

Indecon calls for clampdown on greyhound drugs and cruelty

[Tom Lyons](#)

Last Updated: Monday, July 7, 2014, 22:06

[Indecon](#) has said it believes the number of positive tests and adverse findings for banned substances in greyhounds is “unacceptable”. It concludes in its report that Bord na gCon faces “potential reputational damage” as a result.

It said the number of tests for drugs had risen by 50 per cent to 7,307 between 2011 and 2013. In 2011, it said there were 45 positive tests, of which 31 led to an adverse finding. In 2013 it said there were 51 positive tests but no adverse findings, for internal Bord na gCon reasons.

It noted, however, that 17 adverse findings were later recorded in January 2014, before another 21 adverse findings in April 2014.

Indecon said there was a number of reasons for the “divergence” between positive tests and adverse findings.

It said the control committee of Bord na gCon had dismissed a “significant number of positive tests on the basis that, in their opinion”, certain protocols around storage or handling were not adhered to.

Indecon said the main board disagreed with the control committee’s rulings but were powerless to change them under the legislation.

“It is likely that these dismissals of significant numbers of positive tests further damaged the reputation of the greyhound sector for regulatory control, but we make no judgment on the merits or otherwise of the individual rulings,” Indecon said.

It noted that “protocols” had since been revised, and recommended these were kept under ongoing review.

Fundamental reform

“The strengthening of the regulatory unit within Bord na gCon with a new senior position of director of racing governance and compliance will be of assistance but we consider more fundamental reform is necessary,” Indecon said.

It said processes must be “legally robust” and “the perception that off-course testing of greyhounds may not be permitted by the legislation is an area requiring urgent attention”. Indecon also said it believed that a “more severe system of sanctions” was needed to prevent animal cruelty.