

Obedience Liaison Council Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Obedience Liaison Council represents the interests of everyone involved in Obedience - including clubs, organisations, judges and individual participants. It serves as a vital communication link between the community and the Royal Kennel Club, working collaboratively to shape, support, and grow the activity.

Key activities and Responsibilities

Gather, assess and recommend proposals or discussions to be considered by the Activities Committee.

- Listen to the Obedience community's opinions and conduct research where necessary.
- Schedule regular meetings or meetups.
- Review and manage participant feedback and proposals.
- Communicate updates or information to the Obedience community.
- Monitor progress and report findings to the Activities Committee.

Composition and Term of appointment

- The Liaison Council will include nine representatives, including a Chair and Vice Chair.
- Each representative is appointed for a three-year term (the initial term of office may only be for 2 years)
- The Chair will be elected by the Liaison Council at the first meeting of the term of office.
- The Liaison Council will elect a Vice Chair and choose a deputy who will attend an Activities Committee meeting if the Chair cannot attend.
- New member applications will open before the current term ends, and current representatives can reapply if they want to stay on the Liaison Council.
- Any substantiated misconduct or disciplinary matter involving a representative will result in their immediate removal from the Liaison Council.
- The Royal Kennel Club reserves the right to withdraw a representative's Liaison Council membership if they fail to meet expected standards, breach the terms of reference, or engage in conduct that may bring the Royal Kennel Club into disrepute.
- No person may serve on more than one Liaison Council and members of the Royal Kennel Club Board may not serve on any Royal Kennel Club Liaison Council.
- You must be 18 or older to serve on a Liaison Council.

Roles & Responsibilities

Representative's responsibilities:

- Stay connected with the Obedience community through social media, surveys, shows, email, phone calls, and more.
- Discuss any proposals and discussion ideas with the individuals or clubs involved.
- Attend at least two online meetings each year to present and discuss proposals, ideas, and plans.
- Represent the interests and views of the Obedience community.
- Share opinions and feedback on important topics.
- Help create ideas, solutions, and useful resources.
- Support the Activities Committee and Royal Kennel Club Board on Obedience matters.
- Liaison Council representatives are expected to respect and maintain the confidentiality of discussions, documents, and sensitive matters, ensuring that information is only shared when appropriate and in accordance with Royal Kennel Club guidelines or legal requirements.

Chair's responsibilities:

- Review and approve the meeting agendas.
- Make sure representatives have spoken with the individual or club that submitted each proposal or topic before any meeting.
- Lead meetings clearly and constructively, keeping discussions focused and on track.
- Provide a consistent format for sharing information, so all representatives receive the same details.
- Encourage open discussion, but make sure conversations stay meaningful, clear, and to the point.
- Approve the meeting minutes.
- Present the approved minutes and recommendations to the Activities Committee.
- Explain and share policy and strategy decisions from the Board and Royal Kennel Club office, and report back on the outcomes of recommendations

Meeting Frequency

- The Obedience Liaison Council will meet twice a year, with additional meetings added if needed.
- All meetings will take place online.
- At least half of the representatives need to be present for a meeting to be quorate and able to proceed.
- If a representative can't make a meeting, they should let the office know in advance.
- If in-person attendance is required for meetings; standard travel costs will be reimbursed.

Meetings and Agendas

A formal process for meetings is outlined below; however, we are transitioning to a more agile approach. This new process allows items to be submitted to the office throughout the year using a designated form and handled accordingly. If the office can address the item directly, it will be actioned promptly with a response provided. This approach enables urgent items to be fast-tracked when necessary.

Before submitting formal items to the office for inclusion on the agenda, representatives should first hold discussions with the community to investigate, assess and gather feedback on these items. If, following these discussions, the item requires consideration at a Liaison Council meeting for discussion and possible formal recommendation to the relevant Committee, the team will ensure it is added to the agenda for the next scheduled meeting.

Agenda Item Submission

- Proposals or discussion items should be sent to the Royal Kennel Club via the designated online form.
- Formal items for the agenda must be submitted six weeks prior to the meeting.
- Items must clearly outline the purpose and how the proposal or discussion item would support and improve the discipline.
- Regulation change proposals must reference the relevant regulation and explain the changes clearly.
- Items submitted after the agenda deadline will not be included, however may be considered outside of the meeting or added to the Liaison Councils next meeting agenda.
- The Chair, in consultation with the office, will decide which items are included on the final agenda.
- The final agenda will be issued no less than two weeks prior to the meeting.
- The final agenda is shared with all representatives, posted in the relevant Facebook groups and on the Royal Kennel Club website.

- New topics for Any Other Business (AOB) should be submitted at least 7 days before the meeting. Topics will only be considered if they are urgent, unforeseen, and require immediate attention.
- Accepted recommendations are passed on to the Activities Committee for further consideration, and subsequently the Board if recommended by the Committee for final ratification. No proposals or regulation changes are approved until such time as both the Committee and Board have approved it.

The goal is to make recommendations by agreement (consensus).

If people don't agree, there will be a vote – everyone gets one vote.

If it's a tie, the Chair will have a casting vote.

Meeting notes are drafted, approved by the Liaison Council Chair, then shared with representatives and published online.

1. Recommendations from meetings are added to the agenda for the next Activities Committee meeting.
2. Once decisions have been approved by the Committee/Board, they will be communicated clearly to the wider community.

Review

Each year, a review will be held where the Obedience community can share their thoughts on what is going well and what could be better. This feedback will help improve how the Liaison Council works and makes sure it meets the needs of everyone involved.