

# 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).**

Ardroy OEC has been in operation since 1969. We were opened by Fife Council but since 2011 have operated as a third sector charity, still largely working with Fife Schools. This is the collective view of the staff and management team at Ardroy. But for a lot of hard work & support from many MSP's in 2011, we could have been another statistic rather than a successful provider of meaningful learning through outdoor adventurous activities.

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).

Ardroy Outdoor Education Centre (t/a AOEC Trust Ltd)

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.**

We have reservations about this entitlement only being open to 12-16 year olds. We partly understand the reasoning why, but this action (if it goes ahead) will exclude the opportunity for any children in the Primary sector to benefit from meaningful residential experiences. We strongly believe this entitlement should also be open to P6 & 7 children. This comprises a large part of the current attendees in OEC's in Scotland, at a very formative time in their lives. We have a huge amount of anecdotal and quantitative evidence of the benefits of residential in the primary sector.

See <http://www.ardroy-oec.co.uk/assets/pdf/impactreport17-18.pdf> and [https://www.blairvadach.org.uk/Content/UserGenerated/Image/Downloads/2021\\_blairvadach\\_impact\\_report\\_web.pdf](https://www.blairvadach.org.uk/Content/UserGenerated/Image/Downloads/2021_blairvadach_impact_report_web.pdf)

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.

We strongly agree with the need for legislation. For too long the provision or funding of residential outdoor education has been the 'low hanging fruit' when budgets are tight in Local Authorities. There is considerable evidence that children in disadvantaged areas miss out on these developmental experiences as parents are expected to pay for (or contribute to) their child's residential. Making a 5 day residential an entitlement will mandate local authorities to provide funding for potentially life changing opportunities for Scotland's young people, especially at a time when social skills, resilience, self confidence have all taken a knock as a result of the pandemic.

We would have reservations about this fund being administered by Local Authorities - perhaps it would be better allocated directly to schools, similar to PEF funding. Unless the funding is strictly ring fenced, it does have a habit of disappearing into Council black holes. Headteachers know their school, pupils and parents. They are best placed to make judgements about how to maximise the benefit of funding such as proposed in the bill.

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.

Fully supportive

**Please give reasons for your response.**

We agree with this approach - generally speaking independent schools are well funded. The greatest need is in Local Authority and Grant Aided schools

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.**

This question is somewhat incorrectly worded. Education Authorities are not "responsible for arranging the provision" - Councils may oversee and approve excursions, but it is generally down to individual schools to book, plan and organise a residential, including choosing a provider. That said, if it became a statutory requirement for all children (including upper primary!?) to attend a residential, then we can see the need for Local Authorities to take a more proactive approach. There is no consistency in the way residential are

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organised, or overseen by the various Local Authorities in Scotland. This would need to change if residential were mandated by law.

## Funding

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

By parents/carers, with costs being covered by public funding where children meet criteria for financial support (e.g entitlement to free school meals)

**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.)**

It is our opinion that expecting SG or LEA's to fully fund residential is too aspirational, and unlikely to be feasible. Equally, some form of subsidy which is assessed only by Free School Meals or the like is too far in the other direction. Perhaps if a fixed amount (eg £200) was available for all children, regardless of their means, but this could then be augmented to potentially the full cost where a child was entitled to free school meals. Any funding where Local Authorities are involved MUST be ring fenced. We are of the opinion that Headteachers are best placed on where to spend this money, rather than it disappear into Local Authority budgets.

## 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.**

Unless unscrupulous outdoor education providers increased their fees as a result of this funding, then this should not change radically. There is already considerable disparity in costs for attending a residential - private (profit making) outdoor providers currently charge more than the third sector. Some form of price cap or other mechanism may need to be applied to reduce the risk of profiteering

## 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.**

We fully support ensuring a quality framework, and HMIE would appear to be best placed to assess this, once suitable criteria was agreed and conversations had between HMIE and the industry. There is considerable disparity in terms of quality of delivery within Scottish Outdoor Education Providers, in part due to underfunding over many years and a 'race to the bottom'. Currently OEC's only have to conform to safety standards, (eg via AALA) but there is no statutory quality requirement, and is something we would strongly encourage.

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.**

We feel that entirely excluding the primary sector is a mistake. Most Scottish school children attend a residential in their upper primary years, usually P6&7, at a formative time in their lives. We do not oppose 12-16 year olds having this opportunity as well, but believe in addition it should be extended out to P6 & 7's

## 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.

The provision for children with Additional Support Needs (mainly around physical disabilities) is very patchy in Outdoor Education Centres in Scotland, especially in old buildings which have adapted into an OEC. This would need some consideration and funding if a residential was an entitlement for all children, regardless of their disability.

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

We feel that a fixed funding contribution for all children in Scotland is the way forward (regardless of their means), which could then rise to 100% funding depending on specific circumstances - eg in areas of high deprivation.

## 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?

All of these! There is a huge body of evidence (much of which is cited in the consultation document) that a life changing, transformative experience such as a five day residential improves children's well being, enhances their environmental understanding (eg through schemes such as the John Muir Award) and more just, active healthy lifestyle. We regularly get feedback from teachers and parents about the transformative power of an Ardroy experience.

## 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)?

We have a slight concern about capacity. The overall number of OEC beds in Scotland has stayed largely the same since 1982, which implies there is approximately the correct, sustainable amount of provision to meet the current level of demand. Centres not operating at a profitable capacity would soon go out of business. A significant increase in the numbers attending five day residential may mean there is not enough provision - and in addition some Scottish schools go to England for a residential. We would assume this funding would only apply to residential occurring in Scotland.