



# Guidance for DofE Leaders – advising on residential activities

## What is this resource for?

The following pages provide you with guidance to help the young people in your groups identify a challenging and appropriate residential activity for their Gold DofE programme. It should be used in conjunction with the *Handbook for DofE Leaders* (6th Edition). The resource contains three things:

- Five residential considerations to check.
- Flow chart to use for checking the suitability of a residential opportunity.
- Residential case studies.

## What is a DofE residential?

To achieve a Gold Award, participants need to complete an extra section in addition to the Volunteering, Physical, Skills and Expedition sections - the Residential. This involves spending five days and four nights away from home on a shared activity or specific course with people they've never met before. Participants need to identify an activity that they want to learn, or improve at, set themselves objectives and create a programme to meet them. It is a chance for the young person to step outside their comfort zone, gain new skills for life, enjoy new experiences and have fun. There is a near limitless range of opportunities and fantastic experiences that can be had on a residential.

## The aim of the Residential section

The aim of the Residential section is to inspire participants through a concentrated involvement with people they don't know, who are often from different backgrounds, and bring alternative views to the challenges they will face. The Residential section broadens their experiences by empowering them to make a difference in a team-based residential setting. Please see page 81 of the *Handbook for DofE Leaders* (6th Edition) to find out more about the principles and benefits of the Residential Section.

## Gathering ideas

This resource focuses on helping you identify the suitability of a residential, once the young person has gathered ideas for what they want to do. To help them explore ideas, we have a number of other resources:

- **Programme planners for participants:** When starting each section of their DofE, young people should develop a programme which meets their needs and is specific, enjoyable, and relevant to them. To help young people design their own programme, we have programme planners available on the website. These are one page sheets with a number of questions for young people to answer, to help them plan what activity they will do and to think about availability. They can be filled in by young people on their own or in conversation with you as their Leader.
- **Programme ideas sheet:** To help them get their imagination going, we have listed activities that other people have done for their residential on programme ideas sheets on the website.
- **Case studies:** We have provided a few case studies as part of this resource, to show the range of residentials young people have done. You could encourage the group to interview/ chat to young people who have already done their Residential section, who can explain how it benefited them and what they learnt. You could ask the participants to bring in photos, videos or any other objects which explain their positive experience.
- **The DofE website:** We list a number of residential opportunities in the UK and all over the world on our website.

## Achievable by all

As DofE programmes are achievable by all, it is vital that young people choose an activity that is interesting to them and suited to their needs. If you have any queries about the suitability of an opportunity suggested by a Gold participant please contact your Operating Authority or the DofE at [info@DofE.org](mailto:info@DofE.org) or 01753 727400.

- Visit [www.DofE.org/residential](http://www.DofE.org/residential) for more guidance, information, programme planners and programme ideas.
- For more resources for DofE Leaders visit [www.DofE.org/leaders](http://www.DofE.org/leaders)
- For feedback or enquiries email [info@DofE.org](mailto:info@DofE.org)



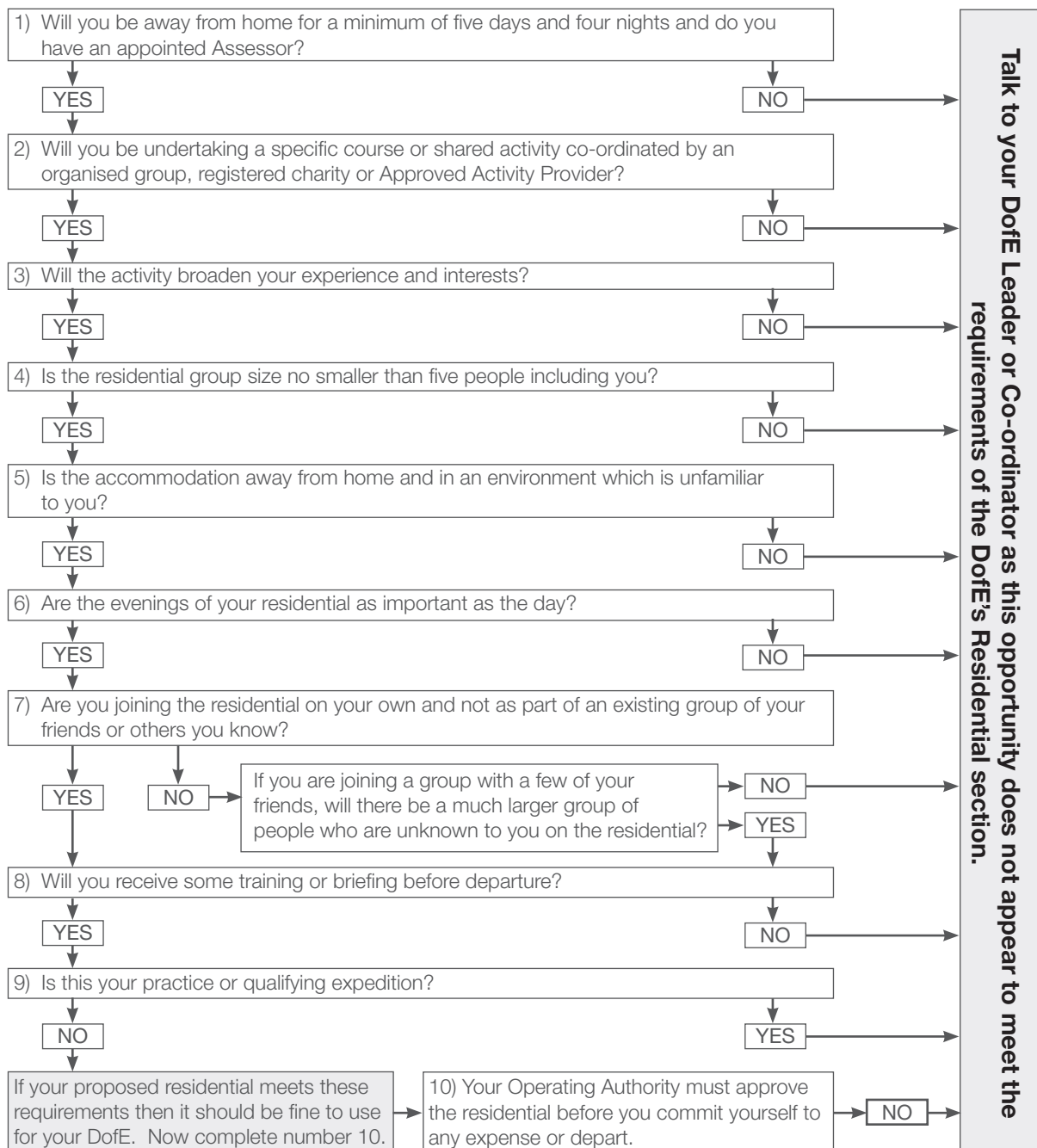
## Top five residential considerations to check

These notes provide information to help you decide the suitability of a young person's choice of residential activity.

Residential considerations	Further explanation
1. The participant must be away from home for a minimum of five days and four nights and must have identified an Assessor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attending a group activity during the day but returning home each evening is not allowed. Participants should stay overnight with the group. Individual home stays or staying with a friend or relative are not allowed.</li> <li>- In most cases this will be consecutive days and nights. In exceptional circumstances, and at the discretion of the Operating Authority, the residential could be spread over two weekends in the same 12-month period during which the same activity must be pursued.</li> <li>- Evenings are as important as the day, so participants should be mixing with the group during planned activity and down time.</li> <li>- The Assessor should engage with the participant during the residential and must be familiar with the aims and objectives of the Section.</li> </ul>
2. There must be a specific, shared course or activity to broaden experiences and interests done with an organised group, registered charity or Approved Activity Provider.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Doing an activity individually during the day whilst staying in a residential setting with others would not count.</li> <li>- Participants must volunteer their time on the residential and not receive payment; however, they may receive money for expenses.</li> <li>- Going on holiday is not an appropriate activity. The participant should do some form of purposeful activity, such as a training course leading to a qualification, a course which develops skills or interests or which involves volunteering. As with other sections, this should not be an activity which is part of the curriculum.</li> <li>- Participants cannot count their practice or qualifying expeditions for this section.</li> </ul>
3. Consider the group size and make up.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The group should be no smaller than five people (including the participant), as the interaction with others is crucial to the success of the residential and a group any smaller than this will not provide sufficient opportunities.</li> <li>- Participants should ideally join a residential as an individual. A few participants may know each other when they are joining a larger group, where possible these participants should be separated.</li> <li>- Other members of the group can be of any age.</li> <li>- The staff should also be unknown to the participant (for example, helping Bronze or Silver participants with their expeditions for your school or DofE group is not acceptable).</li> </ul>
4. Before the residential, the participant should carry out appropriate training, briefing or research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participants should research the activity that they have chosen and follow any pre-activity instructions or requirements.</li> <li>- In some cases this may mean meeting some of the people on the residential once or twice before the residential for essential training.</li> </ul>
5. The Operating Authority must have approved the planned residential.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All residential opportunities must be approved by the Operating Authority in advance of the residential taking place.</li> </ul>

# Does the residential count for your Gold programme?

This flow chart can be used by young people alone or in conversation with their DofE Leader, to help decide if their choice of residential activity can count for their Gold DofE programme. If they are using a Residential section Approved Activity Provider then their trip will meet these requirements.



## Case studies

Below are some recent examples of residential activities which were undertaken by young people for their Gold programme. For more ideas please visit [www.DofE.org/residential](http://www.DofE.org/residential)

**Residential Category: ACTIVITY BASED**

Charlie Dessain spent a month in Gunjur, a village in The Gambia helping to build a school classroom block with a local community linking charity. The group from around Wiltshire fundraised individually and came together for training in the UK before flying out to the village. The group lived with a local family and worked alongside the village builders on site.

Charlie said: *"It was an invaluable experience where I overcame many challenges including language, floods and the heat. Being adopted into a local family, the whole team was completely immersed in the Gunjurian culture and was exposed to the real lifestyle of the people."*



**Residential Category: LEARNING**

Dhan-Shan Rana spent eight days learning about astronomy, space science and technology at Senior Space School UK based at the University of Leicester. The school is a mixture of lectures and hands on experiments from leaders in the field. There are also fun social activities such as scuba diving, camping under the stars and skydiving in a wind tunnel.

Dhan-Shan said: *"Space School is one of the best places I have ever been to and has fuelled my appetite to learn more about a perpetually puzzling universe... I have also made a lot of friends who may be future colleagues and with whom I will keep in contact for a long time."*



**Residential Category: SERVICE TO OTHERS**

Francesca and Daniella Nice used the Scout Jamboree in Chelmsford for their residential – 30,000 young people from all over the world attended the Jamboree for two weeks. They volunteered to join separate support teams at the Jamboree.

Francesca was on the instructor team teaching canoeing to hundreds of young people, she said: *"Having completed the residential I am far more confident when I meet new people."* Daniella was on the first aid team and she said: *"My proudest moment was dealing with a leg injury and having to communicate in French so that my patient felt reassured and comfortable."*



**Residential Category: ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION**

Thirty-five young people with disabilities enjoyed an open residential programme of adventurous activities and environmental education run by Kirklees Operating Authority. The young people achieved so much in the environmental part of their residential project that they fulfilled the criteria for the John Muir Award as well.

After the residential many of the group joined a local conservation group 'Conservation Angels' and have built several sculptures from willow including a wheelchair accessible willow igloo. They learnt how to lay a footpath from a countryside officer and successfully obtained a grant which enabled them to buy materials and lay a path to allow wheelchair access to a local woodland.



**Residential Category: SERVICE TO OTHERS**

Kate Joyce travelled to Chernobyl to work with teenage victims of the nuclear disaster. The group from the UK helped organise adventure activities during the day and helped with the household duties in the evening.

Kate said: *"Through the experience I gained confidence working with people of a different language and background."*

