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**\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\***

## **GOVERNMENT MUST DO MORE FOR OUTDOOR EDUCATION**

**The DfES and Local Authorities have not done enough to promote education outside the classroom. This is the message delivered to the Government today by a cross party committee of MPs.**

In its latest report the Education and Skills Select Committee also called upon teaching union NASUWT to review its advice to members not to participate in school trips.

The MPs recommended the DfES issue a “Manifesto for Outdoor Learning” to publicise the benefits of education outside the classroom and to provide more strategic leadership in this area.

The manifesto should attract a similar level of funding as the music manifesto (£30 million) in order to deliver real change.

During its inquiry into education outside the classroom, the committee became “convinced of the value of education outside the classroom in its broadest sense”.

The committee welcomed the introduction of Educational Visit Coordinators as champions for outdoor education within schools and called for an EVC to be present in each school.

However, the report also highlighted the need for well trained teachers with the skills to carry out sessions in accordance with health and safety regulations. It called on the DfES to “engage with professional bodies to ensure that teachers have access to appropriate programmes of continuing professional development, which should include curriculum design”.

William Ripley, Operations Director at The Outward Bound Trust and SkillsActive board member gave oral evidence to the committee. Commenting on the publication of the report William said: “I am delighted the committee has given education outside the classroom the credit it deserves.

“The contribution our sector makes to the physical, mental and intellectual development of young people has long been overlooked by certain quarters and now is the time to give this learning the recognition it merits. Out of classroom learning makes a significant contribution to high performing schools. The task now is to ensure this opportunity is available to all.

“With this must come the strategy and funding to deliver the opportunity for all young people to partake in an outdoor learning experience.

“Employers are already playing their role by ensuring the staff working to deliver learning in the outdoor sector have the correct qualifications which meet the National Occupational Standards set by SkillsActive.

“The Government’s role is now clear and I hope that Ministers and Local Authorities across the country will take on board the committee’s recommendations.”

Stephen Studd, Chief Executive of SkillsActive also welcomed the report. He said: “I am heartened to read that the committee has taken on board representations made on behalf of the Outdoor Sector and acknowledged the importance of qualifications and training in its report.

“Building skills in the Outdoor Sector is an essential part of ensuring the sector’s continued credibility. Developing the qualifications amongst the outdoor workforce will serve to allay parent’s fears about the safety of their children and teachers fears about vexatious litigation.

“SkillsActive looks forward to working with the DfES to ensure that teachers have appropriate programmes of continued professional development to allow them to continue to work in this area.

“We must maintain the momentum this issue has gained until safe, structured and properly supervised outdoor education opportunities are available for all.”

**-ENDS-**

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## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

1. SkillsActive is the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for Sport and Recreation, Health and Fitness, Playwork, The Outdoors and the Caravan industries.
2. SkillsActive’s mission statement is: “To ensure best quality, best business and best value within the Sector to achieve its economic and social potential.”
3. SSCs are employer-led organisations that aim to tackle the skills and productivity needs of their sector throughout the UK. SSCs provide employers with the opportunity to provide leadership to meet their sector’s skills and business needs. In return they receive substantial public investment and greater dialogue with government departments across the UK.

4. For more information about SkillsActive, please visit our website @ [www.skillsactive.com](http://www.skillsactive.com)