

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

Third sector (charitable, campaigning, social enterprise, voluntary, non-profit)

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).

The first Abernethy Centre opened in 1971 to provide outdoor learning and activities for children, young people, families and groups of individuals, all within the shared values of a Christian community. We warmly welcome everyone to our centres, no matter their beliefs and hope our hospitality demonstrates our love and care for all. Our faith fuels a belief that each and every person is valued and unique. We believe that time spent in the natural world can have a positive impact on our emotional and spiritual wellbeing, with retreat bringing time and perspective. Through challenge and adventure in the outdoors people gain confidence, grow character and experience transformation. We run three Centres in different locations across Scotland.

The views expressed are a representation of staff views from all Abernethy centres.

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).

Abernethy Trust

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.

Abernethy Trust supports the well documented value and benefits of residential Outdoor Education experiences. There are some elements of the Bill we have made some suggestions about. We support the overall principle of an entitlement to a residential experience as part of an overall learning journey from 3-18 years which includes regular opportunities to Learn Outdoors.

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.

It would be nice to think that a residential outdoor education experience would be available to all young people during their time in Education from 3-18 years of age. In reality this is not the case and is unlikely to be achieved without some form of 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.

Neutral (neither support nor oppose)

Please give reasons for your response.

Many independent schools already have significant outdoor learning programmes and in some cases full time outdoor staff. Choices have already been made on behalf of learners at these establishments with regard to programmes, activity options and affordability. A fee charging structure allows more flexibility to include outdoor learning opportunities that is not possible within the Local Authority structure.

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.

To ensure equity of opportunity and an aim to ensure consistent high quality of delivery we believe that this is most likely to happen through existing education authority structures. If obligation is shared across different organisations there is a risk that communication or planning would not be robust enough to fulfil obligations for the high number of young people involved and some may miss out.

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.)

Despite the value and high profile of Outdoor Learning in recent years some Local Authorities have demonstrated a lack of understanding and support for Outdoor Learning. For this reason and for consistency we believe funding needs to be created and administered centrally by Scottish Government. The Bill discusses various options for means testing some form of parent/carer contribution which could work but there are complications and risks associated with this. We believe that the cost to ensure that all young people have this experience represents good value. We also believe that the entitlement to a residential experience may also provide motivation to improve local area Outdoor Learning as part of the pathway towards the residential experience.

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.

Although costings have been done as part of the research for this Bill it is likely that costs will be higher than current estimates for a number of reasons including: rising cost of living, increased transport costs, increased energy costs, full cost of transporting groups.

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.

For this initiative to realise its full potential the delivery of the Outdoor Learning experience must meet the standards of High Quality Outdoor Education. There are a number of ways this can be demonstrated including existing Quality Frameworks such as LOTC Quality Badge, AHOEC Gold Standard, proposed changes to AALA Licensing (unlikely to be in place soon), the Brilliant Residentials framework. Following the Thematic inspections undertaken by HMIE in late 2021 there is some enthusiasm about the possibility and benefit of extending the inspection process undertaken by HMIE to include the residential experience. This would also enhance and encourage pathways between local outdoor learning and the residential 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.

A number of centres offering quality residential outdoor learning experiences already operate at or near capacity with the existing Primary 6&7 market. While we are fully supportive of the principle of the Bill we believe that including the P6&7 age range would not alienate those schools/LA's that historically provide the opportunity at this stage while still ensuring that young people who haven't had an experience in primary school will benefit during their secondary schooling.

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.

Learning Outdoors is an approach to learning that can and does benefit all learners. If implemented properly and with the right consideration given as would be expected in the education environment we don't believe there will be any negative impacts. In some circumstances there is a higher cost for supporting outdoor learning for people with a disability but there are excellent examples across the country where this is being achieved and delivered and provision put in place taking into account any additional costs.

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

There are different models of delivering a residential experience including local camping, offsite expeditions and residential outdoor centres. In terms of equity of provision the important factors are to ensure that a. the residential experience actually happens as part of a progressive pathway of Outdoor Learning experiences and b. there is some measure that it is a quality Outdoor Learning experience. There needs to be accountability and a means of tracking young people and when and what type of residential experience they have.

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?

There could be a view that the transport element of travelling to residential centres does not fit with the sustainability agenda such as reducing journeys and fuel use. We believe that the benefits and learning that young people will experience will outweigh the negatives and actually result in young people who are more aware of the world around them, the place of nature and the importance of making good sustainable choices. We believe there are opportunities to create an even bigger positive impact not only through the outdoor activity options but by improving the holistic learning experience including planting, growing, awareness of the environment, care and importance of the natural world and putting into practise Learning for Sustainability actions.

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 current considerations around the cost of the school day represent a significant threat to the residential outdoor learning experience. There is already evidence of schools replacing their residential trips with day trips to the Zoo and watching movies. These experiences in no way replicate the benefits of a quality outdoor learning experience and so this demonstrates the importance of funding and ensuring an entitlement to the residential Outdoor Education experience.