Role Description – Paddle Leader

Overview

As a Paddle Leader you will be responsible for the safety of the group to which you’re assigned whilst paddling and/or engaging in activities on or in the margins of the river/body of water. You will lead and manage your group in conjunction with at least one other expedition Leader and will operate within the parameters set by British Exploring Society, the Chief Leader and/or Senior Paddle Leader.

Senior Paddle Leader

In many cases this role will be fulfilled by the Chief Leader. The Senior Paddle Leader will have relevant technical skills in order to have overall responsibility for the water-based activities on expedition and will offer advice and support to Paddle Leaders with route planning.

Responsibilities

Pre-Expedition

- Attend training residential in the UK during the 6 months prior to the expedition. UK Training requirements are specific to each expedition and the needs of the client group and may include 3-4 training weekends and/or a training week. All training events are considered mandatory
- Contribute to planning, risk assessments, expedition-specific guidelines and similar as appropriate and directed by British Exploring Society and/or the Chief Leader, particularly in your area of expertise
- Plan the group’s paddle activities in liaison with the Chief Leader and/or Senior Paddle Leader

On Expedition

All responsibilities for your group in the field are shared with the second (and third where applicable) group Leader, except those which pertain directly to your expertise (i.e. paddling)

- To inspire our Young Explorers and engage fully in activities to support the educational aims and purpose of the society and expedition
- To facilitate learning opportunities for all Young Explorers in your group
- Responsibility for, and pastoral care of, Young Explorers in your group
- Overall responsibility for safety and adventurous activities of the group assisted by the second (and third) group Leader
- Train Young Explorers, and other Leaders as necessary, in basic paddle skills pertinent to the proposed activity / itinerary
- To train the Young Explorers, and other Leaders as necessary, in the methods necessary to live and operate in the expedition environment
- Carry out planned paddle activities and facilitate wider expedition projects
• All Leaders must regard it as a priority to ensure the safety of each and every member of the expedition at all times
• To manage a feedback and review process with Young Explorers in the group following the structure provided by British Exploring Society
• Where an assistant or Trainee Leader is attached to your group, to give them responsibility as appropriate, oversee their actions and provide learning opportunities, in coordination with the Trainee Leader Mentor

Post Expedition
• To produce an overview report for the activities you have been responsible for
• Contribute to the overall post expedition report (PXR), and expedition feedback as appropriate and directed by British Exploring Society and/or Chief Leader
• Attend the expedition debrief event & presentation. This is usually a single day event held in London or around within three months post expedition
• Contribute towards the development of the Area Info pack, in particular to any additional information or risks that should also be included in subsequent versions

Person Specification

Essential
• An interest in youth development and experience of working with young people relevant to the expedition client group*
• High levels of integrity and sound judgement
• A strong and flexible team player
• Excellent interpersonal and communication skills
• Strong leadership skills and the ability to inspire others
• The ability to deal with conflict and overcome challenges
• Significant personal expedition and travel experience
• Significant personal paddling experience, including multi-day/week trips in remote areas
• An enthusiasm for expeditions and paddling – and the ability to convey this to our Young Explorers
• Level 2 canoe coach with a relevant 4* award.
• Paddle Qualifications: We operation on Moderate water in Open Tandem Canoes and require a Level 2 open canoe coaching award with a relevant 4* award or the equivalent in the new UKCC qualification system guidance
• Environment specific experience relating to the expedition location and the nature of the bodies of water involved
• Experience of managing/coaching beginner groups while paddling and in remote/challenging environments
• Recognised water safety and rescue qualification(s)
• Recognised 16-hour adventure/wilderness First Aid Qualification. (provided free of charge by British Exploring Society)

*client groups vary between expeditions and may include young people with special educational needs, low aspirations, emotional and behavioural difficulties of specific developmental or support needs. Please see the relevant expedition pages for more details.

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.