *12(17)* or *(18)* or *15(7)* it is a good defence for the defendant to prove that he or she has made a payment in accordance with this section pursuant to a fixed payment notice issued in respect of that offence.

(5) Moneys received pursuant to the giving of a fixed payment notice shall be disposed of in a manner determined by the Board, Club or relevant local authority specified in the notice.

(6) In this section "relevant local authority" means, in relation to the alleged commission of an offence, the local authority in whose functional area the offence is alleged to have been committed.

PART 5

Miscellaneous

Exercise of functions by secretary of Club.

28.— The functions of the Club under this Act may be performed on its behalf by the secretary of the Club.

Non-application of Dog Breeding Establishments Act 2010.

29.— The Dog Breeding Establishments Act 2010 does not apply to a premises entered on the register or to which *section 12(3)* applies.

Number 29 *of* 2011

WELFARE OF GREYHOUNDS ACT 2011

REVISED

Updated to 2 April 2025

About this Revised Act

This Revised Act presents the text of the Act as it has been amended since enactment, and preserves the format in which it was passed.

Related legislation

Welfare of Greyhounds Acts 2011 and 2019: this Act is one of a group of Acts included in this collective citation (*Greyhound Racing Act 2019* (15/2019), s. 1(3)). The Acts in this group are:

- *Welfare of Greyhounds Act 2011* (29/2011)
- *Greyhound Racing Act 2019* (15/2019), Part 10 (s. 59)

Annotations

This Revised Act is not annotated and only shows textual amendments. An annotated version of this revision is also available which shows textual and non-textual amendments and their sources. It also shows editorial notes including statutory instruments made pursuant to the Act and previous affecting provisions.

Material not updated in this revision

Where other legislation is amended by this Act, those amendments may have been superseded by other amendments in other legislation, or the amended legislation may have been repealed or revoked. This information is not represented in this revision but will be reflected in a revision of the amended legislation if one is available. A list of legislative changes to any Act, and to statutory instruments from 1972, may be found in the Legislation Directory at www.irishstatutebook.ie.