

Our current projects – updated 22 February 2026



Collaboration is at the heart of what we do. Much of our input and time as SAPOE committee members

and officers goes into participating in projects and working groups, collaborating across the outdoor education sector to develop policy, guidance and resources. Through our involvement, we help drive and promote high quality and good practice in outdoor learning. In 2025-26, we are participating in:

Scottish Outdoor Learning Strategic Working Group (SOLSWG)

As part of this Scottish Government ministerial group, we're working alongside civil servants, the Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres (AHOEC), Education Scotland and other partners to provide a written briefing on outdoor learning for Government ministers before 26th March 2026. There was a pause in progress October-December 2025 as government officers were engaged in work around the Residential OE Centres Bill that was passed by Scottish Parliament on 16th December 2025.

Version 4 of the recommendations was circulated round the working group in early February. This was reviewed for SAPOE by the CIC group and Executive committee members. Written feedback was provided as well as attendance at the last SOLSWG group meeting.

The current timetable for progressing the recommendations is:

Date	Stage
Wed 11 th Feb 2026	Version 4 circulated to SOLSWG members
Friday 20 th Feb 2026	Final planned meeting of SOLSWG. SAPOE represented by Ali Dreyer
w/b 23 rd February 2026	Final version expected to be circulated to SOLSWG members
w/b 9 th March 2026	Briefing with recommendations to support outdoor learning over the next several years expected to be delivered to government.
Note that due to Scottish Government elections the expectation is that the current government will acknowledge receipt of the recommendations, but the advice, along with any government response, will not be published until new government ministers are in place following 7 th May elections.	

Contacts: [Neil Wightwick](#) & [Ali Dreyer](#)

Quality Residential Experience Framework

Working alongside AHOEC, Education Scotland and other partners, SAPOE are contributing to the creation of a framework and supporting resources which will effectively communicate what learners, educators, parents and providers can expect from residential experiences. Following a 2-day workshop in October 2024 the writing team, Patricia Johnston and Dave Harvey presented a draft framework at an in-person review meeting on 5th June 2025. An outline of the nearly completed document was presented by Nick March at the SAPOE conference in November 2025. Several potential user groups have been identified ranging from young people, parents, teaching staff, senior managers, provider staff and senior staff. A variety of media including video, checklists, sketchpads etc are being looked to share the information in the quality framework in the most appropriate way.

The document is complete and awaiting publication (as of end February). The exact timing of publication will coordinate with other work such as SOLSWG recommendations and guidelines supporting the implementation of the Schools Residential OE Act.

Contacts: [Andrew Bradshaw](#) & [Ali Dreyer](#)

Residential OE Instructors Training Resource

Together with AHOEC and Education Scotland, we are producing a training resource similar to the Supporting Learning Outdoors (SLO) and Teaching Learning Outdoors (TLO) courses, but specifically aimed at instructors and support staff at residential outdoor centres. SAPOE is leading this work alongside AHOEC and Education Scotland. Ruadhri Murphy, from Glasgow City Council, has written a draft of this resource which has been circulated to the project group for comments. Work is now being done on the presentation and resources sections. The actual launch date of this resource is on hold to allow the existing material to be checked against the Quality Residential Experience Framework now that it is available.

Contact: [Neil Wightwick](#)

Curriculum Improvement Cycle Group

This short-term working group originally wrote a SAPOE CIC Guidance document in response to Education Scotland's Curriculum Improvement Cycle to ensure that outdoor learning is fully considered. This guidance was published in May 2025 and circulated to SAPOE members, Directors of Education, ADES, ES and SOLSWG. Following Ollie Bray's keynote speech, at the SAPOE conference in November 2025, and a follow up online Q&A, the CIC group are now collaborating with ES staff at a high-level workshop in March 2026 to explore how to embed outdoor learning as part of CIC going forward

[SAPOE CIC Guidance Paper](#)

Contact: [Liz Brookes](#) & [Ali Dreyer](#)

SAAF Workforce Development Group

For a number of years, the Scottish Adventure Activity Forum (SAAF) have had a workforce development group looking at pathways towards a career in the outdoors, identifying the existing needs and any barriers. Progress has been slow, but the group has recently been re-established with renewed purpose to identify and address issues around the outdoor workforce and begin to develop some potential solutions.

The group currently includes Jane Campbell Morrison (SAAF Chair), Ali Dreyer & Tim Pickering (SAPOE), Liam Watson (Scouts), Roger Scrutton (Edinburgh Uni), Debbie Williams (Glencoe OEC), Ian Robertson (Countryside Learning), Mike Strang (Youth Scotland), David Sanderson (Morrison's Academy), Lee Musson (Rock UK).

There are several work streams being progressed and one of those written up so far was a review of how people access outdoor experiences throughout their lives and how this can potentially lead to a lifelong interest and potentially a career in the outdoors.

Jane and Ian presented at the recent CPG for Outdoor Education on 19th March 2026 and highlighted some of the workforce challenges in delivering the Schools Residential OE Act as well as wider outdoor sector workforce challenges.

[Career Path in the Outdoors – Discussion Paper](#)

Contact: [Ali Dreyer](#)

Collective Knowledge Project

SAPOE have been asked to endorse this project being run throughout 2026 by UHI North, West & Hebrides, Adventure Activity Industry Advisory Committee (AAIAC) and Institute for Outdoor Learning (IOL).

Peter White, from UHI, joined the SAPOE meeting on 2nd September to introduce the project.

Outcomes include capturing improved participation and incident data across led adventurous activity, identify possible trends and share learning across the sector.

Ways to get involved include;

- Sharing project information with your networks
- Consider participating in the project
- Help with funding

[Collective Knowledge Project Presentation](#)