

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".)

Academic with expertise in a relevant subject

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).

Roger Antony Scrutton

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.

I actively research the impact of residential outdoor education on young people using quantitative methods. I also have numerous other connections with outdoor education, recreation and adventure sports

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

including as Chair of Trustees of the charity Friends of Benmore Outdoor Centre. Although there are definite caveats in the evidence described in the consultation document, I do, of course, fully support the campaign to ensure that young people have the opportunity to experience residential outdoor education.

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.

I do think that legislation will be required for the the aim of the proposal to be sustainable. There are so many other demands on school time, staff and budgets that residential OE will suffer the same fate it has suffered in recent decades. Residential OE will become the preserve of fee-paying schools with implications for personal and social development, attainment and so on. However, how any funding is allocated and best used needs to be decided.

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.

Not all pupils at fee-paying schools have well-off parents who can make the parental contribution to residential education costs. Moreover, some fee-paying schools might not have a mechanism for supporting these families, although unlikely. Therefore, a safety net for pupils in this position is needed to create truly equal opportunity. A separate question is whether a bill and financial support might also include special needs schools. Residential outdoor education has been shown to have significant therapeutic benefits for people with special needs.

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?

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Education authorities are in the best position to know how to most effectively place their pupils in residential outdoor education. This might lead to re-establishing LA residential centres if that is seen as cost-effective and knowing that financial support will be sustainable.

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

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

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.)

Funds should come to LAs from the Scottish Government's education budget as a ring-fenced sum of money calculated per head and possibly per some other criteria. I don't think funds should go directly to OE centres. A question in the long term is whether there should be any incentive to re-open or develop new outdoor centres and whether there should be any flexibility for LAs on how they spend their allocation. In the long term it might be more efficient for them to run their own centres rather than pay into the private providers.

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 increase 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.

With regard to cost, there is the cost of increased demand for instructing staff (very difficult to recruit at the moment) and up-to-date equipment at outdoor centres as a result of increased usage. It's not clear if this is included in the £24M mentioned. Numerous sources of small amounts of monies, e.g. third sector, individuals, parental contributions, are available - to tap into but businesses would have to generate a return (could they be convinced?) and the bulk of funding would fall back on the public sector through rebalancing Government budgets with the benefits of residential OE across many sectors in mind, i.e. there might be cash transfers to OE but benefits and possible savings in the long term.

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.

Although I think HMIE is the best vehicle and agree with the suggestions in the proposal, having sat in on an inspectors meeting with school OE teachers it is clear that inspectors need the specialist training needed to conduct a fair assessment. Inspectors should ideally see the teaching and learning in action at the outdoor centre used by the school. Most OE centres now claim that they instruct in a curriculum-friendly way, and in some cases schools design the week programme in collaboration with the centre (so called 'Brilliant residentials'). However, my experience is that local authority centres and organisations like the Field Studies Council are better at meeting the needs of the curriculum. To maintain standards this should be a statutory requirement.

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?

Fully supportive

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

There should definitely be some flexibility on what age schools send their pupils on a residential week. Maybe 11-16 would be best. Residential OE is thought to help pupils make the transition from primary to secondary and I suspect a lot of schools would use this option, either at P7 or S1. The early teenage years are likely to be the those in which pupils are most responsive to the experience, and at 15-16 they might already be too set in their ways, and statistical data from many sources shows that interest in outdoor pursuits declines rapidly through teenage years: at 15-16 the focus might be on field studies courses, for which there is evidence of significant academic gain. However, research shows that there is benefit to be gained from residential courses for young people right through into their university/college years.

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.

Outdoor education need not be residential. There are clearly examples of where OE delivered locally or on a day-by-day basis is accessible to many of these different groups of people within the education system. If residential OE is made compulsory then some thought needs to be given to provision for groups who are not able to attend a residential experience for a particular reason. Reasonable adjustments are possible.

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

If funds are available per head to fully support residential visits then socio-economic status is not an issue. However, if only part-funding is secured then a scheme for allocating support to individual pupils is required and would best rely on the criteria used at the moment as mentioned in the proposal. Thought could be given to what other criteria might be needed. Small sums of money are available from several third sector organisations or fund-raising to support hardship cases, although these are potentially unpredictable.

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?

Yes, I do believe this and it is really what I was referring to in an earlier reply on benefits across many sectors of society in return for funding. NatureScot is about to release a new educational package (focusing on access) for schools. The point is, we cannot expect young people to protect and enhance the environment if they do not understand in the first place what the natural environment is. Outdoor education has a big role to play here, and ideally residential OE where the pupils become immersed in natural surroundings. The same could be said for strong, healthy, sharing society.

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 bill quite rightly focuses on state-funded and grant-aided schools, but it should not shy away from using the evidence of benefit from fee-paying schools, nearly all of which run residential OE courses for their pupils. These schools almost universally see residential OE as an essential ingredient of a young person's education. Why shouldn't pupils outside the private sector also have this opportunity?