

Canine Health Clinics Guidance document



Guidance document

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Introduction

The Kennel Club strongly recommends health testing all dogs prior to breeding. Knowing more about a dog's health can help breeders make informed decisions to lower the risk of producing puppies affected by known health issues. To see which health schemes/tests are recommended for a particular breed, visit The Kennel Club's [Breeds A to Z](#), select the relevant breed and scroll down to 'More about health'.

This guidance document is for anyone that wishes to host a canine health clinic, including veterinary organisations and breed clubs. The guidelines provide advice on how to run a successful health clinic for the following health schemes:

- The BVA/KC/ISDS Eye Scheme
- The Kennel Club Heart Scheme for Cavalier King Charles Spaniels
- The Kennel Club/University of Cambridge Respiratory Function Grading Scheme

The document includes guidance on running a health clinic, an overview of each scheme, including what happens during the assessment, participant and venue requirements, approved vets and how to contact them, required documentation and other helpful tips.

Clinic hosts

In 2023 The Kennel Club launched its 'clinic host' initiative. This initiative is designed to help increase the availability and awareness of health testing across the UK and to support and reward the dedicated volunteers that are striving to improve dog health.

A list of our clinic hosts can be found on our website, [Find a dog health testing clinic | The Kennel Club](#).

Who is a clinic host and what does it involve?

A clinic host is an individual or organisation that organises and runs health clinics in the UK, to provide pre-breeding health assessments to all those that need to get their dog tested. Clinics may be breed specific or open to all, with one or multiple types of assessment available.

Clinic hosts are listed on our website, with contact details of their choice. Owners may wish to contact our hosts to be added to a waiting list or let them know of local demand. *Clinic hosts may opt out of having their details displayed on our website at any time.*

Benefits package

All clinic hosts are entitled to the following benefits:

1. Use of The Kennel Club clinic host logo
2. Free Crufts tickets
3. Free 12 month subscription to the Kennel Gazette
4. 20% discount off The Kennel Club DNA Testing Services
5. £10 off voucher for The Kennel Club Image Store

Subject to alteration. Terms and conditions apply.

How to become a clinic host

Anyone can become a clinic host. If you're already holding clinics or thinking of holding them and wish to become a clinic host to take advantage of the benefits we have to offer, please complete the form on [Find a dog health testing clinic | The Kennel Club](#) or for more information contact us via health@thekennelclub.org.uk.

Standard protocols

Organising a health clinic

Step 1: Contact your local approved assessor/cardiologist/eye panellist to request their availability, assessment fee, preferred appointment schedule and any special venue request.

Step 2: Find a suitable venue (see venue requirements under the relevant scheme information page).

Step 3: Book the vet specialist and venue. You may also want to find some other helpers for the day depending on the type and number of assessments you're offering.

Step 4: Create a booking process and appointment schedule.

Step 5: We would recommend developing a risk assessment ahead of your planned clinic. A template can be found in this guide.

Step 6: Promote your clinic. We can help with this! See the promotion section below for more information.

Step 7: Take bookings and payments/deposits.

Step 8: Once fully booked, provide your veterinarian(s) with a copy of the appointment schedule. You may also need some additional copies for the day.

Step 9: Have a successful clinic.

Running the day

Step 1: Make sure your veterinarian(s) and helpers have a copy of the day's appointment schedule.

Step 2: If needed, set up appropriate areas for the veterinarian(s) and waiting area for owners.

Step 3: Ask the veterinarian(s) about assessment forms and pre-appointment administration. They may want to give you several blank assessment forms for the owners to fill out their dog's details before their appointment.

Step 4: Check-in owners as they arrive and support the veterinarian(s) as needed throughout the day.

Step 5: Pack up and relax.

Helpful tips

- When choosing the date, consider how your clinic could be affected by other events being held at the same time, holidays and weather.
- Check our clinic calendar for any clashes in your area, [Find a dog health testing clinic | The Kennel Club](#).
- Check our shows/events calendar for any clashes, which could affect interest levels, [Find a dog show or trial | The Kennel Club](#)
- Where possible, try to offer testing under multiple schemes. This way, breeders can complete multiple recommended health tests on the same day. For example, owners of French Bulldog's are advised to test their dogs under both the RFG Scheme and the Eye Scheme.

- Always use a local veterinarian(s) if you can. This will help reduce the need for any unnecessary travel or accommodation fees.
- For eye testing clinics, ask the performing eye panellist if PLA (gonioscopy) testing can be offered in addition to routine testing. See the Eye Scheme section for more information.
- When scheduling appointments, make sure you've allocated time for breaks. If you're not sure, ask the veterinarian(s) how many breaks they would like and how long for.
- When booking appointments, you may want to request the following details to help speed up the administration time on the day:
 - Owner's full name and address
 - The dog's Kennel Club registered name and number
 - The dog's microchip number
 - The dog's date of birth
- Send all owners an email to confirm their appointment, including the full date, location, time and appointment type. You could also include information on how to get to the venue and the parking facilities.
- Where possible, take payments in advance or non-refundable deposits to avoid no-shows or last-minute cancellations. See the refund policy section for more information.
- Send plenty of reminders to both the veterinarian(s) and the owners. We recommend sending a reminder to all attendees the day before their appointment.
- Consider having tea/coffee facilities available for your veterinarian(s) and helpers.
- If you are oversubscribed, to increase the number of dogs you can test, consider booking an additional veterinary specialist.
- Provide the veterinarian(s) and helpers with clear instructions for finding the venue. Don't forget to give them your telephone number so they can contact you should they get lost or be running late.
- Have water bowls available on the day.

Our health team are here to help so if you have any problems or need any assistance, please contact them on health@thekennelclub.org.uk.

Promoting a clinic

To encourage participation, we would love to promote your clinic and help spread the word. We are able to offer the following promotion and advertising opportunities:

- Publication of clinic and booking details on our website
- Publication of clinic and booking details in our online journal
- Increase awareness via our social media channels
- An email to relevant owners that live in close proximity to the venue
- Notifying all relevant breed clubs and Breed Health Co-ordinators (BHCs), where applicable.

BHCs volunteer on behalf of breed clubs and councils to enable and improve the health and welfare of their breed, and therefore they may also be able to help promote your clinic.

To submit details of your clinic to The Kennel Club, simply click [here](#) and complete our clinic submission form.

Refund policies

To avoid last minute cancellations or no shows, we recommend taking payment in advance or non-refundable deposits. If you decide to take payments in advance, you must make owners aware of your refund policy. Below is an example that you can adapt accordingly. You must make owners aware of your refund policy prior to payment.

'If you are no longer able to attend your appointment, please notify us of the need to cancel as soon as possible. If you cancel at least 28 working days prior to the clinic you will receive a full refund.

If you cancel less than 28 working days before the event you will not be entitled to a refund.

To cancel an appointment, please contact us on example@email.com. No refund can be issued for non-attendance.'

Risk assessments

It's always a good idea to be aware of any possible risks that may arise at an event you're organising. You may also be asked to provide a copy of a risk assessment when hiring a venue.

Unfortunately accidents are bound to occur occasionally. However, it is essential that organisers are seen to have done their very best to avoid them. This is the purpose of a 'Risk Assessment'.

- Look for hazards
- Decide who might be harmed and in what circumstances
- Evaluate the risk and ensure the existing controls are adequate
- Record significant findings
- Regularly review the risk assessment and also in the light of any incident

Each event and venue will have its own needs but in general you should have a plan of action with regard to:

- Emergency telephone numbers
- An available car and driver should transport be required
- A plan for emergency abandonment of a venue

Contact details

The Kennel Club

If you have any questions, would like support or just want to talk a few things through about organising a health clinic, please contact us using the details below:

Email: health@thekennelclub.org.uk

Tel: 020 3540 2684

British Veterinary Association

If you or an owner at your clinic needs support from the BVA, please contact their Canine Health Scheme team using the details below:

Email: chs@bva.co.uk

Scheme specific guidance

The BVA/KC/ISDS Eye Scheme

The British Veterinary Association (BVA)/Kennel Club/International Sheep Dog Society (ISDS) Eye Scheme offers a clinical eye examination performed by expert veterinary surgeons (ophthalmologists), to identify both inherited and non-inherited eye conditions in dogs. There are many types of hereditary eye disease, both congenital (conditions that exist from birth or soon after birth) and non-congenital (conditions that develop later in life) that affect dogs. The scheme is open to all dogs and breeds, including crossbreeds and non-Kennel Club registered dogs. For more information about the scheme, visit our website: [Eye screening scheme | Dog health | The Kennel Club](#)

Types of assessments under the Eye Scheme

- Standard assessment
- PLA (gonioscopy) assessment

There are two types of inherited glaucoma, Primary Closed Angle Glaucoma (PCAG/PACG) and Primary Open Angle Glaucoma (POAG). The examination for PCAG/PACG is called PLA (gonioscopy) and is an additional assessment to the standard routine assessment. Gonioscopy is not required for the diagnosis of POAG.

PLA testing requires a degree of expertise and specialised equipment and therefore these examinations are not part of the standard assessment for the Eye Scheme. However, PLA testing is recommended for several breeds – most owners will know what assessment type their dog needs, but to check a particular breed's recommendations/requirements visit our [Breeds A to Z](#).

PLA testing may not be available from every member of the BVA/KC/ISDS Eye Panel. Make sure to check with your panellist if you would like to offer PLA testing at your health clinic. For more information regarding PLA testing, visit [Gonioscopy | Dog health | The Kennel Club](#).

- Litter screening

The Eye Scheme offers litter screening for congenital hereditary conditions such as collie eye anomaly and multifocal retinal dysplasia, when the puppies are 5 to 12 weeks old. This assessment type is not typically offered at clinics but ask the panellist if you would like to offer this.

What happens during the assessment?

Standard assessment

The eye panellist will first administer drops into the dog's eye to dilate the pupil and ensure it stays wide during the examination. Once the drops have taken effect, the eye panellist will examine the dog's eyes with an ophthalmoscope in a dark room.

An assessment form will be completed by the eye panellist and a copy will be given to the owner following the appointment.

PLA (gonioscopy) assessment

Gonioscopy is generally performed without dilating the pupil, therefore, PLA assessments must be performed before a standard assessment as the dog must not receive the dilating eye drops. After application of local anaesthetic drops to the eye, a special lens (goniolens) is placed on the surface of the cornea to enable the drainage angle to be examined. The test is then repeated on the other eye.

Eligibility:

- All breeds (including crossbreeds and non-Kennel Club registered dogs)
- No age restrictions for routine eye testing, however PLA testing can only be performed on dogs 6 months or over.

Vets able to offer testing under this scheme:

BVA appointed eye panellists - to find your local eye panellist, visit [Find an eye panellist | British Veterinary Association \(bva.co.uk\)](#).

Eye Panellist fee:

Each panellist will have their own day rate or individual assessment fee, so check this before booking them.

Appointment time:

Most panellists require 10-15 minutes for a routine eye test (additional 20 minutes if PLA testing is included) but check this with your chosen panellist.

IMPORTANT NOTE - If an owner is booking a routine and PLA assessment for the same dog, always schedule the PLA appointment first.

Maximum no. of examinations per day:

At the panellist's discretion.

Venue requirements:

- Parking facilities
- Reception/waiting area (with seating)
- Toilet facilities
- Small/medium-sized dark consult room with plug sockets (with consult table and area for veterinary specialist to complete assessment form). *The panellist may be able to bring an examination table if needed.*

What will the owner need?

If their dog is registered with The Kennel Club, the owner must bring their dog's Kennel Club registration certificate to the appointment, and any previous eye examination certificates.

What happens with the results?

The owner will be given the assessment form with the results on the day. The dog's results will also be recorded on The Kennel Club's database and published in The Kennel Club's Breed Record Supplement and on our website here: [Health Test Results Finder](#).

Useful links:

If you wish to find out more about the Eye Scheme, visit the British Veterinary Association's and The Kennel Club's website via the links below:

1. <https://www.bva.co.uk/canine-health-schemes/eye-scheme/>
2. <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health-and-dog-care/health/getting-started-with-health-testing-and-screening/eye-screening-scheme/>
3. <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health-and-dog-care/health/getting-started-with-health-testing-and-screening/gonioscopy/>

The Kennel Club Heart Scheme for Cavalier King Charles Spaniels

The Kennel Club Heart Scheme assesses Cavalier King Charles Spaniels for mitral valve disease and other potentially significant heart diseases. The scheme advises owners if their dog is affected by heart disease and gives guidance to breeders on how to lower the risk of producing affected puppies. For information about the scheme, please visit our website:

[Heart Scheme: Cavalier King Charles Spaniels | Kennel Club \(thekennelclub.org.uk\)](https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/heart-scheme-cavalier-king-charles-spaniels)

What happens during the assessment?

The cardiologist will use two non-invasive techniques to check the dog's heart. The cardiologist will begin by using a stethoscope to listen to the dog's heart for signs of a heart murmur. They will use their findings to give the dog a murmur grade. After this they will use an echocardiogram to scan the dog's heart valves and give a mitral valve prolapse grade. The cardiologist will also record other measurements on the scan which may be used for research purposes, but these will not be recorded on the assessment form.

An assessment form will be completed by the cardiologist and a copy will be given to the owner following the appointment.

Eligibility:

- Cavalier King Charles Spaniels (including non-Kennel Club registered dogs)
- All dogs must be at least 18 months or over. However, to gain the maximum benefit from the scheme, dogs should ideally have their first assessment at approximately 2 years of age and then re-assessed every two years.

Vets able to offer testing under this scheme:

Approved regional cardiologists - to find your local regional cardiologist, visit [Heart Scheme: Cavalier King Charles Spaniels | Kennel Club \(thekennelclub.org.uk\)](https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/heart-scheme-cavalier-king-charles-spaniels)

Regional cardiologist fee:

Each cardiologist will have their own assessment fee or day rate, so check this before booking them.

Appointment time:

Most cardiologists require 20-30 minutes per appointment but check this with your chosen cardiologist.

Maximum no. of scans per day:

15 (maximum)

Venue requirements:

- Parking facilities
- Reception/waiting area (with seating)
- Toilet facilities
- Medium-sized dark consult room with plug sockets (with consult table and area for veterinary specialist to complete assessment form). *The cardiologist may be able to bring an examination table if needed.*

What will the owner need?

If the dog is registered with The Kennel Club, the owner must bring their dog's Kennel Club registration certificate to the appointment.

What happens with the results?

The owner will be given the assessment form with the results on the day. The dog's results will also be recorded on The Kennel Club's database and published in The Kennel Club's Breed Record Supplement and on our website here: [Health Test Results Finder](#).

Useful links:

If you wish to find out more about the Heart Scheme, visit The Kennel Club's website, <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health-and-dog-care/health/getting-started-with-health-testing-and-screening/heart-scheme-for-cavalier-king-charles-spaniels/>

The Kennel Club/ University of Cambridge Respiratory Function Grading Scheme

The Kennel Club and University of Cambridge Respiratory Function Grading (RFG) Scheme assesses Bulldogs, French Bulldogs and Pugs for brachycephalic obstructive airway syndrome (BOAS). The aim of this scheme is to advise owners if their dog is affected by BOAS and gives guidance to breeders on how to lower the risk of producing affected puppies. For more information about the scheme, please visit our website: [Respiratory Function Grading Scheme | Health | Kennel Club \(thekennelclub.org.uk\)](#).

What happens during the assessment?

The assessment is completely non-invasive and takes approximately 15 minutes. The veterinary surgeon will initially use a stethoscope to listen to the dog's breathing whilst they are calm and relaxed. The dog will then be encouraged to move around an exercise area at a quick pace for three minutes, either by the veterinary surgeon or the owner. The veterinary surgeon will then listen to the dog's breathing again and will use a list of criteria to give the dog a respiratory function grade.

An assessment form will be completed by the veterinary surgeon and a copy will be given to the owner following the appointment.

Eligibility:

- Bulldogs, French Bulldogs and Pugs (including non-Kennel Club registered dogs)
- All dogs must be 12 months or over

Vets able to offer testing under this scheme:

Regional approved assessors - to find your local regional approved assessor, visit [Respiratory Function Grading Scheme | Health | Kennel Club \(thekennelclub.org.uk\)](#)

If possible, we recommend having two assessors at a clinic. This allows for more dogs to be assessed, and for assessors to consult if needed.

If you are a registered veterinary surgeon and wish to become a regional approved assessor for our Respiratory Function Grading Scheme, please contact our health team on health@thekennelclub.org.uk so we can add your details to our waiting list and let you know when a training date becomes available.

Regional Approved Assessor fee:

Each assessor will have their own assessment fee or day rate, so check this before booking them.

Appointment time:

Most assessors require 15-20 minutes per appointment but check this with your chosen assessor.

Maximum no. of assessments per day:

At the assessor's discretion.

Venue requirements:

- Parking facilities
- Reception/waiting area (with seating)
- Toilet facilities
- Consult room (with consult table, weighing scales and an area for veterinary surgeon to complete assessment form). *The assessor may be able to bring an examination table and weighing scales if needed.*
- Large space available to exercise dogs for three minutes

What will the owner need?

If the dog is registered with The Kennel Club, the owner must bring their dog's Kennel Club registration certificate to the appointment.

What happens with the results?

The owner will be given the assessment form with the results on the day. The dog's results will also be recorded on The Kennel Club's database and published in The Kennel Club's Breed Record Supplement and on our website here: [Health Test Results Finder](#).

Useful links:

If you wish to find out more about the research and the Respiratory Function Grading Scheme, please visit the University of Cambridge BOAS research group's and The Kennel Club's websites via the links below:

1. <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health-and-dog-care/health/getting-started-with-health-testing-and-screening/respiratory-function-grading-scheme>
2. <https://www.vet.cam.ac.uk/boas/research>

Breed club health schemes:

- Bulldog Breed Council Health Scheme - <https://www.bulldogbreedcouncil.co.uk/health-scheme>
- French Bulldog Health Scheme - <https://www.thefrenchbulldogclubofengland.com/health-scheme-information.html>
- Pug 5 Star Health Scheme - <https://www.pughealth.org.uk/how-to-join/>