

OE-033- Flintshire County Council

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

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

Ymateb gan Flintshire County Council | Evidence from Flintshire County Council

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

Proposed Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill

Consultation: Response form

Name: Flintshire Local Authority

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 type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" 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:

Senior Manager for School Improvement , Flintshire County Council

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:

Positive impact on pupils' health and well-being

Positive impact on confidence and motivation, linked to improved educational outcomes

Such activities often begin what can be life-long interests in adventure and sporting activities, leading to improved health outcomes

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 (Logistical arrangements for schools ; including dependency on staff goodwill)
- 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?

There is a wealth of information and research that demonstrates the positive impact of outdoor activities, including residential opportunities for children and young people. These include health and wellbeing benefits, including the opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills and build positive relationships with their peers. Activities develop skills such as team building, independence and personal responsibility. For young people, these opportunities are often some of the most important memories that they take from their school experience.

For pupils whose family circumstances mean such opportunities are limited outside of school, this can be the closest experience they have to a holiday, or to see other parts of the country. Whilst schools do their best to support with limited resources, it is often financial considerations that mean some children do not access current opportunities, either because of the cost of the visit and/or the additional considerations of clothing and equipment for the visit.

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?

Some children and young people can be anxious about time spent away from home and / or with their peers. An expectation to take part could put additional pressure on them. If most children are able to access the opportunity if fully funded, then a pupil's choice to not be involved might lead to organisational challenges as well. For example, if 29/30 pupils in a class wish to participate and one pupil does not.

Some children and young people might be comfortable with a couple of nights away from home, particularly younger pupils, but 4/5 nights might seem more daunting. If the time away is stipulated, that might discourage some pupils from accessing any opportunity.

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

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).

The duration of a residential outdoor experience will depend on many factors including age of pupils, availability of staff, availability and cost of residential centres, distance travelled, time of year, size of school. A standard approach would be difficult for schools to manage, given the organisational complexities. Primary schools tend to do 2.5 days often swapping classes over mid week – it is more appropriate for younger children to be away from home for shorter periods of time whilst they are building confidence and logistically makes it easier for schools to manage the cover/supervision.

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?

The proposed Bill indicates that it would be the statutory responsibility of the local authority to make this provision. The intention is that the statutory obligation to ensure residential outdoor education is provided would fall on those who are responsible for arranging the provision, i.e. local authorities for maintained schools.

Local authorities do not make those arrangements currently and do not have the capacity currently to do so. School visits are approved by Governing Bodies and organised at individual school level.

Consideration would need to be given to scenarios where for particular reasons, pupils are not able to attend an organised residential, e.g. due to illness. Would there be an expectation / entitlement for alternative opportunity to be provided? Logistically this would be impossible for schools to manage on an individual basis.

Residential visits are currently staffed by staff through goodwill. It is not a requirement for staff to participate. Consideration would need to be given to employment terms and conditions if this provision becomes statutory. Schools, particularly small schools might find it difficult to fully meet any statutory requirement.

Any funding allocated for this provision would also need to take consideration of transport costs and the varying costs of providers of outdoor education. Funding would also need to be considered to support providers in being able to accommodate significantly larger numbers of pupils potentially across the academic year. There are certain times of year that schools prefer for particular residential activities, and there will be competition for the "best" slots, potentially putting pressure on local provision.

Potential capacity issues for large schools to manage this as well logistically.

If the opportunity can be available at any time during a pupil's school experience, how would that be managed / tracked so that pupils don't miss out or access more than one provision (as funding would be for one opportunity) e.g if they have moved school or if some provision is primary and some is secondary depending on which school they attend. A secondary school for example might have pupils from over 20 primary schools, some of which might have offered the provision and some might not.