

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i'r [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Bil Addysg Awyr Agored Breswyl \(Cymru\)](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) on the [Residential Outdoor Education \(Wales\) Bill](#)

ROE 14

Ymateb gan: PLG Travel Ltd

Response from: PLG Travel Ltd

Introduction

PGL has been delivering residential outdoor education experiences to young people for over 65 years and provides tailored activity programs for more than 300,000 students each year both in the UK and overseas.

We are guided by our company purpose which is **“To enrich young people’s lives.”**

And further supported by our company vision: –

“We will create fun, but challenging, experiences for young people that help them develop the life skills they need to thrive and grow.”

PGL supports the introduction of the Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill proposed by Sam Rowlands, MS. The aims set out in the initial explanatory memorandum and subsequent debate in the plenary session of Senedd Cymru on 26th October 2022 are in alignment with the aims of PGL set out above.

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:

We know that outdoor education residentials have far reaching benefits, developing independence, building communication skills, resilience & teamwork to name a few. Alongside the more obvious physical and mental health benefits.

After each residential trip we request direct feedback which gives us tremendous insight into the requirements of customers. At the same time, we conduct our own independent research and hold regular teacher forums where schools and teachers tell us about the barriers to running school trips and what they need to see delivered. This has led us to develop a **REACH** framework, an outline of which I have attached with this submission. As you can see the key benefits differ between age ranges and indeed the individual requirements of each child, but it has long been established through research by the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (CLOtC), School Travel Forum (STF), and The "Learning Away" strategy produced by the Paul Hamlyn foundation that residential trips have hugely positive outcomes for young people as well establishing memories that often last a lifetime.

Indeed, it was recognised that the positive relationship between teacher and pupil developed during a week-long residential can be greater than that established over a whole school term in the classroom.

The Curriculum for Wales 2022 sets out a vision for learners to become independent, confident, creative, problem-solving, critical thinking individuals who challenge themselves and are resilient to be able to live a full and active life.

It aims to support young people to be: –

- Healthy confident individuals
- Enterprising creative contributors
- Ambitious and capable learners
- Ethical informed citizens

We believe that there is clear evidence to support outdoor residentials becoming a part of the curriculum rather than just an enrichment activity.

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

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?

Having looked at our own customers and correlated our travelling groups against the % of pupils receiving the Pupil Development Grant within each school we found that over 90% of the young people who travel with us are from establishments with PDG levels of 40% or less, it became quite clear that financial constraints were a key barrier to travel. At the same time, we have seen a change duration with groups moving from 5-day residential to 3 days. In answer to this PGL have launched a “**Breakthrough Fund**” which allows schools who have a 40% or higher PDG participation to access a sliding scale of additional discounts to support access for ALL. Clearly this is helpful but can only cover a small part of the issue in isolation and is unlikely to cater for the

“working poor” category highlighted through the review, as such we would fully support the wider reaching Bill proposal.

With regards ALN & SEND then the issue really arises around the ability to house young people with more severe disabilities overnight, facilities simply do not exist in enough numbers currently across the UK to fully cater for this provision. In the event that funding was made available through the Bill and therefore guaranteed for this provision, this would enable businesses to plan with more certainty and be able to adapt or build new facilities to accommodate these guests. Alternatively, it may be that the provision for this sector of young people could be catered for by providing five “day” trips rather than a week-long residential requiring overnight stays. Activity centres rather than the more natural terrain may be better targeted for this group. The opportunity to provide supported activities is more likely to be immediately possible and ensure that accessibility is available for all.

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?

We need to be mindful of the likely impact on young people with disabilities given the current shortage of facilities which I have outlined above. However, I do believe that the bill presents the opportunity for this to be rectified working alongside providers and supporting any capital expenditure plans.

Another positive consequence of ensuring a funded / guaranteed 5-day trip is that the occupancy of the activity centres and the season length would both be likely to increase. This in turn allows providers to operate more efficiently and reduce costs, which could then help in supporting the overall costs of the Bill.

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

We see no reason why children as young as 7 or 8 cannot benefit from an outdoor residential trip, indeed we currently provide residential to young people of this age. The REACH framework (attached) already has differing levels within our activity provision to allow a tailored package to be delivered to each set of students. We would

collaborate closely with the schools to ensure that the learning outcomes identified were delivered within the program.

It may well be that the younger age group would have a provision that was split as three 2d / 1n stays rather than one 5d / 4n stay to allow for the fact that they may not want to be away from home for a week at that age. Both children and parents are more anxious. The activities would also be tailored to match age / ability.

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 answer will of course vary from child to child and may be different for different age groups as I have already highlighted through the feedback. It is certainly true that a week-long residential allows a fuller program to be delivered and the time away from home is long enough to create a sense of independence which often a single overnight simply will not.

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?

Within the explanatory memorandum and the plenary sessions that have taken place I note that there are calls to ensure that the correct governance and standards of provision would be in place. It is worth noting that a number of industry bodies do already exist such as AHOEC, BAPA, etc. assisted by the OEAP and there is an existing

Quality Badge awarded by the CLOtC which can be used to benchmark the provision supplied by operators and can be monitored accordingly.

It is likely that should the bill be passed; the directors of education and local authorities will need guidance from specialist outdoor education advisors on how they may most effectively implement the bill. These advisors are already in place in many cases, either employed specifically as such (the OEAP) and/or through teacher education partnerships with Welsh universities and regional consortia.

Directors of education may also want to consult with professional bodies such as ourselves that represent residential outdoor education centres. All AHOEC members who are the providers of these residential, could provide case studies of how outdoor education residential are managed effectively to further share best practice.

There are clear benefits to young people from taking part in outdoor education and we welcome the proposal to extend those benefits to all children of school age in Wales during their school career.

Summary

The Residential Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill:

- will ensure equity across Wales for the opportunity for ALL children to be able to access residential outdoor education provision
- will support schools to enhance the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum
- is likely to increase physical health and help reduce mental health issues
- will help value the outdoor education industry and contribute to its sustainability

Create memories that last a lifetime.

STRUCTURE

Introducing REACH™

A framework that ensures all of our programmes lead to breakthroughs that matter to teachers, parents and kids when learning outside the classroom

Relationships

Developing teamworking, stronger friendships, respect for each other and communication skills

Experiences

Enabling kids to try new things, visit new places, challenge themselves, soak up different cultures and thrive in their environment

Ability

Improving problem solving, practical skills, building subject knowledge and inspiring a passion for learning

Character

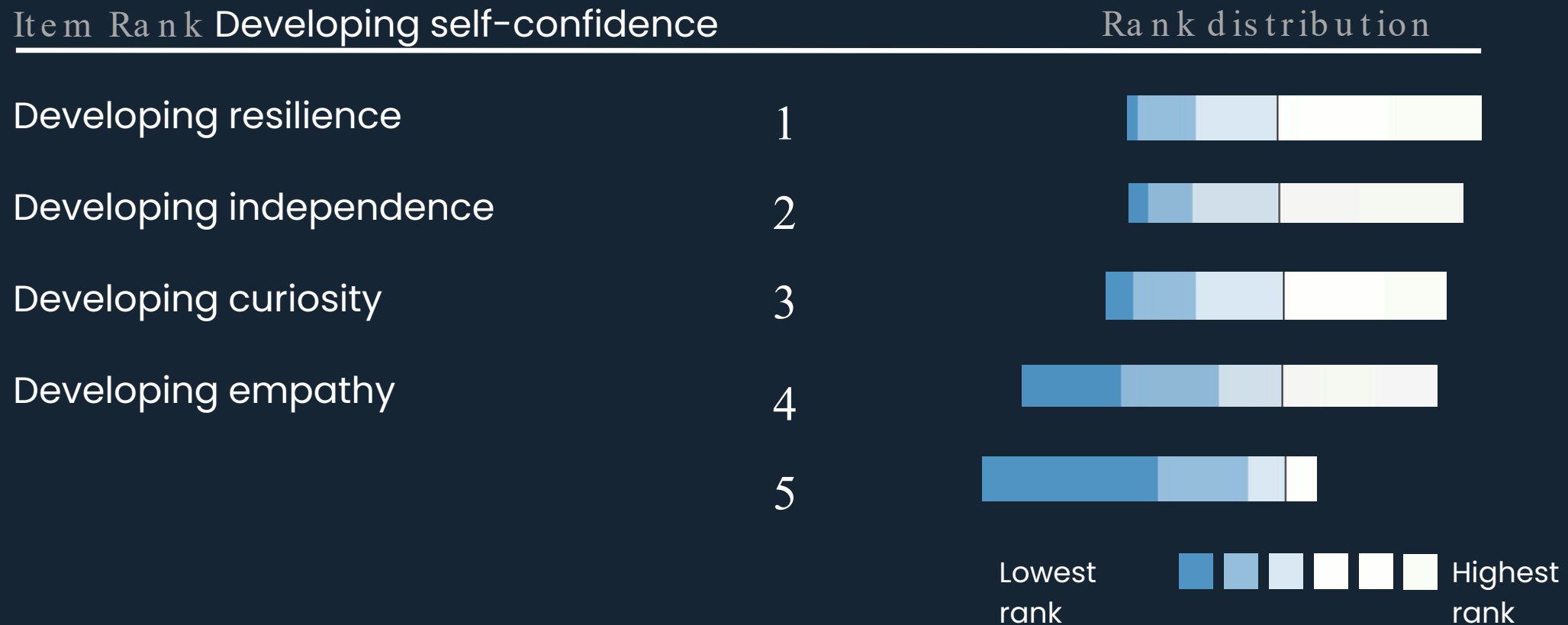
Strengthening traits like self confidence, resilience, determination, independence, curiosity and leadership

Health + Wellbeing

Supporting mental wellbeing, reducing stress, giving kids time away from technology and improving their physical health

Self-confidence, resilience and independence are the seen as most important character traits to develop when learning outside the classroom

CHARACTER



The health benefits of learning outdoors are centered on mental wellbeing and reducing stress & anxiety, rather than physical factors

HEALTH

