

# Statistical Paper: Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill

## Executive Summary

1. In the [Explanatory Memorandum](#) I tabled on 17 August 2022, I committed to providing Members of the Senedd with a statistical paper in advance of the debate for the Senedd agreement to introduce the Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill. This would set out the most relevant data available to September 2022 in Wales.
2. Working with the Outdoor Education Advisory Panel (OEAP) Cymru, I have collected data which shows:

**60%** of schools surveyed cited financial reasons as the main barrier to participation in Outdoor Education residential visits.

In over a third of schools, of those children offered the opportunity to participate in an Outdoor Education residential visit, fewer than **75%** of the children take part.

In addition, **23%** of schools do not offer a subsidy for those families who are financially constrained.

3. Further information about the survey and its results are set out in the following sections of this paper.

## Why conduct a survey?

4. There are no official statistics about the numbers of Outdoor Education residential visits and how many of our children and young people in Wales are gaining the clear range of benefits they provide.
5. OEAP Cymru is the professional association for Outdoor Education advisers who oversee Outdoor Educational visits. It also represents local authorities in Wales by working closely with Welsh Government and relevant stakeholders.
6. Most Welsh local authorities use an online system (EVOLVE) for the management of educational visits. As I noted in the [Explanatory Memorandum](#), data is available from this system, but OEAP Cymru members advise whilst helpful, this does not

present the full picture or capture at an individual level those who take part, or not, in these activities. As such, it is likely there is a clear shortfall in the number of pupils across Wales able to attend an Outdoor Education residential visit.

7. Data from OEAP Cymru suggests there were 1,072 Outdoor Education residential visits across Wales in 2022. If each visit represented one school Outdoor Education residential per year and the data demonstrated an even spread of visits across local authorities in Wales, then this would mean that around two thirds of schools in Wales were organising Outdoor Education residential. However, this is not clear cut, and the data is more complex and nuanced as the statistics also include visits by non-school establishments, such as youth services, which make up approximately 5-10% of the total number. Some establishments will record multiple residential visits and may also include other visits such as sporting visits and Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions.
8. I wanted to know more. Working with OEAP Cymru, I launched a survey to gather data and ask those working in schools – working with our children and young people – for information about what opportunities were being offered and how many had, or were able, to take them.
9. Given the timescales, the OEAP Cymru issued the survey to the Outdoor Education Adviser at each of the local authorities in Wales which use its system to manage educational visits. They in turn, circulated the online survey to maintained schools for completion and submission. OEAP Cymru also sent the online survey to the Outdoor Education Adviser at an additional local authority, which does not use the OEAP Cymru system. This means we shared the survey with all but two local authorities in Wales (Pembrokeshire County Council and Torfaen County Borough Council) who do not currently have an OEAP adviser in post.
10. The online survey sought the following information, as well as details about the school that was responding:
  - Does your school offer residential outdoor education opportunities?
  - Which year group(s) ordinarily take part?
  - Is every child in the year group(s) offered the opportunity to participate?

- On average, what percentage of the year group(s) take advantage of the offer(s)?
- Of those who do not participate, please list all the reasons.
- Does your school offer subsidies for residential outdoor educational visits to families who are financially constrained?

## Survey results

### Who responded?

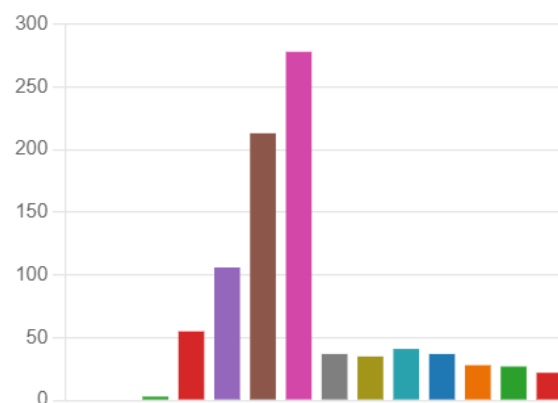
11. I received 351 responses, from 324 maintained schools (260 primary and 64 secondary), across 18 local authorities.

### Do all schools offer Outdoor Education residential opportunities?

12. Whilst most schools offer an Outdoor Education residential opportunity, there were still 5% of schools surveyed who do not offer this at all.

13. The survey showed that most of these opportunities are offered in primary schools, with a large proportion taking place in Years 5 and 6, as an important part of the transition to secondary school.

● Reception	0
● Year 1	0
● Year 2	3
● Year 3	55
● Year 4	106
● Year 5	213
● Year 6	278
● Year 7	37
● Year 8	35
● Year 9	41
● Year 10	37
● Year 11	28
● Year 12	27
● Year 13	22



## Who participates?

14. The results showed that well over a third of those given the opportunity to participate show participation rates lower than 75%.

● 0-25%	21
● 25-50%	34
● 50-75%	63
● 75-100%	211



## Reasons for non-participation

15. By far the greatest barrier for children not being able to take part is for financial reasons. In the 'other' column, approximately 43% of the comments cited reasons such as anxiety, parental worries or family attachment issues as reasons why children are not participating.

● Financial constraints	207
● Health reasons	44
● Social constraints	97
● Mobility issues	11
● Additional Learning Needs (ALN)	50
● Other	149

