Role Description – Chief Leader

Overview

British Exploring Society requires a high calibre of Leaders for all its expeditions. A leadership team which is diverse, able and committed has proven benefits; transferring skills, knowledge and positive attitudes to all participants on a youth development expedition.

The Chief Leader role is key to the overall success of an expedition. The most senior member of our Field Leadership teams, the Chief Leader trains and manages the rest of the expedition leadership team and takes an active role throughout the development and delivery of an expedition. From planning to review and evaluation, through training, direct field leadership and staff management they are crucial components in the educational experience, the success of the leader team and the safety of the expedition.

British Exploring Society Chief Leaders are critical to everything we do, and to everything we believe in. They effectively manage large staff teams of up to 20 other expedition leaders and up to 50 young people, who are often remote from themselves. They direct and deliver complex operations, inspire teams and are responsible for often large groups of young people for long periods of time in remote wilderness areas across the globe.

Any British Exploring Society Chief Leader will need to be able to demonstrate a robust and extensive background in leadership, expeditions and people management. Your experiences will have shaped the way that you work, how you make decisions under pressure, and your understanding of the exceptional learning and development opportunities provided by genuinely wild and remote locations. You will be able to effectively convey your knowledge and enthusiasm and ably support and foster the skills of your leader team. Your ability to inspire and motivate teams will be evident in your approach to leadership, and in the feedback you have received from those you have already worked with.

Your values and ethics matter to you – as will those of the people you want to work with and the organisations you give your time to. Your exceptional resilience, adaptability and willingness to collaborate with passionate and energetic people with a wide range of abilities and capacity will set you apart.

Responsibilities

The Delivery Cycle

Reconnaissance

From the conception of the expedition the Chief Leader works closely with the Expeditions Team to develop and shape a deliverable expedition from the original vision/concept/model or idea. Ideally the Chief Leader will have been recruited early enough to attend or help design the reconnaissance phase if it is a new destination, and to contribute to the reconnaissance report/expedition proposal. This gives the Chief Leader a high level of ownership of the project, knowledge of the destination and of the activities which can take place. The reconnaissance provides initial scope for logistics and transport, contact with third
party providers and a clear framework for the achievement of British Exploring Society’s goals for the expedition.

**Development**

During the development phase Chief Leaders will work closely with the Expeditions Team and have critical input into leader placements, designing risk-benefit assessments and associated control measures, planning and delivering training, working up logistical plans and liaising with their Leader team. The Chief Leader will also liaise with in-country agents to develop plans and ensure adequate resource/support is in place.

**Expedition**

On the expedition the Chief Leader ensures that the plan is executed, making any necessary additional decisions, dealing with issues with Leaders or young people, managing logistics, safety, communications and liaison with the British Exploring Society office team. The Chief Leader ensures that up to 50 young people and 20 Leaders collaborate positively, achieve aims and objectives as far as is practicable and safely return home. In practise, this means the Chief Leader is often located at Base Camp, providing remote support to multiple teams at remote locations alongside their Senior Leadership Team.

**Reporting and Next Steps**

On return the Chief Leader will ensure that the expedition is reported properly and accurately and that lessons learned are captured and reviewed, to be able to give British Exploring Society a clear account of what happened and what could be changed or improved. Chief Leaders also design and deliver content for their team at their debriefing event called Next Steps, designed to help young people reflect on their experiences and set goals for the future.

**Person Specification**

**Essential**

A British Exploring Society Chief Leader is an expert in their field. Experts have an organised body of knowledge that is deep and contextualised and is normally built up over an extended period of time. They have the ability to retrieve and apply knowledge to new problems and to notice new patterns of information in a novel situation.

We seek Chief Leaders who can demonstrate:

- Extensive experience of creating and leading teams, setting the tone for a working environment and creating a culture and ethos to drive a project.

- Senior management experience and a proven ability to support, direct, lead, manage and delegate effectively to complex, multidisciplinary staff teams.

- Experience of the environment they will be working in.

- Technical aptitude and skills in a range of areas, specifically pertinent to the proposed expedition activity.
• Extensive experience of working with young people in outdoor settings and supporting youth development objectives.

• Experience of safeguarding, pastoral care and behavioural management with young people.

• Experience of managing safety, writing and implementing risk assessments and managing incidents.

• An understanding and experience of managing teams and projects at remote locations.

The environments in which we operate offer new leadership challenges on a regular basis. In addition to having a considerable body of knowledge and experience, British Exploring Society is looking for Chief Leaders who can demonstrate:

• An ability to problem-solve creatively, and to work with people in an adaptable and flexible way: to have adaptive expertise.

• Strong Emotional Intelligence, including:
  - Self-awareness – a deep awareness of one’s strengths, values and motives which supports realism and thoughtfulness.
  - Social Awareness – empathy, group awareness and the ability and desire to work to meet the needs of the wider group. Empathy will tend to facilitate approachability, listening and response skills, and the support of talent in others.
  - Aptitude in Relationship management – the ability to influence others, manage change and challenge, build teams and foster teamwork and produce desired outcomes.

**British Exploring Society is committed to building an executive and volunteer team that together represent a diverse variety of backgrounds, skills, and perspectives on the world. The more inclusive we are, the better we think we’ll be at delivering our charitable aims.**

Our focus is on supporting those most disadvantaged in childhood and adolescence. To deliver our charitable aims, and secure our future, our actions and behaviours must support our commitment to welcoming young people, volunteers and team members from backgrounds and life experiences which reflect our aims and the changing dynamics of contemporary life. We are making good progress providing access and programmes which work for young people from right across society, but we urgently need to diversify our staff and volunteer teams. We actively seek the energy, wisdom, and challenge of those who represent the life experiences of the young people we serve, and who can increase our effectiveness as a team.