

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

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

Ymateb gan Rachel Manning, Research Fellow, | Evidence from Rachel Manning, Research Fellow,

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

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## 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?

There are many benefits but we need to think about what works for whom, and under what circumstances. If this bill goes through, Outdoor Education cannot be seen as a one size fits all approach for supporting young people wellbeing

- social development
- creativity
- health and wellbeing

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;Disabilities;Child anxiety / uncertainty;Teacher anxiety - planning of the trips etc.;

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

Yes. A big barrier to outdoor learning is financial constraints. Providing free outdoor learning will benefit those who are normally unable to afford outdoor learning.

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?

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We need to think about what is outdoor learning for, its purpose and what sort of young people does it benefit. The outdoors is traditionally viewed as very 'white' and framed around challenge e.g. high ropes courses and kayaking. If this approach continues it continues to devalue how other cultures value experiences in the outdoors.

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?

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Older (please state below)

11+ Sometimes for younger children a residential can be overwhelming. Younger children should start off with day trips and then build up to a residential in the older years.

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

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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).

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I don't think there should be a standard approach to how many nights a residential should be. If we are going to be making outdoor learning accessible to everyone it needs to be context and situation specific. Drawing from my research, for some young people four nights/five days is too long and subsequently reduces the benefits that outdoor learning can bring. For some young people even just a day spent outdoors can be beneficial if it something they have not yet been able to fully experience.

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?

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Strongly agree

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

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I think it is a great proposal and important for getting young people outdoors. For it to be beneficial to young people it needs to ensure that it suits the diverse needs of young people and schools so that it does not become a burden on the schools. It also needs to focus on the varying different ways young people relate to the outdoors and the way they want to spend time in it. Assuming that all young people enjoy things like high ropes and kayak can perpetuate a negative view of the outdoors. It cannot be a one size fits all approach! Happy to discuss my research 'exploring young people's wellbeing in outdoor an environmental education.'