What the Kennel Club does for Dog Health
2016/2017

www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health
The Kennel Club is committed to ensuring that all dogs have the opportunity to lead healthy, happy lives, with responsible owners.

By working collaboratively with the veterinary profession, the canine scientific world, dog welfare organisations and breed experts, the Kennel Club strives to work towards the protection of health and welfare of all dogs, both presently and in the future.

To view more on what the Kennel Club has done and is doing for dog health, please visit www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health
TOP TOPIC OF 2016: WHAT IS BEING DONE TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF BRACHYCEPHALIC BREEDS?

COLLABORATING WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

A Brachycephalic Breeds Working Group was set up in 2016, led by the Kennel Club and working alongside veterinary associations, researchers and dog welfare organisations.

PLANS FOR A HEALTHIER FUTURE

Last year the Kennel Club began the initial research phase of a dynamic new resource to support Breed Clubs and individual breeders - the Breed Health and Conservation Plans (BHCP) project.

This new resource will use evidence-based research to identify, understand and prioritise each breed’s health issues. Each breed’s BHCP report will be the foundation by which canine health can be improved.

ADVISING BREEDERS

The Kennel Club dedicates a whole section of its website to providing information and advice on how to breed away from conformation related health problems, helping breeders who are seeking guidance to find out on how to breed healthy, happy dogs. For breeding advice please visit www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health/for-breeders/breeding-advice.

FUNDING IMPORTANT SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

The Kennel Club Charitable Trust is funding groundbreaking research into Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome (BOAS) at Cambridge University. The aim is to improve the health of dogs which are already affected by BOAS and to create breeding tools that will help breeders make informed choices and ultimately breed healthier puppies.

IMPROVING DOG SHOW JUDGES EDUCATION

The Kennel Club raises awareness of brachycephalic health amongst dog show judges and emphasises the responsibility of judges through education training days, and an online resource known as Breed Watch, which helps judges monitor and address visible health concerns.

RAISING AWARENESS OF HEALTH ISSUES

The Kennel Club Academy’s most recent film concerns a Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome (BOAS) online-learning resource, to provide free and easily accessible education to those with an interest in BOAS and the research being undertaken into the health of brachycephalic dog breeds at Cambridge University, funded by the Kennel Club Charitable Trust.
The Assured Breeder Scheme promotes good breeding practices and ensures its members are dedicated to canine health. Currently the scheme has around 5,300 members, who, in 2016, produced over 17,000 puppies.

The Estimated Breeding Values resource, used by breeders to assess the degree to which an animal may have inherited, or pass on, genes associated with hip or elbow dysplasia received approximately 34,000 hits in 2016.

Owners and veterinarians can report dogs that have had Caesarean section and conformation altering surgery to the Kennel Club. This reporting system enables the recording of information regarding breeding lines, assists dog show judges to be sure they are not called to assess dogs with hereditary defects which have been so well corrected by surgical intervention that they cannot be detected, and also to deter breeders from breeding animals displaying evidence of hereditary problems. In 2016, the Kennel Club received approximately 4,000 reports of caesarean sections and 650 reports of conformation operations.

The BVA/KC Canine Health Schemes help breeders to assess which dogs to use for breeding, with the aim of reducing the incidence of health issues in future generations. In 2016, the schemes evaluated 8,000 dogs under the Hip Dysplasia Scheme, 4,500 dogs under the Elbow Dysplasia Scheme, 13,000 dogs under the Eye Scheme and 40 dogs under the Chiari Malformation/Syringomyelia scheme.

The Mate Select website, a resource that allows breeders, puppy buyers and owners to look up the health information that is available for each Kennel Club breed registered dog, was visited over 1,800,000 times in 2016.

The Kennel Club currently publishes the DNA test results for 61 official DNA testing schemes for 67 breeds. Test results were recorded and freely published for 7,600 tested dogs in 2016.

The Inbreeding Co-efficient Calculators, which, among other things, can be used to run the scenario of how inbred potential puppies would be from a hypothetical mating, received approximately 194,000 hits in 2016.

The Health Tests Results Finder, a resource to allow breeders and potential puppy buyers to search for health test and screening scheme results for any dog registered on the Kennel Club’s breed register, received approximately 328,000 online hits in 2016.

The Breed Information Centre, which recommends breed specific health tests and includes everything you need to know about a breed, including its exercise and grooming needs, received approximately 4,700,000 hits in 2016.
New in 2016

In 2016, two new extensive sections were added to the Kennel Club website, these included a Breeding Advice section and an Understanding Canine Genetics section. These pages assist breeders and give guidance regarding important factors to consider when breeding dogs and how to use health test results and screening scheme results effectively.

New in 2016

In 2016, the Kennel Club launched the initial research phase of a vital new resource aimed at Breed Clubs and individual breeders – the Breed Health and Conservation Plans (BHCP) Project. This new project will ensure that the health concerns of each Kennel Club recognised breed are identified through evidence-based criteria. From this plan, breeders will be provided with useful information and resources to support them in making balanced breeding decisions that make health a priority. 17 key priority breeds will be provided with a BHCP report in 2017, with all remaining breeds having a report in time. Each breed’s BHCP report will be the foundation by which canine health can be improved.

Data will be collected on:
- Known inherited diseases
- Suspected and emerging inherited disease
- Population structure and inbreeding risks
- Visible health concerns (conformation)

Resources that will be used:
- Scientific literature
- Breed club health survey data
- Data from Breed club health initiatives
- Kennel Club’s 2014 Pedigree Breed Health Survey Data
- Population analysis of Kennel Club data
- Data from Official Kennel Club DNA testing schemes
- Data from BVA/KC Screening Schemes

Collaborators:
- Breed clubs
- Breed Health Co-ordinators
- Veterinary community
- Research community

Initially 17 Key priority breeds will be provided with a Breed Health and Conservation Plan (BHCP).
Eventually allKennel Club recognised breeds will have a BHCP.

Identify where additional research is required and where further funding is needed
Help create breeding strategies with a particular focus on health
Determine where new breeding resources are required
Help the Kennel Club and its collaborators make evidence-based decisions on the best ways to improve canine health
**Breed Health Co-ordinators**

Breed Health Co-ordinators (BHCs) are individuals working on behalf of breed clubs and councils who are advocates for the health and welfare of their chosen breed. The BHC acts as a spokesperson on matters of health, collaborating with the Kennel Club on any health concerns the breed may have. The Kennel Club provide BHCs with advice and resources to help promote and improve the health of their breed where necessary. In 2016, the Kennel Club introduced a new newsletter for BHCs to help keep the group up to date with news and progress.

**Breed Health Co-ordinator of the Year Award**

This award was designed to recognise and reward the hard work and dedication of its network of health co-ordinators. Nominations from breed clubs and councils were invited for the award and five finalists were chosen by an expert panel of judges, comprising world renowned canine experts.

**New in 2016**

**Brachycephalic Working Group**

The Kennel Club is participating in a multi-stakeholder working group to look at practical, evidence-based solutions to health concerns in brachycephalic breeds. The working group include the Kennel Club press and health teams, veterinary organisations (BVA), members of the veterinary community, researchers (Cambridge University and the Royal Veterinary College), dog welfare organisations (Dogs Trust & the RSPCA) and Breed Health Co-ordinators.

**Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Heart Working Party**

This working group, consisting of the Kennel Club, representatives of the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel breed clubs and the Veterinary Cardiovascular Society, was set up to review and improve the heart screening of the breed within the UK, to enable more robust collection and publication of data.

**Giant Breeds and Mollosor Breeds Working Group**

The Giant Breeds and Mollosor Breeds Working Group was set up in early 2017, comprising of the Kennel Club and representatives from 15 breeds. The project will bring the expertise of different stakeholders together to help tackle health concerns shared by these breeds.
Health & Welfare of Show Dogs

FIT FOR FUNCTION

BREED WATCH

The Breed Watch web page, a resource to assist judges in monitoring and addressing visible health concerns in dogs exhibiting at shows, was visited over 43,000 times in 2016.

In 2016, due to the hard work of the Basset Hound Breed Clubs and community and the health initiatives currently in place, the Basset Hound was reclassified from a Breed Watch category three breed to a category two breed.

In 2016, a new Breed Watch booklet was launched to enable judges to better understand their responsibility to health when judging and further the importance of their role within the Breed Watch system. The booklet also includes guidance to breeds of how they can improve the monitoring of health within their breed and move between categories on Breed Watch.

In addition to judges health monitoring during 2016, a total of 314 Category 3 breeds were vet checked at Group & General Championship Shows for Best of Breed and Champion title awards. Of these checks, 312 were passes and 2 were fails.

All judges with appointments for category two and three breeds are required to complete a mandatory health monitoring form to enable the Kennel Club to collect data on the visual health of the dogs they have judged. In 2016, 993 mandatory judges’ health monitoring forms were completed across 42 breeds.

The annual Breed Watch Education Day provides an opportunity to help dog show judges develop their knowledge and further understand how to identify any visible health and welfare concerns. The 2016 seminar comprised of lectures on canine movement, dentition, obesity and body conditioning, with all tickets for the event sold with 60 judges attending.
Events and Education

The 2016 Breed Health Co-ordinator Symposium consisted of free lectures to all Breed Health Co-ordinators (BHCs) on the Give a Dog A Genome project, the International Partnership For Dogs, Dogswellnet and VetCompass. An afternoon workshop was set up to discuss the main roles of Breed Health Co-ordinators. The day was attended by around 90 BHCs. The 2017 symposium will be the first time that the event will be open to anyone, with tickets going on sale later in the year.

During the 2016 National Canine Health Testing Week, an event that raises awareness of the importance of breeding and buying puppies from appropriately health tested parents, the Kennel Club celebrated the 50th anniversary of the BVA/KC/ISDS Eye Scheme by launching a successful social media campaign asking owners to show their support of eye testing by taking and sharing images of their pets, using the hashtag #DogsEyeView.

During the 2017 Crufts, around 250 veterinary students attended free lectures on problems associated with brachycephalic breeds and the latest research in understanding Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome (BOAS). A total of 787 veterinary students were provided with free Crufts tickets to help them learn more about pedigree dogs and dog health.

The Kennel Club health team regularly have an exhibition stand at the annual British Small Animal Veterinary Associations Congress to engage with veterinary professionals and in 2016 handed out over 1,000 bags of information promoting Kennel Club health resources.

The Kennel Club is active on both Facebook and Twitter, and in 2016 posted over 150 health related posts on each form of social media. The Kennel Club Facebook page alone has a potential reach of 444,000 users each month. The most shared post was a Christmas poem warning of festive foods that are toxic to dogs.

The Kennel Club’s online Dog Health information pages, an area designed to cover health issues and considerations that impact on dog breeding ownership and puppy buying were accessed over 862,000 times in 2016.

The Kennel Scope a free quarterly canine health e-newsletter, currently has over 3,800 subscribers.
The Kennel Club Academy offers a series of free films that cover topics on pre-breeding considerations right through to canine pregnancy, whelping & rearing, caring for the health of young puppies. Resources include topics such as understanding inheritance & DNA testing, how to maximise the chances of producing healthy offspring, whelping, pregnancy and rearing puppies. All films have been produced by experts in their fields and offer users an insight into their knowledge and experience. Every film comes with useful learning resources and suggested further reading. The Academy now has over 2,700 subscribers.

The 2016 Breed Health Co-ordinator (BHC) toolkit covered the subject of managing the arrival of a new DNA test, with the aim of providing BHCs with the necessary and recommended actions to take following the arrival of a new DNA test, including how to tell if the test is reliable.

Published in 2016, The Kennel Club’s latest Health Information Guide (Managing Your Dog’s Weight) was downloaded around 1,400 times in the same year, with 3,000 printed versions being ordered for veterinary practices or given away at Crufts and veterinary conferences.
Supporting involvement in health research

The Kennel Club regularly assists veterinary researchers in promoting current studies by emailing Breed Health Co-ordinators, veterinary contacts and owners of relevant breeds, as well as promoting the studies on social media. Over the last three years (2014, 2015 & 2016), the Kennel Club has promoted 45 separate health research projects via the BARC project (Bio-Acquisition Research Collaboration).

The Kennel Club utilises its registration database to contact registered owners of particular breeds, asking for them to participate in health surveys, studies and health clinics. In 2016, the Kennel Club emailed over 610,000 dog owners and breeders to promote 21 different independent health surveys, research projects and health clinics.

The International Canine Health Awards, an initiative administered by the Kennel Club Charitable Trust and underwritten by a major gift from Vernon and Shirley Hill, founders of Metro Bank, recognise innovative researchers and veterinary scientists whose work has had a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of dogs. In 2016, the International Canine Health Awards donated £60,000 to scientific research to help improve the health of dogs.

The Kennel Club Cancer Centre at the Animal Health Trust helps pets receive the latest treatment and invest in ways in which to better understand the disease. The Cancer Centre helps to educate veterinary surgeons provide better help for hundreds of animals. Knowledge learned within the new Cancer Centre feeds into research, helping to improve tests used to detect tumours and predict how a cancer may behave and respond to treatment.
The Kennel Club Genetics Centre at the Animal Health Trust contributes significantly towards research into inherited canine disease. In 2016, the AHT’s DNA testing facility tested around 8,000 dogs and each year creates new diagnostic tests in collaboration with breed clubs, owners and the Kennel Club, which, together with breeding advice and online Kennel Club resources, improve the health and welfare of generations of dogs. Additionally, the Genetics Centre collects and stores canine DNA for future investigations.

In 2016, the Kennel Club Charitable Trust (KCCT) donated over £520,000 to aid with scientific research. The Kennel Club Health Team currently work closely with the following research groups:

• Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome (BOAS) at Cambridge University. The aim of this study is to improve the health of dogs which are already affected by BOAS and to create breeding tools which will help breeders make informed choices and ultimately breed healthier puppies.

• German Shepherd gait and movement at the University of Surrey. A research project to investigate how German Shepherd Dogs stand and move, advancing our understanding and potentially providing information that could be of benefit to all dogs.

• The Veterinary Companion Animal Surveillance System (VetCompass), a not-for-profit research project at The Royal Veterinary College (RVC), investigates the range and frequency of companion animal health problems by using data stored in individual computerised veterinary practice management systems.

In 2016, the Canine Genetics and Epidemiology journal, the first journal dedicated to the health of all canid species, published 9 articles that were accessed over 28,000 times. Support from the Kennel Club for the journal is primarily from the Kennel Club Educational Trust, to provide bursaries to make submitting to the journal as easy as possible.
Useful links

The Academy
www.kcacademy.org.uk

Assured Breeder Scheme
www.assuredbreederscheme.org.uk

Bio-Acquisition Research Collaboration (BARC)
www.kcbarc.org.uk

Breed Information Centre
www.breedinformationcentre.org.uk

Breed Watch
www.breedwatch.org.uk

BVA/KC Canine Health Schemes
www.bva.co.uk/Canine-Health-Schemes/

Canine Genetics and Epidemiology
http://cgejournal.biomedcentral.com/

Kennel Club Health Pages
www.thekennelclub.org.uk/doghealth

Kennel Club Charitable Trust
www.kccharitabletrust.org.uk

Mate Select
www.mateselect.org.uk

www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health