



Professional Development in the Outdoor Sector

19th February 2026

Jo Barnett – Chief Executive Officer

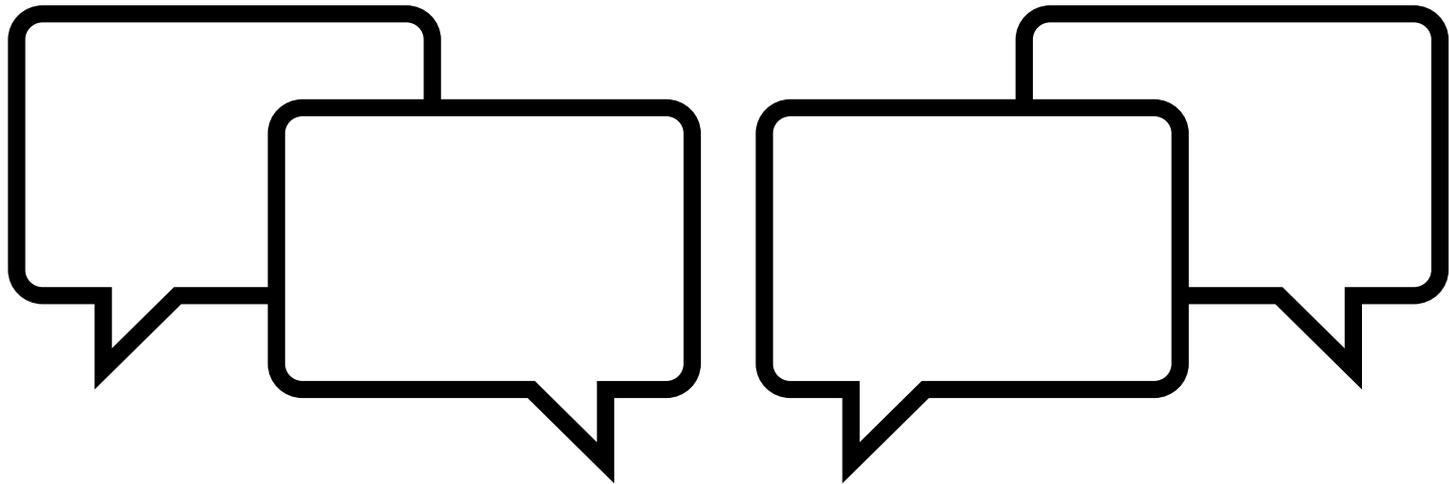


Share your love of the outdoors with others

The Institute for Outdoor Learning is the professional body for organisations and individuals who use the outdoors to make a positive difference to others.

What roles are there in Outdoor Learning

- Which roles are represented here?
- What are the other roles you can think of?
- How would you group them?



FE & HE

- Instructor
- Researcher
- Lecturer
- Reader

Education

- Early Childhood Practitioner
- Forest School Leader
- Primary Teacher
- Secondary Teacher
- Specialist Teacher
- Outdoor Education Advisor

Countryside

- Education Officer
- Skills Instructor
- Environmentalist
- Farm Educator
- Land Manger
- Ranger

Wellbeing

- Community Activator
- Development Trainer
- Lifestyle Coach
- Outdoor Counsellor
- Integrated Outdoor Therapist

Activity Delivery

- Assistant Instructor
- Outdoor Instructor
- Specialist Instructor
- Senior Instructor
- Group Leader
- Outdoor Educator / Tutor
- Activity Coach
- Senior Coach

Voluntary

- Local Guide
- Leader
- Club Coach
- Club Officer
- Trustee

Workforce

- Trainer
- Assessor
- Mentor / Coach
- Instructor Developer
- Course Director
- NGB Officer
- Policy Advisor
- Quality Assurance Officer

Adventure

- Guide
- Instructor
- Expedition Leader

Programme Delivery

- Programme Facilitator
- Outdoor Youth Worker
- Event Organiser
- Corporate Trainer
- Course Director
- Evaluator / Researcher

Love the outdoors? Enjoy working with people?



Exciting opportunities to work and volunteer in outdoor learning and make a positive difference for others and our world. Where could the outdoors take you?

Sport

- Performer / Athlete
- Participant Coach
- Development Coach
- Elite Performance Coach
- Strength & Conditioning
- Equipment Technician
- Sports Scientist
- Physiotherapist
- Team Manager

Business

- Freelance Instructor
- Business owner
- Chief Executive
- Consultant
- Director

Safety

- Technical Advisor
- H&S Consultant
- Mountain rescue
- Snow patroller
- Metrologist

Design & Retail

- Sales Assistant
- Sales Representative
- Brand Manager
- Product Designer
- Technical Trainer
- Field Tester

Operations

- Administrator
- Sales Development
- Reception / Guest Services
- Gardener / Maintenance
- Storeperson
- Social Media / Comms
- Finance
- Systems / IT
- HR / Personnel
- Marketing / PR
- Fundraising

Hospitality

- Housekeeper
- Supervisor
- Kitchen Porter
- Chef
- Catering Manager
- Overnight Duty Manager

Management

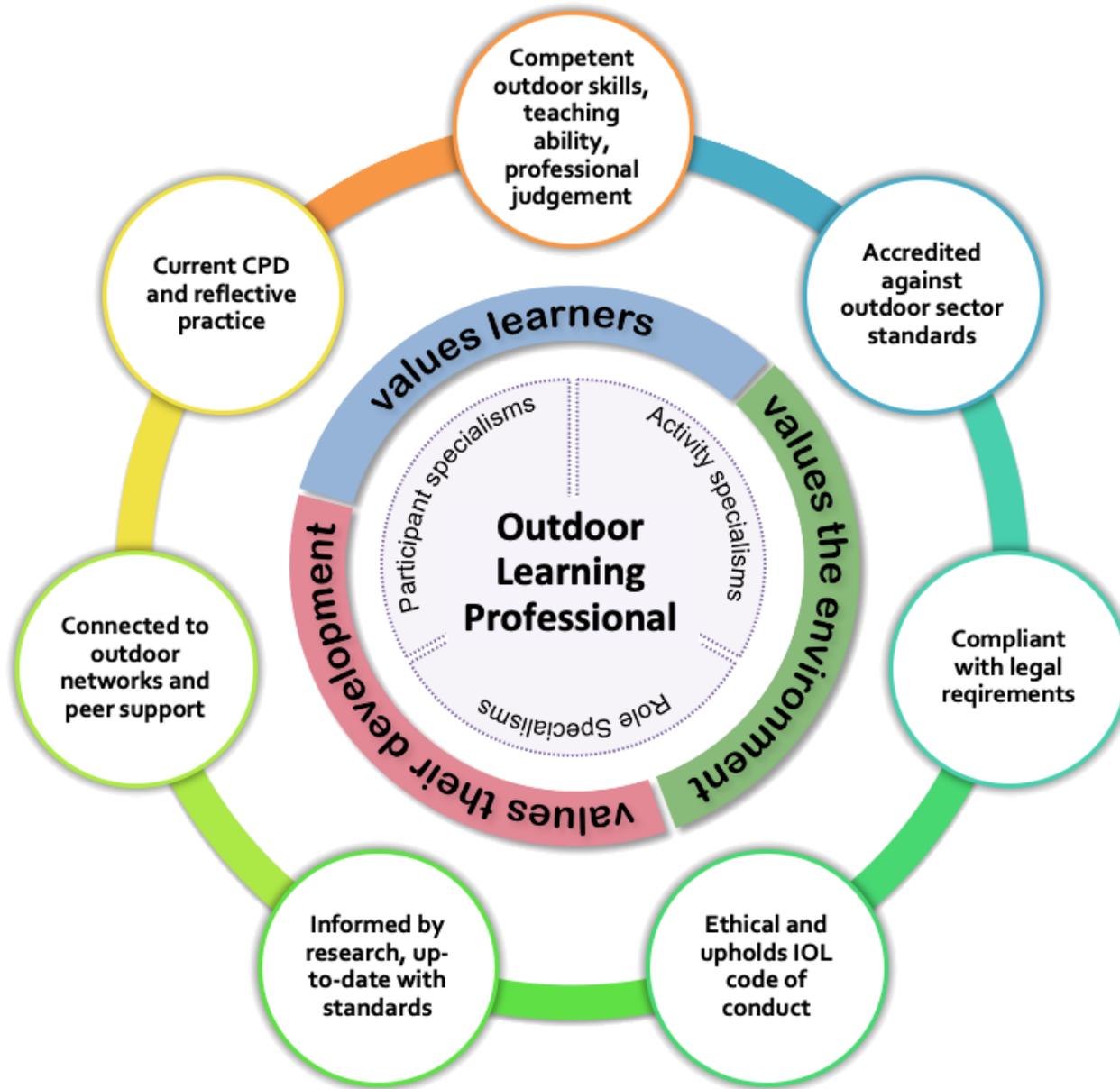
- Team Leader
- Assistant Manager
- Department Manager
- Operational Manager
- Centre Manager
- General Manager

Outdoor Learning Professionals

Outdoor learning professionals provide safe activities and effective learning in the outdoors for the benefit of individuals, communities, society and the economy.

They are trained, experienced and uphold the values and behaviours that help others adventure in their environment, gain skills and make a positive difference for our world.

Professionals in outdoor learning may volunteer, work full-time or part-time to positively impact areas such as sports participation, outdoor education, youth development, wellbeing, workforce training or adventure tourism.



Professional Recognition

Professional recognition shows that you have the required skill set to gain recognised status within your chosen field.

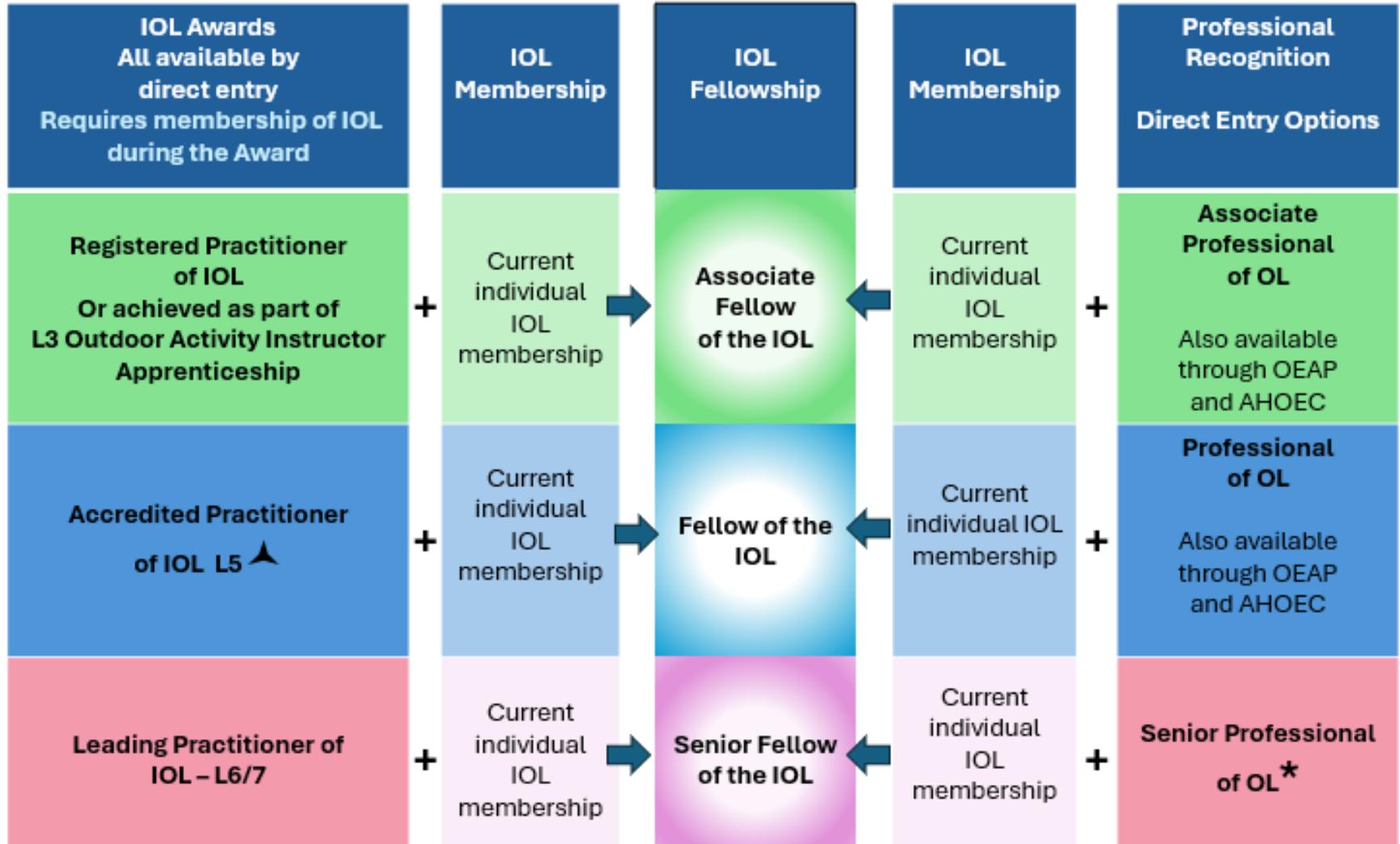
It enhances your career prospects and evidences your commitment to your specialism of outdoor learning.



IOL Accreditation & Professional Recognition

IOL Awards Route to Fellowship

Professional Recognition Route to Fellowship



Continuing Professional Development

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is an on-going commitment to broadening or further developing competence.

For instructors, teachers, managers and leaders in the outdoors, competence in a particular role comes from the ability to combine learning, skills, experience and knowledge and operate safely.



Continuing Professional Development

Experiences that contribute to broadening or further developing competence can be considered CPD.

Courses, voluntary work on a committee, watching video, reading books, online courses are all valuable forms of professional development.

It is not just the experience that makes something CPD – it is how you have applied the experiences to broaden and/or develop your practice.



Sometimes the way is clear...



...and sometimes it's (k)not!



Which way?



LPIOL

Leading Practitioners of the Institute for Outdoor Learning (LPIOL) are champions of outdoor learning and have a depth of experience and evidence of influencing the wider sector beyond their workplace or specialist interest area.



APIOL

Accredited Practitioners of the Institute for Outdoor Learning (APIOL) have a passion for outdoor learning and have experience planning, leading and evaluating programmes for individuals and groups. The APIOL Award recognises the holistic skills and knowledge of professionals who deliver outdoor learning programmes.



RPIOL

Registered Practitioners of the Institute for Outdoor Learning plan, prepare and lead safe and engaging outdoor learning sessions to achieve intended outcomes.

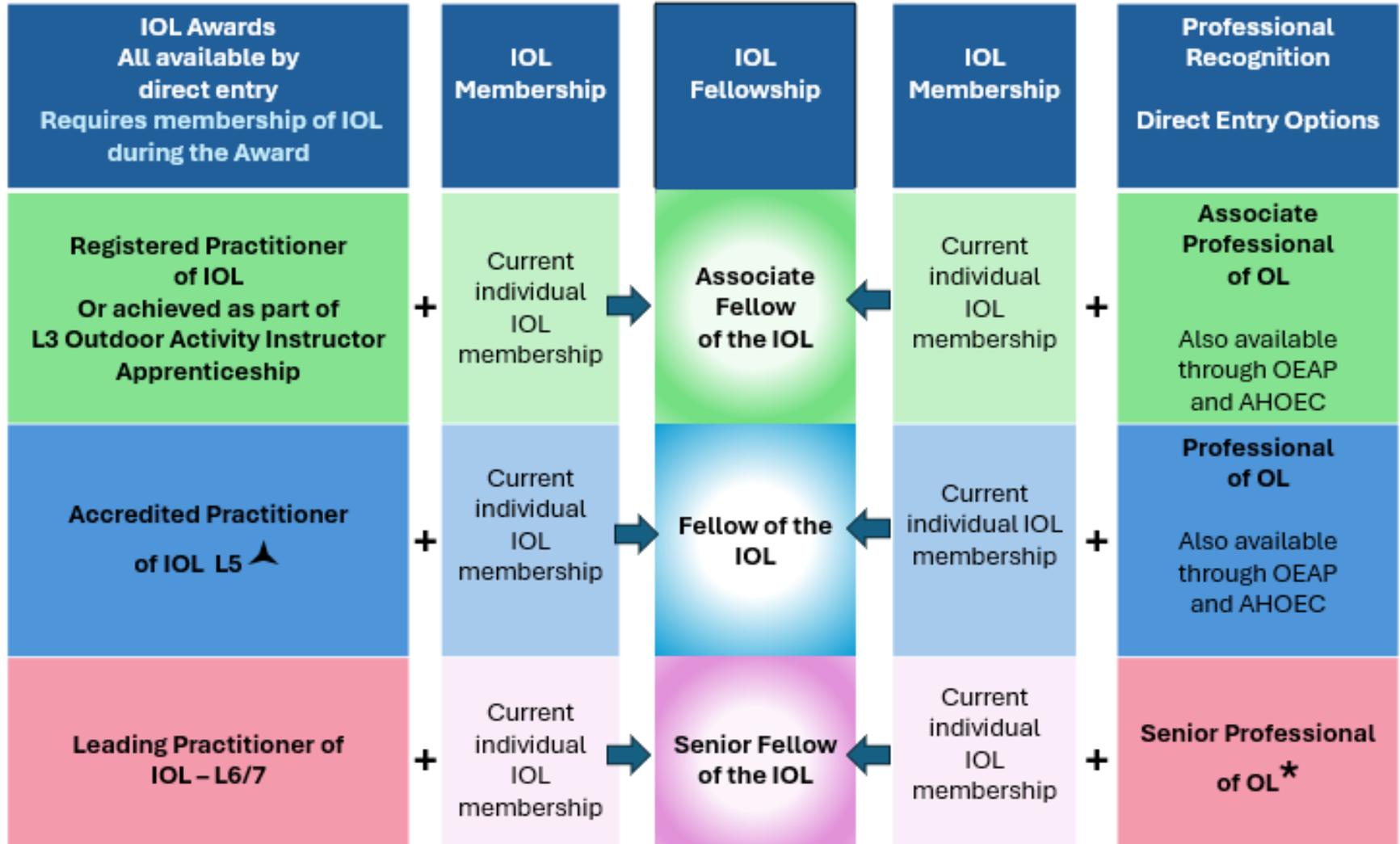
1. Recognised 2. Valued 3. Supported



IOL Accreditation & Professional Recognition

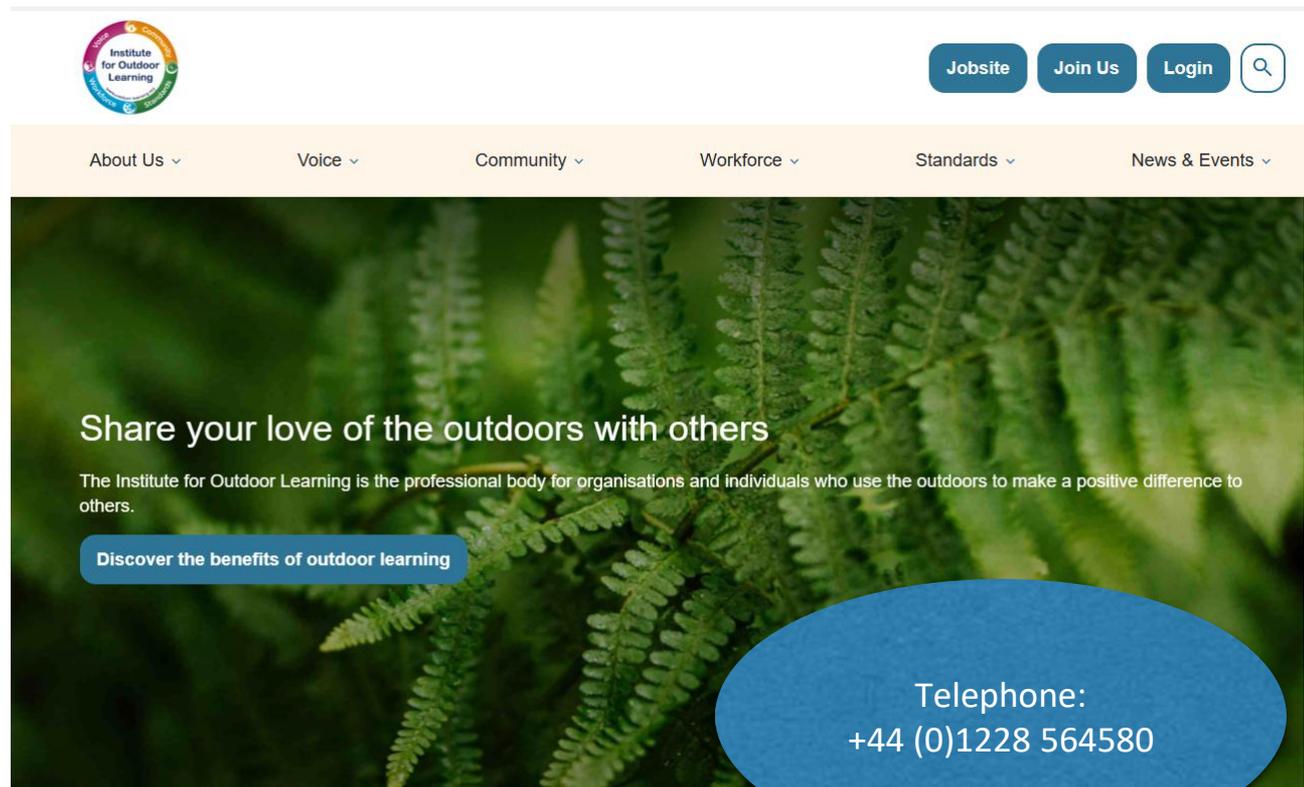
IOL Awards Route to Fellowship

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Championing Outdoor Learning

Contact Us



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Institute for Outdoor Learning