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Campaigners call for Government U-turn on abolition of adventure regulator

Safety campaigners are hoping for a U-turn after it was confirmed that the Government's decision to water down the regulation of adventure activities for children will be revisited.

"Parents will surely feel encouraged that Lord Young's short-sighted recommendation to abolish the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) is to be reconsidered," said Karl Tonks, president of the not-for-profit Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL).

"What is needed now is for policymakers in Westminster to see sense and follow the example of their Scottish counterparts, who recently agreed to retain the current regulation in Scotland and reject the ill-thought-through proposal to water it down.

"The truth is, proper health and safety is not some sort of straitjacket which prevents children from taking risks. Instead it helps children to take part in activities without being put in unnecessary jeopardy.

"The existing regulation, which requires an adventure activity provider to hold a licence, is proportionate and provides the assurance that an operator has been inspected and meets acceptable safety standards."

Employment minister Chris Grayling said the decision to consult on the AALA was made "having listened to industry concerns". He added that the consultation will be carried out later this year by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Mr Tonks went on: "The Government should look back on the reasons why these important safety regulations were originally implemented.



“The tragedy of Lyme Bay, in England, in 1993, in which four teenagers died during a canoeing expedition, illustrates why it’s so important for adventure activities to be properly regulated and licenced.

“When considering whether or not to abolish the AALA, the Government must ensure that its priority is the safety of children and vulnerable adults.”

-Ends-

Notes to editors:

- Confirmation that the UK Government would consult on the decision to axe the AALA was given in the latest progress report on the UK Government’s implementation of its health and safety reforms, which can be found here: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/progress-report-health-safety-reforms-june-12.pdf>
- 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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