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## Media Release

Embargoed until 00.01 29 September 2017

### Study reveals: far too many children are missing out on life-changing residential experiences

A new study examining 'the state of school residentials in England: 2017' is released today by the campaigning group 'Learning Away'. The study, which assesses the quantity and quality of residentials currently delivered in schools, is the first of its kind in England. Based on analysis of data from tens of thousands of schools and educational establishments over the last five years, it found that far too many children are missing out on these powerful learning and life experiences, with only one in five children participating in a residential every year. More worryingly still, the study found a picture of patchy and inequitable access with young people in the poorest areas the least likely to participate. Furthermore, only around half of teachers said they believed the residentials they delivered were affordable to all pupils.

Residentials are often the most memorable experience of students' school days; for their teachers, they are rewarding, if exhausting. Learning Away's initial research report stated that they "provide opportunities and benefits/impacts that cannot be achieved in any other educational context or setting" and "the combination of activities and shared experience of living and learning with others makes a residential a unique learning opportunity." They have even been described by teachers as "worth half a term in school".

Remarking on the study and the accessibility of residentials for all students, Joe Lynch, Chair of the Learning Away Consortium said:

*"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 primary and secondary school. It is reassuring to see that residentials in schools are generally of high quality but availability and cost is stopping many poorer students from participating. Schools are attempting to address this problem, often by using the pupil premium, but as funding is squeezed, this will become an increasing problem."*

The 'state of school residential in England: 2017' forms part of a longitudinal study tracking any changes in the scale and quality of residential delivery over time. The report presents the findings from a study by education think tank LKMco, funded by Learning Away. It draws from a national database used to organise trips by approximately 25,000 schools as well as a survey testing the quality of residential according to the 'Brilliant Residential' principles.

Speaking about the findings from the teacher survey Loic Menzies, Director at LKMco said:

*"The teacher survey found that the design and planning of residential is an area of strength for schools. Teachers who organise residential know what they hope to achieve from them and why they are important. This offers some assurance that the investment from parents and schools in residential is focussed on meeting students' abilities and learning needs. However the survey found that too many residential are not valued as an essential part of schools core offer to all students but are seen as an added optional extra."*

The study suggests that schools are much less likely to organise residential in the autumn term, preferring to arrange residential in the spring and summer. As schools return for a new academic year, it seems only a few are recognising residential's potential to foster deeper relationships between staff and students, which are sustained back in the classroom for the rest of the year. Learning Away believes that the impact, quality and accessibility of residential could be improved if schools consider providing more autumn and winter residential, as Lynch explains.

*"Going on a winter residential is a great time to kick start key subjects with inspiring hands on learning. Doing this in the first term allows time for learning to be embedded back in school which we know has a long term impact on students' progress and attainment. Winter residential can also be more affordable giving schools the benefit of a greater return on investment. Schools can keep residential low-cost by having a sleep-over in the school hall or within the school grounds. Many residential providers have reduced rates, or offer discounts over the winter period too."*

Paul Whiteman, general secretary of school leaders' union NAHT said:

*"Many leaders of outdoor education centres are NAHT members. We are acutely aware of the negative impact of funding pressures. At our annual conference this year delegates voted in favour of campaigning for protected funding to enable all children to have access to high quality outdoor education and residential experiences. The benefits of residential experiences and outdoor education are indisputable. It is distressing to learn that they are not available to all students. The education funding crisis is only going to reduce opportunities to participate in residential activities, which is why we are campaigning for protected funding to enable children to have greater access to high quality residential experiences. We want more residential opportunities, for more children, more of the time."*

To help schools make their residential more inclusive and effective, Learning Away are running national #BrilliantResidential and #WinterResidential 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

training modules are being developed to specifically support teachers with the planning and execution of Brilliant Residentials.

**ENDS**

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## **Editors' Notes**

### **Summary of the main findings from the 'State of schools residentials in England: 2017' by LKMco**

#### ***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.

#### ***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.

#### ***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 the 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 considerably 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 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.
- 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, residential occupy a position that is distinct from the standard curriculum. This sometimes limits teachers’ willingness to link residential to the curriculum or plan for progression.

### ***Summary of recommendations***

#### ***For government and funders:***

- More funding is needed to ensure residential are affordable:
  - Funds should be made available to schools to ensure there is fair access to residential 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 residential.
- 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 residential as part of the latter could help ensure equitable access and skill progression.

### **About Learning Away**

In 2009, set up as a special initiative by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Learning Away began working closely with 60 primary, secondary and special schools to demonstrate the positive impact that high-quality residential learning can have on learner engagement and achievement, on peer and teacher-student relationships, and on the powerful professional development opportunities it can provide for staff.

The impact of the Learning Away experience has been robustly evaluated over a five year period by independent evaluators, York Consulting, using extensive survey and focus group data. In June 2015 York Consulting published a compelling final report about the positive impacts of Learning Away, for participating students, staff and the wider school community. This evidence showed that Learning Away residential:

- Improve students' engagement with learning
- Improve students' knowledge, skills and understanding
- Support students' achievement
- Foster deeper relationships
- Improve students' resilience, self-confidence and well-being
- Boost cohesion and a sense of belonging
- Provide opportunities for student leadership, co-design and facilitation
- Smooth students' transition experiences
- Widen and develop teachers' pedagogical skills

Read the summary report by Learning Away and the full report by York Consulting here:

<http://learningaway.org.uk/residentials/evidence/independent-evaluation-of-learning-away/>

### **Brilliant Residentials Guiding Principles**

Through the Learning Away programme a clear picture of what makes a high-quality residential learning experience has been developed, and Learning Away have coined the phrase 'brilliant residentials' to describe these experiences. Brilliant residentials are school trips with at least one overnight stay, which are:

- Fully integrated with the school curriculum and ethos
- Designed and led by teachers and, where appropriate, students
- Inclusive and affordable for all students
- Deliberately and collaboratively planned to meet students' specific learning needs, and to embed and reinforce learning back in school
- Part of a progressive programme of experiences
- Designed to include a wide range of new and memorable experiences
- Designed to allow space for students to develop collaborative relationships with both peers and staff
- Evaluated rigorously
- Supported by senior leadership and school governors.

[www.learningaway.org.uk](http://www.learningaway.org.uk) offers information on how to develop a brilliant residential.

### **Learning Away Consortium**

In December 2015, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation agreed to provide a further two years of 'legacy' funding to Learning Away. The funding has been awarded to a newly developed Learning Away Consortium, led by the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (CLOtC). The funding will enable the consortium to deliver a campaign which will aim to increase the number of young people taking part in residentials and improve the quality of residential provision. Members and advisors of the Consortium are:

- Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (CLOtC) – the lead organisation
- Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres (AHOEC)
- Brathay Trust

- British Activity Providers Association (BAPA)
- English Outdoor Council (EOC)
- Field Studies Council (FSC)
- Girl Guiding
- Institute for Outdoor Learning (IOL)
- Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP)
- Royal Geographical Society (RGS)
- Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT)
- SYHA Hostelling Scotland
- The Scout Association
- Youth Hostel Association (YHA)

### **About LKMco**

The evaluation and report was carried out and written by the education and youth development ‘think and action tank’ LKMco. LKMco is a social enterprise – they 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.

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

Find out more at: [www.lkmco.org.uk](http://www.lkmco.org.uk) / @LKMco / [info@lkmco.org](mailto:info@lkmco.org)

### **About the Paul Hamlyn Foundation**

Learning Away was founded and initially developed by Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

Paul Hamlyn Foundation is an independent funder working to help people realise their potential and lead more creative, fulfilling, and enjoyable lives. The Foundation was established by Paul Hamlyn in 1987. Upon his death in 2001, he left most of his estate to the Foundation, creating one of the largest independent grant-making foundations in the UK.

Its mission is to help people overcome disadvantage and lack of opportunity, so that they can realise their potential and enjoy fulfilling and creative lives. The Paul Hamlyn Foundation has a particular interest in supporting young people and a strong belief in the importance of the arts.

Find out more at: [www.phf.org.uk](http://www.phf.org.uk)