

# Ruling

## Sighthound Welfare UK Ltd

83 Ducie Street, Manchester, M1 2JQ

Media: Poster  
Agency: None - unconfirmed  
Complaint Ref: G21-1138156  
Complaints: 2



### AD DESCRIPTION

A billboard ad for Sighthound Welfare, a greyhound welfare pressure group, seen on 1 December 2021 near Oxford Stadium (a greyhound racing track), featured large text stating "Cruelties [sic] Coming Home" and an image of a collision in a greyhound race. Further text stated "Over 40% of greyhounds DIE each year due to racing" alongside the website address "www.CAGEDNW.co.uk". Small print at the foot of the billboard stated "Figures for fatalities due to greyhound racing are published by Preferred Results Ltd & the Greyhound Board of Great Britain. Over 80% of UK raced greyhounds are bred in Ireland".



### ISSUE

The Greyhound Board of Great Britain and Oxford Stadium Ltd challenged whether the claim that "Over 40% of greyhounds DIE each year due to racing" was misleading and could be substantiated.



### RESPONSE

Sighthound Welfare Ltd said that they expected readers to interpret the phrase "due to racing" in the ad's claim as meaning that the quoted 40% figure reflected all greyhound deaths caused by the sport's existence, including the culling of dogs unfit to race as well as deaths caused by on-track injuries. They added that the small print referred to the organisations whose research supported the claim and that readers therefore had sufficient information to understand the claim in the way they intended them to.

They told us the ad's figure concerning the mortality rate of UK racing greyhounds had been taken from reports published by The Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB) and Greyhound Racing Ireland (GRI). They believed that, since these organisations were the nationally recognised regulators of licensed greyhound racing in the UK and Ireland respectively, the 40% figure was reliable.

They referred to a 2017 report prepared by Preferred Results Ltd (as referenced in the small print in the ad), on behalf of GRI. The report estimated that in the period 2013 to 2015, an average total of 13,365 race-eligible Irish greyhound pups were born each year, and an annual average of 5,897 of those pups were culled before ever being registered onto the GRI's Race Management System.

They understood that the Irish report was relevant to the current state of UK greyhound racing because its findings supported that, each year, over 80% of Irish-bred racing greyhounds were exported to the UK, and they were unaware of any significant changes to British or Irish greyhound breeding practices since 2017.

Sighthound Welfare also referred us to a document published by GBGB that enumerated the number of UK greyhound fatalities in 2017. It stated that 257 greyhound track fatalities had occurred while a further 756 greyhounds were listed under the heading "Put to Sleep (PTS) / Sudden / Natural Death".



## ASSESSMENT

Upheld

The ad featured an image of an on-track collision, in which a fallen greyhound was being trampled by a competitor. We considered that the image would be seen as a reference to the dangers inherent to the activity of greyhound racing. The fact the ad appeared near to a greyhound racing track and stated "Cruelties [sic] Coming Home" also added to the impression that the ad related specifically to the activity of greyhound racing. We therefore considered that readers would interpret the claim "Over 40% of greyhounds DIE each year due to racing" to mean that over 40% of racing greyhounds in the UK died each year as a result of injuries received whilst racing. The ad also contained small-print at the bottom which referred to "Figures for fatalities due to greyhound racing" and although it also stated that "Over 80% of UK raced greyhounds are bred in Ireland" we did not consider that those people who read the small-print would understand that to mean that the claim intended to include greyhounds who were culled as part of the breeding process.

Sighthound Welfare had provided us with relatively recent evidence relating to the culling of dogs bred for greyhound racing in Ireland. However, we did not consider that was relevant to the claim in the ad as it was likely to be understood by readers.

A separate GBGB report stated that in 2017 257 UK greyhounds suffered fatalities on UK racetracks. Additionally, 756 greyhounds were listed under the heading "Put to Sleep (PTS) / Sudden / Natural Death" and split into subcategories which provided some information concerning the cause of death. Some of the deaths were identified with causes that we understood as unrelated to the activity of racing – e.g., "Terminal illness", whereas some of the other deaths, e.g., those due to "Treatment costs / Poor prognosis", were identified with causes that we understood might have related to on-track injuries in some cases. The document did not identify the total number of greyhounds racing in the UK in 2017, nor provide the number of dogs who continued racing into 2018. As a result, the information provided in the document was insufficient to calculate a percentage figure for the annual fatality rate of UK racing greyhounds. However, the advertiser had not sought to argue that the number of greyhound deaths quoted in this report alone substantiated the claim in the ad and we understood that the number of racing greyhounds in the UK meant that the number who died directly as a result of racing would be much lower than 40%.

Because Sighthound Welfare Ltd had not substantiated the claim "Over 40% of greyhounds DIE each year due to racing" as it would be understood by readers of the ad, we concluded that it was misleading.

The ad breached CAP Code (Edition 12) rules 3.1 (Misleading advertising), and 3.7 (Substantiation).



## **ACTION**

The ad must not appear again in its current form. We told Sighthound Welfare Ltd to ensure that future ads did not make claims about the percentage of greyhounds that died each year due to racing unless they held relevant adequate evidence to substantiate those claims.

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