

Obedience Community Survey November 2025

Whilst not yet in post, the new OLC issued a survey to the obedience community for 3 reasons:

- To assess the responsiveness of the obedience community to this type of engagement
- To gather baseline data on the composition of the obedience community
- To seek the views of the obedience community on the future priorities for the Obedience Liaison Council to inform the strategic plan

The survey link was shared via several Facebook groups on 2nd November. This summary was completed on 23rd November having received almost 650 responses. This indicates that the obedience community is responsive to this type of engagement.

Competitive Obedience Community

We have gathered hard data from the obedience community with results showing:

- Almost 91% of respondents are female
- Almost 81% of the community is over 50 with 60% over 60

We had engagement from a good spread of competitors from almost 21% in their first 4 years of competing to 27% who had been competing for over 30 years. Over 70% of new competitors are aged 40 – 69.

For most competitors (72%) the enjoyment of competitive obedience is in training and developing a bond with their dog, seeing their dog progress, and being with friends and like-minded people. Only 3% said it was about winning and getting placed. This suggests that Competitive Obedience is a sociable sport for many and the training is as important as the competing.

OLC Priorities

Respondents were asked to select the top three issues that the new OLC should focus on, the three issues selected most are:

- Encourage new competitors to the sport (72%)
- Build a good rapport with the whole obedience community and encourage feedback (50%)
- Encourage more local/smaller clubs to run one day shows (49%)

There were two questions about judging which, when combined, were selected out of the maximum of three options by 57% of respondents which should not be ignored.

- Encourage new judges and support judges to Championship level (42%)
- Review Judges' training (15%)

2% of respondents used 'Other' option to type their additional issues. This list is included in Appendix 1 on page 5.

OLC No 1 Priority

Respondents were asked to select from the three they had chosen in the previous question the option that they thought should be the new OLC's priority.

The top priorities are:

- Encourage new competitors to the sport (25%)
- Build a good rapport with the whole obedience community and encourage feedback (23%)
- Encourage more local/smaller clubs to run one day shows (14%)
- Encourage new judges and support judges to Championship level (11%) which when combined with 'Review Judges' training' totals 19%

Summary

There has been a fantastic response to this survey with almost 650 responses, indicating that the obedience community is willing to engage through this format and appreciates the opportunity to share their views on the sport as a whole, rather than just on specific proposals.

We have some good base data on the community and whilst the demographic data is probably not surprising, it is valuable to know how important the training and sociable aspects of the sport are, which will be helpful when attracting new members.

The obedience community has given the new OLC very clear guidance on what they believe the top priorities are for the OLC and competitive obedience, namely:

- Encourage new competitors to the sport
- Build a good rapport with the whole obedience community and encourage feedback
- Encourage more local/smaller clubs to run one day shows
- Encourage new judges and support judges to Championship level and review judges' training

The priority that was possibly not expected is 'Encouraging more local/smaller clubs to run one-day shows'. For lots of good reasons, the format of competitive obedience has gradually changed to bigger two-day (or more) weekend shows, but the community clearly feels that this has reduced the availability of local shows and could well be a factor in attracting new people to the sport.

The new OLC is grateful to the obedience community for taking the time to complete the survey and will use the priorities indicated to develop the strategic framework for the work of the OLC.

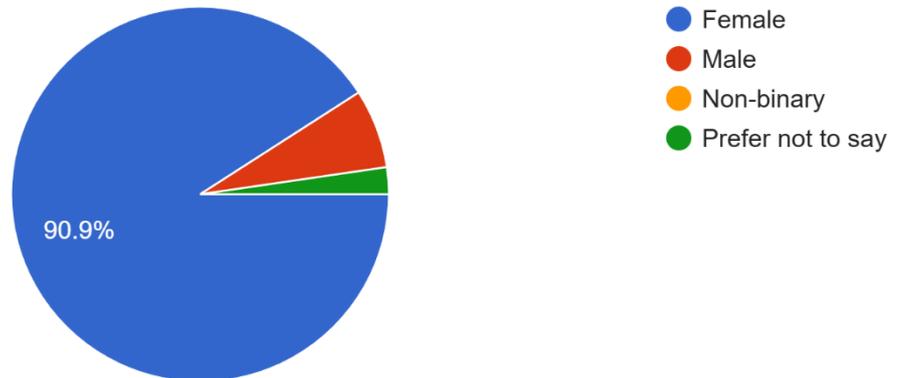
Clare Williams

23rd November 2025

Survey Results: The Competitive Obedience Community Overview

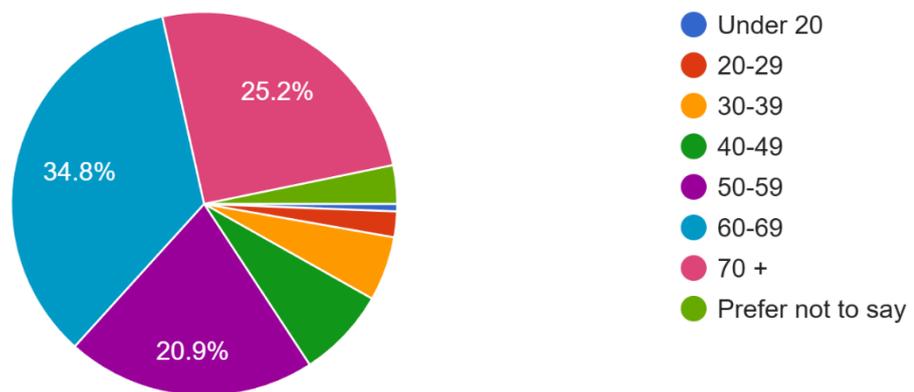
What is your gender?

646 responses



Which age group are you in?

646 responses

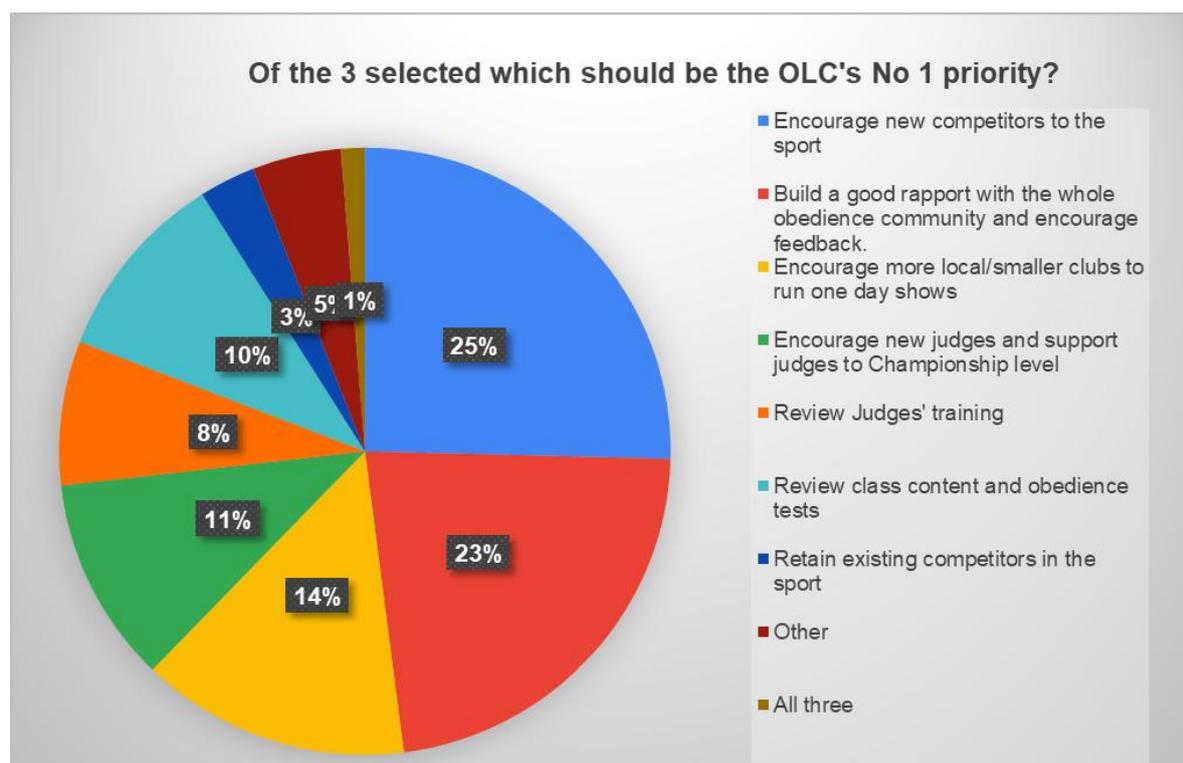
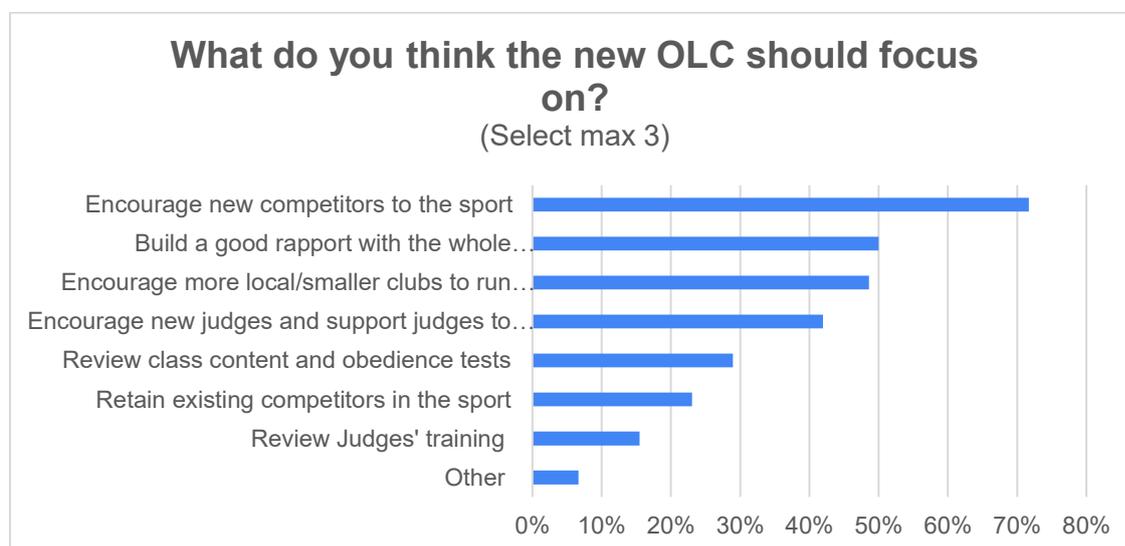


How long have you been competing in Obedience?

646 responses



Survey Results: Views on Competitive Obedience Today



Appendix 1

Other suggestions for OLC priorities

Please bear in mind that these are views from members of the obedience community and everyone is allowed to have their say.

Make Obedience More Accessible

- Encourage existing or new clubs to offer competitive obedience training classes
- Support KC registered clubs
- Provide help for newcomers to the sport, especially at the shows
- Put more interesting exercises in the lower classes
- Reach out to pet dog owners to consider obedience
- Allow the use of food rewards in training rounds in the ring
- Encourage an atmosphere of trying new ideas/possibilities

Suggested Judging Improvements

- Clearer marking and fairer results. Find ways to make judging less subjective
- Emphasise gaining marks rather than losing marks
- Make it a more positive experience at the lower levels. Some negative comments are demotivating
- Remove judges' favouritism
- Have a cut off time for people to come to work in the ring

Support Different Breeds

- Small dog classes
- Help improve judging for different breeds and small dogs

Easier Qualification for Ticket

- Find ways to increase the number of people in Ticket (e.g. restrict places in open C to those without CCs or allow progression on points)

Running Shows

- Provide more support to enable people to help at shows (stewarding etc)
- Recognise that we are losing shows as the committees that run them get older
- Use technology such as in agility so you can see when it's your turn.