



Planning a residential

The key to planning a residential experience, or other event, is to start well in advance. Get your team together to discuss the plans and divide up tasks. The amount of time will vary according to the scale of the event. You will need to think at least six months ahead if you hope to secure a popular venue, and some trips may need a year to eighteen months of planning.



2. Check the dates

It will affect the success of your event if it clashes with other important dates in either the young people's or your own team's diaries. Exam dates, busy work periods (and even football cup finals) should be considered when outlining dates.

3. Type of event

Early input from your group should ensure that you are providing the type of event the young people would like to do. This will increase interest, help you choose an appropriate programme and venue, and consider the type of equipment that you are likely to require.

4. Budgeting

It is important to outline your budget, allowing for any unforeseen expenditure. It may also be beneficial to apply for grants or subsidies.

5. Visit the venue

A pre-booked visit will enable you to see first-hand the facilities, surroundings and suitability of the venue. Make a checklist of items you may have concerns about or potential problems, such as vehicular access to the site.

6. Early notification

Most people lead busy lives and their diaries may fill up months in advance. Write to parents/carers as early as you can, outlining timings, costs, and activities. This will enable parents/carers and young people time to decide if they want to go, and then to make sure that they keep the dates free. It also allows for discussion of financial assistance if required, or payment by instalments.

Your plan could look like this:

1. Initial planning

With your team, decide on the number and range of experiences for the coming year when planning your 12-month programme.





7. A balanced programme

It is important that the programme drives the event, and is not seen as an afterthought. Try to ensure that there are a range of activities to suit every young person's abilities. You may need to book special activities and instructors. Consider how all of the elements of your programme link together to help deliver your outcomes – building experience, knowledge and understanding throughout the event.

8. Check equipment and travel arrangements

Make sure that all the equipment you will need is available and serviceable. Now is the time to replace or repair any item that requires it. Early confirmation of travel arrangements is essential, and allows time to find alternatives if necessary.

9. Pre-event training

Some basic instruction in the activities that you are planning to undertake may prove beneficial for young people and adults alike. You may identify gaps in certain skills and have time to rectify them. For example, Scout Activity Centres offer training in the skills needed to run group camping experiences.

10. Consolidation meeting

A meeting will allow parents/carers to voice their concerns and be reassured by the team that everything has been considered and catered for. Explaining the personal kit requirements can avoid expensive clothing being ruined, money being lost and unwanted electronic equipment being taken along.

Confirm how your emergency contact procedure operates, and the potential challenges of young people using mobile phones. Ensure you collate all the necessary details about those attending the event, for example, medical and dietary information.

11. Catering

Your menu needs to take into account the dietary requirements of those attending the event. Particular care should be taken over allergies and religious needs. Using supermarket online ordering systems can alleviate some of the stress of buying and transporting the food, however, many do not offer catering size portions. Also, although most are able to deliver to recognised venues it is unlikely that they will go to remote locations. For more information see our 'Catering' resource at scouts.org.uk/sac.



12. Confirmation

Confirm all the arrangements, timings and costings with the venue and ensure these details are passed on to all the parents/carers. This may also help those who have misplaced the original details.

13. Fees

Collection of money is easier before an event than after. You should already have made arrangements for those who are paying by instalments or for those who need financial assistance. By ensuring that you have collected all of the necessary fees, you will be able to pay monies owed promptly.

14. Equipment check

You should check all the larger items of equipment six weeks before departure and smaller items of equipment two weeks prior. However, a week before the event, it is worth giving all the equipment one last check. This will give you time to repair or replace any item that may have been used since you previously checked it.

Now go and enjoy