

UPDATE FROM THE KC - JAN 2020 The Judges Committee and the Board consider there is value in bringing forward a number of new show regulations and a range of additional supporting statements in the code that recognises and protects best practice and underpins and protects the integrity of judges at every level of show.

This is because, in all areas where pedigree dog competitions are discussed, there is always a range of opinions expressed about judges. Their decisions and practices are critiqued and commented on in a variety of different ways and expressed across many different media.

This high level of rigorous oversight and debate has led to a high number of judges who on a regular basis deliver excellence, who care a great deal about the decisions they deliver and are rightly proud of their experience and knowledge.

It is considered important that the show regulations and the code of best practice for judges includes criteria and advice that underpins this level of excellence.

There are many situations in which judges' actions could be misconstrued. The code of best practice describes some of those situations to be avoided and helps all to better understand what is not acceptable and where criticism might arise. The code discusses how judges can best present themselves across the media, including social media. This public forum is an area where people freely debate the finer points of all that happens at a licensed dog show and the code provides guidance to judges as to how their actions could be perceived and where their integrity could be compromised.

It is recognised that judges, in many cases, also exhibit. In fact in order to continuously improve, this can only enhance the knowledge and experience of our judges. That said care must be taken to avoid certain situations which may be misconstrued and lead to the appearance of irregularity.

Some examples of a conflict of interest are provided in the code and are published in the updated regulations. New show regulations will allow judges to request a dog be withdrawn from competition should he/she believe the exhibition of the dog creates a conflict of interest. A regulation is to be introduced to state that exhibitors should not enter a dog for exhibition if a conflict of interest with the judge is apparent.

Caroline Kisko, Kennel Club Secretary, said: "Our show community continually strive to exhibit the highest quality of dog, to be judged by our highly competent and experienced judges. The continued evolution of the advice provided to the judges, and recognised by all who show and exhibit, will add a further layer of support for all to see and which will further enhance our shows in the future.

"Perception is important to the reputation of Kennel Club licensed dog shows, their standing in the world of pedigree dogs and the value of awards won and titles gained. Both judges and exhibitors have a responsibility to ensure that dog shows are a positive experience and promote the positive aspects of owning and showing a pedigree dog."

The new regulations will be effective from 1 January 2020 and may be read at the following link: [bit.ly/32O698c](http://bit.ly/32O698c) where all changes are marked in bold. A new edition of the Code of Best Practice for Judges may be accessed on the Kennel Club website at [bit.ly/2K3XPbY](http://bit.ly/2K3XPbY).