

LIMITATION ON 'HEREDITARY CLEAR' STATUS POSTPONED TO 2023

Following the announcement that The Kennel Club will limit the assignment of 'hereditary clear' status of registered dogs to two generations, the organisation has announced that this change is now set to be implemented as of January 2023.

The decision to restrict hereditary status was made by The Kennel Club Board in 2018 on the recommendation of the Dog Health Group, and followed a Kennel Club study, published in the journal of Canine Genetics and Epidemiology. This change was put forward to safeguard against the impact that dogs with an incorrect 'hereditary clear' status could have on health issues within a breed.

Hereditary clear status is given to dogs that are determined to be free of specific genetic material linked to a particular inherited disease. The Kennel Club's registration system assigns a dog this status if their parents are known to be clear, either because they have both been DNA tested as clear, or because they are hereditary clear themselves.

Dogs could be mistakenly given a false hereditary clear status for a number of reasons; for example if there has been a failure of laboratory protocols, pedigree errors or incorrectly recorded parentage. In these instances it is unlikely that the inaccuracies would be noticed immediately, but rather that several generations later many dogs throughout the breed descended from the individual with the original incorrect status will also have erroneous hereditary status, and the well-intended mating of two such apparently hereditary clear dogs risks producing affected puppies.

The Kennel Club research analysed the risks faced by a population following the incorrect assignment of hereditary status and determined that the rate of dogs with false hereditary clear status could rise considerably over a fairly small number of generations, particularly for genetic conditions that are more common.

To reduce the knock-on effect of these errors, and the risk of unintentionally breeding affected puppies, The Kennel Club will be ensuring that from January 2023, the 'hereditary clear status' will be limited to two generations, unless lineage is verified by DNA parentage profiling recorded by The Kennel Club. DNA parentage profiling is a separate procedure to screening DNA for disease causing mutations, but can often be carried out at the same time by the same laboratory.

Originally scheduled to come into effect in January 2022, this has now been postponed to 2023 to allow for necessary development work to be completed and in order for 'hereditary clear' status to be as effective and reliable as possible.

ENDS

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XX July 2021

For journalists who would like further press information, images or interview requests please email press.office@thekennelclub.org.uk

thekennelclub.org.uk

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Notes to editors

Research demonstrating the potential problem was published in the journal Canine Genetics and Epidemiology (<https://cgejournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40575-019-0074-3>)

If you'd like any further information, please email press.office@thekennelclub.org.uk

The Kennel Club

The Kennel Club is the largest organisation in the UK devoted to dog health, welfare and training. Its objective is to ensure that dogs live healthy, happy lives with responsible owners.

It runs the country's largest registration database for both pedigree and crossbreed dogs and the Petlog database, which is one of the UK's biggest reunification service for microchipped animals. The Kennel Club is accredited by UKAS to certify members of its Assured Breeders scheme, which is the only scheme in the UK that monitors breeders in order to protect the welfare of puppies and breeding bitches. It also runs the UK's largest dog training programme, The Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Training Scheme and accredits dog trainers and behaviourists through The Kennel Club Accredited Instructors scheme.

It licenses shows and clubs across a wide range of activities, which help dog owners to bond and enjoy life with their dogs. The Kennel Club runs the world's greatest dog show, Crufts, and the Discover Dogs event at ExCeL London, which is a fun family day out that educates people about how to buy responsibly and care for their dog.

The Kennel Club invests in welfare campaigns, dog training and education programmes and The Kennel Club Charitable Trust, which supports research into dog diseases and dog welfare charities, including The Kennel Club Breed Rescue organisations that re-home dogs throughout the UK. The Kennel Club jointly runs health screening schemes with the British Veterinary Association.

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