**Sam Rowlands, MS**

**Member of the Senedd for North Wales**

**Proposed Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill**

A consultation on proposals for legislation to ensure that all young people receiving maintained education are provided with the opportunity to experience residential outdoor education, for at least one week, at some stage during their school years. The proposal also seeks to ensure that providers of maintained education are allocated funding to enable them to provide this.

Date of issue: 31 January 2023

Action required: Responses by Friday 17 March 2023

Mae’r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

**Overview:** This consultation seeks views on the policy objectives and proposals for the Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill.

**How to respond:** Responses to this consultation should be emailed or posted using the details below, or by using the online response form, by 17 March 2023 at the latest.

**How your information will be used:** Information you provide may be used by Members of the Senedd (including the Member of the Senedd in charge of the Bill), support staff and Senedd Commission staff, during the development of a Member Bill, promotion of the intended effect of the Bill, and subsequent scrutiny of the Bill.

For full details about how your information will be used please see the Senedd’s [Member Bill privacy policy](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fsenedd.wales%2Fhelp%2Fprivacy%2Fmember-bill-privacy-notice%2F&data=05%7C01%7CGareth.Rogers%40senedd.wales%7C3d7ad9650ad948d04d9508da6020121d%7C38dc5129340c45148a044e8ef2771564%7C0%7C0%7C637927988099359679%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=JzdpzInrtzYeFaeYoYavrN69nIgYyqxG6rgESO3kpsI%3D&reserved=0).

Further information about the Member Bill process can be found on the [Guide to the Member Bill process](https://senedd.wales/NAfW%20Documents/Assembly%20Business%20section%20documents/Member-Bill-Guidance/Guide-Member-Bill-process_eng.pdf).

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**Proposed Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill**

**Introduction**

This draft legislation has been brought forward in accordance with the rules set out in the Standing Orders of the Senedd, that enable non-Government Senedd Members to propose new laws for Wales.

In July 2022, I was successful in a ballot held under the Senedd’s Standing Order 26.87 for the right to bring forward a proposal for a new law. The proposal that I had put forward was for an Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill[[1]](#footnote-2). Under the Standing Orders I then developed my proposal further and published an Explanatory Memorandum setting out the policy objectives and the main aims of the proposal in further detail.[[2]](#footnote-3)

On 26 October 2022 a ‘leave to proceed’ debate was held, and the Senedd agreed that I could introduce a Bill within 13 months of the date of that debate to give effect to the proposal selected in the earlier ballot, and as set out in the published Explanatory Memorandum.[[3]](#footnote-4)

The proposed legislation seeks to establish a statutory duty on local authorities to ensure that all young people receiving maintained education are provided with the opportunity to experience residential Outdoor Education, for at least one week, at some stage during their school years. The Bill will also establish a statutory obligation for providers of maintained education to be allocated funding to enable them to do this.

This consultation now seeks views on the proposed Bill and on the policy objectives it seeks to achieve. Respondents do not have to answer all of the questions provided, but it would assist in our continued development of the Bill if as much detail as possible could be provided in any response.

**Sam Rowlands, MS**

**Member of the Senedd for North Wales**

**Proposed Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill: Consultation**

**Background and Purpose of the draft Bill**

1. The proposed legislation seeks to establish a statutory duty on local authorities to ensure that all young people receiving maintained education are provided with the opportunity to experience residential outdoor education, for at least one week, at some stage during their school years. The Bill will also establish a statutory obligation for providers of maintained education to be allocated funding to enable them to do this.
2. The intention is that the statutory obligation to ensure residential outdoor education is provided would fall on those who are responsible for arranging the provision, i.e. local authorities for maintained schools.
3. Further information on the proposal is contained in the outline Explanatory Memorandum, published in August 2022.[[4]](#footnote-5)

**What is being proposed?**

1. The aim is to make residential outdoor education an entitlement. Moving it from an *enrichment* to the curriculum, which is often viewed as a ‘nice to have’, to an *entitlement* of the education offer. One that recognises the importance of outdoor education in a residential setting to the progress and development of children and young people.
2. The Bill intends to establish residential outdoor education as an integral part of a pupil’s education and personal development in a way that enhances the Curriculum for Wales.[[5]](#footnote-6)
3. Children and young people will be encouraged but not compelled to participate in residential outdoor education. However these proposals mean they will have a **guaranteed opportunity to access it if they wish, free of charge**. Research suggests that affordability and financial constraints are a significant barrier to some pupils taking up the opportunities when their school is arranging a residential outdoor experience.[[6]](#footnote-7) Put simply, the Bill would ensure no child or young person is prevented from experiencing residential outdoor education once in their school lives simply because their family can’t afford it.
4. The proposed Bill will:
* Require local authorities to ensure that all pupils in maintained schools have an opportunity to participate in residential outdoor education at least once during their schooling, free of charge.
* Require the Welsh Government to provide sufficient funding to local authorities to enable and facilitate this universal offer.
1. At this stage, I anticipate that universal free provision will be for one residential outdoor education experience lasting one school week (four nights/five days). We know that some children already have this opportunity and the Bill will therefore build on the good practice that already exists across Wales. However, some children currently miss out, not through choice but through either not having the opportunity or not having the money to afford it. The proposed Bill will help put this right.
2. The most common stage of a child’s education to currently participate in an outdoor education residential visit is in Year 6, often to aid transition to secondary school and develop children’s independence and resilience. The proposal I have put forward does not limit the stage at which the opportunity to participate in outdoor education should be taken, but as part of the development of the proposal I will consider whether there are particular stages (such as Year 6) when the offer could be best used.

**Current position**

1. Children currently take part in residential outdoor education for a variety of reasons. In particular, it forms an important part of many children’s experience of transition from primary to secondary school, developing the organisation, self-reliance and resilience needed to thrive in a secondary setting. They also learn about language, culture and the environment through such visits, with the residential aspect playing an important role in this skill development.
2. Residential outdoor education can take many forms and is provided at centres across Wales. Activities range from those within the scope of the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) scheme e.g. caving, climbing, trekking and water sports to those outside the scope of AALA but equally valuable activities within a natural environment e.g. Forest and Beach Schools activities. Providers of residential outdoor education, publicly funded under the proposed Bill, would be required to be licensed (subject to the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations (AALR)) or meet the necessary accreditation requirements referred to in paragraph 12 below.
3. The Activity Centres (Young Persons’ Safety) Act 1995 requires anyone who provides, in return for payment, adventure activities covered by the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations (AALR), to young people under 18 years of age to have an Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) licence and abide by its conditions. The holding of an AALA licence provides assurance that outdoor education providers offering residential experiences have been inspected and have demonstrated compliance with relevant health and safety legislation. In addition, the holding of the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge (QB) by outdoor education providers is a nationally recognised indicator of good quality educational provision. Where residential outdoor education providers do not provide, in return for payment, adventure activities covered by the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations (AALR), to young people under 18 years of age, they are required to provide assurances of a third party inspection that demonstrates compliance with relevant health and safety legislation and high-quality educational provision.
4. The Outdoor Education Association Panel Cymru (OEAP Cymru) is the professional association for outdoor education advisers and educational visits. It also represents Welsh local authorities by working closely with Welsh Government and relevant stakeholders. In 2018, OEAP Cymru, supported by the Wales Council for Outdoor Learning, published *“High-Quality Outdoor Learning for Wales”*.[[7]](#footnote-8) This provides a blueprint, linked to the Curriculum for Wales, for what outdoor education should look like.

**Relevance to the Curriculum for Wales and wider Welsh Government policy**

1. Outdoor education and its pedagogical approach of direct experience, coupled with reflection on real-world first-hand experiential learning, aligns with, and supports, the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales.[[8]](#footnote-9) It also helps develop a sense of cynefin (roughly translated as a sense of connection to place, land, culture, language and distinctly Welsh identity), which is a key imperative of the Curriculum for Wales.
2. Key concepts of the Curriculum for Wales’ ‘Health and Well-being’[[9]](#footnote-10) and ‘Humanities’[[10]](#footnote-11) Areas of Learning Experience and the ‘Statements of what matters’, which drive their teaching, can be realised through an outdoor education residential experience.
3. Outdoor education also contributes significantly to the Welsh Government’s “Whole-school approach to the physical and mental health and well-being of children and young people”[[11]](#footnote-12), as well as its “Climbing Higher”[[12]](#footnote-13) strategy for physical activity and “Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales”[[13]](#footnote-14) agenda.
4. Further information on all of the above can be found in the outline Explanatory Memorandum, published in August 2022.[[14]](#footnote-15)

**Potential benefits of the proposed Bill**

1. Outdoor education has well established benefits for children and young people in their physical and mental health and well-being, personal and social learning, cognitive development, and understanding their place in the world. This has been confirmed in Welsh Government commissioned research, undertaken by a research team from the universities of Bangor and Wrexham Glyndŵr and the University of South Wales.[[15]](#footnote-16)
2. Further evidence of the benefits of outdoor learning and return on investment has recently been provided by research commissioned by Natural England, which the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom has summarised in a briefing note.[[16]](#footnote-17) The social return on investment in learning in natural environments was found to be £4.32 from every £1 spent.
3. OEAP Cymru’s *“High-Quality Outdoor Learning for Wales”*[[17]](#footnote-18) identifies ten outcomes of high-quality outdoor learning, which are listed below. These will not all be always relevant in every experience and every setting but young people should gain most of them from whatever outdoor education they undertake:
* **Enjoyment:** Young people enjoy participating in outdoor activities and adopt a positive attitude to challenge, learning and adventure.
* **Confidence and character:** Young people are developing personal confidence and character through taking on challenges and achieving success.
* **Health and Well-being:** Young people are learning to appreciate the benefits of physical fitness and the lifelong value of participation in healthy active leisure activities.
* **Social and emotional awareness:** Young people are developing their self-awareness and social skills, and their appreciation of the contributions and achievements of themselves and of others.
* **Environmental awareness:** Young people are becoming alive to the natural environment and understand the importance of conservation and sustainable development.
* **Activity skills:** Young people are acquiring and developing a range of psychomotor skills in support of their participation in outdoor pursuits, recreation and exploration.
* **Personal qualities:** Young people are demonstrating increased initiative, self-reliance, responsibility, perseverance, tenacity and commitment.
* **Skills for life:** Young people are developing and extending their key skills of communication, problem-solving, leadership and teamwork.
* **Increased motivation and appetite for learning:** Young people are displaying an increased motivation and appetite for learning that is contributing to raised levels of attainment and progress in other aspects of their development.
* **Broadened horizons:** Young people are broadening their horizons and becoming open to a wider range of employment opportunities and life chances, life choices and lifestyles.
1. The overall rationale behind the Bill is that, given the fundamental importance of outdoor learning to educational experiences as an entitlement of rather than an enrichment to the curriculum, the Bill should help ensure, through universal provision, that no child misses out on this valuable experience that better prepares them for their future.
2. A summary of the initial estimated costs of the Bill was set out in the outline Explanatory Memorandum, published in August 2022.[[18]](#footnote-19)

**Proposed Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill Consultation: Response form**

**Name:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**E-mail:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Are you submitting this response in a professional or personal capacity?:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [ ]  **Professional capacity (including on behalf of an organisation** | [ ]  **Personal capacity** |
| Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?[ ]  Yes[ ]  No | Age:[ ] I am under 13 years old[ ]  I am aged 13 to 17[ ]  I am aged 18 or over and wish my contribution to be anonymised[ ]  I am aged 18 or over and happy for my name to be published with my contribution |
| Are you (your organisation) currently a provider of outdoor education?[ ]  Yes[ ]  No | In what capacity are you responding?[ ]  Child / Young person[ ]  Parent / Carer[ ]  Other |

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

**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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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?

Click or tap here to enter text.

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?

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

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).

Click or tap here to enter text.

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?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. Member Bill Ballot 13 July 2022: [Proposal 029 from Sam Rowlands, MS](https://senedd.wales/senedd-business/legislation/proposed-member-bills/tabled-proposals-for-a-member-bill/proposal-029-sam-rowlands-ms/) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Development of the Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill: [Explanatory Memorandum](https://senedd.wales/media/1nsjgtqb/outdoor-education-wales-bill-em.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. ‘Leave to Proceed’ Plenary debate: [26 October 2022](https://business.senedd.wales/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=700&MId=13014&Ver=4) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Development of the Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill: [Explanatory Memorandum](https://senedd.wales/media/1nsjgtqb/outdoor-education-wales-bill-em.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Welsh Government (Hwb website), [Curriculum for Wales](https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. [Statistical Paper: Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill](https://senedd.wales/media/nenbiuds/statistic-paper-outdoor-education-wales-bill.pdf) (October 2022) – paper published by Sam Rowlands MS ahead of the Senedd debate on his proposal on 26 October 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Outdoor Education Advisory Panel (OEAP) [High-Quality Outdoor Learning for Wales](https://www.walescouncilforoutdoorlearning.org/_files/ugd/d00a84_df6d54796525493188ed3183949cd01f.pdf) (2018) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Welsh Government (Hwb website), [Curriculum for Wales](https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Welsh Government (Hwb website), [Curriculum for Wales: Health and Well-being](https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/health-and-well-being/) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Welsh Government, (Hwb website), [Curriculum for Wales: Humanities](https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/humanities/) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Welsh Government, [Whole-school approach to the physical and mental health and well-being of children and young people](https://www.gov.wales/whole-school-approach-mental-health-and-wellbeing-framework-guidance-impact-assessment-html) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Welsh Government, [Climbing Higher](https://www.gov.wales/sport-and-physical-activity-strategy-climbing-higher) [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Welsh Government, [Healthy weight strategy (Healthy Weight Healthy Wales)](https://www.gov.wales/healthy-weight-strategy-healthy-weight-healthy-wales) [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Development of the Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill: [Explanatory Memorandum](https://senedd.wales/media/1nsjgtqb/outdoor-education-wales-bill-em.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Welsh Government, [The Impact of the COVID 19 Pandemic in Wales on the Health and Well-being of Learners and Practitioners and the Implications for Initial Teacher Education](https://hwb.gov.wales/professional-development/the-national-strategy-for-educational-research-and-enquiry-nsere/research-studies-on-the-impact-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-on-the-welsh-education-system/research-study-6/) (2021) [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Council for Learning Outside the Classroom, [New summary report confirming the benefits of LOtC in natural environments](https://www.lotc.org.uk/new-summary-report-confirming-the-benefits-of-lotc-in-natural-environments/) (2022) [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. Outdoor Education Advisory Panel (OEAP) [High-Quality Outdoor Learning for Wales](https://www.walescouncilforoutdoorlearning.org/_files/ugd/d00a84_df6d54796525493188ed3183949cd01f.pdf) (2018) [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. Development of the Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill: [Explanatory Memorandum](https://senedd.wales/media/1nsjgtqb/outdoor-education-wales-bill-em.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-19)