

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".)

Professional with experience 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).

Rob Bushby

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 opposed

Please explain the reasons for your response.

The passionate support of Liz Smith MSP for residential outdoor centres and their work – over many years and particularly during the recent existential crisis resulting from lockdowns – should be highly

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commended.

In considering the proposed Bill Consultation I have reluctantly shifted from being Partially Supportive to Partially Opposed.

The principle of residential outdoor experiences for each 12-16 year-old pupil being embedded in Scottish education has great merit. Crucially, this must be set out as a fundamental element of a progressive learning journey, not as a bolt-on.

In a nutshell, the proposed Bill fails to adequately position itself in relation to current learning contexts; it positions 'residential outdoor education' far too much as a separate rather than an integrated entity. Its stated aim – 'to provide a statutory obligation to ensure that young people aged 12-16...are provided with the opportunity to experience residential outdoor education...for at least one week' – isn't adequately presented in its current form to merit such a major obligation on Local Authorities. The proposed Bill needs much more clarity and coherence in terms of its terminology, its definition and its contribution to education policy.

To note:

- Learning for Sustainability has been a key policy driver for c10 years, articulating 'an entitlement for all learners in Scotland' which expressly includes 'Outdoor Learning'. The interpretation on page 16 of the consultation of 'In Scottish schools, stewardship of the natural environment is fostered through Learning for Sustainability' shows a misunderstanding of its significance. The Heading/statement/section on P14 "Why an entitlement to Residential Outdoor Education is important" significantly underplays the leverage offered to this Bill through its connection to Learning for Sustainability, despite referencing the work of Higgins & Christie:

"What persists as unique within Scottish education is our commitment to outdoor learning as a core and central part of teaching and learning, and more recently as a facet of Learning for Sustainability. This commitment to learning beyond the classroom – within local communities, urban and wild spaces... many other aspects of the curriculum can be woven into short, day-long or residential experiences. Such essential experiences afford huge potential for interdisciplinary learning; enriching and cultivating skills for life and work that impact far beyond formal educational settings".

The role of the residential experience should be far more coherently and prominently positioned in relation to this context if it is to be a statutory obligation.

- Similarly, The General Teaching Council for Scotland proactively supports teachers "to reflect on, engage with and enhance Learning for Sustainability [including Outdoor Learning] in both your own practice and the wider life of your setting and learning community". It should be noted that:

"In line with the General Teaching Council for Scotland Professional Standards, every practitioner, school and education leader should demonstrate Learning for Sustainability [incorporating Outdoor Learning] in their practice." (Vision 2030+ Report).

Much more should be made of this expectation of 'every practitioner, school and education leader' in creating a case. A refreshed interpretation should outline how residential outdoor learning experiences can support Professional Standards and Values. Teachers seem to be sidelined in this proposal, with inferences that (residential) 'outdoor education' should only be the realm of specialists.

- The March 2022 report by Prof Ken Muir, 'Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education' (and the Scottish Government response) offers significant positioning contexts for this proposed Bill but appears to be absent from the consultation document. Its key reform principles include 'climate change as one of the most significant issues facing their futures and, as such, must be recognised as a key driver influencing the future of our education system', reference to 'the role and value of outdoor learning', and support for each individual's learner journey. Recommendations reference 'the increasing engagement of youth work, Community Learning & Development, industry and third sector bodies in offering wider curricular and learning opportunities' and the importance of recognising 'the achievement of broader activity undertaken within and outwith educational settings'. Why not create a compelling case for how residential experiences are part of 'the Future Vision for Scottish Education' alongside the historical references provided?

It's not really possible to look at this proposed Bill – and the statutory obligations associated with it - in isolation from asking:

"What does Outdoor Learning look like in Scotland over the next 10 years?"

"What is the role of residential outdoor experiences? And how does this contribute to embedding this approach?"

The aims of the Bill currently do not adequately match the education landscape. If re-set, however, the Bill could and should have the benefit of re-energising outdoor learning approaches in all education settings and giving more heft to Learning for Sustainability (including Climate education and nature connectedness).

This proposed Bill should extract far more leverage from policy contexts provided by Learning for

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

Sustainability (and the 2019 Action Plan currently under revision by Scottish Government) and by the Muir Report on the future of Scottish 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.

It would be a mark of a successful consultation process if legislation is not required, having robustly positioned the aims of this Bill within existing policy. What is proposed needs to more fully demonstrate its educational value to enable this.

Any proposal is unlikely to get consistent application across all Local Authorities without some form of direct imperative. There may be 3 steps to this process:

- 1) better articulate aims and benefits to education authorities,
- 2) gauge 'buy-in' levels across all Local Authorities,
- 3) consider the most suitable level of directive - from voluntary take-up to 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.

Unsure

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 opposed

Please explain the reasons for your response.

There needs to be a stronger and more contemporary case put for the aims, benefits and curricular deliverables to make a sense of 'obligation' worthwhile – in terms of specific outcomes, value for money, positive destinations, wider achievement etc. Ideally, the proposal should be seen as a net contributor of value – both in its framing and the outcomes it seeks to deliver.

This proposal should clearly contribute to relevant priorities of education authorities (those that the obligation 'would fall on' e.g. sustainability objectives, school improvement plans, attainment targets etc.

Interpretations of residential-related facilities and activities do not currently match up. More clarity is needed in relation to these two statements:

For the purpose of securing this provision, under section 6 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980:

"...an education authority may...Establish, maintain and manage...Camps, outdoor centres, playing fields and swimming pools... organise...expeditions and other activities". (P19)

and

"The aim of the proposed Bill is to provide a statutory obligation to ensure that young people aged 12 - 16 in local authority-run and grant aided schools in Scotland are provided with the opportunity to experience residential outdoor education. The proposed Bill would seek to make it a statutory obligation for funding to be provided and ensure the opportunity for at least one week (four nights and five days) of residential outdoor education for young people at some stage in their school career."

The proposal can be interpreted in the 1980 definition to incorporate a broad spectrum of residential experiences including school grounds-based, camps, expeditions (as per 'Learning Away' evaluation, good practice and case studies). Is the proposed Bill fixed on the residential centre provision aspect? Or is a

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hybrid model part of a progressive learner journey? And how does this impact on the statutory obligation on education authorities?

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 it stands, the proposal does not merit being fully funded by Scottish Government or Local Authorities. If the learning and achievement derived from residential outdoor experiences can be positioned as integral to a progressive education for 12-16 year-olds, that strengthens the case for statutory funding from education authorities. This case has not yet been adequately made.

The element of 'criteria for financial support' noted in this question should be more fully explored if full funding is not part of the way in which this proposal progresses.

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?

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.

Unclear about what this question refers to?
Costs of what, to who?

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 opposed

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.

Use what is already available, as an integrated aspect of 'education'.

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?

- Interpret the findings of the February 2022 Education Scotland/HM Inspectors Report 'Successful approaches to learning outdoors'.
- Identify relevant policy drivers/contexts and clearly outline how this proposal contributes to them e.g. Getting It Right For Every Child/GIRFEC; A refreshed narrative on Scotland's curriculum, 4 Contexts, Muir Report etc.
- Demonstrate value, benefits, outcomes, relevance etc in the context of school inspection frameworks.

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

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.

No Response

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

Consideration must be given to equity of any obligation in relation to what is offered for all pupils. Besides socio-economic status, the 'preparedness' for such an experience must be carefully considered. Some pupils will need a degree of 'lead-in' and management of expectations. Pupils with Additional & Complex Support Needs must not be excluded.

The Edinburgh & Lothians charity Friends of the Award provides extensive targeted and 1:1 support to enable marginalised and excluded young people to access various nature-based awards including Duke of Edinburgh's Award and John Muir Award. For over 20 years this supportive approach has enabled thousands of youngsters to complete expeditions (and achieve wider outcomes) than would otherwise have been the case. This expertise can be employed to allay anxieties and improve residential experiences.

Similarly, the expertise of The Outward Bound Trust in relation to Wellbeing in residential settings is well captured in the recent document Feeling Good and Functioning Well

<https://www.outwardbound.org.uk/feeling-good-and-functioning-well>

Recommendations from Learning Away/Brilliant Residentials should be cross-referenced.

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?

What is described is, in effect, Scottish Government's 'Learning for Sustainability' education policy. It should be noted that the direct relevance here is to current generations rather than 'future generations'. This proposal should reinforce LfS policy of putting learning in, through, about and for nature, placing this at the heart of education.

It feels indicative of the proposal's lack of contemporary context-setting that this whole section headed 'Sustainability' makes zero reference to Scottish Government's key education policy on this theme of the last 10 years, 'Learning for Sustainability' – which includes Outdoor Learning, and by implication, residential provision of outdoor education.

Similarly, 'Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education' Professor Ken Muir offers an important point of leverage. He notes in 'Case for Change' that amongst the most common concerns raised is:

"The need for the development of values, attitudes, knowledge and skills to be significantly strengthened in the context of Learning for Sustainability, the bringing together Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Global Citizenship Education (GC) and Outdoor Learning (OL). This was felt to be particularly important given the increased profile and relevance of climate change to the current and future generations of children and young people."

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)?

This has been a deeply frustrating exercise as I'm well aware of all the positive elements behind this proposal.

Residential outdoor learning experiences of all kinds have been at the heart of my career for 35 years and I'm unable to support it.

Feedback provided at the recent NNOL conference from experienced, informed academics and practitioners is highly relevant and worth noting.

The way the proposal is set out feels regressive rather than progressive, more harking back than looking forward. It makes scant use of the multiple opportunities to position this proposal in an robust, coherent and contemporary way. It should feel like an integrated aspect of the future of Scottish education, yet it feels like a bit of a Trojan horse to save outdoor centres. That is a laudable aim, but the way to achieve it is to make what they offer indispensable in terms of a) their educational and developmental benefits and b) their delivery of policy priorities.

A major re-set of this proposal can achieve this, but what is set out here does not seem viable as a statutory obligation.