

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 Outdoor Council is an umbrella organisation that draws together the principal representative organisations operating in the field of outdoor education, training and recreation. We exist to promote the understanding, nature and purpose of work in the outdoors; encourage the provision of outdoor experiences of the highest quality, safety and enjoyment and lobby for the benefits of outdoor education and learning and working in the outdoors to policy makers. We have 15 member and observer organisations supporting this work including the Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres, The Outdoor education Advisers' Panel; British Activity Providers Association, Institute for Outdoor Learning, The Scouts, Young Explorers' Trust, Field Studies Council, Council for Learning Outside the Classroom, Learning through Landscapes, Duke of Edinburgh Award, Outward Bound Trust, Youth Hostel Association and the Association of Sail Training Organisations. The key focus of our work is supporting colleagues in England, however, we have membership organisations that cover much of the UK.

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).

The Outdoor 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.)

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

For many years the Outdoor Council (previously the English Outdoor Council) has been campaigning to ensure that all young people have access to at least one residential while attending primary and secondary school, as highlighted within our 2015 Outdoor Manifesto, below:

'Raise the profile of outdoor learning and adventurous activities in both school and non-school/youth settings

- Proposal: The Department for Education should recognise the educational value of outdoor learning and adventurous activities through a strategy that supports all primary and secondary schools and other non-school youth settings to incorporate and deliver a programme of frequent, continuous and progressive outdoor learning experiences within and for their curriculum/programme.

Create an expectation that all young people, including those who could not afford to do so without financial support, should have access to at least one residential experience at each key stage.

- Result: More young people are experiencing and benefitting from outdoor learning and adventurous activities as part of their primary and secondary education experiences.
Increased numbers of young people participating in National Citizens Service.'

This 'ask' has been part of our work stream for over 15 years and we would fully support the concept of 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.

Legislation will ensure that Local Authorities (LA) and schools are responsible for all young people having access to at least one residential during their secondary education and emphasise the importance place on this such experiences. However, the challenge will be in terms of financing such a responsibility, Local Authority budgets are already under pressure and would struggle to fully commit to such a requirement. If the onus was placed solely on LAs and their budgets then they may have to make difficult decisions between financing this and other outdoor learning support or even other services.

It may be better to look at a 'blended' approach' to funding with support coming from central government, local authorities, schools and parents/carers where they can afford to do so. This may be more complex but could also provide some flexibility, with the overall responsibility being at the LA or school level.

At the very least funding should support the most disadvantaged young people to ensure equal access alongside their peers.

Whatever is decided this proposal must be effectively and fairly funded to succeed.

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

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.

Please give reasons for your response.

In terms of equity the proposal should apply to all young people in Scotland

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.

We are not so clear on where the responsibility should ultimately fall, in this instance, as there are arguments both for and against each setting taking ultimate responsibility. At the LA level they can develop a more holistic/strategic approach, however, schools will have a better idea of their own particular circumstances and better reflect the communities they serve. Schools would also be best placed to monitor the engagement of young people in the programme.

Ensuring such opportunities are available will not necessarily mean all can or would want to access it. Financial and physical considerations are looked at later in this response. However, some may not want to attend in terms of personal or cultural considerations and this would need to be recognised and managed fairly.

Another aspect of the provision related to this question would be the ability of the current provision to meet the demands such a responsibility would place upon it. Has any work been undertaken on the capacity of the current provision to meet the demands of this proposal? If there were gaps in provision who would be responsible for this? The LAs/Schools? Some market research and engagement with the sector will be vital in terms of ensuring the success of this proposal.

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.)

As mentioned previously, a 'blended' approach may be more effective as the financial burden will be high and constant.

If the Bill is passed that there would be some responsibility on the Scottish Government supporting the scheme financially to underline its belief and commitment to the Bill. It would also ease some of the pressure on both LA and School budgets. However, if the value of this entitlement is recognised by all then to ensure its sustainability and longevity it would need 'buy in' from all parties. Some roll in terms of financial support must come from the LA as a community input and the school as an educational input. The greatest pressure will, of course, be on families, especially the most vulnerable families and offering high levels of support for such families will be essential.

With the last point in mind a 'means tested' approach would also seem fair. Working with the residential outdoor education sector both the Scottish Government and LAs could develop a highly reduced cost for

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

such residential experiences. This would require a survey of capacity and need, which in itself may require investment in both physical resources and staff to enable the Bill requirements to be met alongside high quality delivery of the experience.

If a low base fee for the experience could be delivered as a result of this partnership working and some external support or sponsorship then schools could look at how else they may be able to subsidise such activity. It would obviously be a requirement that pupils on free school meals should have a minimal amount to pay, some buy in would still be useful, if circumstances permit. Schools could then decide to pass costs on to parents/fund raise or use their own funds to further support the cost. This approach was one that the Inner London Education Authority used for many years prior to is being disbanded.

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.

Ensuring universal provision will increase costs. Early engagement with the outdoor learning sector in Scotland will be essential as they will be able to advice cost effectiveness, for example making use of the times of year when there is less demand, exploring the idea of a number of providers working together under a national contract (for example as was done by London Challenge)

If a blended approach is considered, then some costs could be more fairly bourn throughout the system but those from more vulnerable backgrounds would need protecting.

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.

Accessing high quality provision will be essential in ensuring the desired outcomes of the proposal are meet and that the programme is sustained as a result of achieving these outcomes. The starting point for this will always be the school and how well it effectively integrates such experiences into the life and curriculum of the school. Such experiences must not be seen in isolation to the delivery of the curriculum and the development of young people. It should be able to clearly demonstrate (to schools, parents and government) how their offer links to the Curriculum for Excellence and Learning for Sustainability, how it enhances subject knowledge and skills as well as personal development, teamwork and social skills.

Consideration of a CPD programme for school staff to run alongside this programme in order to maximise the outcomes would be extremely useful.

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?

The sector has a number of quality marks and accreditations available that have been operating for a number of years that could help in delivering high quality outcomes. Such as the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge and for safety the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority and Adventuremark.

Running alongside this will be the need to have high quality delivery in support of the proposal. This will mean an equal investment in ensuring that there are enough appropriately trained staff, in residential centres to support the schools and that such centres are supported by management and the provision of physical resources to back them up.

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?

Neutral (neither support nor oppose)

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

Essential to see this as a progressive 'entitlement', it would be valuable to link this to Curriculum for Excellence and integrate it into the learning journey for all young people from 3 – 18. It needs to be embedded in the curriculum and personal development programmes for young people. It must be seen in the context of a wide range of sustainable outdoor learning experiences. These will include regular use of the school grounds and immediate area around the school; day visits more in depth exploration away from the school site and residential allowing for more immersive experiences both at home and abroad. In turn these components should support and enhance the Curriculum for Excellence.

In terms of the residential experiences themselves progression in this context is also important. During the primary phase low cost, accessible residential options should be promoted/supported such as over-night stays in school, on school grounds, in the local area and at outdoor Education centres. At the other end of the spectrum linking it to Awards such as the John Muir award and DofE would be sensible as well as curriculum subjects, especially those involving fieldwork..

The Outdoor Council has always encouraged the value of progressive outdoor learning/education experiences as outlined in our document High Quality Outdoor Learning.

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.

Access for all would be an essential principle and would require close cooperation with the residential outdoor education provision. Some providers do specialise in order to service the needs of those with a range of disabilities, while others will need to ensure they can accommodate a wide range of other requirements in terms of sexual orientation, gender reassignment and religion or belief, for example.

Again, working closely with LAs, schools and the residential outdoor education providers will be essential.

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

A fair funding approach in terms of finance would be appropriate, some means testing and links to those on benefit/free school meals would need to be taken into account when designing the funding mechanism.

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?

It may be of value to undertake an environmental impact assessment of the programme. In introducing such a Bill how much of an increase in provision and activity would it generate? If it is significantly higher than now, then there may be additional pressure placed on some location 'hot spots' for outdoor education activities. If there is such pressure on these areas other areas that are not currently as intensively used may be impacted upon. Again, this would need to be considered in partnership with the Government, Local Authorities, Outdoor Education providers, land owners and other environmental bodies.

In relation to a sustainable economy, ensuring the longevity of residential outdoor education providers, especially where they are located in some of the remote areas of the country can have a significant impact on the local economy and employment.

More than anything else it can show young people the awe and wonder they can experience in the natural environment of Scotland, that belongs to all of them. It should open their eyes to their future engagement with it and if set within a programme of responsible use can impact not only on their own health and wellbeing but support the awareness of the huge value of the outdoors and activities that can take place within it. Education around this should be integral to any programme supported by the Bill – sustaining a young person's engagement in the countryside.

Green skills and STEM skills will be a vital part of Scotland's economy, both of which can be developed on residential where learners get used to working and studying in a more unpredictable environment than a laboratory, becoming familiar with equipment and data gathering in the outdoors, overcoming practical problems and designing and redesigning experiments in the real world. Residential for those with little experience of spending time in nature may for the first time be able to see their horizons expand into possible careers in conservation and habitat management.

Early nature connection, giving learners confidence to access what the natural world has to offer can set them up for a lifetime of enjoyment and health and wellbeing benefits. Even learning that spending short amounts of time in nature is a way to boots of maintain good mental wellbeing is a valuable life lesson.

Making the provision of residential for all learners is one way of ensuring a more just society by removing the barrier of financial disadvantage which can otherwise hold learners back.

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