Indian Himalayas 2018

Explorer Information Pack
For Explorers and Parents/Carers/ Guardians of Explorers

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The Expedition

What?

In 2018 British Exploring, will return to the Indian Himalayas. The expedition has a strong emphasis on mountain climbing and exploration together with scientific data recording and interpretation of that natural environment. As an Explorer, you will take on the journey of a lifetime trekking in the world’s highest mountain range over peaks as high as 5800m, experiencing the traditional culture of the region and taking part in a wide range of scientific fieldwork, from carrying out lake surveys to measuring glacial retreat levels.

Why?

We create unique expeditions to challenge and transform the expectations and future lives of the young people we work with. Our work is transformational for everyone who participates (leaders as well as Explorers) and we believe that society benefits considerably, over many years, from the impact of what we do.

Who?

British Exploring – The British Exploring Society is a unique youth development charity which uses expeditions as a vehicle to advance the education of young people by developing their confidence, teamwork, leadership and spirit of adventure and exploration. Since it was formed in 1932, the Society has run countless expeditions to remote regions across the world including jungles, deserts, mountains and the arctic.

Who can apply?

Our Himalaya Expedition is available to Explorers between the ages of 16 and 25. The most important thing we look for from our Explorers is commitment; you must show an initial interest, and be prepared to commit to the training and expedition from the start. You do not need to have any prior expedition experience, you will receive the training you need in the UK and during the first few days of your expedition.

2018 Dates

- **Explorer Briefing Weekend:** Spring 2018
- **Overseas Expedition:** Summer 2018
- **Next Steps:** Autumn 2018
Phase 1: UK Training Programme

Briefing Weekend

This is a great opportunity for you to meet your expedition team and learn about your trip. The weekend will commence during Spring, 2018

You will be invited to a weekend of activities to introduce you the fellow Explorers in your fire (Fire is the British Exploring word for team – as it’s the perfect amount of people that can fit round a camp fire) and meet your expedition leaders. This includes ice-breakers and team building activities so you can start to experience what it will be like working together on expedition.

You’ll get a chance to learn first aid, kit and equipment packing, safety procedures. As well as this you will learn about the proposed scientific fieldwork on the expedition and start learning the fundamentals of life on expedition. You’ll have additional training once you arrive on expedition – a camp site in the UK can only mimic the mountains so much!

Transport, Accommodation and Facilities

The site for the Briefing Weekend for 2018 is TBC. However, all sites we use for events have good public transport links and a coach will be provided to pick those travelling by train up from the nearby station. Details of the meeting places, dates and times will be shared with the teams before then.
Phase 2: The Expedition, Himalaya

Please note that expedition plans are subject to change, both prior to departure and once in country. This is applicable to all our expeditions. The expedition operates with a full contingency plan which can be put in place prior to departure or during the expedition itself.

By accepting the challenge of joining a British Exploring Expedition to the Indian Himalayas you will have the opportunity to discover a true wilderness landscape with picturesque valleys, a rich cultural history and abundance of rare flora and fauna. British Exploring has a long history of running expeditions to the Indian Himalayas yet each expedition proves to be a truly unique adventure.

Expedition Overview:

Since the Society was founded in 1932, exploration and discovery has been at the core of our expeditions. By participating in a challenging expedition to remote, wilderness environments we hope to inspire you to develop your confidence, teamwork, leadership and spirit of adventure, and help you and society better understand the world around us.

Whilst all our expeditions are unique they all share purpose and follow the same model:

- **Adventure**...to explore and challenge.
- **Science**...to explore and discover.
- **Creative Media**...to explore and capture.

As previously mentioned, every expedition is unique however below is typical day you are likely encounter whilst on expedition in the Himalayas. Please bear in mind that there is no set itinerary for any British Exploring expedition as the best adventures need to allow for an element of uncertainty and flexibility as you adapt to the environment and to allow individual interests to lead the direction the expedition takes.
Getting there: To reach the Indian Himalayas you will travel from London Heathrow to New Delhi with an overnight layover in New Delhi before flying on to Leh. On arrival in Leh you will spend a couple of days gently acclimatising to the altitude and environment.

During this time you will sort out the logistics for the journey ahead and purchase items needed for the expedition. Once departing from Leh, you will start the 5-day journey to base camp. En route, you will experience the wonder of the Dalai Lama’s summer palace, the Hemis Monastery and cross the Tang Lang La pass at over 5000m!

After arriving at base camp, you will get involved in setting up camp and preparing to begin your treks and projects.

Then the real adventure begins...

A typical day in the Himalayas:

- Emerge from your tent to the glorious sight of a mountain valley following a night drifting to sleep to the sounds of the glacial wind and work with your Fire to cook breakfast and strike camp.
- Continue to climb upwards towards the summit, you are looking to reach up to 5800m!
- On reaching a long stretch of good snow the team stop to put on crampons, helmets and ropes before the final push to the summit.
- As the clouds dissipate, your team will eventually reach the summit, stopping briefly to celebrate this feat and to take weather readings for your science project at our weather station, the 3rd highest in the world!
- The day winds down as you set up camp, cook dinner and settle into your tents to reflect on an incredible day of trekking and your first 5800m mountain.
Accommodation, Food and Facilities

Throughout your time in the Himalayas, the team will be ‘wild’ camping, both at Base Camp and during the activity phases. This involves digging pit toilets and collecting water for drinking and cooking from the river. There will not be access to showers throughout the expedition, so plenty of wet wipes will be essential! You will receive plenty of support and guidance on life on expedition.

During some of the activity phases, you may be required to carry at least one day’s supply of drinking water alongside camping equipment, depending on what sources are available on the route. Even in cooler weather, it is important to stay hydrated whilst undertaking physical activity.

Food will be prepared on camping stoves; many of the meals will consist of freeze dried ration packs and some fresh food, with snacks during the day. Freeze dried goods are preferable for expeditions and trekking because they are very light weight. They take a bit of getting used to but you will soon find yourself looking forward to your meal at the end of a long days walking, especially when the temperature drops.

There will be no access to electricity whilst on expedition— you will not be able to charge any electrical devices.

Contacting Home

Throughout the majority of the expedition, there will be little or no reception on mobile phones. You are advised against bringing your mobile phones with you, if you do you will be asked to hand them in at basecamp at your own risk and get them back at the end of expedition. You should not expect to be able to contact home at any point during the expedition except in emergencies. In the case of an emergency at home, friends and family should be advised to contact the British Exploring head office who will be able to make contact with the expedition team. Details for contacting this representative will be issued with joining instructions in the weeks running up to your departure from the UK.
Understanding the Indian Himalaya

Climate

In the Himalayas, the climate varies depending on elevation and location. As the elevation increases it gets colder and as the elevation drops it gets wetter. As a result, the temperature and climatic changes in the Himalayan regions change very quickly. The Ladakh region of the Himalayas where you will be based is in a high mountainous region of Northern India, with summer temperatures reaching up to 25°C during the day and plunging to below freezing at night depending on your elevation. Precipitation levels are expected to be low at this time of year but the weather can be particularly changeable in mountain environments so you need to be prepared for periods of poor weather.

History & Culture

Ladakh ("land of high passes") is a region in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir that currently extends from the Kunlun mountain range to the main Great Himalayas to the south, inhabited by people of Indo-Aryan and Tibetan descent. It is one of the most sparsely populated regions in Jammu and Kashmir and its culture and history are closely related to that of Tibet.

The Himalayas has a rich cultural heritage with many different aspects. The Himalayan people’s diversity shows in many ways. It shows through their architecture, their languages and dialects, their beliefs and rituals, as well as their clothing. The shapes and materials of the people’s homes reflect their practical needs and beliefs. The diversity amongst the Himalayan peoples is also show in their handwoven textiles that display colours and patterns unique to their ethnic backgrounds.

Ladakhi culture is very similar to Tibetan culture and the food in particular has much in common with Tibetan cuisine. Popular dishes include thukpa (noodle soup) and tsampa, known in Ladakhi as ngampe (roasted barley flour). Tea in Ladakh is traditionally made with strong green tea, butter and salt!

Almost half of Ladakhis are Shia Muslims and the rest are mostly Tibetan Buddhists. Religious mask dances are an important part of Ladakh’s cultural life. Hemis monastery, a leading centre of the Drukpa tradition of Buddhism, holds an annual masked dance festival, as do all major Ladakhi monasteries.

Tibetian medicine has also been the traditional health system of Ladakh for over a thousand years! For centuries, the only medical system accessible to the people have been the amchi who are traditional doctors following the Tibetan medical tradition. Amchi medicine is still an important component of public health to this day, especially in remote areas.
Phase 3: Next Steps

You will be invited to attend the final phase of your expedition journey which will take place in London (location TBC) approximately 2 months after your return from expedition. Next Steps is a chance for Explorers and leaders to reunite after their expedition, to reflect on the lessons learned during their time away, share stories with friends and family and make the most of the experience for the future.

The 2017 Next Steps event was a real success, with many Explorers and leaders taking part in a range of activities during the day, followed by presentations from our Explorers to an audience of family, friends and supporters of British Exploring.

Feedback

When you have completed your expedition, we will ask for feedback from you in the form of a survey. We will ask for your feedback on all aspects of your British Exploring Journey, what you enjoyed and what you think we could do to improve our expeditions in the future. If you have any questions or feedback throughout the course of your journey with us, please don’t hesitate to contact your Expeditions Coordinator!
The Leadership Team

At the heart of all British Exploring expeditions is a skilled team of mountain leaders, instructors, career expeditioners, medics, scientists, educators and youth workers. The Society benefits from some of the most highly skilled staff in the sector. The Leadership team for the Himalayas expedition will include both male and female staff.

Team Structure

Overall, we expect to have approximately 50-60 Explorers taking part in the expedition. They will also be joined by approximately 5 Trainee Leaders. Trainee Leaders are past participants of previous expeditions, or those with relevant experience looking to gain and develop further experience in the expedition world. On expedition, the team will be split into ‘Fires’ of approximately 10-12 Explorers, 1 Trainee Leader and typically 1 Science and 1 Adventure leader who will be responsible for the group. The Central Leader team will be spread between basecamp and the teams in the field, depending on needs.

The Central Leader Team

Chief Leader:

A Chief Leader is the most senior role on an expedition, involved from the outset in planning, devising and leading on an expedition and responsible for ensuring that it meets the aims of the Society, and is permanently, positively transformative for everyone who participates.

Both the Chief Leader and Deputy Chief Leader will be experienced Explorers, having completed and lead on several expeditions in mountain environments and worked with young people in the outdoors. They will both be responsible for the itinerary of the programme and will supervise the rest of the leadership team.

Deputy Chief Leader:

The Deputy Chief Leader role varies on each expedition. Primarily, it involves acting as the Chief Leader’s second-in-command and thus needs to compliment his/her skills; hence the role is largely defined by the Chief Leader. The Deputy Chief Leader would take overall responsibility for the expedition should the Chief Leader need to step down for any reason.

Chief Scientist:

The Chief Scientist will take overall responsibility for all scientific fieldwork taking place on the expedition, including the development of suitable scientific objectives and offering guidance and training to the individual group (“Fire”) Science Leaders and Explorers. It is likely that the Chief Scientist will also act as a Fire Leader, working with up to 12 Explorers alongside a second Fire Leader who will have responsibility for the adventurous aspects of the expedition. The Science Fire Leader is responsible for constructing a scientific project with the consultation of the Chief Scientist.
**Expedition Medic:**

Expedition medical teams are devised for each of our expeditions based on a thorough assessment of medical requirements considering a range of factors including, but not limited to, the environment, client group and access to local facilities/services. Our medical teams consist of fully qualified medical professionals and may include Doctors and other healthcare professionals such as Nurses or Paramedics with appropriate specialist experience.

**Base Camp Manager:**

The Base Camp Manager is responsible for many of the logistical aspects of the expedition such as equipment and food, as well as managing environmental impact at base camp. It is a flexible role that requires a need to be able to handle a range of tasks, as well as acting as the ‘fixer’ of the expedition and supporting the Chief Leader with all aspects of expedition life.

**Creative Media Leader:**

The Creative Media Leader is responsible for devising inspirational and engaging projects with the consultation of the leader team, focusing on developing media related skills and content for all expedition participants.

**Trainee Leader Mentor:**

Trainee Leader Mentors are responsible for mentoring and assisting the development of a group ('Fire') of Trainee Leaders who are undertaking a leadership development programme with British Exploring. The Trainee Leader Mentor will be involved in the British Exploring Trainee Leader Programme prior to the expedition and will see the participants through their training and development prior to and during the expedition.

**The Fire Leaders**

**Adventure Leaders:**

Our Adventure Leaders are responsible for leading a group (“Fire”) of up to 12 young Explorers in partnership with a second and possibly a third leader. Adventure Leaders are responsible for the adventurous activities of the fire during the expedition, within the parameters set by the Chief Leader and Senior Adventure Leader.

**Science Leader:**

Our Science Leaders are responsible for leading a group (“Fire”) of up to 12 young Explorers in partnership with a second, and possibly third leader. Science Leaders are responsible for the construction and delivery of a programme of inspirational scientific projects in conjunction with the Chief Scientist and other science leaders on the expedition.
The British Exploring Code of Ethics and Good Conduct

This Code of Ethics and Good Conduct forms part of our terms and conditions and our contract with every Explorer and Leader on every British Exploring expedition. British Exploring reserves the right to remove an Explorer or Leader from an expedition for a significant breach of this Code. Such judgement rests with Expedition Chief Leadership and British Exploring Head Office.

A British Exploring expedition is a team effort. Before starting on an expedition with us every expedition member is asked to think carefully about the positive or negative impact of their behaviour and decisions on others.

British Exploring asks you to agree to the following:

- You understand that you will support others in applying this code, as well as keeping to it yourself.
- You will respect the worth, contribution and opinions of everyone on expedition at all times - through what you do, and through what you say.
- You commit to making the expedition experience enjoyable and rewarding for everyone.
- You agree to fully participate as far as you are able in all adventure, learning and personal development opportunities with British Exploring before, during and after your expedition.
- You will make reasonable efforts to provide support for others who need it on expedition.
- You will ask for help yourself when you need it.
- You will follow all Expedition rules, including those which you agree during the course of your Expedition.
- You will respect and accept the decisions of Leaders and carry out their reasonable requests.
- You will be willing, enthusiastic and help others carrying out tasks needed for a successful expedition, before and during the expedition.
- You will respect the customs and practices of people and communities that you meet with British Exploring.
- You will be careful to avoid actions which lead to any form of pollution and closely follow instruction to minimise negative environmental impact.
- You will be trustworthy.
- You will consider the safety and welfare of others and avoid reckless activities that put yourself or others at risk.
- You will not use violent language or physical violence.
- You will avoid all illegal activities and substances.
- You will not drink alcohol.
- You will immediately avoid, if asked, any substance or behaviour which Leaders believe is harming your ability to take part in the expedition.
- You agree not to have any exclusive or sexual relationships on expedition.

Time Off

There will be times during both the training programme and the expedition when you are able to take some time to yourself to read a book, write a diary or just reflect on the day. This might be during the evenings or a midday break on expedition. You will be instructed by your Leaders when personal time will be permitted. It is
important to remember that your conduct during these times is just as important to the team and the success of the programme as your conduct during the day.

What’s Included

Before Expedition:

- Support throughout the application process from our dedicated and friendly team
- On-going help and advice on anything you need from the experts in our UK office
- A branded t-shirt
- Training weekend (Spring); help to get everything prepared, meet your fellow Explorers and ask any questions
- Support throughout your fundraising journey, including help with bursaries
- An invitation to your expedition Facebook group, where you can chat with other Explorers and discuss anything in more detail

On Expedition:

- Continued technical training and acclimatisation
- Leadership from world class expedition professionals
- Comprehensive travel insurance
- An adventurous expedition programme that exhilarates, challenges and inspires
- All accommodation and subsistence (incl. ration packs and fresh food)
- All basic expedition and group equipment (e.g. tents, stoves)
- All required technical and safety equipment (e.g. ropes, helmets & harnesses)
- The latest communications technology (e.g. satellite phones, yellow bricks, VHF radios)
- 24/7 support network based in the UK
- In country agents providing localised expertise

After Expedition:

- British Exploring Expedition Certificate
- John Muir Explorer Award Certificate
- Support with your Duke of Edinburgh Award (residential only)
- An invitation to Next Steps

What is not provided:

- Costs relating to application for or renewal of passports
- Visa costs
In most cases, you will be expected to make your own way to designated meeting points at the start of each training event. The costs associated with travel to meeting points will not be covered by the expedition

- Flights
- Personal expedition kit – you can find your kit guide on the following page
- Any costs related to vaccinations or prophylactic medication if relevant on your expedition – you can find this is the section: Preparing for departure
- Transport to the airport on the day of departure from the UK
- Spending money – it should be noted that since most of the expedition is spent in remote locations, there will be little opportunity to spend money, however you should be aware that on the few occasions you may have access to local shops, any purchases made will be at your own expense.

Fundraising

Don’t let the reality of fundraising put a halt to your plans as it is much easier than you think to raise the money you need, especially with our charity status. Though you may not believe us now this is a highly enjoyable part of the expedition process: raising your anticipation for the actual trip, whilst providing you with an opportunity to gain invaluable life skills. So, although we don’t deny it is a challenge, with a positive attitude, a plan and a little hard work you will quickly find the pounds piling up.

As a starting point you can take a look at our fundraising booklet for advice and guidance on how to approach your fundraising.

Explorer Miles:

Explorer Miles is a fantastic British Exploring fundraising initiative that enables you to earn up to £1000 towards the cost of your expedition.

British Exploring is teaming up with vInspired to offer you a new way to fund your expedition through social action. Social action is about doing something practical that makes a positive change. This could be volunteering, fundraising, campaigning, setting up a social enterprise or any action that has a positive impact on both yourself and other people.

We will give out the Explorer Miles like this:

- 10 Hours = 100 Explorer Miles = v10 badge = £100 off your expedition cost
- 30 Hours = 300 Explorer Miles = v30 badge = £300 off your expedition cost
- 50 Hours = 500 Explorer Miles = v50 badge = £500 off your expedition cost
- 100 Hours = 1000 Explorer Miles = v100 badge = £1000 off your expedition cost

To find out more about our Explorer Miles scheme and how to sign up please click here.
Expedition Kit

Before embarking on expedition, you will need to ensure you have all the required items of kit. Your kit and clothing is paramount to your ability to operate fully and comfortably in a remote expedition environment. Assembling your personal kit for the expedition will be both fun & daunting. The information in this guide for our 2017 expedition, has been put together utilising extensive experience and is designed to support you and help you to be fully equipped and prepared for the expedition and the environment you will be visiting. You will also have the opportunity to have a kit brief and ask any questions at the Explorer Briefing weekend in spring 2018. This guide will give you an idea of what kit will be needed on your expedition. You will receive an updated version of the kit guide in 2018.

Preparing for departure

Vaccinations:

Please note it is your responsibility to ensure your vaccinations are up to date. You will need to make sure you have the required vaccinations prior to embarking on your expedition. The vaccination form with a full list of required vaccines for your expedition to the Himalayas is available to download from your online portal on the British Exploring website. You will need to log all the dates you have received each vaccine and once all vaccines and doses are completed, you will need to sign and upload the completed document to your online portal. Please be aware that some vaccines require multiple doses over a period of time, so make sure you do not leave your vaccines until the last minute!

For up to date travel health information, please visit http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/home.aspx

Visas:

For your expedition to the Himalayas you will need to ensure you have applied for an Indian Tourist Visa. Without the appropriate visa, you will not be able to enter the country. This is a lengthy process and can take some time, so it is important that you do not leave it until the last minute. For a full guide on how to apply for the required visa please follow our guide here. Please make sure you read this guide thoroughly before you apply.

If you hold a passport of another nationality, please contact the British Exploring office as soon as possible to discuss visa arrangements.

Like the vaccination form, you will need to ensure you upload a copy of your visa to your online portal.

Passports:

Passports must be valid for at least 6 months’ post expedition. You will be asked to upload a photocopy of your passport to your online portal prior to your departure from the UK.

All Explorers must have a full valid passport by the beginning of the briefing weekend or they will not be able to take part. Each year several individuals miss out on the expedition and the opportunity of a lifetime because their passport hasn’t arrived in time. Please start your application/renewal NOW to ensure you are ready to go.
What Happens Next

Expression of Interest

By completing an Expression of Interest, you let us know that you want to know more about our expeditions. You will then receive an email asking you to arrange a time for a phone conversation with our Explorer Recruitment Officer.

Chat to our Explorer Recruitment Officer

This will be a short conversation to answer any questions you have about our expeditions and to tell us a little bit more about yourself and why you would like to be an Explorer. Once you feel confident that we have answered your questions and ready to take part, you will be invited to complete our Supporting you form and to pay your deposit.

Supporting You & Deposit Payment

We will email you a link to our Supporting You form and details on how to pay your deposit of £200 to hold a place on expedition.

Our Supporting You Form can take a little while so make sure you give yourself enough time to complete all the steps in one sitting. You will need to fill in this form truthfully and in as much detail as you are able, to allow us to support your participation and maintain your wellbeing on expedition. This form is important to gather important information which will help both you and us prepare for the expedition and to reduce risk and maintain safety for you and all other participants. This process also forms part of our adherence to the British Standard for the delivery of overseas ventures (BS8848). Once you have completed your form, you will receive an email with your answers in it. You will need to take this to your GP for their signature.

Application Review

Here, we will review your full application and make sure there is nothing else that you, or we need to know to support your participation on the expedition.

Under Offer & Deposit Payment

You will receive an email with details on how to pay your £200-pound deposit and you will be asked to confirm your place on expedition. You can confirm your place by logging back in to your British Exploring Portal on our website www.britishexploring.org and clicking on “Edit Application”.
Documents Required

You will have several important documents that need to be completed and uploaded to your online portal. You will receive a deadline date for these documents in 2018. The British Exploring office needs to receive all the required documents on your portal. If you are having trouble uploading your documents you can call your Expeditions Coordinator, who will be happy to help you with this process.
Safety & Support

Expedition Safety Summary

**Purpose:** This document is designed to give you some general advice of the type and nature of the risks associated with your expedition destination. It will also cover some of the safety measures that we enact to endeavour to keep all participants safe.

This document only highlights the main risks, and has been compiled after undertaking a full risk assessment of the expedition, reconnaissance visits and past knowledge of the expedition environment. Expeditions by their nature are risky and whilst some of these risks are avoidable, it is important that all participants are aware of the major ones.

As part of our Integrated Safety Management System we will, closer to the departure, send you a copy of the final risk assessment. Participants undergo comprehensive training and full briefings as to the safety measures that are carried out both in the UK and during the training and acclimatisation phase of the expedition. It is important that you read this document and, if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

British Exploring is BS8848 compliant. BS8848 is the British Standard for safety in adventurous activities. For more information, please see the BS8848 guide available on our Safety and Support page on our website.

It is important that you read this document prior to signing any forms, if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

**Himalaya**

British Exploring has run expeditions to the Himalaya since 1988. The 2018 expedition is to an area in the province of Ladakh, Northern India, close to the city of Leh.

This is a high altitude- 4000-5800 metre area, which is sparsely inhabited and surrounded by huge mountain peaks, with some glaciers and snow patches.

The expedition is primarily a trekking and science expedition, though this can mean some travel on ice and snow, though predominantly the terrain is mountainous and rocky.

**Main Hazards:**

**Transport**

There is always a risk of incidents occurring while using various forms of transport. In the Himalayas, roads are often not to the same standard as UK roads and can be in a poor state of repair or not have equivalent safety features. We access many mountain roads and general road users may not be sufficiently competent.
British Exploring has a contract with a reputable Third Party provider to ensure that all vehicles and drivers meet the highest standards. Vehicles have been inspected during the build-up to these expeditions, the company have undergone a full provider check and leaders will reconfirm this and the suitability of the vehicles prior to using them or their drivers. once they have arrived in India. Participants will be briefed on behaviour on vehicles as well as moving around in towns where driving standards and road priorities may be different than in the UK.

**Wild Animals**

Throughout your expedition, there will be a number of wild animal related hazards, ranging from mosquitos and bugs whilst in transit through Delhi to large mammals in the Mountains.

Whilst large animals will usually avoid large parties of people there are evident risks of encounters and conflicts. All leaders and Explorers will be trained in dealing with low level risks from biting insects and small animals, as well as protocols for the avoidance and management of encounters with large and potentially dangerous mammals.

The area we are operating in is known to be home to large herbivores such as Himalayan blue sheep and Himalayan Tahr as well as omnivores such as wild boar and carnivores such as Snow leopards and Asiatic black bear and Himalayan brown bears. Human – animal conflicts are rare due to the nervousness of these species around humans. However, all expedition participants will be briefed, trained and will follow British Exploring protocol for large and potentially dangerous mammal encounters. Control measures will be put in place, including good practice with regards to cooking and camp hygiene. Food and other attractants will be appropriately stored in sealed containers away from sleeping quarters.

**Altitude**

The main hazard on this expedition is the altitude. The expedition base camp is at nearly 4500metres, and this has an implication on travel, trekking, living and operating for the duration of the expedition.

Altitude affects everybody differently, and no one can tell where and when altitude sickness may occur. This means that all leaders and young people must be aware of all the signs and symptoms of Acute Mountain Sickness and the more serious conditions of Cerebral and Pulmonary Oedema. Early recognition and descending to a lower altitude are the main forms of treatment, though we have a high ratio of Doctors and medics, specialist altitude drugs and supplementary oxygen carried within the expedition team.

For more serious cases where evacuation is required, British Exploring have a full evacuation plan detailing a range of medical facilities in the area depending on the severity of the case, however you should be aware that evacuation times can be long. The full evacuation plan is available on request. We also have access to a special piece of equipment called a Gamow Bag, which is designed to support casualties before evacuation and helps with the treatment.

Through specific training, the addition of doctors and medics, with specialist medication and the ability to manage casualties both on the mountain, at base camp and via an evacuation we have a robust system for dealing with altitude related problems.
Communications

Communications in India and particularly the high mountains can be difficult as the use of satellite telephones is restricted in India and therefore we cannot use them.

To offset this, we have designed a communications plan to always ensure that we do not rely on just one method of communication. This is the case on all our expeditions. In the Himalaya we have access to two-way handheld radios and mobile telephones (in main town only).

We will also be using a device called a Yellow Brick. This device allows you to send short text messages from anywhere on Earth providing there is a clear view of the sky. This is used to communicate between each group and with our Operations Team. It also transmits data that allows our Operations Room to see their location in real time.

All British Exploring participants will undergo training so that they understand how each piece of communications equipment is used, and they will all be fully briefed on how to use the communications plan.

Health and Hygiene

Sickness and illness are a common hazard on expeditions. Causes could range from a bug picked up whilst travelling to serious bacterial infection from dirty or contaminated food or water. A strict hygiene regime will be enacted during the expedition, and all participants will be trained in the procedures.

On arrival into country, a sanitation plan will be devised to ensure that there are suitable sites identified for toileting, cooking and personal hygiene. Participants will be briefed on keeping good levels of hygiene at all times, including hand washing, using anti-bacterial gels and not sharing cutlery or food. All drinking water will be prepared properly through boiling, filtering or chemical tablets to ensure it is safe to cook with or drink.

Tropical Disease

Whilst there is always a risk of tropical disease when traveling internationally, the risk in most areas of Ladakh is relatively low due to the altitude. Participants will be trained in the measures necessary to ensure the highest levels of individual and group hygiene. Procedures include keeping clean, safe sources of food, and preventative medicines. Prior to the expedition, we will provide further information regarding suitable and necessary vaccinations, though we encourage participants to discuss this issue with their Practice or Travel Nurse.

General

The hazards highlighted in this document are the main ones pertinent to this expedition. Clearly there are many smaller hazards that can and sometimes do effect an expedition and the participants. Through thorough leader recruitment and training, specific training of participants around hazards and risks, the development of a culture of vigilance and the ability to dynamically respond to incidents we have a robust strategy for dealing with and minimising occurrences.

For more information regarding British Exploring’s integrated safety management system, please visit our website http://www.britishexploring.org/our-approach/safety-and-support.aspx
Accessibility

We want to be genuinely inclusive and ensure that our expeditions provide opportunities for young people from every area of society to participate over time. To do this, we will be focusing on working with those who are:

- Aged 14 to 25 (age ranges vary depending on the expedition, you can find the age range of your expedition under the heading “Who can apply” in your Expedition Info Pack)
- Cognitively able to participate in reflection
- Able to be stretched physically
- Able to be on expedition "independently"

In addition to the young people we have worked happily with for many years, we have identified additional groups of young people we want to work more with, and/or who are currently underrepresented on our expeditions. These include:

- Those at risk of becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training)
- Ethnic minority groups
- Those from communities exhibiting a number of indicators of social and economic deprivation
- Those with physical disabilities fitting our participant profile
- Those in employment/ workplace training

The most important thing we look for from our Explorers is commitment; you must show an initial interest, and be prepared to commit to the training and expedition from the start.

Insurance Policy Summary:

The Society has comprehensive travel, liability and medical insurance for everyone, with access to emergency response and evacuation, emergency medical care and repatriation.

Our insurance policy is reviewed yearly. A summary will be available to be viewed February before your expedition [here](#).
Acceptance Terms and Conditions

Health and Safety

a) By accepting the Terms and Conditions you confirm that you have studied carefully the Code of Good Conduct and that you will comply with it.
b) By accepting the Terms and Conditions you confirm that you have studied carefully the Safety Summary and confirm that you are willing to accept the level of risk contained therein, and that you agree to comply with all the risk management actions set out in the Safety Summary document as updated and extended from time to time.
c) You understand that you will be required to complete a confidential medical questionnaire prior to departure of the expedition. This medical information will be used by our doctors and leaders to help support applicants through the programme and keep them safe. Any medical information not declared to us prior to departure could result in British Exploring cancelling your expedition place with no recourse or refund or compensation. Furthermore, any medical treatment required for an undisclosed prior medical condition may not be covered by our insurance company and in this case the applicant, or in the case of those under 18, their parent or guardian, will be liable for any expenses incurred including the cost of a flight home if necessary.
d) You accept that your entitlement to participate in the Expedition is conditional upon British Exploring (and its medical advisers) considering that your medical questionnaire is satisfactory and confirming that you are fit and healthy enough to safely participate in the expedition.
e) Whilst in normal cases, we expect participants to sleep in single gender tents, in some exceptional cases, you may be expected to share with another participant of the opposite gender. In such cases, British Exploring will endeavour to ensure that you will not be in accommodation in a mixed gender group of less than 3 people

Missed Attendance

If an Explorer fails to attend any training event they will automatically be disqualified from the programme and will not be permitted to attend any future activities. In cases where Explorers miss their outbound flight, it is highly unlikely that they will be permitted to join the expedition at any future stage.

Training or Expeditions Cancellations

a) British Exploring may cancel your place on expedition at any time if you are in breach of any of these Terms and Conditions. In these circumstances, British Exploring are not obliged to refund monies paid or offer an alternative expedition. British Exploring will not be liable for any costs incurred.
b) British Exploring will endeavour to deliver all phases of the programme according to the details outlined in the Information Pack, however, in extreme circumstances, including political unrest, terrorist activity or extreme weather, it may be necessary to cancel all or part of the programme for the safety of the Explorers and staff. In cases where cancellation of any part of the training or expedition takes place mid-way through delivery, British Exploring will endeavour to assist all Leaders and Explorers with return travel to the UK or to a specified meeting point as appropriate.
Delays in Transit

British Exploring can take no responsibility for any delays in transit caused by coaches, airlines or rail companies. In cases where delays in return transport to the UK affect ongoing travel arrangements, it is the responsibility of the Explorer to make alternative arrangements and obtain compensation, where appropriate, from the transport provider. It is the responsibility of Explorers to contact any friends or relatives planning to collect them, in the event of a delay. Where standard mobile communications are not possible, British Exploring will provide assistance making satellite phone calls as and when appropriate.

Emergency Procedures

By completing the online application, participants authorise the Chief Leader or Deputy Chief Leader as appropriate to initiate emergency procedures and, where necessary, emergency medical treatment, without recourse to next of kin.

Insurance

a) British Exploring will provide comprehensive insurance cover for all participants on the programme, including assistance with medical repatriation to the UK if and when required. A document outlining the current proposed levels of cover is provided. If at any time the proposed level of cover changes, British Exploring will inform Explorers of these changes separately.
b) Explorers are reminded that it is their responsibility to read the insurance document and confirm they are happy with the levels of cover provided. Any applicant who suffers from a pre-existing medical condition is advised to contact British Exploring to discuss whether insurance cover is possible for this condition.

Complaints

Throughout the programme, Explorers will be able to offer feedback and address issues to their group leaders. If they do not feel a complaint has been dealt with effectively, they may escalate the issue to a member of the senior leader team including the Deputy Chief Leader or Chief Leader. On return to the UK, Explorers are welcome to address complaints to the British Exploring office. All complaints will be dealt with according to the British Exploring complaints policy, available on request.

Data Protection (see our full Data Protection Policy here)

a) British Exploring will hold all Personal Information supplied by you in connection with your booking, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Personal information is collected by us when you apply for a place on expedition and when you update your application. Some of your Personal Information may be considered “sensitive personal data” under the Data Protection Act 1998. We collect Personal Information for us to best cater for your needs on expedition.
b) By submitting your application form and accepting your place on expedition you understand that British Exploring may sometimes need to share personal and sensitive information we process with other organisations. Where this is necessary we will comply with all aspects of the Data Protection Act 1998.
c) We may disclose your Personal Information to programme delivery partners where relevant for the purpose of providing you with a service. Only Personal Information necessary for this purpose will be disclosed to them.
d) By participating in expeditions and all associated training and follow up events you give your consent for any photographs/videos of you taken during contact time with British Exploring to be used by British Exploring in any medium we choose. You grant British Exploring a non-exclusive perpetual, royalty-free,
e) worldwide, irrevocable, fully transferable licence to use such images for training, advertising, publicity, promotional or other British Exploring charitable activities or services. We will however remove any image from the public domain, if it is within our power to do so, if a complaint is received for whatever reason.

Financial Terms: Only applicable when the explorer pays a contribution towards the expedition.

a) You are responsible for payment in full to British Exploring by the final date for payment specified in the payment schedule.
b) If the final expedition cost increases and this increase exceeds £150 then you will be given the option to withdraw without penalty. This does not apply to flight costs, which are finalised by the airline nearer to departure.
c) Refunds will be offered strictly in accordance with the conditions set out in the Payment Schedule and Refund Policy.
d) In the unlikely event that British Exploring needs, or is required, to cancel the expedition, monies will be returned to you, in accordance with the insurance allowances outlined in Important Notes. In the case of cancellation you cannot hold British Exploring liable for any amount over and above those monies paid by you, or on your behalf.
e) In order to confirm your place on this expedition, you need to pay your deposit back to British Exploring within one week of receiving your Offer Letter.

Personal Admissions

a) You confirm that, other than minor motoring offences, you have no Criminal Convictions, either within the UK or abroad, and that no criminal charges are outstanding against you. Should this cease to be the case, you undertake to inform, immediately and in confidence, the Chief Executive Officer of British Exploring. You understand that deliberate non-disclosure of a criminal record may result in travel or repatriation complications and lead to expedition cancellation, transit delays, insurance policy invalidation and visa or entry refusal including at borders where we are in transit.
b) You understand that although British Exploring provides recommendations for your personal preparation necessary for your expedition, it is your responsibility to make sure that you follow the guidance we provide. British Exploring could cancel your expedition place should you not follow our advice. Advice may include fitness, vaccinations, travel documents and kit.
c) You agree to fully participate to the best of your ability in all expedition activity including scientific or media-led activity, and to allow any data from this to be used in writing up British Exploring’s scientific or media reports.