



**Advisory Note 7**  
**Activity Provider Accreditation**

*Prepared by Outdoor Recreation NI on behalf of the Blueway Partnership*

## Appendix 8: Activity Provider Accreditation

### National Statutory / Voluntary Accreditation Schemes

#### Northern Ireland

Although there is the provision for statutory licencing of activity providers in Northern Ireland through The Activity Centres (Safety of Young Persons) Northern Ireland Order 1997, the legislation to date has not been enacted. The Department of Communities has currently adopted '**Adventuremark**' as a suitable adventure activity accreditation scheme for activity providers in Northern Ireland in lieu of statutory licencing. This approach was identified following extensive consultation with the outdoor activity industry.

Adventuremark is a non-statutory safety scheme devised by the Adventure Activity Industry Advisory Committee (AAIAC)<sup>1</sup> for providers of adventurous activities that are outside the scope of AALA. Adventuremark allows providers to demonstrate to their customers or users that the provider's arrangements for managing the potential risks of adventure activities have been inspected and found to meet the necessary standards of good practice in the adventure activity industry. Independent external assessment is required.

See <http://www.adventuremark.co.uk/>

Adventuremark is often utilised by activity providers that offer a range of activities. It is particularly useful for those activities which do not have a National Governing Body or centre based accreditation scheme. However, many activity providers (especially those that only offer one activity) still chose to obtain accreditation via a robust National Governing Body scheme – see below.

#### Republic of Ireland

There is currently no voluntary or statutory accreditation scheme for outdoor activity providers in the Republic of Ireland.

Following an incident at Clogher Head, Co.Louth in 2011 (when six school girls were rescued from the water by a lifeboat whilst partaking in sea kayaking under the supervision of an instructor from an activity centre) the Marine Casualty Investigation Board recommended the relevant Minister consider the regulation of the provision of adventure activities.

In 2013, Minister of State for Tourism and Sport, Michael Ring T.D. asked the Irish Sports Council to examine the issues associated with safety and standards in the adventure activities sector and the development of a register of adventure activity providers.

The Irish Sports Council established the Adventure Activities Working Group 'to assist the Council to define the scope and application of the registration system, and the standards to be applied.' The Group's recommendations for a statutory 'Adventure Activities Registration Scheme for Ireland' were made to the Minister in mid-2014. At the time of writing the scheme is not in place and the timeline for delivery is not known.

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<sup>1</sup> AAIAC, the Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee, is the sector's lead body for safety in adventure activities. It is representative of a wide range of stakeholders from the UK adventure activities sector and is supported by the Institute for Outdoor Learning.

The Irish Association of Adventure Tourism <https://iaat.ie/what-we-do/> was launched in Spring 2018. In the context of accreditation the IAAT aims to:

'promote best practise in all areas of our businesses, including: a. The highest service and safety standards (but not to regulate them) in a practical way that is sustainable and workable for the industry'

Blueway developers may find close liaison with this body to be useful.

### National Governing Bodies

National Governing Bodies (NGBs) have the responsibility for managing their specific sport. The table below demonstrates the activity provider accreditation schemes (relevant to activities undertaken on Blueways) delivered by NGBs in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Accreditation schemes included within the table apply to the centre / provider rather than the individual instructor.

Activity	Northern Ireland	Republic of Ireland
<b>Canoeing</b>	Not Available	<b>Canoeing Ireland</b> - Course Provider Registration <a href="https://canoe.ie/provider-registration/">https://canoe.ie/provider-registration/</a>
<b>Cycling</b>	Not Available	Not Available
<b>Sailing</b>	<b>Royal Yachting Association</b> - Recognised Teaching Centre <a href="http://www.rya.org.uk/training-support/Pages/thinking-of-running-a-centre.aspx">http://www.rya.org.uk/training-support/Pages/thinking-of-running-a-centre.aspx</a>	<b>Irish Sailing</b> – Training Centre <a href="https://www.sailing.ie/Training/Clubs-Centres/Become-a-Centre">https://www.sailing.ie/Training/Clubs-Centres/Become-a-Centre</a>
<b>Snorkelling</b>	Irish Underwater Council – Approved Snorkelling Centres <a href="http://diving.ie/">http://diving.ie/</a>	
<b>Walking</b>	Not Available	Not Available

As the table above identifies, there is not an option currently for activity providers to be externally accredited by National Governing Bodies for all the key activities anticipated to be offered by a Blueway.