



OutdoorLads.com

Leaders Handbook

Prepared by	Policies and Procedures Subcommittee
Version	2
Date Last Updated	Spring 2015
Date to be reviewed by	Spring 2016



LEADERS HANDBOOK

YOUR GUIDE TO GIVING AND GETTING THE MOST OUT OF BEING AN OUTDOORLADS LEADER

CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Background	2
Leader application process	3
Five steps to becoming leader	4
What happens during an assessment?	4
So I'm a leader...what do I need to know?	5
So... I'm going to lead an event, take me through it!	7
What happens if something goes wrong?	9



INTRODUCTION

This is the guide for all leaders in OutdoorLads. This covers:

1. The application stage
2. How to create your first event
3. Support available to you
4. Some general tips for running events.

This guide acts of a 'behavioural' guide in that it covers what we expect from anyone leading an event with OutdoorLads. Alongside this a series of additional 'technical documents'. They have been written by experienced OutdoorLads leaders whom have put a lot of their own experience and knowledge.

We hope that you enjoy being a leader and that you find this guide useful.

BACKGROUND

OutdoorLads was set up in 2006 by a group of gay guys who had a vision of creating an active network for gay men throughout the UK to be able to organise outdoor pursuits and activities together. By 2015, OutdoorLads has grown to have over 10,000 members, with over 150 leading up to 5 activities every weekend of the year across the UK, ranging from day walks and hostel weekends to climbing, mountaineering, watersports and even international trips. OutdoorLads is affiliated to a number of bodies including the British Mountaineering Council and YHA.

Whilst the emphasis is very much on having fun and forging lasting friendships, OutdoorLads take very seriously the health, safety and security of all members who participate in activities many of which carry high levels of risk. For this reason, it is essential that leaders have the training, information and support that is needed to not only deal with any situation that may arise, but to handle queries from members and to act as an effective and responsible representative of OutdoorLads.

Being a leader is great fun - and a great way to get to do the activities you want to do, with a great bunch of guys who want to join you! This guide we hope will help all leaders, new and established, to get the most out of your role, prepare and run professional, popular and successful events, and handle your leadership responsibilities effectively, and hopefully in a way that prevents OutdoorLads from potentially taking over your life.

All the best for leading OutdoorLads out and about across the UK.



OutdoorLads is made up of:

Trustee Board: Group of volunteers who set the strategy and direction of the group. Many also help with the day-to-day running of the organisation.

OutdoorLads Staff: OutdoorLads employs a number of staff who run our office. Their job is to handle the nationwide events planning, supporting the admin and finance of the operation and delivering the strategy set by the board

Regional Coordinators: Group of regional volunteers who help to plan the events in their region and support the leaders to run events. Many run events themselves.

Leaders: We have over 150 leaders around the country who run a whole range of events.

LEADER APPLICATION PROCESS

Different Types of OutdoorLads Leaders

OutdoorLads has a range of leader opportunities for you:

<u>Activity</u>	<u>What do they do?</u>	<u>I can be assessed by?</u>
<u>Walking</u>		
Hill Leaders	Lead: Walks up to 500m. Never further than 5km from the nearest road. Max 20 group size (or 30 with co-ord approval). Max height 250m in snow	
Mountain Trail Leaders	Lead: Walks on marked trails and paths in the mountains of the UK. Never further than 5km from the nearest road. Max height 250m in snow. Max: 20 group size	
Mountain Leaders	Lead: Walks in any mountains in the UK in Summer Conditions Max height 250m in snow. Max 12 group size	
Mountain Snow Leaders	Lead: Walks in any mountains in the UK in all conditions. Max 8 group size	
<u>Hostel and Camping</u>		



<u>Activity</u>	<u>What do they do?</u>	<u>I can be assessed by?</u>
Hostel Leaders	Hostel away weekends. Providing and cooking food for participants (Saturday morning 'cold breakfast, cooked Saturday evening and cooked Sunday morning). Ensure that fire and health safety regulations are met. Provide activities during the weekend.	
Camping Leaders	: Members at a camping weekend. Ensuring that tents are in a safe distance from each other, no group cooking required and providing activities for the weekend. If you are signed off as a 'Hostel Leader' you automatically become a camping leader.	
<u>Climbing</u>		
Indoor Climbing Leaders	Groups of (X) roped indoor climbing. Groups of (x) indoor bouldering.	
Outdoor Leaders can	Groups of (x) outdoor climbing.	
<u>Biking</u>		
Mountain Biking	Groups of (X) on trailed mountain paths	
Road Biking	Groups of (X) on British main roads.	

FIVE STEPS TO BECOMING A LEADER:

1. Log into OutdoorLads. Under the 'Event' tab is 'Become a Leader'. You can scroll through each of the event leader types to receive more information for it. Click 'APPLY NOW'. You will then fill in a number of sections, the area of the UK you are and click 'SUBMIT'.
2. You will receive an email/message from OutdoorLads HQ acknowledging your application and you will be contacted by a Regional Coordinator to arrange a time for an assessment.
3. You'll lead (and be assessed on) your activity at an OutdoorLads event, with guidance from an existing leader. They will then review with you any training needs and areas for improvement.



OutdoorLads.com

4. You will be sent/emailed a 'Volunteer Role Description' form covering your roles and responsibilities. This is a simple document which we'll ask you to look over. It covers what we expect from you, and what you can expect from us.

5. If approved, you'll be contacted by your regional coordinator, and appointed a leader. You will need to sign the **Non-Disclosure Agreement** to be allowed access to the Next-of Kin's Forms.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING AN ASSESSMENT?

You will be assessed by either a regional coordinator, or by someone who has a lot of experience leading that event. We will look for a range of core skills for that event and how well you do with them. Additionally we will look for how well you do with the 'personal skills' i.e. interacting, leading and engaging with others.

Things to consider...

- Leadership is not only about being able to read a map, though technical proficiency will be important
- Leadership is *particularly* about managing and inspiring confidence in your group, being able to adapt and change plans / activities if circumstances arise (e.g. a path on the map does not exist in reality), and dealing with problem issues.
- Leadership is equally about 'followership'; a good leader does *not* do what he wants - they facilitate and supports what others want (e.g. the needs / wishes of their group, of the wider group / OutdoorLads - e.g. sharing duties on a hostel weekend)
- Your assessing leader will report to OutdoorLads on: a) your contact with members (friendly, understanding, approachable etc.); b) Briefing (information and activities clear to everyone?) and post-event wrap-up talk; c) Conduct through the event (keep group together, checking in with quiet members, seeing how people are doing etc.); d) Areas to work on / needing further improvement.

SO I'M A LEADER... WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

1. Information and Resources
2. Decision Making/Support
3. Your Privileges
4. Your responsibilities

Before getting into the logistics of organising events, there's lots of information and support available which will make your role a lot more straightforward.

1. Information Resources

These are the main sources of additional information relevant to leaders:

- Leaders Resource Section of website: Once you have been approved a leader, you will be given access to the Leader Resource section. This section contains resources you need including risk assessments, sign up forms and event guides.
- Regional Coordinators: Some coordinators have their own resources to hand which they might make available to you. Email/message them directly.

2. Decision Making / Support

What support do I get from my Regional Coordinator:

- **Is your first point of contact as a leader**
- Help with uploading events or assigning events to you.
- Provide local support/promotion of your event.
- May have local resources you can use.

What support do I get from OutdoorLads Office Staff:

- OutdoorLads Staff will help to promote your event via social media
- Provide you with the budget if applicable and will process your expenses claim.
- Provide 'check in' information if leading a hostel/camping event
- Support you if things go wrong.

Support from OutdoorLads Trustee Board

- Handle confidential complaints if you wish to make one.
- Receive/reply to suggestions or questions about the group's strategy/delivery.
- Board will ensure that your regional coordinator is fully supported and equipped.

3. Claiming Expenses

For Paid OutdoorLads Events you are able to claim back a certain amount of expenses for your event. Before your event, the OutdoorLads office will email you over your budget and how much you can claim back.

Claimable Items:

- Hostel/Camping Event Cost
- Food Budget for hostel (£7 per person)
- Travel to hostel (Train/petrol costs)
- Event items such as maps etc.

As a leader, you are guaranteed 75% of the event cost-but this might increase if more people sign up the event.

If you are unsure what item you can/cannot claim back please email OutdoorLads HQ to enquire.

The procedure for claiming back:

- Make sure you have the receipts/tickets. This is vital for assigning the costs.
- Fill out the expense form which you can find online.
- Post the form to OutdoorLads HQ
- The funds will be transferred as soon as possible to your bank account.

4. Your Responsibilities

- You should promote and abide by OutdoorLads policies.
- As a leader you will be privy to the Next of Kin information of the members on your events, so that you are aware of medical issues and contacts in the event of an emergency. You must treat this information with utmost confidentiality.
- You will be accountable for health, safety and wellbeing of individuals in groups and activities that you lead (with the protection cover of OutdoorLads insurance).
- You will be looked up to by members and public as a representative of the organisation – please conduct accordingly! You should also be mindful of this when using the OutdoorLads Forums, etc.

SO... I'M GOING TO LEAD AN EVENT, TAKE ME THROUGH IT!

OutdoorLads has a variety of guides for the specifics of running individual types of events which can be found on the website. Below is a list of the specifics that you have to do with all events.

1. Planning an event
2. Creating an event page
3. Preparing it
4. After the event
5. What to do if something goes wrong

1. Planning an Event

Checklist

- ✓ **Check the date** with your regional coordinator to make sure there isn't a clash
- ✓ **Plan the route.** Make sure you are within your leader remits (see chart). Is the route interesting? Good views? Avoiding too many roads?
- ✓ **How will people get there?** Check road access, parking, public transport options.
- ✓ **Where and when should people meet?** Local car park are a good place. Somewhere easily assessable to the start of the event. Weekend events: what time should people arrive?
- ✓ **What to bring?** The standard kit list option will give people an indication, but it's always good to remind them. Weekend events: Reminders of food and overnight items.
- ✓ **Activity/Route details:** Plan the route itself, features, stopping points, lunch points.
- ✓ **Planned end time:** What time do you expect to be done by?
- ✓ **Incidental Costs:** Car park costs, day event costs, trips to the pub.

2. Creating an event page

Creating an OutdoorLads event is a lot like creating a Facebook event page. To create a page, you can follow **the separate guide**. Normally weekend events are created by a regional coordinator and you are then added. There are 8 sections to making an event page:



OutdoorLads.com

1. **Basic information:** Time, date, region
2. **Event details:** About it, kit list, food
3. **Event location:** Where is it?
4. **Difficulty:** Time, difficulty grading
5. **Pricing and Booking:** Cost and numbers
6. **Media:** Pictures of location
7. **Leaders and co-leaders:** who is booking it
8. **Child events:** Any other events you can sign up to

3. Preparing it

In the week leading up the event it's a good idea to send a message to your group about the event you are leading. We don't have a set format but in general it should cover:

- Reminders of what to bring (all weather clothing, walking boots etc.).
- Lunch or food for the event (including water).
- Any medical conditions that aren't on Next of Kin Forms.
- If it's a weekend event what's happening activity wise.
- Reminder of the meet up point/directions.
- If you can't make it what to do. (Member needs to call 0161 420 0001, press 1, then enter the event code). Don't give out your mobile number.

Night before event

The night before the events, it's worth going through this tick list of things for yourself:

- ✓ Check the weather forecast.
- ✓ Map if you need it.
- ✓ Printed out registration list and any other handouts.
- ✓ N.O.K forms in a envelope.
- ✓ Your own stuff (its actually easy to forget packing your own lunch).
- ✓ First Aid Kit if you need it.
- ✓ Mobile phone (and charger for weekend events).

4. After the event

OutdoorLads Staff email out a survey after each event which asks members for their feedback. You can get access to this by emailing your regional coordinator.

Depending on the event, you might want to consider sending a follow up email thanking any volunteers who might have helped out, or addressing anything that came up over your event. This of course depends on you.



OutdoorLads.com

IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG...

1. Getting lost
2. Fire alarms
3. First aid
4. Member behaviour
5. Reporting

OutdoorLads runs hundreds of events a year and very rarely do our leaders have to deal with an issue/problem.

If something goes wrong, your role as leader is to provide leadership for your group, and to facilitate the most appropriate, responsible, least hazardous and most direct route to resolving the situation.

Always

- 1. Prioritise the safety and security of the majority of the group**
- 2. Ensure any instructions are clear and understood by all**
- 3. Summon appropriate help (e.g. from emergency services) as quickly as possible**
- 4. Report the incident to OutdoorLads HQ by ringing 0161 42 00 00 1**

1. Getting Lost

- a. Circumstances differ greatly between having missed a direction in lowland country in daytime, or being stuck on a mountain in the dark in a howling gale, but...
- b. Do not panic, this will unnerve and potentially put the whole group in danger!
- c. You may want to try just retracing your steps to a point that you do recognise, and plot an alternative route from there.
- d. You may try using compass bearings to navigate e.g. out of fog.
- e. You may bring the group together to discuss options and agree a majority way forward (e.g. walking down off a mountain, to somewhere where there is a phone signal, seeking shelter whilst conditions pass etc.)
- f. If situation unresolved or conditions are likely to put any members at risk (e.g. night / cold closing in), ring emergency services on 999 – you may need to walk (as a group) to find a signal – and call for search and rescue, giving your last known location (grid ref / coordinates / landmark) and contacts.



2. Fire Alarm (e.g. in a hostel)

- g. Ensure all members are evacuated swiftly to the agreed meeting area.
- h. Ring the fire brigade on 999 – or ensure somebody (possibly hostel manager?) has done so – giving venue, circumstances, any known details, and if there are people stuck inside.
- i. If in a hostel, you should have completed a copy of the Room Allocation / attendance list and deposited in the outside fire box. Retrieve, do a rollcall and tick off all those present. If any are missing, inform emergency services.
- j. Ensure all members remain in the waiting area until emergency services have cleared a building for re-entry (in the event of a false alarm). In the event of a real fire, follow instructions of emergency services.

3. First Aid

- k. Recognise symptoms of dehydration, exhaustion, exposure, sunstroke and / or hypothermia, as these can often occur on outdoors activities.
- l. First Aid should be administered by somebody who is qualified to do so – find out who in your group has first aid qualifications.
- m. **Call for help (999) as quickly as possible** giving as many and as precise details (location / grid ref / landmarks, symptoms / current condition).
- n. If you must **split the group** in order to get help (e.g. to get to nearest signal / road / house), the smallest / quickest group should have at least 3 people, and at least 3 people should remain with the casualty.
- o. If the group is large, it may be appropriate / least risky for them to continue if there is another leader present.
- p. **If someone is seriously hurt or killed, you must still ensure the safety of the remainder of the group;** communicate urgently with emergency services; **report the incident to OutdoorLads HQ as immediately as possible** so they can offer appropriate support to you and your group, and handle any potential media enquiries. Don't get involved with media yourself - **you need to remain focused on looking after your group.**

4. Dealing with Member Behaviour

Unlike a school trip, OutdoorLads cannot control the behaviour of adults during events. That said as the leader it is your job wherever possible to try and ensure that no member's enjoyment of an event is affected by the behaviour of another.

Most of our events go off without issues and the overwhelming majority of members are great to be with. Inevitably in a big organisation one can encounter individuals who might create the odd problem. It is best not to confront the person as an individual, but speak with the authority you have as an OutdoorLads accredited event leader – remember it is your event. The same applies to dealing with other event leaders who interfere.

The following is a good method of approaching the situations listed below, and one adopted by emergency services: **PERSUADE > ADVISE > WARN**

First try to persuade the individual that their behaviour is unreasonable both towards the other members present and the organisation, giving reasons why. If this does not get a response, advise the person what may happen if their behaviour continues. Finally warn them that if they continue you will be taking the action described (NB your action then becomes mandatory otherwise your authority will be lost)

Someone is behaving unreasonably to you or other members – e.g. is verbally abusive.

This can be a difficult call and needs handling rapidly but with a measured response. Sometimes making a joke of the situation whilst also persuading them that those comments are unhelpful because the group welcomes all and tries hard to create a friendly inclusive atmosphere, which you are keen to maintain, will work. Create a diversion by stressing positives – like lunch / the end isn't far off. If this fails then advise there is a disciplinary procedure, which can eventually result in a membership being terminated without refund. If the situation worsens, warn them that you will report them in line with said policy. Finally, if you think violence is a possibility take the group to a place where other members of the public are present, and call the police.

If you need advice contact **OutdoorLads emergency number 0161 850 850 9**. Please report all incidents afterwards to the coordinator.

Someone has consumed alcohol/recreational drugs/medicine and has become disruptive or even incoherent.

Depending on the severity you may need to treat this as a sick/injured person incident and respond as such. Persuade them their behaviour is disrupting the event. Advise them you may need to invoke the disciplinary procedure if they don't moderate their behaviour. Assess for both the group, and the individual, whether it is safe for the person to continue. (It is important to recognise that sometimes an individual may have a mental illness or other problem that manifests as a drink problem, and as such they are a vulnerable person.) You might need to discreetly and tactfully suggest this to the rest of the group if their day out is being disrupted. It is worth messaging or talking with the person afterwards when they are sober, to remind them of the results of their behaviour and the consequences if repeated. The incident should always be reported to the Coordinator afterwards.

Someone can't or won't keep pace with the group:

Firstly get the group to stop and wait somewhere interesting, or you will lose it! Tactfully and discreetly ask the slow-coach(es) whether this is their first event, if they are feeling OK, and why they are hanging back. Then try to persuade them that the event needs to go faster to meet the expectations of the others, e.g. catch trains home etc. Ask for their cooperation. If the person says they can't go any faster, then tactfully advise them to choose easier events next time. Meanwhile review the route and perhaps shorten it, or see if there is somewhere they can catch public transport home, or a pub etc where they could wait, so you can pick them up later. Then advise them to take that action. If you have another leader present, you might be able to split into a 'fast' sector and a 'slow' sector; or one of you take the slower group on a short cut. If they insist on holding everyone up when there are viable alternatives, you might need to warn them that you will be leaving them behind (if safe to do so). If they have a minor injury it might be an idea to ask the others for sympathy and support, and consider calling a taxi, however be careful not to become liable for an expensive fare.

Injuries require you to complete of an accident report form. Please report incidents like this to the coordinator so that we can take a tactful approach and try to avoid future events being hampered. It is important not to 'push' participants beyond their abilities; this may result in someone collapsing, or if cycling, an RTA.

One or more people deliberately break away to investigate something:

Obviously this rather depends on where and why. If it is in a dangerous place or high-level route the matter is serious and you'll need to explain the risks and ask for their cooperation. If they are looking around a church on a low level walk and holding everyone up you will need to wait for them to catch up and then persuade them that their actions may have consequences for others taking part; or make them liable to trespass, or whatever. If they



continually fail to cooperate you must advise them that the group won't be able to wait for them and warn them they will be deemed to have left the event.

One or more people are getting too far ahead:

It is important to lead from within the group and talk with everyone, but there is a risk of a few faster guys getting ahead and taking the wrong trail. This can be avoided by persuading people to stay with the group by advising them of the consequences for both them and the others should they get separated. Tell people where and when to wait for others to catch up – e.g. by the church, at the river, the other side of the field etc. If they are getting out of range and you have a rescue whistle you could use that to attract their attention, or ask intermediate guys to shout ahead. As a last resort you'll need to try calling their mobile phones, then warn them that they will be deemed to have left the group should this happen again.

5. Reporting

Not all situations require you reporting to either your regional coordinator or OutdoorLads HQ. Much of these comes down to your best judgement and what is the worth it.

To give you a hand we've put together some advice around the issues it's worth reporting.



Issue	What	When	To Whom
Getting Lost	<p>Every leader will get lost at some point-even the best mountain leaders. You will only need to report this to either the office or your regional coordinator if:</p> <p>A. As a result it endangered group or you were late to your finish point.</p> <p>B. Member complains.</p> <p>If getting lost means you arrive 5 minutes to your finish or you have to back-track...you don't need to do anything.</p>	<p>Almost never, if A or B, when you get home from an event.</p>	<p>If depending on the seriousness of A, then to the regional coordinator.</p> <p>If B, to the OutdoorLads office whom may be able to communicate with members. Again, depends on how serious</p>
Minor first aid	<p>Small cuts, grazes and knocks happen all the time. Generally with first aid, if the situation is simple (a plaster, run under cold water) then it can be dealt with there and then-no further follow up.</p> <p>If minor first aid is required due to a.) poor equipment eg walking boots, b.) problem caused by OutdoorLads equipment/venue reporting is required.</p>	<p>a.) Not immediate, possibly week following event.</p> <p>b.) ASAP or when you get home.</p>	<p>If due to a) depending how serious, this member could be a repeat offender-report to coordinator. Check with member and report to coordinator if need be.</p> <p>b.) Depending on what, to OutdoorLads office or YHA etc as soon as possible.</p>
Major first aid	<p>Hopefully you will never have to do this, but this could include broken bones, a burn, a major bump on the head or any reasonably serious injury. In almost all cases reporting is required.</p>	<p>Depending on seriousness of situation:</p> <p>1.) Something that requires an ambulance/response team immediately to OutdoorLads hotline/office.</p> <p>2.) Something like a burn or cut that can be treated on site or minor injuries unit</p>	<p>Depending on seriousness, N.O.K immediately if a hospital trip is required and member isn't able to make own decisions.</p> <p>999 in an emergency is your first point of call.</p>



<u>Issue</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>When</u>	<u>To Whom</u>
		can be reported either post event/morning after.	If you need to contact OutdoorLads immediately our number is: OutdoorLads HQ can be reached on and if at the weekend it will phone chain down to the nearest Trustee. 0161 42 00 00 1
Problem during event	Dealing with non-first aid problem during an event is often about common sense. Generally ask yourself a.) what caused the problem b.) how do I fix to minimise the impact to our members. a.) If there is a problem that was an inconvenience but could be dealt with-it's your call whether it's worth reporting. b.) If the issue caused significant impact then it's worth reporting.	a.) post event. b.) Day/Monday after event.	a.) Regional coordinator b.) OutdoorLads office.
Problem with hostel	Sometimes problems occur in the hostel. Often there are small issues in terms of hostels managers not providing items that are part of the hostel itinerary. Small problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the details from OutdoorLads HQ that are sent over in terms of what you should get from the hostel when you arrive. • Small breakages of items such as plates/cups Larger problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrical items not working. 	Small items: When doing run through with the hostel manager-comment immediately if you think something is wrong. Otherwise, leave a note to manger when you leave. Often there will be a contact number left by the manager, or they will be on site.	Often the hostel manager for both smaller and larger problems as they are the best ones to deal with it. If the problem has affected the group in a negative way it is also worth letting the office now.



<u>Issue</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>When</u>	<u>To Whom</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems with access to building • Hot water/heating supply. 		
Member behaviour-minor	<p>Hopefully you won't have to deal with any negative member behaviour but it's good to be aware of what to do if it happens.</p> <p>Minor negative behaviour for example could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making un-helpful or disruptive comments • Being rude to another member • Being disruptive in an external location like a pub/bar or restaurant. • Under-minding a leader during a walk. 	<p>Hopefully in a situation of minor problems you won't have to report anything. It's your best call if and when it needs to be reported, and generally only do so when another members enjoyment was negatively affected and you couldn't rectify the situation there and then.</p>	<p>If you feel like this was a issue that needs to be raised, first raise it with a coordinator and then if you feel the office needs to know, drop a message/email to HQ.</p>
Member behaviour-major	<p>Major behaviour problems are rare and hopefully you'll never have to deal with anything. However, a few examples could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive drinking. • Aggressive behaviour. • Activities that put members in danger. 	<p>If this sort of behaviour happens, it's a good idea to report it to OutdoorLads HQ first thing when you return from the event. Go into detail what happened and what you tried to do.</p>	<p>OutdoorLads HQ via email is the best method.</p>