

Meeting convened to discuss a sector approach to a new Adventure Activity Licensing regime

24th March 2017

BMC Offices, Manchester

Meeting notes

Present :

Adrian Clark – member of Outdoor Education Advisers Panel & Adventure Activity Industry Advisory Committee

John Cousins Chief Executive, Mountain Training UK

John Hamilton Chair of Scottish Adventure Activity Forum

Dave Horrocks member of SAAF & Scottish Advisors Panel for Outdoor Education

Craig McCullough member of Adventure Industry NI

Iain Peter Director of Adventure Activity Associates

Mike Rosser Chair of AAIAC

Andy Robinson Chief Executive of Institute for Outdoor Learning

Martin Smith Chair of English Outdoor Council

Catherine Williams – Operations Manager of Snowdonia Active/WATO

Apologies :

Matt Healy member of British Activity Providers Association & AAIAC

Steve Morgan Head of Sport Wales National Outdoor Centre, Plas Menai.

Louise Edwards Chair of Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres

Paul Donovan Chair of Wales Activity Tourism Organisation

Part 1 : Sharing of current understanding

Part 2 : Proposed communication with HSE

Sharing of current understanding

1. HSE are open to hear the industry's proposals
2. There is a lack of clarity from HSE on where we are in the review process. There also concerns that Adventure Activity Licensing Authority governance is not part of the review and that the proposed re-tendering of the Adventure Activity Licensing Service contract, which Tourism Quality Services have held for twenty years does not appear to be underway.
3. There is a need to manage HSE expectations about the readiness of the sector and any proposals should feature "high level principles" that enjoy broad sector support. We are looking for an evolution delivered through working together with the HSE. We are early in this journey. Realistically this could be at least 5 years.
4. Terminology is important and must be defined in all communications (see terminology notes)
5. The industry seeks a "negotiated solution" – working with HSE to deliver developments that can work across the UK (being mindful of the devolved home nations and HSE's role across the devolved nations). HSE is one of the few bodies that can be consistent across the home nations, whilst at the same time providing at least current levels of assurance.

We would like to assume that current levels of funding and support can be assured.

6. There is a need for more clarity about the HSE role in the 4 nations.
Craig to check NI HSE communications with Richard Judge.

7. Any industry proposal needs to reflect the need for industry involvement in the governance of AALA. We hope that the future regime will welcome input from the industry and will include open and transparent feedback to the wider industry (and not just those holding accreditation).
8. A purely voluntary scheme would not currently meet the needs of all 4 home nations; many stakeholders have also indicated that they need at least current levels of assurance from any proposed alternative to the current statutory regime. However, there is also a clear demand for improved levels of flexibility within the accreditation regime. Such a scheme requires significant legal input in terms of what is possible and practicable and we would like to work with HSE to create the kind of flexibility and inclusivity required.
9. The sector recognises the difficulties experienced by providers in NI who do not have access to the current licensing scheme. We would welcome the opportunity to explore possible solutions with HSE as part of the review and any subsequent proposals that emerge.

The group recognises that HSE may be unable to endorse/engage in the accreditation of "quality of provision" (an issue identified as important by some stakeholders). However, this may be an example of an area where a joined up approach (industry and HSE) could deliver both forms of accreditation through a single inspection to those providers who want it.

Whilst the current "ad hoc" group has been brought together by AAIAC it is recognised, that moving forward, there may be a need to look again at how we deal with industry representation and input

10. The "ad hoc group" needs to consider where additional expertise or representation is required as the debate moves forward. It may be appropriate to appoint a small sub group that can work with the HSE to develop proposals (always feeding back to the wider group and the industry).
11. Mike Rosser to let Frances Kelly at HSE know that we will provide a proposed approach on behalf of the industry. This high level approach to be communicated to the sector by those present and others. Mike and available members of the group to hold telcon with HSE on 7th April to discuss the following proposed communication to Frances & Cameron.
12. The group recognises that providers in the different home nations have differing levels of understanding of the potential of changes to Adventure Activity Licensing, due to the differing approaches to consultation on the matter by the home nation governments:
 - a. The Scottish government has recently run a fairly comprehensive review enabling a reasonably wide range of providers to consider potential changes.
 - b. The Welsh government has focused on access to the benefits of the outdoors and left the issue of licensing to the HSE. Some discussion has taken place amongst the regional environmental charter groups.
 - c. In Northern Ireland a previously funded mechanism for consultation no longer exists and it is early days in the transition to a voluntary forum. See note 6. above.
 - d. Westminster has left the approach to any change to the HSE. No meaningful discussion about potential changes has taken place outside of the recent meeting in Birmingham. A real need for a better understanding of the potential options for the industry exists.
13. Key features of approach to HSE :
 - a. The industry wants to work with the HSE to improve on the current regime.

- b. This group will review its membership and ensure the wider industry is informed to maintain transparency.
- c. Ensure the HSE understand we believe they are the key to consistency in any future regimes across the 4 nations.
- d. High level principles include:
 - Any new arrangements, following the Review, must give at least current levels of assurance to all stakeholders.
 - There needs to be more industry involvement in the running of the Scheme
 - Current levels of financial support for the Scheme should be maintained.
 - We need improved flexibility (i.e. it should be possible to vary the Scheme without changing the law – add activities, change the fees etc.)
 - The industry would like to work with HSE to deliver and further develop the Scheme
 - Following a period of transition, the industry could be in a position to assume increased responsibility for the Scheme

Proposed communication with HSE

The industry, working through a group (see note 5) of representative bodies and individual experts, is committed to working with the HSE to develop a consistent and improved approach to adventure activity licensing in the 4 home nations. The group recognises that this is a process that requires a long term commitment to working together and is prepared to provide the expertise and industry support for the HSE.

Industry Statement	Associated questions
Any new arrangements, following the Review (see note 3), must give at least current levels of assurance to all stakeholders (see note 4).	Is it possible to achieve any new arrangements and retain assurance levels without changes being incorporated in new legislation?
There needs to be more industry (see note 1) involvement in the governance and on-going development of the Scheme (see note 2) to access the schemes potential benefits	How might the Scheme be better served by the Industry (see note 1)?
Current levels of financial investment in the Scheme should be maintained to ensure the robustness of new arrangements and realise the potential societal benefits of participation in outdoor adventurous activities.	What additional financial investment and other resources might be available to enable any transition from current to new arrangements?
We need improved flexibility in the Scheme to reflect the evolving nature of the range of adventurous activities.	To what extent does the current Scheme infer an appropriate approach to provision across the full breadth of adventurous activities provided by a License holder?
We do not recommend an extension of scope beyond commercial provision to under 18's.	

Terminology notes

1. The industry (a.k.a. The Sector) – those who provide adventure activities, advise on adventure activities, NGBs (do we want to include participants and parents – I think not)
2. The Scheme – the system(s) for accrediting adventure activity providers that results from the current Review.
3. The Review – The totality of the current process being undertaken by HSE
4. Stakeholders – Those with an interest in the accreditation of adventure activities (includes those at 1 above and also: parents, teachers, participants, elected representatives etc.)
5. The Group – This group that is meeting and collaborating, on behalf of the industry, to try to determine if there is enough common ground for an industry wide response to HSE.