

# SkillsActiveCareers

ISSUE NO.2



ACTIVE ADVICE FOR ACTIVE CAREERS

## The Sector Skills Council for the Active Leisure and Learning Sector.

Sector Skills Councils are employer-led organisations, set up to address the needs of the UK's workforce.

SkillsActive works with employers across the Sport and Recreation, Health and Fitness, Playwork, The Outdoors and Caravan industries, to develop the standards that vocational qualifications are based on.

## INTRODUCTION

**SkillsActive** is a membership organisation, with members ranging from small family-run caravan parks to large multi-site health and fitness chains.

**SkillsActive** works with and for the sector to:

- Influence government and decision makers
- Promote the image of the sector to the public
- Ensure the quality of training and qualifications
- Help people find the jobs and training they need
- Help the industry attract and retain the right staff
- Attract funding to meet employers' training needs

## WHAT WE DO

**SkillsActive** consults employers on the skills they need for their workforce and is currently producing a written agreement between employers, the government, funding partners and training providers to ensure those needs are met – this is known as a Sector Skills Agreement.

**SkillsActive** speaks to government to highlight the issues that employers in the active leisure and learning sector face. For example, we have warned government that the rising 'compensation culture' is threatening opportunities for outdoor activities, such as walking in the countryside and school trips.

**SkillsActive** ensures government realises the vital input active leisure and learning can make in improving the health of the nation.

## WHAT WE WANT

When it comes to issues as important and diverse as young people, qualifications, active leisure and public health, it is clear that **SkillsActive** is working in a fast moving policy environment, but, is paramount in addressing the government's skills agenda across the UK.

**SkillsActive** strives to communicate the needs of employers to decision makers so they can help us achieve our organisational goal; a sector with the right skills to deliver on the public policy challenges of the day.



**SkillsActiveCareers** is the number one contact for information and advice on working in the Active Leisure and Learning Sector.

**SkillsActiveCareers** offers clear and comprehensive advice to all those wanting to enter and progress through a career in Sport and Recreation, Health and Fitness, Playwork, The Outdoors and Caravan industries.

## BACKGROUND

Some school and college leavers don't consider working in the active leisure and learning sector as a viable career option. They make the common mistake of only considering certain roles – the professional footballer, personal trainer or full-time coach – and do not see the bigger picture.

There are over 200 different job roles to choose from in these industries, with over 5.8 million volunteers already working in unpaid positions. Roles include anything from referee or umpire, personal trainer, gym receptionist, children's playscheme coordinator and after-school play assistant; to outdoor activity leader, caravan park lifeguard and green-keeper.

After reviewing all the career information that is currently available for the active leisure and learning sector, **SkillsActiveCareers** has established itself as a one-stop-shop for all careers information and advice in the sector, AND is the signposting organisation for all relevant jobs, qualifications, career pathways, courses and key partner contact information.

**SkillsActive** has worked with employers, training providers and key partners in the sector to develop the highest quality information, encouraging individuals to enter and progress through a career in one of the most vibrant, exciting AND rewarding sectors in the UK, all delivered through **SkillsActiveCareers**.



# WORKING IN SPORT AND RECREATION

With a workforce of 400,000 people in paid employment across the UK, working in 25,000 organisations (Great Britain only), spanning the public, private and voluntary and community sectors – a career in sport and recreation is both diverse and rewarding. The industry forecasts a growth of 23% in the paid workforce by 2012, and there are over 5.8 million volunteers working in the industry, UK-wide.

## Coaching

Coaching in sport can be with beginners to elite performers, the young and old, and people with disabilities. From being a Sunday morning volunteer at the local sports club, to a retired athlete looking for continued involvement in the game, coaching will develop participants' enthusiasm and enjoyment of sport and physical activity.

## Officiating

Another crucial role in competitive and recreational sport is that of officials, e.g. referees, umpires, judges, marshals or time keepers. There are paid opportunities and career pathways in some sports to officiate, although the vast majority of officials work on a voluntary basis.

## Elite Performance

There are currently around 50,000 professional sportsmen and women in the UK, paid to perform at the highest level. Careers in professional sport are often very short, particularly in high impact, contact sports and the average career lasts 10-15 years. Afterwards, many move into sports coaching, journalism, punditry, marketing and administration.

## Management and Operations

Management and operations is concerned with the day-to-day issues involved in the running of facilities. Such roles include lifeguards and recreation assistants at a local leisure centre, through to the duty manager at a larger facility or venue. Considering safety, welfare, and income generation is a big part of these roles.

## Development

Sports development officers ensure everyone in the community has the opportunity to take part in sports and activities. They liaise closely with local people, schools, clubs and volunteers to organise sports activities and promote events. The ability to coach multiple sports at all levels can be a distinct advantage.



**Name**  
Jen White

**Job Title**  
Disability Sports Coordinator

**Organisation**  
Norfolk County Council

### What are your main responsibilities?

The main purpose of the job is to promote inclusion and equity in sport and to provide sporting opportunities for people with disabilities in the county of Norfolk. This requires a great deal of coordination and awareness raising.

### Do you work alone or in a team?

I work alone as the disability coordinator but I am part of the Norfolk County Sports Partnership which has a core team of six people.

### What would a typical day contain for you?

My day is very varied; from answering emails, completing paperwork, attending meetings and working with coaches, clubs, schools and sports development officers to design and deliver pathways for people with disabilities to engage in sport.

### How many members of the public do you meet on a day-to-day basis?

This again varies depending on the time of year. When we are delivering activities and events there is considerable contact with the public. At the recent Norfolk Youth Games over 200 members of the public attended. Sometimes, however, if I am completing office work there will be no contact with the public.

### Why did you choose a career in the sport industry?

I enjoy sport; I wanted to put my experience of participating into a work environment.

### What is your educational background?

I completed my highers and then attended Glasgow University and completed a BSc in sport science. I then undertook an MSc in sports nutrition at Aberdeen University.

### How did you find out about your current job?

I saw it advertised in Leisure Opportunities.

### What do you enjoy most about your job?

I enjoy raising awareness and educating others on the importance of including all in sport and physical education.

### What do you like least?

The amount of paperwork, bureaucracy and strategies involved in the work. They all take up too much time.

### What skills are important in your job?

The most important is good communication skills. Without this you wouldn't be able to do the job. Organisation skills and good time management are also important.

### What training have you received whilst in your job?

The majority of my training has been around disability awareness training with clubs, coaches and schools. I have also attended some sports conferences such as the NASD sport development conference and a health white paper conference.

### Is there anything else you wish you had a chance to learn, develop or practise?

I would like to further my management and leadership skills.

### What could people expect to earn in a job like yours?

£22,000 - £28,000 a year.

### How satisfied are you with your job security?

My role is currently funded until June 2008, which is quite a long time for projects in the sports industry, most jobs and projects are dictated by funding.

### What are your career aspirations?

I would like to further my education to a PhD whilst I continue to work. In the future I would like to combine my sport science education with equity experience, possibly around elite performance.

### What do your friends think about what you do?

That it is a very interesting, rewarding job.

### What is the best way to get into the sport industry?

Be yourself, try and get involved as soon as you can and persevere.



#### What are your main responsibilities?

My main responsibilities are looking after the public and taking them through their induction training. I show them how to use the equipment and write training programmes for them. I also have to make sure that the place is clean and tidy for the public to use which means I have to vacuum areas and clean equipment. Within the sports centre there is a sports hall so I have to set up the different equipment for each session for example football, judo, badminton and even birthday parties.

#### Do you work alone or as part of a team?

Definitely as part of a team. There is a wide variety of roles within the sports centre and it is essential that we all work together.

#### What would a typical day contain for you?

It depends if I am working an early or a late shift. An early shift starts at 7.15am and ends at 3.15pm. The first thing to do on an early shift is turn on machines in the health suite, test the spa and pool to make sure that it is safe for the public to use. Every 15 minutes this area needs to be checked. Throughout the day you follow the timetable of groups using the centre and ensure that the right equipment is set up for them. I also receive GP referrals where I have a 12-week window to convince someone with a serious medical condition that exercise is good for them. I set them an achievable exercise programme in the hope that they will continue after the sessions with the instructor.

#### Why did you choose a career in the leisure industry?

I have always enjoyed running, going to the gym and exercise in general, right from school age and have continued to pursue it in my own time. It's a growing industry with increasingly varied opportunities. There is also the potential to do personal training outside work. I also enjoy the challenge of encouraging others to exercise, particularly those referred by their GP, and this is easier to do when you enjoy and believe in exercise yourself.

#### How many members of the public do you meet on a day-to-day basis?

A couple of hundred people come through the gym in a typical shift. The pool is very large and so gets extremely busy. Friday shifts tend to be the busiest.

#### What is your educational background?

I did GCSE's at school but I didn't achieve the grades I wanted. I then went to college and followed a first diploma in leisure studies which I passed with distinction and went on to complete a national diploma and HND in leisure management. The distinction I received for my HND means I can go on and do an extra year to convert it into a full degree.

#### How did you find out about your current job?

I did some work experience at college and enjoyed it so I went for a casual position while I was still at college. Once I finished college I waited for a full time position to become available and applied for the position. I think it helped that I was working there already, and I definitely feel that it stood me in good stead.

#### What do you most enjoy about your job?

I enjoy meeting and chatting to so many people each day. It is never just the same old faces in the office. I also find seeing the GP referral patient's progress extremely rewarding. It is great to hear from them what a difference you have made to their lives. There is so much potential for personal and professional development. You can take the qualifications quite far within the industry, you can open your own gym, work privately or progress into management.

#### What do you like least?

If I am honest, the amount of cleaning involved.

#### What skills are important in your job?

Definitely communication skills! You need to be able to talk to a range of groups and individuals with different ages and backgrounds. Some who are keen gym attendees and others who need more encouragement. You need to present yourself well and be enthusiastic and knowledgeable about what you do.

#### What training have you received whilst in your job?

Loads! I have got a first aid certificate with St John Ambulance, GP referral NVQ level 3, NIIC gym based training, NIIC free-weight and dumbbell training, child protection and professional development, and at the moment I am completing my bronze medallion lifesaving award.

#### What could you expect to earn in a job like yours?

The hourly rate can be up to around £8, however, if you take on extra responsibilities like GP referrals then your pay can increase to £10-£15 an hour.

#### How satisfied are you with your job security?

I feel pretty secure really. The council very rarely lay people off so if you perform well in your performance reviews it's almost a job for life. If I get injured or become sick then I get 6 months half pay.

#### What are your career aspirations?

I would like to get more into personal training, especially once I have completed my cardiac rehabilitation training. I would also like to get more involved in nutritional training, however it's tricky trying to fit it all in.

#### What do your friends think about what you do?

They're always coming to me for some fitness advice! My job helps me to be able to motivate my friends to exercise. They think that the GP referral side of my job must be really rewarding.

#### What is the best way to get into the leisure and fitness industry?

Don't be afraid to go round different leisure centres and fitness clubs and get information from people working in the industry about their jobs. If you can, get some work experience or a casual job within the centre, where you will have the opportunity to build on your career once you are there. Be prepared to start at the bottom to get your 'foot in the door'.

Register  
of  
Exercise  
Professionals



## WORKING IN HEALTH AND FITNESS

**Health and fitness is a dynamic, rapidly growing industry with more and more people of all ages and backgrounds taking up regular exercise in any number of environments including health clubs and leisure centres. The government is keen to promote a healthy nation and to encourage people to take better care of themselves. Almost 50% of all adults say their lives are more stressful than they were just five years ago, and two-thirds think that their lives are busier than they were five years ago.**

There are over 3,000 private fitness clubs and over 2,500 leisure centres in the UK, employing over 45,000 people, and the industry is worth over £2 billion a year. A further 800 clubs are expected to open in the next few years, and many of these will be large facilities.

A range of very different jobs contribute to the successful day-to-day running of health and fitness centres, and some of these require high level technical skills. They range from membership sales to fitness instructors to receptionists and studio coordinators. Since the development of a **Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs)**, (part of the SkillsActive Group), two years ago, the interests of people who are using the services of exercise and fitness instructors, teachers and trainers has become safeguarded. The Register uses a process of self-regulation that recognises industry-based qualifications, practical competency, and requires fitness professionals to work within a code of ethical practice. Members of the Register are given a card and registration certificate to prove their qualification and membership. Also known as the Exercise Register, it operates in the UK and is recognised across the world to acknowledge the personal achievement and competencies of qualified fitness professionals. The Register currently has over 26,000 members.

There are broadly four main job functions, and in smaller clubs these can often be combined, with staff having to be able to turn their hands to anything that is needed to run the business. The job functions cover the operational and maintenance aspects of running a facility; the instructional and training capacity of teaching people how to use machines and free weights, designing programmes and helping clients achieve specific targets; the management side of the facility concerned with the business elements of a club; and the sales and marketing element which designs membership packages and promotions. In larger clubs, there are usually managers and staff who only work in specific departments, like the gym, swimming and spa pool, racquets, reception and administration, and food and beverage operations.

#### Name

Carol Bell

#### Job Title

Leisure Assistant/  
Fitness Instructor

#### Company

Lisburn City Council



## WORKING IN PLAYWORK

There are more out-of-school clubs than ever before, with other playwork settings on the increase too. Playworkers are now a highly respected workforce, recognised for the valuable input they have into childrens lives. The care standards in each home country, used to regulate play settings for under-8s mean that playworkers need to be well trained and qualified. This means that being a playworker is rewarding, valued and also leads to career development opportunities.

There has never been a better time to take up a career working with children.

### The Role of a Playworker

Playworkers work with school-aged children in out-of-school settings. Different playwork settings are run in different ways, but all aim to give children and young people choices about how they spend their leisure time. Playworkers offer a range of activities and provide children with a safe place to play, socialise, try out new things or just spend quiet time. Safety in a play setting doesn't mean children can't take risks - after all, risk is often what makes play fun. It means the playworker has thought about protecting the children from harm, for example, providing crash mats for a made-up climbing game or helping the children work out their own safety rules. Play helps children develop in many ways, and a playworker might find themselves involved in creative activities, sporty games, drama, den building, cooking and talking to a child about their worries all in the same day. No two days are the same, and the work is never likely to be boring!

### A playworker needs to be:

- A good team worker, and to get on well with children, their parents/carers and with other staff
- Able to plan activities with children and young people
- Flexible – if children want to change their plans or don't want to take part, it's their choice
- Good at listening to children

The children who attend playwork settings come from all walks of life and will all have different abilities and personalities. Some disabled children using play settings need additional support, others who have extra help at school might not need it in a play setting. A good playworker will be able to work well with all sorts of children.

### What are your main responsibilities?

I am responsible for approximately 15 staff which include playworkers, premises support officers, administration and training officers and an arts officer.

### Do you work alone or in a team?

I work as part of a team but often have to work on my own too.

### What would a typical day contain for you?

No two days are ever the same. My day officially starts at 9.30am although I usually start earlier to prepare for the day. We run a before-school club for children which involves providing activities and taking them to school. During the day we run a luncheon club for older people. In the afternoon we have an after-school club where we again provide activities and a meal for the children. At weekends we also provide a gardening club for both disabled and able-bodied people. I'm involved with all of these activities and the management of them. My day typically ends between 6.30pm and 7.00pm.

### How many members of the public do you meet on a day-to-day basis?

This varies daily, I can be involved with anything from 5-20 members of the public.

### Why did you choose a career in the playwork sector?

My interest started when I volunteered in an after-school club. I really enjoyed working with the children and seeing them develop. This then formed the basis of the rest of my formal education, I studied A levels and did a playwork degree at university.

### What is your educational background?

Having completed my formal school education I studied for my playwork degree followed by a masters in playground development. I have done numerous adult training qualifications and I am myself now qualified to deliver playwork courses. I have completed CACHE qualifications and also teach on a part-time basis at Leeds Metropolitan University.

### How did you find out about your current job?

I heard about my job through word of mouth, it helps to network and get to know people in the sector.

### What do you enjoy most about your job?

I thoroughly enjoy working with the children, this can sometimes be challenging but the rewards are great. There is a massive sense of achievement in doing this type of work.

### What do you like least?

I can't think of anything really!

### What skills are important in your job?

The most important skills are empathy, understanding and diplomacy with both the children and other members of the team. Qualifications are also important as well as having or building up experience.

### What training have you received whilst in your job?

Alongside my studying I have been trained in first aid and health and safety etc.

### Is there anything else you wish you had a chance to learn, develop or practise?

I welcome any opportunities to continue to learn and develop myself. I am also currently studying for a PhD.

### What could people expect to earn in a job like yours?

Approximately £30,000 per year.

### How satisfied are you with your job security?

My job offers no real job security as it is dependent on funding. If the funding gets pulled from this project my role may not be secure.

### What are your career aspirations?

I would like to complete my PhD and increase my involvement in voluntary work as I believe it is really important. I would also like to increase my teaching involvement at Leeds Metropolitan University.

### What is the strangest thing you have ever been asked to do?

Probably to explore the roof for a bees nest!

### What do your friends think about what you do?

My friends are intrigued by my job and I don't think they will ever fully understand exactly what I do although they believe it is a worthwhile job and they respect me for trying to make a difference.

### What is the best way to get into the playwork sector?

Without a doubt volunteering is a good way of getting experience and an insight into this type of work. It is also a good opportunity to get to know people and make contacts for the future. It is also important to pursue some sort of academic qualifications or specific playwork qualifications such as those offered by CACHE.



**Name**  
Mike Wragg

**Organisation**  
Warwick Adventure  
Playground



## Name

Tim Taylor

## Job Title

Course Director and Instructor

## Company

The Outward Bound Trust



### What are your main responsibilities?

I design and implement personal development programmes to be run at the centre and I also design aspects of the technician development programme which is run here. At the centre, each member of staff has additional responsibilities, e.g. keeping a certain area tidy. I am responsible for ensuring that these tasks are completed on a daily basis. I am also project champion for 'Teams and Leaders' which is an educational product we are involved with.

### Do you work alone or in a team?

The centre would not function if the staff did not work as part of a team, but there are times when we are required to work alone.

### What would a typical day contain for you?

Each day is completely different but I typically start at around 8.30am, we have a staff meeting where we go through the activities for the day and ensure risk assessments have been carried out and the correct numbers of staff have been allocated to each activity. If the weather is really bad, activities may need to be altered to suit. At 9.00am we meet our groups and explain to them what the activities for the day will be and what we hope the learning outcomes will be. Once we have completed the activities we review them and look at theories and models (depending on the group). In the evening we carry out activities based on team building and problem solving. Three days a week I finish at 8.30pm and on the other two days I finish at 5.30pm.

### How many members of the public do you meet on a daily basis?

It varies from day-to-day depending on how many courses the centre is running, it can be anything from 10-100, but on average about 15.

### Why did you choose a career in the outdoor sector?

I have a passion for the outdoors and enjoy the activities we instruct here myself. As a youngster I attended Outward Bound courses and these inspired me to become an instructor.

### What is your educational background?

At school I gained seven GCSEs in various subjects, I then went on to complete a National Diploma in land and countryside studies and a level 2 NVQ in mechanical engineering. This led me on to study for a degree in countryside management. During my time studying I used my holidays to spend time volunteering and gaining technical qualifications. I am a qualified outdoors instructor, mountain instructor, level 2 canoe coach, level 3 inland kayak coach, level 2 powerboat operator, single pitch climbing instructor, mountain leader award holder, mini bus driver and qualified first aider.

### How did you find out about your current job?

I was aware of the organisation from going on the courses as a child. Once I had gained some experience and gained my technical qualifications I wrote a speculative letter to The Outward Bound Trust enquiring about employment opportunities and they offered me a position as a trainee instructor. After six weeks I was fast-tracked from trainee instructor to instructor.

### What do you enjoy most about your job?

I enjoy meeting so many different people from different backgrounds and seeing their confidence grow whilst they are at the centre. I take satisfaction from seeing a group of people become a team.

### What do you like least?

The job is not particularly well paid, the average salary is about £15,000 a year; however, if you work hard there is the potential to earn good money. I don't do this job for the money; I do it because I enjoy it.

### What skills are important in your job?

It is important that you have good people skills and can work well on your own or as part of a large team. You need to have good time management skills and have a professional approach to your work. Your technical knowledge needs to be of a high standard too.

### What training have you received whilst in your job?

I have received a lot of in-house training, including soft skills 1 and 2 and how to deal with challenging behaviour.

### Is there anything else you wish you had a chance to learn, develop or practise?

I am currently working towards becoming an accredited practitioner for the outdoors (APIOL).

### How satisfied are you with your job security?

As an instructor I feel that my job is quite secure, I do feel though that the higher you go on the career ladder in this sector, the fewer opportunities there are.

### What do your friends think about what you do?

They are envious of my lifestyle; I get paid to work in an environment which I love. They get jealous of the fact that on my days off I am able to take advantage of the location I am in and spend my time doing the things I love such as climbing.

### What is the best way to get into the outdoor sector?

I would advise anyone interested in this area of work to gain as much work experience as possible whilst learning and developing their technical skills and knowledge. I have learnt a lot from working in lots of different centres. Soft skills are highly important in this area of work, but so are technical skills; after all you can't teach people to do something if you are not good at it yourself.

## WORKING IN THE OUTDOORS

The outdoors provides a vast and wonderfully diverse range of activities. The entry levels into the industry are through vacancies such as activity leaders within organisations like travel companies, and summer camps. There is a range of contract types on offer across the industry, including day-by-day, seasonal fixed-term and 'standard' full-time permanent.

To better explain the opportunities within the outdoors, the industry is divided into five categories:

### Recreation

The scope of the outdoor recreation courses and holidays can be extremely wide and varied. A wide-range of options is available from positions for young, unqualified and inexperienced people, through to positions for highly qualified, experienced, skilled practitioners and management levels. Many staff in outdoor recreation stay for a couple of seasons with a particular organisation before moving on to other organisations, to college or university.

### Education

Mainly involved in working with children and young people, the range of activities includes anything from formal school-based educational opportunities such as geography, to a less formal and more experiential approach to education and development of people in areas such as personal development and interpersonal skills.

### Exploration and Expeditioning

Exploration and expeditioning is a new and very much growing area of the outdoors sector, and is usually seen as being within an educational context. It can operate on a local, national or international level. Typical pursuits include field studies work at home for younger children, and expeditions abroad ranging from senior school and gap year expeditions with local charity work, or a research dimension through to long haul group 'traveller-tourism'.

### Development Training

Building on aspects of outdoor education, outdoor development training uses the outdoors as a vehicle for exploring and developing personal and inter-personal skills and attitudes. Carefully researched and planned training programmes are a feature; outcome areas include leadership, communication and problem solving. Entry level reflects the complexity of the job roles and the qualifications normally required.

### Sports Development

In general there are two aspects to outdoor sports development; competition sport and related coaching and awards, which are often pre-requisites in many non-sport activities undertaken by teachers, youth-workers and technicians. A well-rounded spectrum of experience, formal educational qualifications and specific outdoor performance and coaching qualifications is needed for a career in this area.



# WORKING IN THE CARAVAN INDUSTRY

The caravan industry is a unique sector of UK tourism, encompassing a diverse range of businesses and occupations to match any other in the UK employment market. The industry can be divided into three distinct sub-sections for practical purposes, although each would view themselves as very much a part of the whole, and links between businesses are strong throughout.

The whole of the industry retains a 'family' feel, and many of the companies involved are still family owned and run. The product is diverse; the term 'caravan' can be used to describe touring caravans, motor homes, caravan holiday-homes (permanently sited on parks) and park homes for year-round residential use. The estimated total employment within the industry is in the region of 60-70,000, with most people working on caravan parks. Manufacturers account for some 7,000 employees, and dealerships a further 3,000. A small number of businesses operate substantial groups of parks, including the family orientated 'big names' such as Haven. In total, the industry generates an annual turnover of more than £3 billion of retail sales, products and holidays a year. Caravan holidays account for 20% of all holiday spend, with a value of £3.2 billion a year – over 73 million holiday nights.

### Parks

Many different tasks go towards the successful running of a caravan park; promotions, sales, maintenance of grounds and facilities, landscaping and siting. Customer care and service is vital when working in the industry; each holiday park competes not only with its neighbours, but also with parks across the UK and overseas. Some of the jobs on parks are similar to those in other tourism or hospitality businesses, such as catering and bar management. Specialist sports staff can be employed where the park has sports facilities and multi-skilled employees have to turn their hands to many activities with good humour and adaptability.

### Dealerships

Similar to car dealerships, caravan retail businesses usually operate on a franchise from a number of caravan manufacturers. The business usually incorporates a sales function for new and second-hand caravans of a given type. There may also be a workshop for maintenance, repair and modification. Most dealers have a shop for sales of accessories, appliances, tents and awnings.

### Manufacturers

Manufacturing processes are different for each type of caravan. Opportunities available on the manufacturing side of the industry include; electricians, wood machinists, designers and gas technicians. Manufacturers have their sales and marketing teams, as well as the management and technical jobs that go with any business.



**Name**  
Sarah House

**Job title**  
Health and Safety Advisor/  
General Manager

**Organisation**  
Holiday Resort Unity

### What are your main responsibilities?

Ensuring the safety of customers and staff and overseeing human resources, can be quite tricky as there is a lot of new legislation to keep up with. I develop policies to do with staff discipline etc. and write the staff handbook. I carry out a monthly inspection of the park and am responsible for ensuring all daily and weekly checks are carried out and that we keep a record of them.

### Do you work alone or in a team?

I work alone as my position is unique within the organisation, but I also work with other departmental managers. There are 18 departments and in the summer we have up to 250 employees. In the winter we have around 120 employees.

### What would a typical day contain for you?

There isn't really a typical day in this job. I arrive in the morning and see what new things I have to deal with; it could be a job application, a complaint or maybe an accident. I also have a list of regular tasks which includes risk assessment, fire procedures and inspection of the site. I don't know what I will have to cope with from one day to the next, I have a plan I work to, but anything can happen.

It's different in winter as we are closed from November to March. There are no customers about and my day is shorter.

In summer I work longer hours, and sometimes six days a week. As I live on-site I don't waste any time in travelling to and from the park. I'm also 'on call' two nights a week to deal with any issues that arise, but I am expected to come in if something happens that I am responsible for overseeing, like health and safety. I take my holidays sometime between November and March. If you are working in the leisure industry you have to accept that you can't have holidays at the most popular times and during school holidays.

### How many members of the public do you meet on a day-to-day basis?

I meet around 20 to 30 customers a day, to deal with enquiries, problems and complaints.

### Why did you choose a career in the caravan industry?

I fell into it as it is the family business. I did apply to university but decided not to go. My dad suggested that I take on the health and safety role. My family have run the park for 50 years and I have grown up with it. It's very much a family business, for example, my cousin runs the arcade and my aunt is a duty manager.

### What is your educational background?

I took a NEBOSH (National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health) general certificate in occupational safety and health and then the national diploma in occupational safety and health. I have undertaken a training qualification from the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health to allow me to run food handling, fire prevention, and manual handling courses in-house. I'm also now an NVQ assessor so I can assess our staff.

### What do you enjoy most about your job?

The variety of work and the chance to meet new people. It's very satisfying to see a customer enjoying their holiday. The park has a fun and lively atmosphere and this kind of work attracts people who want to have fun and enjoy working with people.

### What do you like least?

Changes in legislation often make it hard for operators to run their park and can place financial constraints on them. Also customers seem to be getting more demanding and complaints can sometimes get you down.

### What skills are important in your job?

Organisational skills, listening skills and definitely IT skills.

### What can managers in the caravan industry expect to earn?

A departmental manager would probably earn around £18,000 a year and would then be able to work up from there. There are good prospects for promotion in our park if an opportunity arises, otherwise staff could move to a more senior position at another park.

### What is the strangest thing you have ever been asked to do?

We used to keep three cows on spare land on the site so they could graze on the grass, but one night they escaped! I was up at 3.00am trying to chase them back into their field before they could cause any major damage. That's certainly not in my job description but sometimes these things happen!

### What is the best way to get into the caravan industry?

I would encourage young people at college or university to get a holiday or part-time job so they can gain experience whilst they are studying. There are many different kinds of jobs available in the caravan industry; lifeguard, plumber, chef etc. It's a fun and lively industry and there is lots of variety. Many companies offer their staff vocational training. When I employ someone I look for relevant qualifications along with experience.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

**SkillsActiveCareers** [www.skillsactive.com/careers](http://www.skillsactive.com/careers)  
**Sector Skills Development Agency** [www.ssda.org.uk](http://www.ssda.org.uk)  
**Register of Exercise Professionals** [www.exerciseregister.org](http://www.exerciseregister.org)  
**Jobswithballs.com** [www.jobswithballs.com](http://www.jobswithballs.com)  
**Leisure Jobs UK** [www.leisurejobs.com](http://www.leisurejobs.com)  
**Leisure Opportunities** [www.leisureopportunities.co.uk](http://www.leisureopportunities.co.uk)  
**UK Sport** [www.uksport.gov.uk/jobs.asp](http://www.uksport.gov.uk/jobs.asp)  
**Institute of Sport & Recreation Management** [www.isrm.co.uk](http://www.isrm.co.uk)  
**Institute of Leisure & Amenity Management** [www.ilam.co.uk](http://www.ilam.co.uk)

## ENGLAND

**Department for Culture, Media and Sport** [www.culture.gov.uk](http://www.culture.gov.uk)  
**Sport England** [www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)  
**Learndirect Advice** [www.learndirect-advice.co.uk](http://www.learndirect-advice.co.uk)  
**Learning and Skills Council** [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)  
**Apprenticeships** [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)  
**Sprito Direct Tasters** [www.spritodirect.co.uk/tasters](http://www.spritodirect.co.uk/tasters)  
**Caravan Industry Training Ltd** [www.cito.org.uk](http://www.cito.org.uk)  
**Institute for Outdoor Learning** [www.outdoor-learning.org](http://www.outdoor-learning.org)  
**British Activity Holiday Association** [www.baha.org.uk](http://www.baha.org.uk)  
**London Community Sports Network** [www.communitysports.org.uk](http://www.communitysports.org.uk)  
**Sports Leaders UK Awards** [www.bst.org.uk](http://www.bst.org.uk)

## NORTHERN IRELAND

**Northern Ireland Office** [www.nio.gov.uk](http://www.nio.gov.uk)  
**Department for Employment and Learning** [www.delni.gov.uk](http://www.delni.gov.uk)  
**Sports Council Northern Ireland** [www.sportni.net](http://www.sportni.net)  
**Learndirect Advice** [www.learndirect-advice.co.uk](http://www.learndirect-advice.co.uk)  
**Careers Service Northern Ireland** [www.careersserviceni.com](http://www.careersserviceni.com)  
**Coaching** [www.coachingni.net](http://www.coachingni.net)  
**Educational Guidance Service for Adults** [www.egsa.org.uk](http://www.egsa.org.uk)  
**Northern Ireland Sports Forum** [www.nisf.net](http://www.nisf.net)  
**Playboard** [www.playboard.co.uk](http://www.playboard.co.uk)  
**Sports Institute Northern Ireland** [www.sini.co.uk](http://www.sini.co.uk)  
**Tollymore Mountain Centre** [www.tollymore.com](http://www.tollymore.com)  
**Volunteer Development Agency** [www.volunteering-ni.org](http://www.volunteering-ni.org)

## SCOTLAND

**Scottish Executive Government** [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)  
**sportscotland** [www.sportscotland.org.uk](http://www.sportscotland.org.uk)  
**Learndirect Scotland** [www.learndirectscotland.com](http://www.learndirectscotland.com)  
**Scottish Enterprise** [www.scottish-enterprise.com](http://www.scottish-enterprise.com)  
**Highlands and Islands Enterprise** [www.hie.co.uk](http://www.hie.co.uk)  
**Modern Apprenticeships in Scotland** [www.modernapprenticeships.com](http://www.modernapprenticeships.com)  
**Careers Scotland** [www.careers-scotland.org.uk](http://www.careers-scotland.org.uk)  
**Scottish Sports Association** [www.scottishsportsassociation.org.uk](http://www.scottishsportsassociation.org.uk)  
**Playwork in Scotland** [www.playscotland.org](http://www.playscotland.org)  
**Job Website for Scotland** [www.s1jobs.com](http://www.s1jobs.com)

## WALES

**Welsh Assembly Government** [www.wales.gov.uk/wag/wag.htm](http://www.wales.gov.uk/wag/wag.htm)  
**Sports Council for Wales** [www.sports-council-wales.co.uk](http://www.sports-council-wales.co.uk)  
**Learndirect Wales** [www.learndirect.co.uk/cymraeg](http://www.learndirect.co.uk/cymraeg)  
**Education and Learning Wales** [www.elwa.org.uk](http://www.elwa.org.uk)  
**Careers Wales** [www.careerswales.com](http://www.careerswales.com)  
**Wales Live** [www.waleslive.com](http://www.waleslive.com)  
**Playwork Wales** [www.playwales.org.uk](http://www.playwales.org.uk)  
**Go Wales** [www.gowales.co.uk](http://www.gowales.co.uk)  
**Welsh Sports Association** [www.welshsports.org.uk](http://www.welshsports.org.uk)



SkillsActive

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## Ask Dougie!

Meet him at: [www.skillsactive.com/careers](http://www.skillsactive.com/careers)

Dougie can assist you by guiding you through our full range of information.

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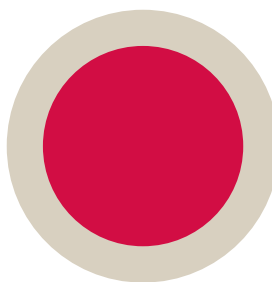
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