

SECTION THREE **Top Tips**



Top Tips



SUPPORT

Get a Park ‘Buddy’

Identify and maintain a relationship with a named contact in the Park and NNR in your area. If you are not sure who your first point of contact should be for your enquiry, go to the Park Authority websites or see the Contacts section in this Pack. Your ‘buddy’ will be a support, helping you understand how the Parks work, who is best to contact for what, helping with ideas and directing you to other resources.

Join in or contact a Park ‘Champions’ group

Check out the Inclusive Cairngorms Forum (see Contacts section)

INFORMATION

Keep up to date with what is going on in the Parks

Sign up for the Park/s and SNH’s newsletters, e:bulletins and any other information keeping you up to date on activities and opportunities. Keep visiting their websites (details in the Contacts section) for updates if no mailings are available.

Use the websites listed in the Contacts section for:

- Ideas on activities and downloadable resources
- Images that inspire participation
- Data that helps funding applications
- Examples of what others have achieved through their participation in the Parks (including case studies and links to CfE)
- Who’s who in the Parks
- Links to practical tools such as risk assessment templates

Packaged activity experiences

If you are not sure what you want to do in the National Park and NNR or if you have the confidence to lead the activity, ask the Park Authorities for information on packaged experiences/activities in the Parks that will work for a range of interests and experiences.

Links to policies and strategies

Persuading managers and others of the benefits of engaging with the Parks is easier if you can clearly identify the difference the work will make to those that you take along. National outdoor agencies, Park staff and local community workers can all help with this.

PRACTICALITIES

Shared resources

Find out if there are any local equipment stores or shared resource banks from the Park Authorities, local schools, local authority outdoor education services, your local CVS or one in the Park area. If none exist that work for you then think about setting one up – funding may well be available. There are likely to be other groups in your field of interest or local area that have used the National Park or NNR, get in touch to share ideas and resources.

Transport

Get information on what community transport options are available to you in your area, and ask the National Parks what transport options they can offer or know are available, including public transport links. Look at their websites for leaflets promoting the public transport links.



Funding applications

Use local community workers and National Park staff to help you identify the kind of benefits that can be expected for your group from your activity in the Park; and ask them to help you source and apply for suitable funding. (see Contacts pages).

Continuing professional development

Get involved in (or develop) continuing professional development programmes aimed at building the capacity of staff and volunteers. This will help them to understand the potential benefits and how to engage with the National Parks.

Access and inclusion

When you are planning your trip consider the access needs of those taking part. It might help to get a profile of the group and discuss how to accommodate any special requirements with the Park Ranger service/activity provider. Examples might include the age and physical health of the group. Are there any members that have disabilities which need support? Check whether everyone in the group will find it easy to see or read materials or signage (is English their first language, are there literacy or sight considerations?). Being aware of cultural sensitivity is also helpful (for example diet, gender approaches).

RISKS

Minimise the bureaucracy

Use off-the shelf risk assessment templates and resources to minimise the administrative burden. The Park Rangers and National Park Authority Learning and Education staff are very experienced and can direct you to helpful resources that will save you time and worry (see the Contacts section for their details and access to other readily available resources).

Use experienced support staff

Contact appropriate support agencies to enlist their help in assessing and managing risk. Use the National Park Authority staff to help you identify whether you will need to access special expertise for your visit. They will talk you through what is involved in your activity and where to get trained support if it is needed (it is often not). See the Contacts section for access to resources.

Pre-plan

Try and visit the National Park or NNR ahead of your visit to get a sense of what is involved. If this is not possible phone someone in the Park Authority or Rangers Service to talk through your visit. Find out all you can about the systems and procedures required in your organisation for risk assessment and management and plan ahead to ensure that these are easily dealt with when it comes to your visit.

DEMONSTRATING CHANGE

Links to policies and strategies

Work with the National Parks and other support agencies to link the benefits for your participants with national and local policies; as well as how these meet your organisation's goals and priorities.



