

Sam Rowlands MS
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(by e-mail)

21 July 2023

Dear Sam

Thank you for your letter of 13 July, enclosing a copy of the draft Residential Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill on which you are seeking further views ahead of it being introduced before the Welsh Parliament later in the year.

As you know, NAHT Cymru sent in March our detailed response to the consultation on the draft legislative proposals on behalf of our school leader members in Wales. As we said then, school leaders are hugely supportive of the principle of outdoor education and the benefits it can bring to young people. The issue is however whether outdoor education is the key education priority area at present, with so many other pressing demands on schools' budgets and school leaders' time.

We believe that there is an opportunity cost to consider of providing a fully-funded week of outdoor education to every child in Wales, when funding is so desperately needed in the school system to provide classroom equipment and to ensure that schools can provide sufficient, qualified staff. Local Authorities would be required to find the funding to support this from within the limited funding pot available to them, which means not providing other vital services and the delivery of the core education entitlement. This is irrespective of whatever duty might be placed on Ministers to "take all reasonable steps" to ensure the offer is made.

You will also be aware that school leaders in Wales are currently in industrial action over the overwhelming burden of workload currently on them. As we said in our response, classes of young people on an outdoor education experience will need to be accompanied by fully qualified staff members, and in greater number since the staff to pupil ratio will need to be higher. There are also cost and workload implications for the additional cover staff required to provide education and care to children who, for whatever reason, are unwilling or unable to take part in the outdoor education on offer. Because of this, we believe that such a proposal at a critical time during these negotiations could derail progress made to resolve the dispute.

While NAHT Cymru's response may have been just one of the 170 you received, please bear in mind that we represent the views of over 2,000 school leaders in Wales, therefore we feel our response should carry more weight than those from individual respondents.



I hope this is helpful to you and I am of course happy to discuss any of the issues raised in this letter or in our earlier consultation response.

Yours sincerely,

Laura Doel
National Secretary Wales