# Bernie the AI dog reveals shifting UK preferences towards healthier breeds



Floppy ears, a curly tail, and thick, brown fur—introducing Bernie, an AI-generated dog that encapsulates the ideal traits potentially desired by dog-lovers across the UK. Created by researchers at Burns Pet Nutrition, Bernie is no ordinary canine; he represents an amalgamation of features that Brits find most appealing, as determined through a survey conducted with 2,000 dog owners. This innovative approach not only highlights current preferences but also reveals shifts in attitudes towards dog breeds that have long been beloved, yet often come with health concerns.

The study's results suggest that the charm of traditional breeds like Pugs, French Bulldogs, and Dachshunds may be waning. These so-called designer dogs, once at the forefront of canine popularity, are increasingly scrutinised for their health implications, as they are prone to various congenital issues ranging from breathing difficulties to skin irritation. A substantial 36% of respondents indicated a preference for the longer-nosed features of breeds such as Border Collies, indicating a growing awareness of how a dog's facial structure can impact its overall well-being.

Interestingly, Bernie's biggest brown eyes, echoing the characteristics of Spaniels, captured the affection of half of the surveyed participants. Notably, studies have shown that darker eyes can contribute to perceived approachability, thus making dogs more likable companions. This burgeoning awareness may link back to broader public concerns regarding animal health and welfare, as highlighted in a recent study by the Royal Veterinary College, where the ongoing popularity of breeds like the French Bulldog was correlated with rising health issues related to their physical forms.

When it comes to coat preferences, Bernie's thick fur mirrors that of a Siberian Husky, a feature admired by 35% of respondents. This reflects an understanding that a dog’s diet plays a crucial role in its appearance, with a well-balanced intake leading to a shiny, healthy coat. High-quality nutrition is essential, as dogs, much like humans, thrive on essential fatty acids, vitamins, and proteins, which significantly influence both their health and aesthetics.

Bernie's design also reflects a desire for medium-sized dogs, which 43% of British respondents preferred. This sentiment aligns with characteristics typical of popular breeds today, including Labrador Retrievers and Cocker Spaniels. Additionally, a generational divide emerged from the survey: younger dog owners from Gen Z and Millennials showed a preference for medium-sized Labradors with blue eyes, while older respondents leaned towards Airedales with brown eyes and shorter coats.

The implications of these findings resonate with the insights from Dogs Trust's National Dog Survey 2024, which revealed that 99% of respondents regard their dogs as family. This deep emotional connection underscores the importance of choosing a breed that not only brings joy but prioritises health and well-being alongside aesthetics. Amidst shifting trends, Laura Crotch Harvey, Nutrition Manager at Burns Pet Nutrition, remarked, "Dogs have changed so much over the past few centuries, and this gives an insight into how they continue to change."

As the UK dog landscape continues to evolve, it is evident that consumer preferences are gravitating towards dogs that exemplify both beauty and health. This shift towards favouring breeds with fewer health issues highlights a hope that future generations of dogs might enjoy longer, healthier lives, remaining not just companions but entrusted family members.

### Reference Map

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Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-14722817/mans-greatest-friend-AI-Britains-perfect-designer-dog.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.rvc.ac.uk/vetcompass/news/who-s-top-dog-french-bulldogs-and-cockapoos-claim-top-spot-for-the-uk-s-most-popular-puppies> - A study by the Royal Veterinary College reveals that French Bulldogs and Cockapoos have overtaken Labrador Retrievers and Jack Russell Terriers as the UK's favourite puppies. The research highlights a shift in public demand towards breeds with more exaggerated body shapes, raising concerns about the health implications of such preferences. The study emphasizes the need for responsible breeding practices to ensure the well-being of dogs in the UK.
3. <https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/national-dog-survey-2024> - Dogs Trust's National Dog Survey 2024 reveals that 99% of respondents view dogs as family, with 98% agreeing that their dog makes them happy. The survey, the largest of its kind, shows that over 40% of the UK's dogs are crossbreeds. Specific breeds like the Labrador Retriever, Cocker Spaniel, and Border Collie remain popular, while French Bulldogs have entered the top ten for the first time since the survey's inception in 2021.
4. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/915079/top-hound-dog-breeds-by-registered-number-united-kingdom-uk/> - In 2023, the Miniature Smooth Haired Dachshund led the hound dog breeds in the UK with 14,459 new registrations, followed by Whippets with 3,704 registrations. This data provides insights into the popularity of specific hound breeds in the UK during that year.
5. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/915190/top-toy-dog-breeds-by-registered-number-united-kingdom-uk/> - In 2023, the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel topped the toy dog breeds in the UK with 3,528 new registrations, followed by Pugs with 2,221 registrations. This information highlights the popularity of specific toy dog breeds in the UK during that period.
6. <https://www.countryfile.com/animals/pets/popular-dog-breeds> - As of December 2023, the Labrador Retriever was the most registered dog breed in the UK, followed by the French Bulldog and Cocker Spaniel. The data provides insights into the popularity of various dog breeds in the UK during that year.
7. <https://www.horseandhound.co.uk/dogs/most-popular-dog-breeds-uk-853187> - In 2023, the Bulldog was among the top ten most popular dog breeds in the UK, with 6,924 registrations. The article discusses the Bulldog's enduring popularity and its status as an iconic British breed.