

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.

an individual

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".)

Professional with experience in a relevant subject

Optional: You may wish to explain briefly what expertise or experience you have that is relevant to the subject-matter of the consultation

I previously ran the Abernethy Ardgour outdoor centre near Fort William - being there for 12 years - and was made redundant when they chose to close the centre in April 2020. I now have finished studying Adventure Education with University of the Highlands and Islands, whilst also working for them in delivering their practical programme. I have experience in running an outdoor centre, working with a range of school and charity residential trips, and staff development and training through the running of an outdoor instructor training course.

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

No Response

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).

Pete White

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.)

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Outdoor education is a crucial component to a holistic education for young people. It opens up new opportunities for young people to encounter their own freedom and responsibilities, allowing the space and time to nurture these important dimensions within their life. This is alongside all the many practical benefits of connection with nature, developing relationships and ways of interacting with each other - alongside the development of curriculum-based knowledge.

Residential outdoor education has been consistently challenged financially - even before COVID. Rising costs have affected the budgets of running residential outdoor centres, and have had an effect on families having less disposable income to be able to spend it on "privilege's" that include residential outdoor trips - there was a growing trend amongst schools to reduce their typical residential week from 5 days/4 nights to 3 days/2 nights to make it affordable for pupils to attend. Consequently there has been reduced income coming into the sector, to allow a healthy financial position to develop - that would have enabled them to withstand COVID better - and has seen staff wages remain static for over a decade.

Providing both a statutory obligation and funding to match that for residential outdoor education trips would enable the sector to re-start and build into a healthy position in regards to both financially and staff levels and experience.

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.

Yes, I think both legislation and funding alongside that is required, as otherwise Local Authorities will claim they don't have the resources or that there is a greater need for the money in another area.

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.

Partially supportive

Please give reasons for your response.

Whilst I believe that most independent schools already have a strong outdoor education ethos with the finances alongside that - there are some independent schools that don't necessarily have the same financial position. Perhaps there should be a criteria, maybe based upon the school fees for pupils - and if they are significantly lower and therefore indicate that the school is not about "status" but rather other reasons then they may be eligible for funding.

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?

Partially supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Whilst I agree in principle, I wouldn't want the LA to place excessive restrictions on the choices available for the schools - some schools have developed relationships with various centres and staff, that bring added benefits to the residential trip.

Funding

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

In some other way

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.)

I don't know enough about the options to give a reasonable response - but I feel that the majority of funding should come from Scottish Government (LA budgets are already being squeezed and have no simple option to funding it), but I also feel that there should be an element of costs being covered by parents/carers, This should clearly be done based on income/financial support they receive, and they shouldn't cover the full cost of the trip - but a token amount encourages "buy in" for the trip from the families.

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?

some reduction 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.

I'm not sure if this answers the question - but if we increase the demand for residential outdoor trips then potentially more centres will be full throughout more of the year, developing a healthier budget - which may therefore allow the reduction of the cost of the trip.

Set against the rise in cost of living, particularly energy costs is likely to dramatically increase costs for centres.

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.

I think having some quality framework is important - but it should be flexible enough to take into account varying opportunities that different centres afford - these can differ according to location, access opportunities, facilities and staff experience. I wonder if having a sector-run accreditation scheme that validates & supports centres in their ethos, approach and staff competencies would be more appropriate - with then a requirement that centres that are eligible to take the work are part of the accreditation scheme.

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.

I agree it is a crucial age and a residential throughout that time could have tremendous impact. The reality is that not every person enjoys being outside, and as they become older they become more entrenched in their views - therefore starting early and developing outdoor education opportunities within primary schools is vital to this succeeding, to allow the young people to be better positioned to make the most of a residential week in secondary school.

The Primary 7 residential is a massive segment of the current - or was - market... including that year group in the age could be beneficial, but equally may detract from the purpose of the legislation as it may not actually create that many more opportunities for young people (and bring in additional work to the centres).

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.

Linked to my previous response, equality is not just based on financial limitations - it is also the implicit nature of OE and who "belongs" to it... and currently that is middle-class & white - and as we get older male-dominated...

Therefore we can make it an opportunity for everybody to attend a residential, but that may not promote a sense of belonging and therefore achieve limited results with under-represented groups... to achieve this there needs to be some groundwork put in before in early years to develop this sense of being part of the "outdoors"

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

Maybe base funding on the socio-economic situation of each schools catchment, allowing each school a varying pot of money to provide discretionary funding for their young people who are most in need... the power for this needs to be with the school, as they are best positioned to know the actual situation of each family and how best to support them

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?

The proposal could encourage the sustainable position of residential outdoor education, consequently growing skilled jobs in rural areas that have diminishing populations. The value that outdoor centres and staff teams provide to their local communities can not be under-estimated, as they integrate within the life of the rural community and also provide added benefit to the local education of young people through community out-reach and volunteering (for example) in a wide range of things, such as Scouts etc... These provide unique benefits to living rurally, something which is becoming increasingly difficult for young families to achieve.

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)?

Post COVID the capacity of the sector has been hit with the closure of some centres and the exodus of a wide number of staff. Every centre currently is experiencing staff shortages which will affect their capacity to fulfill the requirements. Attention needs to be given to reasons for staffing difficulties and how the sector can be made more sustainable in regards to it being a career for those who want to continue working in it.