

OE-025 - Wales Council for Outdoor Learning

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

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

Ymateb gan Wales Council for Outdoor Learning | Evidence from Wales Council for Outdoor Learning

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

Proposed Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill

Consultation: Response form

Name: Stephanie Price, on behalf of Wales Council for Outdoor Learning

Chair: Phil Stubbington

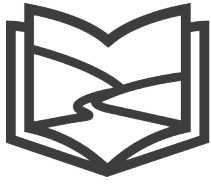
E-mail: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Are you submitting this response in a professional or personal capacity?:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Professional capacity (including on behalf of an organisation)	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal capacity
<p>Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?</p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>Age:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> I am under 13 years old <input type="checkbox"/> I am aged 13 to 17 <input type="checkbox"/> I am aged 18 or over and wish my contribution to be anonymised <input type="checkbox"/> I am aged 18 or over and happy for my name to be published with my contribution
<p>Are you (your organisation) currently a provider of outdoor education?</p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>In what capacity are you responding?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Child / Young person <input type="checkbox"/> Parent / Carer <input type="checkbox"/> Other

If professional, or a provider of outdoor education, your role and the name of organisation for which you are responding:

Member - Wales Council for Outdoor Learning



Cyngor Cymru ar Gyfer
Dysgu yn yr Awyr Agored

Wales Council for
Outdoor Learning

[Wales Council for Outdoor Learning](http://www.walescouncilforoutdoorlearning.org/) acts as a voice for the outdoor learning and environment sector bringing together organisations that support and deliver high quality teaching and learning in the outdoor environment.

The partnership shares good practice and influences policy development, highlighting the many benefits of outdoor learning and its contribution to the development of ethical and informed citizens of future generations.

Wales Council for Outdoor Learning helps to raise the profile of Out of Classroom Learning aiming to foster greater understanding and appreciation of its value and its vital contribution to education for sustainable development and global citizenship.

More information can be found at: www.walescouncilforoutdoorlearning.org/

Wales Council for Outdoor Learning welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Wales Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill consultation and is happy to work with the Senedd to **ensure the role of outdoor learning and the natural environment in improving physical activity, mental health and well-being, and attainment is highlighted throughout the teaching and learning system.**

The Council recognises outdoor learning as covering a wide range of activity from use of our school grounds, local parks, woodlands and beaches, field studies, environmental education, recognised accredited approaches to teaching like forest school and coastal school, residential stays, and adventure education. The partners provide expertise in areas ranging from Initial Teacher Education, professional learning and curriculum support, use of school grounds for play and learning, and for well-being and physical health improvements, supporting awards, land ownership, residential and overnight expeditions, national guidance and health and safety.

The Network can provide advice and guidance on quality assured outdoor teaching and learning and provide training and support for teachers and education professionals.

Please do contact us for further clarification or information.

Consultation questions

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

- Very important
- Quite important
- Don't know
- Not very important
- Not at all important

2. What are the main benefits to children and young people from having a residential outdoor education experience? Please list your top three benefits:

The benefits of a residential outdoor education experience are clearly documented in the High Quality Outdoor Learning for Wales document <https://www.walescouncilforoutdoorlearning.org/hqoldoc> which Wales Council for Outdoor Learning (WCfOL) co-produced with OEAP.

Members of WCfOL feel the following are important benefits but acknowledge there are so many, it is difficult to bring it down to three:

- **Well-being and confidence – the chance to travel away from home in new situations.**
- **Co-operation and communication skills – communicating and co-operating in new surroundings.**
- **Resilience – often the first time away from home and a chance to build resilience in a supporting new environment as new activities are experienced.**
- **Soft skills – residential offer unique opportunities to develop soft skills including problem solving.**
- **A vital component towards developing a strong [connection to nature](#) which in turns help to establish pro-environmental behaviours to help mitigate the climate and nature emergencies and develop ethical and informed citizens of the future – a direct link to the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2016.**

3. 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
- No
- Don't know

4. 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
- No
- Don't know

5. What are the main barriers which you believe currently exist to children and young people accessing residential outdoor education experiences? (please tick all that apply)

- Financial constraints
- Health reasons
- Disabilities
- Additional Learning Needs
- Parental anxiety/uncertainty
- Child anxiety/uncertainty
- Other (Please state)
 - **Lack of opportunity. There are only 2 LA funded centres resulting in a postcode lottery depending on where other centres are and the capacity of them e.g., FSC and Urdd centres**
 - **Linked to parental anxiety – cultural and religious reasons – hesitation and post covid anxieties.**
 - **Many settings can't afford the 1:1 support for those with behavioural difficulties but it's those young people who will benefit the most from this type of opportunity.**
 - **Implementing the new curriculum – teachers are trying to cram so much in and may see a week away from classroom learning as too much time to use because they don't recognise the education and learning benefits. The time is not actually barrier.**
 - **Philosophical barriers – WCfOL members recognise OL as a pedagogical approach but others don't recognise this or its benefits to both learners and teaching staff.**

- **If a residential experience became a requirement, the LA would have to prioritise spend but if not, money will understandably be allocated elsewhere.**
 - **Transport costs linked to locality and available providers. Even local journeys can be up to £500 for a coach, a significant financial barrier.**
 - **It should be recognised that “residential” can mean overnight under canvas. It should not be presumed as just outdoor centres in one block of time. There are other opportunities for young people to have a shared experience in an outdoor environment which could be a split experience at different points of the learning journey – spreading the entitlement over primary and secondary schooling. It needs to be a quality flexible offer with appropriate guidance for Directors of Education.**
 - **Lack of opportunity linked to lack of awareness of what is available.**
 - **Some have missed the opportunity due to cancelled trips during covid. Contractor issues noted – is there now a consistent offer for schools to lock in which will meet all requirements. We recommend use of the HQOL document which details expectations and links clearly to Evolve system requirements.**
 - **A confused area for schools to navigate including PPQ, LOtC Quality Badge, AOHEC Gold, Visit Wales Award etc. We need a consistent approved provider’s approach in Wales. What kind of consistent system needs to be in place? Estyn’s role needs to be considered.**
 - **Does this include overseas residential or residential in the rest of the UK. Capped funding per person should cover the cost of the visit to ensure equity for all – not a top up fund.**
 - **Young people’s viewpoint must be considered (aware a separate consultation is being prepared). If it becomes an entitlement, young people will have to be involved in the choice of residential/trip.**
- None

6. Equalities considerations:

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

Please consider the answers to Q5 – the reverse of the barriers identified are the positive impacts a Bill could provide. It would help remove the social stigma of not being able to attend due to financial constraints.

There needs to be a consideration for Home Educated students – is there a way of ensuring they get the same opportunity?

There also needs to be a consideration of the wider outdoor learning picture. A residential visit should be part of the wider picture of use of our school grounds, local parks, woodlands and beaches, field studies, environmental education, recognised accredited approaches to teaching like forest school and coastal school, residential stays, and adventure education. Any Bill must make it clear that a residential stay is only one way to realise the wider benefits of outdoor learning.

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?

Young people should have the option not to go and that decision needs to be supported to ensure they are not alienated by others. Where a parental decision means the young person cannot attend, this also needs to be supported.

To help mitigate this, education is required for parents and guardians as to benefits. We can learn from good practice in other places e.g., Peak District project with local Muslim community

7. 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?

- Year 6 (age 10-11)
- Younger (please state)
- Older (please state)
- Not at any age

At any age but years 5/6 and year 8/9 fit well now. This avoids the Yr 7 settling period and avoids exam years but can help inform GCSE choice. Acknowledging that year groups may not remain the same under the new curriculum (linked to cohort numbers, progression steps and 3 to 16 schools – a phased not stage approach), in reality it could be offered at any age once children are independent and confident to be away from home. It's important to consider when the benefits of the visit can be realised for maximum impact regardless of age.

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

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

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

A flexible, progressive approach is required depending on age - younger children tend to get tired/home sick towards the end of a longer stay and don't get the most out of the last few days. As above there are other opportunities for young people to have a shared experience in an outdoor environment which could be a split experience at different points of the learning journey – spreading the entitlement over primary and secondary schooling. It needs to be a quality flexible offer with appropriate guidance for Directors of Education.

9. 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
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

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

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