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Regulation in Scotland ‘would help ensure children’s safety’

Children will be exposed to greater risk of harm if important safety measures for adventure activities in Scotland are watered down, a not-for-profit campaign group has warned.

Because the existing licensing regime in Great Britain is going to be abolished, the Scottish Government is considering whether to replace it either with new regulations, a voluntary accreditation scheme or a voluntary code of practice.

“In making this important decision, the Scottish Government needs to look back on the tragedy of Lyme Bay, in England, in 1993,” said David Bott, president of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL).

“When we consider the deaths of those four teenage canoeists, it is difficult to see how anyone could consider it right to reduce these important safety measures.”

The impending abolition of the current licensing regime, which is run by the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) was recommended by the UK Government’s Lord Young of Graffham, who, in his report *Common Sense, Common Safety*, referred to it as an unnecessary “cost and burden on business”.

Mr Bott said: “Proper regulation is important and necessary to prevent children from harm. If not controlled properly, adventure activities can be dangerous, and, in the worst case scenario, can result in the loss of life.



“Instead of diluting the measures which help protect children and vulnerable adults, the Scottish Government should ensure that the regulations are retained and extended to cover a wider range of activities.

“Any ‘light touch’ safety measures will only provide people with a limited assurance that proper safety measures have been taken.

“Parents and carers need to feel confident in the knowledge that an activity provider is credible and will not put their children at an unnecessary risk of harm.

“Far from being an unnecessary burden, a licence shows that a provider has been inspected and is operating to acceptable safety standards.”

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Notes to editors:

- The Scottish Government’s consultation on developing a safety system for adventure activities in Scotland closes tomorrow (30 March)
- APIL (Association of Personal Injury Lawyers) is a not-for-profit organisation whose members are dedicated to campaigning for improvements in the law to help people who are injured or become ill through no fault of their own
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