



Skern Lodge has a long history of quality and high standards over the last 45 years within the industry, and some customers have been visiting Skern for much of that time which is good sign that the quality reaches the customer also. Here are some slides to get to know the centre better: accommodation and dining, staff and activities.

These are the reason for a visit.

The local area



This is Taw Torridge estuary, with Westward Ho beach in the foreground – a popular site for surfers and holidaymakers. Northam Burrows nature reserve is behind, and also the Skern of Skern Lodge. Braunton Burrows is in the background, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the focus of the UNESCO biosphere reserve. It is the perfect geographical location for outdoor education!

The site



The centre is situated in 23 acres, and surrounded by green fields with the tidal estuary over the road. The seaside town of Appledore is just down the road.



There are 240 beds spread across 3 dormitories, from left to right. The centre is the dining room and offices. Anything else is a workshop space or a classroom. There is a fleet of vehicles to help support off-site delivery of activities.



Dormitories



This is the orchard dormitory, which is fairly typical of a residential centre with downstairs common rooms, a central corridor running through both floors, shared rooms with attached bathrooms, well placed teacher rooms, recycling points, and secure doors and windows.



This is another dormitory with a courtyard, and it is a different layout to the orchard. However, all dormitories are similar where it matters, with locking external doors, drying rooms, communal areas, warm rooms, and functional bathrooms.



This is an example of a bedroom.



This is another example of a bedroom, with a bathroom in the background.



This is an example of a bathroom at Skern Lodge.



This is the common room, with a workshop space.

Food



This is the dining room.



The dining room can comfortably seat about 110 at a time, with staggered breakfast, lunch and dinner times helping minimise queues and how busy the room feels.

Every school has allocated tables which are unlikely to change during the week.



There is the serving window to the left, with the returning window at the back. Menus are varied and food is very good, which is often reflected by Skern Lodge's school feedback forms.

A favourite is salmon tagliatelle or chicken korma with naan!

There is always a variety, and any dietary requirements communicated with the school are communicated to the chefs who cook to need.



Activities





These are the new high ropes.
An opportunity to invest during the 2020 lockdown gave Skern Lodge a chance to completely replace the high ropes.



This is a favourite on-site session: the assault course. There is a route of problem solving obstacles that are only successfully tackled as a team, for example climbing up the wall.





Archery is one of the activities offered at Skern Lodge.



This is the climbing tower, where all students are provided with helmets, clips, harness and ropes.



Here, students are traversing a wall to develop skills and confidence before tackling the tower.

This peer coaching is useful for life beyond Skern, as well.



Skern Lodge has a tunnels system, which occupies an important space in the programme, and offers a different set of challenges than heights.



This is a blindfold activity game that is often good to play, and involves lots of trust and confidence.



This is an example of a tutoring session, where one of the staff at Skern Lodge is conducting some STEM activities.



Skern Lodge has pool kayaks, which are good for developing water skills.



Skern Lodge maintain a fleet of vehicles which means no one has to walk to the river.



This is Torridge, the home to Tarka the otter and with one of the largest tidal ranges in Europe.

It is a welcoming and inclusive stretch of real water, and is tidal so the water is either going out or flowing in and behaves similarly to a conveyor belt.

Two people sit in the kayak, which is great for teamwork but also managing personal fatigue.



This is the salt marsh of Kynochs Foreshore, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and a nature reserve that can only be accessed by the water.



This photo gives a good idea of the kit kayakers use. They keep warm with the wetsuit, the buoyancy aid allows them to float, and the helmet helps them to keep safe.



Rafting is an alternative craft in addition to the kayaks.





There will be an activity brief by the surf instructors, who are RLSS lifeguards and know the local coastline well.









This is Hartland Peninsula further down the coast, where the rockpools are a bit bigger.

It involves a nice combination of skills developed on other activities, transferred into a new environment if children take part in this activity.



Daytime activities are often the focus, but the evening activities are just as important, including evening swims in the pool, team games, scavenger hunts, and walks to and from Appledore and Northam Burrows.

Our Staff

Our staff help to deliver all of the great activities.

Skern draws applications from around the world from instructors and tutors from all flavours of the industry, from competitive athletes, wellbeing coaches, to trained teachers wanting to teach outside the classroom.



This is a snapshot of an office in Skern. From left to right: Ben, Cameron, Katie, Lauren, and Ed (the Chief of Operations).



This is Becky, a mountain leader who trained in Scotland.



The staff in this photo are Kieran, Tom, Chris and Alice.

Our industry

At Skern Lodge, there are strictly assessed qualifications, quality badges, and licencing that underwrites all the activities that the centre does.



AALA and AAIAC are licencing, regular inspections similar to Ofsted which have the power to rightly close a centre if they discover anything noncompliant.

BU and RYA are training development bodies.

IOL and LOtC are quality badges to ensure that actual learning outcomes are achieved in addition to safe fun.

Lastly, the BBP reflects Skern Lodge’s responsible and sustainable business practice in our local areas.



ADVENTUREMARK
www.adventuremark.co.uk

SKERN LODGE

Has met the necessary standards for the safe delivery of adventure activities as defined by the Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee.

M. A. Rowe **Chair (AAIAC)**

Abseiling	Jacobs Ladder
Archery	Kayaking
Artificial Climbing Wall	Leap of Faith
Assault Course	Orienteering
Bushcraft	Sea Level Traversing
Canoeing	Sit on Top Kayaking
Caving - Artificial	Surfing
Crate Stacking	Team Building
High Ropes Courses	Towed Water Sports - Water Skiing
Improved Rappelling	Zip Wires



Health and Safety
Executive



Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004

Licence number: L29392

Date of issue: 29/10/2020

Provider reference number: R0316

This licence is granted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), acting as the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA), to

Skern Lodge Ltd
Skern Lodge
Watertown
APPLEDORE
North Devon
EX39 1NG

to provide adventure activities as specified in the Activity Centres (Young Persons) Safety Act 1995 and the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004.

The facilities for adventure activities which may be provided under this licence are:

RISK ASSESSMENT

ACTIVITY – Climb and Abseil Tower

Date last reviewed: January 2022

Next review date: January 2023

Hazards	Who affected	Control Measures	Variations with different groups
Falling objects	Client/Instructor	At bottom move away and wait away from base of Tower. Correctly fitted helmets to be worn at all times.	
Rope burns	Client/Instructor	Descent and belaying should be managed as controlled and measured to avoid rope burn.	
Clothing/hair in fig. 8.	Client	Briefed to keep head and shoulders back, loose hair and clothing tied back and minimised as much as possible. Releasable abseil system in the event of fig 8 becoming fouled.	
Falling from top	Client/Instructor	Ensure protected when setting up and working at top of tower. Manage group by briefing to stay well back until they're ready to go. Clipped the entire time whilst up at the top of the tower. Prusik must be used to protect instructor upon descent. Trap door at top to be kept shut when not in use.	Tighter control kept with groups with behavioural issues, through use of Skern and Visiting Staff. Group numbers at the top kept lower to make them easier to manage.
Strains and muscular injury	Client/Instructor	A warm up prior to the session involving mobility and flexibility to try and avoid any unnecessary strains.	
Client belaying	Client	Thorough briefing on the belay system to be used. Instructor maintains control all the time with hand on dead rope and tie slippery hitch in to 'dead' rope at appropriate distances. Descents always fully controlled by the instructor.	
Vertigo	Client	Instructor constantly assesses individual on the rope. System of challenge by choice employed. Always the option available to descend via the staples.	

Everything at Skern Lodge is risk assessed, from activities to the bedrooms. These are accessible to your school leaders as early as the bookings stage and help ensure safety at every stage.

The first hour



This is the driveway up to Skern Lodge.



When the students arrive, they take their bags off the coach and are organised into bedroom groups.



Then, students will unpack and get settled.



Afterwards, students will meet back out on the grass to be split into activity groups, meet their instructor who will likely be with their group for the entirety of their stay, and explore Skern with a tour of site, where they will find out where to go for food, for games in freetime, how to summon help in an emergency, and where to assemble if the fire alarms were to sound.

SKERN LODGE 