



The
induction
of activity
leaders at
outdoor
activity
centres



Background and context

The outdoor sector is made up of a rich and diverse mix of local authority provision, private sector companies (mostly small businesses with a few notable exceptions), charitable/not for profit organisations and voluntary groups.

Organisations work with children, young people and adults to develop physical, emotional and personal/interpersonal skills in the context of outdoor activities, often in residential settings. The two key themes are recreation and education in varying degrees of complexity, which often overlap.

This suite of induction materials was originally developed over 15 years ago, since when its scope has been refined and broadened in response to customer/guest needs, legislation and events.

Scope of the case study

This study focuses on one organisation in the private sector, which has been responsible for most of the initial work on induction. 80% of the organisation's work is with schools, involving 300,000 students each year. It has 3,000 staff at residential centres, who are given common basic training that addresses the skills required to work with children in challenging settings.

The programme and standards are beginning to form the core of the common standards for the outdoors sector. In turn, the induction programme is being developed into a formal nationally accredited award. This development is also central to the emerging National Skills Academy (NSA) for the Outdoors (part of the SkillsActive Sport and Active Leisure NSA).

Highlights

- A systematic, learner/employee-focused approach to the induction of staff at outdoor activity centres
- This is a long established programme of induction that has had links to qualifications for over ten years
- The induction programme addresses most aspects of Every Child Matters (ECM) although it was not explicitly designed around it. The original programme pre-dates ECM by a decade



Description of induction arrangements

New staff, whatever their background and qualifications, undertake a basic course lasting up to two weeks, often at one of the residential centres. This is followed by three to six months of further training and assessment before the induction period is signed off.

A wide range of induction activities take place. All staff have a formal handbook in a ring binder format which contains all necessary information. During induction, this is added to, and as technical and 'soft' skills are developed through continuing professional development (CPD), it becomes an operational reference book. Staff are examined on the necessary knowledge elements of general induction through a multiple choice written test (with alternative testing frameworks for those with specific learning needs). Successful completion of this test deems them fit to work with young people.

The initial two week is structured with the support of group work, mentors and instructors (training department staff or senior centre staff), all of whom have experienced the programme previously. Induction has a practical emphasis and concludes with a short written that is shared with the participant and then sent to the head of department at the centre where they will be working. The report informs the subsequent stages of induction.

Any weaknesses identified in training which have not been addressed and overcome are potentially detrimental to the participant's work with children and young people. Consequently, some recruits leave the organisation after this initial period, having decided, with support, that the role is not suitable for them. This is seen as positive move for all concerned.

For those staff who have completed the initial training, areas of further need or interest are identified in an initial assessment. Follow on activities take place during the subsequent three to four months. Induction is formally signed off only when all the basic skills, plus significant areas of further development, have been achieved. The line manager records her/his observations of the staff member's progress, and these are discussed together on a regular basis. The induction process is built on by CPD.

The induction programme predates Every Child Matters. Several fundamental activities of the established programme coincide with the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge. Child care, safety and child protection are compulsory modules. Effective communication with children and young people is key to running activity courses/holidays and there are optional units within the basic induction on topics such as instructing skills and pastoral care. In monitoring the effectiveness of the induction programme, further areas for development are identified: for example, supporting transitions and multi-agency working.

Although service users were not involved in the initial design of the induction programme, good communication with service users is considered essential resulting in high customer satisfaction and return visit levels. Written feedback and interviews with teachers who have brought students to use the centres' facilities contribute to the evaluation and review of staff performance. For example, there are clear procedures for identifying and resolving any emerging issues with a particular instructor.



Roles and responsibilities

The initial responsibility for induction lies with senior staff (through line managers) at the basic training course centre. After the initial training, responsibility is then passed onto the heads of centres and their senior staff where new staff are based once the basic centre/locality specific training is finished. Teachers are aware of the processes and may be invited to write witness statements for vocational awards.

Resources

The induction handbook materials have been written by the training and development department of the organisation. A loose leaf format is used so that initial induction materials can be added to, generating a personalised continual manual and reference resource.

For many of the activities, the principal resource is the qualified expert staff member available to lead technical training with appropriate outdoor equipment for activities such as climbing, canoeing and sailing. Wherever required, external technical experts are used.

Links to qualifications

The induction course has been formally accredited for 10 years through the West Midlands Open College Network. Over 1,000 employees are accredited every year. It is now being developed into a nationally accredited NVQ Level 2 award. The assessment strategy, largely based on work-based observation, will continue.

The principles and processes inherent in the programme have provided learners with a superb foundation, understanding and appreciation of work-based learning and assessment. This has facilitated a smooth and enthusiastic progression into higher level learning and qualifications, in some cases providing prior learning evidence for future qualifications.

The organisation has a comprehensive apprenticeship programme and progression route. Staff are encouraged to acquire technical qualifications in specific outdoor activities, which, as with all staff training and qualifications for staff, are paid for by the organisation. The Level 4 NVQ in Management has been offered to senior centre staff.

Quality assurance

Quality has been assured through the assessment of competence and official sign off of induction, coupled with the formal external moderation of a National Open College Network qualification.



In the past few years, this case study's induction programme standards have been treated as a requirement for the annual inspection of the commercial activity provider's association. Now compulsory for all member organisations, inspectors ensure that all details and records relating to the induction, training and monitoring processes are in place and operated correctly.

Members must maintain a written record of the induction, training and monitoring of each member of staff. These records should be available on site, and in cases where staff are redeployed to other sites, the records should be transferred simultaneously with the staff member.

This association's Code of Practice incorporates some of the principles advocated by the Adventure Activities Licensing Service (AALS) in determining staff competence.

The induction programme is currently being reviewed in preparation for its move onto the Qualifications and Credit Framework. The materials set out in the appendix are likely to change as part of this development.

SkillsActive have been a key partner in taking the award and its standards to national accreditation for a common standard and award for the outdoors sector.

Lessons learned

Multiple benefits include:

- the "whole package", including training and development for training staff
- the design of monitoring, recording and support mechanisms
- the review and feedback processes, embedded within the programme and during the review
- clearly signalling the worth of the investment in, and commitment to, new staff – with vital links and progression to learning and qualifications
- creating a genuine collaborative model for each recruit's induction and a sensitivity to the needs of learners, including those whose previous experience of education and training may not have been positive
- advocating the concepts and principles of work-based learning within the organisation and outside it – initially not everyone understands the worth of this approach, but it is the key buy-in and support of staff from across the organisation involved

APPENDIX

BAHA Introductory Training Standards for Centre Staff

www.baha.org.uk

Contents - Units

1. General Induction Standards
2. Organisation of Non-Activity Time
3. Basic Customer Care
4. Organising Activity Sessions
5. Health Emergencies - Identification & Response
6. Hospitality & Support Roles

The standards can be used for a variety of purposes, including job descriptions, initial training, monitoring, assessment, reviews, job analysis.

Different roles may use a combination of units; all will include Unit 1.

1. General induction standards

	Learning Outcomes		Assessment Criteria
	<i>The Learner should be able to:</i>		<i>The Learner has achieved this outcome because s/he can:</i>
1.	Understand the structure of the organisation, its procedures, rules and conditions of employment for centre staff.	1.1	Explain the company background, its ethics and operations within the industry.
		1.2	Identify the key points in 'Working with Guests and Others'.
		1.3	Recognise the general accident procedure and know how to summon first aid.
		1.4	Explain the serious accident procedure.
		1.5	Identify the relevant sections of the 'Health and Safety at Work Act' and Health and Safety procedures.
		1.6	Explain the fire precautions and procedures at the centre.
		1.7	Outline contractual terms and conditions of employment and the rules of the centre.
		1.8	Explain the relevant aspects of COSHH training.
		1.9	Explain the relevant aspects of Manual Handling.

2. Organisation of non-activity time

	Learning Outcomes		Assessment Criteria
	<i>The Learner should be able to:</i>		<i>The Learner has achieved this outcome because s/he can:</i>
1.	Perform organising techniques and skills effectively for a residential activity centre that complies with necessary Health and Safety procedures and Generic Induction Standards for working with children.	1.1	Demonstrate and explain during the staff review process the various skills necessary to be proficient at organisation during non-activity time.
		1.2	Demonstrate the appropriate skills and procedures to support children and young people who are being introduced and inducted into the centre/site on arrival and dealing with their departure at the end of their stay.
		1.3	Demonstrate the appropriate skills and procedures to support children and young people during the organisation of their day (including night and morning) covering any communal and non communal areas.
		1.4	Demonstrate the appropriate skills and procedures to support children and young people in organising time filler games/events (sport & recreational) outside of activity sessions.
		1.5	Demonstrate the appropriate skills and procedures to support children and young people in contributing to the Health & Safety of any settings. (i.e. including organising and running off site events/excursions).
		1.6	Demonstrate the appropriate skills and procedures that support the protection of children and young people from abuse and bullying.
		1.7	Demonstrate the appropriate skills and procedures that contribute to establishing positive relationships when working with children and young people.
		1.8	Demonstrate the appropriate skills and procedures in working as part of a team including relationships with adults both internally and externally.

3. Basic customer care

	Learning Outcomes		Assessment Criteria
	<i>The Learner should be able to:</i>		<i>The Learner has achieved this outcome because s/he can:</i>
1.	Understand and demonstrate the basic principles of customer care within an activity centre context for young people.	1.1	Demonstrate and explain what is meant by customer service.
		1.2	Demonstrate and explain how expectations and needs can differ between a range of users e.g. education, recreation etc.
		1.3	Demonstrate and explain the role that individual staff play in ensuring the delivery of excellent customer service.
		1.4	Explain the importance of customer service measurement.

4. Organising activity sessions

	Learning Outcomes		Assessment Criteria
	<i>The Learner should be able to:</i>		<i>The Learner has achieved this outcome because s/he can:</i>
1.	Prepare appropriately for the session.	1.1	Explain and demonstrate the need for relevant information and resources to be prepared for the session, dependent on aims and objectives required by customer.
2.	Describe and demonstrate how to meet guests and make introductions.	2.1	Explain and demonstrate how to meet guests correctly and why you should be appropriately prepared.
3.	Introduce guests to activities and supervise guest's participation.	3.1	Explain and demonstrate why guests should be correctly introduced to activities.
		3.2	Explain and demonstrate why guests should be instructed to a 'basic' level.
		3.3	Explain and demonstrate how and why feedback is given to guests.
		3.4	Explain and demonstrate how and why guests are monitored and supervised during the session.
		3.5	Explain and demonstrate why there is the need to monitor bases, equipment and conditions and therefore make changes to the session plan.
		3.6	Explain and demonstrate why incidents (including 'near misses') accidents and or emergencies are correctly dealt with.
4.	Complete the session correctly dealing with the people, equipment and reporting logs.	4.1	Explain and demonstrate how and why guests, equipment and bases are correctly dealt with at the end of the session.
		4.2	Explain and demonstrate how and why any reports, queries or concerns regarding any aspect of the session are logged in the correct manner.
		4.3	Demonstrate through self-reflection and analysis by line manager evaluation of own performance within the criteria laid down above.

5. Health emergencies - identification and response by first aid qualified staff

	Learning Outcomes		Assessment Criteria
	<i>The Learner should be able to:</i>		<i>The Learner has achieved this outcome because s/he can:</i>
1.	Act appropriately in emergency situations.	1.1	Identify situations which require emergency services.
		1.2	Demonstrate his/her knowledge by using competent first aid skills in basic emergency situations, e.g. simple cuts, grazes, bruises, shock.
		1.3	Demonstrate his/her knowledge by using first aid skills to assist in serious emergencies until emergency services arrive.
		1.4	Implement safety requirements effectively.
		1.5	Demonstrate his/her knowledge by assisting injured people with clear indication of safe procedures and own limitations.
2.	Establish and service a fully equipped first aid box.	2.1	List basic first aid materials used in a first aid box.
		2.2	Demonstrate his/her knowledge by preparing a first aid box appropriate for its location.
		2.3	Demonstrate his/her knowledge by maintaining a first aid box replacing used stock, out-of-date and damaged articles.

6. Hospitality and support roles

	Learning Outcomes		Assessment Criteria
	<i>The Learner should be able to:</i>		<i>The Learner has achieved this outcome because s/he can:</i>
1.	Understand Health and Safety in the Workplace.	1.1	Demonstrate Health and Safety in the workplace (a) COSHH (b) Manual Handling (c) Behaviour (d) Uniform and Appearance.
2	Have appropriate Skills and Attitude in relation to Working with Others.	2.1	Demonstrate Teamwork (a) Working as planned (b) Variety of Tasks (c) Use Initiative.
		2.2	Demonstrate Customer Service Skills (a) In his/her daily routine (b) Dealing with issues.
3	Have the appropriate Skills and Attitudes when using Company Equipment.	3.1	Demonstrate use of equipment following Company procedures (a) Use (b) Storage (c) Maintenance/cleaning.
4	Understand Relevant Legislation, Tasks and Duties.	4.1	Demonstrate continuous competence in Job Role (a) Discuss job description (b) Complete job specific initial training.

This unit applies to such roles as Maintenance, Site, Stores, Catering, Tuck shops, Reception, Security & Driving and should be customised accordingly.

Induction Case Studies - Contact Information

This is one in a series of nine induction case studies. The other case studies are listed below.

Case Study	Sector	Contact
An integrated workforce approach to induction	Children's Workforce Development Council	www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/ Integratedworking@cwdcouncil.org.uk
The induction of Youth Offending Service staff – an example of a multi-disciplinary team	Skills for Justice	www.skillsforjustice.com info@skillsforjustice.com
The induction of staff working with children and young people in custody through the Juvenile Awareness Staff Programme	Skills for Justice	www.skillsforjustice.com info@skillsforjustice.com
The induction of creative practitioners within and beyond the arts and creative and cultural sector	Creative & Culture Skills	www.ccskills.org.uk info@ccskills.org.uk
The induction of school lunchtime supervisors, school administrators and teaching assistants	Training and Development Agency for Schools	www.tda.gov.uk supportinduction@tda.gov.uk
The induction of newly qualified teachers (NQTs)	Training and Development Agency for Schools	www.tda.gov.uk induction@tda.gov.uk
The induction of teaching assistants	Training and Development Agency for Schools	www.tda.gov.uk supportinduction@tda.gov.uk
Supporting induction with online assessment	Children's Workforce Development Council	www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/ Integratedworking@cwdcouncil.org.uk
The induction of activity leaders at outdoor activity centres	SkillsActive	www.skillsactive.com skills@skillsactive.com