

## **HEREDITARY CLEAR STATUS**

The Kennel Club has announced that it is unfortunately necessary to pause the changes to its policy on 'hereditary clear' status, which were due to become effective from the start of next year.

The Kennel Club previously announced that, from January 2023, the assignment of 'hereditary clear' status of registered dogs would be limited to two generations, unless lineage is verified by DNA parentage profiling. Unfortunately, technical challenges have meant that we have needed to pause this complex project, which requires extensive testing before it can be implemented, and allow further development work to be carried out.

Therefore, The Kennel Club's current policy for assigning 'hereditary clear' status to progeny – if their parents are known to be clear for the same autosomal recessive condition, either because they have both been DNA tested as clear, or because they are hereditary clear themselves – will remain for the foreseeable future.

'Hereditary clear' status is given to dogs that are determined to be free of specific genetic material linked to a particular inherited disease.

Following on from a Kennel Club study, published in the journal of Canine Genetics and Epidemiology, a decision to restrict hereditary status was made by The Kennel Club Board on the recommendation of the Dog Health Group. 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. Dogs could be mistakenly given a false 'hereditary clear' status for several reasons e.g., 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 instead several generations later, and the well-intended mating of two apparently hereditary clear dogs risks producing affected puppies. To mitigate the risks faced by a population following the incorrect assignment of hereditary status, The Kennel Club previously announced that, from January 2023, the assignment of 'hereditary clear'

status of registered dogs would be limited to two generations, unless lineage is verified by DNA parentage profiling.

The Kennel Club continues to strongly recommend that all breeding dogs, including apparently 'clear' lines, are retested every two generations to reduce the impact of errors and ensure the 'hereditary clear' status is as effective and reliable as possible, thereby reducing the risk of unintentionally breeding affected puppies.

Bill Lambert, The Kennel Club's Health, Welfare and Breeder Services Executive said: "DNA tests help breeders to eradicate health issues in dogs and we want our registration system to maximise the impact these tests are having. Therefore, we still plan to implement the limitation of 'hereditary clear' status and will release further communications regarding this in due course. In the meantime, we encourage all breeders to DNA test their dogs to ensure that they can remain confident that the puppies produced are free from the relevant inherited disease."

**ENDS**

**(124.22)**

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For journalists who would like further press information, images or interview requests please email [press.office@thekennelclub.org.uk](mailto: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 UK-wide scheme 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.