

POE105 The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

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

Ymateb gan The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, | Evidence from The Duke of Edinburgh's Award,

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?

- Developing self-confidence and resilience in an unfamiliar environment.
- Developing a deeper understanding of the environment and reinforcing/establishing a connection with nature.
- Sharing time away from home with peers helps develop social skills and broadens horizons.

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?

Health reasons;Disabilities;Financial constraints;Additional Learning Needs;Paternal anxiety / uncertainty;Child anxiety / uncertainty;None;- Limited availability of residential provision within a reasonable distance of schools. - Cultural/ Religious barriers may need to be overcome. - Support staff costs will need to be considered for young people with additional needs. - Young people who are transitioning or from the LGBTQ community may need additional support to take part. - Availability of specialist facilities for young people with additional needs. - A lack of understanding of the benefits of outdoor education on the part of senior leaders who are already trying to juggle multiple requirements in the implementation of the new Curriculum. (Need to change mind set not just provide funding) -Transport costs have always been an issue but are becoming increasingly expensive, the funding must include support

for transport as well as the actual residential. Those with a residential centre which is more accessible will be able to spend more on the residential, than they do on transport, resulting in an unequal offer;

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

- Children and young people will have access to an opportunity which provides many benefits as previously described.
- Young people who are experiencing poverty will have the support to take part equally with those who are better off – increasing opportunities for social inclusion and promoting social mobility.

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?

- There are likely to be some children and young people that feel unable to take up the opportunity. This might be because they have family circumstances that make it difficult for them to be away from home (e.g.: young carers) or because, despite the offer of a free residential they do not have the same quality/range of personal clothing as their peers (e.g.: nightwear, underwear, casual clothes, footwear). This might make them feel ashamed and unwilling to spend time with others in shared accommodation.

Mitigation: Schools need to spend time working with young people in the build up to a residential supporting them with their confidence and identifying what additional barriers they may have and sourcing additional funding if necessary to help them with the basics needed to attend. The Bill could include flexibility for any funding to be spent as required to support young people's attendance.

- Children who choose not to attend or have parents who will not give consent, may feel isolated by having to stay in school and stigmatised by not being included.

Mitigation: If a child/young person is not able to attend then the funding available should be used to provide a meaningful non residential alternative for them back in the school environment or utilising local providers and venues to provide them with some of the same learning outcomes and experiences. This will be challenging as staff will be needed for the residential as well as back at school to provide the alternative event. Children who are struggling with confidence may be happier to take part in a campout or sleepover on the school site and this should be considered a legitimate use of the funding available and an important step in building confidence (and trust of parents).

- The offer to young people may not be equal in all areas. The distance required to travel to a centre may add transport costs which cannot be borne by the school and should not be passed onto the young people. The 'best' most exciting centres may be further away and could become booked up quickly by those schools that have the additional resources to meet ancillary costs such as transport and any additional staffing required.

Mitigation: Whatever the amount is that is allocated for the young person it must cover all the costs associated with attending including transport, staffing and provision of any specialist support required.

- The Bill is only for young people in maintained education this will exclude a growing number of children and young people who are home educated In order to be fully inclusive the legislation should consider how best to ensure that young people receive their entitlement. This is a much wider issue as grant funding is not currently provided for home educated children in the UK.

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?

Younger (please state below)

It would be good for children and young people to have two separate opportunities to take part in a residential one in primary (around year 6) one in Secondary (year 9). These are key transition points with the latter being a key moment as young people are choosing their options and moving towards formal examinations.

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

No

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 week is a long time away from home for anyone and might prove problematic to provide staff for. - Residential can be very intense for all involved – excitement often spills over into late nights for staff and children. - Separation from family and familiar routine can lead to home sickness. -A residential that is too long could be detrimental to the positive outcomes sought. - Providing flexibility for schools, working across the primary and secondary age range, to meet the needs of their young people when planning residential opportunities will be important. For some young people, and their parents, building progressive confidence might be essential. - A one night residential may be sufficient in the first instance to build confidence and trust followed by two or three nights away. In some cases a planned series of single nights away may be what is needed to provide the outcomes desired. A residential later in a young person's education could also help build confidence and skills to move to more independent living. Some young people who attend university, leave home never having stayed away without family or close friends before.

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?

If legislation brings with it appropriately thought out and sufficient funding, then that's a really positive move but the mechanics of how this would work to ensure an equal offer for all young people will require considerable thinking through.

The DofE has, for over 65 years, included a residential section in its Gold Award, recognising the value of sharing an experience with others who, in the case of the DofE residential, are not your peers. The gold is for 16+ young people and even at this age young people have to build up the confidence to take part, if successful the legislation could help lay the foundations for all young people to develop the confidence take part in wider opportunities away from home.

The DofE also encourages outdoor opportunities and overnight stays through the expedition section. Camping can be a relatively flexible option for overnights and has the advantage of being able to take place on the school field if necessary , reducing both the environmental and financial cost of travelling long distances. Might camping also be considered as an option for some young people?

Appreciate that the bill has a long way to go and that implementation will be carefully planned if successful, but ensuring that it can be rolled out in a way which maximises the benefit for young people and minimises the additional workload for teachers and headteachers will be important.

The 'flood' of statutory funding to the residential sector could lead to the creation of companies that spring up to supply the new demand, by providing off the peg solutions for schools who are keen to meet their statutory obligation. Whilst investment into the outdoor residential sector can bring positive outcomes for future generations of young people, attention will need to be given to ensuring that the opportunities meet appropriate standards of delivery and safeguarding.

I would be particularly keen to promote the inclusion of young people in this consultation process.

12:00:00 AM