

Job Description

Expedition Chief Leader

Overview

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

The Chief Leader is key to the overall success 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 chain.

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

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 British Exploring Society, and is permanently, positively transformative for everyone who participates.

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 opportunities provided by genuinely wild and remote locations. You will be able to effectively convey your knowledge and enthusiasm; you will 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.

Profile

Necessary Skills

A British Exploring Society Chief Leader is an **expert** in their field. We define expertise as the capability of a person to display skilful physical, cognitive and meta cognitive behaviours. Experts have an organised body of knowledge that is deep and contextualised; they have the ability to retrieve and apply knowledge to new problems and use new knowledge to existing problems, and to notice new patterns of information in a novel situation. Their deep and contextualised body of knowledge is normally built up over an extended period of time.

We seek Chief Leaders who can demonstrate:

- Extensive 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
- Senior management experience and a proven ability to support, direct, lead, manage and delegate effectively to complex staff teams
- Extensive experience of working with young people in outdoor settings and supporting youth development objectives. Experience should be relevant to the proposed expedition participant group and their required support needs
- A body of contextualised experience across a range of areas, including expeditions and leadership

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.

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 CL 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 CL a high level of ownership of the project, knowledge of the destination and of the activities which can take place. The recce 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 recruitment; designing risk-benefit assessments and associated control measures; planning and delivering training; working up logistical plans; and liaising with their leader team. The CL will also liaise with in-country agents to develop plans and ensure adequate resource/support is in place.

Expedition - In Country

'In country' the Chief Leader ensures that the plan is executed, making any necessary additional decisions, dealing with issues with staff or young people, managing logistics, safety, communications and liaison with the UK. The CL ensures that up to 60 young people and 20 staff collaborate positively, achieve aims and objectives as far as is practicable and safely return home.

Reporting and Next Steps

On return they make sure that they report the expedition properly, ensure lessons learnt are captured and reviewed to be able to give British Exploring Society a clear account of what happened, what could be changed or improved and to help our explorers reflect on, and maximise the impact of, their experience.

Synopsis

Whilst a hugely rewarding role for the right individual, offering challenge, independence and the opportunities to provide transformative experiences to leaders and young people alike, considerable responsibility rests on a CL's shoulders. They are our "Executive Directors" in the field. This senior position requires a specialist skill set. Whilst comparisons with other sectors and industries are challenging, this role might be equivalent to a major site manager in construction, a major/ squadron leader/ captain in the armed forces, an inspector or station officer in the emergency services, or an event manager in the large events sector.