

# 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

Commercial organisation (company, business)

**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).**

Loch Insh Outdoor Centre provides residential activities for schools in 'bunkhouse' small room accommodation. The business also caters for tourism and this provides sustainability across the school holiday periods. We also offer chalet accommodation; restaurant; meeting rooms / event venue; parking and a wide variety of outdoor sports on the loch itself (canoeing, kayaking, paddleboarding, sailing, windsurfing), and on land (tubing and skiing on our dry slope, archery, problem solving skills, young children's play parks).

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).

Laura McNally, Loch Insh Outdoor Centre

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.**

It is acknowledged that the industry as a whole has suffered as a result of the COVID19 pandemic and the ongoing impact can now be partially attributed to cost savings attempted by local education authorities, schools and the cost to parents e.g. by reducing stays from 4 to 2-3 nights with fewer pupils attending overall. Therefore we support this approach and we are already working with other organisations in an attempt to increase the value of our offer to schools, this proposal will help guide the offer that is put in place.

There remain high barriers to entry into the industry and so it is important that existing providers are supported to ensure children have the opportunity to experience the benefits highlighted in the consultation paper and avoid closure - we are not out of the woods yet.

We support the introduction of a mandate but we have concerns about how this will be sustainably funded either by schools or local authorities. Cost saving measures could alter the structure of the industry - as a private company, we often have no central person within the local authority to contact and this means our contracts are made directly with schools, though the local authorities make the payments. This makes for a complicated legal interaction often frustrated by local authority payment dates and is an obvious inefficiency. However, centralising the organisation of residentials could be detrimental to the industry: A relatively fragmented industry may need to consolidate if, for example, a local education authority chooses to contract one centre as their provider, to the detriment of others. Whilst this would be fantastic for the chosen centre, it might undermine the competition both in terms of cost and educational value over time because other centres may be forced to close. It could be beneficial to formally 'cluster' small groups of schools in order to achieve efficiencies, whilst ensuring survival of existing centres inciting better competition on both cost and value.

Options for payment could be a direct partial subsidy to the centres per pupil booked; grants; direct payment from the LEA as currently (either by school or cluster to the LEA then to us). We could not accommodate any delay in payment - margins are tight and cash flow is also strictly managed as a result of post-covid pressures so centres need the payment in full ahead of the school's visit e.g. 1 month prior. We also require a deposit to cover costs incurred at the time of booking. Changing the payment model could also therefore have industry consequences.

Finally, mandating all students attend from 12-16 could change the local education authority funding and some children could lose out from experiences at around P7 who fill the majority of places at present. This could lead to an industry re-set and we could lose our existing custom. Could it be better to mandate that the local education authority decide upon the year or age group and could therefore make smaller adjustments to meet their obligations rather than incurring additional pressures on teachers who might not have previously organised such trips.

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.

More work could be done with other parts of the curriculum e.g. history, science and geography, working alongside institutions such as the Geographical Association or RSGS to incorporate fieldwork into residential trips further reducing the burden on teachers and LEAs organising the trips (i.e. 5 days could be 3 days' outdoor activities, 1 day geography field work and 1 day history or cultural trips) which could revolve around an accreditation scheme for schools associated with those specific subjects and this could be a factor in existing inspections / education quality checks. Could also link to ISO14001 for schools based upon environmental education and awareness criteria, and other similar accreditations.

Could provide ringfenced grants to all schools for residentials.

Could make the administration much easier with a network of local or regional Residential Education Advisors as points of contact for the schools and centres.

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.

Neutral (neither support nor oppose)

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.**

I dont know enough about curriculum obligations between LEAs and schools. However, the education authority is not the one currently arranging the provision in every case - this is an assumption and changing the system so this is the case could be detrimental to some industry participants.

## 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.)**

If this is mandated, it should be heavily subsidised to ensure all are able to attend, with costs covered for those who meet criteria for financial support. Parenting is very expensive and costs of these visits may incur debt or other difficulties by parents who do not meet financial support criteria; and environmental education, life skills and physical fitness have tremendous benefits to wider society so it is justifiable that the tax payer meets some of the cost.

## 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.**

It could change revenue in either direction; could affect viability if bookings are moved en masse to another provider; could reduce cost-per pupil but not overall costs which are subject to other external factors.

## 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?

Partially 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 could offer a really effective guideline for quality. It could create additional costs if centres were to be inspected (I note this is not the case) and it could provide centres with an opportunity to demonstrate value. However it could create a hierarchy and a centre may provide 'value' in ways that are not captured in a quality framework (e.g. single-person contact point; flexibility; staff retention / corporate memory)

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 opposed

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

This could fundamentally shift the industry. A large portion of our schools are P7 and as a result they may stop coming, with a new administrative burden on both teachers and centres to engage with schools who have never previously run such visits. In addition younger age groups who cluster with other Secondary feeder schools offer the residential opportunity to meet new secondary peers for the first time. It would be better to require the education authority to run at least one residential for every pupil in the P5 to S4 range or demand it of P6/7.

## 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.

it could be difficult to offer the same experience to very severely physically disabled (e.g. those who cannot sit upright on their own) but otherwise there would be limited impact. We could probably cater for many / most disabilities and ethnicities in some way including providing a private room / with a carer / prayer room / written instruction / appropriate menu and we already employ and cater for neuro-diverse individuals. Whilst there would be some impact, it would be catering for large numbers of disabilities in one go that might provide a challenge.

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

From a centre perspective socio-economic status isn't a factor as we provide the equipment needed and the funds are paid by the local authority.

## 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?

This may incur larger numbers of individuals exercising their right to responsible access. The National Outdoor Access Forum and Nature Scot could / should also be consultees. It could be worth incorporating a requirement on SOAC awareness and what 'responsible access' means.

## 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)?

*No Response*