

UPDATE ON CANINE HEALTH SCHEMES AS ENGLAND ENTERS SECOND NATIONAL LOCKDOWN

In light of the national four-week lockdown that began in England yesterday (5 November), the British Veterinary Association (BVA) and The Kennel Club (KC) have announced the following changes to the Canine Health Schemes (CHS) in order to follow the new guidelines and restrictions, and also continue to process submissions.

As of Thursday 5 November the CHS office will be closed and the team will be working remotely.

Impact on veterinary practices

England: As part of BVA's guidance to veterinary practices, how practices are able to operate and which services they will be able to offer in terms of health testing will be dependent on individual practice factors such as staffing levels, building layout, as well as the vets' professional and clinical judgement, and we would urge all owners to respect their individual vet's decisions in this matter.

Wales: During the firebreak lockdown (23 October - 8 November) veterinary practices must only undertake essential and urgent services and practices may need to delay x-rays and eye screenings. At the end of the firebreak lockdown, practices in Wales will be able to deliver veterinary services in line with Covid-safe requirements. However, during the England national lockdown, CHS is only able to process online submissions to the Hip and Elbow Schemes (see below).

Scotland and Northern Ireland: Veterinary practices are able to deliver veterinary services in line with Covid-safe requirements so x-rays and eye screening can go ahead. However, during the England national lockdown, CHS is only able to process online submissions to the Hip and Elbow Schemes.

Eye Scheme

In England, under the new guidance for the national lockdown, group screening cannot take place. In Scotland, NI, and Wales (after the firebreak lockdown) group screenings can go ahead but Panellists must adhere to additional requirements to work in a Covid-safe manner. Some CHS Eye Panellists may be able to offer eye screenings as long as government guidance on working safely, practice polices, and any local restrictions are adhered to.

We are asking all animal owners and breeders to respect their vets' clinical and professional judgement and be patient during this time. The list of eye panellists offering testing can be found at: www.bva.co.uk/canine-health-schemes/eye-scheme/find-an-eye-panellist/

Hip and Elbow Dysplasia Schemes

As the CHS processing team is based in London, during the England national lockdown, processing and scoring of hip and elbow submissions will be as follows:

Online submissions:

- Hip and elbow submissions can be made by a veterinary surgeon via the CHS online portal
- The CHS team can process and score online submissions, however, online scoring is slower than in-person scoring, and this means there will be reduced capacity for scoring during the lockdown
- Unfortunately, this will further impact turnaround times and both BVA and The Kennel Club ask for your patience

Postal submissions:

- CHS cannot score postal submissions during the national lockdown in England
- CHS can process postal submissions, ready for them to be allocated to an in-person scoring session after the national lockdown. Unfortunately, this will impact turnaround times, which CHS are unable to estimate until the office reopens
- CHS is asking veterinary practices to assist by not sending postal submissions during lockdown as there is already a significant backlog of submissions that are unable to be scored until the offices reopen. Consequently vets are advised to hold on to submissions if at all possible

Anyone presenting dogs for hip or elbow x-Ray for submission to the Canine Health Schemes at this current time is advised to confirm that their vet is able to submit these via the online portal.

Turnaround times

Due to the uncertainty caused by the national lockdown in England, the CHS team are currently not able to provide accurate turnaround times. The team is working hard to process

and score online submissions in order of date received and is unable to fast-track any submissions.

BVA and the KC is asking all owners and breeders to please respect the CHS team and their vets' clinical and professional judgement and to be patient during this time.

Payment

CHS is unable to take payment until the submission is received, so please wait for at least two weeks before calling to make payment.

To make a payment by card for postal submissions, please call the office on 020 7908 6380 (please note that this line is for payments only).

When calling please provide the following information: Date of radiography; Kennel Club/microchip number; name and address of the veterinary practice.

Contacting CHS

For all non-payment related enquiries, please email chs@bva.co.uk and if possible include the dog's Kennel Club or microchip number, date of radiography, and the name and address of your vet practice. The team will get back to you as soon as possible.

The BVA, Kennel Club and CHS teams thank you for your patience and understanding in these exceptional circumstances.

For the latest guidance and advice on Covid-19, please visit the BVA coronavirus information hub: www.bva.co.uk/coronavirus/. If you have any questions or concerns relating to canine health and welfare, please email health@thekennelclub.org.uk

ENDS

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

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Notes to Editors

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.

BVA and the Kennel Club (KC) work in partnership to provide a number of health screening programmes - the Canine Health Schemes. The Canine Health Schemes enable breeders to screen for a range of inherited diseases so they can make informed decisions as to whether those dogs should be included in breeding programmes. For more information on all of the Canine Health Schemes visit www.bva.co.uk/Canine-Health-Schemes/

BVA is the largest membership community for the veterinary profession in the UK. We represent the views of over 18,000 vets and vet students on animal health and welfare, and veterinary policy issues to government, parliamentarians and key influencers in the UK and EU.