

# Brenin Adventures



## Open Canoeing – Operational procedures

### Staffing & Ratios

Minimum Appropriate qualifications [in line with Paddle UK Skills Guidance]:

- Very Sheltered inland water: Paddlesport Instructor
- Sheltered inland water: Old L2 + 3\* / UKCC L1 (overseen by UKCC L2 or Paddlesport Coach) / Paddlesport Leader
- Non-sheltered inland water: Old L3 + 4\* / UKCC L2 / Paddlesport Coach / L1 instructor or PS Leader with Safety Boat
- Moving water up to Grade 2: Old L3 + 4\* / UKCC L2 + Moderate water endorsement / Moderate Water Leader
- Moving water Grade 3 & above: Old L3 + 5\* / UKCC L3 / Advanced Water Leader

Ratio 1 instructor: up to 12 clients dependent on water & prevailing conditions

Instructors working alone must have an effective way of communicating with the centre base.

### Weather limitations

Low temperatures will lower the acceptable duration of immersion. With junior groups, when air and water temperatures are below 10C instructors should operate in sheltered conditions to reduce the likelihood of participants entering the water.

In high winds, and particularly when there are waves, novice paddlers will have increased difficulty maintaining course and will tire more rapidly. Instructors should structure sessions so they can be cut short if participants are becoming tired or cold.

When conditions are less favourable, and with novice junior paddlers, instructors should consider rafting canoes as the best option. It is a better plan to begin rafted and then progress to single boats rather than have to end a session early due to participants getting wet & cold.

### Venues

Llyn Clywedog

Any suitable body of water, following site specific risk assessment.

Graded rivers appropriate to instructor qualifications

### Participant equipment

- Buoyancy aid correctly fitted
- Swim wear
- Wetsuits must be worn if either the air or the water temperature is below 12C [15C for novices].
- Canoe cag
- Suitable footwear [wetsuits boots / trainers / wet shoes] must always be worn. Wellies, walking boots & flip flops are not acceptable].

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- Helmets are mandatory on moving water and should be considered in shallow water and when playing games or where there is a significant risk of being hit by paddles.
- Participants must have a full change of warm clothing ashore, a towel, and a hot drink / facility to make a hot drink.

**Instructor equipment** Instructors should be equipped with:

- Wetsuit / drysuit
- Helmet [on moving water]
- Buoyancy aid
- First aid kit
- Knife
- Rescue saw & wire cutters [on moving water]
- Throw line
- Two way radio [where more than one group is operating at the same venue]
- Mobile phone / phone in accessible location
- Spare clothing [i.e. spare hat, warm jacket, survival blanket] appropriate to the conditions

## Helmets

Instructors must be able to justify the reason **not** to use helmets. Instructors must wear helmets if groups are.

## General Procedures

Before the start of any session, instructors must be fully aware of any medical conditions that may affect participation, and any specific requirements of the group.

The instructor should consult Environment Agency/NRW flow data and local weather forecasts before embarking on any river trip. On arrival, the instructor must check the level marker and assess whether the state of the river is suitable for the group.

Buoyancy aids and helmets must be checked immediately before the group enters the water.

Ensure you brief the group fully. Your briefing must include;

- Activity description / goals
- Safety rules on and off the water
- Wind awareness
- Communication on the water
- Capsize / man overboard scenarios
- Launching & recovering canoes, including lifting techniques

Particular care must be taken when participants are lifting / moving equipment / boats.

Group control is very important. Groups must be kept together so the instructor can reach all participants easily.

On moving water, the instructor will need to position themselves so that they can provide assistance on all difficult sections. This will often mean landing and providing bank cover [alongside assistants / other trained participants] with a throw line.

The group must be monitored throughout the activity and the session adapted as required [i.e. early exit / finish if group members are tired / cold or progress is overly slow].

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Don't forget the rest of the group if you are rescuing someone. Your priority is the rest of the group, then the person in the water, then the boat. If in doubt, get the participants safely to the shore and go back for the boat later. A lost boat can be replaced, lost clients are a lot more serious.

Risk factor	Control
Drowning	Properly fitting buoyancy aids / lifejackets Identify non-swimmers / weak swimmers Appropriate supervision
Entrapment	Appropriate boat for participant size & experience Instructors carry knife [& rescue saw / wire cutters] at all times Moving water sections checked for obstructions / strainers etc. Portage past unsuitable sections Boat maintenance Appropriate footwear & clothing
Heat stroke	Appropriate clothing, sun screen & hats Drinks available Monitor group
Hypothermia / exposure	Appropriate clothing / wetsuits Modification of session to account for air / water temperature and group ability Spare clothing, hot drinks to re-warm Monitor participants
Flooding	Water level indicators Adequate weather forecast Escape points
Impact injuries	Helmets as appropriate Effective briefing / teaching Route selection
Slips & trips	Care on banks Briefing & group control Spotting
Strains & sprains	Warming up Care when moving boats & equipment

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Lifting injuries	Appropriate storage of boats and equipment Appropriate manual handling training for staff Briefing & supervision when moving boats & equipment
Group drifting apart [wind / tide / current]	Effective briefing Maintain control throughout session Ability to tow boats if required
Poor communications	Briefing Use of hand signals where noise prevents clear communication
Sharp stones / rocks on shore	Appropriate footwear Launch & recover on slipways / safe shoreline Keep clear of shoreline when sailing
Water borne pollution / diseases	Monitor water quality / consult Environment Agency data Wash hands before eating
Conflict with other users	Keep clear of other water users Communication Abide by local rules / guidelines / access agreements
Loss of group control	Effective briefing Monitor participants both on & off the water
Equipment failure	Boat / equipment maintenance Appropriate use of boats / equipment

**The risk assessment must be reviewed on arrival on site to take into account prevailing conditions and recent changes, and monitored throughout the activity session.**