



## THE ULYSSES TRUST

---

### CADET ADVENTUROUS TRAINING SURVEY – JUNE 2014 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### *Introduction*

In view of the relatively low take-up of grants from the Ulysses Trust from Cadet units for expeditions (1.3% of units and 0.8% of members p.a.), the Trust undertook a survey of Cadet units throughout the UK to investigate what the inhibitors were. More specifically, the survey sought to identify:

- The adventurous training (AT) support requirements of UK Cadet units;
- A comparison of the Cadet unit AT support requirements against the existing Ulysses Trust support provision;
- Recommendations of how the Ulysses Trust can adapt its support provision to better meet the AT support requirements of Cadet units.

551 responses were received against a total of 3181 Cadet units which equates to a 17% sample. Considering that Services' Cadet Directorates all undertook to communicate a request to all units to participate, and that the survey was focussed on what the Ulysses Trust could do for them, this response is disappointing. It begs the question: is the low response because units did not receive the request, or because over 80% have no interest in Adventure Training?

#### *Key Observations*

Adventurous training is highly valued by almost 85% of Cadet units as a key tool to aid in both the recruitment and retention of Cadets. Participation was seen as important to developing self-confidence, leadership, and teamwork skills within the individual. 80% of respondents participated in AT beyond that provided in Annual Camp and almost all of these enrol Cadets within the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.

Of the 300 respondents (54%) who stated that they had never applied to the Ulysses Trust, 181 units ( 32% of those who responded) stated their reason as being that they had never heard of us. This contrasts with a perception amongst some that the Trust was widely known about.

Units who are currently supported by the Ulysses Trust value the financial support that is provided without which many of the more disadvantaged units/Cadets would not be able to participate in extramural AT activities. Beyond this, these units would also value access to an instructor pool and the ability to share the combined AT and expedition knowledge gained by the Ulysses Trust and its beneficiaries.



## THE ULYSSES TRUST

---

While the overwhelming majority of units responding (80%) participate in adventurous training, the research draws attention to the fact that for those who do not undertake any adventurous training beyond that during Annual Camp the top three reasons cited as barriers to participation were:

1. Lack of Adventurous Training qualified Instructors and experienced expedition leaders;
2. Burdensome approval process;
3. Affordability of Adventurous Training to participants.

These reasons were also reflected in many of the comments received as part of the survey feedback.

Another widely held view was that the Chain of Command was risk averse (with one CCF unit abandoning adventurous training through MoD support, and instead mounting their expeditions as school-sponsored activities to avoid this). When asked to rank the Chain of Command levels of support for AT on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being Non-Existent and 5 being Excellent, the average score out of 452 responses was 3.08 which is not encouraging.

### ***Conclusion***

While units that responded throughout the UK value AT very highly both for units and individual participants, and many do what they can to ensure that their Cadets benefit from extramural activities wherever possible, more meaningful commitment that reaches all their members is restrained by three key issues:

- A lack of expertise.
- A burdensome approval process (compounded by perhaps a disproportionate approach to risk).
- Affordability.

The Ulysses Trust currently only addresses the affordability barrier and, a reflection of limited current resources, often at a level that does not really overcome that bar. Some 36% of respondents who had never applied for a grant stated either that they did not think it is worth the effort, or did not need it.

A lack of expertise is proving insurmountable for some units, and often these units simply do not participate in adventurous training beyond Annual Camp. Those that do often resort to hiring civilian expertise, which of course exacerbates the affordability issue. For others, the high levels of administration to gain approval to participate in adventurous training then proves the final straw. Some CCFs therefore only participate in adventurous training outside of the military system.



## THE ULYSSES TRUST

---

As 80% of Respondents partake in Adventurous Training beyond Annual Camps (over half on at least an annual basis and half without Trust support), it would be possible to conclude that the issues above are not fundamental barriers. However 85% of respondents rated the importance of AT as high or Very High, so why are only 1.3% of units availing themselves of Trust support annually. The answer to this question must lie buried amongst the 83+% of Units who did not participate. Is it, as posed in the introduction, ignorance or indifference? With respondees rating AT so highly, one might conclude that it is ignorance – of the possibilities and the help available. This points to a significant communication and education challenge.

### ***Recommendations***

The Ulysses Trust should consider the following measures, to enhance the support it provides to Cadets, and hence its value:

1. Raising the level of funding it provides to expeditions that meet its criteria for support to a more meaningful level. Unless or until more funds are available, this means that the Trust needs to become more selective - targeting funds to units where financial support is most needed, and/or applying more rigorous criteria for what is supported.
2. Raising and providing funds specifically for units to invest in Instructor Training.
3. The establishment of an instructor pool and Expedition database for access by units.
4. The establishment of a knowledge / needs sharing forum on its website.
5. Engage with MoD and Cadet Service chiefs, to encourage:
  - a. More support in the search for and provision of instructors.
  - b. Affiliations between Cadet and Adult units for AT support.
  - c. The provision of seminars on the value of adventurous training and on expedition planning etc, using Service staff and experience.
  - d. A review of the expedition approval process in order to reduce it as a barrier to participating in AT.

These proposals would create significant added value for beneficiaries, and would surely encourage more units to undertake expeditions. . This would help differentiate the Trust, increase its relevance in the future, and so make it a more attractive proposition to potential donors.