

Dachshund Health Report 2021

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Introduction

Our 2021 Health Report is presented in a different format to recent years. Our Breed Health and Conservation Plan describes the evidence-base for our priorities in addressing the breed's improvement challenges. This report does not reiterate the information in the BHCP (which is available at www.dachshundhealth.org.uk/health-plans). This report for 2021 focuses on the work we have done and what has been achieved.

Priorities for 2021

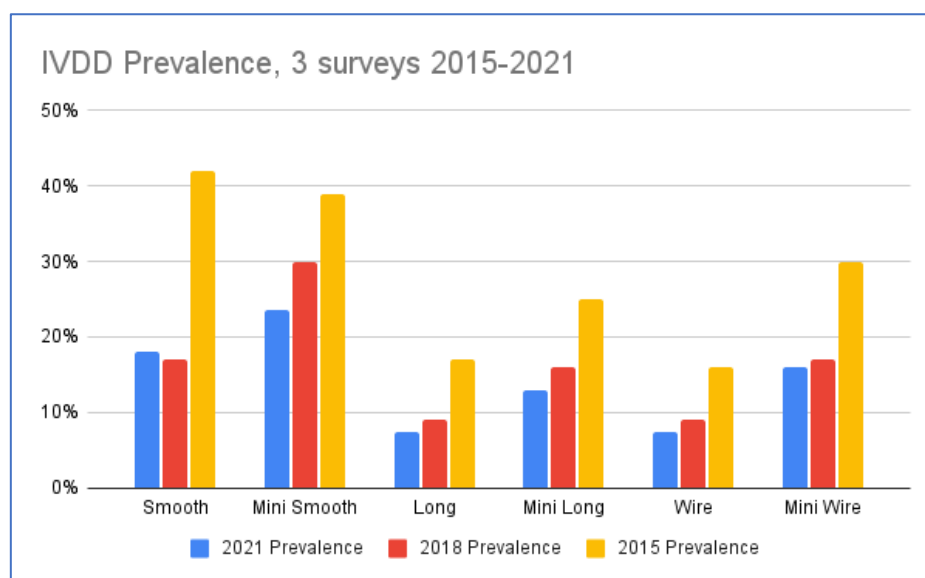
In our 2020 report, we summarised our priorities for the coming year:

- Reduce the risk of IVDD by promoting the use of screening and by educating owners about lifestyle risk factors
- Achieve 98% Lafora safe litters
- Promote use of KC/BVA/ISDS eye screening
- Increase buyer awareness of the breed to influence responsible buying decisions
- Implement the agreed actions in our BHCP
- Analyse and publish data/evidence to support breed improvement

Intervertebral Disc Disease (IVDD)

IVDD is the single most significant health issue affecting the breed, albeit to different degrees across the 6 UK varieties.

In 2015, our DachsLife Survey identified several lifestyle factors that are associated with an increased risk of IVDD. This has enabled us to focus our communication efforts for breeders, buyers and owners. At the end of 2016, we launched our IVDD Screening Programme, based on multiple research papers published over the past 30 years. In 2018 and 2021, our DachsLife Surveys collected further data about IVDD prevalence. The chart below summarises the trend we are seeing. It shows a statistically significant reduction in IVDD prevalence in all 6 varieties, for dogs aged 4 and over. N.B., we exclude dogs under 4 years because the typical age of onset is 4-7 years.

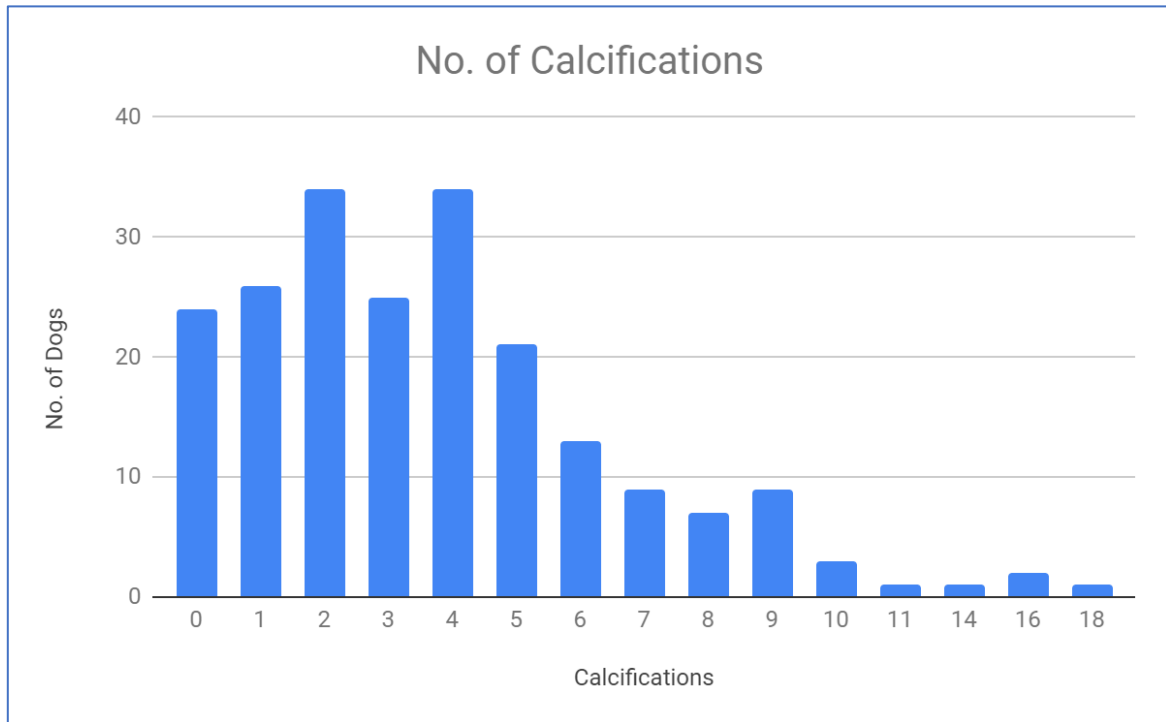


During 2021, the Kennel Club took over the running of our IVDD screening programme. It is now officially recognised by the KC and they manage a team of UK assessors who are all experienced veterinary surgeons and neurology experts. IVDD screening is now a Recommendation for members

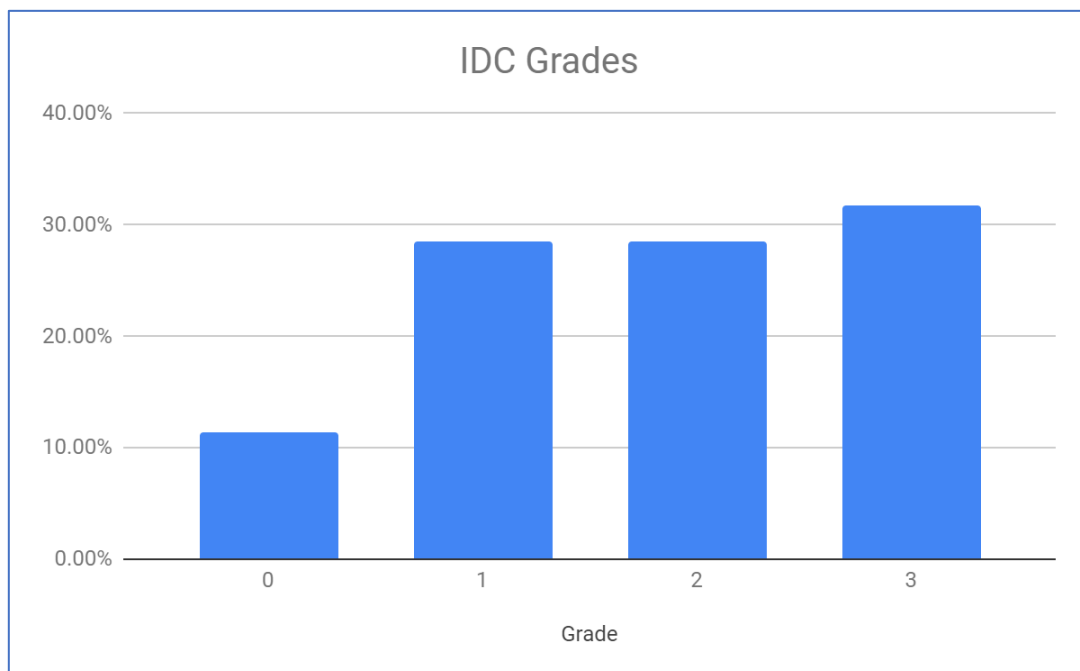
of the KC's Assured Breeder Scheme. We are grateful to Dr Anu Lappalainen who has continued to advise us and act as our screening consultant, in Finland.

Both the KC and Dachshund Health UK have been offering £100 subsidies to those participating in the screening programme during 2021. This reduces the cost to an owner to £110.

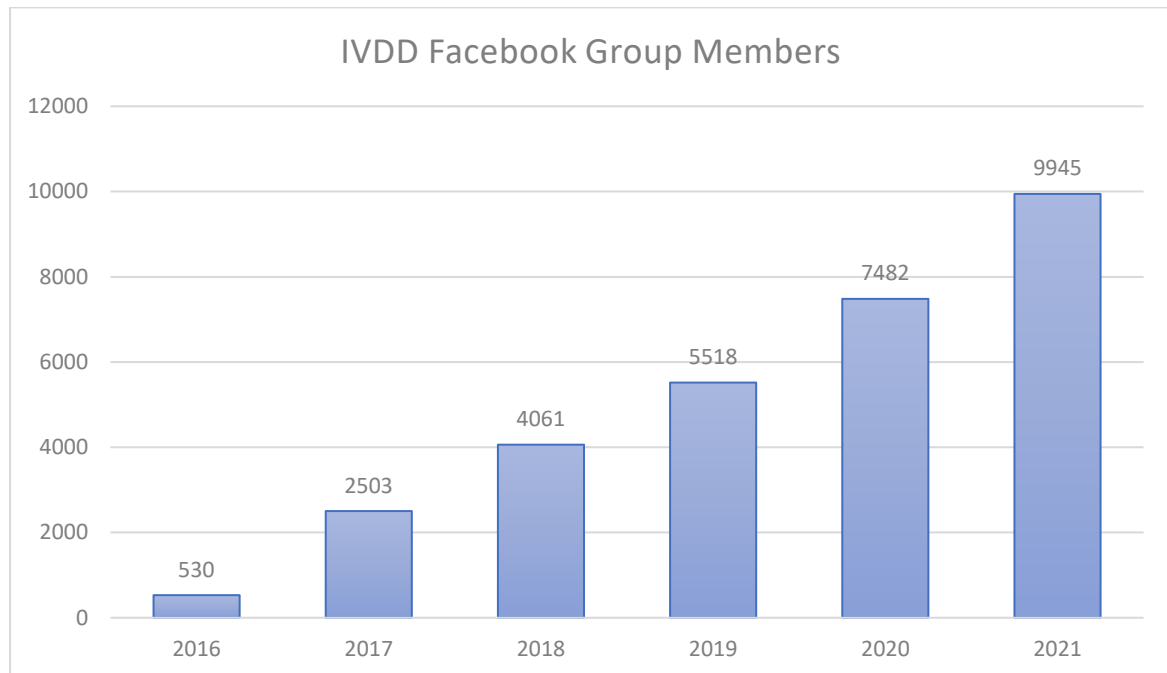
The chart below shows the numbers of calcifications reported in all the dogs screened so far.



68% of the screened dogs were graded 0, 1 or 2 (see chart below); i.e., low to moderate risk of IVDD.



Our IVDD support group on Facebook continues to provide advice to owners whose dogs are affected by IVDD, as well as providing information to owners on how to reduce risks. On average, there were 5-10 new cases reported to the group each week.



A survey by our Pet Advisors in July found 22% of dogs had 2 recurrences, 7% had died and 9% were permanently paralysed. The remainder had either recovered completely (30%) or partially (54%).

We support the work of “Dedicated to Dachshunds with IVDD”, a not-for-profit organisation that provides equipment for recovering and disabled dachshunds. Since 2016, D2D has purchased and loaned 543 strollers and supported over 1100 families. Find out more at:

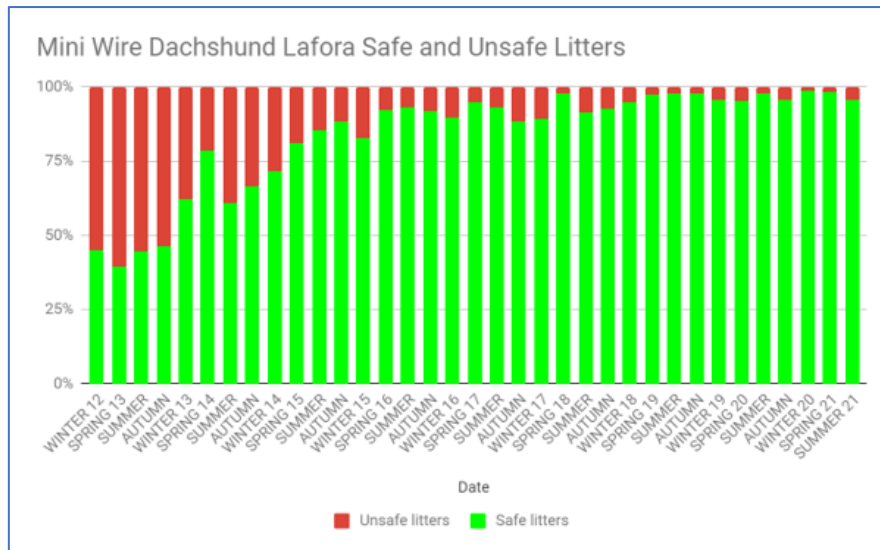
<https://dedicatedtodachshunds.co.uk/>

The most significant research that we are currently supporting is being carried out at Cambridge University Vet School. They are investigating the recovery of paralysed dachshunds (Grades 4 & 5) using conservative treatments. We have run 3 webinars with the Cambridge team, and you can find these here: <https://www.dachshund-ivdd.uk/research/cambridge-research/> The team has found high recovery rates at 12 weeks in dogs treated conservatively but have not yet published their findings and need more dogs to participate in the programme. These encouraging results offer great hope to owners of affected dogs who choose not to opt for surgery.

For information on IVDD, visit our website www.dachshund-ivdd.uk

Lafora Disease

A DNA test has been available for more than 10 years and screening is a Requirement for members of the KC’s Assured Breeder Scheme. We continued to see a high uptake of DNA testing and a low proportion (3% in 2021) of litters that potentially included “Affected” puppies.



Read more about Lafora disease here: <https://www.dachshundhealth.org.uk/lafora-disease>

Eye Disease

Clinical eye screening is a Recommendation for members of the KC's Assured Breeder Scheme breeding for Miniature Longhaired Dachshunds. Our advice is that it is good practice for all varieties to be eye screened prior to breeding.

All the Miniature varieties also require (under the ABS) DNA testing for cord1 PRA.

In the Mini Longs and, to a lesser extent, the Standard Longs, Distichiasis is a condition of concern. Prevalences in our 2018 survey were 2.5% and 1% respectively. In our 2013-14 clinical surveys, this was a condition of clinical concern in 13% of Mini Longs.

Due to Covid restrictions during 2020 and 2021, very few breeders were able to carry out clinical eye screening.

Read more about eye disease here: <https://www.dachshundhealth.org.uk/eye-disease>

Buyer and owner education

With few major events running in 2021, the main opportunities to engage with buyers and owners were via our social media channels and at Discover Dogs which was held in London in November. This event was organised by the Southern Dachshund Association, and we are grateful to all the volunteers who took their dogs over the 2 days. The breed booths were decorated with new posters and banners (designed by Pet Advisor Gill Key) and we were delighted to be awarded 2nd prize in the breed booth competition (photo below, courtesy The Kennel Club).



(c) Photo by The Kennel Club

An innovation this year was a QR Code poster that provides a direct link to our most frequently asked questions.



Our health website (www.dachshundhealth.org.uk) had 196,000 visitors in 2021, up from 85,500 in 2020 (29,000 in 2019 and 11,000 in 2018).

During 2021, we also published new infographics including advice on illegal imports, bitches in season and the results of our 2021 DachsLife survey.

BEWARE ILLEGAL DACHSHUND PUPPY IMPORTS



28% of illegal imports are Dachshunds

Dogs Trust found that, in 2020, Dachshunds were the most frequent breed imported illegally. They accounted for 28% of all dogs intercepted at UK ports.



Illegal imports have grown by 26%

Research from Direct Line Insurance shows illegal imports have grown by 26% over the past 3 years. The research also found that a third of adults would consider buying an imported pet.



78% of buyers had a problem importing

The most common problem was that the animal was seized under suspicion of being imported illegally and they had to pay for it to be quarantined and vaccinated.



16% of illegal imports became ill and had to be euthanised

One in six (16 per cent) reported the animal became ill and had to be put down. A further 15% reported the pet became ill once they had taken it home and had to be treated by a vet.



See Mum (preferably twice)!

Always see a puppy and its mum together at their home. Good breeders will always allow you to see the puppy and its littermates interacting with their mum. Ideally, you should see the puppy at its home at least once before you go to collect it. A Pet Passport or non-UK Vaccination Certificate should be a red flag warning.

For advice on buying a Dachshund safely in the UK, visit the Dachshund Breed Council's website

www.dachshundbreedcouncil.org.uk



HELP!



MY DACHSHUND BITCH IS IN SEASON

ADVICE FOR OWNERS

WHAT IS A BITCH'S SEASON?

Bitches have a 4-stage fertility cycle:

1. Pro-oestrus (swelling of the vulva and spotting of blood)
2. Oestrus (when she is fertile and ready to mate)
3. Dioestrus (when she is no longer fertile, whether pregnant or not)
4. Anoestrus (the resting stage that lasts 100 or so days before the cycle starts again)

Stages 1 & 2 are when your bitch is "in season".

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Urinating more often
- Vulva swelling
- Bleeding or spotting blood
- Increased cleaning & licking of her vulva
- More outgoing, needy
- Changing appetite – maybe more or less hungry
- Standing with her rear towards male dogs and moving her tail to one side, teasing
- Increased attention from male dogs

HOW OFTEN DO BITCHES COME INTO SEASON?

A first season usually starts around 9 months but can be earlier (6 months) or later (up to a year).
A first season can be hard to spot and is sometimes called a "silent season".
Bitches repeat their seasons every 6-9 months.

HOW LONG DOES A SEASON LAST?

Typically, a season lasts around 3 weeks. Count "Day 1" when the vulva starts swelling and bleeding starts. Pro-oestrus lasts around 9 days but can be shorter. Oestrus also lasts around 9 days and this is when a bitch will allow a dog to mate her. Ovulation occurs over a 5-day period and the bleeding discharge will usually be lighter, straw-coloured.

THINGS TO BE AWARE OF

- Garden exercise may be preferable to normal walking places
- Keep garden gates closed
- Walk on a lead – avoid running off
- Supervise when outdoors
- Keep separate from males in the same house
- Keep off furniture to avoid mess
- Increase routine floor cleaning and indoor hygiene
- Consider using deodorant e.g. Johnson's Bitch Spray

LEARN MORE AT WWW.DACHSHUNDHEALTH.ORG.UK/BREEDING

Dachshund Health UK is a registered charity (1177400)

Education - Research - Health

We are grateful to Christine Bessio who manages our Instagram account @dachshundhealthuk (from the USA). She has increased our followers from around 500 to over 1500.

DachsLife 2021

Our 2021 breed health survey achieved around 10,000 responses which is an amazing number (we had 2,500 in 2018). The focus of this survey was skin diseases and we have fully reported the results on our website: <https://www.dachshundhealth.org.uk/dachslife-2021>

We published several infographics summarising the results and the most important findings were:

- Blue dachshunds were 77 times more likely to be affected by colour dilution alopecia

- Dilute dachshunds were 4 times more likely to suffer from auto-immune conditions
- Neutered dachshunds were significantly more likely to suffer from skin conditions
- Neutered dachshunds had twice the risk of IVDD compared with entire dogs
- A continuing downward trend in IVDD prevalence (see above)

As a result of this survey, we submitted a report to the Kennel Club asking them to consider refusing registration of dilute coloured dachshunds on the grounds of increased health issues.

Ongoing health monitoring

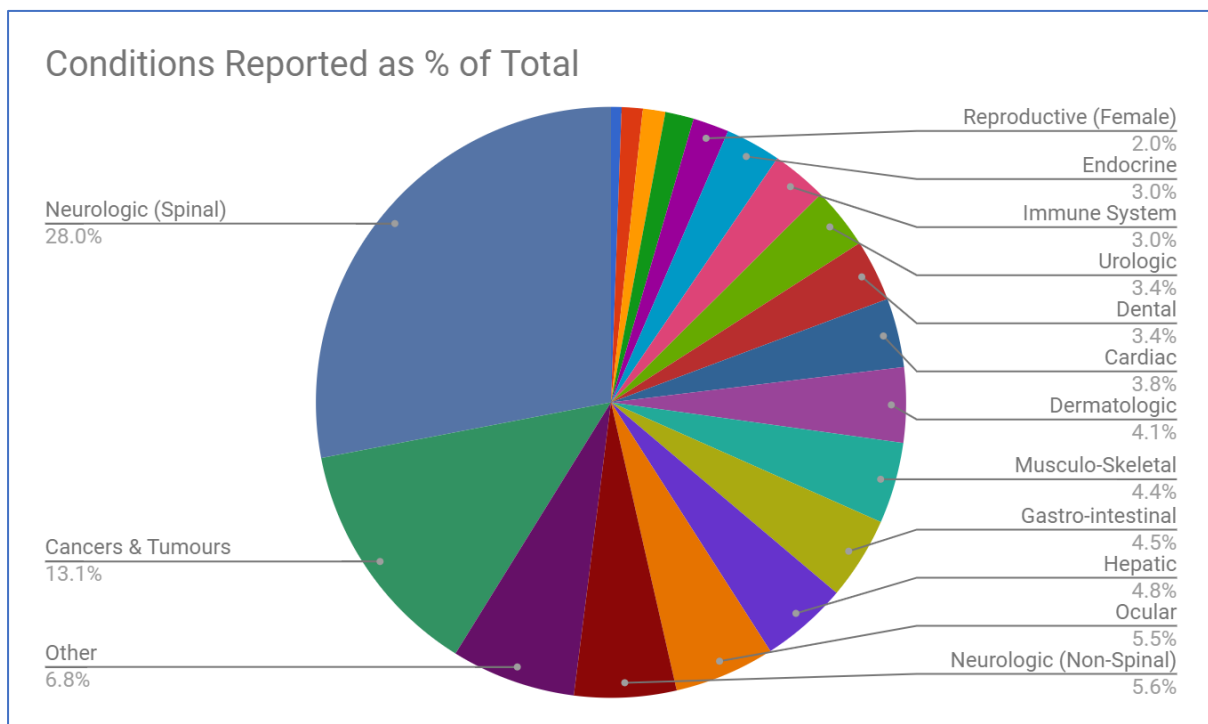
Owners can report health conditions and causes of death at our health reporting webpage

<https://www.dachshundhealth.org.uk/submit-a-report>

We received 66 reports during 2021, bringing the total to 1040 in 12 years. While this is a relatively low response rate, it does provide us with some useful data on a regular basis, particularly on mortality and longevity.

- Death reported as “Old Age” – Average = 15.3 (15.1 for Standards, 15.4 for Miniatures); Max. = 19
- Death from cardiac conditions – Average = 10.2
- Death from IVDD – Average = 5.7
- Death from Lafora Disease – Average = 9.4
- Death from Epilepsy – Average = 8.7
- Death from cancers and tumours – Average = 9.6

The proportions of each category of condition are shown below:



Our Watch List

In addition to our priority conditions, we have a Watch List of other conditions which may be of concern if their prevalence increases or further scientific evidence emerges about their relevance and severity in our breed. Currently, we are watching:

- Pes Varus (particularly, in the miniature varieties)
 - More information at <https://www.dachshundhealth.org.uk/pes-varus>
- Cardiac conditions (particularly Mitral Valve Disease)
 - Dachslife 2018: Smooth 6%, Long 8%, Wire 12%, MS 2%, ML 5%, MW 3%
- Lymphoma – early-onset in Mini Longs
 - 40% of all ML cancer cases reported and 4 times as many cancer cases than the other 5 varieties (ref. <https://www.dachshundhealth.org.uk/dachslife-2018>)
- Epilepsy – mid-age onset in Mini Longs
 - 4% prevalence in MLs 2012, 2015 and 2018 surveys (~3-4 times more common than in the other 5 varieties) – cases can be reported here:
https://docs.google.com/forms/viewform?hl=en_GB&id=1WC2-IEFwjXSgBP7p4G1UMM19RQkCboRrY3VEQE_g_8
- Sarcoglycan Deficient Muscular Dystrophy (SDMD), in the miniature varieties
 - This is currently being investigated in Australia and New Zealand using a DNA test and it is known that some UK Mini Smooths are Carriers of this genetic mutation

Fundraising

Dachshund Health UK is a registered charity that raises funds to support education, research and health improvement projects. We are grateful to the many people who have run fundraising events or have made donations from the sale of products (e.g. books and cards). Their donations have been acknowledged in the monthly Dachshund breed Council newsletters.

Details of how to raise funds or to make a donation can be found at:

<https://www.dachshundhealth.org.uk/health-fund>

DHUK's priority projects where grants were made during 2021 were:

- Cambridge University Vet School IVDD research
- UK IVDD screening programme subsidies to participants

Priorities for 2022

Our priorities for the coming year:

- Reduce the risk of IVDD by promoting the use of screening and by educating owners about lifestyle risk factors
- Increase buyer and breeder awareness of the breed to influence responsible buying/breeding decisions, particularly in relation to the dilute colours that have increased risks of health issues

Contact us

Our websites:

www.dachshundbreedcouncil.org.uk

www.dachshundhealth.org.uk

www.dachshund-ivdd.uk

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