



THE KENNEL CLUB DOG HEALTH

Breed Health and Conservation Plans

What is the new project?

The Kennel Club is launching its Breed Health and Conservation Plans project, a dynamic new resource to support breed clubs and individual breeders. This exciting new project will use evidence-based criteria to help identify common breed specific health concerns. Breeders will be provided with information and breeding resources to help them improve the health of their puppies and breed.

What health concerns will be incorporated and how will they be prioritised?

The Breed Health and Conservation Plans will take a holistic view of breed health with consideration given to known hereditary conditions (both simple and complex), conformational concerns and population genetics (inbreeding, effective population size etc.). To help determine the impact and importance of the health concerns in each breed, a number of evidence-based criteria will be used. Each health concern identified will be assessed and prioritised, based on welfare implications, proportion of the breed affected and likelihood of the concern getting worse in the future. The bespoke nature of these breed-specific health plans will include monitoring and review, to ensure they are up-to-date and remain relevant.

Who will be involved in this project?

The project will involve collaboration across a broad spectrum of stakeholders including breed clubs and the veterinary and research community. Breed Health Coordinators will continue to be central collaborators in the identification of health concerns and risks.

How can breed clubs help?

Alongside research studies we will be using the information collected in the Annual Health Reports and any health information provided by the breed clubs. The Kennel Club would very much appreciate being sent any health information you have collected through health surveys or health schemes. This can be e-mailed to mateselect@thekennelclub.org.uk.

Which breeds will be given their Breed Health and Conservation Plans first?

Key breeds have been identified as the first to collaborate on these health plans, with the aim of having a Breed Health and Conservation Plan for each Kennel Club recognised breed.



Meet the team

The project will have a number of dedicated resources, including team members with experience in veterinary science, quantitative genetics, epidemiology, dog breeding, and bio veterinary science, to enable the development of the plans.

Dr Katy Evans



Katy has been passionately interested in dogs since her early childhood. She qualified as a veterinary surgeon at the University of Bristol in 2001. After various clinical jobs, she undertook a Postgraduate Studentship in Small Animal Epidemiology at the Animal Health Trust, funded by the Kennel Club Charitable Trust, from 2007-2010. This involved analysing data from the 2004 Purebred Dog Health Survey and undertaking breed-specific health surveys, while also completing an MSc in Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health via distance-learning at the Royal Veterinary College.

Katy then undertook a PhD in quantitative genetics at the University of Nottingham, working with Guide Dogs to investigate the potential to use estimated breeding values (EBVs) for health and behavioural traits of importance to Guide Dogs. She successfully defended her thesis in January 2015 and since that time has been working as a Postdoctoral

Research Fellow at the University of Nottingham developing Guide Dogs' EBVs and assisting with their implementation.

Katy leapt at the chance to be the Breed Health and Conservation Plans project leader, a role which will utilise all the skills and experience she has gained over the years and which provides an unparalleled opportunity to have a positive impact on dog health, breeding and welfare. She is looking forward to working with Bonnie Wiles and other members of the Kennel Club Health Team, in collaboration with breed clubs, breed health coordinators and researchers to advance the project over the coming years.

Bonnie Wiles



Bonnie has always been very active in the world of dogs, helping her parents showing Labrador Retrievers since the age of six, whelping litters and later taking up judging. In 2008 she got her first Pembroke Welsh Corgi, which she also shows. A keen interest in animals and the sciences lead to her undertaking a Bioveterinary science degree at the Royal Veterinary College.

Through a highly practical degree she learnt veterinary research techniques and statistical analysis, which were put into practice at the Kennel Club. She is looking forward to working on the Breed Health & Conservation Plans in collaboratively developing these with breed clubs, breed health coordinators and researchers.



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The Next Step

Some breeds have already been identified as requiring support from the Kennel Club.

The suggested breeds identified as key priority breeds are as follows:

- Basset Hound
- Bloodhound
- Bulldog
- Cavalier King Charles Spaniel
- Chow Chow
- Clumber Spaniel
- Dogue de Bordeaux
- English Setter
- French Bulldog
- German Shepherd Dog
- Mastiff
- Neapolitan Mastiff
- Otterhound
- Pekingese
- Pug
- Shar Pei
- St Bernard

The team will organise meetings with Breed Clubs/Breed Councils involved in developing a Breed Health & Conservation Plan for each of these breeds. It is hoped that Breeding for Health Plans will be developed for the identified key priority breeds in 2017, with other breeds to follow.