What the Kennel Club does for Dog Health

www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health
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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 hopes to do all it can for its part and helps to protect the health and welfare of dogs 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
Breeding for health

Dog breeders today have a number of different considerations to make when choosing which dogs to use for breeding. These include: temperament, breed type and conformation, health test results, genetic diversity and the general health of the sire and dam.

Responsible breeders will consider the health of their puppies to be a priority, increasing the probability that healthy puppies will go on to live long and happy lives. The Kennel Club has a number of initiatives to encourage the responsible breeding of healthy dogs.

The Assured Breeder Scheme
Promoting responsible breeding

In 2004, the Kennel Club established its Assured Breeder Scheme (initially called the Accredited Breeder Scheme) – a scheme which promotes responsible breeding practices and ensures its members are dedicated to the health and welfare of both their breeding dogs and the puppies they produce. The Assured Breeder Scheme ensures its members take all the necessary steps to breed healthy, well socialised puppies, with members agreeing to mandatory health testing of their breeding stock and regular inspection.

The Kennel Club recommends that puppy buyers go to a responsible breeder who offers a high standard of canine health and welfare, such as Kennel Club Assured Breeders.

The benefits of buying from an Assured Breeder are that:

• Puppies have been bred responsibly and their breeder puts health and welfare above all else
• The breeder has agreed to be inspected by the Kennel Club
• Each puppy comes with a contract to prevent any misunderstandings
• Feedback on each breeder is collected and examined by the Kennel Club
• Each puppy’s parents undergo health tests, as appropriate to the breed
• Each puppy is socialised prior to being sold
• Each puppy buyer is given essential breed specific information
• Each breeder will remain available for help and advice after the sale of the puppy

The scheme has continued to evolve over the years and the Kennel Club received United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) accreditation in January 2013 to certify breeders who belong to the scheme. UKAS is the only national accreditation body recognised by the British government to assess the capability of organisations that provide certification and inspection. The Kennel Club is the first and only organisation in the UK to achieve UKAS accreditation to certify dog breeders.

Impact: The Assured Breeder Scheme currently has around 6,000 members, who, in 2015, produced over 19,000 puppies.

For more information on the Assured Breeder Scheme, please visit www.assuredbreederscheme.org.uk.
BVA/KC Health Testing Schemes
Helping to identify healthy dogs

The Kennel Club, in conjunction with the British Veterinary Association (BVA), run four clinical screening schemes. The results for each Kennel Club registered pedigree dog is published in the Kennel Club quarterly publication, the Breed Record Supplement, as well as on the Kennel Club’s Mate Select – a resource available online that is free to access. These schemes are designed to help breeders to assess which dogs to use for breeding, with the aim of reducing the incidence of health issues in future generations.

The BVA/KC Hip Scoring Scheme
Launched in 1965, this scheme was designed to address the problem of hip dysplasia. The scheme evaluates radiographs that have been taken of an individual dog’s hips. Each hip is evaluated by two experts who score nine anatomical features of the hip and score each hip out of a total of 53. The two hip scores are then added together to give an overall total hip score. A dog’s hip score can therefore range from 0 to 106, and the lower the hip scores the better the anatomy of the dog’s hips.

Impact: The BVA/KC Hip Scoring Scheme tested and published the results of approximately 8,000 Kennel Club registered dogs in 2015.

The BVA/KC Elbow Grading Scheme
Launched in 1998, this scheme has been designed to address elbow dysplasia. Each dog is assessed from radiographs that are taken of the dog’s elbows. Each elbow is graded on a scale of 0 to 3, by two specialists. The lower the grade, the better the anatomy of the elbow. In this scheme, if the dog has two different elbow grades, the higher of the two is used as the dog’s elbow grade.

Impact: The BVA/KC Elbow Scoring Scheme tested and published the results of approximately 4,000 Kennel Club registered dogs in 2015.

The BVA/KC/ISDS (International Sheep Dog Society) Eye Scheme
This scheme has two lists, Schedule A and Schedule B. Schedule A contains all of the known inherited eye diseases and the breeds that are currently considered to be affected by these conditions. Schedule B, lists breeds and conditions where further investigation is urged. Specialist panellists, appointed by the BVA, can examine any individual dog for clinical signs of these diseases.

Impact: The BVA/KC/ISDS Eye Scheme tested and published the results of approximately 10,000 dogs in 2015.

The BVA/KC Chiari Malformation/Syringomyelia (CM/SM) Scheme
This is the most recently developed scheme, being launched in January 2012. MRI scans, carried out under BVA procedures, are reviewed by a panel of BVA appointed neurologists and radiologists and graded by two scrutinisers. Grading is assigned according to the severity of the CM and SM changes. As CM/SM is a progressive condition, scans throughout the dog’s lifetime are recommended, generally at years 1, 3-5, and over 5.

Impact: The BVA/KC CM/SM Scheme screened approximately 300 dogs between 2012 and 2015.

For more information on any of the BVA/KC Health Schemes, please visit www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health/breeding-for-health/complex-inherited-disorders/bvakc-health-schemes.
The Kennel Club website has an array of free online health information and resources which help dog breeders make informed breeding decisions. One resource of particular relevance is Mate Select. Mate Select was launched in 2011 and provides breeders, puppy buyers and owners with an opportunity to look up the health information that is available for each dog registered on the Kennel Club breed register.

Mate Select has been developed in conjunction with the Animal Health Trust and enables breeders to easily and accurately investigate the health of a potential sire or dam that they are thinking of using and integrate health screening and genetic diversity information into their breeding plans. The services that are available online via Mate Select include a Health Test Results Finder, Inbreeding Co-efficient Calculators and Estimated Breeding Values.

**Impact:** The Mate Select website received approximately 2,000,000 hits in 2015.

For more information on Mate Select, please visit [www.mateselect.org.uk](http://www.mateselect.org.uk).

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**Health Test Results Finder**

**Publishing dog-specific health information**

This resource enables breeders and potential puppy buyers to search for health test results for any dog registered on the Kennel Club’s breed register. Searching the database is easy and only requires the dog’s Kennel Club registered name, registration number or stud book number. The resource displays any health screening test results received and recorded by the Kennel Club from any of the British Veterinary Association/Kennel Club (BVA/KC) health schemes (hip scheme, elbow scheme, eye scheme and Chiari Malformation/Syringomyelia scheme) or results from official Kennel Club testing schemes and programmes.

**Impact:** The Kennel Club’s Health Tests Results Finder received approximately 90,000 online hits in 2015.

For more information on the Health Test Results Finder, please visit [www.mateselect.org.uk](http://www.mateselect.org.uk).

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**Inbreeding Co-efficient Calculators**

**Assisting considered breeding decisions**

Inbreeding, put simply, is the mating of related individuals. High levels of inbreeding can impact the health of individual dogs and the breed as a whole. The Kennel Club’s Inbreeding Co-efficient Calculators can be used to run the scenario of how inbred potential puppies would be from a hypothetical mating. This enables breeders to make informed choices when deciding on a potential mate for their dog. Calculators are also available for determining the inbreeding co-efficient of an individual dog and breed.

**Impact:** The Kennel Club’s Inbreeding Co-efficient Calculators received approximately 45,000 hits in 2015.

For more information on Inbreeding Co-efficient Calculators, please visit [www.mateselect.org.uk](http://www.mateselect.org.uk).

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**Estimated Breeding Values**

**Reducing the risk of inherited disorders**

Estimated Breeding Values, or EBVs, are a resource that can be used by breeders to assess the degree to which an animal may have inherited, or pass on, genes associated with a particular health condition. Currently, EBVs are available for hip and elbow dysplasia and are calculated using data from the BVA/KC hip and elbow dysplasia screening schemes. EBVs are a more accurate way of measuring a dog’s genetic risk, than by using the scores from the BVA/KC schemes alone. EBVs take into consideration a dog’s hip or elbow score, as well as the scores of all of their relatives. By using this additional data, it allows breeders to build up a better picture of a dog’s genetics, using this knowledge to breed healthier dogs in future.

**Impact:** The Kennel Club’s Estimated Breeding Values received approximately 18,000 hits in 2015.

For more information on Estimated Breeding Values, please visit [www.mateselect.org.uk](http://www.mateselect.org.uk).
Official Testing Programmes and DNA Testing Schemes

Recording and monitoring health test results healthy dogs

Official DNA testing schemes involve collaborative work between the Kennel Club, the breed clubs and DNA testing facilities. Under any one of these schemes, the breeder/owner agrees for the result of their DNA tested dog to be sent independently to the Kennel Club by the testing laboratory. The DNA tests used in official testing schemes can accurately identify clear, carrier and affected dogs, and can be used by breeders to effectively eliminate undesirable disease genes in their stock.

In January 2015, the Kennel Club launched a BAER (Brainstem Auditory Evoked Response) testing programme for deafness in Dalmatians. There are a number of specialist centres in the UK that offer this screening, and each dog screened is issued with a veterinary certificate.

In December 2015 the BAER testing programme was extended to all breeds. Results for dogs tested can now be recorded by the Kennel Club and owners are encouraged to submit copies of certificates directly to the Kennel Club.

Results submitted to the Kennel Club from official DNA testing schemes and official testing programmes are recorded on the Kennel Club’s database, and are published on the open access online health resource, Mate Select, and in the paper publication, the Breed Record Supplement, and on the dog’s registration certificate. By publishing these results, it allows breeders to have a better understanding of which genes a dog may pass on to its offspring, giving them the information required to try to avoid producing affected puppies. Making informed decisions from health test results enables breeders to adapt their breeding programmes and reduce the risk of this disease appearing in future generations.

Impact: The Kennel Club currently has 56 official DNA testing schemes for 62 breeds. Test results were recorded and freely published for 6,051 tested dogs in 2015, while 37,948 of the dogs born in that year had a known hereditary status.
Updated Breed Standards
Discouraging extreme conformation

The Kennel Club’s Breed Standards describe the typical look, characteristics and temperament of a breed, and are subject to continual monitoring and review. In 2009, the Kennel Club’s Dog Health Group, conducted a comprehensive review in conjunction with a large body of experts, including veterinarians and veterinary researchers. The review was undertaken to ensure that all Breed Standards encourage the breeding of healthy dogs. Some health problems in dogs are related to exaggerated physical characteristics, such as large skin folds causing infections, or overly short muzzles leading to breathing difficulties. In this review every description was checked to ensure that it could not be interpreted as encouraging breeders to produce dogs with features that might prevent them from breathing, walking or seeing freely.

Impact: In 2009, the Kennel Club amended 78 of its breed standards to make it clear that exaggerated conformation was not acceptable in the show ring.

For more information on the Breed Standards, please visit www.thekennelclub.org.uk/activities/dog-showing/breed-standards.

The Breed Information Centre
Recommending appropriate health testing

Information on recommended breed specific health tests can be found on the Breed Information Centre (BIC). An extensive list of tests, which laboratories perform the analysis, as well as whether the results are recorded by the Kennel Club is also available. The BIC also includes everything you will need to know about a breed, including its exercise and grooming needs, details on the breed standard, Breed Watch points, and facilities to find breeders, dog clubs and rescue clubs.

Impact: The Breed Information Centre webpages received approximately 4,000,000 hits in 2015.

For more information on the Breed Information Centre, please visit www.breedinformationcentre.org.uk.

Control Schemes
Helping to eradicate inherited disease

A DNA Control Scheme links DNA testing to registrations; limiting registration to those dogs that meet the requirements of the breed-specific Control Scheme (i.e. dogs that are DNA tested normal or hereditary clear). These are put in place to eradicate a breed-specific disease that is severely affecting a breed. Control Schemes are usually considered a last resort to help breeders remove a condition within the breed, and are limited to serious, painful or welfare affecting conditions.

For example, a DNA Control Scheme was put in place in 2005 to eradicate Canine Leucocyte Adhesion Deficiency (CLAD) in Irish Setters. Working with breeders, the Kennel Club was able to restrict registration of offspring from parents that were not identified as hereditarily clear or DNA tested as clear. As a result of the DNA Control Scheme and the work of breeders and breed clubs, CLAD has now been eradicated from the UK Irish Setter population.

More recently, more Control Schemes have been introduced:

• Welsh Corgi (Cardigan) - DNA control scheme for PRA rcd-3 (2015)
• German Wirehaired Pointer - DNA control scheme for vWD (2013)

Impact: The Kennel Club have Control Schemes in place for 5 breeds, which impacted on around 1,600 dogs newly registered in 2015.

For more information on Kennel Club Control Schemes, please visit www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/520222/applying_for_control_schemes-web.pdf.
Online Information Advising breeders

The Kennel Club dedicates a proportion of its website to providing visitors with information and advice on: DNA testing and simple inherited disorders, inbreeding, complex inherited disorders and conformation related health problems. These information resources help breeders who are seeking guidance to find out on how to breed healthy happy dogs. The health of any breed is largely in the hands of breeders and the Kennel Club wants to ensure they have the tools and resources available to them to help them make sensible breeding decisions. Responsible breeders will consider the health of their puppies to be a priority, increasing the probability that healthy puppies will go on to live long and happy lives.

Impact: The Kennel Club’s online Dog Health information pages were accessed 512,000 times in 2015.

For more information on The Kennel Club’s online breeding advice, please visit www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health/breeding-for-health.

Caesarean Section Reporting System

Helping to monitor reproductive health

In 2010, the Kennel Club amended its rules to make it a condition of registration, or continued registration, that the owner consents to the reporting of any caesarean operation carried out on their bitch. These registration conditions solve the problem of confidentiality in relation to veterinary surgeons making reports to the Kennel Club. The consent of the owner releases the veterinary surgeon from the professional obligation to maintain confidentiality.

The information provided to the Kennel Club:
• Provides information regarding breeding lines appearing to perpetuate certain defects
• Helps to deter breeders from breeding from animals displaying evidence of hereditary problems, or whose natural conformation has been altered, or where breeding routinely relies on caesarean operations
• Assists dog show judges to be sure that they are not being called upon to assess dogs with hereditary defects which have been so well corrected by surgical intervention that these cannot be detected.

In 2015, the Kennel Club launched online reporting forms for vets to report operations and caesarean sections carried out on Kennel Club registered dogs, in order to make it easier for both to continue helping the Kennel Club monitor and improve dog health and welfare.

Impact: The Kennel Club received approximately 4,000 reports of caesarean sections carried out in 2015.

For more information on the Kennel Club’s caesarean Section reporting system, please visit www.thekennelclub.org.uk/vets-researchers/caesarean-operations-and-procedures-which-alter-the-natural-conformation-of-a-dog.
Breed Health Co-ordinators

Working collaboratively with breed clubs

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 main role of the BHC is to facilitate, over time, the communication and collection of data on the health of their chosen breed.

The BHC acts as a spokesperson on matters of health and will collaborate with the Kennel Club on any health concerns the breed may have. BHCs are chosen and appointed by breed clubs and councils. Candidates for the position are usually nominated and then chosen by a majority vote. Breeds with more than one club must have a majority agreement before informing the Kennel Club of the newly appointed individual.

A BHC may be appointed for a variety of different reasons, including their breed knowledge or their skill sets. The Kennel Club assist individuals within this role by offering them the tools, an annual seminar and resources to help promote and improve the health of their breed where necessary.

For more information on Breed Health Co-ordinators, please visit www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health/breed-health-coordinators.

Registration Requirements

Limiting unacceptable breeding behaviour

The Kennel Club requires a copy of a local authority breeding licence for all those breeding five or more litters in a year. Those who cannot provide a licence are not allowed to register with the Kennel Club.

In 2012, the Kennel Club limited the number of litters of puppies registered from any one bitch to four, which is lower than the legal limit of six. In the same year, the Kennel Club agreed to no longer register any puppies born to any bitch which has previously had two caesarean sections.

To help reduce the highest degrees of inbreeding, the Kennel Club does not register puppies produced from a mating between father and daughter, mother and son, or brother and sister, save in rare exceptional circumstances for scientifically proven welfare reasons.

Impact: In 2015, 220,000 breed registered dogs met the Kennel Club’s registration requirements.

For more information on the Kennel Club’s registration requirements, please visit www.thekennelclub.org.uk/registration/how-to-register-your-dog/breed-register-(pedigree).
Health in Dog Shows

Ensuring that a dog is bred to have moderate and not exaggerated conformation is very important. Some exaggerated conformations can lead to health problems, such as skin infections, eye problems or breathing difficulties. The show ring is one place where the look of a dog can be monitored, and whilst only two percent of dogs are shown in the UK, the Kennel Club is committed to ensuring that dog shows reward only healthy dogs and so plays its part in rewarding and encouraging good breeding practice. The Kennel Club works closely with the dog showing community and wider individual breed communities, to ensure that where health improvements are necessary, health initiatives are undertaken and judges, breeders and those who show their dogs, are actively encouraging non-exaggerated conformational traits.

Breed Watch

Assisting dog show judges to monitor and influence breed health

In 2009, the Kennel Club launched Breed Watch, an online resource which outlines breed-specific visible health conditions and exaggerations. Breed Watch assists judges and breed clubs to monitor and address visible health issues. Breed Watch provides up-to-date information by listing visible health issues (called points of concern) that may be found in each Kennel Club recognised breed. The points of concern have been derived from a combination of health surveys, veterinary advice, information from Breed Health Co-ordinators and judge’s feedback.

Breed Watch has a three tier process; Category One breeds have no reported points of concern, Category Two breeds have some points of concern and Category Three breeds are those breeds that are considered to be most at risk from exaggeration related health issues (previously known as “High Profile Breeds”).

From 2014, all judges of Category Two and Three breeds at Championship dog shows must report any visible conditions or exaggerations that they consider to be detrimental to the health and welfare of dogs. This way, Breed Watch can monitor current health and also highlight any emerging trends for individual breeds, meaning judges are at the heart of improving the health of pedigree dogs.

Impact: The Breed Watch website was visited over 38,000 times in 2015.

For more information on Breed Watch, please visit www.breedwatch.org.uk.
High Profile Breeds
(now known as Category Three Breeds)

In response to the European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animal’s 1995 appendix, the Kennel Club created a list of what were known at the time as “High Profile Breeds”. These breeds were identified as being the most at risk from exaggeration related health and welfare issues and included the following breeds: Chinese Crested, Basset Hound, French Bulldog, German Shepherd Dog, Pug, Dogue de Bordeaux, Mastiff, Bulldog, Bloodhound, Chow Chow, Clumber Spaniel, Neapolitan Mastiff, Pekingese, St. Bernard and Shar-Pei.

Since creating this list with the aid of breed and veterinary specialists, the Kennel Club have provided support and worked closely with breed representatives to promote and develop health initiatives. In 2012, it appointed the role of High Profile Breed Coordinator, to provide specific support to High Profile Breed (HPB) health groups, helping many of the breeds to run breed-specific health testing schemes with veterinary surgeons to collect and monitor health information and data on an on-going basis.

In 2014, the High Profile Breeds were renamed Category Three Breeds as part of enhancements made to Breed Watch. Three breeds have moved from Category Three to Category Two since 2012; the Chinese Crested, French Bulldog and the Clumber Spaniel.

Impact: Since 2012, due to improvements in health and the development of substantial health programmes, three breeds have come off the Category three list.

For more information on Category Three breeds, please visit www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health/health-and-welfare-for-show-dogs/category-three-breeds/.

Mandatory Best of Breed Veterinary Checks
For Category Three Breeds

At Crufts 2012, the Kennel Club launched mandatory veterinary checks for all Category Three Breeds at all Kennel Club licensed General and Group Championship Dog shows. These checks enable independent vets to check for visible conditions that may have resulted from exaggerated conformation. Any dogs that do not pass these checks are not awarded the highest accolades at dog shows, which it is hoped will be an additional step forward to discouraging the breeding of dogs with exaggerated conformation.

Impact: During 2015, a total of 310 veterinary health checks took place at Group & General Championship Shows for Best of Breed and Champion title awards. Of these checks 306 were passes and 4 were fails.

For more information on mandatory Best of Breed Veterinary Checks, please visit http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health/health-and-welfare-for-show-dogs/veterinary-health-checks/.

310 health checks
Updated Breed Standards

Discouraging extreme conformation

The Kennel Club’s Breed Standards describe the typical look, characteristics and temperament of a breed and are subject to continual monitoring and review. In 2009, the Kennel Club’s Dog Health Group conducted a comprehensive review in conjunction with a large body of experts, including veterinarians and veterinary researchers. The review was undertaken to ensure that all Breed Standards encourage the breeding of healthy dogs. Some health problems in dogs are related to exaggerated physical characteristics, such as large skin folds causing infections, or overly short muzzles leading to breathing difficulties. In this review, every description was checked to ensure that it could not be interpreted as encouraging breeders to produce dogs with features that might prevent them from breathing, walking or seeing freely. Following widespread consultation, 78 of the breed standards were amended. However, problems can still arise with those breeders who do not refer to the Breed Standards and who continue to breed dogs with exaggerated features, such as puppy farmers who breed under the radar solely for profit.

Impact: In 2015, the Breed Standards were visited 332,000 times on the Kennel Club’s online resource the Breed Information Centre.

For more information on the Kennel Club’s Breed Standards, please visit www.thekennelclub.org.uk/activities/dog-showing/breed-standards.

Conformation operation reporting system

Helping to monitor reproductive health

In 2010, the Kennel Club amended its rules to make it a condition of registration, or continued registration, that the owner consents to the reporting of any conformation operation carried out on their dog. These registration conditions solve the problem of confidentiality in relation to veterinary surgeons making reports to the Kennel Club. The consent of the owner releases the veterinary surgeon from the professional obligation to maintain confidentiality.

The information provided to the Kennel Club assists dog show judges to be sure that they are not being called upon to assess dogs with hereditary defects which have been so well corrected by surgical intervention that these can not be detected. Data and information obtained from these reports can also be used for research and for monitoring changes in canine inherited visible conditions.

Impact: 45 conformation operations were reported in 2015, excluding C-sections/neuters.

For more information on the conformation operation reporting systems, please visit http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/vets-researchers/caesarean-operations-and-procedures-which-alter-the-natural-conformation-of-a-dog/.
Judges training
Assisting judges to make an impact on health

The Kennel Club runs an annual Education and Training month for those who judge, show or organise dog shows, which includes a strong emphasis on the responsibilities on judges in relation to rewarding the healthiest dogs. Events are regularly held for KC registered judges, to provide information and support on existing and emerging visible health issues.

Healthy Eye Conformation Seminar
In 2012, Category Three (High Profile Breed) representatives, judges and veterinary surgeons were invited to attend Healthy Eye Conformation seminars, in order to begin a consultation process to clarify what judges and veterinary surgeons should look for when assessing eyes. The seminars were led by Professor Sheila Crispin, who described the basic principles that should guide a judge’s assessment of a dog’s eye and provided examples of normal eyes and those with abnormalities. Clubs were also invited to give presentations on the valuable health work they are undertaking within their breeds.

Impact: Over 330 delegates attended the three days of Healthy Eye Conformation Seminars

High Profile Breed Education Day
In February 2013, a High Profile Breed Education Day was held for judges, vets and breeders to raise awareness of health initiatives undertaken by the High Profile Breeds. The event highlighted the improvements in each of the Category Three (High Profile) Breeds relating to movement, conformation and health problems, showcasing the health work that has been undertaken. Representatives of each of the breeds showcased dogs that had good characteristics and were moving away from exaggerations, as well as those with conformation or movement problems still faced within the breed. This provided a visual demonstration of the progress achieved to improve breed health, and allowed attendees to see where other problems may still lie. There were more than 100 examples of the High Profile Breeds present, with a minimum of three dogs from each used as movement examples. As well as giving breed representatives the opportunity to talk to judges, vets and those in other breeds, there were two rings dedicated to movement displays, which included commentary on movement within the breeds.

Impact: The 2013 High Profile Breed Education Day was attended by over 200 judges, vets and breeders

Breed Watch Education Day
In 2014, a Breed Watch Education Day took place and was aimed at championship show judges of breeds listed in Category Two and Three of the Breed Watch initiative. The day’s aim was to provide appropriate training and guidance to help the judges identify any visible health and welfare concerns.

The education day featured workshops covering what judges should look for in a dog’s movement, eyes, skin, body conditioning and mouth and dentition. Time was provided to talk about judge’s health monitoring forms and the reporting of visible conditions or exaggerations.

The education day was an opportunity to add to the expertise of judges and further increase their ability to identify visible points of concern.

In 2015, a second Breed Watch Education day was run and comprised of lectures on eye conditions and visible health concerns and how to identify them. An afternoon workshop on body conditioning, muscle tone, movement and applying the “fit for function” ethos was also provided.

Impact: Over 170 judges attended the Breed Watch Education Days over two years.
Seminars

Breeder Education Seminars, brought to you by the Kennel Club and Royal Canin
Sharing knowledge for better breeding

For many years, the Kennel Club ran an annual Breeder Symposium held at the Royal Veterinary College. In 2013, the Kennel Club and Royal Canin expanded this concept to include 12 days of seminars throughout the UK, held at 6 of the major veterinary colleges and universities. This series of seminars continued to expand over the last two years, providing a stimulating series of educational lectures on health issues, breeding practices and scientific developments to help breeders and their puppy rearing programmes. Lectures have been given by a number of highly regarded professionals in the world of canine health, including Dr Cathryn Mellersh, from the Animal Health Trust; Dr Angelika von Heimendahl, from the Veterinary Reproduction Service and Dr Lorna Kennedy, Senior Scientist at the University of Manchester.

Impact: Over 1,000 delegates have booked places to attend one of the Breeder Education Seminars held at over 24 venues over the last two years.

Healthy Eye Conformation Seminar
Improving the assessment of eye health

In 2012, Category Three (previously known as “High Profile”) Breed representatives, judges and veterinary surgeons were invited to attend three Healthy Eye Conformation seminars. The seminars identified health issues that judges and veterinary surgeons should look for when assessing eyes. The seminars were led by Professor Sheila Crispin, who described the basic principles that should guide a judge’s assessment of a dog’s eye and provided examples of normal eyes and those with abnormalities. Clubs were also invited to give presentations on the valuable health work they were undertaking within their breeds at the time.

Impact: Over 330 delegates attended the three days of Healthy Eye Conformation Seminars.

High Profile Breed Education Day
Highlighting health initiatives to tackle health and welfare concerns

In February 2013, a High Profile Breed Education Day was held for judges, vets and breeders to raise awareness of health initiatives undertaken by the High Profile Breeds. The event highlighted the improvements in each of the Category Three (High Profile) Breeds, relating to movement, appearance and health problems. Representatives of each of the breeds showcased dogs that had good characteristics and were moving away from exaggerations, as well as those with conformation or movement problems still faced within the breed. This provided a visual demonstration of the progress achieved to improve breed health, and allowed attendees to see where other problems may still lie. There were more than 100 examples of the High Profile Breeds present, with a minimum of three dogs from each used as movement examples. As well as giving breed representatives the opportunity to talk to judges, vets and those in other breeds, there were two rings dedicated to movement displays, which included commentary on movement within the breeds.

Impact: The 2013 High Profile Breed Education Day was attended by over 200 judges, vets and breeders.
**Breed Watch Education Day**

**Enhancing judges training on visible health concerns**

In 2014, a Breed Watch Education Day took place and was aimed at championship show judges of breeds listed in Category Two and Three of the Breed Watch initiative. The day’s aim was to provide appropriate training and guidance to help the judges identify any visible health and welfare concerns.

The education day featured workshops covering what judges should look for in a dog’s movement, eyes, skin, body conditioning, mouth and dentition. Time was provided to talk about judge’s health monitoring forms and the reporting of visible conditions or exaggerations. The education day was an opportunity to add to the expertise of judges and further increase their ability to identify visible points of concern.

In 2015, a second Breed Watch Education day was run and comprised of lectures on eye conditions and visible health concerns and how to identify them. An afternoon workshop on body conditioning, muscle tone, movement and applying the “fit for function” ethos was also provided.

**Impact:** A total of over 170 judges attended the 2014 and 2015 Breed Watch Education Days.

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**Breed Health Co-ordinator Annual Symposium**

**Presenting breed clubs with the latest developments in canine health**

Breed Health Co-ordinators (BHCs) are individuals working on behalf of breed clubs and councils, and act as a spokesperson on matters of breed specific health. Since 2010, the Kennel Club have run free annual seminars for BHCs, often consisting of a morning of lectures on developments in canine health and an afternoon workshop on common problems encountered by Breed Health Co-ordinators and how to resolve them. Previous lectures have included how breed histories provide the key to healthier futures (Philippa Robinson, the Karlton Index), VetCompass: how veterinary data can inform breed health (Dr Dan O’Neill, The Royal Veterinary College), Estimated Breeding Values (Aimee Llewellyn, the Kennel Club), how examinations under the eye scheme can help you and your breed (Professor Sheila Crispin), Inbreeding and outcrossing (Dr Tom Lewis, Animal Health Trust) and How to spot a good DNA test (Dr Cathryn Mellersh, Animal Health Trust).

For more information on Breed Health Co-ordinators, please visit [www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health/breed-health-coordinators](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health/breed-health-coordinators).

**Impact:** Over the last three years 241 delegates have attended the Breed Health Co-ordinators symposia.

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**Bulldog and Pug Health Improvement Day**

**Helping breeders make considered choices before breeding**

In 2015, the Kennel Club held a Bulldog and Pug Health Improvement Day. The purpose of the day was to arm breeders with the right knowledge to ensure they make considered choices when breeding and the event provided new insight into health issues affecting these breeds.

Both breeds are classified as Category Three on the Kennel Club’s Breed Watch initiative, as both are breeds in which some dogs can be affected by visible conditions or exaggerations that can cause pain or discomfort. The education day featured seminars on breathing, eyes, skin, weight and body conditioning, and was delivered by renowned veterinary experts, such as Nai-Chieh Liu, Dr Jane Ladiow and Dr David Sargan, Professor Sheila Crispin and Nick Blayney.

The seminars at the Bulldog and Pug Health Improvement Day were also designed to explore research projects being undertaken in the breed, for example, research being carried out by the University of Cambridge, supported by the Kennel Club Charitable Trust, into Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome (BOAS).

**Impact:** 60 people attended the education day from both breeds.
Mastiff and Neapolitan Mastiff Health Improvement day
Helping breeders resolve health issues in Category Three breeds

The Mastiff and Neapolitan Mastiff Health Improvement day was held in 2015. Lectures were provided to breeders on the importance of conserving genetic diversity, and ways to improve exaggerated conformation associated with health and welfare concerns. The afternoon gave delegates an opportunity to speak to each of the speakers and advisors individually and confidentially for personal advice.

**Impact:** 47 people attended the education day from both breeds.

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Webinars
Providing online education on canine health

These web based seminars provide listeners with slides and other images with audio descriptions in the form of an online lecture. In 2014, the Kennel Club produced two one hour webinars through The Webinar Vet. Both webinars aimed to provide the veterinary community with information and advisory guidance on avoiding inherited diseases. The first of the free webinars, “It’s all in the genes”, informed veterinary professionals about the latest free online resources available for advice on puppy buying and dog breeding clients, and also to expand their own knowledge on reducing the risk of simple inherited disease. The second webinar, “Tackling complex diseases”, informed veterinary professionals of the resources available for testing for complex diseases and how to advise clients appropriately regarding this matter.

**Impact:** Both webinars attracted a collective audience of 750 listeners at the time of live broadcast and were available to listen to online for one year from July 2014.

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BSAVA Congress
Lecture Stream
Promoting health resources for vets and their clients

At the 2015 British Small Animal Veterinary Associations annual congress, the Kennel Club was invited to host a day of lectures on “practical aspects of dog breeding”. Veterinarians and veterinary nurses were presented with a series of lectures on how to support and advise dog breeding and puppy buying clients using the best evidence based research available. Speakers came from the Royal Veterinary College, University of Nottingham and the Kennel Club and spoke on such topics as the basics of inheritance, how to use DNA test results, understanding complex inherited diseases, balancing health screening results, how the public can influence canine health improvements and how vets can benefit through contributing to dog health and welfare beyond the practice.

**Impact:** over 250 veterinary professionals attended the lectures provided by the Kennel Club at the BSAVA lecture stream.

For more information on the BSAVA lecture stream, please visit https://soundcloud.com/the-kennel-club.
National Canine Health Testing Week
Highlighting the importance of educated breeding decisions

National Canine Health Testing Week is one of the Kennel Club’s annual initiatives to raise awareness of the importance of breeding and buying puppies from appropriately health tested parents. Launched in 2013, the annual social media awareness week also highlights the value of health testing both purebred and crossbred dogs prior to mating. During the week, breeders and puppy buyers are provided with information on which health tests are relevant to their dogs, tools to assist breeders in making health related breeding decisions and information for puppy buyers to ask the right questions before buying a puppy.

Although National Canine Health Testing Week focuses on health testing, it also raises awareness of the many other important factors for breeders when choosing two potential mates, such as genetic diversity, the way a dog looks and behaves, general health and family history. A breeder’s decision should always be well balanced between all of the good qualities of the sire/dam that are being considered.

In 2014, dog owners were encouraged to show off their healthy and happy dogs by taking a ‘healthy selfie’ of their pet and uploading it to social media with the hashtags #healthyselfie and #NCHTW. By posting a ‘healthy selfie’ during National Canine Health Testing Week it helped raise awareness of the importance of canine health testing, whilst also providing a platform for breeders and owners to highlight health tests that are important for their dogs.

Impact: Each year over 800 veterinary students attend Crufts for free and receive lectures to help improve their understanding current issues in canine health.

For more information on Crufts, please visit www.crufts.org.uk.

Puppy Awareness Week
Promoting responsible puppy buying

Puppy Awareness Week (PAW) is held annually, gaining widespread publicity for the issue of buying a puppy from a responsible breeder or rescue home. PAW aims to make sure that puppies live healthy, happy lives with suitable owners, advising that puppy buyers get the right dog for their lifestyle from a reputable breeder. Puppies from puppy farms are bred with no regard for their health and well-being and are kept in appalling, unsanitary conditions. Kennel Club research from 2014 showed that as many as one in four may have unknowingly bought from a puppy farm, after sourcing their puppy online, on social media, in pet shops or through free newspaper ads - outlets often used by puppy farmers. One in five puppies bought online or in pet shops need long-term veterinary care or die before six months old. The PAW section of the website provides information and advice, including educational videos. These include films about dog health, puppy farming and a three part series about how to buy a puppy responsibly.

Impact: The three part video series on how to buy a puppy responsibly, which were created for puppy awareness week, have been viewed over 165,000 times in total.

For more information on Puppy Awareness Week, please visit www.thekennelclub.org.uk/paw.

Crufts
Providing an opportunity to talk to health specialist

Each year at Crufts, the Kennel Club provide dog breeders and dog owners and potential puppy buyers with an opportunity to talk to veterinary advisors, scientists, geneticists and breeder specialists about a wide range of Kennel Club health initiatives. The Breeding for the Future Zone at Crufts brings together leaders of canine science and health, allowing visitors to find experts from the Kennel Club, Animal Health Trust and representatives from the BVA/KC Canine Health Schemes who are happy to answer their questions.

To further communications with the veterinary community, each year the Kennel Club invites all veterinary students from around the UK to attend the show for free. Those who attended are given the opportunity to listen to talks from the Kennel Club Chairman, winners of the International Canine Health Awards and veterinary researchers.

Crufts and its associated TV programmes and web streaming provide a huge platform in conjunction with many animal welfare charities, to educate the public on important issues which surround breeding, buying, training and caring for dogs, as well as promoting Kennel Club health initiatives and resources.

Impact: Each year over 800 veterinary students attend Crufts for free and receive lectures to help improve their understanding current issues in canine health.

For more information on Crufts, please visit www.crufts.org.uk.
Eukanuba Discover Dogs
Promoting responsible dog ownership
Sponsored by Eukanuba and Metro Bank, the event welcomes visitors and dogs over two days of the dog show, and provides an opportunity for visitors to meet, greet and discover over 200 different breeds of dog, and learn all about the distinctive personalities, health, traits and looks of each breed, and how to responsibly buy the perfect canine partner.

For more information on Eukanuba Discover Dogs, please visit www.discoverdogs.org.uk.

Impact: Eukanuba Discover Dogs welcomes approximately 34,000 visitors each year.

Social media and online videos
Raising the profile of canine health issues
The Kennel Club is active on both Facebook and Twitter to keep the general public up to date with, and to promote, amongst other things, what is going on in the world of dog health and welfare. Types of posts include details of health seminars, advice and information, surveys, current research that owners can help with, events and resources for breeders, pet owners and puppy buyers.

A range of videos are available from the Kennel Club’s YouTube channel, with topics varying from how vet checks are carried out to what the Kennel Club does for health.

Impact: The Kennel Club Facebook page alone has a potential reach of 250,000 users each month.

Impact: The video “Dogs a health Future” receives approximately 500 views per month.

For more information please visit:
www.facebook.com/kclovesdogs
www.twitter.com/kclovesdogs
www.youtube.com/thekennelclub

Get Fit With Fido
Encouraging dogs and their owners to get fit together
Reports indicate that between 30% and 60% of all dogs are overweight, so it is more important than ever that owners keep their dogs happy and healthy. One of the most serious findings is that being overweight, in both humans and dogs, increases the risk for a shorter lifespan. As well as encouraging the dogs and their owners to get fit together, the campaign includes weight loss tools, such as a chart that will allow owners to see if their dog is overweight, a food diary to record and monitor weight loss and a Global Nutrition Committee Toolkit.

Impact: The winners of the Get Fit With Fido Challenge from the last three years lost a combined weight of 13 stone 8 pounds.

For more information on Get Fit With Fido, please visit www.thekennelclub.org.uk/activities/get-fit-with-fido.
The Kennel Club website
Providing information to dog lovers on issues that matter

The information available on the Kennel Club website covers a diverse range of canine topics, such as getting a dog, breeding, training your dog, canine activities, registration and health. The health sections within the website are designed to educate, advise and raise awareness, and cover health issues and considerations that impact on dog breeding, ownership and puppy buying.

In 2014, the Breeding for Health zone was created to provide breeders with information and advice on: DNA testing and simple inherited disorders, inbreeding, complex inherited disorders and conformation related health problems.

In 2015, the Pet Health Information area was launched with the aim of helping owners find out more about common health problems that could affect their dogs. Articles found in this area have been written by veterinary experts on a wide range of topics, including anal gland impaction, epilepsy, obesity, poisons, grass seed injuries and pyometra, to name a few.

Impact: The Kennel Club’s online Dog Health information pages were accessed 512,000 times in 2015.

For more information on the Kennel Club’s Health Section of their website, please visit www.thekennelclub.oeg.uk/health.

Newsletters, publications and information resources

Canine Genetics and Epidemiology Journal
Publishing original scientific research

Launched in April 2014, the first journal dedicated to the health of all canid species, Canine Genetics and Epidemiology is an open-access resource for the whole dog health community. As part of an ongoing project to develop dog health education, the Kennel Club began developing a canine-focused scientific journal to make the newly emerging genetic research more accessible to the general public and dog breeders, as well as a more centralised resource for the veterinary community. Key to this project was ensuring that the journal was independent, reputable, and accessible to all those interested in dog health – both professionals and lay-persons.

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. It is intended that this journal will become a standard reference for those new and experienced in canine health and research. It is hoped that the journal will become established as the first choice for those in canine research to submit their work – not only as a significant journal, but in appreciation of how important it is to dog health to share knowledge with the widest possible audience.

Impact: In 2015, the Canine Genetics and Epidemiology journal published 17 articles which were accessed over 50,000 times.

For more information on the Canine Genetics and Epidemiology journal, please visit http://cgejournal.biomedcentral.com/.
Free Information Guides
Giving advice on key issues faced by dog owners
The Kennel Club annually updates and adds to a large number of different information guides on all aspects of responsible dog ownership, from choosing a puppy to looking after a dog in old age. These are available to download on the Kennel Club website. The most recent edition to the information guides are, Breeding for Health (released in 2014) and Common Canine Poisons in your House and Garden (released in 2015). Breeding for Health contains information on Mate Select, why you should health test your dog prior to breeding, guidance on how to breed away from simple and complex inherited disorders, inbreeding and its impact on health, and breeding from non-pedigree dogs. Common Canine Poisons in your House and Garden provides owners with details of poisons found in their kitchen (chocolate, onions, raisins and xylitol), cleaning cupboard (bleach, detergents and oven cleaners), medicine cabinet (Ibuprofen, paracetamol, oral contraceptives and psoriasis creams), garden (fungi, spring bulbs and toads) and shed (antifreeze, herbicides, rodenticides and slug bait).

Paper copies of these guides are available to veterinary practices to order for free for their clients.

For more information on the Kennel Club’s Information Guides, please visit www.doginformation.org.uk.

Breed Health Co-ordinator toolkits
Assisting breed clubs to improve and monitor health
In 2012, to assist Breed Health Co-ordinators (BHCs) in their role, the Kennel Club launched the first of many toolkits to help BHCs develop and promote the health of their breeds. The Kennel Club recognises that BHCs are enthusiastic and motivated about canine health, but may not have the specialist knowledge or tools required to carry out some tasks. The first toolkits launched were the Health Strategy Guide - a practical approach to developing, assessing, and monitoring a breed specific health plan, and the Breed Health Survey Toolkit - a step by step guide to developing the right surveys for each breed. In 2013, two further toolkits were launched, which included the Website Content and the Website Enhancement Toolkit, both of which concentrate on helping breed clubs and councils to improve their communications with the general public and their members.

For more information on Breed Health Co-ordinators, please visit www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health/breed-health-coordinators.
Scientific research and data

The collection of scientific data can help everyone invested in canine health to understand the frequency and inheritance of specific disorders, identify the genetic status of dogs prior to breeding and to develop effective treatments. The Kennel Club have a number of initiatives to help support, promote and progress scientific research into canine health.

Assisting with recruitment for scientific research

The Kennel Club assists researchers to recruit for their studies via social media, the Kennel Club’s veterinary newsletter – The Kennel Scope, Bio-Acquisition Research Collaboration (BARC) and via e-mails to owners.

Bio-Acquisition Research Collaboration (BARC)

Promoting and encouraging research

In December 2013, the Kennel Club launched an initiative to improve the way in which information on canine research is shared between researchers, veterinary professionals and dog owners. The Bio-Acquisition Research Collaboration (BARC) is an online research exchange, bringing researchers, dog owners and veterinary clinicians together.

Researchers are able to post requests on to the BARC webpage for biological samples, such as blood or DNA from a cheek swab to aid their research. BARC then alerts veterinarians and dog owners of the research and how they can get involved. Items added to BARC are further promoted through the Kennel Club’s social media platforms and an e-mail sent to relevant Breed Health Co-ordinators and all 3,800 individuals on the Kennel Club’s veterinary contacts list. By creating a network of research and biological sample sharing, it increases everybody’s understanding and awareness of canine disorders and creates a means to treat and prevent them.

Contacting owners

Helping to recruit for surveys and scientific research

The Kennel Club utilises its registration database to contact registered owners of particular breeds, asking for them to participate in scientific research. This may involve completing a survey, requesting a cheek swab, or asking owners of dogs suffering from particular conditions to get in contact.

For example, the Kennel Club assisted with recruitment of participants for the University of Cambridge’s GDogs project by e-mailing approximately 19,000 owners.

In addition to assisting with scientific research, the Kennel Club also e-mail owners to help to promote breed club health survey participation. For example, the English Springer Spaniel breed clubs’ health survey was promoted through a number of different means (press releases, social media and by e-mailing 14,000 Kennel Club registered owners/breeders). Using these means helped the clubs to achieve 5,000 responses.

Impact: In 2015, the Kennel Club e-mailed over 419,000 dog owners and breeder to promote 15 different independent health surveys and research projects and health clinics.

Impact: In the last two years (2014 and 2015), the Kennel Club promoted 38 separate research projects via BARC.

For more information on BARC, please visit www.kcbarc.org.uk.
Purebred Dog Health Survey
Collecting a snapshot of data on pedigree dogs

The Purebred Dog Health Survey, carried out in 2004, aimed to identify important health conditions in UK dog breeds. The Kennel Club/ British Small Animal Veterinary Association Scientific Committee joined forces with scientists in the Epidemiology Unit at the Animal Health Trust to carry out a nationwide survey of UK purebred dogs. Questionnaires were sent to the numerically largest club of each breed, and secretaries were asked to send them out to their members. Only the largest club of each breed was selected to try and avoid duplication, and also to limit the vast number, and therefore cost, of the 70,000 forms needed.

The questionnaire was divided into different sections, concentrating on different types of information, such as the general health the dogs, breeding, causes of death and birth defects in any puppies.

Breed clubs received detailed feedback on the results of this survey, assisting with the recognition and control of important conditions in specific breeds. Data gathered from this survey provided baseline information against which the success of future health initiatives could be measured.

Impact: 13,741 complete questionnaires were returned to the Kennel Club, accounting for 36,006 dogs.

For more information on the Purebred Dog Health Survey, please visit http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/vets-researchers/purebred-breed-health-survey-2004/

Pedigree Breed Health Survey
Furthering our understanding of canine health

Ten years on from the 2004 Purebred Dog Health Survey, the Kennel Club carried out another nationwide health survey for all pedigree breeds. With the help of owners, the survey gives the most wide-ranging insight into dog breed health to date, and allows us to compare the results to the previous survey and review the changes in the health of breeds over the ten year period.

The information collected from the survey helps us to better understanding the general health of pedigree dogs as a whole, as well as individual breeds. In addition, it highlights positive progress in the breeds and helps to better understand the prevalence of current health concerns.

Impact: Data on just over 43,500 live dogs and 5,700 deceased dogs were collected from the 2014 Pedigree Breed Health Survey.

For more information on the Pedigree Breed Health Survey, please visit
Estimated Effective Population Size

Ground-breaking research on inbreeding and breed sustainability

In 2015, the Kennel Club analysed extensive data from its pedigree records to launch ground-breaking research to help breeders to improve genetic health and protect the future of pedigree dog breeds.

The 35-year review analysed Kennel Club data from 1980 to 2014 for all 215 recognised pedigree dog breeds and, where numbers allowed, calculated the rate of loss of genetic diversity within each. This is quoted as the Estimated Effective Population Size - an important descriptor of the sustainability of a population.

The research showed that, since 2000, the rate of inbreeding has declined or slowed down in the majority of breeds to sustainable levels, meaning that the future is brighter for many breeds - including some of the UK’s vulnerable native breeds whose lack of popularity and low numbers are a concern. The research was published in the peer-reviewed journal, Canine Genetics and Epidemiology.

The slowing down of the rate of inbreeding coincides with advances in science that have enabled the Kennel Club to develop its online Mate Select tool, where breeders can look at the genetic risk associated with a potential mating, and also the relaxation of Pet Passport rules enabling foreign, and potentially more distantly related dogs, to be brought into the country more easily.

Breeders can now review the unique situation for their own breed and, using this information and tools such as Mate Select, they can decide how best to preserve genetic diversity, not only for the health of the next litter of puppies, but also for the health of the breed population as a whole.

Impact: The open access scientific journal article on Effective Population Size was viewed 4,400 times.

The research was published in the peer-reviewed journal, Canine Genetics and Epidemiology and individual breed specific reports were produced for all 215 Kennel Club recognised breeds and are available from www.thekennelclub.org.uk/vets-researchers/publications-statistics-and-health-results/breed-population-analyses/

International Canine Health Awards

Inspiring researchers

Administered by the Kennel Club Charitable Trust and underwritten by a major gift from Vernon and Shirley Hill, founders of Metro Bank, the International Canine Health Awards recognise innovative researchers and veterinary scientists whose work has had a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of dogs.

Launched in 2013, these annual awards offer a funding programme to each recipient of the Student Inspiration Award (£5,000), the International Prize in Canine Health (£40,000) and the Lifetime Achievement Award (£10,000). The awards are judged by representatives from the veterinary profession and the world of scientific research, including experts in the nominees’ selected fields.

The International Canine Health Awards are the largest veterinary awards in Europe and have attracted illustrious candidates from around the world. Through the generous prize money these awards continue to further research to improve the health and wellbeing of dogs.

Impact: The International Canine Health Awards have currently donated £165,000 to scientific research to help improve the health of dogs in the last 3 years.

For more information on the International Canine Health Awards, please visit www.thekennelclub.org.uk/icha.

£165,000
The Kennel Club Charitable Trust
Helping to fund ground breaking research

The Kennel Club Charitable Trust (KCCT) is a dog charity that looks after the health and welfare of all dogs. The KCCT fund a wide variety of work, ranging from supporting research into canine diseases, dog welfare organisations and the promotion of support dogs, all of which help to give dogs a healthier, happier life.

The Kennel Club Charitable Trust was founded in 1987 and since then has donated approximately £6.5 million to support a number of initiatives. Of all the grants which the Kennel Club Charitable Trust gives, those which assist with the funding of scientific research make up over half of the money given each year.

The types of scientific research that the Charitable Trust supports is diverse and include such topics as research into; simple inherited canine disorders, oncology, Chiari Malformation/ Syringomyelia, epilepsy, cardiac disease, arthritis and deafness. More specific examples of Kennel Club Charitable Trust donations include:

- Providing the University of Liverpool with a grant of £28,000 in 2012 to investigate and identify the genes involved with cruciate disease in the Newfoundland. It is hoped that from this important research a test can be developed to identify the causative gene(s); from here breeding strategies can be implemented that will reduce the incidence of the disease in the breed.
- £5,000 was provided to the Miniature Dachshund Breed Council to assist its DNA screening process into Lafora disease in the breed. From these results, it is hoped that responsible breeding will dramatically reduce incidences of Lafora disease in Miniature Dachshunds.
- The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies continued its project, Dogslife: An Epidemiological Study of Canine Health, following the Kennel Club Charitable Trust’s £100,000 grant.

**Impact:** In 2015, the KCCT donated over £500,000 to aid with scientific research.

For more information on the **Kennel Club Charitable Trust**, please visit [www.kccharitabletrust.org.uk](http://www.kccharitabletrust.org.uk).

The Kennel Club Genetics Centre at the Animal Health Trust
Improving disorder diagnosis and our understanding of inherited disorders

The Kennel Club Genetics Centre at the Animal Health Trust was launched in 2009 and has already contributed significantly towards research into inherited canine disease. The centre creates diagnostic tests 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 (approximately 11,000 dogs to date).

The Kennel Club Charitable Trust initially committed £1.2 million in funds over five years to help the Centre investigate a number of inherited diseases. Led by Dr Cathryn Mellersh, the Centre develops simple mouth swab screening tests to determine affected, carrier and clear dogs. Currently the Centre offers 33 genetic health tests across 59 different breeds.

Five years on, the Kennel Club Charitable Trust has committed a further £1.6 million to further the research carried out at the centre.

**Impact:** The AHT’s DNA testing facility tests around 12,000 dogs each year.

For more information on the **Kennel Club Genetics Centre at the Animal Health Trust**, please visit [www.thekennelclub.org.uk/vets-researchers/the-kennel-club-genetics-centre](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/vets-researchers/the-kennel-club-genetics-centre).
The Kennel Club Cancer Centre at the Animal Health Trust
Improving treatment and our understanding of cancer

In 2013, the Kennel Club provided the Animal Health Trust (AHT) with an interest-free loan of £1.5 million to help with the construction and development of The Kennel Club Cancer Centre at the Animal Health Trust. The Centre contributes to the AHT’s well-established cancer research programme and brings together the expertise of their clinical oncology team, molecular scientists and geneticists to investigate cancers in animals.

The Kennel Club Cancer Centre at the AHT helps pets to receive the latest treatment and invest in ways in which to better understand the disease. The Cancer Centre help to educate veterinary surgeons treating cancer patients, who will, in turn, provide better help for hundreds of animals, and their owners, who may never visit the facility at the AHT.

Knowledge learned within the new cancer centre feeds into research, helping to improve tests used to detect tumours at an early stage, or predict how a cancer may behave and respond to treatment. It is also hoped that the information gathered will lead to an improved understanding of the underlying causes of cancer and especially any breed specific genetic.

**Impact:** In 2015, the Kennel Club Cancer Centre at the Animal Health Trust delivered 1,325 fractions of radiotherapy treating twice as many patients than in 2014. The Centre has treated more than 35 breeds of dog with 15 different types of cancer.

For more information on the Kennel Club Cancer Centre at the Animal Health Trust, please visit [www.thekennelclub.org.uk/vets-researchers/the-kennel-club-cancer-centre-at-the-aht/](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/vets-researchers/the-kennel-club-cancer-centre-at-the-aht/).
Canine Genetics and Epidemiology Journal
Publishing original scientific research

Launched in April 2014, the first journal dedicated to the health of all canid species, Canine Genetics and Epidemiology, is an open-access (free) resource for the whole dog health community. As part of an ongoing project to develop dog health education, the Kennel Club began investigating developing a canine-focused scientific journal to make the newly emerging genetic research more accessible to the general public and dog breeders, as well as a more centralised resource for the veterinary community. Key to this project was ensuring that the journal was independent, reputable, and accessible to all those interested in dog health – both professionals and lay-persons.

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Impact: In 2015, the Canine Genetics and Epidemiology journal published 17 articles which were accessed over 50,000 times.

For more information on the Canine Genetics and Epidemiology Journal, please visit http://cgejournal.biomedcentral.com/.

VetCompass
Helping us better understand canine health

In 2014, the Kennel Club Charitable Trust (KCCT) took a significant step towards improving our understanding of the health of the overall dog population in the UK by providing funding support for the VetCompass program at the Royal Veterinary College (RVC). The KCCT has committed £185,000 over the next three years to this project, and this includes funding for Dr Dan O’Neill to take up the newly-created role of ‘KCCT Companion Animal Epidemiologist’ at the RVC. As a result of the Trust funding, Dr O’Neill will now focus VetCompass studies towards breed health in dogs. VetCompass is a not-for-profit collaborative program that shares and analyses clinical health data from veterinary practices across the UK, in order to provide scientific evidence that will improve companion animal welfare.

This new KCCT project aims to progress the research capacity of VetCompass and to support collaborative breed related research. Breed Health Co-ordinators in each of the Kennel Club-recognised breeds were contacted late in 2014 asking them to express an interest for their active involvement in future studies. Following this process, a number of projects have been shortlisted across a number of breeds, including Dachshunds, West Highland White Terriers, English Springer Spaniels and German Shorthaired Pointers.

Impact: The VetCompass program currently collaborates with over 300 veterinary practices across the UK, holding five million clinical health records covering 800,000 dogs.

For more information on VetCompass, please visit www.rvc.ac.uk/vetcompass.
Free information and online resources from

THE KENNEL CLUB

DOG HEALTH

Kennel Club Information Guides
www.thekennelclub.org.uk/doginformation

Kennel Club Dog Health and DNA Schemes
www.thekennelclub.org.uk/doghealth

Kennel Club Mate Select
www.mateselect.org.uk

Kennel Club Breed Information Centre
www.breedinformationcentre.org.uk

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

www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health