

# Section 4

## Using an outside organisation

(including LEA centres, farm visits, adventurous activities, commercial and charitable organisations)

- 1) There has been a marked increase in recent years in the use of commercial centres and independent activity providers offering a wide range of adventurous activities. The number of adventure providers in the UK alone is huge; no accurate figures exist but it is known to exceed 2000. Turnover is also high, with new operators each year. Such a situation makes it impossible for the LEA to maintain a register of such organisations.
- 2) Many such operators offer services at a very acceptable level but wide variation exists and some are very poor indeed. Visit Leaders are strongly advised to apply the following guidance which is relevant to all educational use of outside organisations.
- 3) It is imperative that appropriate checks are made before Cambridgeshire groups commit themselves to working with any external organisation. A suggested process is outlined below.
- 4) Visit leaders should recognise that they have the primary responsibility, on behalf of the school/centre, for ensuring that any provider to be used can meet acceptable standards in each of the following aspects:
  - the educational merit of the experience
  - the suitability and safety of domestic arrangements
  - the relationship between your staff and any staff provided by the operator
  - the security of money paid to the operator
  - the quality and safety of any adventure activities provided and, in particular, qualifications of activity instructors.

**THE OUTDOOR EDUCATION ADVISER CHECKS OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS OFFERING ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES, ON BEHALF OF SCHOOLS, WITH ADVENTURE PROVIDERS EACH YEAR. THEREFORE IF YOU WISH TO USE AN ORGANISATION FOR ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES, THE FIRST CHECK YOU SHOULD MAKE IS WITH THE ADVISER OR THE SCHOOLS PORTAL PAGES FOR THE LIST OF OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN ALREADY CHECKED. THIS SAVES SCHOOLS AND PROVIDERS PAPERWORK.**

**HOWEVER OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS NOT OFFERING ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE CHECKED USING THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES OUTLINED IN THIS SECTION.**

- 5) It is an essential requirement of LEA policy that all visits involving 'adventure activities' must be notified to the LEA **at least** one month before participation. Where there is uncertainty about any aspect of adventure activity provision, the visit organiser must contact the Outdoor Education Adviser **BEFORE** commitment to the venture.

# Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996

- 6) The above regulations were introduced in 1996. In brief, any provider offering, within the UK, any of certain, specified activities for a fee to young persons under 18 years of age, is legally required to be inspected and licensed by the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA).
- 7) Licensable activities are:
- trekking - foot, cycle, horse or off-piste skiing in remote or high country
  - climbing - climbing, traversing, abseiling, scrambling except on purpose-designed walls or towers
  - watersports - canoeing, sailing, rafting and related activities undertaken on "specified waters"
  - caving - underground exploration in natural caves and mines, excluding show caves and mines open to the public.
- 8) Organisers should note that LEA Centres, when offering any of the above activities, are also required to be licensed. Grafham Water Centre falls within the regulations and is licensed. The centres at Stibbington, Upware and Burwell House are outside the scope of the licensing scheme since they currently offer none of the activities outlined above.

No notification or external provider forms need to be completed for a visit to a day centre or residential centre that is operated by Cambridgeshire's Environmental and Outdoor Education Services. These Centres operate to County guidelines and all staff are employed by the LEA.

**HOWEVER MEPAL OUTDOOR CENTRE IS NOT AN LEA CENTRE AND IS AN INDEPENDENT PROVIDER AND FOR VISITS TO THIS CENTRE, LEA APPROVAL MUST BE SOUGHT.**

AALA web-site [www.aala.org.uk](http://www.aala.org.uk) Tel: 02920 755 715

If you have any queries or questions about licensing, please contact the Outdoor Education Adviser

- 9) Organisers are required to ascertain:
- whether a provider is legally required to hold a licence for the activities offered before any financial commitment is made and, if so
  - that the provider holds a current licence.

## Preliminary information

- 10) It is essential that initial assurances be sought from the prospective provider before commitment to the venture. The issues in the outside organisations questionnaire (Section 4) should form the basis of such enquiries. Subject to satisfactory response, a subsequent booking may then be made, subject to the receipt of a satisfactorily completed outside organisations' questionnaire, at the end of this Section.
- 11) The visit leader or teacher has ultimate responsibility for pupils, even when the group is under instruction by the provider's staff. The provider is responsible for the safe operation of the activity.
- 12) It is particularly important to ensure that clear arrangements are in place for the effective hand-over of pupils from the staff to the activity instructor and vice versa.
- 13) Where the company additionally offers personal accident cover, the suitability of such cover should be checked. This can be done through the Insurance Section.

## Making a 'contract' with the provider

- 14) Please ensure that the guidance given in Section 7, paragraphs 3 - 6 is followed before signing any booking form or contract with an external provider.
- 15) For visits involving any of the defined adventure activities (see Section 3 for clarification ), organisers must then submit the Adventure Activity Notification Form: OE 2005 (of this manual) to the Adviser for Outdoor Education.
- 16) The final decision to proceed with the visit, based on all available information and advice, is the responsibility of the headteacher and governing body.

## Providers based abroad

- 17) If using an operator based abroad, organisers should be aware that the package travel regulations (see Section 7) are based on an EEC Directive which applies to all countries of the European Economic Area. Organisers must seek verification that the operator satisfies the relevant national legislation implementing the directive.
- 18) Organisers must be particularly careful to ensure that appropriate financial protection arrangements are in place (see Section 7, paragraphs 1 and 2) and that the activity qualifications of any instructors provided are to the relevant national awards of the country visited.

## Some relevant references in this manual

Section 2:	Visit Checklist
Section 3:	Adventure Activities
Section 3:	Approval of Adventure Activities
Section 3:	Form OE2005: Approval of Adventure Activities
Section 3:	Adventure Checklist
Section 4:	Independent Providers' Questionnaire
Section 5:	Visits Abroad Checklist
Section 7:	Financial Matters and ERA Charging for School Activities

It is hoped that the above recommendations will help schools and youth centres to continue to make valuable, effective and safe use of the wide range of independent facilities increasingly available.

## Farm visits

- 19) If you are visiting any farm then the following information is important.
- 20) Farms are places of relatively high risk. The presence of machinery, slurry pits and animals pose a range of risks which need to be carefully assessed. Careful planning and good on-site management is vital.
- 21) Organisers should ensure, by an exploratory visit, that the farm is well-managed and applies adequate safety and animal welfare standards. It should have dedicated public areas, washing and toilet facilities. The farm should, ideally, be one of the NFU-sponsored "Open Farms" which are specifically developed for visitors.
- 22) The zoonosis infections form an obvious risk to visitors to farm sites. Visitors to farm sites do not possess the relative immunity of farm workers to the various infections. Organisers should ensure that all supervisors and children are informed of the precautions to be taken.

## Zoonosis infection

- LEPTOSPIROSIS (cattle or rat form)
- CRYPTOSPORIDIOSIS
- E-COLI

The above Zoonosis infections are transmitted by contact, directly or indirectly, with the faeces or urine of animals or by the drinking of contaminated water. Such infections are relatively rare but can be serious. Most are treatable with antibiotics.

Prevention of infection involves:

- avoiding contact with urine, faeces or contaminated water
- avoiding drinking potentially contaminated water
- covering cut and broken skin with waterproof dressings
- thorough washing of any possibly affected areas of skin

Symptoms may include flu-like attacks, headache (often persistent), vomiting, muscle pain, diarrhoea and abdominal pain. Go to your GP early and tell him/her what you have been doing and where you have been.

Staff and pupils operating in the vicinity of farms, on farm visits or on water activities, should take the above precautions and inform parents accordingly.

23) Group control is important and students/pupils on farm visits should **not** be allowed to:

- play in the vicinity of, or ride on, tractors or other machinery
- play in working area of the farm
- drink from taps other than in the designated public areas
- place their faces against animals or put their hands in their own mouths after feeding animals
- eat until they have washed their hands
- sample any animal foodstuffs

24) More detailed advice is available from:

- DfES (Handbook for Group Leaders)
- [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk) and look for Agricultural Information Sheet No 23 Avoiding Ill Health at Open Farms - with farmers and teachers notes.
- the British Canoe Union website [www.bcu.org.uk](http://www.bcu.org.uk) - search for Weils Disease

## Outside organisations questionnaire

25) It is strongly recommended that school and youth groups within Cambridgeshire LEA assure themselves of the suitability of any residential and activity facilities provided by independent operators, external to the LEA, before financial commitment to the venture. The issues below should form the basis of initial questions to the prospective provider who should then complete and return the Questionnaire.

Provisional bookings should be made subject to return of the Questionnaire.



# INDEPENDENT PROVIDERS QUESTIONNAIRE

Cambridgeshire LEA and Peterborough LEA wish to assure themselves of the suitability of any residential and activity facilities provided by independent operators, external to the LEA, before financial commitment to a venture. Please would you complete this as fully as possible, and return

NAME OF COMPANY

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NAME OF CENTRE

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COMMUNICATION ADDRESS

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TELEPHONE NO

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EMAIL ADDRESS

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WEBSITE ADDRESS

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1 Does the above Company /Centre or Provider have any official recognition or accreditation? Yes/No  
If so, please indicate \_\_\_\_\_

2 Does the Company / Centre or Provider have written Code of Conduct for groups, available at the time of booking and to which visiting groups should adhere? Yes/No  
If so, please provide a copy.

3 Where applicable, do all facilities used comply with relevant statutory requirements eg. Health and Safety at Work Act 1974; Environmental Health and transport requirements? Yes/No

4 Are premises used covered by a current Fire Certificate? Yes/No  
If not, what other fire Authority advice has been sought and adopted?  
\_\_\_\_\_

5 Do you provide, on request, names and addresses of recent user groups to whom reference can be made? Yes/No

6 Do you provide opportunities for preliminary visits? Yes/No

7 **General staffing**

Do your designated supervisory staff have the experience and competence appropriate to work with

Primary Schools  Secondary Schools  Youth Groups  Specialist Groups

Do you provide adequate and regular opportunities for liaison between your designated staff and staff of the visiting group? Yes/No

Is there a clear definition of responsibilities (for staffing of safety, supervision, programme and general welfare) between your staff and staff of the visiting group? Yes/No

8 Do you hold a public liability insurance policy which will be current over the next twelve months visit, both in relation to all directly provided and sub-contracted activity Yes/No  
Please give here the Limit of Indemnity : £\_\_\_\_\_

9 Do you have a procedure for dealing with complaints? Yes/No  
If so, please give details \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10 a **Adventure Activity Staffing for Providers offering Adventure Activities**  
Are you licensed by the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority? Yes/No

If 'Yes', Licence Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date \_\_\_\_\_

If no go to question B

Please list the activities covered on the license  
\_\_\_\_\_

b **Non AALA Licensed Centres offering Adventure Activities**

Please will you contact the Adviser for Outdoor Education on 01480 813857

c **All Centres**

Where non AALA licensed Adventure Activities are provided, are all staff who directly supervise each activity appropriately qualified under the relevant National Governing Body (NGB)? Yes/No

Where no NGB exists for a particular activity do you have a written training process, risk assessment and operating procedures? (please do not enclose them) Yes/No

11 **Activity equipment**

Do you have a written and prescribed system of safety checks? Yes/No

Do you have a written and prescribed maintenance programme? Yes/No

Is there sufficient equipment of appropriate size to cover the range of participants indicated on Page 1? Yes/No

Where international standards exist, does the equipment conform to those standards? Yes/No

12 Please give any additional information which you think may be helpful to a group leader and to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Education Authority.  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position in Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

A copy of this completed form should be forwarded to the Outdoor Education Adviser, Grafham Water Centre, Perry, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE18 0BX.