



National
Guidance

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Joint Visits and Partnership Working

Sometimes different employers or establishments work together to organise outdoor learning opportunities or offsite visits for participants from more than one establishment. These can have many advantages, such as:

- participants and staff from different establishments, and possibly from different backgrounds, get to know each other and learn from each other;
- staff from different establishments share resources, experience and expertise, and provide opportunities that would not otherwise be available;
- economies of scale are possible, making more efficient use of resources and reducing the cost per participant.

Alternatively, sometimes an establishment works in partnership with a provider, rather than having a transactional relationship where the establishment simply engages the provider to provide a service. For example, a school might enter into a long-term arrangement with a specialist provider, to organise a programme of activities and visits where teachers lead some activities and provider staff lead other activities, pooling their individual expertise. Again, this can have many advantages, including:

- the provider brings specialist resources and expertise which the establishment does not otherwise have;
- the provider trains establishment staff;
- establishment staff can use their own expertise, rather than hand over totally to the provider and thus feel disempowered.

When working in partnership with another organisation, it is vital to have a shared vision and ethos, with clearly agreed aims for the joint activities. It is also important to have a clear understanding of who is responsible for what, especially the risk management of activities. There should be a written agreement, such as a memorandum of understanding or a contract, which sets out the aims and nature of the provision and details of what the different parties are responsible for, how decisions are made and how concerns are addressed.

Employers are legally responsible for the health, safety and welfare of those affected by their activities, including when engaging an external provider to deliver those activities: see OEAP National Guidance document [3.2a "Underpinning Legal Framework and Duty of Care"](#). This responsibility also applies when working in partnership with another employer or provider, and care should be taken to ensure that nothing 'falls down the cracks' between the organisations. The same considerations apply when establishments from the same employer work together.

One way of working is to assign the responsibility of assessing the risks of each joint activity to a particular partner, usually the partner with the most expertise in that activity, and for the results of the risk assessment to be shared with the other partners for review and agreement. Some online visit management systems provide the facility for doing this between establishments from the same employer.

When staff from different organisations are involved in leading visits and activities, it must be clear at any time who is the current Visit Leader and/or Activity Leader, with clear handover when these change. See OEAP National Guidance document [3.4k "Visit or Activity Leader"](#).

Any establishment providing 'in scope' adventure activities for participants who are not on their own roll, for payment, is legally required to have an Adventure Activities Licence. See OEAP National Guidance document [3.2f "Adventure Activity Licensing"](#).

Examples of Partnership Working

The following OEAP National Guidance documents give further advice about specific examples of partnership working:

- [7.1c "Collaborative Provision"](#) about collaborative curriculum provision between establishments;
- [7.1y "Using Armed Services Providers"](#) about Combined Cadet Force (CCF) contingents in schools and colleges.

