



# The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Expeditions

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Please see also the **Duke of Edinburgh's Award website** ([www.dofe.org](http://www.dofe.org)).

## INTRODUCTION

Somerset Council is a Licensed Organisation authorised to offer The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) to young people between the ages of 13 (in Year 9) and 25 and to support schools, colleges and community organisations to do so.

The Council approves groups and organisations that wish to provide DofE programmes. These groups could be schools (including academies and independent), FE colleges, youth centres/projects and voluntary organisations. Current providers of the award in Somerset include schools, colleges, and a small number of voluntary groups, in the form of Open Award centres. This arrangement is unique in terms of this manual in that groups not normally thought of as part of the County Council may be brought within the scope of the Council's policies and guidance.

Any DofE group operating under the SC licence must adhere to safe practice guidance regarding external visits.

These policies apply to all DofE sections, particularly the expedition section. It may also apply to other sections of the award, for example a young person may undertake swimming, canoeing, or sailing as part of their physical section, or certain residential projects, such as those with an adventurous theme or objective.

Leaders should consult the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Handbook and the Expedition Guide for information and should familiarise themselves with relevant sections, particularly:

- remote supervision (new window) of groups.
- lightweight camping, in particular the use of liquid-fuelled stoves.
- Qualifications and training for assessing and supervising expeditions.

Please see the [DofE](#) website.

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## THE ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES LICENSING REGULATIONS

The Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) was established in April 1996, arising from the Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety Act 1995). AALA is designed to ensure that licensed activity providers follow good safety management practices. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) now administers the licence, taking on this role on 1 April 2020. The HSE has appointed Adventure Risk Management Services (Adv-RMS) to provide inspection services for the AALA.

Silver and Gold level expeditions will fall within the Licensing Regulations – see page 3 for a list of licensable activities.

Visit leaders should note that:

- School based DofE units, in which all members are young people at the school or college will be exempt from the Licensing Regulations.
- Units (i.e. Open Award Centres/youth clubs) which recruit members from more than one school/establishment or college, or from the local community (including ex-attendees of the host school/establishment), will be subject to the Licensing Regulations.

- Presently, SSE Outdoors holds an AALA Licence for its Outdoor Education Centres at Charterhouse, on the Mendip Hills, and Kilve Court, on the Quantock Hills. Any organisation which is planning DofE expeditions or activities which may fall under the Regulations should contact the Somerset DofE office on 01278 741270 before proceeding with any arrangements.

Please visit the HSE's website - [Adventure Activities Licensing \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/adventure-activities-licensing/) > *find a provider* - to view providers that hold a current AALA licence.

In brief, any provider offering, within the UK, any licensable activities for a fee to young persons under 18 years of age is legally required to be inspected by the Activity Activities Licensing Service and licensed by the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) part of the HSE.

For more detail on the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996 see [Appendix B](#).

Licensable activities are:

- trekking – journeying on foot including fell running, cycle, horse, or off-piste skiing in remote or high country e.g. moorland or terrain more than 600metres above sea-level and where it would take more than 30 minutes travelling time to reach any accessible road or refuge.
- climbing - climbing, traversing, abseiling or scrambling except on natural terrain or outdoor man-made structures. Climbing walks, abseiling towers and ropes courses are exempt from the licence.
- watersports - canoeing, kayaking, 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. Caving may also be known as potholing.

Visit leaders are required to ascertain:

- if 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.

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### **APPROVED ACTIVITY PROVIDERS**

Approved Activity Providers (AAP) are organisations, both commercial and charitable, that have been approved by the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme to deliver sections of the award to young people. Whilst the award has approved an organisation, charity or business as an AAP, there is no guarantee that an AAP has been suitably assessed for safeguards including health and safety and financial stability when it was licenced by DofE. Licensed Organisations have the ability to conduct checks to ensure that the AAP has suitable and sufficient arrangements in place for measures including health and safety, safeguarding and financial stability. Further information on AAPs can be found here: <https://www.dofe.org/run/aap/>

Many schools will appoint an AAP to deliver the award, or sections of the award, with the expedition section a popular area where schools have sought the services of an AAP to deliver this section. However, it is strongly recommended that the Visit Leader, or External Visit Coordinator conducts a range of suitability checks with the AAP to ensure that the school or establishment is receiving a quality experience and you are satisfied that measures including safeguarding, health and safety and financial

stability are all in place. If you have concerns regarding an AAP, please contact the Duke of Edinburgh's Award or the Licenced Organisation.

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## RESPONSIBILITIES

Somerset Council is a Licensed Organisation approved to provide the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and to deliver guidance, support and training to Somerset schools, colleges and community groups.

As part of this licensing agreement, Somerset Council and registered organisations enter into a Licence Agreement which includes an expectation that organisations providing DofE manage their health and safety responsibilities to all young people and staff involved in the expedition and other sections. For further details or a copy of the licensing agreement please contact the Somerset DofE office on 01278 741270 or email: [dofe@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:dofe@somerset.gov.uk).

Schools that receive the statutory health and safety provision from the Local Authority, or purchase Health and Safety support from Somerset, are expected to follow the [guidance and procedures](#) provided within the Outdoor Education and External Visits website. For all DofE expeditions, schools (including Academies) are required to gain endorsement for their planned expedition by way of an external visit application, category 'C', via the EEC website.

Academy schools that do not purchase Health and Safety provision from the Local Authority, together with Independent Schools, Colleges and voluntary groups, are responsible for their own Health and Safety, together with the planning and endorsement of any planned expedition. However, an expedition notification needs to be submitted to the Somerset DofE office if the planned venture takes place in a wild country expedition area e.g. Dartmoor, Brecon Beacons, Snowdonia, Lake District, Scotland.

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## LEADER QUALIFICATIONS/EXPERIENCE

The recognised **National Governing Body (NGB)** Award qualifications – see [Appendix A](#) – are the minimum requirement for leading groups.

All leaders need to be registered with Somerset Council by submitting an EV3 form. Where the relevant NGB award is not held, local LA leader approval may be given to those with proven personal and leadership experience at a comparable standard to the NGB - application should be made to the Corporate Health and Safety Unit using form EV3.

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## PAID LEADERS

Visit leaders need to be aware that payment for leadership services in an activity which could be licensed, will make the expedition subject to the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations. This applies where someone who is not a member of staff at the school/academy or organisation from which the group members are recruited ([see above](#)). In this case, any such provider must be licensed under the Licensing Scheme.

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## INCIDENT REPORTS

Any incident (both involving an injury or a near miss) during an expedition which is led by a local authority-maintained school (or academy) must be reported on the EEC Health and Safety website within 7-days of the incident. The local authority or your appointed health and safety manager can conduct an appropriate investigation. An accident data collection form enabling individuals involved in an incident

to record what happened before upload to the EEC website is available: [SC Accident Data Collection Report Form](#). Please also contact the Council's DofE Award Office to inform them of the incident as DofE head Office will need to be informed of the incident.

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## CHOICE OF EXPEDITION AREA

DofE expeditions must take into account the experience and competence of each member of the group when choosing the location for the expedition. As a general rule, both DofE and the County Council agree that ventures should be proportionate to the expedition award level along with the competencies and capabilities of both the participants and expedition leaders/supervisors. Emphasis should be allowing the young people to design their routes, taking appropriate advice and guidance from adult leads that delivers on adventure and challenge through remoteness rather than technical difficulty/risk.

Please also consider that groups may wish to complete their expedition using other recognised modes of travel e.g. bike, horse or canoe/sail.

Choosing an expedition area is critical because for many young people completing an expedition, even at Gold level, will have limited experience and knowledge of the environment chosen to complete the expedition. They will rarely have had more than a few days experience in such terrain and are unlikely to have been exposed to a variety of weather and underfoot conditions.

Routes involving sharp ridges, very steep ground or prolonged treacherous underfoot conditions, e.g. heather-covered boulder scree, coastal paths that may be prone to landslides, together with changing water and tide levels for canoeing/sailing expeditions all pose risks that require serious consideration when planning an expedition route. The heavy loads carried further exacerbate the difficulties of such terrain.

When advising group members, leaders should take into account the effect of navigational error during the expedition. Where such an error might quickly lead a group onto very steep ground or sharp ridges, the route may need modification or closer supervision (see below).

For groups operating in remote areas (also known as wild country) training is critical for the participants as they will be expected to carry extra food and equipment for sustained survival in such country. Group leaders must consider terrains which may involve steep ground, the use of hands (e.g. scrambling), or where the carrying of a rope for safe movement would be the normal expectation. River crossings must also be risk assessed as part of the route planning.

### **Recommended Expedition Environments**

The following table outlines suitable terrains/environments for each level of the Award (*reference – DofE Expedition Guide – 13<sup>th</sup> edition, published September 2012*).

<b>General requirements</b>	
Land environment (walking, cycling and horse riding)	All expeditions should avoid villages and populated areas unless that is impossible. Long distance footpaths should not be used, particularly by Silver and Gold teams, except in small sections to link up other paths or areas outside of the UK where they are the only routes available. Teams should not aim for more than 500m of height gain or descent on any one day although cycling expeditions may climb more.
Canoeing and rowing	Local access agreements must be checked in advance for all expeditions
Sailing	Practice and qualifying expeditions should take place in

	different areas. Where this is not practical, different routes over the same area can be used.
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<b>Bronze</b>	
Land environment (walking, cycling and Horse riding)	Normal rural countryside which can be familiar and local to the participants
Canoeing and rowing	Canals, rivers or other inland waterways and lakes
Sailing	Inland waters or sheltered estuaries well within the participants competencies

<b>Silver</b>	
Land environment (walking, cycling and Horse riding)	Normal rural, open countryside or forest, which is unfamiliar to the participants. The environment should be more demanding for participants than at Bronze level. Where possible the expedition should all be in, or at least include, areas of open country or forest.
Canoeing and rowing	Canals, rivers or other inland waterways and lakes in rural areas.
Sailing	Inland waters, estuaries or sheltered coastal waters.

<b>Gold</b>	
Land environment (walking, cycling and Horse riding)	Wild country (remote from habituation) which is unfamiliar to participants. The environment should be more demanding for participants than at Silver level. Remote estuaries, marshes fens and coastal areas may provide an appropriate environment expedition with the emphasis on exploring rather than journeying.
Canoeing and rowing	Rivers or inland waterways and lakes in rural areas, sheltered coastal waters or estuaries.
Sailing	Inland waters, estuaries or sheltered coastal waters. Yachts may be used in open sea areas.

[< Choice of Expedition Area](#)

### ***Expeditions in 'Normal' Country***

Normal Country refers to rural, open countryside that young people will be familiar with. These areas include country paths, permissible foot and bridle paths that are commonly used by the public and are within reasonable distance to roads to allow emergency vehicle access.

[< Choice of Expedition Area](#)

### ***Expeditions in 'Low Level' Hill Walking Country***

It is difficult to draw sharp distinctions between hills and mountains and the varied challenges which 'wild' country presents. The definition of 'open remote or demanding environments' includes criteria such as remoteness, steepness, objective hazards (bogs, crags, quarries etc).

Such low-level hill walking terrain should:

- Be within reasonable walking distance of emergency vehicle access. This must be less than 30 minutes walking time, of any part of the route, at the slowest member's pace, allowing for uphill sections.

- Be neither generally rugged nor steep.
- Have footpaths that are well defined on the map and ground.
- Be of no more than moderate height; rarely above 450 metres and never above 600 metres.

Leaders of routes in 'low level hill walking terrain' must:

- Have considerable personal walking and navigational experience and provided evidence, if required, of such experience to the LA.
- Have appropriate group management experience, to the satisfaction of the Head/Senior Manager/EVC.
- Be familiar with the proposed area and route.
- Hold a first aid qualification and be aware of emergency procedures.
- Be appropriately equipped to deal with emergencies.
- Carry equipment appropriate to the time of year.
- Have arranged emergency contacts and left details of the route at base.

[< Choice of Expedition Area](#)

### ***Expeditions in 'Wild' Country***

Wild country environments are only appropriate for Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions. However, it is acknowledged that some Silver expeditions containing young, competently trained participants will enter 'wild' country areas although the whole venture will not take place in a wild country environment. A wild country environment consists of:

- Access to emergency vehicles is likely to be less and may require alternative methods of rescue, e.g. helicopter/mountain rescue.
- Terrains are likely to be steeper and rugged, which may involve treks over hills/peaks above 600m.
- Although expedition groups should seek to use footpaths/marked routes where possible, expeditions in wild country areas may require a group to navigate across differing terrains, e.g. rivers, unmarked paths, open moorland.
- Camping for groups is likely to take place in wild, remote locations, away from the commercial/farm style camping that is commonly used in Bronze and Silver ventures.
- Groups will need to carry additional specialised equipment if they are completing an expedition on horseback/bike/canoe/sail in a wild country area that is known to present particular hazards.
- Groups must be prepared for more extreme and frequent changeable weather conditions in a wild country area.

Leaders of routes in 'wild country terrain' must:

- Have considerable personal walking and navigational experience and provide evidence, if required, of such experience/qualifications to the LA. Acceptable qualifications in this field will include Mountain Leader or South West Mountain and Moorland Leadership (Winter Walking/Summer Camping).
- Have relevant group management experience, subject to the approval of Head/Senior Manager/EVC, or advice from the Outdoor Education Advisor if required.
- Be familiar with the proposed area and route.
- Hold a first aid qualification and be aware of emergency procedures.
- Be appropriately equipped to deal with emergencies.

- Carry equipment appropriate to the time of year.
- Have arranged emergency contacts and left details of the route at base.

Further information on 'wild country' expedition areas in the UK can be found on the DofE website: <https://www.dofe.org/run/expeditionareas/>.

[< Choice of Expedition Area](#)

### ***River Crossing***

The fording of streams and rivers, except in the most obviously benign circumstances, is a high-risk activity and groups should always look for a bridge to cross in the first instance. River crossings requires the judgement and skills of an experienced walker/mountaineer. In conditions of significant depth and/or current it may also require the use of a rope for safety or rescue. Crossing of significant streams or rivers should *never* be necessary for a DofE expedition group.

The DofE Expedition Guide offers little advice on this subject. The LA's will view any expedition that requires or may require the fording of a significant river or stream with extreme concern. Routes should be selected that avoids the need for such activity. Groups must be advised that if confronted by swollen rivers as a result of unexpected heavy rain, then they should not attempt to cross, even if this means abandoning the planned route. They should either proceed on a planned alternative route, or camp until such time as the waters subside sufficiently to make recognised crossing places once again safe to use.

[< Choice of Expedition Area](#)

### ***Swimming***

Groups should be warned of the hazards of swimming in lakes, rivers, sea etc, and should never swim unless supervised by a suitably qualified leader.

[< Choice of Expedition Area](#)

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## **THE ROLE OF EXPEDITION STAFF**

All schools, academies and organisations that run the award rely heavily on the goodwill of its staff and volunteers. Somerset provides guidance and support through its field officers, however, anyone that runs the award must ensure that new staff or volunteers wishing to support the scheme receives appropriate induction and training. The school or organisation may have an induction and training programme in place, which may include national governing body qualifications (e.g. walking, cycling, sailing etc). However, volunteers and leaders should also complete e-learning modules provided by the award:

[Training Centre - The Duke of Edinburgh's Award \(dofe.org\)](#)

### **(a) Visit Leader**

The visit leader may not necessarily be present on the expedition, but they have overall responsibility for the group and usually act as the liaison with the relevant authorities, i.e. school/establishment and award. They will also be co-ordinating the other sections of the Award. It is the visit leader's responsibility to ensure that the supervisor is an approved leader and is suitably supported.

### **(b) Supervisor**

The supervisor has overall responsibility on the ground, and they must be employed by an AAP or by/volunteer for the Licensed Organisation. This may be the same person as the visit leader. It is their responsibility to ensure the health and safety of the whole group and staff involved during the expedition. This is a responsible position that involves all decision making on behalf of the group and liaising with the home contact if an emergency arises. The supervisor is also required to have completed the DofE Supervisor Training and hold a valid first aid certificate to maintain this position. In major



emergencies the supervisor may have to devolve responsibility to the emergency services. Supervisors will need the competency and experience to understand the nature of an incident, procedures required to resolve the problem and the consequences of actions taken. It may be that such decisions will affect only one part of the group and that the supervisor will retain responsibility for the remainder.

Supervisors will not be with the group throughout the expedition but will determine the nature and extent of close and remote supervision based on the capabilities of the group.

### **(c) Assessor**

The assessor checks that a Duke of Edinburgh's Award expedition meets the [20 conditions](#). The assessor must be registered with the Licensed Organisation and has successfully been accredited by the DofE. The assessor checks the progress of the young people during an expedition to ensure that they safely and successfully complete the venture by way of their chosen mode of travel. Whilst the overall responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of the young people lies with the supervisor, it is seen as beneficial for a supervisor to liaise with and accept advice from an assessor, owing to their knowledge of the award and expedition area. The assessor should outline safety features to participants and supervisors through pre-expedition checks and during the venture. It is also beneficial for the assessor to hold a valid first aid certificate. At Bronze level only, the assessor can also act as the expedition supervisor.

### **(d) Volunteer**

The volunteer supports the supervisor in ensuring that the expedition runs smoothly and safely. The role of volunteer is recommended as part of the apprenticeship served by supervisors.

### **(e) Emergency/Home Contact**

In situations where the visit leader is out on expedition an alternative home contact must be appointed who can be contacted 24 hours a day. They must have access to copies of group members' consent forms and fully understand the emergency procedures to follow in the event of an incident.

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## **SUPERVISION DURING EXPEDITIONS**

A fundamental principle of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award is that young people complete an expedition on their own. To reach this stage of acting independently, they must have acquired the necessary techniques, with sufficient experience, confidence, physical ability and judgement. The training given must therefore be sound and thorough with careful judgement being made before the leader can withdraw. Even then, withdrawal from direct supervision should be a gradual and progressive process. A staged progression may develop from:

- accompanying groups (direct, close supervision); to
- shadowing groups; to
- checking at various times and venues (remote supervision); to
- occasional contact via pre-arranged locations and methods

### **The supervisor continues to be responsible for the group even when direct supervision has been withdrawn.**

The DofE Expedition Guide recommends that groups should complete expeditions without external help; however, where a route potentially places a group in technically difficult terrain then supervision by an appropriately qualified leader may be acceptable. Routes requiring supervision for safety reasons should not be the norm as they do not meet the 20 Conditions requirements.

Where essential, supervision should be:

- undertaken by an appropriately qualified person;
- restricted to those parts of the route which are outside the technical experience of the group, e.g. on or adjacent to sharp ridges or very steep ground;
- of an absolute minimum and provided only to ensure the safety of group members;
- discreetly done by 'shadowing', normally in visual contact but close enough to intervene if safety requires.

## ALTITUDE

Altitude is not in itself, in the UK, a major factor (subject always to consideration of prevailing and forecast weather). DofE advice is that "routes which involve more than 600 metres of ascent in a day should be viewed with suspicion".

If applied, this advice will usually imply maximum height limitations.

## SELECTION, NOTIFICATION AND APPROVAL OF ROUTES

The functions and responsibilities of the LA as a Licensed Organisation and of the Assessor Networks are quite distinct.

The LA has responsibility for the safety of participants and the effective operation of the scheme. Examples of this are the safe practice guide which has been produced and the DofE office within the LA.

The Networks maintain no direct responsibility for safety but have functions such as, for example, checking that routes meet the minimum requirements of the Award level, advising on local access issues and provision of assessment where required.

Route selection must be based on the criteria outlined in [Choice of Expedition Area](#) above. Leaders must ensure that routes are chosen to reflect the criteria.

## RECOMMENDED READING

***Handbook for DofE Leaders (8<sup>th</sup> edition - 2019)***

[Merchandise The Handbook for DofE Leaders DofE](#)

***DofE Expedition Guide (14<sup>th</sup> edition - 2019)***

[Merchandise The DofE Expedition Guide DofE](#)

***Outdoor Education National Guidance – Duke of Edinburgh’s award expeditions***

<https://oeapng.info/download/1206/>

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## Appendix A: National Governing Body (NGB) Award Qualifications

[< Leader Qualifications/Experience](#)

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Terrain	Qualification	Notify D of E Award Office	Award Level (Typical)	Typical Area	Somerset Code
Accompanied day walk – moorland fringe or coastal or 'local' or less than 30 mins from road or refuge and below 600 metres. In season.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SWMMLTS Walking Leader (Summer) (A1)</li> <li>• Coastal and Countryside (B3)</li> <li>• WGL (C1)</li> <li>• ML (Training)</li> </ul>	Yes	Bronze (possibly Silver training)	Quantocks Mendips Blackdowns Exmoor	S1
As above plus camping. In season.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SWMMLTS Walking Leader (Summer) plus</li> <li>• Camping Leader (B2)</li> <li>• Coastal and Countryside (B3)</li> <li>• WGL (C1)</li> <li>• ML (Training)</li> </ul>	Yes	Bronze (possibly Silver training) Direct entry Gold	Quantocks Mendips Blackdowns Exmoor	S2
All South West moorland areas, summer conditions (day walk or camping). In season. Excludes S5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SWMMLTS Walking Leader (Summer) (A1) – day walk only</li> <li>• SWMMLTS Walking Leader (Summer) plus Camping Leader (B2)</li> <li>• WGL (C1)</li> <li>• ML (D1)</li> </ul>	Yes	Silver/Gold training/ practice/ assessed	Exmoor Dartmoor	S3
Wild country not in South West. In season. Excludes S5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WGL (C1)</li> <li>• NL (D1)</li> </ul>	Yes	Silver/Gold practice/ assessed	Brecon Beacons Lake District Snowdonia	S4

Terrain	Qualification	Notify D of E Award Office	Award Level (Typical)	Typical Area	Somerset Code
Above 600 metres with exposed gullies and steep ground. In season.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ML (D1)</li> </ul>	Yes	Silver/Gold practice/assessed	Brecon Beacons Lake District Snowdonia	S5
Abroad. In season.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ML (D1)</li> </ul>	Yes	Gold assessed	Picos Mountains, Alps, Pyrenees	S6
S3 out of season.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SWMMLTS Walking Leader (Winter) plus Camping Leader (E2)</li> <li>WML (E1)</li> </ul>	Yes	Gold	Exmoor Dartmoor	S7
S4 out of season.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WML (E1)</li> </ul>	Yes	Gold		S8
Other Expeditions (e.g. Canoeing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate leader qualifications as stated by the respective National Governing Body recommendations</li> </ul>	Yes			

Key:

- *In season* – End of March to October
- *SWMMLTS* – South West Mountain & Moorland leader Training Scheme
- *WGL* – Walking Group Leader
- *WML* – Winter Mountain Leader

## Appendix B: Qualification Levels and Somerset Expedition Levels

Qualification Level	Minimum Qualification of Party Leader	Qualification Code	Somerset Level
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>South West Mountain and Moorland Leader Training Scheme Walking Leader (Summer)</li> </ul>	A1	S1 and S2 (day walks only)
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>South West Mountain and Moorland leader Training Scheme Walking Leader (Summer) plus Camping Leader</li> <li>Coastal and Countryside</li> </ul>	B2	S1, S2 and S3
		B3	S1 and S2
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walking Group Leader (WGL)</li> </ul>	C1	S1, S2, S3 and S4
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mountain Leader (ML)</li> </ul>	D1	S1, S2, S3, S4, S5 and S6
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Winter Mountain Leader (WML)</li> <li>South West Mountain and Moorland leader Training Scheme Walking Leader (Winter) plus Camping Leader</li> </ul>	E1	S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7 and S8
		E2	S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6 and S7

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### Further information to National Governing Body Schemes:

Mountain Leader: <https://www.mountain-training.org/qualifications/walking/mountain-leader>

Mountain Training (walking and climbing) training infographic: [Infographics \(mountain-training.org\)](https://www.mountain-training.org/infographics)

Southwest Mountain and Moorland Training Scheme: <http://swmmlts.org/> (the scheme also comprises the Coastal and Countryside Leader and/or camping)

## Appendix C: The Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996

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- [Introduction](#)
- [The Licensing Authority](#)
- [Activities Covered by the Regulations](#)
- [Which Providers Need a Licence?](#)
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### Introduction

These Regulations were passed under the Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act 1995 and introduce a licensing scheme for 'adventure activity' providers. The regulations have important implications for all those who plan, organise, lead or provide certain adventure activities.

**In brief, any provider offering, within the UK, any of certain specified activities for a fee, to young persons under the age of 18, is legally required to be inspected and licensed by the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA).**

Please visit the Health and Safety Executive's website, AALA webpage: [Adventure Activities Licensing \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/adventure-activities-licensing/) > *Looking for a provider* to view all the current **Adventure Activity Licensing Authority (AALA) licensed providers based in Somerset, or nationally if your visit is out of county.**

[< Appendix B](#)

### The Licensing Authority

Under the 1995 Act a Licensing Authority was established. The present Regulations set out the legal framework within which the Licensing Authority must work.

The Licensing Authority has to consider applications for licences from providers, carry out an inspection, and decide whether to grant a licence. Conditions may be attached, such as restrictions on activities and the duration of the licence, and there is also the power to revoke a licence.

The governing legislation is the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, as updated, and the emphasis is on the evaluation of the provider's risk assessment and management when considering an application. Such aspects as instructor qualifications and experience, supervision ratios for parties, first aid and emergency policies and procedures, accident records, and the equipment and facilities of providers, are all taken into account.

There is an inspection cycle and a licence renewal system at expiry, as well as a complaints system.

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## Activities Covered by the Regulations

The following activities are within the scope of the Regulations:

<b>Climbing</b> ( <a href="#">see below</a> )	<b>Watersports</b> ( <a href="#">see below</a> )	<b>Trekking</b> ( <a href="#">see below</a> )	<b>Caving</b> ( <a href="#">see below</a> )
Rock climbing Abseiling Gorge walking Ice climbing	Canoeing Kayaking Dragon boating White water rafting Sailing Sailboarding Windsurfing Wave skiing Improvised rafting	Mountaineering Hill walking Fell running Orienteering Pony trekking Off road cycling Off-piste skiing	Caving Potholing Mine exploration

### **Climbing**

For the purposes of the licensing scheme covers most activities involving movement over difficult terrain which requires the use of hands as well as feet and where safely requires either the use of the equipment or the skills and techniques of a rock or ice climber.

A licence is not required for scrambling where injury would not occur if equipment or special techniques to protect the individual from falling are not used and where other hazards which might cause injury are everyday hazards which would be obvious to and surmountable by someone with no previous experience of rock or ice climbing.

Use of climbing walls, abseiling towers and similar manmade structures designed for practising climbing techniques are excluded from licensing but this does not extend to other outdoor manmade structures such as railway viaducts.

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### **Watersports**

For the purposes of the licensing scheme covers most activities involving un-powered craft on certain *specified waters*. The *specified waters* include any place within the territorial limits of Great Britain on the sea or any other tidal waters, including estuaries, the tidal reaches of rivers, sea lochs and harbours. The term also includes a body of inland water in which it is possible to be more than 50m from the nearest perimeter bank; and any inland waters where the surface is turbulent because of weirs, rapids, waterfalls or fast flowing currents (white water).

A licence is not needed for use of craft on inland lakes, lochs or other bodies of placid water which are less than 100m wide throughout their length and where surface turbulence is limited to the regular wave produced by wind action. If a lake or loch is greater than 100m wide, use of craft on any part of that body of water would be subject to licensing; a river or canal connected to it would be a separate body of water there.

Any stretch of inland water which is categorised at Grade II or above according to the International Canoe Federation classification would be subject to licensing, but unlicensed providers will not be able to use them when they are turbulent at times of spate flow.

The craft subject to licensing, if used on *specified waters*, are canoes, kayaks or similar craft; rafts (inflatable or improvised); sailing boats, windsurfers, sailing dinghies or other wind-propelled craft. A licence is not required for the use of rowing boats, powered or towed inflatables or rafts, and the larger sailing vessels, which go to sea and are subject to Merchant Shipping Act certification.

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## **Trekking**

For the purposes of the licensing scheme covers walking, pony trekking, mountain biking or off-piste skiing in remote open country. Travelling in any place which is *moorland* (open uncultivated land at any height above sea level) or on a mountain above 600m and from which it would take more than 30 minutes' *travelling time* to walk back to an *accessible road* or *refuge* is subject to licensing except for on-piste *skiing*.

Woodland, forests and other cultivated land is excluded from the definition only where it is less than 600m above sea level.

A road, which does not have the width or surface to be used by an ordinary road-going ambulance, would not be an *accessible road*.

A *refuge* is a building offering shelter for the party in an emergency and it must either be occupied or have some means of summoning help.

The distance which can be covered in the 30 minutes' *travelling time* will never be more than 2.5 km and will be less if there are uphill sections on the route back. It must also be over a route which can be walked safely so must not have any unfordable rivers or precipitous ground on it.

Time of year and weather conditions may mean that a road is not an *accessible road* or a seasonally open or occupied building is not a *refuge* at some times of the year.

The distance calculated by reference to *travelling time* is a standard one not dependent on weather conditions or the capabilities of the part.

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## **Caving**

For the purposes of the licensing scheme covers most activities done underground in natural caves or in mines, including variant described as potholing, cave diving and mine exploration. It does not include visits to the parts of show caves or tourist mines, which are open to the public or to the parts of mines (underground excavations made for the purpose of getting minerals), which are still being worked.

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These activities are subject to detailed definition in the Regulations, which should be consulted directly in cases of doubt. In their publication *Guidance on Regulations to the Licensing Authority* the Health and Safety Commission provide further details as to the hazard levels within each of these activities, and the corresponding qualifications required of group instruct/leader and the technical expert advice available to the provider.

The Act only applies to activities within Great Britain; however, reputable UK providers will operate to similar standards where they provide activities in other countries.

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### **Which Providers Need a Licence?**

Anyone who provides adventure activities within the scope of the scheme in return for payment (which does not have to be aimed at profit making) must have a licence and abide by its conditions. The scheme applies to all who sell adventure activities to schools/establishments and to the public for young people under 18. This can include both commercial and voluntary bodies. A school/establishment must check whether any provider it is using for regulated activities is licensed for those activities. A provider can be an individual, a group, a company, a local authority, a school, a service, a society, trust, partnership, or club.

Schools do not need a licence for provision to young people who are currently at the school but would be expected to apply the same standards of leadership, management and care as are required for licensable organisations. Schools do need a licence for provision to young people of another school, or to other members of the public, for activities covered by the Regulations. This includes the Duke of Edinburgh Award when ex-pupils take part or young people from another school or other under 18-year olds are also provided for.

Outdoor Education Centres run by LAs are required to have a licence for any activities covered by the Regulations. The Youth Service needs a licence if, for example, it is a direct provider of Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions to independent young people not in school or from various schools.

A Youth Centre is regarded by the Department for Education as a 'voluntary association' for purposes of the Regulations and as such would not need a licence for regulated activities unless it provides for non-members. The Armed Forces can be providers but have Crown immunity from the Regulations.

A full list of current AALA licence holders together with useful advice for providers and clients is available at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/aala/index.htm#>.

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### **Implications**

Activity organisers:

- must comply with LA safety requirements as set out in this guidance.

- must ensure that they do not offer defined activities in return for payment to anyone under 18, except to their own members, unless they are either licensed or are using a provider who is licensed for the activities on offer. To do so is a criminal offence.
- should understand that the term 'payment' is construed as being any financial transaction between the parties, even where the instruction or leadership is nominally free but would not be available to anyone who has not paid for transport, accommodation, catering or some other part of the provider's package.
- must avoid using any provider of licensable activities unless they hold a licence from the Licensing Authority and can provide a licence number. It is strongly recommended that this be checked on the AALA website, <https://aala.hse.gov.uk/aala/>. If you have concerns regarding an AALA licensed organisation, please contact [AALA-Applications@hse.gov.uk](mailto:AALA-Applications@hse.gov.uk). Please note that this only applies to licensable activities being provided to children by licensed providers. Activities involving adults should be reported to your local enforcing authority.
- should recognise that the licence held by a provider will only apply to specified activities from those detailed above. In other words, a provider can be licensed for one or more of these activities and can only offer those licensable activities that are specified on the licence. Most providers offer an additional range of activities which are outside the scope of the Licensing Regulations and for which they do not, therefore, need a licence.
- should recognise that most 'adventure activities', whether falling into the licensable category or not, should only be provided by individuals who are appropriately qualified and experienced in the activity in question.
- should note that the employment of unlicensed, freelance activity instructors as supply teachers to provide licensable activities to young people is legal, providing the School/establishment meets the normal regulations for employing teachers and other staff. Schools/establishments should ensure that any such staff are appropriately qualified, are police-checked where necessary and provide instruction only to young people at the employing School/establishment.

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## General

A copy of the full regulations (Guidance to the Licensing Authority on the Adventure Activity Licensing Regulations, 1996) can be obtained online:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/1309/contents/made>

Or from HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 6FS. Telephone 01787 881165.

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