

**REPORT TO:** Education Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 30 September 2014

**BY:** Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

**SUBJECT:** Overview of the East Lothian Council Outdoor Learning Service and HSE Adventure Activity Licensing Authority (AALA) Inspection Report

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## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to give an overview of the Outdoor Learning Service and update the Committee regarding the HSE Adventure Activity Licensing Authority (AALA) Inspection Report on East Lothian Council Outdoor Learning Service. The background papers include a copy of the HSE report.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report (Appendix 1) and in particular the successful HSE Adventure Activity Licensing Authority (AALA) Inspection Report.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

### **3.1 Overview of the Service**

- 3.1.1 **“The journey through education for any child in Scotland must include opportunities for a series of planned, quality outdoor learning experiences”** - quote from Education Scotland

- 3.1.2 The Outdoor Learning Service uses the outdoor environment and adventurous activities as a vehicle for delivering the Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning. The service Vision is:

- **To enable** every East Lothian Council school to deliver the Curriculum for Excellence using the outdoor environment.

- **To assist** schools in delivering *regular* and *frequent* outdoor learning which is sustainable, high quality, progressive and linked directly to the relevant experiences and outcomes in the Curriculum for Excellence.
  - **To be regarded** nationally as high quality educators of Outdoor Learning providing valued input to national organisations and best practice initiatives.

### 3.1.3 Staffing of the Outdoor Learning Service is made up of

- Principal Teacher (0.6 FTE)
- Teacher (1 FTE)
- Teacher (0.6 FTE)
- Technician (1 FTE)
- Associate Staff/Freelance (x6 when needed)
- Technical Advisors (when needed)
- Student Placements (school, college and university)
- Qualified Volunteers (x3)

### 3.1.4 There are a number of ways the service delivers its vision

3.1.4.1 **‘Specialist Outdoor Learning Teacher Provision’** The service provides all schools with a set number of days allocated to them. All teaching sessions delivered are; planned with direct reference to the Curriculum for Excellence relevant key ‘Experiences and Outcomes’, tailored to individual school/ class/ learner requirements, progressive and high quality. These days are free to participants.

3.1.4.2 **‘Adventure Award Days’** This is an opportunity for young people to gain the skills needed to progress in a range of adventurous activities. Young people have the opportunity to gain local and national certification. All awards meet a range of CfE experiences and outcomes. A nominal charge is made to participants.

3.1.4.3 **‘Extra Curricular/ Extra Requests...’** The service supports the demands on schools and community such as DofE, JMA & Residential experiences. A subsidised rate is charge to participants.

3.1.4.4 **‘Other OL Projects’** The service provides support, staffing, equipment etc where appropriate, to enable outdoor learning projects related to the curriculum for excellence to take place. One of the key objectives for these projects is that they can become sustainable over an agreed period of time to be run without the need for outdoor learning staff or secure funding to cover the cost of outdoor learning staff. Projects we are involved with at the moment include:

- ◆ Ross High Climbing in the curriculum
- ◆ 2hrs PE across all schools
- ◆ Bikability level 1 & 2 provision in all primary schools
- ◆ Christmas Leavers

◆ Additional Support Needs (ASN) adventures in the outdoors

- 3.1.4.5 **‘Summer Activity Programme’** The service provides a programme of adventurous activities for young people run through the school summer holidays.
- 3.1.4.6 **‘Staff Development’** Provide CPD/ CLPL opportunities (including NGB awards) enabling staff to build confidence and pass on skills and knowledge to young people in an outdoor learning environment.
- 3.1.4.7 **‘Advice & Resources’** The service provides advice and resources to all enabling outdoor learning to take place throughout the council. This includes the management of Innerwick Residential Centre.
- 3.1.4.8 **‘Volunteers/ Support’** From a number of areas including: School Work Experience Placements, University Student Placements, Volunteer Network, Partnership Working, Outdoor Learning Network Group.
- 3.1.4.9 **‘External (to ELC) work’** Any external requests for delivery of adventurous activities/ outdoor learning/ first aid are considered and charged at a commercial rate if associate/ freelance staff are available. All our staff development courses are accessible to external clients who are charged a commercial rate for attendance.

## 3.2 HSE Adventure Activity Licensing Authority (AALA) Inspection Report

- 3.2.1 The adventure activities licensing scheme (AALS) is the mechanism for the inspection and regulation for certain aspects of the delivery of adventure activities to young people as set out in the Activity Centres (Young Persons’ Safety) Act 1995 and the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004. East Lothian Council have held a HSE AALA licence since 1996 when licencing was first introduced and have been inspected on an annual basis since that date.
- 3.2.2 The inspection included looking at aspects of the service that play a key role in the delivery of Outdoor Learning throughout East Lothian Council, these included:
- Managing the council wide visit approval database, EVOLVE, with regard to Outdoor Learning experiences. The number of approvals have doubled over the last 2 years.
  - Defining the ELC ‘Safety and Good Practice in Managing off Site Visits Guidelines’ alongside safety management documentation.
  - Ensuring staff (throughout the council) are trained to appropriate standards to ensure off site visits involving young people are of high quality and take place safely. Providing access to appropriate technical advice where necessary.
  - Appropriate maintenance of safety equipment throughout the council, relating to adventurous activities.

3.2.3 Other service responsibilities that have been discussed in previous reports include contributions to national bodies concerned with outdoor learning safety and management and managing the monitoring of off site visits taking place involving young people

3.2.4 In conclusion, the inspection was very successful and the recommendation advised '**no required action**'.

### 3.3 How does the Outdoor Learning Service help deliver the SOA? ...in brief

#### 3.3.1 Sustainable Economy

- **1. East Lothian has a growing sustainable economy** – The service utilises a number of small businesses in East Lothian to deliver on its behalf.
- **3. Communities in East Lothian are able to adapt to climate change and reduced finite natural resources** – Encourage/ educate young people to lead active healthy lives promoting walking and cycling. Promote cycling awards for both staff and pupils. Encourage school and community groups to walk pupils to venues and/ or use public transport.

#### 3.3.2 Resilient People

- **4. All of East Lothian's young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens** – Deliver the curriculum for excellence alongside both local and national awards.
- **6. In East Lothian we live healthier, more active and independent lives** – Educate both staff and young people about the importance of active healthy lives. Promote the outdoors as part of healthy living. Introduce new outdoor sports/interests to staff and pupils encouraging them to progress by offering development programmes and access to local clubs.

#### 3.3.3 Safe and Vibrant Communities

- **8. East Lothian has high quality natural environments** – Use adventurous activities as a vehicle to educate young people about the importance of their local natural environment and how they can play a role in protecting and enhancing it.
- **10. East Lothian has stronger, more resilient, supportive, influential and inclusive communities** – Encourage, support and build up our volunteer network. Continue to work across all sectors of the East Lothian community both in schools and with community groups. Continue to deliver outdoor learning across the learning communities of East Lothian.

## 4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The ELC Guidelines Safety and Good Practice in Managing Off Site Visits needs to be reviewed and updated on an annual basis in accordance with HSE AALA

guidance and Scottish Government Guidance in the form of the Going Out There (GOT) document.

- 4.2 The Outdoor Learning Service is making a key contribution to The East Lothian Plan: Single Outcome Agreement 2013-23 as noted above.

## **5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 This report is not applicable to the wellbeing of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

## **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Financial – None  
6.2 Personnel - None  
6.3 Other - None

## **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 HSE AALA Inspection Report (Appendix 1)  
7.2 [www.edubuzz.org/outdoorlearning](http://www.edubuzz.org/outdoorlearning)

<b>AUTHOR'S NAME</b>	Liz Brookes
<b>DESIGNATION</b>	Principal Teacher Outdoor Education
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<b>DATE</b>	3 September 2014

# *Adventure Activities Licensing Service*

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## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **Name of Licence Applicant**

East Lothian Council

### **Inspected establishment / company / person**

**Name** East Lothian Council Outdoor Learning Service

**Address** Musselburgh Racecourse Complex

Balcarres Road

MUSSELBURGH

East Lothian

EH21 7SR

**Reference Number** R0176

**Operational Base** Unit 3, Musselburgh Racecourse Complex, Musselburgh.

**Type of Provider** Large Multi Activity Local Authority Peripatetic Provider

**Normal Capacity** 50 - 100

**Contact person during inspection** Liz Brooks Martyn Pegg Keith Christie

**Contact's position** Principal Teacher Outdoor Education Teacher Outdoor Education Technician

**Enforcement Authority** HSE Edinburgh

### **Inspector**

Steve Spalding

### **Date of inspection**

12.06.14

### **Time on Site**

6 hour(s)

## **About this Report**

- In making this report the Licensing Service has considered a report(s) made to it by an Inspector authorised in accordance with the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations (updated 2004).
- You should act on the requirements of this report which supersede any previous discussions or verbal instructions.
- The report does not constitute a final decision by the Licensing Authority. The final decision will generally be in the form of a licence document, where applicable, or a refusal notice where not. A licence will be forwarded to the provider when all required information has been received and full payment has been made.
- In some cases you may be instructed to make changes to the way you operate and you should note any required time scale. In other cases you may be offered advice. In these cases you should use your own expertise to decide if it is applicable or necessary.
- In cases where there are no apparent seasonal or activity restrictions in respect of activities in the activity matrix of this report (or any subsequent licence document), the standard conditions attached to all licence documents will apply.
- In all cases the continued management of safety remains the responsibility of the provider and not the Licensing Authority nor the Licensing Service.
- Your licence, where one is applicable, will show the licence holder as **East Lothian Council** and the operational base as **East Lothian Council Outdoor Learning Service**.

*Please advise us as a matter of some urgency if these details are not correct.*

- Similarly, you should check that the “Activities offered by the provider” section, if shown, is accurate. The matrix may contain activities which are not licensable. These will not appear on any subsequent licence document.
- **You should be aware that you have the right to make a representation to the Licensing Authority on any decisions made by them. In the first instance representations should be to the Head of Inspection of the Adventure Activities Licensing Service.**

**Marcus Bailie**  
**Head of Inspection**

Activity	Activity Restrictions	Seasonal Restrictions	In Scope
Kayaking		None	Yes
Open Canoeing		None	Yes
Improvised Rafting		None	Yes
Sailing		None	Yes
Stand Up Paddleboarding		None	Yes
Rock Climbing		None	Yes
Abseiling		None	Yes
Gorge Scrambling		None	Yes
Coasteering		None	Yes
Hill Walking & Mountaineering		None	Yes
Ski Touring		None	Yes
Off-Road Cycling		None	Yes
Orienteering			No
Pony Trekking	sub-contracted activity		N/A
Team building			No
Archery			No
Bushcraft			

**During an inspection on 12.06.14 the following aspects of the organisation were considered.**

**Part A : About this provider.**

A1. East Lothian Council's Department of Partnership and Services for Community operate the Outdoor Learning Service from their operating base at Musselburgh Racecourse Complex. All adventure activity provided by the Council is either delivered by the Service, or is subject to a notification and authorisation system operated by the Service. All excursions within East Lothian are managed through the Evolve software programme. A major part of the Service's operation is providing activities to the Council's schools and community groups. Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) award provision is mainly school based, but there are currently six community groups actively involved in DofE work.

A2. The operation is managed by Principal Teacher Liz Brookes. The operation is staffed by two full time and one part time permanent instructors, supplemented where required from a pool of six Associate Instructors (occasional/freelance).

A3. Activities are undertaken mainly within the East Lothian area, but facilities and venues further afield are occasionally used.

A4. A past Council reorganisation has resulted in the transfer of management responsibility for the Outdoor Education Service from the Education section, to the Partnership and Services for Community section. This is understood to be an administrative arrangement, with no material effect on the operation.

A5. East Lothian Council has 6 secondary schools, 35 primary schools, and 2 special needs bases.

A6. The Service is a Provider for the Lowland Leader Award, the Basic Expedition Leader scheme, a Regional Centre for the British Stand up Paddle Association and are Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) accredited First Aid Trainers.

**Part B : About this inspection.**

B1. This visit was undertaken following an application from East Lothian Council for a renewal of their adventure activities licence. It consisted of :-

- a. observation of a Coasteering session at Milsey Bay, North Berwick;
- b. observation of a staff morning planning meeting;



- c. viewing a sample of safety management documentation;
- d. viewing of the range of equipment in the stores and provided for the session;
- e. discussions with staff delivering the session, the group and accompanying staff, checking a range of safety management arrangements.

B2. Prior to the visit, the inspector reviewed the report following the last visit, viewed the licence application, and also checked the provider's website, [www.eastlothian.gov.uk](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk), for content.

B3. In the course of the inspection visit, the inspector:-

- a. observed the morning staff meeting confirming aspects of safety management including the outcome of a recent DofE meeting with school staff where Liz clarified staffing ratios and qualification requirements;
- b. discussed training and competence of staff to run coasteering activity with reference to developments in more relevant courses such as the Surf Lifesaving GB (SLGB) Coasteering Safety and Rescue Qualification;
- c. joined a coasteering group and observed the practical application of safety management;
- d. checked staff records and operating procedures relating to the observed coasteering session and for several freelance staff;
- e. checked the range and scope of current Council provision with reference to the current programme and future plans. Was informed of the creation of an East Lothian young persons awards for various activities provided as an encouragement and achievement award within the schools;
- f. was informed by Liz that Bill Stephen who was the Depute has now take a new post with Midlothian Council's outdoor education provision and that the post has not been filled resulting in a higher work load for all the staff;
- g. enquired about the additional work load of checking Evolve and was informed by Liz that notifications through Evolve have risen from approximately 300 to 700/800 per year. Liz also explained that she works closely with Judith Wood in the Education Health and Safety (H&S) department in advising the signing off of school excursions through Evolve;
- h. viewed a recent quality assurance monitoring report for a school visit by Chris Lawson from the Council's H&S department. Chris audited the provision of an offsite visit which had approval through Evolve by meeting the staff during the visit. Liz explained that Chris planned to make one such check per month to ensure that schools were complying with the Council's stated policies which in turn supported her role in signing off more adventurous visits and DofE award activity;
- i. checked on accident and incidents and the subsequent reviewing, noting that there had not been any major events. Liz explained that there was a monthly staff meeting to review any accidents. The inspector suggested adding checking the Info Log to the monthly agenda for updates on current issues;
- j. checked on implementation of recommendations made in the previous licence renewal report, and discussed responses to advice previously offered;
- k. checked the current status of Council DofE provision, and was informed that the provider will be using the Lowland Leader Award to support staff delivering the Bronze level. Also that the Service will be offering Gold level expeditions as many of the schools do not have that capability mainly due to a lack of staff experience and qualifications;
- l. checked on access to technical advice as and when required noting that a number of experienced and highly qualified technical advisors are involved with the Service;
- m. checked arrangements for ensuring all equipment is fit for use and viewed recent equipment check records noting that equipment appeared to be in really good condition. Was informed that all freelance instructor personal technical equipment is now checked as fit for purpose prior to use or centre equipment provided;
- n. discussed several issues currently impacting the outdoor sector including auto belays, the Info Log, kill cords, Kelly Kettles and the latest position on the future of Licensing and several items from the Licensing

## Service's Top Tips and Handy Hints;

- o. provided feedback on the inspection visit and the issues raised.

### **Part C : Activity Observation**

C1. The inspector joined a group of P6 primary children from Prestonpans Primary School on a coastering activity session at Milsey Bay near North Berwick. This was the first part of a Sea to Summit day when the children had the opportunity to coasteer and then climb to the summit of North Berwick Law. The day was led by Martyn Pegg assisted by Keith Christie.

C2. The eight children were well equipped for the session and were accompanied by a member of teaching staff. Martyn and Keith made the experience child centred and carefully helped them to set realistic goals, consider each other and the environment, develop confidence and learn about the shore environment while having a lot of fun. The session was safely and competently delivered.

C3. The session observed seemed to confirm that the risk management and analysis systems claimed by the provider and seen in various documents continue to be implemented in practice.

### **Part D : Issues arising from this inspection.**

There are no required actions as a result of this inspection visit.

### **Part E : Review of the recommendations made in the report following inspection on 4.6.13**

All requirements and recommendations in the previous report had been considered and acted on.

### **Recommendations and conditions regarding the granting of a licence**

The inspector recommended that the licence should continue

**Duration** 1 year

### **Additional Conditions**

### **Notes**

### **Report prepared by**

Steve Spalding

### **Date report prepared**

13.06.14

### **Further action to be taken by the Licensing Service**

### **Further action taken**



**Endorsement by The Adventure Activities Licensing Service**

**Date received** 16.06.14

**Reviewed by** Bob Telfer, Deputy Head of Inspection

**Date** 16.06.14

**Comments**

**Licence decision** Minded to Continue

**Date of Decision** 17.06.14

Marcus Bailie, Head of Inspection

**Duration of licence** 1 year **to run from** 28.06.14 to 28.06.15



Is there an audit with this report?  Yes  No
