

Dear Members of the RAINE Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide evidence to the RAINE Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> April, and for the further invitation to provide any additional evidence by email.

I would like to respond further to some questions directed to me by Mr Mark Ruskell, as time was not available to do so during the committee session.

1. Mr Ruskell started by quoting, out of context, some words which he attributed to me but for which he did not provide a source. His first question seemed to relate to whether or not euthanasia is a welfare issue. Euthanasia is, by definition, painless (Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Code of Conduct [Chapter 8, section 8.1]). The statement which I made in committee, that euthanasia is not a welfare issue, is factually correct: euthanasia is painless, it does not cause suffering, and can never therefore in itself be a negative welfare issue.

Some may, nonetheless, consider euthanasia of animals to be an *ethical* issue. This is an important distinction which was not clear from Mr Ruskell's questioning. It is of relevance to the considerations of the RAINE committee on greyhound racing because it illustrates the difference between animal welfare and animal rights viewpoints. Those with an animal rights viewpoint who believe that animals have an absolute right to life consider human killing (including euthanasia) of any animal to be ethically unacceptable. This is not, of course, the current view of the majority of members of British or Scottish society, who (to take just some examples of human uses of animals) eat meat and other animal products and accept the use of animals in medical science. The view being espoused by Mr Ruskell in committee was an animal rights rather than an animal welfare point of view, and reflects the view now adopted by those (including some canine charities) who are calling for a ban on greyhound racing.

2. Mr Ruskell suggested in committee that by stating that euthanasia is not a welfare issue I was inferring that greyhounds would be better off dead than alive. This is a non-sequitur and a complete misrepresentation of my position to which I object strongly. That misrepresentation was repeated in writing after the conclusion of the committee's consideration of greyhound racing on the Scottish Green Party's website, through a very misleading headline: 'MSP furious at claim 1400 greyhound racing deaths is humane', and the text which followed that headline (<https://greens.scot/news/msp-furious-at-claim-1400-greyhound-racing-deaths-is-humane> last accessed 27th April 2023).

As I made clear in committee in response to Mr Ruskell, I categorically do *not* believe that greyhounds 'would be better off dead'.

Assessment of animals' quality of life requires consideration of both negative and positive welfare impacts. The concept of animal having 'lives worth living' from the animal's point of view was described and developed in the literature by Professors Christopher Wathes and David Mellor (for example, <sup>1,2</sup>). The impact on a greyhound's welfare of the regulatory

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<sup>1</sup> Mellor, D.J. (2016) Updating animal welfare thinking: moving beyond the "Five Freedoms" towards "A life Worth Living". *Animals* 6, doi: [10.3390/ani6030021](https://doi.org/10.3390/ani6030021).

<sup>2</sup> Wathes, C. (2010) Lives worth living? *Vet. Rec.* 166, 468- 469.

system provided by the GBGB, taken in concert with national and international animal welfare legislation, is to safeguard a greyhound's entitlement to a specified standard of welfare. Should any licensed stakeholder be in breach of GBGB's regulations, they are subject to the Disciplinary system (which, as I explained in committee, includes input from external independent members, including a Veterinary Surgeon), and should GBGB become aware that any stakeholder is in breach of animal welfare legislation that matter is reported to the appropriate authorities via GBGB's Director of Regulation.

The purpose of the GBGB's Welfare Strategy as published in 2022 is to build on GBGB's previous Greyhound Commitment to continue to provide not only a 'life worth living' but 'A Good Life for Every Greyhound', and to develop that provision in line with animal welfare and behavioural science as the evidence base increases. What constitutes 'a good life' has again been defined in the academic work of Professors Mellor and Wathes (<sup>1,2,3</sup>). The GBGB's Welfare Strategy is based on the internationally-accepted Five Domains model of animal welfare developed by Professor David Mellor and co-workers (reviewed in <sup>3</sup>), applied across all stages of the greyhound's life. This approach ensures that a greyhound's welfare needs are met not only in the four physical domains but also in the mental domain into which those physical domains feed – hence the emphasis on behaviour within the strategy which we discussed in committee.

Far from greyhounds being 'better off dead' as Mr Ruskell suggested, the quality of life as provided for greyhounds through the GBGB's welfare strategy and the work which preceded that strategy is a good one i.e., a substantially positive one from the greyhound's point of view when taken across their lifetime.

3. Mr Ruskell also alluded in committee to the concepts of avoidable and unavoidable harms.

These concepts are established in animal welfare science (for example, <sup>4</sup>) and in relation to the use of animals in sport (for example, <sup>5</sup>). Indeed, they were the subject of discussion at the Federation Equestre Internationale's Equine Sports Forum a few days ago. The ethical imperative to mitigate avoidable harms is one of the central tenets within the Ethical Framework for the Use of Horses in Sport (<sup>6</sup>). The policy actions and very comprehensive research stream within the GBGB's Welfare Strategy are all designed to ensure that risks of harm are identified through practice and research, and mitigated where they are avoidable. This leaves only the unavoidable harms.

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<sup>3</sup> Mellor, D.J.; Beausoleil, N.J.; Littlewood, K.E.; McLean, A.N.; McGreevy, P.D.; Jones, B.; Wilkins, C. The 2020 Five Domains Model: Including Human–Animal Interactions in Assessments of Animal Welfare. *Animals* **2020**, *10*, 1870. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani10101870>

<sup>4</sup> Morton, D.B. (1993) Is unnecessary suffering avoidable? *Vet. Rec.* **133**, 304.

<sup>5</sup> Campbell, M.L.H. (2013), Editorial. *Equine Veterinary Education*, 25: 489-492. <https://doi.org/10.1111/eve.12087>

<sup>6</sup> Campbell, M.L.H. An Ethical Framework for the Use of Horses in Competitive Sport: Theory and Function. *Animals* **2021**, *11*, 1725. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani11061725>

To go to Mr Ruskell's question about the acceptance of unavoidable harms in terms of athletic injuries, it is important to realise that, as explained by Professor Mellor in relation to the original Five Freedoms animal welfare framework, 'freedom from' should be interpreted as 'As free *as possible* from' rather than '*completely free* from during the course of a lifetime' (<sup>1</sup>). This is of direct relevance to arguments around the ethics of using animals in sport. It means that, where the on-going welfare of an animal is generally optimised through both minimising negative welfare and maximising positive welfare impacts, the negative welfare impacts of injuries resulting from unavoidable risk are ethically acceptable providing that appropriate veterinary treatment is provided. This is because the animal's overall experience of its own welfare, taken across their lifetime, remains a substantially positive one despite the injury. The acceptance of such a level of risk in greyhound sport is consistent with an analogous acceptance in all equine sport (both racing and non-racing). Furthermore, through continually striving to identify the causes of injury through research (as described in the Welfare Strategy), the GBGB is working to turn risks which are currently unavoidable because their cause is not known into avoidable risks which can and will be mitigated, and thus to keep driving down injury rates.

I hope that this provides some clarification.

Thank you,

Madeleine Campbell