

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Bil arfaethedig – Bil Addysg Awyr Agored (Cymru) | Proposed Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill

Ymateb gan Tom Johnstone, Nature Recovery and Nutrient Management strategic lead, | Evidence from Tom Johnstone, Nature Recovery and Nutrient Management strategic lead,

Are you (your organisation) currently a provider of outdoor education?: No

Your opinion

How important is outdoor education to children and young people's overall education and development?

Very important

What are the main benefits to children and young people from having a residential outdoor education experience?

Wellbeing - outdoor recreation experiences boost physical and mental wellbeing

Nature connectedness - upon experiencing nature and engaging with it, a greater sense of nature connectedness is usually attained. It is vital that Wales has a generation of well nature-connected children growing up to take their place in the workforce and decision making positions

Low carbon future - children who participate in outdoor recreation, especially running and cycling, are more likely to adopt active travel habits and thus contribute to a low carbon future

Should children and young people have a guaranteed opportunity to participate in a residential outdoor education experience, at some stage during their school years, if they wish to?

Yes

Should an opportunity to participate in a residential outdoor education experience, at some stage during their school years, be free of charge on one occasion to pupils?

Yes

What are the main barriers which you believe currently exist to children and young people accessing residential outdoor education experiences?

Financial constraints;

Equality Considerations: Could the proposed Bill have any positive impacts on some children and young people in particular? If so, who and why?

This bill would give ALL young people in Wales the opportunity to take part in outdoor recreational activities, thus removing many of the financial and cultural barriers that exclude children from ethnic minorities and low income families now

Equality Considerations: Could the proposed Bill have any negative impacts on some children and young people in particular. If so, who and why? What could this Bill do to mitigate any negative impacts?

No, this bill could not cause any negative impacts on any children as long as it is delivered in full as currently proposed

What age do you believe is most suitable for children and young people to be offered an opportunity to undertake a residential outdoor education experience?

Older (please state below)

Children of any age can, and should engage in outdoor education, however for a residential more value is gained when they are happy being away from parents for a week and so secondary school age children are likely to gain more from the experience. This does NOT however mean that provision for under 11's is not important - it is VITAL, but should be delivered as part of the school day curriculum

Is four nights/five days the best length for a residential outdoor experience?

Yes

Please explain your answer and highlight any possible implications from having a standard approach of four night/five day experiences (whether positive or negative).

It gives children long enough away from home to get used to being away and settle in to the residential. Typically day 2/3 is the point where they are tired and home-sick, so staying beyond this allows them to gain much greater levels of self confidence and self reliance when they are supported through this transition to days 4 & 5

Do you agree there is a need for legislation to ensure all children and young people are given an opportunity to access a residential outdoor education experience, at some stage during their school years?

Strongly agree

Is there anything else you would like to say about this proposal?

It is a fantastic proposal that could change the futures of every child in Wales and support an integral part of our rural economies