



ALC Judge's Panel Report – including an update from the Judges Sub Group New Guide for Agility Judges and Stewards including a guide to agility equipment

The Agility Liaison Council has worked on this revised guide to replace both the Guide for Agility Judges & Stewards and the Judges Guide to Agility Equipment. We wanted to bring these guides together as there was a lot of overlap and concerns where often expressed that agility judges and competitors wanted a single place to find all the relevant guidelines. That is the primary aim of this revised document.

Having a single document will avoid overlap and makes it easier for this document to be updated annually. The Guide for Agility Judges and Stewards was so out of date that it was rarely referred to as much of it seemed irrelevant to current agility practice. The equipment guide must be reviewed each year in December to ensure that it takes into account any changes during the previous year and any new rules relating to agility coming in the following January.

This guide, along with the current H regulations, will provide a comprehensive guide for judges, show manager and stewards and a useful reference for competitors

A first full draft of this document has been considered by the Judges Sub Group and is being consulted on with a view to it being ready for release in January 2022. It is suggested that this is made available simply as a pdf on The Kennel Club Website as it will be regularly updated. It will then be reviewed every October – November.

Qualifications and skill of agility judges

A discussion paper on this was presented at the last Agility Liaison Council and it is hoped that this can be developed over the next year into a workable proposal.

One issue that needs addressing urgently is how to resolve the current problem with the mentoring scheme. A cornerstone of a proposed development plan would be to make the existing mentoring scheme compulsory however until we can improve how the scheme works this cannot be done.

There are clearly administrative issues with people requesting mentors not getting any follow up and some mentors not being contacted. There are also people who are no longer judging Championship classes and therefore not able to act as mentors. We need a system of keeping an up to date list of those judges who are eligible to be mentors and ensuring they are contacted with requested for mentoring. The current listed championship judges on The Kennel Clubs Find A Judge does include judges who are no longer taking Championship judging appointments.

If we can ensure the system is being administered correctly then we can start to gather some data on how many new judges are requesting mentors and how many are being allocated one and how many if these mentors are providing feedback to The Kennel Club.

At this point we can then consider if there really is a lack of sufficient people available to carrying out mentoring in its current format and if we need to allow other people (with suitable training) to act as mentors or consider allowing those people providing mentoring to also run in the classes they are mentoring.

Our proposed action is for the Judges Panel to liaise with Kennel Club regarding administration and ensure that the scheme runs smoothly in 2022 and data are collected to feed into the judges panel's review.

Recruitment and retainment of Judges

There are concerns that a significant number of existing judges are retiring at the moment. There are many factors that affect this but the change in people's lifestyle during COVID is clearly one factor as well as a



(perceived?) increase in the pressure and demands placed on judges by competitors, both at shows and on social media.

The requirement for all judges to have taken the online judges exam within the last 5 years come into play on 1st January 2022. This is being seen as a cut-off point with many judges who are contemplating giving up choosing not to take the online test.

To enable us to monitor this situation the Judge panel would like to conduct a review of all existing judges to see when they last took the online judges exam and if they are still accepting appointments.

Judges Sub Group Report Online Judges exam

The new regulation coming in on 1st January 2022 means that there will be lots of people looking to take the online exam. There are a number of rules that are already out of date and a number of new rules coming in on 1st January. Member of the judges Sub Group are carrying out a full review of the judges questions.

It is essential that these are updated in the online exam immediately – otherwise the new rule cannot be effectively implemented.

Judges Trainers

The current Judges Trainers are all over due for re -accreditation. This will be organised in the new year although The Kennel Club were unable to commit to any timescale for this. There are several applications to be Judges Trainers that have not been assessed over the last couple of years and there is also a need to advertise for new Judges Trainers at the same time.

Guidance has been issued for Judges Trainers that looks at their role in mentoring and doing assessments but also more generally what role they should have at any show they happen to be attending.

Sara Hawkswell (on behalf of the Judges Panel)