



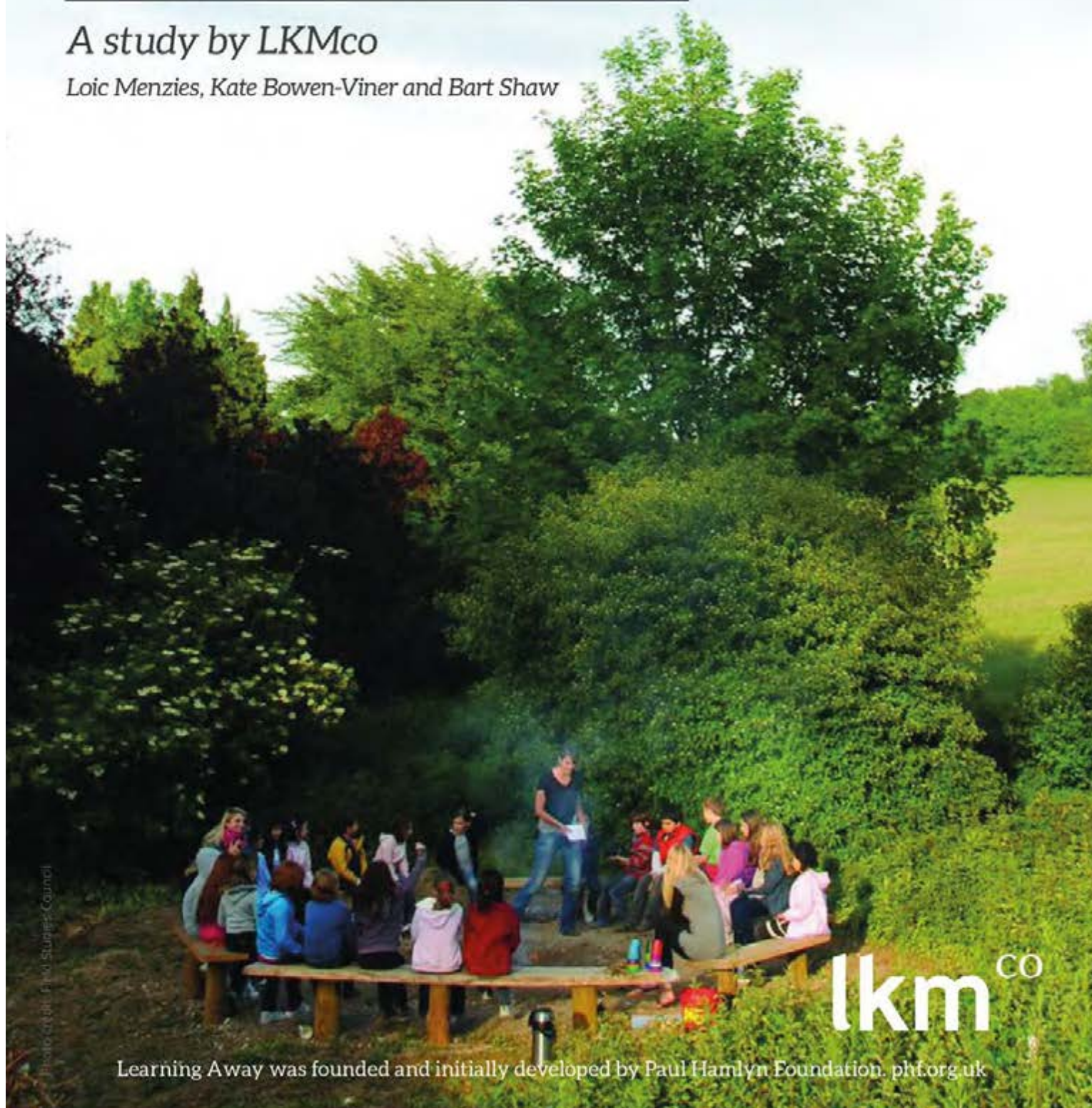
LEARNING

AWAY

# Learning Away: The state of school residential in England 2017

*A study by LKMco*

*Loic Menzies, Kate Bowen-Viner and Bart Shaw*



lkm<sup>co</sup>

Learning Away was founded and initially developed by Paul Hamlyn Foundation. [phf.org.uk](http://phf.org.uk)

# Foreword

Joe Lynch, Chair, Learning Away Consortium

*“I probably did more hours of work in that one week than I did in the whole term; I just had so much inspiration from it.”* Year 10 student, Canterbury Academy

Surely if residential experiences have this type of powerful impact, all children – regardless of their background - should be entitled to benefit from them during their time at school.

Do some children and young people have access to these unique learning opportunities and others not? What is the quality of these experiences, and what type of residentials are provided? This fascinating study by LKMco endeavours to answer these questions.

Learning Away began life in 2009 as an action research programme founded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. The initiative worked closely with 60 primary, secondary and special schools across the UK over 5 years to demonstrate the positive impact that high-quality residential learning can have on children, young people and schools. Through this action research project, Learning Away gathered powerful and compelling evidence about the transformative impact school trips with an overnight stay can have on everyone involved.

The final evaluation report published in 2015 described residentials as “providing opportunities and benefits/impacts that cannot be achieved in any other educational context or setting”. For the first time ever - on this scale - we now had very strong evidence that residentials improve students’ engagement with learning, achievement, resilience, self-confidence, wellbeing and relationships with their teachers and peers.

But what we didn’t know - until now - is the extent to which children and young people were benefitting from these life-changing experiences. Nor did we know very much about the ‘quality’ of these experiences. This study assesses the number and types of residentials that are currently being provided by schools and tells us much more about the quality of these residentials (as measured against Learning Away’s ‘brilliant residentials’ criteria). We believe a study of this magnitude has never been conducted in England before.

Reassuringly, as you will read, the study shows that residentials in schools are generally of high quality, although it does identify areas where teachers planning residentials could do with more support. Disturbingly however, it confirms what many of us feared; far too many children and young people are missing out on these transformational experiences. We would argue that if these experiences have such a significant impact, all pupils should be entitled to have them during their time at primary and at secondary school.

The findings in this study illustrate just how critical it is that we campaign to promote equality of opportunity for all children and young people, to benefit from high quality ‘Brilliant residential’ experiences.

To help schools make their residentials more inclusive and effective, Learning Away are running national #BrilliantResidentials and #WinterResidentials campaigns supported by a website which hosts free resources for teachers and over 100 good practice case studies. This includes planning information, activity ideas, downloadable templates, presentations and films. Talks and workshops



are also running across the UK and new CPD modules are being developed to support teachers with the development, planning, delivery and evaluation of their residentials.

We are hugely grateful to the team at LKMco - Loic Menzies, Kate Bowen-Viner and Bart Shaw – who carried out this study for Learning Away and produced this insightful report. But the study would not have been possible without access to the invaluable Evolve data-sets, for which a special thank you is owed to Clive Atkins – both for making the data available and for his ongoing support. We would also like to thank those members of the Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP) who played a crucial role in distributing the surveys and encouraging schools to participate. We are especially indebted to the schools; inspiring teachers and dedicated visit leaders who not only make the huge commitment to providing residentials, but also found the additional time to share their views through our surveys. Finally, extraordinary thanks must go to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation for their initial vision to create the Learning Away initiative and then support its legacy, so that many more children can experience the benefits of brilliant residentials.

## Joe Lynch

Chair, Learning Away Consortium, September 2017



## 1. Introduction

Learning Away was founded on the belief that high-quality residential experiences can provide powerful learning opportunities for children and young people – and indeed, for adults as well. The term ‘residential’ is intended to refer to any learning opportunity that includes at least one overnight stay for students away from home. This need not be an outdoor learning experience and could include overnight stays in school or local community facilities, in tents or under the stars, as well as residential visits to destinations further from home.

Learning Away have defined eleven principles that their research suggests underpin ‘Brilliant Residential’.

### **Brilliant Residential are:**

1. Led by teachers (and, where appropriate, students)
2. Co-designed with students
3. Fully integrated with the school curriculum and ethos
4. Inclusive and affordable for all students
5. Deliberately planned to meet students’ specific learning needs
6. Part of a progressive programme of experiences
7. Designed to include a wide range of new and memorable experiences
8. Designed to allow space for students to develop collaborative relationships with both peers and staff
9. Evaluated rigorously
10. Planned so that learning is embedded and reinforced back in school
11. Supported by senior leadership

This report presents the findings from a study by LKMco, funded by Learning Away, to assess the quantity and quality of residential currently delivered in England as well as to identify key barriers to delivering ‘Brilliant Residential’. It forms part of a longitudinal study- tracking any changes in scale and quality of delivery over time.

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LKMco is an education and youth 'think and action-tank'. We work across the education, youth and policy sectors. We help organisations develop and evaluate projects for young people and carry out academic and policy research and campaigning about the issues that experience tells us matter.

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**Kate Bowen-Viner** is an Associate at LKMco. She began her career as a teaching assistant in North Liverpool and went on to teach English in West London and Bristol. She also has experience delivering central government policies through her role at the Office for the South West Regional Schools Commissioner (Department for Education). There, she worked with Local Authorities and education providers to deliver free schools. Kate has also supported Ambitious about Autism with their campaign 'When Will we Learn?' Kate is undertaking a MSc in Policy Research from the University of Bristol and is interested in the relationship between education policy and social mobility.



**Bart Shaw** is an Associate at LKMco and combines experience of policy making at the heart of central government with hands-on experience as a teacher and middle leader in school. Bart joined the Department for Education and Skills as part of the Civil Service Fast Stream in 2006. There he developed, delivered and evaluated national policies including the £13 million subsidy pathfinder which helped disadvantaged students access after-school activities. He left in 2011 to work directly in schools. Bart holds an MA in Governance and Development from the University of Sussex and has been a trustee and advisor for the charity Development Nepal.

## 2. Executive Summary

### 2.1 The availability of residentials

***Each year, only a small minority of school pupils experience a residential trip and pupils in the most disadvantaged areas are the most likely to miss out.***

On average, educational establishments organise 2.5 residentials per year. We therefore estimate that approximately 1.8 million children and young people are involved in residentials each year. This is equivalent to 21% of the school pupil population. Whilst this probably means that in most schools, at least some pupils are involved in a residential each year, it also means that every year, a large number of pupils do not experience a residential. Unfortunately, we find that it is pupils in disadvantaged areas who have fewest opportunities to participate.

### 2.2 The purpose of residentials

***Residentials are frequently focused on personal development, and less so on curriculum subjects. Pupils access different types of residentials depending on their area's socio-economic characteristics.***

Nationally, the most common purposes for residentials are to impact on personal development or to deliver the Duke of Edinburgh award. In 2016, these two categories combined to account for a third of residentials. Subject focused residentials are less common, but amongst these, Humanities subjects tend to dominate. In the most deprived areas, pupils are more likely to participate in "Personal Development" and PSHE focused residentials and less so the Duke of Edinburgh award.

### 2.3 The quality of residentials

***Residentials are generally of high quality but cost is stopping many poorer pupils from participating, leaving them doubly disadvantaged in terms of their participation.***

In this report, Learning Away's agreed characteristics for a "Brilliant Residential" serve as a benchmark for quality. We find that design and planning of residentials is an area of strength although pupils' involvement in planning is very much limited. There are however serious concerns in relation to affordability and this problem requires urgent action, particularly given that there is considerable guidance available on providing low cost, high quality residentials.

We find that pupils from poorer families are doubly disadvantaged when it comes to residential provision: they are more likely to live in areas where fewer residentials are available and costs mean they are less likely to be able to participate where they are. Schools are attempting to address this problem, (often by using the pupil premium). However even where teachers try to make residentials affordable, they still consider cost to be a barrier to participation. As funding is squeezed, this will become an increasing problem.

Not all teachers want to use structured approaches to evaluation, however some who wish to do so are not sure how to go about doing so. It can be particularly tricky to reflect and evaluate thoroughly when residentials take place at the end of a summer term – which many do.

Almost half of residentials are mainly led and delivered by external staff. Teachers frequently noted that their involvement in planning was limited by the fact that they were using an 'off the shelf' activity.

Teachers do not necessarily see co-planning with pupils as desirable, furthermore, even where they want to involve pupils, they face practical barriers. In many cases they seek to overcome these by drawing on pupil feedback from previous years.

For many teachers, residentials occupy a position that is distinct from the standard curriculum. This sometimes limits teachers' willingness to link residentials to the curriculum or plan for progression.



"On average, educational establishments organise 2.5 residentials per year. We therefore estimate that approximately 1.8 million children and young people are involved in residentials each year. This is equivalent to 21% of the school pupil population. Whilst this probably means that in most schools, at least some pupils are involved in a residential each year, it also means that every year, a large number of pupils do not experience a residential. Unfortunately, we find that it is pupils in disadvantaged areas who have fewest opportunities to participate."

(pg 6)





### 3. Methodology

This report draws on two main data sources in order to combine the scale and detail we needed to answer our research questions.

1. **The Evolve database:** this was primarily used to gauge the availability and purpose of residential.
2. **A school survey:** this was primarily used to gauge the quality of residential and barriers to better provision.

#### 3.1 Evolve data

##### 3.1.1 The Evolve system

Evolve is a system used to organise trips. It is used by approximately 25,000 establishments, most of which are schools<sup>1</sup> (though numbers have varied from year to year). When using the system, establishments record whether a trip involves a residential and its primary purpose.

Using data from the system has the benefit of providing a large, longitudinal dataset that includes data from schools around the country. However, there are also a number of drawbacks. Most importantly, schools can choose whether or not to use the system. This limitation is somewhat mitigated for by the fact that many local authorities buy into the system at authority level so that all their schools can use it. As schools leave their local authorities though, this may affect use of the system (although many academy chains also buy into the system). It may also be the case that schools are more likely to use the system if they are enthusiastic providers of residential making figures un-generalisable to other establishments. There are also some non-school providers as part of the Evolve Data Set though this is estimated at only around 5%. Additionally, the need to maintain school confidentiality and protect data meant that we were only able to access data in highly aggregated form. This constrained the extent to which we could conduct detailed analysis and statistical testing, it also means that averages may mask considerable variation.

We therefore recognise the limitations the data presents when attempting to make valid judgements about provision in schools as a whole. On the other hand, using this data provides information about an unusually large number of schools and avoids response bias skewing results as it would if we relied purely on an opt-in survey.

##### 3.1.2 Analysis

In order to mitigate the effect of changes in the number of establishments using the Evolve system the key figure we use in this report is “residential per organising unit”. This is calculated by dividing the number of residential organised by the number of organising units.

We were keen to compare provision according to the characteristics of an establishments’ local area. We therefore classified local authorities by their level of deprivation and area type. Levels of deprivation were calculated by placing all English local authorities in quintiles based on the proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals and by using the government’s Output Area Classification<sup>2</sup>. For this reason, only establishments that were ‘nested’ within English local authorities were included in these breakdowns<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> These are predominantly but not exclusively schools since some organisations such as youth clubs also use the system.

<sup>2</sup> <https://lkm.li/2qv1LYN>

<sup>3</sup> A small number of were easily placed within a particular geography and were therefore manually classified according to the area’s OAC classification.

### 3.1.3 Sample sizes

The number of establishments in our sample varies from year to year. Residentials per organising unit figures are based on the following samples:

Year	Organising Units (OUs)
2012	11,253
2013	12,124
2014	13,600
2015	14,704
2016	16,095

Where a breakdown of figures is provided by location or establishment characteristics, the analysis is based on smaller samples depending on the number of establishments that could be matched to their characteristics. Samples were as follows:

Classification	OUs
Deprivation 1	2,940
Deprivation 2	2,829
Deprivation 3	1,626
Deprivation 4	1,708
Deprivation 5	872
Combined 'mainly Rural/largely rural' <sup>4</sup>	2,085
Urban with Significant Rural	3,258
Urban with City and Town	2,478
Urban with Minor Conurbation	473
Urban with Major Conurbation	2,850

### 3.1.4 Ethics

Organising units are not identifiable from the data since we were only been given headline statistics. As noted above, whilst this protected schools' data and anonymity it also limits the conclusions we can draw since we cannot ascertain what specific establishments are doing or the degree of variation within averages.

## 3.2 Quality survey

### 3.2.1 Survey design

Learning Away's eleven characteristics of a Brilliant Residential were adapted and combined to give ten statements with which respondents could rate their agreement (in relation to the most recent residential that they delivered). Rating took place on a seven point scale from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree". Statements were as follows:

1. *I was actively involved in planning and delivering the residential*
2. *The residential was planned with clear learning objectives*
3. *My pupils helped design the residential*
4. *There were clear links between the residential and our school curriculum*
5. *All my pupils could afford to participate in the residential*
6. *The residential was planned in a way that met my pupils' abilities and learning needs*
7. *The residential was linked to an ongoing and progressive programme of other school activities*

<sup>4</sup> Data was only available for 13 OUs in "Mainly Rural" areas, these were therefore combined with "Largely rural" OUs.

8. *The residential was designed to provide opportunities for students and staff to build collaborative relationships*
9. *After the residential, I used a structured approach to evaluate its success*
10. *After the residential we revisited and built on what pupils had learned.*

Findings from the first two surveys were analysed and synthesised in an interim report. This raised clear concerns around affordability and some ambiguity around evaluation. The third survey (relating to Spring residentials) therefore included additional quantitative and qualitative questions to further explore these issues.

### 3.2.2 Survey dissemination

The OEAP (Outdoor Education Advisers Panel) is comprised of outdoor education advisors who work with 147 localities (generally local authorities). These 127 advisers were asked to share the online survey with their schools.

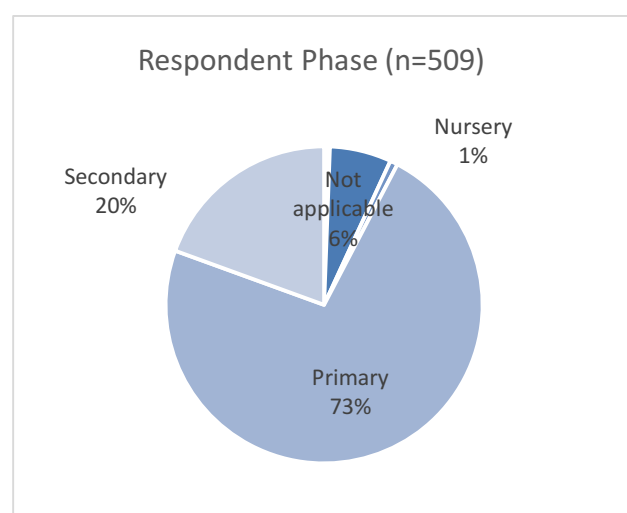
The survey was shared three times, in Autumn 2016, Spring 2017 and Summer 2017. Respondents were asked to respond with reference to provision that took place in the previous term, focusing specifically on the most recent residential that they organised.

All survey respondents were informed of the purpose of the research. They were assured that their participation was voluntary and that their data would be stored securely and only used in non-identifiable form.

### 3.3.3 Sample sizes

The Autumn survey (asking about the previous summer term), received considerably more responses than the Spring survey and it will be important to ensure this drop-off does not continue in future. Respondents came from a range of locations. Nearly three-quarters of respondents were primary schools and one-fifth were secondaries (schools responding more than once only counted once.)

Survey	Partial + complete	Complete	Dates
Autumn (re. Summer residentials)	695	571	10 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2016 - 24 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017
Spring (re. Autumn residentials)	219	170	10 <sup>th</sup> Mar - 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2017
Summer (re. Spring residentials)	271	199	29 <sup>th</sup> May – 25 <sup>th</sup> of July 2017





## 4. The availability of residentials

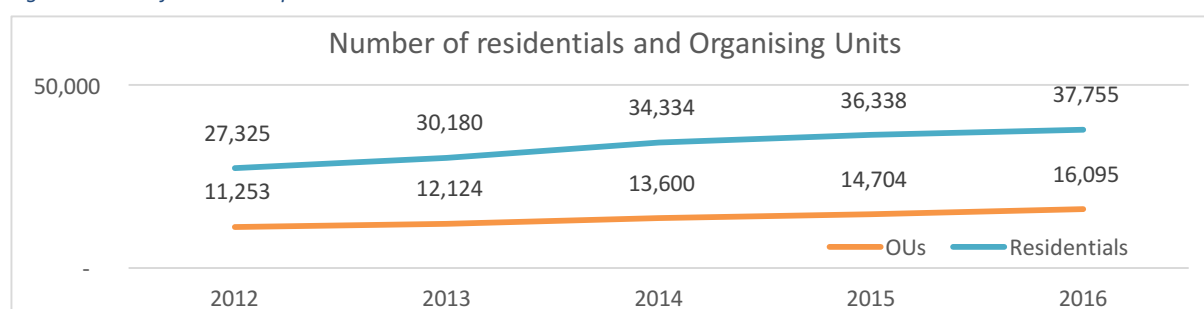
*Each year, only a small minority of school pupils experience a residential trip and pupils in the most disadvantaged areas are the most likely to miss out.*

Over the last five years, 165,932 residentials have been organised by Evolve users. This equates to approximately 2.5 residentials per establishment and this figure has been stable over time. We estimate that on average, residentials have 31 participants. We therefore very tentatively suggest that if 2016 figures from Evolve are generalisable to the wider school population, approximately 1.8 million children and young people are involved in residentials each year. This represents approximately one-in-five of the school pupil population.

The availability of residentials is not evenly distributed. We find that pupils in disadvantaged areas have the fewest opportunities to participate and that residentials are also much less likely to take place during the Autumn term. On the other hand, the rural or urban nature of the areas pupils live in do not seem to have a discernible effect on the availability of residentials.

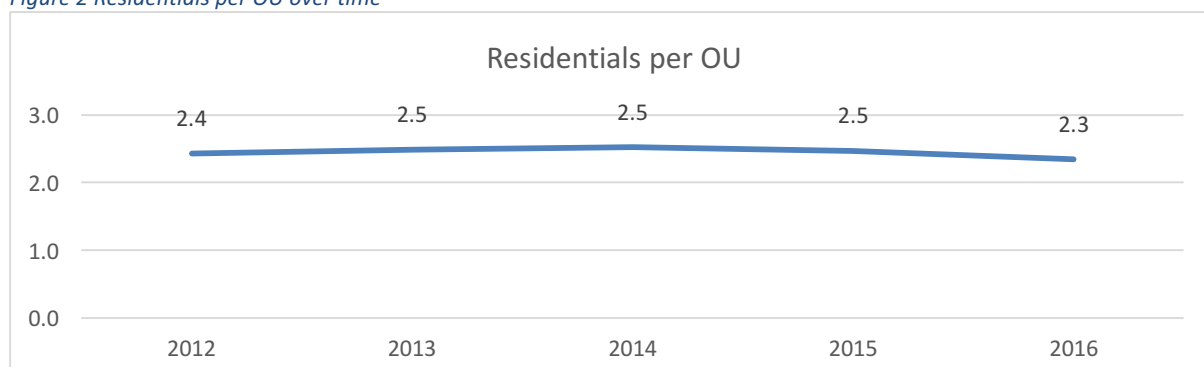
### 4.1 Number of residentials

Figure 1 Scale of residential provision over time



In 2016, Evolve users organised 37,755 residentials. Between 2012 and 2016 the number of OUs increased by 40% however the number of residentials increased slightly less (38%). Residentials per OU provides a better measure of the availability of residentials. This figure has been largely stable at around 2.5 residentials per OU over the last five years though there was a small dip in 2016.

Figure 2 Residentials per OU over time



This figure no doubt masks considerable variation since large and small, primary and secondary OUs as well as other establishments such as youth clubs are likely to arrange very different numbers of

residential. Summary statistics from Evolve also include both Welsh and Scottish establishments as well as those in England whereas our analysis in later sections focuses specifically on England. It is plausible that differences between the nations affect figures. However, the large sample size will hopefully balance out much of the potential variation.

#### 4.2 Participation in residential

Evolve's headline figures do not separate out the number of participants in residential as opposed to other trips, however using a smaller dataset relating to the stated purpose of residential visits (including 23,000-26,000 residential a year), we find that these, on average had 31.1 participants per residential (32 in 2016).

This figure too will mask considerable variation since large and small, primary and secondary OUs as well as other establishments such as youth clubs are likely to have very different numbers of participants in their residential.

Based on these figures we can **very tentatively** estimate the number of pupils involved in residential each year. Before doing so, it is important to re-emphasise the caveats already mentioned around hidden variation in participants per residential and residential per establishment. On top of this, as pointed out in section 3.1, users of Evolve may not be representative of all schools nationally (either in terms of their size, characteristics or propensity to participate in residential). Evolve figures also include some establishments that are not schools which may skew statistics.

Nonetheless, as a very broad estimate we suggest the following three calculations:

$$1. \text{Residential per OU} \times \text{Participants per residential} = \text{Participants per OU}$$

$$2. \text{Participants per OU} \times \text{Number of English schools} = \text{Number of English pupils participating in residential}$$

$$3. \left( \frac{\text{Number of English pupils participating in residential}}{\text{Total number of pupils in English Schools}} \right) = \% \text{ of English pupils participating in residential}$$

Using figures from the government's "Schools Pupils and their Characteristics" data<sup>5</sup> this yields the following figures for 2016:

$$1. 2.3 \times 32 = 73.6$$

$$2. 73.6 \times 24,288 = 1,787,597$$

$$3. \left( \frac{1,787,597}{8,560,000} \right) = 21\% \text{ of English pupils participating in residential}$$

This figure would set an approximate 'best guess' of one in five English pupils (21%) participating in a residential each year but there is considerable uncertainty as to the accuracy of this estimate.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2016>

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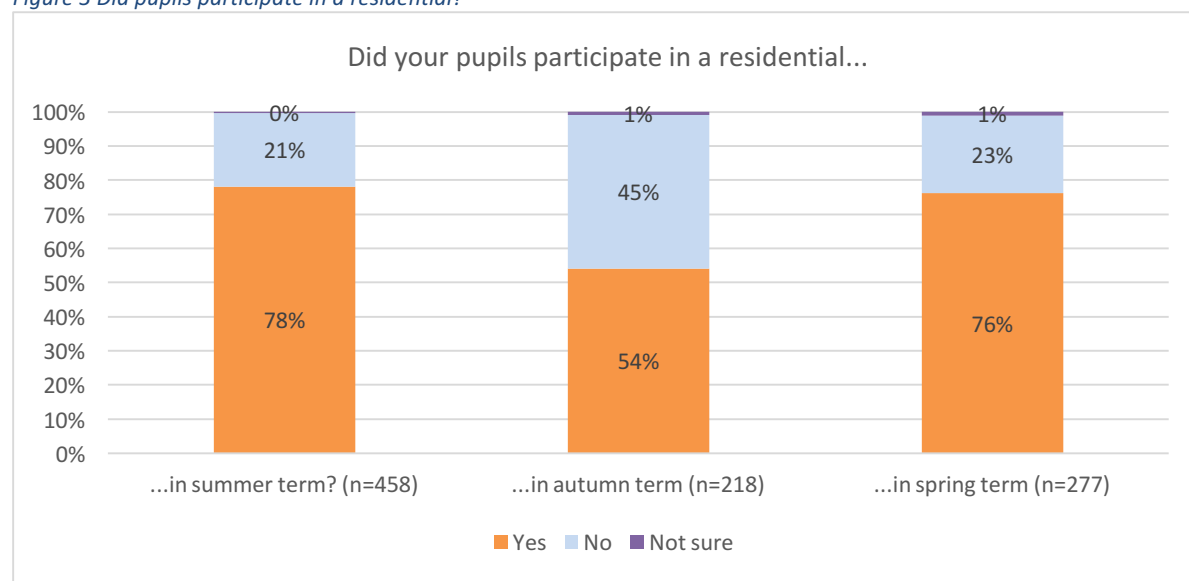
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### 4.3 Variation in the availability of residentials

#### 4.3.1 Season

Whilst our survey data is not a good indication of the availability of residentials (since respondents are in all probability more likely to come from schools that have recently delivered a residential), it provides an indication of when schools organise residentials. This shows that schools were much less likely to organise residentials in the Autumn term. The lower response rate to the survey referring to Autumn may also be related to a lower participation rate and Figure 3 could therefore mask further variation.

Figure 3 Did pupils participate in a residential?

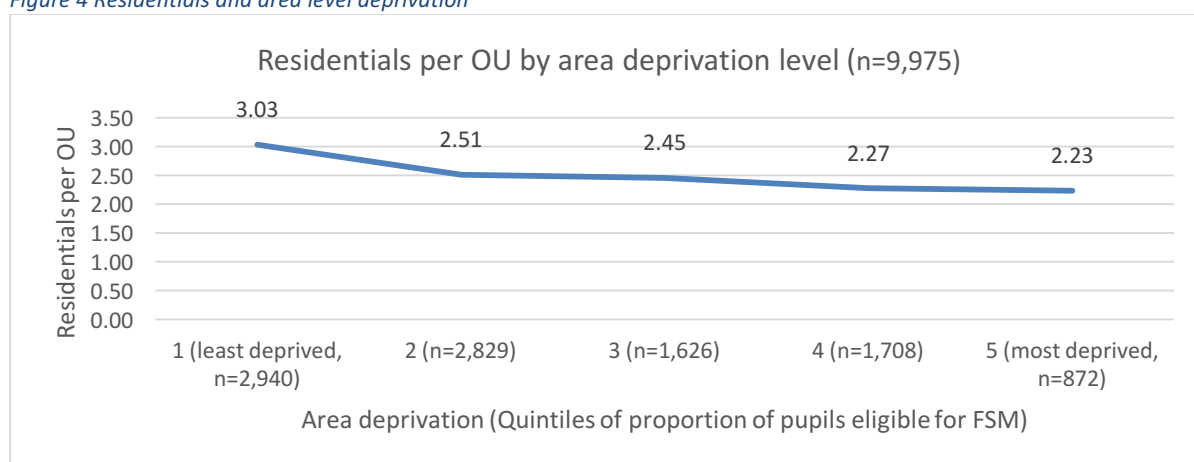


#### 4.4.2 Area level deprivation

The more deprived the area a pupil attends school in, the less likely they are to have the opportunity to participate in a residential. Whereas on average, establishments in the least deprived areas organise three residentials a year, those in the most deprived areas only organise 2.2. Furthermore it is striking that there are fewer OUs using the Evolve system in deprived areas which may mean these figures under-represent the disparity. In section 7.2 we further note that even where residentials are available, there are considerable barriers to poorer pupils accessing them.



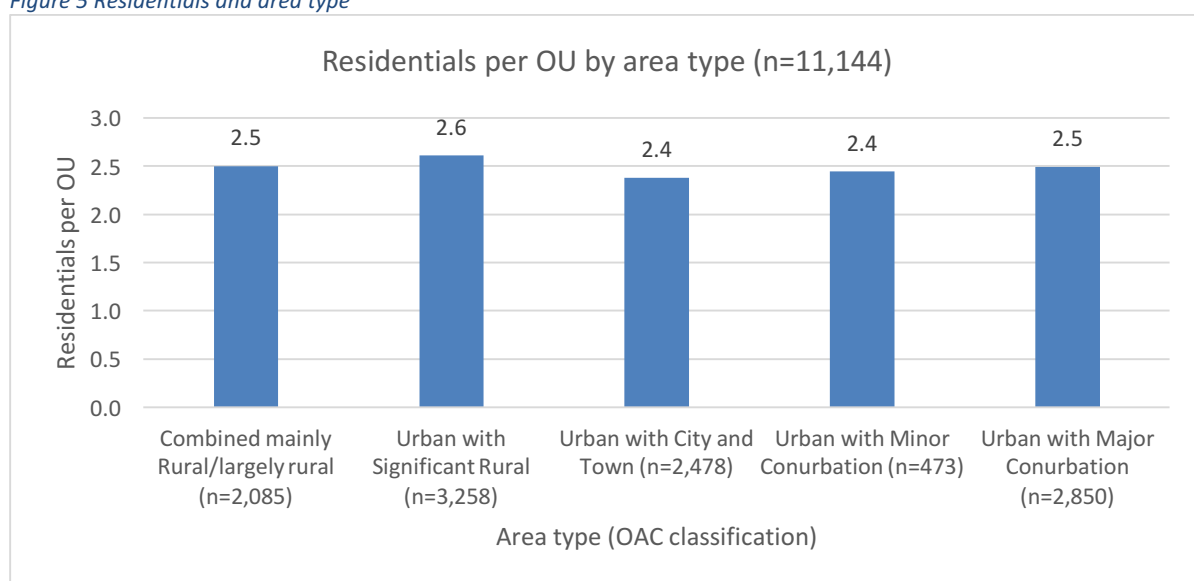
Figure 4 Residential and area level deprivation



### 4.3.2 Area type

Participation in residential does not appear to vary by area type with all area classifications clustered within 0.1 residential-per-OU of the average.

Figure 5 Residential and area type



## Summary

- On average, schools organise more than one residential per year across the schools but far from one per year group. Therefore most pupils do not have the opportunity to participate on an annual basis.
- The availability of residentials has been largely stable over the last five years.
- A very tentative estimate would suggest that approximately one in five pupils each year participate in a residential.
- Schools are least likely to organise residentials in the Autumn term
- Pupils in disadvantaged areas (areas where a large proportion of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals) have fewer opportunities to participate in residentials than their peers in more advantaged areas.
- Pupils in different type of areas (rural/urban etc.) have fairly similar access to residentials.



## 5. The purpose of residentials

*Residentials are frequently focused on personal development, and less so on curriculum subjects. Pupils access different types of residentials depending on their area's socio-economic characteristics.*

Nationally, the most common purposes for residentials are to impact on personal development or to deliver the Duke of Edinburgh award. In 2016, these two categories combined to account for a third of residentials. Subject focused residentials are less common, but amongst these, Humanities tend to dominate. In the most deprived areas, pupils are more likely to participate in “personal development” and PSHE focused residentials and less so the Duke of Edinburgh award.

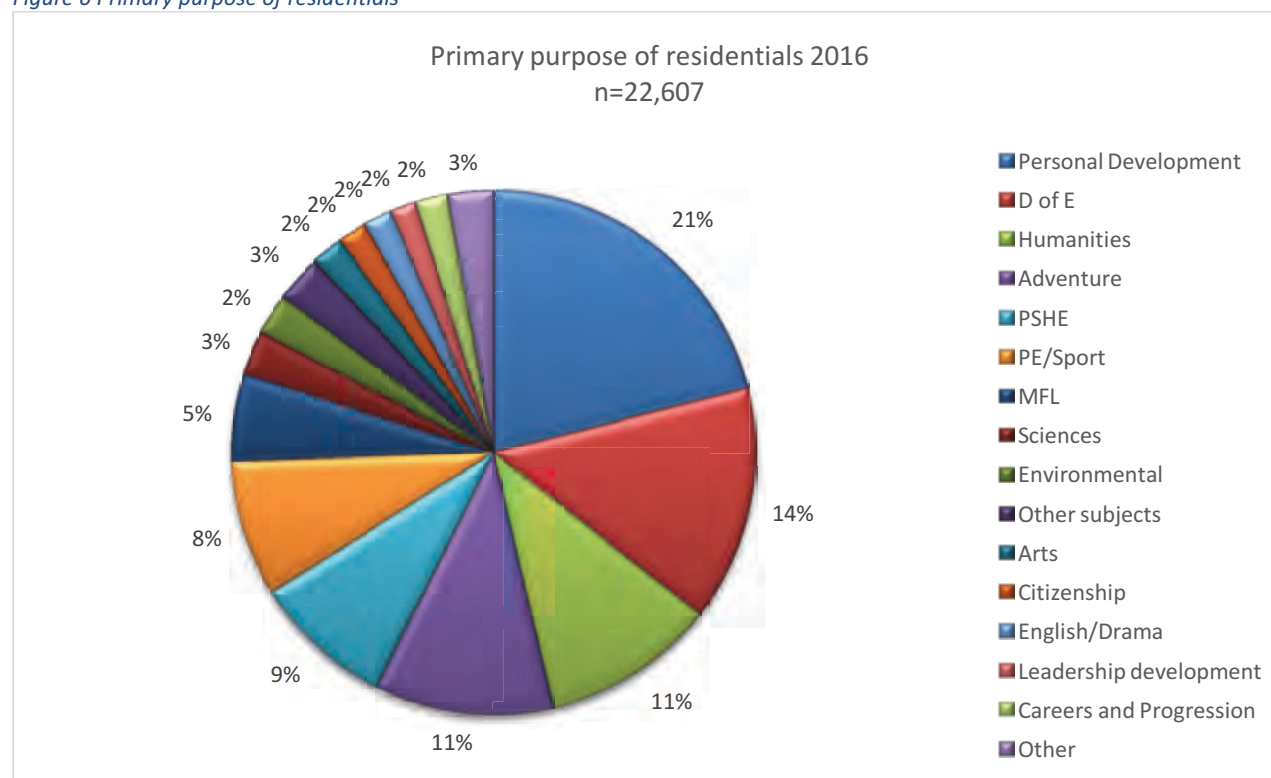
### 5.1 Evolve data

#### 5.1.1. Overall purpose

The five most commonly stated purposes for residentials were Personal development, followed by Duke of Edinburgh, Humanities subjects (history and geography), Adventure and PSHE. This has consistently been the case for the last five years with a slightly increasing proportion (around two-thirds) of residentials being made up of these five main categories over this time.

Combining all curriculum subjects (English and Drama, Arts, Sciences, MFL, Humanities and 'other subjects') accounts for only a quarter of residentials<sup>6</sup>.

Figure 6 Primary purpose of residentials



<sup>6</sup> We exclude PSHE, PE/Sports and Citizenship since these may include enrichment provision with these goals that takes place outside of the mainstream curriculum. The “other” category, accounting for 3% includes “exchange” and “reward”

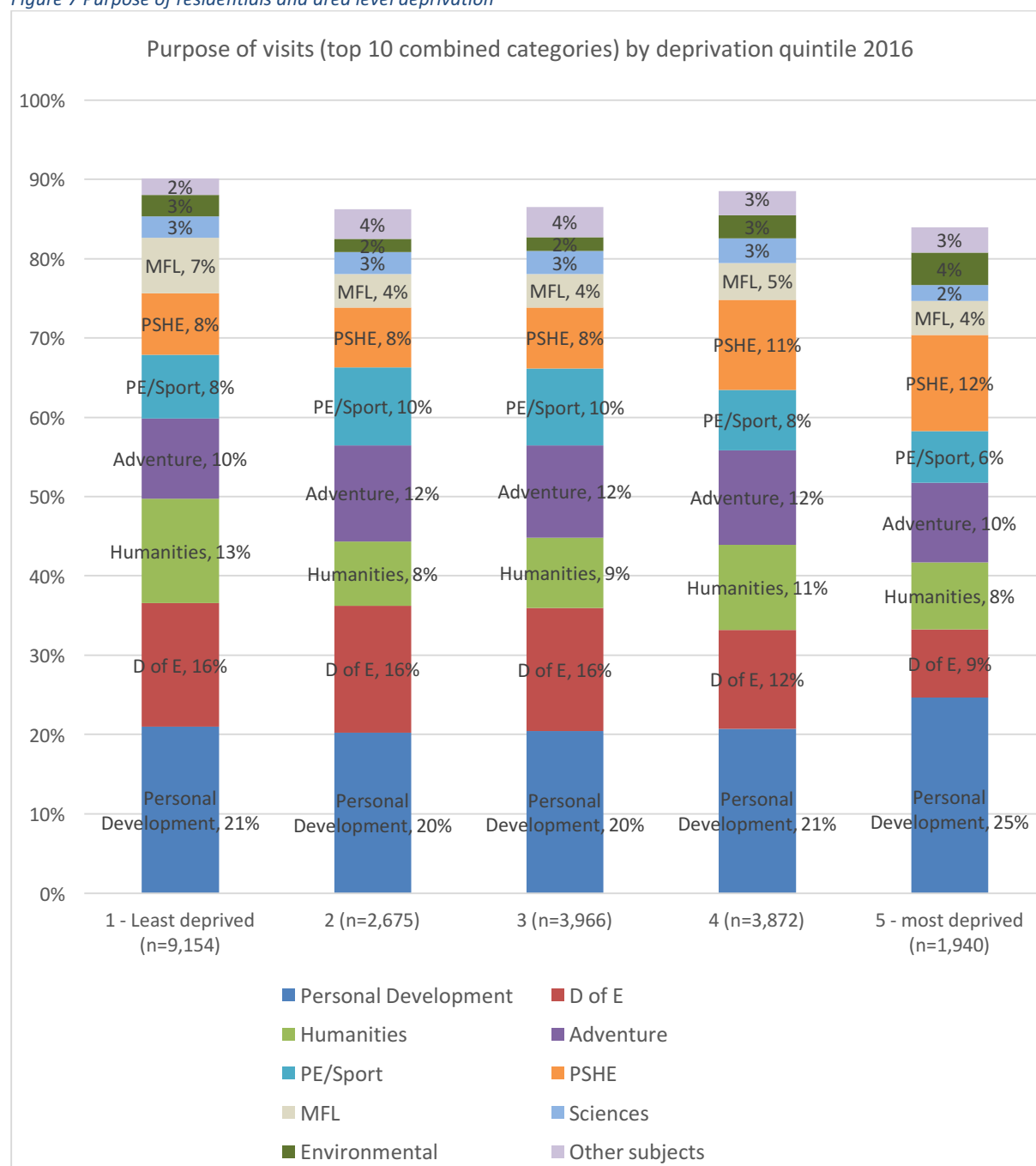


### 5.1.2 Purpose by area characteristics

#### i) Area level deprivation

Residential in the top quintile for deprivation were particularly likely to have PSHE or Personal Development as their purpose. Establishments in areas of low deprivation were more likely to have Duke of Edinburgh award as their purpose.

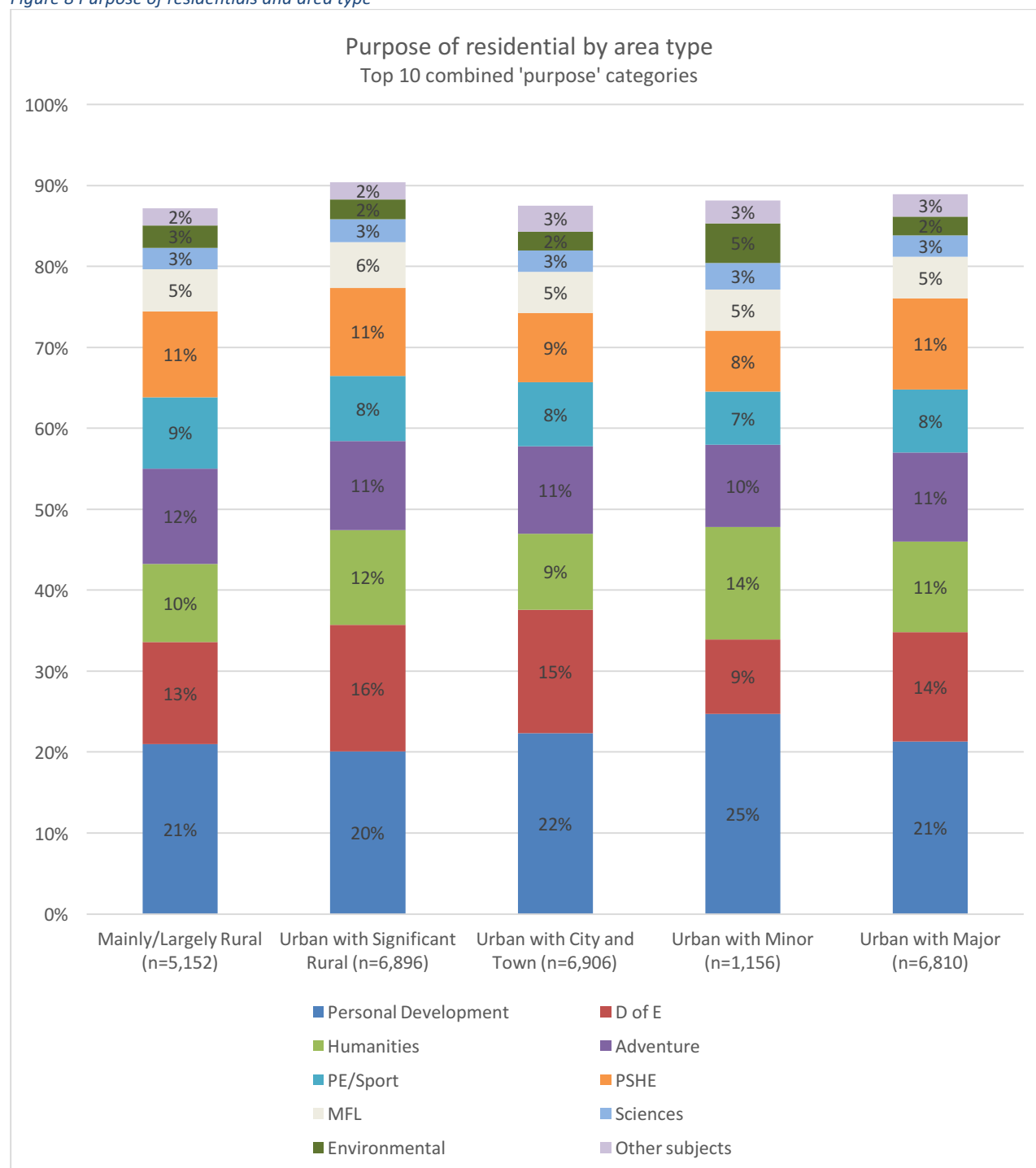
Figure 7 Purpose of residential and area level deprivation



## ii) Area type

There was some variation in the purpose of residentials depending on area-type but no clear pattern or trend emerges. Urban areas with minor conurbations were most likely to organise residentials focused on personal development and were also more likely to give humanities (including geography and history) as the primary purpose. Meanwhile Duke of Edinburgh residentials were most popular in areas that were urban areas with a significant mix of rural.

Figure 8 Purpose of residentials and area type



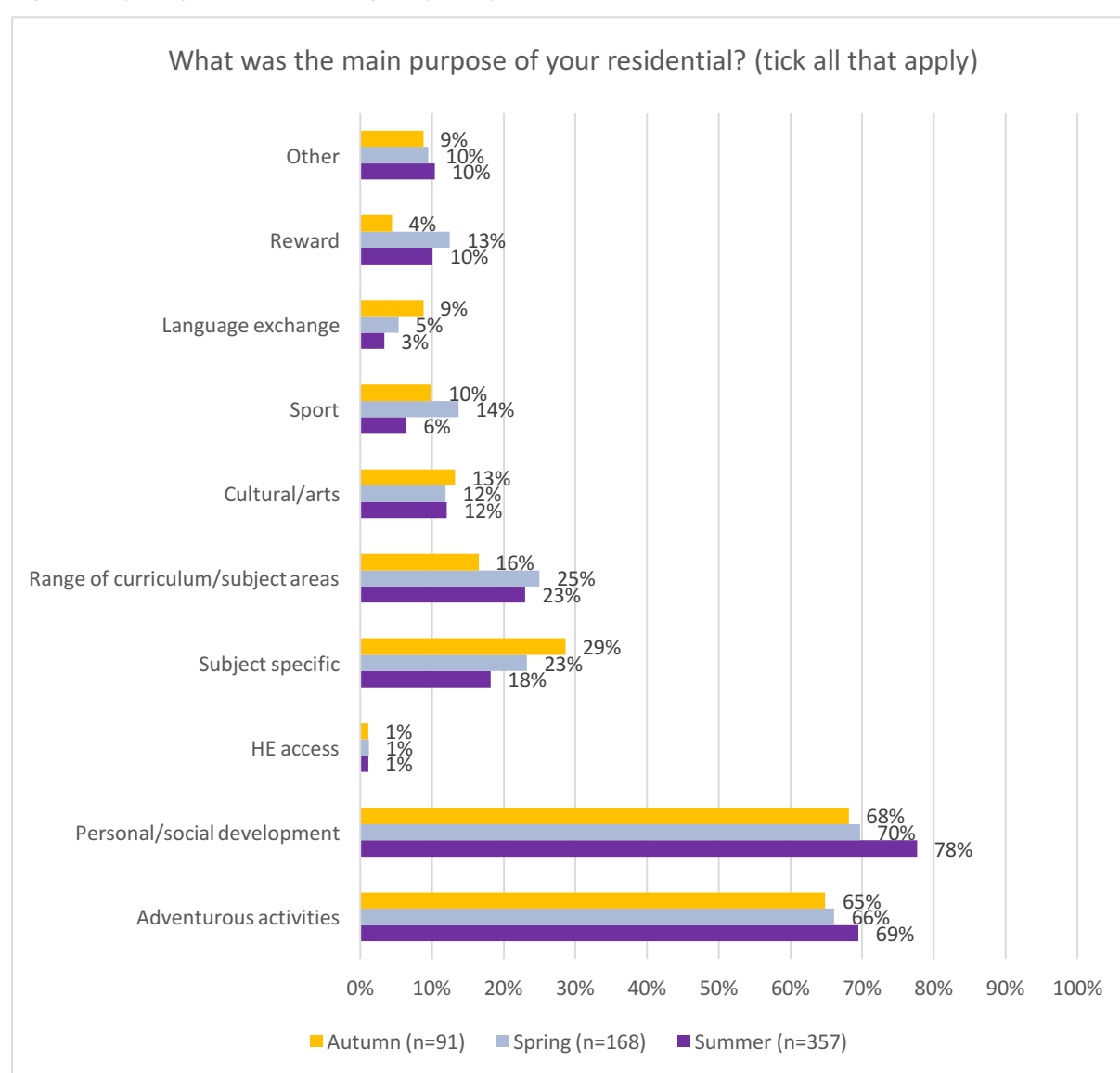
## 5.2 Survey data

### 5.2.1 Summary

Our survey used a different categorisation to that used by Evolve with fewer options and also allowed respondents to select multiple purposes. Findings were however consistent with those from Evolve data in that they showed that adventure and personal/social development were the most common purposes (we assume these categories include Duke of Edinburgh Award). Many residentials were also linked to certain areas of the curriculum.

There appear to be some seasonal trends with subject specific and language exchange visits taking place earlier on in the school year and personal development and adventure activities taking place in the summer.

Figure 9 Purpose of residential (Learning Away Survey)





### 5.1.2 Other purpose

Respondents who specified an 'other' purpose frequently emphasised Duke of Edinburgh or Life skills/independence and transitions/induction

Table 1 "Other" purposes

• D of E (x11)
• Transition/induction grouped category (x5)
• Developing independence/life skills (x5)
• Adventure sports/activities (x2)
• Language (x2)
• Controlled Assessment
• Build new friendships
• PSHSE
• Resilience and self-esteem building
• Let children know there are other places outside of Kings Lynn
• Experiencing the outdoor environment
• Music
• Holiday away from home
• Ecological awareness
• Learning how to camp and undertake various learning activities
• Subject was bike maintenance
• Democracy
• Part of activity week
• Overnight for year 5s in preparation for a week's residential in autumn term year 6
• Our trip was for year 6 and included many of the above purposes - history, geography, theatre, personal/social development and reward
• Marking the end of their primary schooling
• The opportunity to access activities beyond their usual experiences and with their peers
• Residential and water activities experience
• Pupils to access new and engaging sports activities
• Fun activities
• Building in new experiences
• An extension of our own Forest School investigations
• Confidence building
• Challenge, taking risks and experiences
• Widen life experience
• This is an inner city school where some children do not experience holidays or the countryside- it was planned to extend experience especially for certain targeted vulnerable children in the cohort
• Co-operative values
• Environmental
• British values and cultural exchange through a visit to a local school and activities with the children from this school
• Fun!
• Growth mindset - resilience and perseverance
• Progression into year 10
• Reinforcement of school Christian ethos
• Revision for year 11 borderline pupils with the addition of adventurous activities as incentive.

### Purpose – summary

- Residentials have a range of purposes but personal development, adventure and the Duke of Edinburgh tend to dominate, with curriculum subjects only accounting for a quarter of residentials.
- There are some differences in the nature of provision depending on an area's socio-economic characteristics, particularly in relation to PSHE and the Duke of Edinburgh Award.



## 6. The quality of residentials:

*Residentials are generally of high quality but cost is stopping many poorer pupils from participating, leaving them doubly disadvantaged in terms of their participation.*

In this report, Learning Away's agreed characteristics for a "Brilliant Residential" serve as a benchmark for quality. We find that design and planning of residentials is an area of strength although pupils' involvement in planning is very much limited. There are however serious concerns in relation to affordability and this problem requires urgent action.

### 6.1 Strengths

Schools said that their residentials were:

- Planned in a way that met their pupils' abilities and learning needs
- Planned with clear learning objectives
- Designed to provide opportunities for students and staff to build collaborative relationships

In all three surveys, over half, of respondents 'strongly agreed' with these statements and over 80% agreed or strongly agreed. Almost 100% believed that their residential was planned in a way that met their pupils' abilities and learning needs with reference to Summer and Autumn residentials but there was a slight dip in this area in relation to Spring residentials.

Teachers' involvement in planning and curriculum links were also strengths but to a slightly lesser degree.

### 6.2 Weaknesses

Each term, over a third of respondents did not believe that all their pupils could afford to participate. Only around half agreed that they could.

Respondents did not tend to say that:

- Pupils helped design the residential (though more did so in relation to Spring residentials)
- All their pupils could afford to participate

There was some ambivalence in relation to using a structured approach to evaluation, with only two-thirds agreeing that they had used such an approach for their Summer and Autumn residentials but only 15-17% actively disagreeing and 15-17% neither agreeing nor disagreeing. The proportion agreeing that they had used a structured approach to evaluation (to at least some extent) increased to 80% by the third survey.

We explore this further in section 6.3.1 and find that evaluation means different things to different respondents and that they have mixed attitudes to conducting such evaluation.

There was also some ambivalence in relation to whether residentials were linked to an ongoing and progressive programme of other school activities. 11-13% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

Figure 10 Characteristics of residentials: breakdown of responses

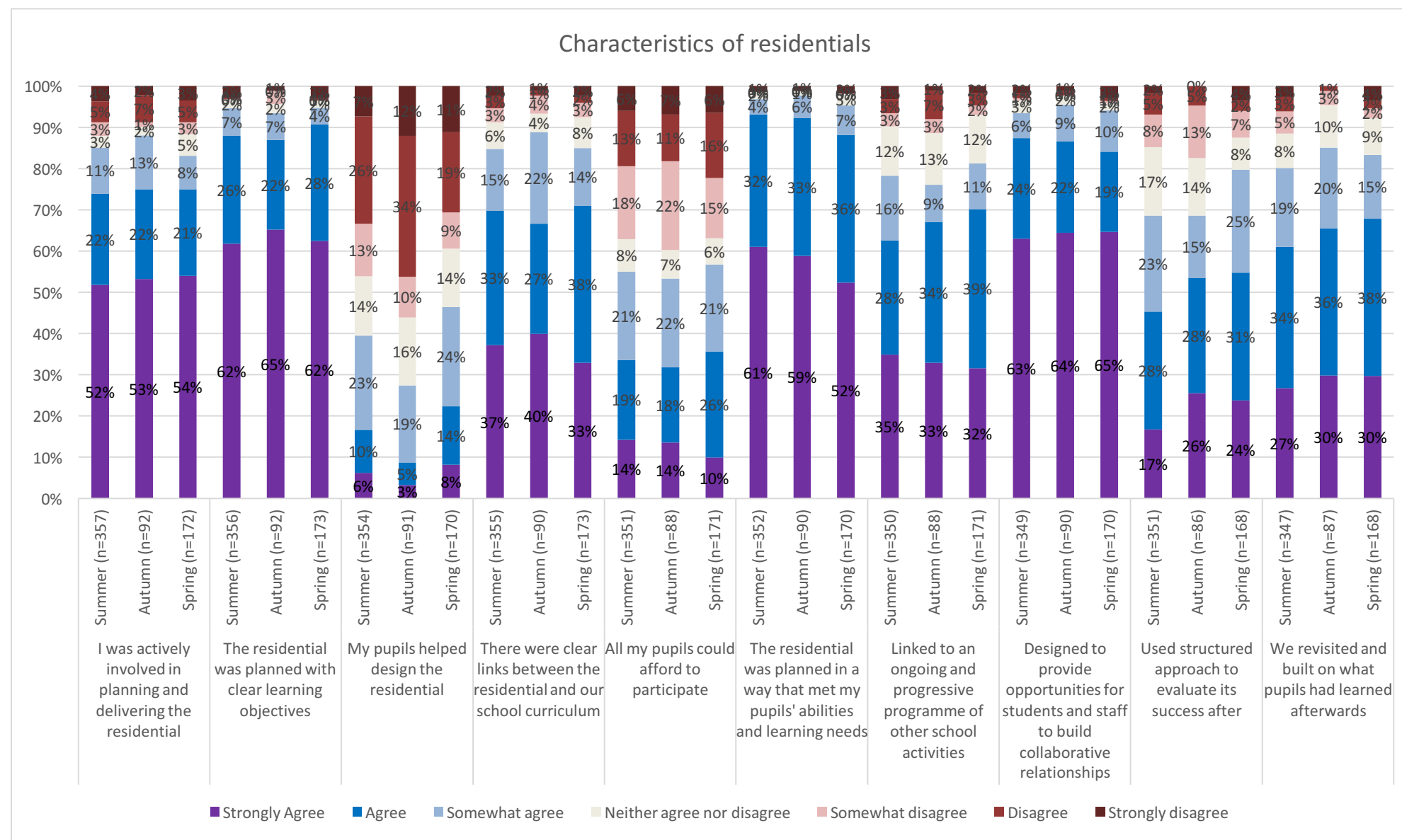
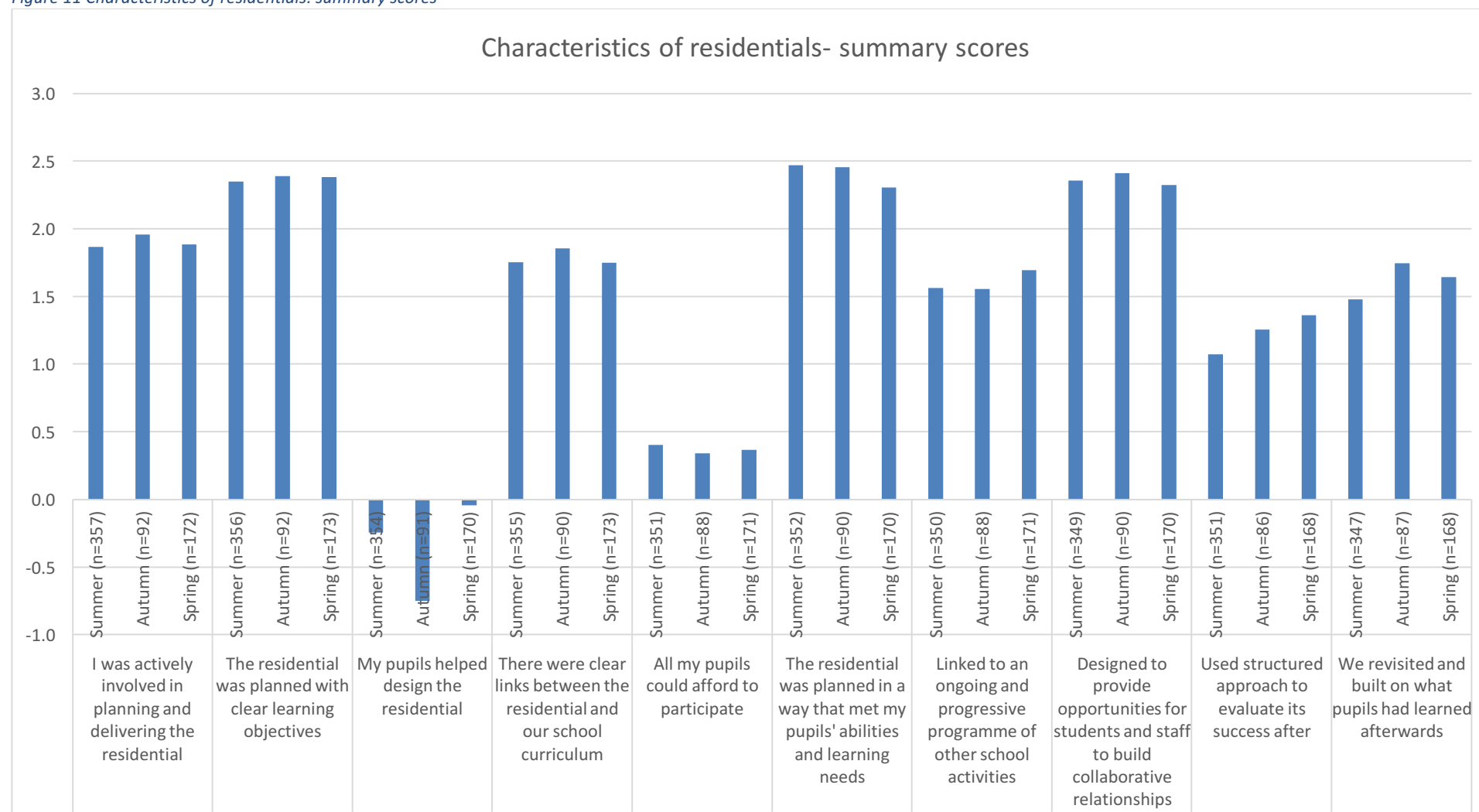




Figure 11 Characteristics of residentials: summary scores



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## 6.3 Barriers to quality

Teachers do not necessarily see co-planning with pupils as desirable, furthermore, even where they want to involve pupils, they face practical barriers. In many cases they seek to overcome these by drawing on pupil feedback from previous years.

We find that pupils from poorer families are doubly disadvantaged when it comes to residential provision: they are more likely to live in areas where there are fewer residential available and problems with affordability mean they are less likely to be able to participate even where they are available. Schools are attempting to mitigate for the problems of affordability but it is not clear that these efforts are sufficient. As funding is squeezed, this will become an increasing problem.

Not all teachers want to use structured approaches to evaluation however some who wish to do so are not sure how to go about doing so. It can be particularly tricky to reflect and evaluate thoroughly when residential take place at the end of a summer term – which many do.

Almost half of residential are mainly led and delivered by external staff. Teachers frequently noted that their involvement in planning was limited by the fact that they were using an ‘off the shelf’ activity.

For many teachers, residential occupied a position that was distinct from the standard curriculum. The Duke of Edinburgh Award for example was considered a valuable programme that sat alongside the curriculum rather than as part of it and many valued the enriching nature of residential. This sometimes limited teachers’ willingness to link residential to the curriculum or plan for progression.

### 6.3.1 Affordability

In section 4.3 we found that fewer residential were available in disadvantaged areas, however, survey responses make it clear that this underestimates the extent to which less well-off pupils miss out on residential. Even where residential are available, in many cases pupils’ opportunities to participate are skewed by how much money their parents have.

Across the three surveys (n=610), only a third of respondents were confident (agreed or strongly agreed) that all their pupils could afford to participate.

*“Some children were unable to afford to attend the residential so they were offered an activity week in school which had a minimal cost and was completed with the teachers remaining.”*

*“Some pupils did not have the means to access this opportunity even though they would probably benefitted the most from the experiences”*

*“Unfortunately there are a small cohort of students that are not necessarily PP but cannot afford it”*

In open responses about barriers to quality, at least 137 respondents referenced affordability. These comments frequently referenced the high cost of activities. As school funding diminishes further, opportunities to subsidise may become more limited and this is likely to have a considerable impact on the poorest pupils.

*“The fee goes up and up. Our school are currently in a position to fund and parents to owe us, this will not be the case in the future.”*

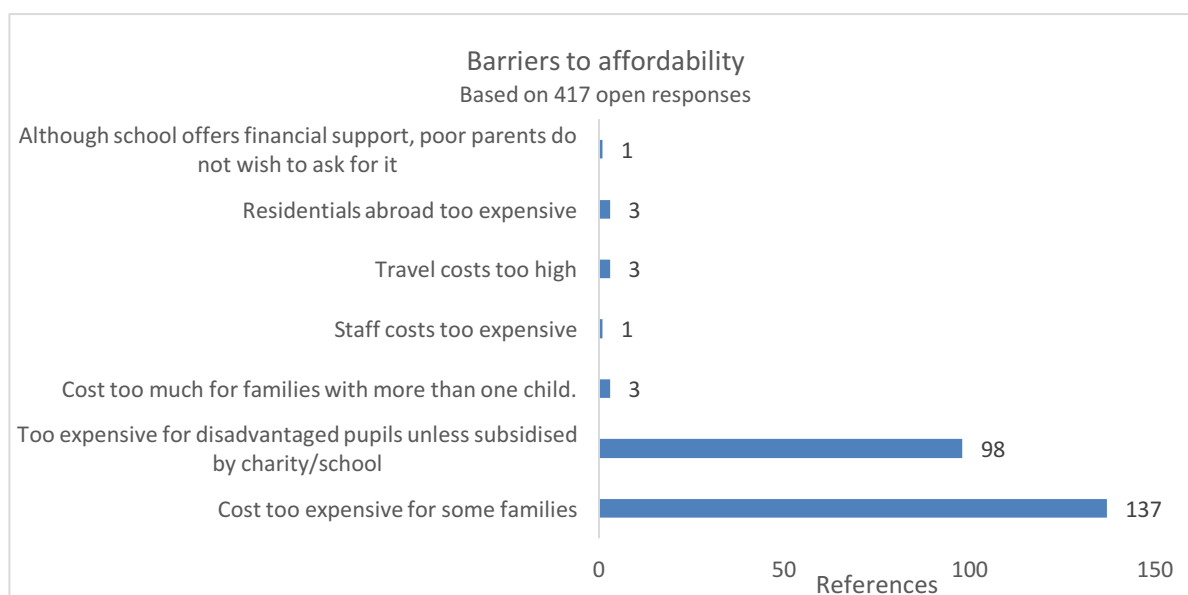


Photo credit: iStock by Getty Images

“Some pupils did not have the means to access this opportunity even though they would probably benefitted the most from the experiences”

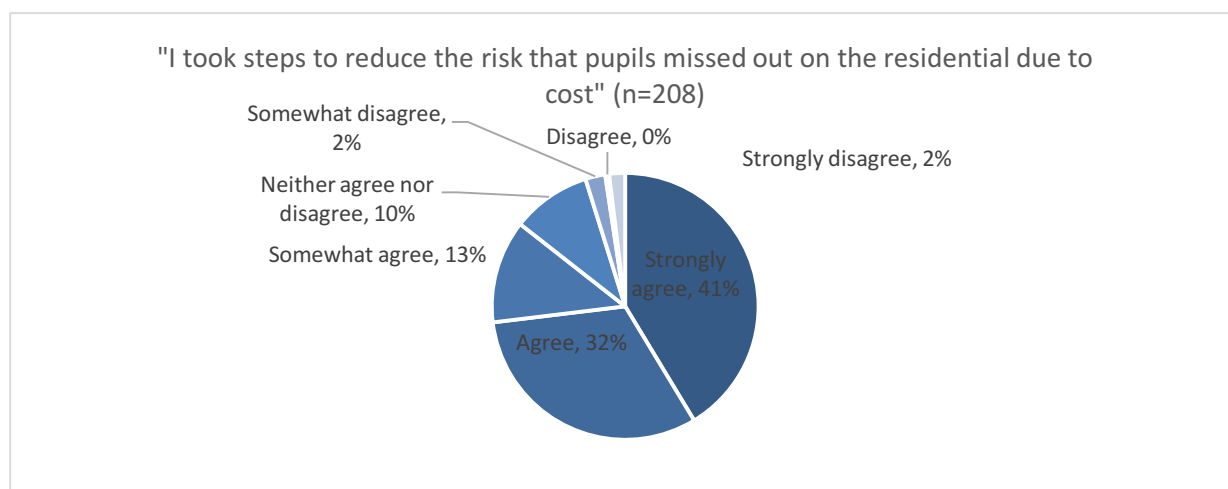
Teacher survey response (pg 25)

Figure 12 Barriers to affordability



85% of teachers took some steps to ensure the residential was affordable (agreed, somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that they did so).

Figure 13 Taking steps to address affordability



***"Not all children could afford the full amount however it was subsidised for them."***

***"For those pupils who could not afford to attend the school accessed other funding to enable them to attend."***

***"Financial support was offered to those families who earlier declined the opportunity to attend purely based on cost to ensure than all the cohort had the opportunity to attend."***



Yet these steps were often insufficient to ensure that pupils could afford to participate. More than a quarter of the respondents who had taken steps to ensure affordability were still uncertain that no pupils missed out on the residential due to cost<sup>7</sup>.

When asked what steps they had taken to ensure affordability in our third survey, a large majority (80%, 129) of respondents to this question mentioned providing a subsidy. In at least 42% (54) of these cases respondents said this was a targeted subsidy, often for pupils eligible for free school meals, or those whom teachers knew would struggle to pay<sup>8</sup>.

*“Considered overall cost to students which was subsidised by school. Pupil premium and low income families were able to seek assistance with funding (reduced price)”*

*“Used pupil premium and sport funding resources to support disadvantaged families. No child missed out.”*

In many cases (38%, 49), respondents said they used the pupil premium to provide this subsidy. In other cases, they referred to using general school funds. 15% (18) said they had fundraised.

*“Raised funds with Year 6 (Fruity Friday, Cake day etc)”*

*“Applied for a bursary to help with accommodation costs and used some Pupil Premium funds to support those who could not afford to go. This enabled every child to attend.”*

Other commonly used approaches to making trips affordable included:

### **1. Flexible payments - mentioned by 20% (32) of respondents**

*“Saving /payment card”*

*“Created a payment plan to spread the cost”*

### **2. Liaising with parents – mentioned by 15% (25) of respondents**

*“Held parents information evenings, letters sent home saying if there were any concerns to see me, (which) parents did”*

*“Spoke to all parents individually who did not put their child on the trip to discuss if money was an issue and paid what was necessary to make it happen.”*

### **3. Reducing the cost – mentioned by 14% (23)**

*“Our trips are incredibly good value and traditionally we have borne some of the true costs as a school either in staff time given freely or in other ways. Government charging guidelines which mean we can only ask for voluntary contributions has resulted in parents who can afford to pay, not paying. This could mean in future our costs have to go up.”*

<sup>7</sup> 179 respondents agreed, somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that they “took steps to reduce the risk that pupils missed out on the residential due to cost” and 28% of these did not agree or strongly agree that they felt “confident that as a result of the steps I took, no pupils missed out on the residential due to cost”

<sup>8</sup> These figures are based on coding of open responses and this figure only includes unambiguous responses (e.g. *providing* a subsidy rather than *seeking* a subsidy and explicitly referencing targeted rather than universal subsidies.

*“Travelled by coach instead of flying which brought the price down by approx. £100”*

*“We purposely book at an unpopular time of year!”*

*“Time of year we booked. Rebooking a year ahead. Various sign posts for parents accessing charity funds.”*

Some schools had worked carefully to combine a range of these approaches to maximise equitable access.

*“Planned very early, provided a clear breakdown and proposed payment plan. Did large amounts of research into tour companies / got sponsorship for new kit & tour jumpers.”*

Despite all these efforts, several teachers highlighted ongoing problems for affordability, particularly with expensive trips

*“It’s an expensive trip that not all families can afford.”*

*“There is no funding available to subsidise this type of trip”*

*“Cannot now due to budgets in schools parents have got to pay”*

*“Pupils were not able to get funding for the trip because it was abroad, despite enquiring about this.”*

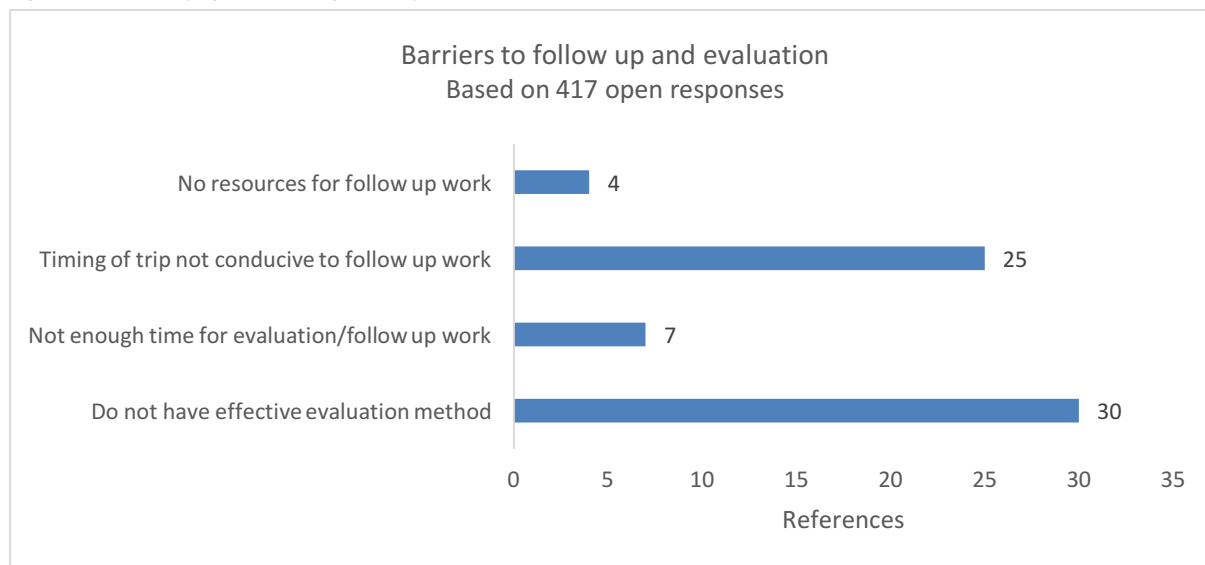
*“Some fundraising in school but this was too little to help all children”*

### 6.3.2 Evaluating and revisiting learning

Respondents had mixed views on evaluating residentials and revisiting them to build on learning. Whilst 80-85% of respondents had “revisited and built on what pupils had learned afterwards”, only 69-80% had “used a structured approach to evaluate its success.” To some extent this reflected differences in interpretation as to what evaluation might mean with some saying they did not use quantitative frameworks to measure impact but that they did gather feedback and reflect. Meanwhile, it is likely that the reason why the proportion who revisited and built on learning was lower in the summer term than other terms was that many residentials were for pupils who then moved to a different teacher or school.

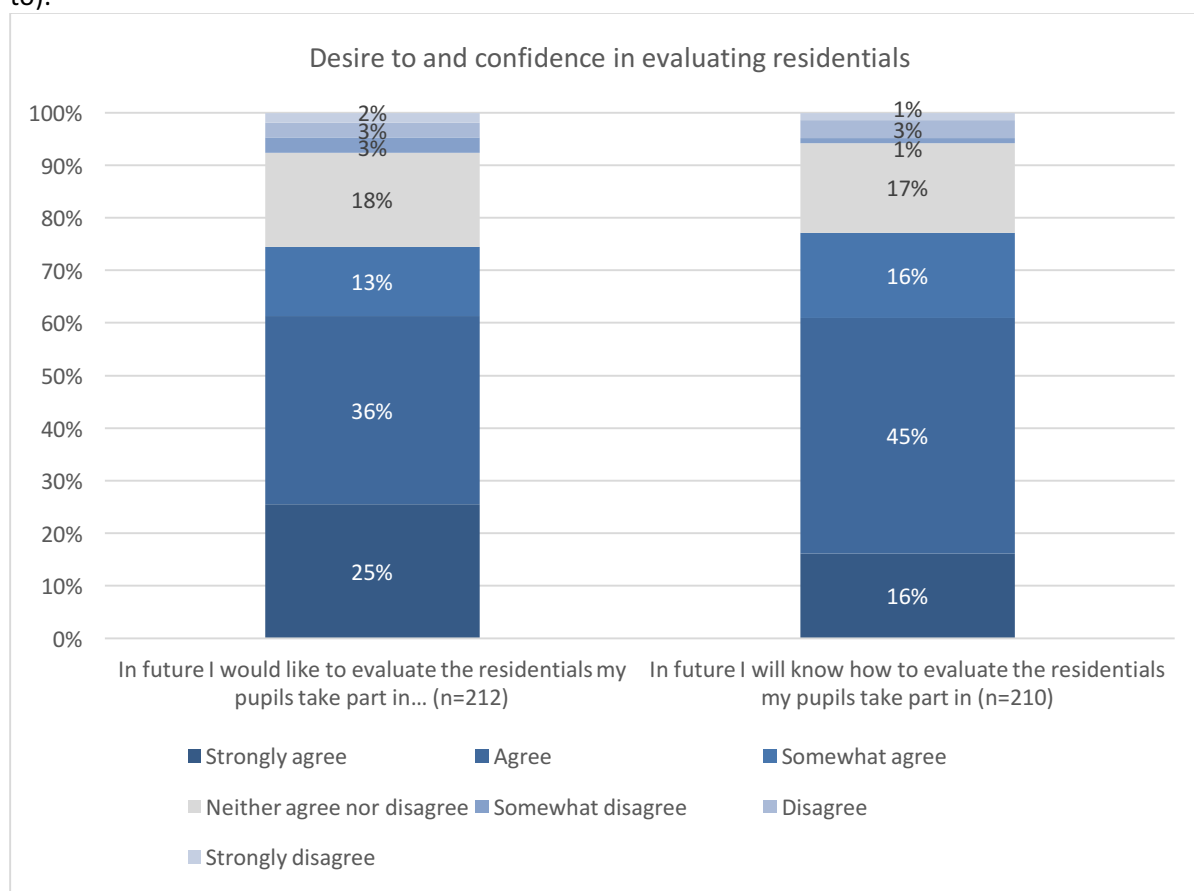
Some respondents considered structured or formal approaches undesirable whereas others felt they lacked the necessary tools or skills. Seasonality also affected evaluation with the timing of summer residentials frequently acting as a barrier to both revisiting and building on learning, and evaluating.

Figure 14 Summary of barriers to follow up and evaluation



#### a) A skills deficit?

61% (13) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they wanted to evaluate future residentials and a similar proportion felt that they knew how to do so (61%, 128). However, a smaller proportion strongly agreed that they knew how to evaluate compared to the proportion that strongly agreed that they wanted to do so. Indeed of those who agreed or strongly agreed that they wanted to evaluate, 16% (21) felt they were confident doing so (strongly agreed or agreed that they knew how to).



Some respondents' lack of confidence seems to be due to a lack of appropriate tools, or a sense that they should be using more quantitative methods than they are at present.

*"I feel slightly unsure as to the best way to evaluate the success of a residential in a quantitative manner. "*

*"We don't have a format to evaluate its success and we don't know what to use to build on what pupils have learnt."*

#### b) Approaches to evaluation and reflection

Not all respondents want to evaluate their residentials or believe that doing so is desirable. For some this was because they did not feel they needed to.

*"Did not think a formal evaluation of the success would merit more time than planning the next residential. Benefits were obvious"*

Many felt that an informal, reflective approach was the best way to go about evaluating residentials' benefits and outcomes.

*"The evaluation is in the form of reflections from the children - so not entirely structured as this would not capture all the elements that the children pick up on."*

There was little evidence of pinning formal evaluation of residentials' benefits to specific intended outcomes.

#### c) Timing

When commenting on summer residentials, 25 respondents mentioned that the timing of their activities was a barrier to evaluation. This may mean that schools should be encouraged to hold residentials at different times of year, beyond the traditional end of year slot.

*"It was held at the very end of the year and that made it difficult to build on."*

*"The residential was at the end of summer term for Year 6 and they then left the school!"*

### 6.3.3 Co-planning with pupils

A number of constraints to co-planning were repeatedly highlighted. The main themes were:

- A belief that co-planning was inappropriate or that it was the schools' role to set aims
- Curriculum or qualification pressures
- A perceived lack of expertise on pupils' part, particularly in relation to certain activities
- The make-up of a group limiting opportunities for or ability to co-plan
- The timing of the trip (which could mean it was planned in response to previous feedback)

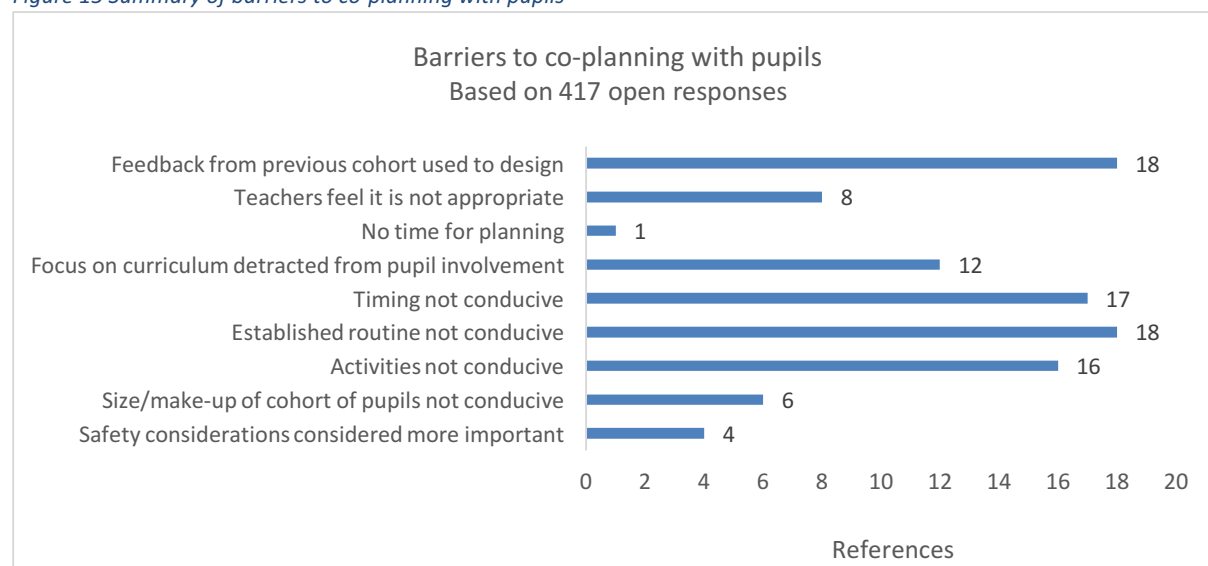


“We don’t have a format to evaluate [the residentials] success and we don’t know what to use to build on what pupils have learnt.”

Teacher survey response (pg 31)



Figure 15 Summary of barriers to co-planning with pupils



#### a) Not appropriate, or school sets aims

Some respondents felt that pupil involvement was not necessarily desirable and suggested that their school already had clear goals for their residential.

*“I do not feel that it is appropriate for children to design the programme.”*

*“Pupils didn't help design it. It is too complex for them to design - we give them some small aspects they have ownership over but there isn't capacity or funds for them to design it”*

*“We are very clear what we want to get out of residentials. We talk to the children about what they're going to be doing but we plan them.”*

*“As a school we had a clear idea of what we wanted the outcome to be. Therefore, the children had minimum input into the planning of the residential.”*

#### b) Curriculum or qualification requirements

Some residentials are planned specifically to meet exam criteria or address specific curriculum aims and in such cases, teachers frequently felt that co-planning was not appropriate or possible. This constraint was specifically linked to geography fieldtrips in several cases.

*“The trip was to allow students to complete GCSE geography coursework at a specialised facility”*

*“The Residential was a FSC Controlled Assessment fieldwork for the exam. The exam board specify the requirements.”*

*“The residential was organised with specific links to the GCSE syllabus for history. It was therefore difficult to involve students in the planning.”*

#### c) Lack of pupil knowledge and unconducive activities

For some teachers, the fact that residentials were intended to provide something unfamiliar meant it was not appropriate to involve pupils because they could not necessarily imagine something so far

out of their everyday experience. Similarly, a lack of knowledge could mean that teachers did not feel pupils were equipped with the skills to plan adventurous activities.

*“The children are not that involved in the planning as we are trying to give them experiences that they have not had before.”*

*“We use pupil feedback from previous years rather than specifically their own ideas - sometimes they achieve on their residential trips things that they could not imagine previously!”*

*“We have done the same visit over a number of years that has been adapted by pupil feedback”*

External provision from outdoor providers and certain types of activities were often barriers to pupil involvement. In such cases schools appeared to be ‘buying activities off the shelf’ and this left them feeling that there were no opportunities for co-planning.

*“Visiting an activity centre, did not give opportunity for pupil planning”*

*“Activities were already structured at the site we attended.”*

#### d) Make-up of group

In one case, a group involved over 270 pupils and in cases like this, the size of the group was considered a barrier to pupil involvement. Similarly, where a group was made up of pupils from a combination different schools, respondents explained that logistics made co-planning challenging.

In some cases respondents believed that the nature of their pupils, for example their age or special needs made co-planning difficult.

*“We are a special school, so the pupils would struggle to design the trip themselves.”*

*“Pupils are not involved in trip planning due to their age”*

#### e) Timing and building on feedback

Constraints of timing frequently inhibited pupils’ involvement. This was generally because residential were planned so much in advance that it was difficult to involve pupils.

*“The residential was planned a year in advance and therefore the children were not asked what they would like to include. However the previous year’s group were asked what they felt worked well and what they would add to improve the experience.”*

As in this case, some teachers still sought to build on pupils’ feedback in an attempt to include ‘pupil voice’ but this is clearly different to co-planning. Furthermore, references to building on previous years’ experiences did not always explicitly mention including pupil feedback.

Where trips were intended as a reward opportunity, this could be a barrier because planning needed to take place before knowing which pupils would be involved. Where planning coincided with a busy period such as SATs this could also be a problem. Similarly, where a group was made up of new pupils (for example an induction trip), the timing could inhibit pupil involvement.

### 6.3.4 Teachers’ involvement in planning

Not all respondents were involved in planning their residential though some took a role even where this was limited in scope. Sometimes, the person who responded to the survey (whether they were

the teacher or a school trip co-ordinator) affected involvement, but a lack of involvement was sometimes linked to external providers doing the bulk of the planning.

Aside from planning, around half of respondents (52-55%) were heavily involved in leading and delivering their residential, but an almost equal proportion said that their residential was mainly led and delivered by an external provider.

#### a) Role

Some respondents had whole school responsibilities that linked them to the trips that they were commenting on, rather than being directly involved (for example where the respondent was a senior leader or Educational Visit Coordinator). Where respondents said they were not involved, this did not therefore necessarily mean that no teachers were involved.

*“I did not plan the residential. I am an EVC and don't plan others trips, just coordinate school trips, Evolve and risk assessment”*

*“The staff going on the residential planned the trip, alongside the EVC. As a Head, I was involved in the planning at a strategic level.”*

#### b) Planned by others

Almost half of residentials were mainly led and delivered by external organisations. This could limit the opportunities for teachers to get involved.

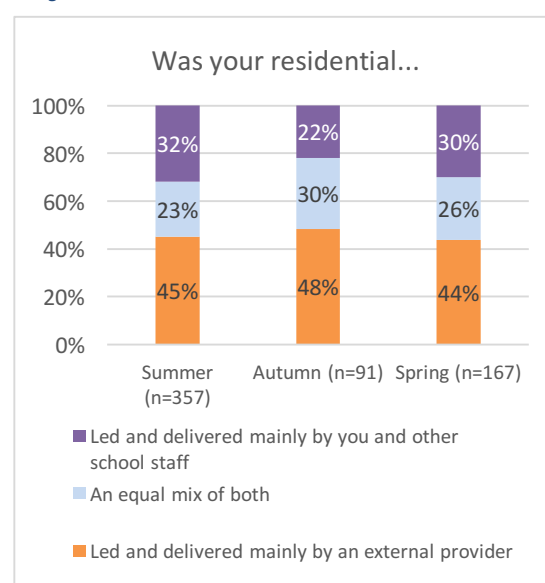
*“The residential was planned and delivered with the university, therefore we couldn't give the children that much input as it was fairly limited what we could do”*

*“It was set by the CRIE so we did not have any input in its programme.”*

Nonetheless, schools could still play a role in co-planning where external providers were used.

*“The residential focused on outdoor adventurous activities. The programme was designed by the provider. The staff carefully chose the provider and planned the activities with them when appropriate.”*

Figure 16 Who leads and delivers residentials?

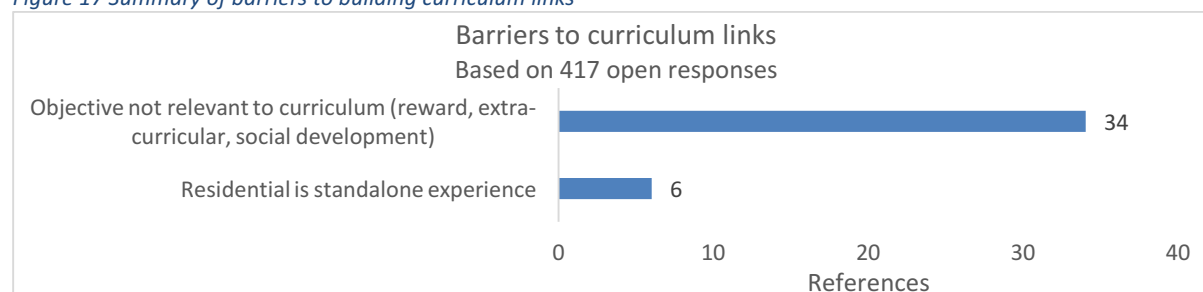


There is a difficult balance to be struck here: given teachers' workload, minimising their involvement and thus the demands on their time through use of 'off the shelf models' may increase the likelihood that they run residentials. However, this limits the extent to which pupils and teachers can co-design activities with pupils, plan for progression, or tailor the activity to meet pupils' specific needs or interests. It is also worth noting that outsourcing the organisation of activities using external organisations may increase costs and therefore impact on affordability.

### 6.3.5 Links to curriculum and progressive programme of activities

Respondents did not always believe that residential should be linked to the curriculum or have fixed objectives. Instead, many believed that residential should be set-aside and distinct from the rest of the curriculum.

Figure 17 Summary of barriers to building curriculum links



This could partly result from equating the 'curriculum' to the *national curriculum* rather than the individual *school's curriculum* of learning that all pupils are entitled to. There is some evidence for this in that where respondents saw residential as enrichment or team building activities they did not always see this as a curriculum activity. Indeed, even though some referred to such activities as "stand alone" or "one off", comments revealed that residential could still be part of something bigger such as an "enrichment programme" or a journey of "growth and development":

*"Was more of an end of school trip for children than educational. Mostly built on team building"*

*"Most of the trips were a one off or part of the school's enrichment programme"*

*"The residential completes our outdoor learning curriculum and therefore was not needed to build on as it is a standalone experience although the outcomes in children's growth and development is obviously ongoing"*

Comments occasionally revealed a resistance to having clear objective with some respondents appearing to see such an approach as instrumental or reductionist:

*"As much as being linked to any learning objective etc, it is important that residential are primarily fun, adventurous and safe experiences that help build independence and leave our children with lasting positive memories."*

*"Where I disagreed it was because I don't feel learning objectives are always relevant to a residential."*

Finally, although the Duke of Edinburgh award clearly involves a programme of progressive activities, respondents frequently believed it took place alongside the curriculum rather than as part of it.

*"Duke of Edinburgh assessed expeditions - these are not embedded in the curriculum, but are valued highly due to personal and skills development."*

It is understandable that teachers will sometimes want to deploy residential in a way that goes beyond the *national curriculum*. However, there is considerable potential to explicitly link residential to school ethos and to ensure they are part of the *school curriculum*, in terms of a sequence of learning offered to all pupils. This would ensure inclusivity and have the benefit of ensuring pupils can progress and build skills over the course of the residential they take part in during their school career.



## Barriers to quality – summary

- Affordability is a considerable concern and although most schools are making efforts to provide equitable access, this is often not enough to ensure equal access.
- The pupil premium plays an important role in ensuring more pupils can participate in residential.
- Schools frequently target subsidies; work with parents; spread out payments; fundraise; or attempt to minimise costs, as part of their efforts to make residential more affordable.
- Most teachers are open to evaluating residential, but some lack the skills to do so.
- Some teachers are wary of evaluating residential and the traditional end of year residential presents particular barriers to evaluation and reflection.
- Co-planning with pupils is far from being the norm and this is because of a combination of a lack of will (or sense that it is inappropriate) and of practical constraints.
- Use of external providers often limits teachers' involvement in planning and delivery and can result in increased costs. However it also brings potential advantages in terms of making it easier to provide residential when teachers are busy.
- Not linking residential to the *national* curriculum did not always mean schools were not seeing residential as part of a wider package or sequence of opportunities. For many, the fact that they saw residential as sitting outside of the curriculum was one of their strengths.



Photo credit: Emilie Holba

## 7. Conclusions and recommendations

### 7.1 The availability of residentials

- On average, schools organise more than one residential per year but most pupils do not have the opportunity to participate on an annual basis.
- The availability of residentials has been largely stable over the last five years.
- A very tentative estimate would suggest that approximately one in five pupils each year participate in a residential.
- Schools are least likely to organise residentials in the Autumn term
- Pupils in disadvantaged areas (areas where a large proportion of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals) have fewer opportunities to participate in residentials than their peers in more advantaged areas.
- Pupils in different type of areas (rural/urban etc.) have fairly similar access to residentials.

### 7.2 Purpose of residentials

- Residentials have a range of purposes but personal development, adventure and the Duke of Edinburgh tend to dominate with curriculum subjects only accounting for a quarter of residentials.
- There are some differences in the nature of provision depending on an area's socio-economic characteristics, particularly in relation to PSHE and the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

### 7.3 The quality of residentials

- Teachers are generally actively involved in planning residentials and are confident that they are planned around pupils' needs, with clear objectives and in a way that builds collaborative relationships.
- Affordability is a considerable concern and although most schools are making efforts to provide equitable access, this is often not enough to ensure equal access.
- The pupil premium plays an important role in ensuring more pupils can participate in residentials.
- Schools frequently target subsidies; liaise with and compromise with parents; spread out payments; fundraise; or, attempt to minimise costs, as part of their efforts to make residentials more affordable.
- Most teachers are open to evaluating residentials but some lack the skills to do so.
- Some teachers are wary of evaluating residentials. This is sometimes because of a lack of tools or confidence to do so and in other cases because they equate evaluation to approaches that they do not consider appropriate or necessary.
- The traditional end of year residential presents particular barriers to evaluation and reflection.
- Co-planning with pupils is far from being the norm and this is because of a combination of a lack of will (or sense that it is inappropriate) and of practical constraints.
- Use of external providers often limits teachers' involvement in planning and delivery and can result in increased costs. However it also brings potential advantages in terms of making it easier to provide residentials when teachers are busy.
- Not linking residentials to the curriculum did not mean schools were not seeing residentials as part of a wider, progressive package. For many, the fact that residentials were outside of the curriculum was one of their enriching strengths.

## 7.5 Summary of recommendations

### For government and funders:

- More funding is needed to ensure residentials are affordable:
  - Funds should be made available to schools to ensure there is fair access to residentials for all pupils;
  - Schools should be encouraged to use pupil premium funds to provide equality of opportunity, not just to close the attainment gap.

### For schools:

- Schools should carefully put together a range of strategies to ensure fair access including:
  - Cost reduction and use of lower cost options;
  - Communication with parents;
  - Targeted and universal subsidies;
  - Flexible payments to ensure all residentials.
- Schools should pay particular attention to ensuring that ambitious foreign trips are equally accessible to all pupils.
- Schools should be careful of equating the *national* curriculum and the *school* curriculum. Including residentials as part of the latter could help ensure equitable access and skill progression.

## 8. Appendix: Grouped Purpose Categories

12 of Evolve's 'purpose categories' were subsumed into wider groupings to simplify analysis

<b>Evolve Category</b>	<b>Grouped category</b>
Aim Higher	<i>Careers and progression</i>
Work Experience	<i>Careers and progression</i>
Careers	<i>Careers and progression</i>
Biology	<i>Sciences</i>
Science	<i>Sciences</i>
History	<i>Humanities</i>
Geography	<i>Humanities</i>
IT	<i>Other subjects</i>
Maths	<i>Other subjects</i>
Media/Film Studies	<i>Other subjects</i>
RE	<i>Other subjects</i>
Business Studies	<i>Other Subjects</i>
DT	<i>Other subjects</i>
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	<i>PSHE</i>
Expressive Arts and Design	<i>Arts</i>
Art	<i>Arts</i>
Music	<i>Arts</i>
Individual placement	<i>Other</i>
Communication, Language and Literacy	<i>Other</i>
Physical development	<i>Other</i>
Literacy	<i>Other</i>
Understanding the world	<i>Other</i>

## 9. Acknowledgments

We are hugely grateful to Evolve and Clive Atkins in particular for access to the invaluable Evolve data-set as well as for endless patience in running and re-running queries late into the night! A special thanks to the Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP) who played a crucial role in distributing the termly surveys and encouraging schools to participate. We are indebted to the schools that completed the surveys and shared their views. Finally, thanks to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF) who founded and initially developed the Learning Away programme and fund the continued work the Learning Away consortium do to enable more children and young people to experience high-quality 'Brilliant Residential' experiences.



## Join the conversation #BrilliantResidentials

 [learningaway.org.uk](http://learningaway.org.uk)  
 [/WeAreLearningAway](https://www.facebook.com/WeAreLearningAway)  
 [@LearningAway](https://twitter.com/LearningAway)

*"This new study provides disturbing evidence that disadvantaged students are missing out on the transformational impact of residential experiences. Surely if these experiences have such a significant impact, all children should be entitled to have them during their time at school."*

Joe Lynch, Chair, Learning Away Consortium



This report was written by the education and youth development 'think and action tank' LKMco. LKMco is a social enterprise - we believe that society has a duty to ensure children and young people receive the support they need in order to make a fulfilling transition to adulthood.

We work towards this vision by helping education and youth organisations develop, evaluate and improve their work with young people. We then carry out academic and policy research and advocacy that is grounded in our experience.

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