

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

[Bil arfaethedig – Bil Addysg Awyr Agored \(Cymru\)](#) | [Proposed Outdoor Education \(Wales\) Bill](#)

Ymateb gan Challenge Wales, | Evidence from Challenge Wales,

Are you (your organisation) currently a provider of outdoor education?: Yes

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?

We have evidenced improved physical and mental health, improved confidence and resilience and improved teamwork, communication and leadership qualities on a residential. Young people can achieve accreditation and awards for their CV regardless of their abilities. Independent evaluation of our activities showed that for every £1 invested in a one of our project residentials it generated £7.43 of fiscal, economic and social value. (Full case study available)

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; Parental anxiety / uncertainty;

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

Our residential activities take people to sea on a Tall Ship so very different to land-based residentials. Our activities put people on a level playing field as it takes people out of their comfort zone. We have had feedback from young people advising how inclusive we are and as the residential is away from home and school and in a new place with new instructors, it can be an opportunity to have positive role models they may not have that can relate to them.

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?

We have found some young people are anxious and not wanting to take part, due to pressures of a parent or a head teacher thinking they aren't capable, or it isn't suitable for them. Correct communication is key, we provide pre-activity visits for teachers and those involved with health and safety, we do zoom meetings with teachers and staff, we can do a school visit and talk to the young people.

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)

13 - 16 - we have found sometimes males who are 13 years are less mature than females so we wouldn't accommodate younger than 13 for our residentials and to have the best impact.

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).

We usually find on a 5 day residential that the first day, the young people are not always happy. It's their first time away from home and familiar surroundings, the second day they start to come out of their shell and adjust, the third day they are now becoming more confident and the group are working well together as are the individuals in that group. On the 4th day the young people are becoming self-sufficient, able to start conversations with others, able to understand what needs to be done at the beginning of the day, understand what is expected of them and having that mutual respect for others, on day 5 they feel accomplished in their tasks, they recognise their achievements (Which for some will be small but it will be an achievement), they will have that sense of pride. Awards and accreditation can be achieved e.g. John Muir Environmental Award, Agored Cymru Accreditation etc

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?

Agree

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

It is well evidenced that outdoor learning has a huge impact on young people and a residential activity can be even more powerful. Through a Theory of Change which seeks to explain why and how an intervention has impact, outdoor learning in a residential setting can achieve long term outcomes such as improved educational attainment, better engaged communities, improved employability, improved wellbeing, increased motivation. This is due to them becoming independent, having more personal discipline, expanding their horizons, growing in self-belief and self-esteem and living with people from other backgrounds and social groups so learning to be accepting of different people. In the area we work in, sail training, but can be applied to other residential experiences the reasons why these changes and outcomes happen is due to the intense, accelerated experience and not being able to walk away from it, an

experience that creates memories creates a more lasting impact, sail training is a risky and real experience where people do rely on you and you do have responsibilities which provides a greater sense of quality, it is also an isolated experience so people are more present in the moment.

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