

# Proposed Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Bill

## Introduction

A proposal for a Bill to ensure that young people have the opportunity to experience residential outdoor education.

The consultation runs from 29 April 2022 to 22 July 2022

All those wishing to respond to the consultation are strongly encouraged to enter their responses electronically through this survey. This makes collation of responses much simpler and quicker. However, the option also exists of sending in a separate response (in hard copy or by other electronic means such as e-mail), and details of how to do so are included in the member's consultation document.

Questions marked with an asterisk (\*) require an answer.

All responses must include a name and contact details. Names will only be published if you give us permission, and contact details are never published – but we may use them to contact you if there is a query about your response. If you do not include a name and/or contact details, we may have to disregard your response.

Please note that you must complete the survey in order for your response to be accepted. If you don't wish to complete the survey in a single session, you can choose "Save and Continue later" at any point. Whilst you have the option to skip particular questions, you must continue to the end of the survey and press "Submit" to have your response fully recorded.

Please ensure you have read the consultation document before responding to any of the questions that follow. In particular, you should read the information contained in the document about how your response will be handled. The consultation document is available here:

[Consultation Document](#)

[Privacy Notice](#)

I confirm that I have read and understood the Privacy Notice which explains how my personal data will be used.

On the previous page we asked you if you are UNDER 12 YEARS old, and you responded Yes to this question.

If this is the case, we will have to contact your parent or guardian for consent.

If you are under 12 years of age, please put your contact details into the textbox. This can be your email address or phone number. We will then contact you and your parents to receive consent.

Otherwise please confirm that you are or are not under 12 years old.

*No Response*

## About you

Please choose whether you are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation.  
Note: If you choose "individual" and consent to have the response published, it will appear under your own name. If you choose "on behalf of an organisation" and consent to have the response published, it will be published under the organisation's name.

on behalf of an organisation

Which of the following best describes you? (If you are a professional or academic, but not in a subject relevant to the consultation, please choose "Member of the public".)

*No Response*

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

Public sector body (Scottish/UK Government/Government agency, local authority, NDPB)

**Optional: You may wish to explain briefly what the organisation does, its experience and expertise in the subject-matter of the consultation, and how the view expressed in the response was arrived at (e.g. whether it is the view of particular office-holders or has been approved by the membership as a whole).**

Response on behalf of Scottish Borders Council from the viewpoint of the Outdoor Education Officer

Please choose one of the following:

I am content for this response to be published and attributed to me or my organisation

Please provide your Full Name or the name of your organisation. (Only give the name of your organisation if you are submitting a response on its behalf).

(Note: the name will not be published if you have asked for the response to be anonymous or "not for publication". Otherwise this is the name that will be published with your response).

Gordon Smith, Scottish Borders Council

Please provide details of a way in which we can contact you if there are queries regarding your response. Email is preferred but you can also provide a postal address or phone number.

We will not publish these details.

**Aim and approach - Note: All answers to the questions in this section may be published (unless your response is "not for publication").**

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposed Bill? (Please note that this question is compulsory.)

Partially supportive

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

Whilst a residential outdoor learning experience undoubtedly provides a varied and exciting opportunity for many young people to try new things and develop new skills, they can often be viewed as a tick box exercise for schools to provide their responsibilities in relation to Outdoor Learning within the curriculum. It may be more beneficial to more pupils to focus efforts on increasing and improving the daily/weekly access to Outdoor Learning experiences, rather than "saving up" the time and opportunity for a one off residential experience. The ideal situation would, of course, be that both strands of OL are meaningfully addressed and included in the Bill.

Q2. Do you think legislation is required, or are there other ways in which the proposed Bill's aims could be achieved more effectively? Please explain the reasons for your response.

We are yet to see what a "normal" year of opportunities will look like for schools and pupils after Covid restrictions have eased. As such, it is difficult to tell what schools will naturally return to doing, in relation to providing opportunities for pupils that are equitable and relevant to their learning. The Bill may lead to ensuring these opportunities are started up again across all schools, but the impact this may have on school staff should not be underestimated - at a time when teachers are also trying to understand how a full return to pre-Covid teaching will work, the added need to plan, staff, organise, run, review and manage a major increase in residential activity would need thought about carefully. As per previous question, a focus on increasing and improving and ensuring teachers are better equipped to self deliver lower level but more regular localised Outdoor Learning may be much more beneficial in the long run, or as a pre cursor to introducing residential experience based legislation.

Q3. The proposed Bill will cover residential outdoor education provision for local authority and grant-aided schools only. Which of the following best expresses your view that independent schools or any other education establishments should not be covered by this obligation.

Fully supportive

**Please give reasons for your response.**

The disparity between opportunities in independent schools and those available to many pupils in local authority schools is already visible. To divert what will likely be limited funds to support independent schools would likely widen the equity gap. However, it would need careful thought to ensure that this did not lead to a "race to the bottom" whereby schools who can pay for better quality experiences do so, and residential centres start to develop a two tier programme to enable costs to be kept low for any new funded programmes for local authority schools.

Q4. The intention is that the obligation to ensure that residential outdoor education is provided would fall on those who are responsible for arranging the provision, e.g. education authorities and managers of grant-aided schools. Which of the following best expresses your view of this proposal?

Neutral (neither support nor oppose)

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

The level of obligation would need to be firmly drawn to indicate who, within the local authority, had responsibility for ensuring the experiences were provided - i.e. would it be the central Education Team? Would it be the school HT's? Would it be the class teachers? The level of work needed to plan and execute, and the programming implications this would have on school staff teams, are likely to be most acutely felt at school level, and as such I would suggest that this would be where the obligation would

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ultimately have to be placed. Conversely, without rigid and centralised guidance, the onus placed on schools could be interpreted in different ways depending on the support for the proposal within schools, and as such some high level criteria and management would likely need to be advised and overseen by centralised Education teams within Local Authorities.

## Funding

Q5. Which of the following best expresses your view of how residential outdoor education experiences should be funded?

In full by the Scottish Government

**Please explain the reasons for your response. (If you consider Scottish Government funding should be provided to local authorities, please set out the mechanism for such funding, for example through block grant, ring fenced funding etc.)**

Ring fenced funding would likely achieve the cleanest separation, and ensure relevant spend. More difficult questions might be around how the funding number is reached - per pupil? Per school? Per head of population? Thought required around higher transport costs for rural or island schools and authorities. Additional needs pupils may mean specialist transport or centres must be used. Different authorities may have different guidance around teacher ratios. Would supply cover be included etc etc. - all these issues would likely be easier to understand and resolve at local authority level rather than national level.

## Financial Implications

Q6. Any new law can have a financial impact which would affect individuals, businesses, the public sector, or others. What financial impact do you think this proposal could have if it became law?

no overall change in costs

**Please explain the reasons for your answer, including who you would expect to feel the financial impact of the proposal, and if there are any ways you think the proposal could be delivered more cost-effectively.**

Difficult to answer without context - change to what costs/whose costs?

Parents - costs would be reduced for those who would have planned to send their kids on residential anyway, as they will be centrally funded, but costs could increase for those who were not planning on/could not afford to send kids on a residential as they may need to buy/replace clothing etc.

Residential Centres and providers - costs are likely to reduce overall as a more stable and guaranteed income stream becomes possible.

Schools - costs will drop if residential are fully funded, and schools do not have to top up or provide opportunity for disadvantaged pupils, but depending on funding model, costs may increase due to higher level of supply staff needed to cover teachers who are on residential more often. Supply cover itself is a very difficult thing to ensure for many rural schools and authorities.

Local Authorities - as with schools, depending on what the funding is ring fenced for/what it covers, it may be LA costs increase in terms of having to manage, advise, and assist schools to develop and run a greatly increased residential offering.

## Standard/ Quality of provision

Q7. Which of the following best expresses your view on the proposal for a quality framework to ensure the quality of the education provision of outdoor centres?

Fully supportive

**Please give reasons for your response, including whether this should be done by HMIE using a quality framework as part of their inspection of schools and the extent to which, if any, it should be statutory.**

This, more than any other factor, could be the pivotal aspect of the entire proposal. The last 30yrs have seen a marked "dumbing down" of the outdoor education residential experience, whereby many pupils now simply swap their school and it's playground for a centre and it's grounds for a week, and do not get to actually take part in any activities that are truly outdoors, and in many cases have questionable educational benefit. Without a solid and inspection based set of criteria for what constitutes an educational residential outdoor experience, the equity of provision could vary hugely between schools and Local Authorities due to the simple logistics of what centres or providers are used or able to deliver the programme. The experience one group of pupils will have if being led by a new instructor barely out of school themselves, taking part only in on site activities and challenges, where they are whisked through 4 or 5 different sessions a day, will be starkly different to the experiences of a pupil group led by a qualified, trained, experienced Outdoor Instructor, in real world outdoor environments, and with time and opportunity to properly reflect and review their experiences throughout the programme. These two different types of experience will undoubtedly also come at different costs, so thought will be required to understand how "a number" is reached in relation to how much a school is expected to be able to pay for any residential programme. Much of this flows back to the idea of regular and ongoing OL being a key part of pupils curriculum, and the need to break away from seeing the one week residential as the only thing needed to ensure kids have an outdoor experience.

Q8. Which of the following best expresses your view that the age range of 12 – 16 is appropriate for participation in the residential outdoor education experience?

Partially supportive

**Please give reasons for your response, including whether you think other age ranges would be more appropriate.**

With the vast majority of primary schools delivering a Primary 7 residential experience, there may be merit in considering any new legislation to focus on S2/S3/S4 age range, rather than S1. There may also be merit in settling on a single year group, rather than an age range, in that this would likely be more stable for schools to enable planning and development of programme into the future. Another area to consider will be the ability of centres to cater to a higher number of participants across a much wider age range - many centres are predominantly set up currently to work with P7 aged/sized pupils, so to cater for a big increase in secondary pupils may require significant spend to buy larger/more resources such as harnesses, buoyancy aids, bikes etc.

If i had to make a call, I would say go for S3 - less exam pressure at that age, so more opportunity to fit residential into the school year, but also because this age range is when many young people start to become disaffected with school, and drop out of sports and activities.

## Equalities

Q9. Any new law can have an impact on different individuals in society, for example as a result of their age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

What impact could this proposal have on particular people if it became law? If you do not have a view skip to next question.

Please explain the reasons for your answer and if there are any ways you think the proposal could avoid negative impacts on particular people.

This proposal could significantly increase the need for centres to think about how they work with young people with complex learning issues, if the offer is to be seen as fully inclusive. In schools with high levels of pupils who have specific religious beliefs, thought may be needed in relation to how young girls take part in residential activity, and whether/how parental involvement is managed.

Q10. How might equity of provision for all be ensured, regardless of socio-economic status? Please give reasons for your response.

Provision would have to be fully funded regardless of costs associated with those young people who have complex learning needs, complex physical needs, or specific religious or gender based beliefs - thought needed around specialist transport, adult worker support, supply staff cover, how parents are included where needed, sleeping accommodation, increased training needs for schools and centres around how to work with young people in these groups etc.

## Sustainability

Q11. Any new law can impact on work to protect and enhance the environment, achieve a sustainable economy, and create a strong, healthy, and just society for future generations.

Do you think the proposal could impact in any of these areas? [If you do not have a view then skip to next question]

Please explain the reasons for your answer, including what you think the impact of the proposal could be, and if there are any ways you think the proposal could avoid negative impacts?

If we cannot get young people to engage with and understand the natural world around them, how can we possibly expect them to develop a sense of urgency and commitment to protecting that world? The need for young people to actively experience the various environments and habitats that are in their own area and their own country has never been greater, and the learning and understanding of why these areas are important, and how protecting them ties into the bigger picture of environmental sustainability, must be a key reportable aspect of any proposed programme. Whilst outdoor activities in their own right are important personal development opportunities for young people, the environment they take place in is just as, if not more, important for them to see and feel and smell and experience. Done well, this proposal could only increase and improve the engagement of young people in relation to the natural world around them. This may be difficult to achieve however, if residential activities are limited to on site, man made or manufactured outdoor experiences, with instructors who have no environmental, historical, educational or ecological background or experience.

## General

Q12. Do you have any other additional comments or suggestions on the proposed Bill (which have not already been covered in any of your responses to earlier questions)?

The Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education would prove to be a key partner in developing and understanding this Bill and its impact within the educational landscape of Scotland - they will be able to provide a national as well as an individual LA context, and have access to a wealth of knowledge and understanding as to how this Bill could be implemented effectively and professionally.