

OE-024 - NEU Cymru

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

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

Ymateb gan NEU Cymru | Evidence from NEU Cymru

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

Proposed Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill

Consultation: Response form

Name: Stuart Williams

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

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

Policy Officer - National Education Union Cymru

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:

Development of social skills

Positive impacts on health and wellbeing

Attainment of new skills and opportunities which may not be available to all children otherwise

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)
- 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?

NEU Cymru believes the proposed Bill could provide positive opportunities for those children and young people from more deprived backgrounds where the household income is low and where normally they wouldn't be able to attend.

Children and young people who suffer from low self-esteem can particularly benefit from outdoor learning¹.

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?

Whilst it's good to give children and young people the opportunity to participate in a residential outdoor education experience, it may not be suitable for all. Those children and young people who suffer with mental health issues (anxiety, etc.), disabilities, or other health reasons may not want to take the opportunity, but all appropriate adjustments and support would need to be put in place to make any trips as accessible as possible. Alternative activities would need to be arranged to ensure those who don't go are enabled to undertake enrichment opportunities whilst the others are away.

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) - Years 7 & 8
- 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).

It is possible that many children and young people (Year 6) haven't experienced being away from home for that long a period and could find it difficult being away from their parents/carers for a long period of time.

¹ <https://ltd.org.uk/news/5-key-benefits-of-outdoor-learning/#:~:text=Research%20has%20even%20suggested%20that,and%20positive%20attitude%20to%20learning.>

We would suggest that this varies, depending on the children involved, and be at the discretion of the school.

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?

Residential outdoor education experience is important, but education professionals are often asked to work underpaid overtime in complex, unfamiliar environments. They are certainly worthwhile but can be very stressful and ask a lot of staff. Therefore, we must ensure that any staff who are planning or attending such trips are given the appropriate time back.

As mentioned in points 52 and 53 of the Explanatory Memorandum: Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill, there will be a huge cost implication on the Welsh Government to provide all children and young people with an opportunity to access a residential outdoor education experience. The costs could range between £9.9 million and £13.6 million per year, not including transport to and from the residential location, which would need to be added to the cost. At a time when we know school budgets are squeezed, it's very difficult to see where these costs will come from without an increase in funding from the Westminster Government.

As mentioned in Equalities considerations above, alternative activities would need to be arranged to cater for those who don't want to attend the residential outdoor education experience. These activities would need to be carefully planned to ensure that similar learning experiences can be provided. If the residential outdoor education experience is funded, then the costs for these activities also needs to be funded and not come out of existing school budgets.

A cost/benefit analysis of these proposals would be very beneficial.