

BVA position on brachycephalic dogs

Executive summary

1. BVA is concerned that the rapid rise in the number of brachycephalic dogs in the UK is leading to a population-based increase of ill health and compromised welfare in these breed types.
2. Society as a whole, including the veterinary professions, dog owners, breeders, registering bodies, breed clubs, academics, animal charities and those with a commercial interest in the use of dogs and their images, have a social and moral responsibility to work together towards:
 - ensuring healthier future generations of dogs with brachycephalic conformation
 - reducing the negative health and welfare impacts of brachycephaly on the current generation of brachycephalic dogs
 - increasing awareness of the health and welfare issues associated with brachycephaly amongst current and prospective owners
 - encouraging research in order to better understand and address the prevalence of, and trends in, conformation-related ill-health in brachycephalic dogs
 - encouraging research in order to better understand and address the prevalence of the welfare impacts resulting from brachycephaly
 - the development of objective, robust measures to contribute to the assessment of problematic conformation.
3. In order to achieve this, BVA is advocating a three-strand approach whereby all stakeholders play a role in:
 - driving healthier standards among brachycephalic dogs
 - avoiding imagery of brachycephalic dogs in advertising, marketing materials and social media campaigns to reduce demand and prevent the normalisation of their associated health issues
 - supporting and harnessing the influence of the veterinary professions.
4. The BVA policy position sets out key actions for stakeholders across dog health and welfare, including the veterinary professions, registering bodies, breeders, the show sector, academia, marketers and advertisers.
5. BVA recognises the need for professional veterinary associations to support their respective memberships to take action by:
 - developing resources and guidance
 - producing targeted communications and consistent messaging
 - providing CPD and engaging with key stakeholders to promote collaborative working across the sector.
6. BVA has developed a 10-point plan for veterinary practices to support vets to further improve the health and welfare of brachycephalic dogs and promote responsible ownership.