



THE KENNEL CLUB



Breed Watch illustrated guide



This booklet is intended for judges, veterinarians and anyone who is interested in the health and welfare of show dogs, with all levels of experience. It will provide an objective and comprehensive illustrated guide for category 2 and 3 breeds with points of concern.

It can be difficult to ascertain how a point of concern has an impact on the health and welfare of an animal. This guide

aims to explain the correlation between exaggerated conformation and how these features can affect the dog and lead to welfare implications. This guide is intended to help judges identify points of concern, and should not be used to diagnose conditions.

In addition to this booklet, please also familiarise yourself with the Breed Watch booklet and individual breed standards.

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Nose and nostrils

Extreme conformation of the nostrils and nose can have a profound impact on the health and welfare of a dog. Open nostrils are vital for allowing oxygen into the airways, for permitting normal scent behaviour, cooling down the dog and preventing over-heating. When assessing the degree of stenosis (pinched nostrils) also consider the level (if any) of respiratory distress that is present (descriptions shown in the table opposite). Dogs showing any signs of respiratory distress must be heavily penalised.



Open nostrils

Acceptable and ideal as the nostrils allow the movement of sufficient air.



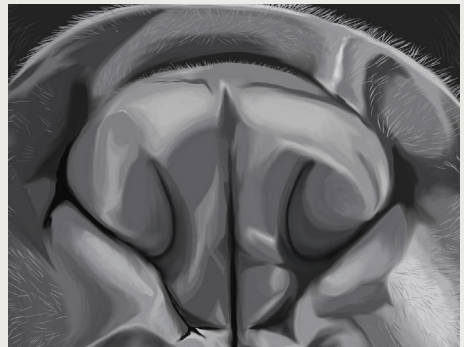
Mild stenosis

Acceptable unless the dog shows any additional signs of respiratory distress.



Moderate stenosis

Not acceptable, especially when accompanied by breathing through the mouth or any other sign of compromised breathing.



Severe stenosis

Not acceptable and must be penalised.

Please see the table below for descriptions that can be used to make a decision regarding the amount of respiratory distress affecting a dog. This is to be used as a guideline and is not definitive, as some conditions may overlap.

No respiratory concerns	Mild respiratory concerns	Moderate respiratory concerns	Severe respiratory concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog is calm, able to breathe through their nose without noise, with mouth closed • No movement of flanks outside of normal range • No respiratory noise. Dog is able to exercise freely and easily with minimal and effortless panting • Dog recovers immediately after exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog is calm, may pant through mouth instead of breathing through the nose • May have slight respiratory noise with no visible effort • Dog can exercise freely but may pant for a period during or after exercise, with slight respiratory noise • Dog recovers immediately after exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog is slightly distressed, breathing mostly through mouth • Has some respiratory sound and noticeable flank movement • Dog can move but may be reluctant to do so, will pant throughout exercise and may take some time to recover 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog is clearly distressed and cannot breathe through nose • Noticeable “rasping” respiratory noise • Excessive flank movement with breathing and does not appear to recover after exercise <p>In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May show obvious signs of distress • Visible mucous membranes, for example, gums and tongue, may be blue • May be reluctant to move • May vomit or collapse
<p>Health of dog is preferable and is favourable</p>	<p>Preferable to other individuals with respiratory concern</p>	<p>Should be penalised as degree of concern is not acceptable</p>	<p>Must be heavily penalised as this degree of distress is not acceptable</p>

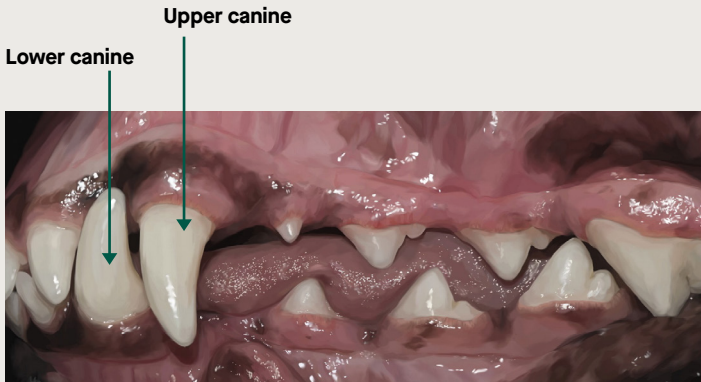
A dog of any breed might be affected by respiratory problems. The breeds noted on Breed Watch as being particularly susceptible are:

- Bulldog
- Chow Chow
- French Bulldog
- Norwich Terrier
- Pekingese
- Pug
- Staffordshire Bull Terrier

NB: In the case where an individual is found to be affected by respiratory distress, it must be penalised, as this can cause extreme discomfort.

Mouth and dentition

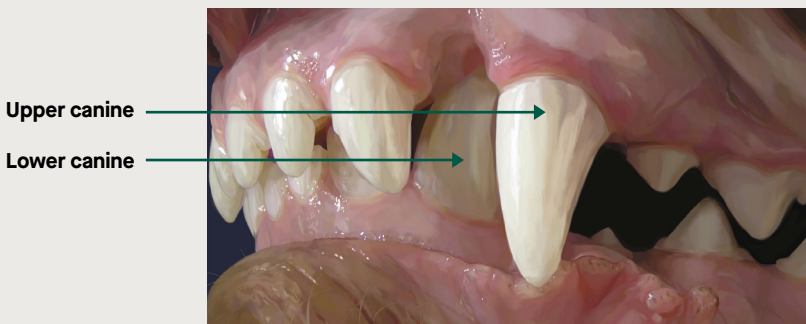
Incorrect dentition and misplaced teeth can have a profound impact on the welfare of a dog. This may vary from infection and pain to inability to eat food appropriately. Signs of incorrect dentition include tartar, redness of the surrounding gums, soreness and ulceration where teeth are rubbing.



Normal teeth

An example of normal teeth in a dog with a correct scissor bite. There are no signs of inflammation or rubbing of misplaced teeth on the gums.

NB: lower canine fits comfortably outside the gum.



Misplaced canines

This example shows misplaced upper and lower canines that have become buried into the gums and rub on the tissue. The dog has also got a slight overbite. This will cause discomfort for the dog and could result in infection.

Gap between upper and lower incisors



Overshot

An example of a dog with an overshot upper jaw (bite), creating a noticeable gap between the upper and lower incisors (front teeth). This will predispose the dog to rubbing and irritation of the teeth on the gums and could result in infection.



Upper canine rubbing on the lower gums, which is incorrect

Undershot

An example of a dog with a severely undershot upper jaw (bite). Whilst some breeds are known to be undershot by breed type, this should by no means be to the extreme that it causes irritation and pain in the mouth, as a result of teeth rubbing on the gums.

A dog of any breed might be affected by mouth and dentition problems. The breeds noted on Breed Watch as being particularly susceptible are:

- Basset Hound
- Borzoi
- Bull Terrier
- Bull Terrier (Miniature)
- Cesky Terrier
- Chihuahua (Long-Coated)
- Chihuahua (Smooth-Coated)
- Collie (Rough)
- Dogue de Bordeaux
- French Bulldog
- Irish Wolfhound
- Shetland Sheepdog
- Spaniel (American Cocker)
- St. Bernard
- Staffordshire Bull Terrier
- West Highland White Terrier

NB: In the case where an individual is found to be affected by dentition problems, it must be penalised, as this can cause extreme discomfort and pain, and presents a welfare issue.

Skin and wrinkles

Dogs with excessive skin on both the head and the body are at an increased risk of skin problems as a result of the environment within the skin folds; bacteria prefer to inhabit skin folds due to the warm and moist conditions found in these areas. In a dog with exaggerated skin folds, bacteria multiply readily, leading to a higher risk of infection.

Redness, dampness and baldness are potential signs of conditions affecting the skin and coat of the dog. Conditions such as dermatitis, skin allergies, infection and alopecia can adversely affect a dog's quality of life and can cause concerns such as excessive scratching, discomfort and, in severe cases, infection, sores and pain.

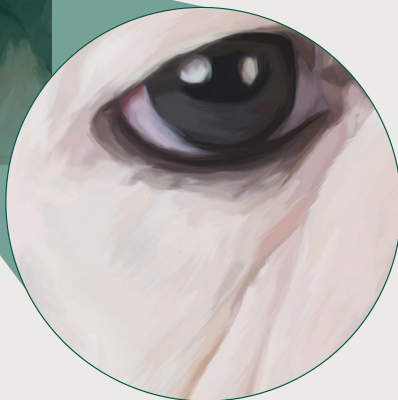
Furthermore, excessive amounts of wrinkles can have consequential impacts on other aspects of conformation, such as impinging on the eyes and nose, resulting in irritation, and inhibiting the natural movement of the dog.

For breeds that have characteristic wrinkling this should be present only in moderation and in no way impede the dog's quality of life or ability to function.



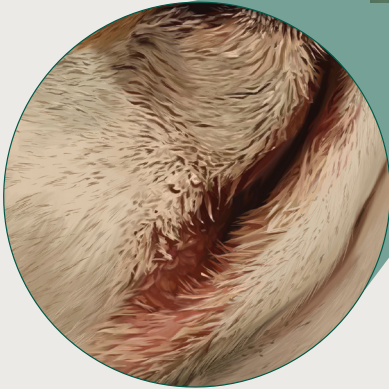
| Clear skin

An example of a dog with good skin. There is no sign of soreness or redness and the skin is clean and healthy between the wrinkles.



Dermatitis

Redness, dampness, baldness and thin coat are indications of skin problems. Dermatitis is commonly found within deep skin folds as a result of inadequate grooming.



Over-nose wrinkle

An example of a severe over-nose wrinkle. The wrinkle is impinging severely upon the nose, preventing normal air flow in to the nostrils and increasing the risk of irritation, dermatitis and infection.

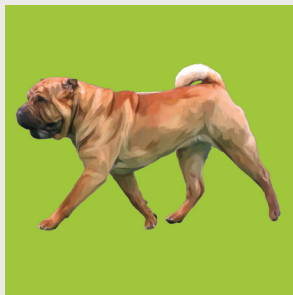


Over-nose wrinkle

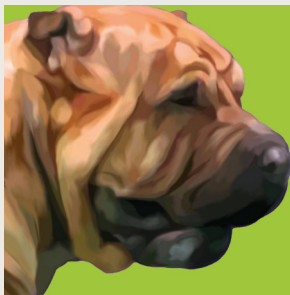
An example of a moderate over-nose wrinkle, which has begun to impinge upon the eyes and nose. This can lead to irritation, dermatitis and infection.

Breed specific skin conditions

Shar Pei



An example of moderate wrinkling in the breed which in no way impedes the sight and movement of the dog; this individual will have a reduced risk of developing any skin conditions.



A moderate example of the breed. The dog has clear and clean eyes with no eyelid defects and minimal wrinkle which will reduce the susceptibility to skin disease.



An example of an extremely exaggerated Shar Pei. The excessive wrinkle is causing eye and eyelid defects and may lead to further complications such as infection. This is not acceptable and must be penalised.

Bulldog



An example of a Bulldog with a reasonable level of wrinkling. The over-nose wrinkle does not impinge on the eyes or nose and the nostrils are large and open. This dog will be at a reduced risk of suffering from breathing, eye and skin conditions.



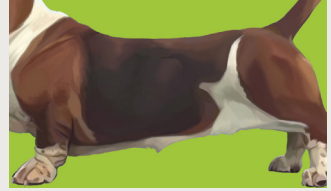
An example of a Bulldog with extreme exaggeration. Whilst the head overall is not heavily wrinkled, the over-nose wrinkle is severely exaggerated and covers the nostrils. This will impede the breathing of the dog and predispose the individual to skin conditions and discomfort.



An example of an extremely exaggerated dog. The heavy wrinkling causes skin infections and seriously impinges on the dog's nostrils and eyelid conformation. This will cause compromised breathing and damaged eyes. A dog with such exaggerated conformation must be heavily penalised.

Basset Hound

An example of acceptable skin in the breed. The amount of skin still allows the dog to move freely and will reduce the risk of skin problems.



An example of excessive skin in a Basset Hound. This will impede the movement of the dog and also make it susceptible to skin problems.



Neapolitan Mastiff



An example of the breed with moderate wrinkling. The facial wrinkles do not inhibit the sight of the dog and will reduce the risk of developing skin conditions.



This dog has excessive loose skin over the head and skull and this can lead to irritation, dermatitis and will predispose the dog to eye and eyelid defects.

A dog of any breed might be affected by skin problems. The breeds noted on Breed Watch as being particularly susceptible are:

- Basset Hound
- Bloodhound
- Bulldog
- Dogue de Bordeaux
- French Bulldog
- Mastiff
- Neapolitan Mastiff
- Pekingese
- Pug
- Shar Pei
- Spaniel (Clumber)
- St. Bernard

NB: In the case where an individual is found to be affected by this, it must be penalised, as this can cause extreme discomfort and pain.

Eyes

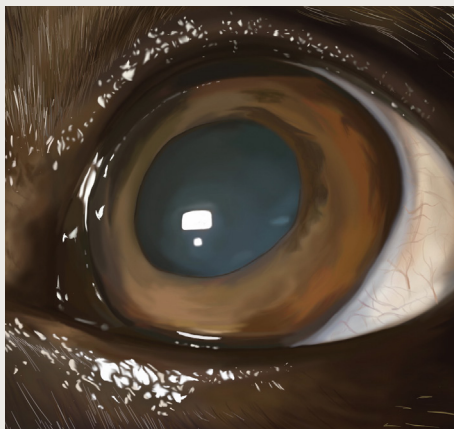
It is of the upmost importance that dogs of all breeds are able to see freely and without pain, to ensure they are fit for function and are not affected by any concerns that could compromise their quality of life.

Breeds that are susceptible to exaggerated eye conformation include those with characteristic loose skin or wrinkle around the head and those with round and large open eyes.

Whilst some breeds may be permitted to have some haw showing in their breed standards and others have round open eyes, these features must not in any way be exaggerated so as to cause irritation or discomfort.

Clinical signs indicating possible eye concerns include: bloodshot or discoloured sclera (whites of eyes), excessive haw showing below the eye with outward turning lower lids, inward facing hairs or eyelashes with inward turning lids and ocular discharge or fluids.

The eyes, regardless of the breed, should be clear, bright and clean.



Good example

An example of healthy eye conformation. The sclera (whites) are clean and clear, without irritation, and there are no hairs facing inwards or excessive skin pulling the eyelid down.



Ectropion

Loose eyelids, redness and sclera showing can indicate eye problems. This may be coupled with exaggerated skin around the head and must be penalised.



Entropion

Inward facing eyelashes or hairs can cause irritation and infection on the surface of the eye.



Excessively prominent eyes

An example of a dog with extremely prominent eyes and excessive white of eye. This dog will be at increased risk of eye damage, irritation and conditions such as corneal ulcers. This type of conformation must be penalised.

**A dog of any breed might be affected by eye and eyelid problems.
The breeds noted on Breed Watch as being particularly susceptible are:**

- Basset Hound
- Bloodhound
- Bulldog
- Chow Chow
- Collie (Rough)
- Dogue de Bordeaux
- French Bulldog
- Great Dane
- Mastiff
- Neapolitan Mastiff
- Newfoundland
- Pekingese
- Pug
- Shar Pei
- Spaniel (Clumber)
- St. Bernard

NB: Breeds that have characteristic wrinkle and/or large eyes will be at an increased risk of developing ocular conditions. Therefore, these may not be limited to the list above. Any dogs showing exaggerated eye/eyelid conformation must be penalised.

Breed specific eye conditions



Bloodhound

An example of extreme conformation in a Bloodhound. This dog would not be fit for function and will suffer from pain and discomfort.



Great Dane

An example of moderate eyelid conformation. The degree of ectropion will cause the dog discomfort and irritation.



Dogue de Bordeaux

An example of extreme conformation in the breed. The looseness of the eyelids have resulted in redness and irritation.



Dogue de Bordeaux

An example of a good eye in the breed. This dog will be fit for function and will be at reduced risk of concerns affecting the eyes.



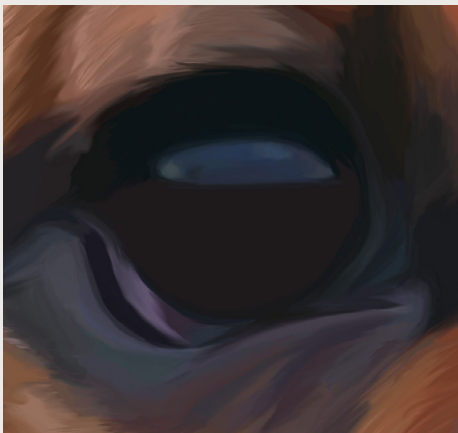
Chow Chow

An example of a dog with good eye conformation. The eyes are clear and clean and are free from any hairs which can cause damage and pain.



Chow Chow

A further example of a dog with good eye conformation. Again, the eyes are clear and clean, allowing the dog to see clearly without any hairs causing irritation.



Bulldog

An example of an excellent eye in a Bulldog. There is no indication of redness or irritation and the eyes are clean and clear.

Weight and body condition

Weight can be difficult to assess objectively and what is termed as “overweight” or “underweight” can differ greatly between breeds and also within individuals of a breed. With this in mind, it is recommended that judges should adhere to recognised body conditioning scores that have been developed with some breed specificity (please see additional resources).

In general, assessing whether a dog is an incorrect weight is done by feeling over the dog. The below points may indicate that an individual is the incorrect weight.

Overweight

- Difficulty in feeling bony prominences e.g. ribs and spine
- Tuck is not visible from the side
- Waist not visible from above
- Excessive fat noticeable upon palpation
- Excessive panting and/or difficulty breathing
- Difficulty moving appropriately

Underweight

- Bony prominences e.g. vertebrae, ribs, pelvis obvious from a distance
- Obvious loss of muscle mass
- No palpable fat
- Dog may appear lethargic or show reluctance to move properly
- Exaggerated waist and tuck



Ideal body weight and condition

An example of a dog with good body condition. This dog is optimal and will be fit for function.



Overweight

A dog that is excessively overweight. This dog will not be fit for function and will be at risk of developing serious conditions such as diabetes mellitus and cardiovascular disease.



Underweight

A dog that is excessively underweight for the breed. This dog will not be fit for function and will be at risk of conditions such as muscle mass loss and organ disease.

A dog of any breed might be affected by weight and have an incorrect body condition. The breeds noted on Breed Watch as being particularly susceptible are:

- Basset Hound
- Bulldog
- Dachshund (Miniature Long-Haired)
- Dachshund (Miniature Smooth-Haired)
- Dachshund (Miniature Wire-Haired)
- Dogue de Bordeaux
- Mastiff
- Neapolitan Mastiff
- Pug
- Pyrenean Mountain Dog
- Retriever (Golden)
- Retriever (Labrador)
- Siberian Husky
- Spaniel (Clumber)

NB: In the case where an individual is found to be affected by this, it must be penalised, as this can present as a welfare issue.

Tail

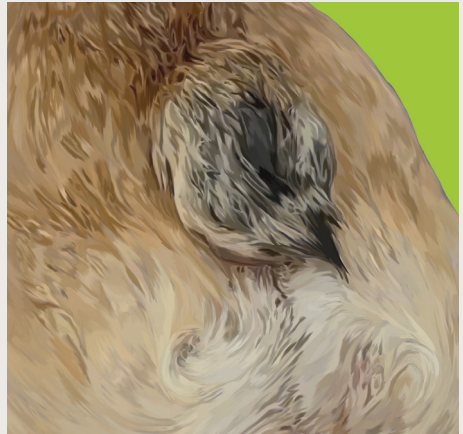
As well as causing dogs significant discomfort, exaggerated tail conformation can inhibit a dog's natural behaviour through communication with other dogs, the individual's overall balance and can even have serious health implications; including severe infection, pain around the tail pocket, and risk of developing neurological conditions. All dogs of any breed should have a mobile tail that can be lifted from the body.



Good Bulldog example

This image depicts a good tail in a Bulldog. This tail fits the breed standard and reduces the risk of the dog suffering from any tail or neurological conditions. The tail can be lifted from the body and is mobile.

NB: it is important that at least one tail vertebra can be felt



Good French Bulldog example

An example of a good tail in the breed. The tail complies with the breed standard correctly and reduces the risk of any discomfort or pain.

A dog of any breed might be affected by tail problems. The breeds noted on Breed Watch as being particularly susceptible are:

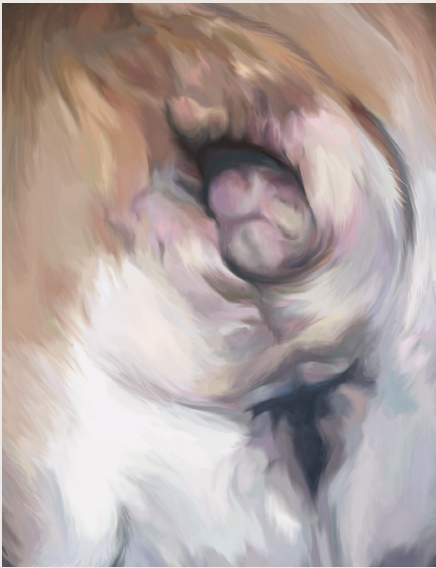
- Bulldog
- French Bulldog

NB: In the case where an individual is found to be affected by tail problems, it must be penalised, as this can cause extreme discomfort or pain.



Lack of tail

An example of lack of tail in a French Bulldog. This will predispose the dog to spinal problems and tail pocket infection.



Inverted tail

An example of a severely inverted tail in a Bulldog, where the tail grows inward. The infection surrounding this will cause the dog severe discomfort and causes significant susceptibility to further disease.

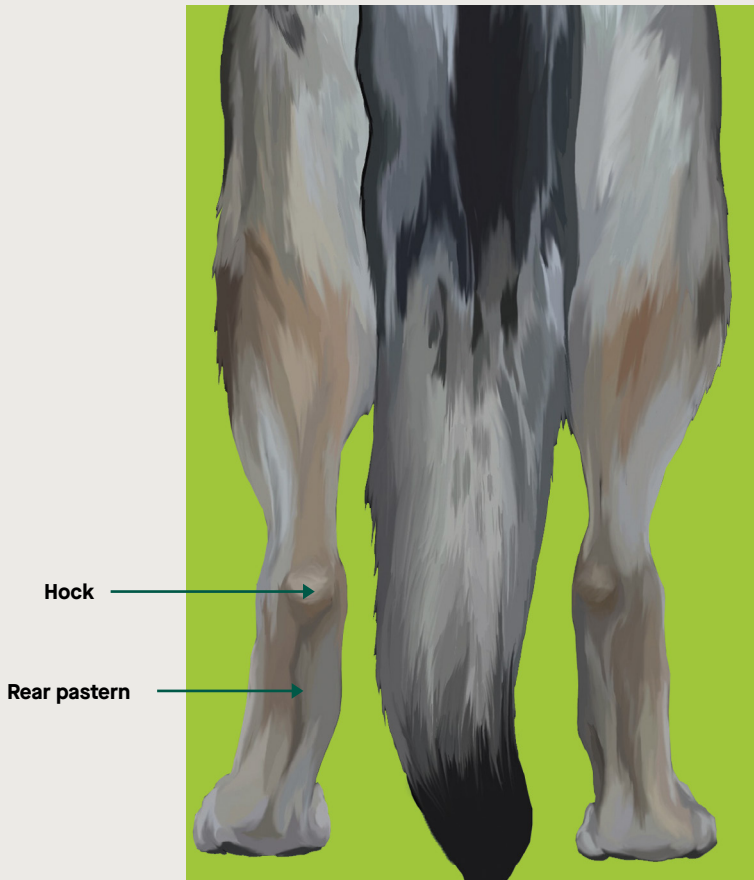


Screw tail

An example of screw tail in a dog. This greatly increases the dog's risk of developing an infection.

Limbs and movement

As well as ensuring the dog is fit for function and can perform soundly, incorrect limb conformation, particularly in the hind legs, can lead to pain, e.g. arthritis, musculoskeletal disease and progressive poor balance or weakness. Severely exaggerated conformation can even result in serious neurological symptoms and impact the dog's quality of life.



| Good hocks in a dog:

This dog has hocks and rear pasterns that are parallel and strong, allowing the dog to be sound and fit for function.



Moderate cow hocks

This can cause unsound movement and weakness in the hind legs, reducing the dog's ability to function effectively.



Severe cow hocks

An example of severe cow hocks in a dog, which can lead to imbalance and weakness. The dog will not be fit for function.

A dog of any breed might be affected by limb and movement problems. The breeds noted on Breed Watch as being particularly susceptible are:

- Bloodhound
- Bulldog
- Chow Chow
- Collie (Rough)
- Dogue de Bordeaux
- German Shepherd Dog
- Mastiff
- Neapolitan Mastiff
- Old English Sheepdog
- Pekingese
- Pug
- Pyrenean Mountain Dog
- Spaniel (Clumber)
- St. Bernard

NB: In the case where an individual is found to be affected by this, it must be penalised, as this can cause extreme discomfort.

Further resources

- **Breed Watch information:**

thekennelclub.org.uk/breedwatch

- **Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome video:**

youtube.com/watch?v=bd3_s_hC7G4

- **Kennel Club academy learning resource dog health resource - brachycephalic obstructive airway syndrome:**

thekennelclub.org.uk/academy

- **Kennel Club academy learning resource: dog health resource - canine biomechanics and movement:**

thekennelclub.org.uk/academy

- **Cambridge BOAS study group:**

vet.cam.ac.uk/research/boas

- **WSAVA body conditioning score:**

wsava.org/nutrition-toolkit

- **Merck veterinary manual - skin disorders of dogs:**

msdvetmanual.com/dog-owners/skin-disorders-of-dogs

- **Merck veterinary manual - dental disorders of dogs:**

msdvetmanual.com/dog-owners/digestive-disorders-of-dogs/dental-disorders-of-dogs

- **Merck veterinary manual - ocular disorders of dogs:**

msdvetmanual.com/dog-owners/eye-disorders-of-dogs/disorders-of-the-eyelids-in-dogs







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