

Proposed Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Bill

Questions

About you

(Note: Information entered in this “About You” section may be published with your response (unless it is “not for publication”), except where indicated in bold.)

1. Are you responding as:

- an individual – in which case go to Q2A
- on behalf of an organisation? – in which case go to Q2B

2A. Which of the following best describes you? (If you are a professional or academic, but not in a subject relevant to the consultation, please choose “Member of the public”.)

- Politician (MSP/MP/peer/MEP/Councillor)
- Professional with experience in a relevant subject
- Academic with expertise in a relevant subject
- Member of the public
- Pupil/student
- Parent/carer
- Teacher/school employee
- Residential outdoor third-sector provider
- Residential outdoor private-sector provider
- Residential outdoor local authority provider
- Other council employee

Optional: You may wish to explain briefly what expertise or experience you have that is relevant to the subject-matter of the consultation:

2B. Please select the category which best describes your organisation:

- Public sector body (Scottish/UK Government or agency, local authority, NDPB)
- Commercial organisation (company, business)
- Representative organisation (trade union, professional association)
- Third sector (charitable, campaigning, social enterprise, voluntary, non-profit)
- Other (e.g. clubs, local groups, groups of individuals, etc.)

Optional: You may wish to explain briefly what the organisation does, its experience and expertise in the subject-matter of the consultation, and how the view expressed in the response was arrived at (e.g. whether it is the view of particular office-holders or has been approved by the membership as a whole).

The John Muir Trust is a community focused conservation charity dedicated to the experience, protection and repair of wild places across the UK. The Trust launched the John Muir Award in 1997. It is a national environmental award to inspire people to raise awareness of the value of wild places and encourage them to take responsibility by caring for them.

Across the UK 458,000 people have achieved their John Muir Award, with 25% of people experiencing disadvantage. These have been achieved in partnerships with thousands of John Muir Award Provider organisations including schools and outdoor residential centres.

3. Please choose one of the following:

- I am content for this response to be published and attributed to me or my organisation
- I would like this response to be published anonymously
- I would like this response to be considered, but not published (“not for publication”)

If you have requested anonymity or asked for your response not to be published, please give a reason. (Note: your reason will not be published.)

Reason for anonymity:

4. Please provide your name or the name of your organisation. **(Note: The name will not be published if you have asked for the response to be anonymous or “not for publication”.)**

Name: John Muir Trust

Please provide a way in which we can contact you if there are queries regarding your response. Email is preferred but you can also provide a postal address or phone number. **(Note: We will not publish these contact details.)**

Contact details:

Toby Clark, John Muir Trust, toby.clark@johnmuirtrust.org

I confirm that I have read and understood the Privacy Notice to this consultation which explains how my personal data will be used.

If you are under 12 and making a submission, we will need to contact you to ask your parent or guardian to confirm to us that they are happy for you to send us your views.

Please ONLY tick this box if you are UNDER 12 years of age.

Your views on the proposal

Note: All answers to the questions in this section may be published (unless your response is “not for publication”).

Aim and approach

1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposed Bill? **(Please note that this question is compulsory.)**

- Fully supportive
- Partially supportive
- Neutral (neither support nor oppose)
- Partially opposed
- Fully opposed
- Do not wish to express a view

Please explain the reasons for your response.

The John Muir Trust broadly supports this Bill to ensure that young people have the opportunity to experience residential outdoor education because we believe outdoor residential centres:

- can help inspire people about the benefits of wild places and showcase how wild places tackle the climate crisis and reverse biodiversity loss (including Learning for Sustainability, Sustainable Development Goals)
- offer experiences to participants and staff that contribute to learning and teaching in Scotland that help create a fairer and more equitable world (including Scottish Attainment Challenge, Developing the Young Workforce)
- often provide significant employment opportunities and career pathways for people living and working in rural communities.

We recognise risks to successfully implementing the provisions of the Bill, primarily risks of funding and capacity, therefore we believe there is a need to carefully consider:

- Capacity of Education Authorities to implement duty
- Number of centres available to cope with increased demand created
- Availability of staff to deliver residential Outdoor Education
- Confidence from Education Authorities and teachers that the Bill will provide quality and impactful education experiences for young people.

2. Do you think legislation is required, or are there are other ways in which the Bill's aims could be achieved more effectively? Please explain the reasons for your response.

We believe that a number of channels could be explored to ensure an entitlement for every young person to have an opportunity to experience residential outdoor education. This entitlement could, for example, be part of:

- **Schools Inspections**
- **Learning for Sustainability Action Plan**
- **Initial Teacher Education**
- **COSLA reporting**

However, all these channels will require each education authority to share data on their residential experiences provision. We believe that accountability and reporting is as important as legislation.

3. The proposed Bill will cover residential outdoor education provision for local authority and grant-aided schools only. Which of the following best expresses your view that independent schools or any other education establishments should not be covered by this obligation.

- Fully supportive
- Partially supportive
- Neutral (neither support nor oppose)
- Partially opposed
- Fully opposed
- Unsure

Please give reasons for your response.

We believe that independent schools follow and can contribute towards best practice, and that residential outdoor education provision will be part this.

4. The intention is that the obligation to ensure that residential outdoor education is provided would fall on those who are responsible for arranging the provision, e.g. education authorities and managers of grant-aided schools. Which of the following best expresses your view of this proposal?

- Fully supportive
- Partially supportive
- Neutral (neither support nor oppose)
- Partially opposed
- Fully opposed
- Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response.

We believe that the obligation to ensure that residential outdoor education is provided should be the responsibility of those able to measure, monitor and support the implementation of change as required, such as education authorities. This of course will be subject to adequate funding being provided to enable them to do so.

Funding

5. Which of the following best expresses your view of how residential outdoor education experiences should be funded?

- In full by the Scottish Government
- In full by local authorities (for local authority-run schools)
- By parents/carers, with costs being covered by public funding where children meet criteria for financial support (e.g entitlement to free school meals)
- By parents/carers meeting food and accommodation costs, and all other costs being met from public funds
- In some other way

The Trust believes that social circumstances shouldn't exclude people from experiencing wild places – the Trust is working hard to keep the John Muir Award free to participants.

We recognise that currently local authorities provide residential outdoor education experiences through different funding models - different parents and carers pay different amounts for residential experiences across Scotland.

We also recognise that the providers of residential outdoor education also operate through a variety of models (such as council operations, private businesses and charities).

A Bill would need to ensure equal opportunity across Scotland. Alongside this would be the need for a quality framework that sets a high standard across the country.

We ask if there is a role for resourcing between national and local government, and business sector investing in young peoples' skills development? Can other, sustainable funding models be explored too?

Given we recognise that we have a lack of resources in outdoor education centres this Bill helpfully highlights a need to review how we use Outdoor Learning as an approach to learning across the whole education and learning sector and including residential is one key component to this.

6. Any new law can have a financial impact which could affect individuals, businesses, the public sector, or others. What financial impact do you think this proposal could have if it became law?

- a significant increase in costs
- some increase in costs
- no overall change in costs

- some reduction in costs
- a significant reduction in costs
- skip to next question

Please explain the reasons for your response, including who you would expect to feel the financial impact of the proposal, and if there are any ways you think the proposal could be delivered more cost-effectively.

Standard/ Quality of provision

7. Which of the following best expresses your view on the proposal for a quality framework to ensure the quality of the education provision of outdoor centres?

- Fully supportive
- Partially supportive
- Neutral (neither support nor oppose)
- Partially opposed
- Fully opposed
- Unsure

Please give reasons for your response, including whether this should be done by HMIE using a quality framework as part of their inspection of schools and the extent to which, if any, it should be statutory.

Residential outdoor education needs to continually demonstrate good practice operating within a quality framework to ensure that activity delivers for Scotland. We would support a Schools Inspection HMIE role in this, as well as clear connections with GTCS standards required to teach in Scotland and Initial Teacher Education (teacher training) standards.

In addition, we believe the Bill should include continued research on the long-term impact of residential outdoor education (e.g. Learning Away: Brilliant Residentials) to best understand impacts on:

- participants – health, wellbeing, attainment, positive destinations, pathways, nature connectedness**
 - education practitioners – confidence, wellbeing, professional development**
 - communities – such as employment, promotion of rights and responsibilities / outdoor access**
 - our environment – environmental impact analysis, climate nature-based action, carbon footprint assessments.**

8. Which of the following best expresses your view that the age range of 12 – 16 is appropriate for participation in the residential outdoor education experience?

- Fully supportive
- Partially supportive
- Neutral (neither support nor oppose)
- Partially opposed
- Fully opposed
- Unsure

Please give reasons for your response, including whether you think other age ranges would be more appropriate.

We believe that residential outdoor education providers should be able to evidence significant impact across a range of learning levels. We also note that many existing outdoor centres are currently equipped to target the primary/secondary transition audiences and that the impact of any changes to their audiences needs to be considered such as infrastructure, existing contacts and repeat clients, equipment, and existing staff skills.

Equality

9. Any new law can have an impact on different individuals in society, for example as a result of their age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. What impact could this proposal have on particular people if it became law? [If you do not have a view skip to next question]

Please explain the reasons for your answer and if there are any ways you think the proposal could avoid negative impacts on particular people.

The Trust believes that there will be valid reasons why not all young people choose to experience residential outdoor education. However, all young people should have an entitlement to make that choice.

10. How might equity of provision for all be ensured, regardless of socio- economic status? Please give reasons for your response.

Provision should also be made for alternatives such as peripatetic non-residential outdoor education provision that meets a quality framework. The Trust is aware of this practice already working across a number of education authorities.

We also ask that the Bill considers support for broader Outdoor Learning to provide an increased equity of provision. This would include a commitment to invest in training our teachers.

Sustainability

11. Any new law can impact on work to protect and enhance the environment, achieve a sustainable economy, and create a strong, healthy, and just society for future generations.

Do you think the proposal could impact in any of these areas? [If you do not have a view then skip to next question]

Please explain the reasons for your answer, including what you think the impact of the proposal could be, and if there are any ways you think the proposal could avoid negative impacts?

We believe that residential outdoor education can help inspire people about the benefits of wild places and showcase how wild places tackle the climate crisis and reverse biodiversity loss (Learning for Sustainability). Research demonstrates that the more people (particularly aged 12 and above) feel nature connectedness, the more they exhibit pro-environmental behaviours essential for living on a sustainable planet.

Outdoor education providers can also lead on sustainability by promoting sustainable travel options such as public transport provision as a means of access to outdoor centres. Many already have, or strive towards, high sustainability principles and practices, for example, on heating, drying facilities, re-cycling. We suggest outdoor education providers strive towards low carbon sustainable operations which could inform part of the learning experience and each centre should have a carbon action and credibility plan (please see response to Question 7 about evaluating impact).

General

12. Do you have any other additional comments or suggestions on the proposed Bill (which have not already been covered in any of your responses to earlier questions)?

Research is needed to ensure understanding of the capacity of beds needed to meet any new law, and that these are available and accessible (physically and geographically) to all young people across Scotland.