

Dear Leader

What is Peak Assault?

Peak Assault is a navigation competition for teams of young people in an upland area of England or Wales. The location is traditionally kept a secret, but in the past Peak Assault has visited many upland areas including: The Peak District, The Lake District, North Wales, Dartmoor, Exmoor and the Brecon Beacons.

The competition takes place over a weekend and teams must navigate to check points around the course to collect as many points as possible throughout Saturday and again on Sunday morning. Peak Assault has been taking place almost every year since 1968 and attracts more than 250 people in over 30 teams.

What's happening in 2024?

As previously communicated, we have changed our approach to Peak Assault 2024 and beyond owing to feedback and the significant cost pressures we are encountering which impacts the event being open to all. We want to ensure that we provide events that deliver great skills for life and enable as many young people as possible to have access to new and exciting opportunities.

For Peak Assault 2024 we have devised a great local event closer to home. Operating in Hertfordshire based out of Phasels Wood, the focus of Peak Assault 2024 will be to engage more young people to become familiar with the Peak Assault format, in easier surroundings. It will enable teams of young people to learn and put their navigation skills into practice, be supported as needed and develop their orienteering and walking skills in a more forgiving environment.

We anticipate delivering a remote event, in future years.

Arrival at Phasels Wood on Friday 11th Oct will be scheduled for after 9pm.

The event is anticipated to end approx. 12.30pm on Sun 13th Oct.

More detailed conformation of timings will be communicated nearer the event.

For 2024, we will maintain the usual structure of Peak Assault with some adjustments. The information below relates to our usual event in the mountains, this is to give you a full idea of what to expect.

Who can enter Peak Assault and how many people are in a team?

Peak Assault is open to anyone over the age of 14. There are five types of teams that can be entered.

- **Explorer Scout Teams:** Must be between 14 and under 18, consisting of 4, 5 or 6 members, 2 or more of which must be over 16.
- **Explorer Scout Training Teams:** Between 14 and under 18, consisting of 3, 4 or 5 members plus an Adult Leader walking with them. (Up to 2 members can be between 13 and 14 to encourage links to Scout Troops)
- **Scout Network Teams:** Must be between 18 and under 25, consisting of 4, 5 or 6 members and must all be members of a Scout Network.

In some years there is an option for all teams to enter a lower level, Lowland course as an easier introduction into Peak Assault.

How much does it cost?

The competition costs are detailed in the General Information document. This includes the cost of travel by coach. Teams are responsible for providing their own food during the weekend though there is a 'catered option' for supporters and walking leaders – see General Information of more details.

What equipment will the teams need to have?

A full list of team and personal kit can be found on our website (<https://www.hertfordshirescouts.org.uk/upcoming-events/peak-assault/>). Your teams and their supporters will need to make sure they have all the items on the list. The supporters will also need to bring the food and equipment to feed the teams for the weekend. If individuals do not have the correct equipment they will be unable to go out on to the hills and would be unable to take part in the competition. If you want any guidance on what kit is suitable or where you can find inexpensive kit, or if you would like us to visit your group to talk about the kit, then please contact **Richard Hayward** (hpakit@hertfordshirescouts.org.uk).

Why is the location traditionally kept secret?

The main reasons for keeping the destination secret are to add an 'element of surprise' and to ensure nobody gains an unfair advantage by studying maps of the area before the competition.

What happens over the weekend?

Teams board coaches on Friday night at several locations across Hertfordshire. The coaches leave promptly at 6:30pm and then travel to our competition Base Camp where all the teams and their supporters set up camp and get a good night rest.

What happens on the Saturday?

On Saturday Morning after breakfast, the competition begins, but before the teams head into the hills they must go through a full kit check (times for the kit check will be sent out before they leave Hertfordshire). Every single item of the team's kit is scrutinised before the team is let out on the hill. This is to make sure it is up to standard needed for the competition. Teams then receive a final safety briefing, the competition maps and a list of approximately 25 check points to plot on their maps. They then have set amount of time (usually 8 hours) to visit as many as possible and reach Overnight Site.

The course covers an upland area that tests navigation skills and basic fitness. It does not include any terrain requiring rock climbing etc. In advance of the competition, the organising team spend the week checking the course, placing the check points and familiarising themselves with the detail of the whole area.

The lowland course option will be held on the foot hills and forests surrounding the main course. This allows for easier terrain and navigation.

So, after the start nobody sees them until they reach the finish?

No. During the competition weekend, marshals equipped with radios and safety equipment patrol an area of the course around each of the check points to make sure the teams are safe and do not break any rules. Teams will be asked their destination and this is noted together with the time the team is seen. The marshals are in constant contact with the competition organiser via radio. This means that we can find any team, at any time. If any team encounters a problem, the marshals are supported by Peak Assault's own Field Response team who are able to rapidly assist any team anywhere on the course.

On Saturday evening teams will stay at an overnight site. This is normally a bit more basic than the base camp but water and toilet facilities are provided. It is staffed by a dedicated team who check the condition of teams as they arrive and are available to assist with anyone who has problems. Network and Senior teams stay at a different overnight camp from the Explorer Scout teams. Teams set up the tents they have carried with them, prepare their evening meal and try to get a good nights' rest before the second leg of the competition on Sunday.

Is Sunday's competition the same as Saturday?

Yes, in format it is the same, but is of shorter duration and ends back at Base Camp just after lunch where teams are met by their Supporters who provide them with a hot meal. When all the teams are safely off the hills, the trophies are presented to the winning teams before everybody boards the coaches to return to Hertfordshire.

What do the supporters do during the weekend?

Each Explorer team must have a minimum of two supporters (one aged over 20). Their job includes ensuring that teams get breakfast on Saturday, that the teams are at kit check on time and have all the right equipment and provide a hot meal for when they return on Sunday. Once the teams are out on the hills, the supporters can relax and enjoy the peace and quiet! Supporters are given the opportunity to visit a local town by coach during the Saturday.

How else can adults be involved in Peak Assault?

We welcome offers of help as Peak Assault requires lots of volunteers to help it run smoothly and to make it the safe competition that it is. The Peak Assault team has many roles and we will put your skills to good use.

Roles include: **Hill Marshalls** (The eyes and feet on the hills), **Kit Checkers** (Ensure the competitors adhere to the kit list), **Base Camp staff** (Help to create and manage the campsites), **Field Response Team** (respond to any injuries or other emergencies during the competition, also supporting the medical team), **Medical Team** (Ensure the health and welfare of everyone at the competition) and the **Course Setting Team** (Arrive midweek at the Peak Assault Location to lay out the course, identify any difficulties or issues with the course). If you are interested in becoming part of the Peak Assault team, then please email **Mark Hubbard, HPA Registrar** at the address below or go to the web page below and follow the link to "Staff Info".

More information about Peak Assault and links to enter are available at: <https://www.14-25.hertfordshirescouts.org.uk/peak-assault>

If you have any further questions, you can contact Mark Hubbard, HPA Registrar by email at: hpa@hertfordshirescouts.org.uk.

See you on the Hills!