

DofE Expeditions in Wild Country: Management and Supervision

Wild country areas are designated by the DofE as those areas most suitable for land based Gold expeditions. They generally align to national park areas.

Recommended Practice (Produced by the South West Outdoor Education Advisers Panel)

The information below summarises practice recommended by the South West Outdoor Education Advisers Panel for the management of DofE Expeditions in terms of role, recommended minimum competence, recommended minimum staffing ratios and risk management.

Competence is based on the experience, leadership skills and qualifications needed to manage and supervise walking and camping activities, in wild country areas. In addition to the specific qualifications listed below, experience should include appropriate recent experience of countryside and moorland, hill walking and camping, and in adverse conditions. Leadership skills include those necessary for an individual to carry out their role effectively, according to conditions, age, standards, and ability of the participants and the extent to which participants are directly or indirectly supervised.

DofE Expedition Lead Supervisors must complete the online Expedition Assessor and Supervisors Pathway. All Expedition Supervisors should be aware of current good practice in terms of leadership, hypothermia and hyperthermia, water hazards, access, clothing and equipment.

Supervising DofE Ventures is typically carried out by adults who have one of the following roles, noting that within small teams some of these roles will be carried out by the same person

- Centre Manager
- Expedition Lead Supervisor
- Team Supervisor
- Assistant
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Staffing ratios: As a minimum there should be one appropriately qualified expedition supervisor to every team up to a maximum of 7 Participants. If teams are combined for training purposes, as a minimum there should be one appropriately qualified group leader to 14 young people in the same location. **See detailed guidance below.**

	Centre Manager	Expedition Lead Supervisor	Team Supervisor	Assistant
Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-ordination and management of one or more teams on behalf of a school or establishment. Identified link with Licensed Org (LO) DofE Manager The Centre Mgr will not necessarily be out on expedition with teams on each occasion training takes place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for the overall management of a particular training event or expedition in wild country. The Expedition Lead Supervisor will determine the deployment of staff for a particular training event or expedition, based on the terrain and weather conditions in the wild country area, age, standard and experience of participants etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibility for the supervision in wild country of a specific team of DofE Participants Supervision includes determining how any remote supervision is carried out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisting a Team Supervisor with the supervision of team in wild country
Recommended minimum competence	DofE: EAS Pathway (Exp Supervisor)	DofE: EAS Pathway (Exp Supervisor)	DofE: Foundations Pathway	DofE: Foundations Pathway
Walking	(The Centre Mgr will not necessarily hold an Outdoor Qualification if the Expedition Section is run by another person within the Centre. However overall responsibility for the section remains with the Centre Mgr who may delegate elements of that responsibility to others)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Summer Moorland Camping Leader (SWMLTS) or *Hill & Moorland Leader (previously Walking Group Leader) or *Mountain Leader <p>*only valid if you hold a current first aid certificate, minimum 16 hours</p> <p>If a training event does not involve camping the minimum competence is Summer or Winter Moorland Walking Leader as appropriate.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant experience <p>The level of experience required will depend on the role of the assistant, determined by Team Supervisor and the conditions on the day</p>
Risk management	Responsible for producing a specific risk assessment for the forthcoming season for the school or establishment, based on anticipated training locations and overall size, composition and experience of the staff and participant team/s.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for adapting the risk assessment in planning for a specific training event or expedition. Responsible for on-going risk assessment during the training event or expedition. 		Acting in support of the qualified staff

Staffing ratio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Centre Mgr should ensure that the season’s training programme and the staffing for any specific training event or expedition is appropriate, based on risk assessment. • All Leaders must work within the requirements of LO policy. • The Centre Mgr should ensure the whole group is adequately supervised, with suitable staffing ratios and determined by the forecast conditions. • As a minimum there should be one appropriately qualified expedition supervisor to every team up to a maximum of 7 Participants. If teams are combined for training purposes, as a minimum there should be one appropriately qualified group leader to 14 young people in the same location. • A second suitable person should be available to assist if an individual group is larger than 8 participants • There will be many occasions when an improved ratio is required, dependant on conditions and informed by risk assessment.
Winter conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter conditions apply when snow or ice prevail or are forecast. If training takes place in winter conditions, the Expedition Lead Supervisor and Team Supervisors must have the Winter Moorland Walking Leader Award (SWMLTS) or Hill & Moorland Ldr Mountain Leader Award – or the Centre Leader must adjust plans to use suitably sheltered locations off the open Moor.
Technical Expert	<p>A Technical Expert may confirm the equivalent competence of a Centre Leader, Expedition Lead Supervisor. However, it is recommended that all leaders confirm their competence through formal assessment. The qualifications of this Technical Expert should be in line with guidance provided by the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority. For moorland country in winter conditions the Technical Expert should be an MIC (Mountain Instructor Certificate) holder or International Mountain Leader (IML). For moorland country in summer conditions the technical expert may be MIC, IML or holder of the Mountain Instructor Award. For lowland country the technical expert may be MIC, IML, MIA or a Summer Mountain Leader.</p>
Remote Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Particular attention should be paid to groups who are unaccompanied and therefore supervised remotely. As the Licensing Authority indicates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Centre Leader should have personal knowledge that participants are sufficiently experienced and competent to undertake the task and are adequately trained in first aid and emergency procedures. • the limits of the area within which the activity takes place should be clearly defined • individual responsibilities should be clearly defined. • a check should be carried out that participants have understood the arrangements before they set out. <p>The Lead Supervisor should ensure there are suitable back up and monitoring systems in place while such activities are in place and can respond to changes in plan.</p>

<p>Training opportunities and additional information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mountain Training: https://www.mountain-training.org/ • Guidance from the Licensing Authority on the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations, 2004, 2nd Edition, 2007, HSE ISBN 978 0 7176 6243 2 • MT has published <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Hillwalking: The official handbook of the Mountain Training walking schemes (3rd edition)</i> - a booklet providing best practice in the remote supervision of groups: • The South West Moorland Leader Training Scheme covers the moorland areas of the South West and the Brecon Beacons, excluding exposed ridges, gullies and steep ground. Local authorities involved in this scheme include Cornwall, Plymouth, Devon, Torbay, Somerset, Dorset, Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, Wiltshire, Swindon, North Somerset and Gloucestershire. The SWMLT Syllabus can be downloaded from https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/sport-leisure/dorset-outdoor-education-service/outdoor-education-centre-training/south-west-moorland-leader-training-scheme-swmlts-syllabus.aspx • A range of providers offer training for The South West Moorland Leader Training Scheme. Contact https://www.dorsetforyou.com/outdoored • Dartmoor National Park: https://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/ • https://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/about-us/about-us-maps/new-camping-map interactive) • Exmoor National Park: http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/ • Met Office: http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/ • http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/
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Walking Group Leader now Hill and Mountain Leader: The supervision of remote (moorland) camping is not included within the standard assessment. Therefore if the WGL/HML Leader plans to supervise remote camping, they should have been assessed for this activity by their WGL/HML Assessor or they should complete the Summer Moorland Camping Leader Assessment of the SWMLTS

**Sports Leaders UK administers the Level 3 Award in Lowland Leadership (the old BEL Award)
This is not appropriate as a qualification to take responsibility for supervising groups on open moorland.**

**National Guidelines for Climbing and Walking Leaders:
<https://www.mountain-training.org/england/resources-and-downloads>**