

UK Competitive Obedience

Review of Show Entries and Judging 2025

Basis of the Review

The data for this study comes from schedules and running orders for UK Competitive Obedience Shows between 29 March and 19 October 2025. This covered 152 separate shows* of which entry numbers for 141 were available.

Names of Judges were obtained from schedules in the first instance and then running orders if these were different. Last minute changes of Judge (for example in the case of sudden illness) could not be recorded.

Entries were taken from running orders. For the 11 shows where full class entries were not available their entries were set at the average of the entries across other shows in their Region. This allowed the inclusion of the Judges in the analysis whilst minimising any skewing of entry numbers.

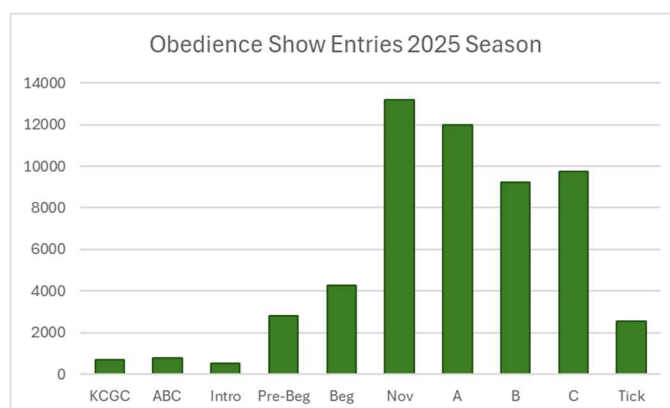
KC Good Citizen Special Pre beginners and ABC classes were counted but Fun classes excluded from the analysis.

The review looked at number of entries, geographical spread of entries, number of Judges and Judging of C and Championship C.

Entries at Main Season UK Obedience Shows 2025

In the 152 shows analysed there was a total of nearly 1600 classes, with just under 56,000 entries. If cost of entry was £7 per class that would be Revenue of around £400k.

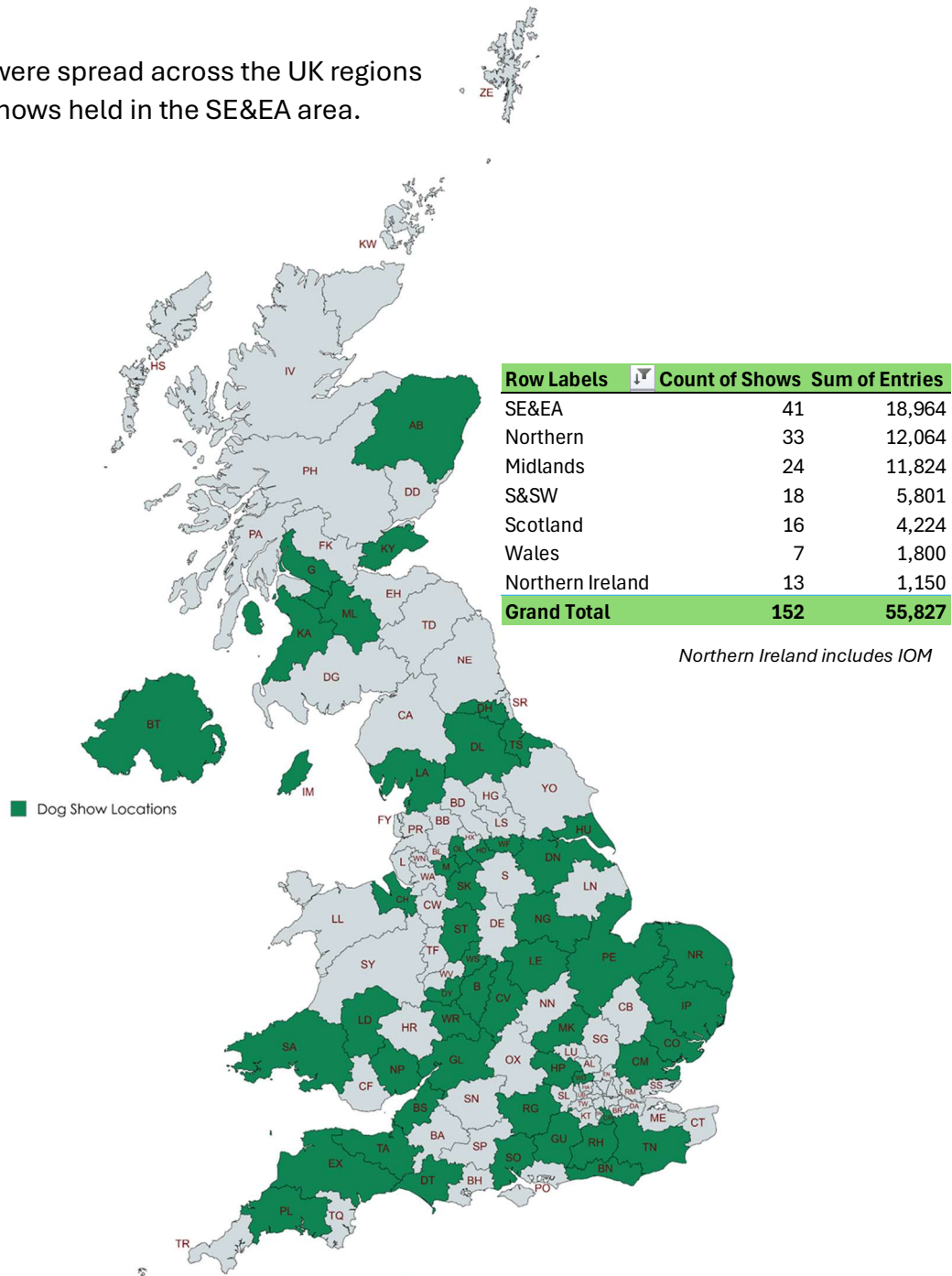
Row Labels	Count of Class	Sum of Entries
KCGC	29	692
Intro	28	507
Pre-Beg	141	2,823
Beg	148	4,285
Nov	323	13,235
A	305	11,999
B	244	9,245
C	251	9,752
Tick	90	2,528
ABC	23	761
Grand Total	1582	55,827



Most entries were in Novice with Class A coming in a close second.

**A show was counted at separate if it was held on different days, even if this was on consecutive days and by the same society.*

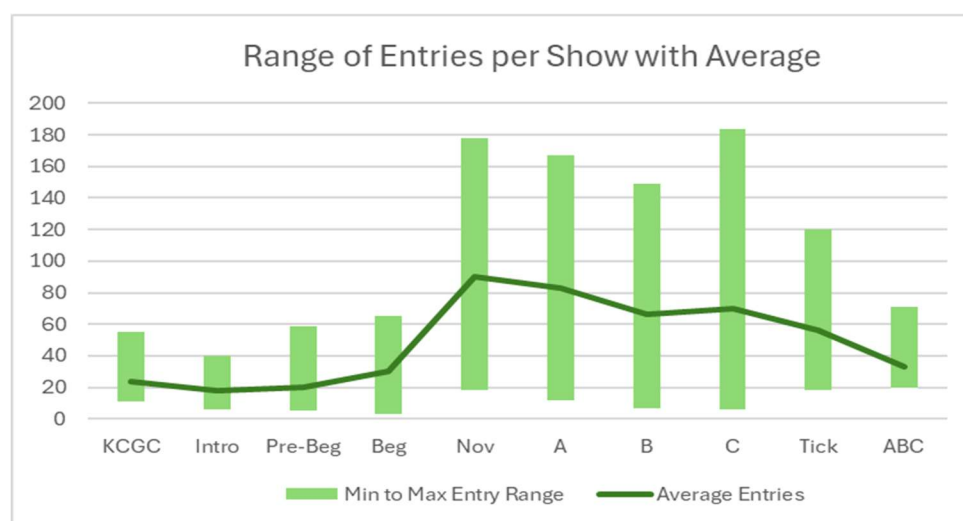
The shows were spread across the UK regions with most shows held in the SE&EA area.



Average of Entries	Column Labels							
Row Labels	Midlands	Northern	Northern Ireland	S&SW	Scotland	SE&EA	Wales	Grand Total
KCGC	34	24	11	14	15	25		24
Intro	17	18		12	12	21		18
Pre-Beg	25	17	9	18	25	23	12	20
Beg	32	26	11	29	33	35	14	29
Nov	44	43	20	42	40	41	47	41
A	43	44	14	39	43	39	34	39
B	44	36	9	43	31	41	33	38
C	43	41	12	37	41	39	37	39
Tick	38	30	9	26	19	26	21	28
ABC	40	35	20	48	31	37		33
Grand Total	40	36	13	36	33	37	31	35

There was quite a range of entries in each class between different shows, with some classes at some shows with an entry of 150+ whilst other shows were much lower, with there being a large geographical influence. The top ten entries in each class were:

Show	KCGC	Show	Intro	Show	Pre-Beg	Show	Beg
13-09-25 Lichfield	44	18-04-25 Diss & Harleston	34	13-07-25 Winchester	54	13-07-25 Winchester	62
05-08-25 Solihull	39	19-04-25 Diss & Harleston	29	19-10-25 Sheffield	42	07-06-25 Basingstoke	56
10-08-25 Danesford	35	19-10-25 Sheffield	27	05-10-25 Elm Park	39	13-04-25 Sheffield	55
19-04-25 Diss & Harleston	33	13-04-25 Sheffield	25	10-08-25 Danesford	37	13-09-25 Micheldever	52
17-05-25 Warlingham	33	21-04-25 Diss & Harleston	24	17-05-25 Loughborough	36	04-05-25 Chesvale	51
17-05-25 Loughborough	32	19-07-25 Culverstone	23	06-09-25 Kilmarnock	36	20-07-25 Culverstone	50
13-07-25 Winchester	32	20-04-25 Diss & Harleston	23	07-06-25 Nuneaton	36	15-06-25 Sherborne	49
03-08-25 Hatchford Brook	29	14-06-25 Caterham	23	14-06-25 Caterham	35	14-09-25 Micheldever	49
14-06-25 Caterham	29	26-04-25 BAGSD Oxhey	23	13-09-25 Lichfield	34	03-08-25 Lune Valley	49
04-05-25 Chesvale	28	17-05-25 Warlingham	21	07-06-25 Basingstoke	34	07-09-25 East Kilbride	49



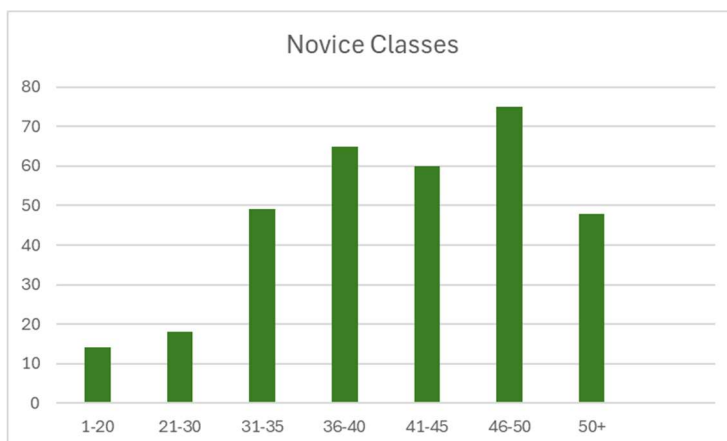
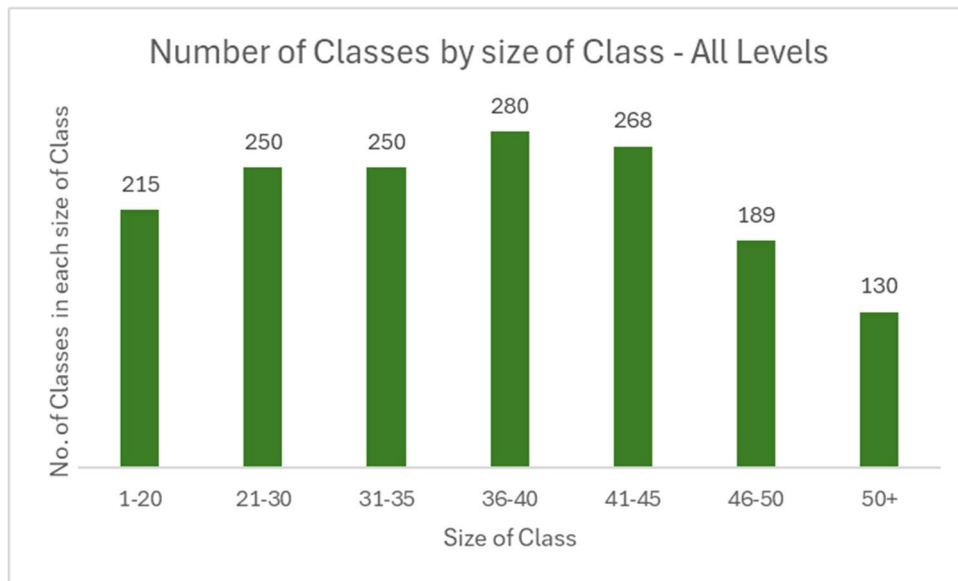
Show	Nov	Show	A	Show	B	Show	C
20-04-25 Diss & Harleston	160	19-07-25 Culverstone	155	20-09-25 Birm & Dist	142	20-09-25 Birm & Dist	178
26-04-25 BAGSD Oxhey	159	26-04-25 BAGSD Oxhey	154	21-09-25 Birm & Dist	139	21-09-25 Birm & Dist	172
19-07-25 Culverstone	157	22-08-25 Cheltenham	151	07-09-25 Great Baddow	125	27-09-25 BAGSD	156
23-08-25 Cheltenham	155	05-10-25 Elm Park	146	19-07-25 Culverstone	124	26-04-25 BAGSD Oxhey	152
13-04-25 Sheffield	154	17-05-25 Loughborough	145	22-08-25 Cheltenham	123	18-05-25 Loughborough	133
19-04-25 Diss & Harleston	153	20-04-25 Diss & Harleston	143	06-09-25 Witham	123	13-09-25 Lichfield	124
05-10-25 Elm Park	150	20-07-25 Culverstone	141	23-08-25 Cheltenham	121	17-05-25 Loughborough	124
17-05-25 Loughborough	150	04-10-25 Elm Park	141	18-05-25 Loughborough	120	02-08-25 Hatchford Brook	122
20-07-25 Culverstone	147	14-09-25 Micheldever	140	27-09-25 BAGSD	115	16-08-25 Yorkshire Dog Club	121
07-09-25 Great Baddow	147	18-05-25 Loughborough	139	27-07-25 North West Ken	114	28-06-25 Cheshire	120

Show	Tick	Show	ABC
20-09-25 Birm & Dist	102	03-08-25 Lune Valley	51
21-09-25 Birm & Dist	100	06-07-25 Somerset	48
27-09-25 BAGSD	92	20-07-25 Phoenix	42
29-06-25 Cheshire	80	10-08-25 Danesford	42
28-06-25 Cheshire	79	07-09-25 East Kilbride	41
14-09-25 Lichfield	79	13-04-25 Sheffield	40
05-05-25 Leicestershire	75	13-07-25 Winchester	40
22-08-25 Cheltenham	75	19-10-25 Sheffield	39
18-05-25 Loughborough	75	03-05-25 Burnbank	35
04-05-25 Rugby	72	22-06-25 Knightswood	33

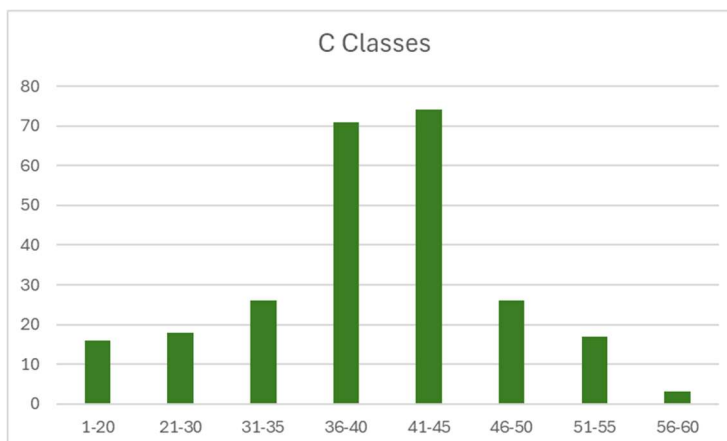
Overall, the top entered shows were:

Show	Entries
20-09-25 Birm & Dist	769
21-09-25 Birm & Dist	716
26-04-25 BAGSD Oxhey	711
18-05-25 Loughborough	675
05-10-25 Elm Park	665
17-05-25 Loughborough	635
19-07-25 Culverstone	634
27-09-25 BAGSD	633
04-10-25 Elm Park	626
13-04-25 Sheffield	619

Class sizes varied, with some shows having a big difference between the size of dog and bitch classes (where one sex was split and the other not). The potential judging time* in some of the larger classes was very long.



Dogs per	Nov hrs Judging	No. of Classes
1-20	1.7	14
21-30	2.5	18
31-35	2.9	49
36-40	3.3	65
41-45	3.8	60
46-50	4.2	75
50+	5.0	48



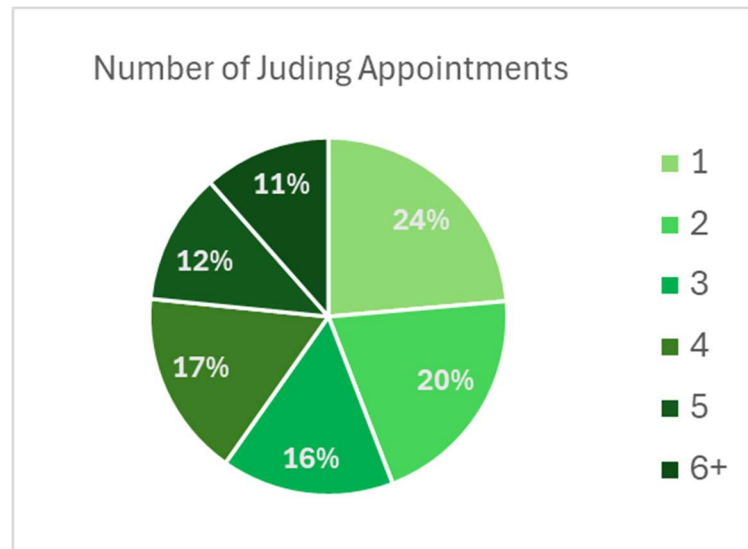
Dogs per Class	C hours Judging	No. of Classes
1-20	2.8	16.0
21-30	4.1	18.0
31-35	4.7	26.0
36-40	5.5	71.0
41-45	6.1	74.0
46-50	6.8	26.0
51-55	7.4	17.0
56-60	8.0	3.0

*Calculated from G Regs dogs per hour plus 2 mins each for 15 dogs doing scent where applicable

Judges

There were a total of 489 judges covering the 1582 classes that were held over the 2025 season*. Of these 115 judged once and 116 judged 5 times or more.

Appointments	Count of Judges
1	115
2	100
3	76
4	82
5	58
6	33
7	7
8	5
9	9
10	1
11	1
14	1
18	1
Grand Total	489



31% of Judges judged Novice and Class A only, whilst 31% did not judge Novice or A. The remainder spread their judging across all classes.

Classes Judged	Judges	Percent
Nov/A only	140	29%
Nov/A & Other Classes	196	40%
Other Classes only	153	31%

What must be investigated further is the number of handlers currently in the sport in the different regions. This is required to understand the pool of handlers that are available to judge and thus what percentage of people in the sport volunteer to judge. See later in this document.

C and Ticket Judges

A review of C judges was done as this is perceived as a problem area. There were a total of 128 C Judges covering the 251 C classes.

**Best endeavours have been made to take into account different variations of names given in schedules.*

Of these 43% judged one C in the season and 9% judged 4 or more C's in the season.

Times C Judged	No of Judges	%
1	55	43%
2	40	31%
3	21	16%
4	8	6%
5	3	2%
6	1	1%
Grand Total	128	

Of the Ticket Judges there were a large number (36%) that did not judge C in the season. A total of 59% judged just 1 C or less.

No of Ticket Judges		
Did not Judge C	23	36%
Judged one C	15	23%
Judged 2+ C's	26	41%
	64	

If all Ticket Judges undertook at least 2 C appointments in the season that they judged a Ticket this would increase the availability of C appointments by 61 in the season, the equivalent of 48% of the classes run in the year (based on this analysis).

Stewards

This analysis has been unable to look at the number of volunteers who give up their time to Steward, Scribe and Scoreboard throughout the year, as these are not documented in a readily available format.

Participants in UK Obedience

Having looked at the number of Show Entries and Judges an attempt has been made to estimate the total number of Participants in UK Obedience. Understanding the size of the Obedience Community gives context to the perceived shortage of Judges in the UK.

In estimating the number of Participants (Handlers) in Obedience, I have considered:

- Not all Handlers go to all shows – so estimates cannot just look at averages
- Many handlers travel around the UK – so cannot just look at Area maximums
- Not all Handlers enter shows electronically – 5% and 10% enter via post*
- Some electronic entries have a single payment for multiple Handler households
- Many Handlers enter multiple classes, although some enter only one
- Many handlers have multiple dogs, although some only have one

Estimating Participants from Largest Show Entries

Each of the RKC areas has a largest show and the entries at each of these add up to a total of 3470 entries.

Largest Show	
Midlands	769
Northern	546
Northern Ireland	114
S&SW	587
Scotland	361
SE&EA	711
Wales	382
Total	3470

I made different estimates of the number of entries per Dog, the number of Dogs per Handler and the Area Crossover (entries from other Areas) at these largest shows.

Calculation Assumptions	
Est. Entries per dog	2
Est. Dogs per Handler	1.5
Est. Area Crossover*	25%
Handlers based on Largest Show	
Total of Max. Entries	3470
Estimate No. of Dogs	1735
Est. Handlers Entered	1157
Estimated Handlers	868

Calculation Assumptions	
Est. Entries per dog	1.5
Est. Dogs per Handler	1.5
Est. Area Crossover*	15%
Handlers based on Largest Show	
Total of Max. Entries	3470
Estimate No. of Dogs	2313
Est. Handlers Entered	1542
Estimated Handlers	1311

Calculation Assumptions	
Est. Entries per dog	1.2
Est. Dogs per Handler	1.5
Est. Area Crossover*	10%
Handlers based on Largest Show	
Total of Max. Entries	3470
Estimate No. of Dogs	2892
Est. Handlers Entered	1928
Estimated Handlers	1735

Using this method estimates that there were between 868 and 1735 Handlers competing in Obedience in the UK over the Summer of 2025.

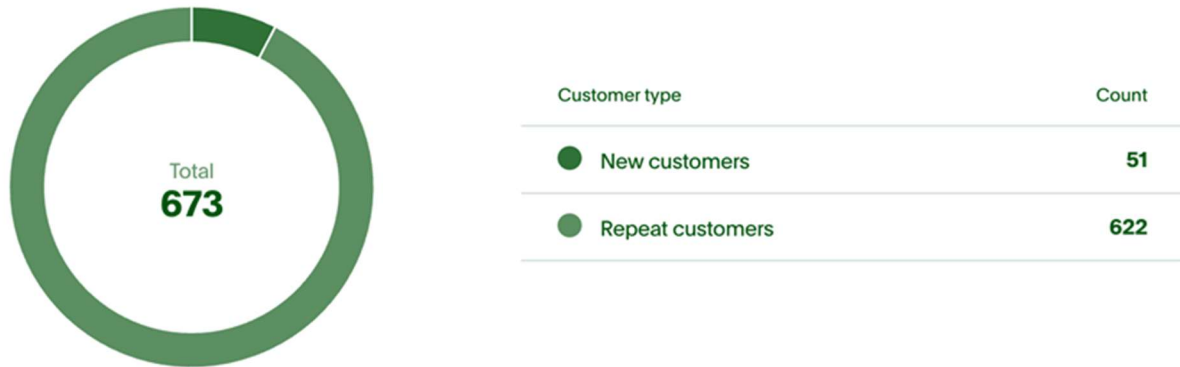
This estimate is very dependent on the accuracy of the number of entries per Dog and Dogs per Handler – and this, by its very nature, is hard to measure accurately. A lot of handlers have one Dog in one Class but there are also Handlers with 4 or 5 dogs competing. It is also very possible that not all the Handlers in an Area attend the largest shows in that Area, and that the amount of crossover from other Areas at largest shows can be high.

The uncertainty of this method is what leads to the large variation in estimate of Handlers taking part in Obedience, although it is also worth noting that, even at the highest numbers, this is significantly smaller than the numbers taking part in Agility.

Estimating Participants from the Payment Methods

A stronger measure of the Handlers taking part in Obedience is a measure of the payments that were made

I am very grateful to Geraldine from With Your Dog for sharing the total number of customers paying through the electronic platform for the period 01 Jan to 20 Oct 2025*



I am also very grateful to the Show Secretaries who were happy to share their numbers on Handlers paying via Cheque/Paper Entries, which was around 5-10% of total entries received during the Summer of 2025.

It has to be taken into account that there will also be a number of multi-Handler households, who will make a single payment for 2 or more Handlers. There may also be people paying for others who do not have digital access. I have estimated the number of extra handlers this could be, although it is impossible to know if this is correct.

Handlers based on Payments Made	
Payers via WYD (Actual - 90%)	673
Cheque/Paper Entries (10%)	75
Extra from Multi-Handler Paying	112
Estimated Handlers	860

Using this method estimates that there were around 860 Handlers competing in Obedience in the UK over the Summer of 2025.

This number agrees well with the first assessment of Handlers in Obedience from total entries received (shown above), which suggests that with 2 classes per Dog and 1.5 Dogs per Handler the number of Handlers is 868.

With this analysis it is fair to state that the number of Handlers across the UK competing in Obedience in 2025 is probably less than 1000 but is certainly no more than 2000.

* Please note that only overall number of payers was shared and no other data, as is proper.

Possible Effect of Handler numbers on Judge and Steward availability

A total of 489 people gave up their time in 2025 to Judge, who would have been accompanied by 489 stewards and a number of Scribes and Scoreboards. Not all of these people would currently be Handlers in Obedience but a large number of them are likely to be. It is also likely (from anecdotal evidence) that the people who Judge also volunteer to Steward.

If we assume 20% of Judges are not currently competing with a Dog – this would leave 391 active Handlers who are Judging.

If there are 860 active Handlers in Obedience, 45% of the Obedience Community Judge.

If we further assume that 20% of Stewards are not currently competing with a Dog – and that 50% of Stewarding positions are filled by those who also Judge - then there are an additional 196 Handlers volunteering as Stewards. With 860 active Handlers this is an additional 23% of the Obedience Community.

For 860 active Handlers, 68% of the Obedience Community may Judge and/or Steward.

Obviously, using the higher estimates of number of Handlers, the percentage reduces. However, it also needs to be considered that there are Handlers who are not qualified to Judge/Steward, those who are not physically able to Judge/Steward and those who are not (and never will be) confident enough to Judge/Steward. This may suggest there may not be the number of Judges/Stewards available to make filling positions simple.

In this context, requiring Ticket Judges to Judge Open C and creating 61 appointments in the Season (see above) would have a large impact on the overall availability of Judges and/or Stewards.

Of course, there are a lot of assumptions in this final piece of this analysis and greater investigation is needed to understand real numbers.

Next Steps

Further analysis will be done of the Winter Season 25/26 and the plan is to repeat over the Summer Season of 2026.