

**ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES LICENSING AUTHORITY (AALA)
MANAGEMENT BOARD**

FOURTEENTH MEETING 8 October 2013

9 Quinton Business Park, BIRMINGHAM

11.00 – 14.00

In attendance: David Ashton – HSE (Chair AALA MB)
Alistair McNab – HSE (Vice Chair AALA MB)
Paul Logan – HSE Policy
Tony Almond – HSE Policy
Gill McElvogue – HSE Policy
Gavin Howat – HSE Field Operations
Alison Fryatt – Department for Work and Pensions
Brian Chapman – Independent member AALA MB
Ian McMorrin – Independent member AALA MB
John-Paul Lawrence – Local Authorities
Gemma Denahay – Welsh Government
Sir Brooke Boothby – Chair TQS/AALS
John Walsh-Heron – Chief Executive TQS/AALS
Marcus Bailie – Head of Inspection TQS/AALS

Apologies: Douglas Armstrong – Scottish Government
Alice Chicken – Department for Education

Welcome and Introductions

1. The Chair welcomed those attending. Apologies were noted.

Minutes and actions from the last meeting

2. The minutes and actions from the last meeting (26 March 2013) were cleared.

Action

- **Agenda, reports and minutes of the March 2013 meeting to be placed on the AALA website**

Progress report

3. The pause on the planned abolition of the AALA in England remains in place and so we continue to operate business as usual.
4. The TQS contract has been extended until September 2014. AALA Board thanked TQS for agreeing to continue to operate the contract for another year. We are starting to look at what activity is necessary to re-tender the contract and how long it might take to do this.

5. AALS activity has been audited by HSE internal audit. Their report was positive about the service and the way it is delivered. There was one recommendation in the report about transfer of data from TQS to HSE which Gavin will cover in his update. [\[Post meeting note: this recommendation has now been cleared.\]](#)
6. The Minister together with his colleagues across Government who have an interest in this topic, are actively considering future options for the AALA. These options range from abolition as planned through to keeping the regime as it is, whilst examining the scope for efficiencies, or extending arrangements to all adventure activities (also with an examination of any efficiencies). He is still considering the options for future arrangements for the AALA in England which were put to him earlier in the year. We think that the current view is that AALA should be retained.
7. The Scottish Government has decided to set up its own AALA underpinned by legislation. A Working Group has been set up to look at the scope of any future Regulations. HSE officials have attended two Working Group meetings. We have been examining the process that will allow an AALA in Scotland to be established with our solicitors. It is a complex area and will require input from Westminster and well as the Scottish Government.

Actions

- **HSE to circulate the audit report**
- **A meeting of the Westminster, Scottish and Welsh Government representatives to be arranged before March 2014**

Developments in HSE

8. Four applications have been considered for refusal/revocation since the last meeting. Enforcement action has been taken in three instances, two resulting in fines and one of which remains ongoing. Three serious incidents with zip wires recently are a cause for concern within the sector.
9. Attached to the minutes is the written report from HSE.

Actions

- **General update paper to be circulated post-meeting (attached)**
- **Link to the new website community to be circulated once it is launched.**
<http://webcommunities.hse.gov.uk/connect.ti/adventureactivitiesnetwork/grouphome>

TQS Reports

Finance

10. The current financial position had been circulated and showed that costs had been contained with more use of contractor inspectors being required. New application numbers had increased but renewals figures had reduced with the ongoing trend being that of a steady rise in licence numbers. Some changes were requested on page 1 and new sheets would be provided. TQS stated that cost efficiencies may be possible if a longer contract were available.

11. Given the continuing pause, significant warning of any change in arrangements/statutory requirements was requested by TQS to allow for staffing plans to be developed.

Inspection report

12. The Head of Inspection's report had been circulated and the Board noted its contents.

Issues Arising

Department for Education

13. Confirmation that reporting of incidents would be done by the AALS reports.

Action

- **DfE to be informed of the use of existing AALS reporting arrangements for notification of relevant incidents**

Welsh Government

14. The Welsh Government reiterated their current position of waiting for further clarity on the future arrangements in both England and Wales before deciding on the shape and scope of arrangements in Wales.

Royal Yachting Association (RYA) request

15. A letter from the RYA had been received in September with a proposal for licensing by RYA. The Chair confirmed that the current agreement for the RYA Onboard Scheme had been an interim arrangement that now needed to be addressed.

16. The following points were made in discussion:

- Some concern around the potential for dual licensing and confusion within the sector were raised.
- The proposal raised a number of financial and legal issues that would need further exploration.
- If this proposal went forward for RYA it could lead to similar requests from other organisations (e.g. BCU).

Actions

- **Further legal and financial advice to be taken**
- **The Chair agreed to acknowledge the RYA letter**

Date and venue of next meeting

4 March 2014, Health and Safety Executive, 9 Quinton Business Park, Birmingham.