



National
Guidance

Adventurous Activities

Rationale

Participating in Adventure Activities - particularly when it is within the context of a residential visit - can be one of the highlights of a young person's learning experiences. While any off-site activity that takes a young person away from familiar surroundings will probably be exciting, adding an extra dimension of personal challenge through participation in adventurous activities can make the experience particularly memorable, rewarding and enjoyable, with a high probability that the learning that takes place will be life-long.

Adventurous Activities can target a wide range of learning outcomes and are particularly good at enhancing the following:

- Risk awareness and personal risk management - young people will undertake experiences that demonstrate that risks can be identified and managed, providing the confidence required to face the uncertainties of every-day living in a complex world.
- Personal and social development – providing real challenges through activities to ensure opportunities for 'real world' 'learning in context' and the development of the social aspects of intelligence as well as an enhanced sense of personal responsibility.
- Citizenship and employability - activities delivered in a way that can develop a young person's collaborative working skills - enhancing learning about when and how to support, lead and follow - are important life skills that help develop a sense of community and responsibility, and improved communication skills.
- New ideas for physical exercise - the activities will expose young people to alternatives to traditional and often short-lived ball sports and team games, contributing to a lifelong healthy living agenda.
- Improved social relations and opportunities to examine the concept of trust (us in them, them in us, them in themselves, them in each other).
- Opportunities to practically examine the components of challenge: chance of gain or benefit / risk of loss or harm / accurate goal setting and judgement / willingness and commitment / activity outside the comfort zone (physical and/or emotional).
- Enhanced emotional intelligence (including a greater awareness of their own needs and the needs of others).
- Opportunities to interact with a wild environment leading to:
 - Improved environmental appreciation, knowledge, awareness and understanding.
 - Better awareness and knowledge of the importance and practices of sustainability in the modern world.

- Recreation - the activities are likely to be seen as fun - providing enjoyment, stress relief and purposeful leisure.

A well-planned educational programme including Adventurous Activities can also be a powerful way of improving achievement and attainment within most curriculum subjects. Students are active participants, not passive consumers, and a wide range of learning styles can flourish.

Leading Adventurous Activities

If establishment staff are to lead adventurous activities, then it is essential that they are properly assessed as competent to do so. See the document on Assessment of Competence in this Guidance.

Using an external Provider

If the establishment does not use its own activity leaders, there are several options available:

1. There are many freelance instructors who can arrange activities by the day in school grounds or in the local countryside. They can often provide all of the equipment you will need.
2. Some employers (such as local authorities) have their own outdoor and/or environmental centres. While their primary purpose is likely to be focussed on serving the needs of a defined community of establishments, many will also provide services to groups from outside that community.
3. There is a large number of centres operated by private companies and charitable trusts throughout the country, some of which offer residential opportunities and others specialising in special needs provision.
4. Some providers run Summer Camps, where young people can benefit from adventure activities in school holidays. These holidays provide opportunities for informal and recreational learning, as well as the chance to make new friends, gain in self-confidence, learn new skills and have fun.

For advice on selecting a Provider and ensuring that they meet required standards, see the Check List on Assessing an Adventure Provider in this Guidance.

Licensing and Accreditation

Adventurous activities for young people in England, Scotland and Wales are subject to the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996. However, not all providers are required to hold a licence, and not all activities fall within the scope of licensing. Other accreditation schemes also exist. See the document on Adventure Activity Licensing Regulations in this Guidance for more detail but the decision tree below provides a summary.

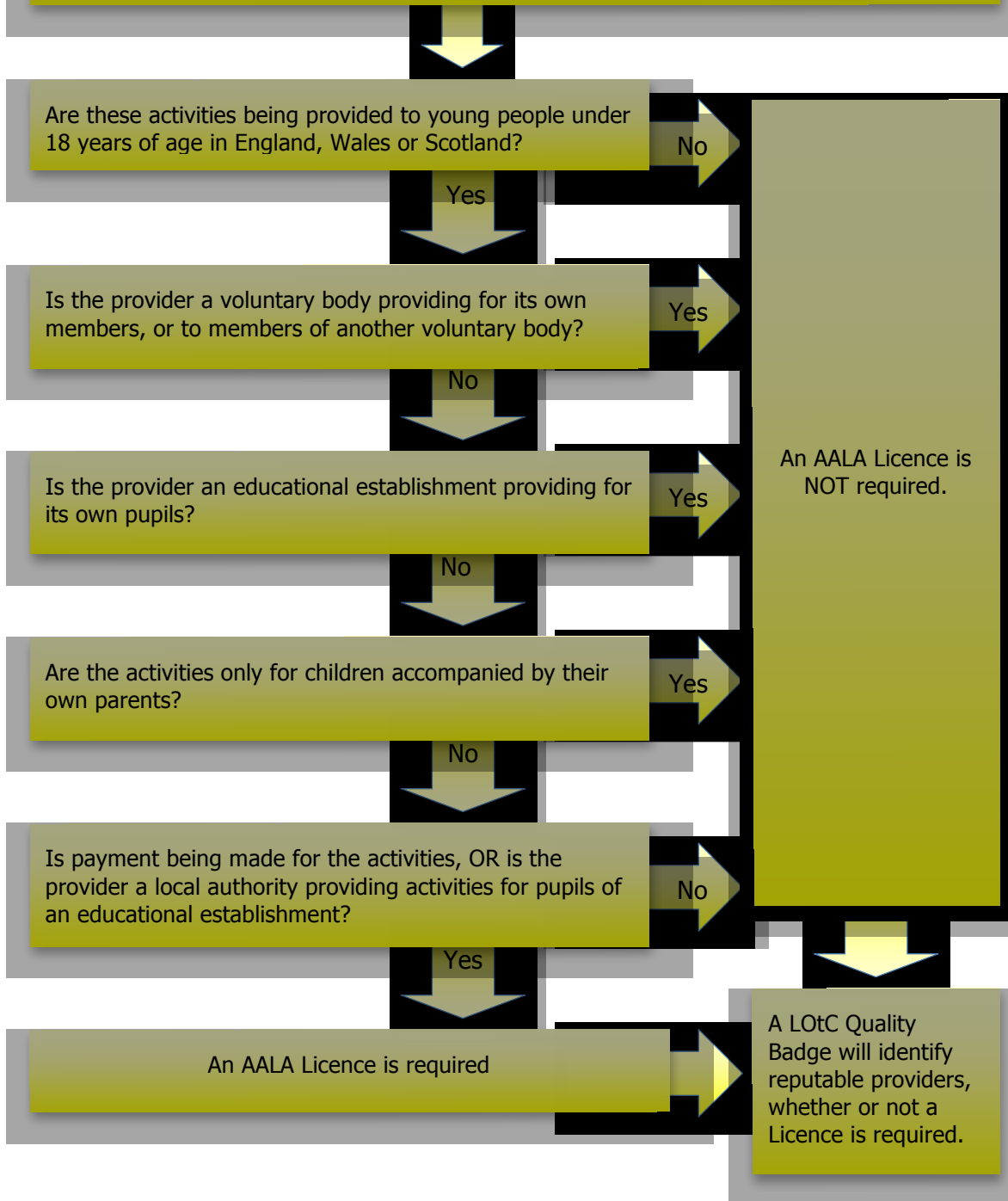
Activities requiring licensing

Caving – exploration underground apart from show-caves

Climbing – climbing or descending natural terrain using specialist equipment and expertise

Trekking – crossing remote moorland or land over 600 metres on foot, horseback, cycle, skis, skates or sledges

Watersports – using craft without engines on the sea, tidal waters, white water and lakes more than 100 metres across



Learning Support

The Visit Leader is responsible for determining the educational objectives, and it is important that these are discussed with the provider, ensuring that the activity programme best suits the planned learning outcomes.

Outdoor centres can offer different levels of support and Visit Leaders need to determine what is appropriate to the group needs. The options available range from someone providing accommodation or equipment only, through to fully catered and staffed packages with specialists providing all activities and a programme tailored to your specific objectives. Accommodation varies from camping barns, through hostels, converted ships and old manor houses to conference centre standard. There are centres where you can have sole occupancy and others where there will be several hundred young people on site.

You will need to balance considerations such as cost, location/environment, the activities available, the quality and experience of specialist staff and the quality and type of accommodation, in order to find the best match for your budget, your own staff team's skills and experience, your students' capabilities, aspirations and needs, and your specific learning objectives.

