

Why we home Irish Dogs in the UK



While the UK has a stray dog problem, particularly with certain breeds, it is miniscule against Ireland's. In 2006 16,000 dogs were destroyed in Eire. This figure only includes dogs which end up in pounds and not those put down by vets or killed by other means. The 16, 000 figure EXCLUDES greyhounds, 10 000-25 000 of which are bred annually in puppy farms with government encouragement. Most greyhounds racing in England were bred in Ireland. Compare this to the UK where the Dogs' Trust Annual Stray Dogs Report states that 6, 710 were destroyed in council pounds. The majority of these dogs being of the bull and guard dog breeds.

The Problem with Greyhounds

Successful male racers sire many thousand offspring with often the bitches being kept in dire conditions and bred from mercilessly. There is no significant enforcement nor a will to enforce, the existing welfare protection of greyhounds in Ireland. The Irish greyhound racing board's chief executive sees no issue with establishing greyhound racing in China using Irish bred dogs. The majority of greyhounds do not make the grade for racing and are destroyed before they reach 2yrs of age. Retirement from racing usually occurs age 4, yet greyhounds can live to 12-14 years.



Seamie, found in this terrible condition with terrible teeth and full of worms

Greyhounds sustain injuries while racing such as broken legs and corneal abrasions from the flying dirt, leading to pain and infections, sometimes requiring removal of the leg or eye but which are left untreated or lead to the dog being dumped or simply destroyed as soon as the injury occurs since it isn't financially viable to pay for treatment as the dog will be of no use afterwards. There is no blood testing of racing dogs in Ireland, and only urine samples occasionally taken. Many drugs, in particular human recreational drugs won't show up in a urine sample until some time after a race thereby avoiding detection. Drug abuse is endemic.



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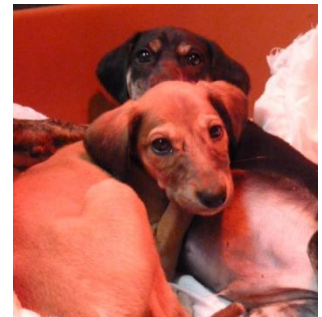
And Lurchers...



Annie was found straying with a broken hip having recently having had pups

Many lurcher breeds are used by travellers as trade items or for sport/ rabbit catching in the countryside. Failures and worn out dogs are frequently mistreated and abandoned so end up in pounds or in road accidents. Dogs are allowed to stray and will wander off / leave “home” and as very few (if any) are neutered bitches will have pups, again only to be picked up as strays.

Another typical scenario is that an individual will buy a bitch puppy with the sole intent to breed her and make money from the pups, dumping any unsold pups and the bitch when she is too worn out to have any more pups. In almost all cases we have come across these dogs are full of worms and clearly received no medical treatment at all – profit above all else.



Peanut and Bobbie were handed to the pound when they failed to sell, both were full of worms and quite poorly

In Eire there is often a 100% put to sleep policy in pounds. If a greyhound or lurcher is surrendered to a pound by its owner, as often happens, it is immediately destroyed. If the hound is picked up as a stray, destruction is carried out after 5 days.

The pounds will only release dogs which the wardens see as fit for rehoming and in Eire, hounds are not seen as pets. Halfway There Hound’s founder, who we work closely with, lives in the West of Ireland, often hears “but they are savages”, “no one has those as pets”, “you have greyhounds / lurchers IN THE HOUSE?!” etc

HTH is working with other Irish based rescue groups to raise the profile of Greyhounds and Lurchers as pets in Ireland and are making some small breakthroughs but as you can see the fate for a Greyhound or Lurcher in Eire is bleak. However, there are many wonderful families in the UK delighted to offer homes to these special hounds – could you be one too?