

## Annual report for health 2025-

Before going into further details on our breed, I wanted to note the registrations within our group and in other groups as an observation. Registrations within our group have dropped by nearly 75% since 2021. Hound has dropped by 35%; Working has dropped by 50%; Terrier has dropped by nearly 40%; Gundog has dropped by nearly 50%; Pastoral has dropped by over 40%; and Toy has dropped by just over 50%. This drop is approximately 188000 fewer registrations across all breeds in the past 4 years. At £20/ puppy being registered, this is a reduction of £3,750,000 in income for the RKC. Something for us to keep in mind when considering health schemes and their potential viability/ feasibility within RKC.

UTILITY	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Akita	366	280	281	194	134	226	190	207	149	159
Boston Terrier	2,031	2,287	2,099	1,754	1,315	2,143	1,603	1,216	820	746
Bulldog	7,785	9,450	10,665	9,922	11,594	15,403	11,667	6,924	3,865	2,711
Canaan Dog	2	7	19	24	6	8	8	6	0	5
Chow Chow	599	563	684	804	1,048	1,867	1,747	1,578	1,135	831
Dalmatian	1,094	1,035	1,007	1,042	1,126	1,662	1,042	1,043	983	743
Eurasier	117	124	95	90	107	87	86	98	77	48
French Bulldog	21,470	30,887	36,785	33,661	39,266	54,074	42,538	26,704	13,789	7,750
German Spitz (Klein)	60	97	70	60	43	61	48	52	49	25
German Spitz (Mittel)	76	50	40	39	45	75	7	44	48	55
Japanese Akita Inu	84	88	79	87	84	90	135	105	43	67
Japanese Shiba Inu	314	326	346	330	434	497	606	550	449	395
Japanese Spitz	207	182	187	145	181	211	131	141	98	66
Keeshond	109	91	80	89	82	134	51	103	51	61
Kooikerhondje	48	60	57	65	20	16	24	13	13	13
Korean Jindo (Imp)	6	14	12	12	9	16	16	2	0	11
Lhasa Apso	2,231	1,926	1,588	1,304	1,220	1,314	885	605	669	525
Miniature Schnauzer	5,437	5,611	5,535	4,982	4,728	5,849	4,788	3,903	3,695	2,956
Poodle (Miniature)	1,060	1,158	1,222	1,168	1,383	1,935	1,757	1,573	1,335	1,233
Poodle (Standard)	886	1,004	1,097	954	1,001	1,443	1,201	950	663	700
Poodle (Toy)	1,356	1,300	1,369	1,394	1,664	2,154	2,106	2,152	2,013	1,880
Schipperke	47	29	33	29	21	23	12	19	14	17
Schnauzer	214	192	270	172	210	183	245	174	160	113
Shar-Pei	1,504	1,395	1,160	973	714	1,055	679	484	365	220
Shih Tzu	3,420	3,119	2,650	2,186	2,155	2,337	1,906	1,586	1,273	1,124
Tibetan Spaniel	169	169	154	170	146	180	151	85	110	104
Tibetan Terrier	1,378	1,125	1,262	1,105	1,004	1,146	1,011	740	702	593
Xoloitzcuintle (Mexican Hairless) (Intermediate) (Imp)	8	9	10	2	8	6	14	1	2	6
Xoloitzcuintle (Mexican Hairless) (Miniature) (Imp)	19	24	41	22	33	37	51	21	26	19
Xoloitzcuintle (Mexican Hairless) (Standard) (Imp)	19	7	19	22	6	22	30	35	35	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52,116</b>	<b>62,609</b>	<b>68,916</b>	<b>62,801</b>	<b>69,787</b>	<b>94,254</b>	<b>74,735</b>	<b>51,114</b>	<b>32,631</b>	<b>23188</b>

Yes, 2021 was a pandemic year, and puppy numbers spiked. When comparing to 2019 it is still a reduction of £1,500,000 in income for the RKC (£20/ registration). Is there a reduction in puppies being born, or just the registrations with RKC?

Breed Watch update-

As a breed, we have the following breed watch points-

- Signs of respiratory difficulty or distress (laboured or rapid breathing, excessive respiratory effort, respiratory noise)
- Excessively profuse coat
- Deep-set eyes
- Eyelids not in normal contact with the eyeball, they are turned inwards or outwards
- Incorrect hind conformation and/or poor rear movement

These are more generic terms that many breeds have; we can agree or disagree with their wording, but the KC has included them. On March 18th, I attended an online meeting regarding nose-to-tail (N2T) assessment by the RKC. This will be similar to our bronze health scheme in reality, organised by RKC and data retained, potentially published by RKC. This N2T assessment could be piloted later in the year and potentially released by the end of the year. At the start of March, I updated the BC website regarding Health Scheme numbers. If, as a breed, we can increase the number of dogs participating in the Bronze Health scheme, we can demonstrate a commitment to promoting health.

During 2025, the breed undertook a review of our breed standard, which included defining a basic shape for our breed and a muzzle ratio. Both of these areas are health priorities. For our dogs to move correctly, we need a good, strong loin, and a square dog should demonstrate this. A muzzle length of no shorter than  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the head avoids us being considered to be a brachycephalic breed. Other than coat it is hoped that our breed watch points for concern will be a thing of the past with clarification on our standard as to what is acceptable.

Moving forward, greater insight with chow owners through surveys would be desirable to capture more health-related information. This informal approach, along with the bronze health scheme being promoted by clubs, would be ideal from a health perspective. To date, the RKC has held several online meetings in which my focus has had to shift slightly. I trust that things will settle and we can proceed with one survey that can last for the year.

The breed health subcommittee is meeting twice a year to better shape our direction and purpose moving forward. In addition to this subcommittee, I ask that each club has a health rep. This health rep is not on the subcommittee but brings insight to the Breed Health Coordinator (BHC) and can pass on information to the clubs. We all have a duty to our breed to improve health knowledge, understanding and perception. A BHC working with a subcommittee and then breed club reps will improve this process.

Within our health sub committee meeting in March we discussed potential health screening at shows to make this more accessible for Chowists; sharing more information on the BC website regarding health test results (hips and elbows from none BVA testing); improving the BC website with a puppy pack and colours of puppies; and a survey for 2026 to gain more insight. We agreed that clubs could assist more to share information and to promote the bronze health certificate within their areas. If you would like to assist or know someone who can assist with puppy colours please do get in touch, we are looking at pictures of the same puppy, 2 days, 4 days, then each week 1-5 (7 pictures in total) to show colour changing and progression during their development.

## The Kennel Club Health Standard:

All breeds have 2 lists: Good Practice and Best Practice.

Good Practice (Hips, Elbows, Eyes [BVA testing only]). Chows no longer have any best practice requirements. I will again ask the RKC if we can have Bronze Health scheme as good practice and hips, elbows and eyes as best practice. We need to encourage people to start health screening, and I personally believe this will be a more approachable method. I did raise this during a RKC meeting recently.

For eye clinics, please follow-

<https://www.royalkennelclub.com/dog-breeding/before-breeding/find-a-health-testing-clinic/>, where you can find eye testing in your area.

## Kennel Club population analysis (RKC PA)-

This has been attached along with this report (the date in the RKC PA is until 2021), the RKC PA report was sent to me at the end of 2025. One thing of note is that our COI, as a breed, suggests good genetic diversity; lower-COI matings generally produced larger litter sizes. There is a suggestion that COI in pet litters has increased over time, possibly due to greater awareness of potential issues. Personally, I think the pet breeders just look at the geographically closest dog and don't consider a pedigree. The show homes tend to focus more on their pedigrees, resulting in a naturally higher COI. Pedigree understands matings and assists with genotype matings, which are an option to achieve desired puppies. Also of note is the lack of available data regarding the COI of imported dogs. They generally appear as 0.0% within the RKC system, when it may actually be higher.

## General health:

Digital certificates available for Bronze, Silver and Gold. There will be ongoing reviews of the the Breed Council Website and identified changes that should be undertaken in the near future. The Bronze health certificate would be great to include in more club and show information, potentially within puppy packs/ sent out to owners when the dogs are over 1 year of age. This will assist us in our own population analysis to work with the KC in a positive way and identify potential issues. The QR code for the bronze certificate is below. This can be emailed to all clubs with ease, and we can create similar QR codes for all health areas. This one downloads the Bronze form for the individual when scanned.



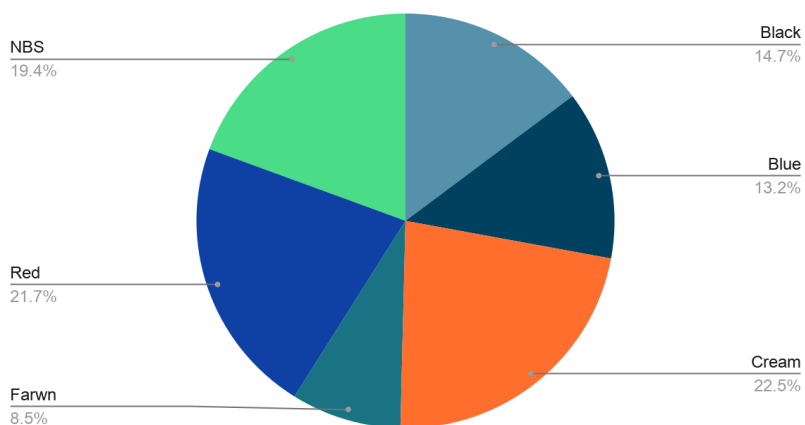
## Breed record supplements 2025

Spring- Litters- 62; Puppies- 258

	Black	Blue	Cream	Fawn	Red	NBS
Litters containing	23	19	20	15	23	15
Puppies	38	34	58	22	56	50

Hip scores 1= 3, 3 and 6; 2= 8, 6 and 14. Elbows 1= 3; 2= 0

Puppies born 1/4

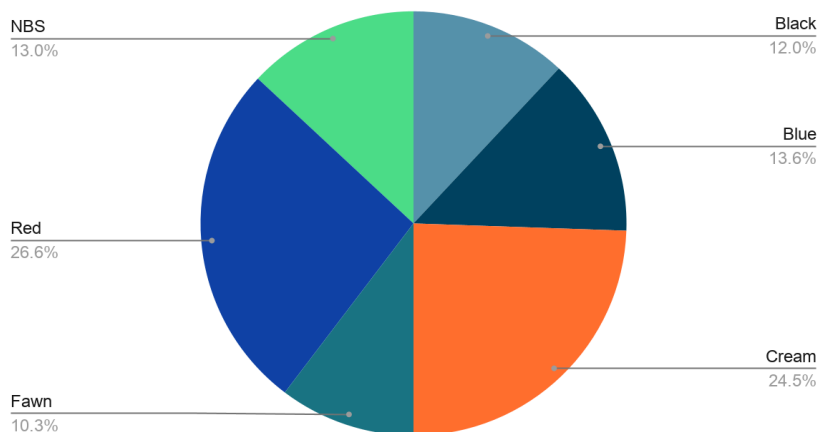


Summer- Litters 45; Puppies 184

	Black	Blue	Cream	Fawn	Red	NBS
Litters containing	13	15	20	12	22	12
Puppies	22	25	45	19	49	24

Hip scores 1= 3, 3 and 6; 2= 14, 7 and 21. Elbows 1= 3; 2= 0

Puppies Born 2/4

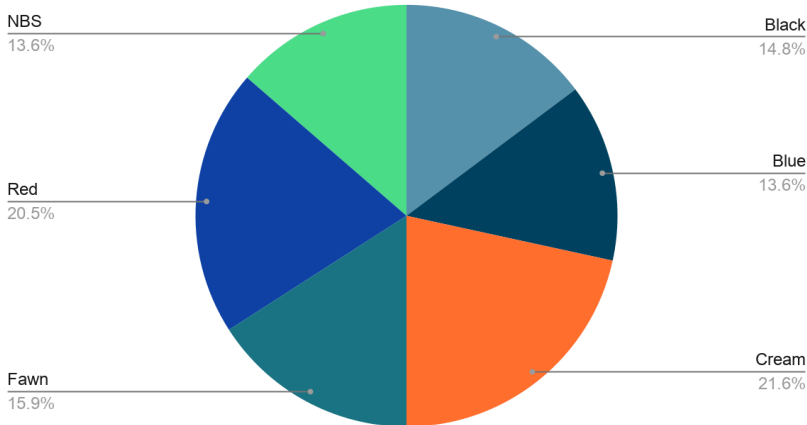


**Autumn- Litters 43; Puppies 176**

	Black	Blue	Cream	Fawn	Red	NBS
Litters containing	11	13	14	15	19	9
Puppies	26	24	38	28	36	24

Hip scores & Elbows None

Puppies Born 3/4

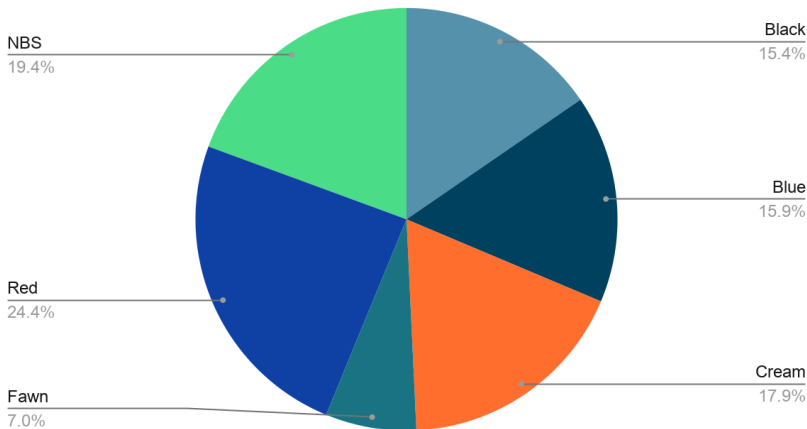


**Winter- Litters 46; Puppies 201**

	Black	Blue	Cream	Fawn	Red	NBS
Litters containing	18	16	17	11	22	12
Puppies	31	32	36	14	49	39

Hip scores 1: 7, 14 and 21. Elbows 1: 1

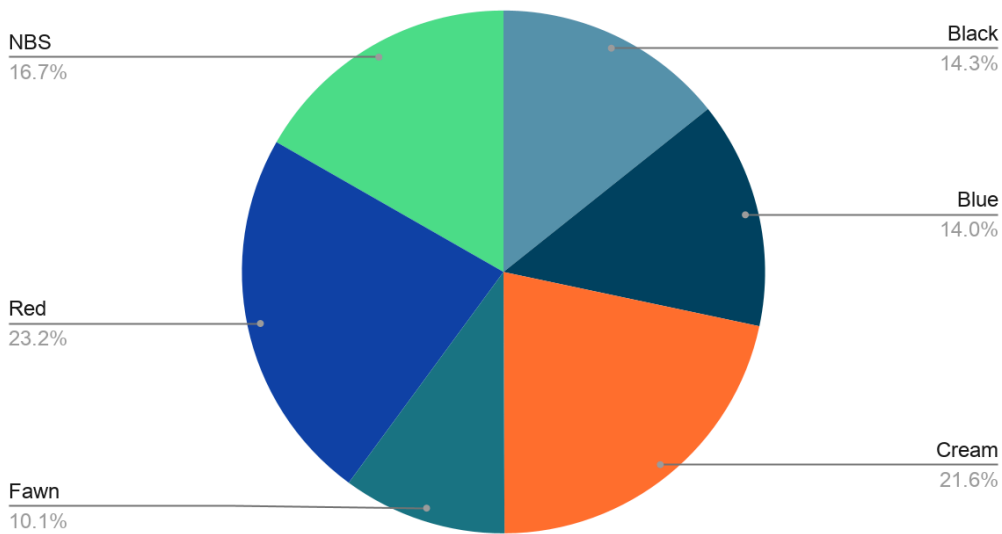
Puppies Born 4/4



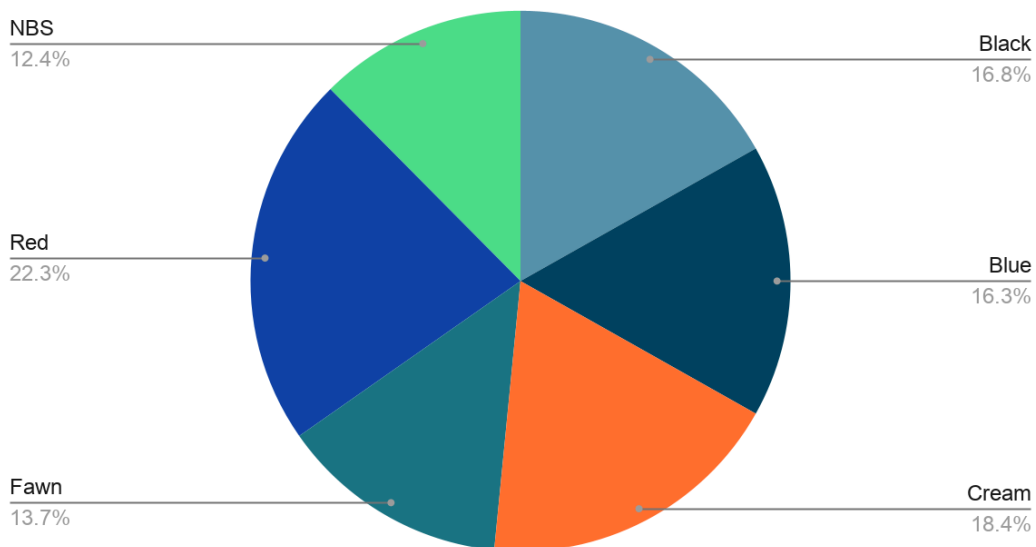
Year 2025- Litters 196; Puppies 819

	Black	Blue	Cream	Fawn	Red	NBS
Litters containing	65	63	71	53	86	48
Puppies	117	115	177	83	190	137

2025 Puppies born



2025 Litters containing



## Breed record supplements historic

### Year 2000- Puppies 461

	Black	Blue	Cream	Fawn	Red	Red Brindle
Puppies	114	12	23	11	291	10

### Year 2019- Puppies 750

	Black	Blue	Cream	Fawn	Red	NBS
Puppies	160	72	129	62	320	7

### Year 2020- Puppies 996

	Black	Blue	Cream	Fawn	Red	NBS
Puppies	214	120	168	117	369	8

### Year 2021- Puppies 1715

	Black	Blue	Cream	Fawn	Red	NBS
Puppies	361	196	272	248	636	2

### Year 2022- Puppies 1630

	Black	Blue	Cream	Fawn	Red	NBS
Puppies	393	248	288	205	412	84

### Year 2023- Puppies 1480

	Black	Blue	Cream	Fawn	Red	NBS
Puppies	275	238	291	162	361	153

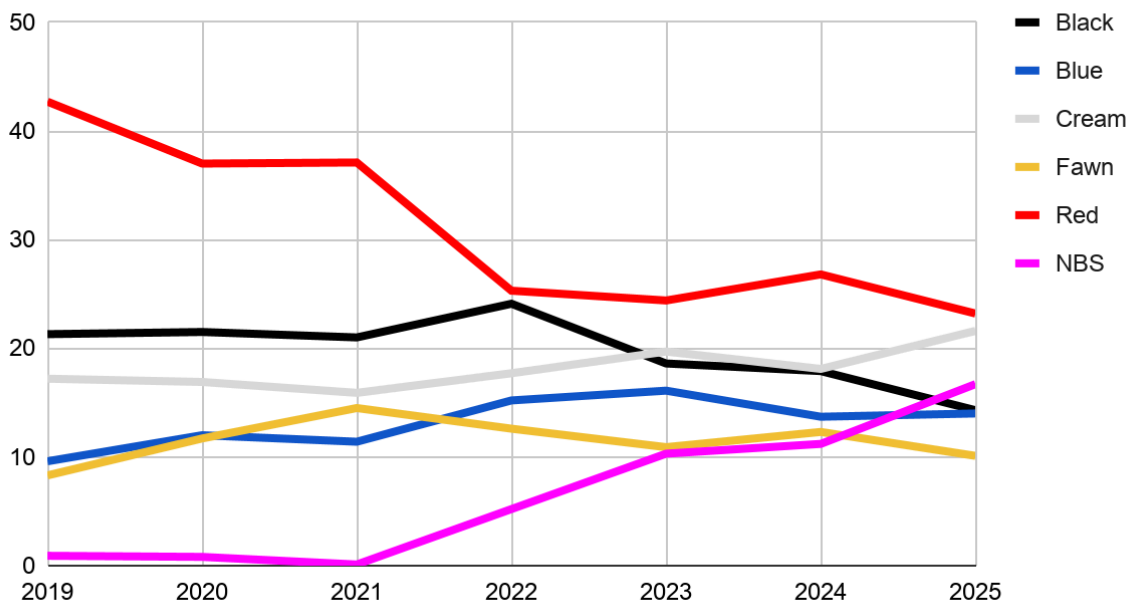
### Year 2024- Litters 254; Puppies 1120

	Black	Blue	Cream	Fawn	Red	NBS
Puppies	201	153	203	138	300	125

## Percentage of puppies born

Year	Black	Blue	Cream	Fawn	Red	NBS
2019	21.3	9.6	17.2	8.3	42.7	0.9
2020	21.5	12	16.9	11.7	37	0.8
2021	21	11.4	15.9	14.5	37.1	0.1
2022	24.1	15.2	17.7	12.6	25.3	5.2
2023	18.6	16.1	19.7	10.9	24.4	10.3
2024	17.9	13.7	18.1	12.3	26.8	11.2
2025	14.3	14	21.6	10.1	23.2	16.7

### % of puppies born



In my 2024 annual report, I started tracking this. In 2025, we can see that NBS registrations have now surpassed three of our recognised colours (Black, Blue and Fawn). Personally, this is concerning. Puppy registrations are declining overall, yet we have more NBS registrations. A total of 137 NBS puppies were registered. From 2021, we have gone from 2 NBS registrations to 137 NBS, I need time to go through pedigrees and to see how closely related these 137 puppies are. If individuals are breeding for certain colours alone, I do not think health is a main priority. I hope I am mistaken, but I am concerned regarding the potential health implications if these 137 are closely bred. The RKC PA goes until 2021, this is when NBS colour registrations started to increase. A further analysis of COIs etc should be undertaken to see how this trend has changed since 2021.

Of note, we had 5 BVA health-tested chows for 2025; some breeders are turning to Vet Scoring instead for its ease, pricing, and speed. I have asked Vet scoring if I can have access to basic data

For Crufts 2026 and Discover Dogs, I created the following poster. It may be a good advert for clubs to include in their schedules/catalogues to show our thoughts on health.

# Chow Chow Health

## It's our responsibility

Every dog owner is responsible for their dog's proper care. Our Breed Health Coordinator is in place to assist with this, advocating for the health and welfare of Chows across the UK. Please feel free to contact- [chowbreedhealth@gmail.com](mailto:chowbreedhealth@gmail.com)



Various Royal Kennel Club Breed features on Breed Watch, which is an early warning system to protect the health and welfare of dogs being exhibited.

Along with Breed Watch, our Breed Council has worked hard over the years to implement various health schemes and in creating a breeders list. We currently have three Health Scheme levels.

- Bronze- a basic health check for Chows
- Silver- this includes Bronze; the completion of a BVA eye test; Elbow and Hip scoring
- Gold has the same requirements as silver, but the eye test must be clear, Elbows need to be under 1:1; and Hips need to be under the average at the time of being scored.



We have various ways of gaining health information on our Chows, eye testing and x-rays are popular methods. The British Veterinary Association offers a service and some breeders now choose to go through vet scoring. Please discuss health when choosing a puppy. While your puppy's parents' scores and tests are not a guarantee of future health, they can be a step in the correct direction. Remember, Nature and Nurture are pivotal in raising your best Chow Chow.

BVA Eye Testing



BVA Elbows and Hips



Vet Scoring

