

Research Title: Participation and Incident Snapshot Survey for the UK Outdoor Adventure Activity sector.

Primary Researcher: Pete White, UHI North, West and Hebrides, School of Adventure Studies

Invitation

Your organisation is being invited to participate in a research study that aims to capture a snapshot of participation and incident rates across the UK outdoor adventurous activity sector. This will allow the publication of key data around levels of activity participation and related incident levels within the sector. Before you make your decision, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the information carefully and ask any follow-up questions.

Explanation: purpose of and background to the research and invitation

The Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee (AAIAC) and Institute for Outdoor Learning (IOL) have been discussing the issues around the sectors' collective knowledge of safety and risk management since 2023. To improve and develop this aspect of the sector, there is a need to understand what the current trends and issues are. Therefore, they wish to run a sector-wide participation and incident snapshot survey that would capture these ongoing issues, across the breadth of the UK outdoor adventure activities sector.

This current research is the culmination of several phases looking at incident-reporting and has been informed through their feedback and development. Specifically, it wishes to;

- Gather participation levels, which includes the activity and client group.
- Gather data on number of overnight stays in the same period, either residential or expedition.
- Gather data on incidents within the same timeframe, which includes generic information such as activity and location, along with thoughts on contributory factors.
- Analyse, present and distribute the findings from the survey, to better inform the sector.

To do this, we will be gathering participation and incident data from participating organisations, over six 2-week periods (total of 12 weeks). This will be throughout the 12 months of January to December 2026.

What would taking part involve?

The survey will utilise two separate online tools to collect the data. Each of these will need to be filled out for each 2-week block, over the 12-month period (total of 12 weeks of data). Both parts of the survey require different levels of knowledge, which could be held by the same person or may be completed by two different individuals.

The participation data requires knowledge of group numbers, activities undertaken, and type of client groups over the two-week period. You will be required to fill out this data on a JISC Online Survey, which will be emailed to the relevant person.

The incident data requires someone to have a degree of first-hand knowledge of the incident. We are not asking for the staff member responsible during the incident to complete it, but it should be a senior staff member who has direct responsibility for the staff and operation of the organisation in that aspect. This person will be emailed directly the link to the incident forms, to ensure that the form is secure and we can track the number of expected responses. All data on the form will be pre-coded, with no option for including free text.

You may choose to withdraw from the research at any point throughout the 12-month period. After this it will not be possible to withdraw from the study, though anonymity will always be retained. If you wish to withdraw you must contact and inform the primary researcher.

What about my personal data?

The lawful basis for processing personal data is if its use is necessary for the performance of a task in the public interest (with a basis in law) or under official authority vested in us (public task). In this case the undertaking of research by the University in keeping with the University's public task.

The data collected for the research will be stored initially on the primary researchers JISC Online Surveys account. Throughout the study all data (including examples such as list of participant organisations) will be stored securely online on the UHI SharePoint.

Upon completion of the project, the data collected will be stored on the University's Research Management System in line with the current Research Data Management Policy.

Will you be able to identify my organisation or specific incidents from the data?

No. Whilst the research team will have access to the organisations participating, this data will be stored securely in line with the UHI Research Data Management Policy. The initial data will be pseudonymised, with each organisational participant being assigned internally an individual identifier. This is to ensure that we can confirm that each organisational participant completes the six 2-week blocks. Once the survey data is completed the key identifying each organisational participant will be deleted.

The survey has been designed to ensure that there is limited opportunity to identify participating organisations from the reports, particularly as there is no geographic data. The resulting data will be carefully analysed and presented to ensure that there is no potential for identification of participants before it's made public. There will also be a minimum reporting threshold for each category before it can be reported in detail.

How will my organisation benefit from participating in this?

- By contributing to this we will be able to provide a more accurate picture of levels of participation across the sector which will help with policy and lobbying. Data such as this is useful to support arguments around funding and support.
- The more participating organisations we have recording the incident data, the more comprehensive picture we will be able to present in regard to trends and patterns. This will enable us to communicate aspects around safety across the sector and share our various experiences.
- We hope that by being prompted to answer the different incident questions, you or your team will be encouraged to think about your incidents in ways that perhaps are not always considered. This could be used as a good training and development opportunity for staff, particularly around the concepts of contributory factors and what constitutes a near miss.

What will happen to the results of this study?

The research is being carried out in partnership with AAIAC and IOL, who will help with oversight of the curation of the data. A report will be compiled and made public with the survey results. This will be used to inform specific projects, guidance and advice on safety throughout the sector.

The participation and incident data, along with the processes and design of the survey may be used for future publication.

Contact Details

Role	Name	Email
Primary Researcher	Pete White	peter.white@uhi.ac.uk
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IOL Contact	Jo Barnett	jo.barnett@outdoor-learning.org
AAIAC Contact	Steve Woods	steve@vertex-training.org

Data Protection

Identity of the Data Controller and Data Protection Officer

The data controller is both the University of the Highlands and Islands, and UHI North, West and Hebrides.

UHI: UHI House, Old Perth Road, Inverness, IV2 3J. The Data Protection Officer can be contacted at: dataprotectionofficer@uhi.ac.uk

UHI North, West and Hebrides: Ormlie Road, Thurso, Caithness, KW14 7EE. The Data Protection Officer can be contacted at: dpo.nwh@uhi.ac.uk

For questions about the research study please contact: Peter White
peter.white@uhi.ac.uk

Lawful basis for processing personal data

Its use is necessary for the performance of a task in the public interest (with a basis in law) or under official authority vested in us (public task). In this case the undertaking of education or research by the University or its students in keeping with the University's public task. This public task including the planning, delivery, and communication of research. Research includes conducting the research and the taking all required steps to ensure the safety, validity and academic integrity of the research. It may also include the re-use of the research data for further research, storage for later inspection, auditing and archiving.

Your data will or may be shared with the following recipients or categories of recipients

- The University of the Highlands and Islands and its [Academic Partner Organisations](#), including
- Relevant UHI Exam Boards comprising UHI and external representatives.
- All individuals to whom UHI considers access should be granted for academic integrity, safety and safeguarding, marking, audit, records management, library, archiving, and quality assurance purposes (and to

ensure all data is handled, and research conducted, in keeping with UHI's policies and procedures). The parties may include UHI staff, contractors or selected external individuals. Such access will only be used as necessary.

- Data may be handled by UHI, academic partner, ICT or records management staff who are required to undertake actions to keep the data safe, maintain data integrity, or ensure the data is handled and secured in keeping with UHI's data policies and procedures. The parties may include UHI staff, contractors or selected external individuals. Such access will only be used as necessary.
- Service providers providing, under contract, services to UHI that are used for the research purposes such as productivity tools (e.g. Microsoft Excel etc.), storage areas, analysis, transcription, or any other service relevant to the research.
- For any questions about data sharing please contact the research supervisor or primary researcher listed in this document.
- JISC Online Survey, using multiple surveys.
- The survey data is intended to be published, in both industry material and academic journals. All data will be anonymised with no opportunity for identification of individuals or organisations.
- The final anonymised data may be shared with other researchers for the purpose of secondary research.

Retention

Your data will be retained for an indefinite period of time. This retention period is in respect of the research data as collected. Anonymised data may be kept for longer and the retention period does not apply to any materials published as a result of this project.