



THE KENNEL CLUB
Making a difference for dogs

THE KENNEL CLUB
**WEBSITE CONTENT
TOOLKIT**



THE KENNEL CLUB

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WWW.THEKENNELCLUB.ORG.UK/HEALTH

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INTRODUCTION

A good website will be one of the best tools to have to promote the health and welfare of your breed. It enables breed representatives to showcase all the good work that is being done to improve and maintain the health of future generations, as well as raise awareness of any health conditions which may appear in the breed. If there is a lot being done to eradicate or reduce the incidence of a condition, then this is the perfect place to tell the world about it.

Having a website dedicated to the health of the breed allows:

- Promotion and demonstration of how healthy the breed is
- Publication of information and advice on health conditions
- Publicity of what is being done to prevent any conditions from persisting
- Recruitment of people within the breed to help and assist, whether it be through financial donations, genetic material for research, or data from completed surveys

An additional toolkit to enhance a website is available which discusses how to build a website and we have provided you with some dos and don'ts on the general design of your site, but what information could be included?

The information that follows is a general guide on things that could be included on your website.



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KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Visitors to the website will be made up of a variety of different people from diverse backgrounds.

Your audience may include:

- Breeders – looking for guidance on how to breed away from certain conditions
- Dog owners – looking for information on a condition that may affect their pet
- Potential puppy buyers – wanting to know how to choose a puppy
- Judges – looking for information on conditions to watch out for in the ring
- Researchers
- Breed club members
- Dog health campaigners
- General public
- Veterinarians and veterinary nurses

The reasons for these individuals visiting the website are also likely to vary, with certain groups looking for specific information. One way to assist each group is to tailor particular sections of the website to a particular purpose, for example an obvious section on health testing, breeding, health surveys etc.

ABOUT YOU

Make sure that it's clear why the website has been created and who it has been created on behalf of, e.g. the Breed Council, breed clubs etc. Why not give a mission statement or provide an aim such as "The Kennel Club - making a difference for dogs". If the website is on behalf of a health committee then provide the names, positions and contact details of those that sit on it. If you wish to make your minutes public, then this is an excellent platform to do so.

CONTACT DETAILS

Ensure that there are contact details available for anyone who would like to give feedback on the website or has any questions that the site has not been able to answer.

Where possible, have designated individuals responsible for certain tasks, for example general enquiries, problems with the website, enquiries concerning particular conditions etc. By doing this it will be clear who a question should be directed towards and provide the appropriate contact details and split the work too. If individuals do not want to put their personal e-mail address on the website, then an additional e-mail address could be created for this purpose alone.

If your health group or health committee has a presence on social media such as Facebook or Twitter, then you can provide these details here.

PUBLISHING REPORTS

If a health strategy or annual report has been produced, then it is good practice to publish it online. This would be an excellent opportunity to announce all that has been done in the last year to improve or maintain the health of the breed, whilst also demonstrating any plans for the future and how to get there. If a health strategy has not yet been produced, then please refer to the BHC toolkit available via the Kennel Club website.

HEALTH SURVEYS

If there is a health survey, then a page dedicated to the questionnaire would be an ideal platform to launch it from. If the survey is online, either as a download or as an interactive part of the website, it allows more people to access it and complete it, without the cost of printing or postage. Not only can you publicise its presence, but so can your friends, colleagues, and even the Kennel Club – all we need is a link.

Make it clear why the survey is being carried out, who can complete the questionnaire and what the deadline for submission is. If the questionnaire is available as a download, then make sure to include an e-mail address or postal address for respondents to return it to.

Once a survey has ended, publicise the results in a report, which can be made available in the health survey section of the website. If respondents to the questionnaire have provided an e-mail address, then contact them to let them know the report is available.

Use the data from the questionnaire throughout the website for giving evidence of how healthy the breed is overall, the prevalence of certain conditions and for prioritising conditions.

If multiple surveys have been carried out over the years, then it is helpful to describe the changes that have been reported. Are there any conditions that seem to be improving or becoming more common? If the latter is happening, what is being done to improve this?

If a health survey has not yet been carried out, you can still direct people to the KC/BSAVA Purebred Dog Health Survey 2004 and can specifically direct them towards information on your breed found in the Breed Information Centre, on the Kennel Club website.

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HEALTH CONDITIONS

It is important to highlight which, if any, health conditions are more common amongst your breed.

For each condition a short section could be written on:

- What the condition is
- Information, if known, or the morbidity and mortality rates
- How prevalent is the condition or what percentage of dogs are affected?
- What clinical effects does it cause and at what age do signs present?
- Is it inherited? If so, how?
- How is the condition diagnosed, is there a DNA test for it or a health testing scheme?
- Which laboratories provide DNA tests for the condition (a list is available from the Kennel Club website)?
- Advice on what to do if your dog is affected
- What current treatment is commonly used?
- If known, any breeding advice on how individuals can breed away from this condition (an information guide is available on the Kennel Club website entitled “Breeding from your DNA tested dog”)

It is also important to state how a condition is being addressed and what research has, and is, being carried out. If information is provided on a particular health condition(s) from scientific papers, then make sure that the paper is referenced appropriately. If there are any collaborative research projects (e.g. with the Animal Health Trust), then highlight this and include a link to the information available on their website. If records are being kept on specific dogs with disorders, then ensure that advice is given on how owners or breeders can report cases.

BREED CONSERVATION AND INBREEDING

An important part of maintaining the health of any breed is to preserve a healthy degree of genetic variation so that the breed can avoid problems such as genetic bottle-necks, and reduced fertility. To achieve this, information could be provided on your website which illustrates the downsides of inbreeding, close matings and popular sires, and also information on why maintaining genetic diversity amongst the breed is important. The benefits of inbreeding co-efficient calculators could be explained and visitors to the website could be directed toward inbreeding co-efficient calculators, such as Mate Select, for use when considering potential mates. You may consider publishing your breed average COI, but ensure that this figure is updated regularly as the Kennel Club update this figure annually.

If the breed is numerically and genetically small, then consider illustrating what is being done to encourage diversity.



HEALTH EVENTS

This could be an area to publicise events such as health seminars and health testing at shows that may be of interest to club members or owners of the breed. These could be events that are organised by clubs, councils, or it could include events organised by other individuals/groups that are relevant. If there are regular health events, then a calendar could be published of which events are on each month. A list of possible seminars that may be relevant to each breed can be found on the Kennel Club website.

LINKS

There are a range of useful tools and information resources that you may consider having a link to on your website.

These may include (amongst other things):

- The Kennel Club website
- Your Breed Club(s) website(s) (if different)
- BVA website
- AHT website
- International Breed website(s)
- KC publications, such as The Dog Health Group Annual Report or the The Kennel Scope
- Breed Club publications (annual reports, minutes)
- Mate Select
- The Breed Information Centre
- Breed Watch

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HIGH PROFILE BREEDS

If the breed has been designated as one of the high profile breeds, then some information on what it means to be on the high profile list could be provided. The particular 'points of concern' (available from Breed Watch) could be provided and used to illustrate how your breed is tackling these issues in order to meet the removal criteria. Information could be provided for those individuals interested in dog showing regarding veterinary health checks and what this procedure involves. If there are any breed specific health schemes then illustrate what these are and how owners and breeders can participate. If there is a list available of specialists who can provide health tests for any particular part of a health scheme, then this could be provided.

ADVICE TO PUPPY BUYERS

The Kennel Club often recommends that puppy seekers new to a breed should contact the relevant Breed Clubs for additional advice and information. Providing information on what they should look out for when buying a puppy of your breed, and who to buy from is invaluable. Including the positives and challenges about the breed will help ensure that puppy seekers are the right potential owners of your breed.

Breed specific requirements for puppy buyers might include:

- Breed group
- Size
- How much exercise they require
- Length of coat
- How much grooming is needed
- Ideal type of home
- Lifespan
- Temperament
- Diet and lifestyle
- Details of any recommended or required health screening tests

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

If the similar questions are being repeatedly asked, then this may be an indication that additional information is required on the website. One way to deal with this would be to include a 'frequently asked questions' (FAQ) section. Providing users with quick access to the answers they need will improve the site's usability, as well as saving time in repeatedly answering the same question.

KEEPING YOUR WEBSITE UP-TO-DATE

The website will only become the "go to" place for breed health information if it is kept up-to-date. Visitors need to be confident that the information provided is current and updated to reflect emerging evidence. One way to do this is to include "News" items so that visitors can see the date of newly added information and get a feel for how often the site is updated. If a "Search" function is able to be included, visitors can then find the most current information as well as reading older material if they wish.

Another way to keep the site current is to include a Blog, which visitors can subscribe to and be notified whenever new information is published.

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