RESIDENTIAL PLANNING TIMELINE
(FIRST PUBLISHED IN PREMIER YOUTHWORK MAGAZINE)

www.churchyouthministry.com

Print this timeline out and stick it to your wall. The timescale is approximate. You may need to adjust it for your situation, for example if you need to book up your venue earlier. Ticking off as you do each one will allow you to tell at a glance what you need to do next and where you are behind schedule. There may be items that you need to do which aren't on the list – we have to book a ferry – but other items should remind you to do them.

Item/Action	H-12 mths	H-6 mths	H-5 mths	H-4 mths	H-3 mths	H-2 mths	H-6 wks	H-4 wks	H-3 wks	H-2 wks	H-1 wk	H-1 day	H day	H+1 wk	H+2 wks
Visit venue[1]															
Fix date with venue															
Ask church leadership to approve event															
Book venue[2]															
Send young people and parents 'Save the date'															
Put date in church diary															
Book visiting speaker if required															
Book transport[3]															
Invite leadership[4] & catering team															
Book any special activities															
Arrange dates for planning meetings with leaders															
Check certificates[5]															

[1] What can you do in the space that you have? What activities outside/inside/nearby? Look at health and safety. Will you do your risk assessment now? Do you need to cater for yourselves? Look at number of bedspaces. How will you divide boys/girls for sleeping? Toilets/showers? Where will leaders sleep? Is the meeting room big enough for you? What about AV facilities? Is there a social/hang out space? What about door access – will you always need leaders to get into a building?

[2] It can be difficult getting a first weekend or week. Many venues have regular customers in regular slots. Christian centres are good starting points. Boarding schools may be available but often only during longer holidays. The way in is to book as early as you can and to be as flexible as you can be. Watch out for exam result times, public holidays, etc.

[3] Transport will significantly add to your costs. If your venue is under an hour away, you may consider asking parents to drop off young people. This also makes it easier for set-up as all the leaders can arrive earlier. One of the benefits of travelling together is that it increases the shared memory time. People can get enthusiastic on the way and debrief together on the way back. Do book early though and barter the price. Ask around for a reliable company. One year we had a coach not turn up and that put pressure on the programme for the rest of the weekend.

[4] Start with your current leaders. If you need more, this can be a good time to attract new leaders. An ask for a weekend may be easier for some than an ask for every Sunday for the next three years! Once they've been, maybe they'll commit to every week. If you need a catering team, try people who don't normally lead youth. If you get desperate, parents of teenagers who don't mind their parents being around may be your only answer. Joining with a neighbouring youth group may also help ratios.

[5] You don't want to get to the day before the event and realise that one of the leaders' police check certificates has run out, so check as people are added to the team. If you're having a visiting speaker, check their certificate. If you're taking a catering team who don't normally help with youth ministry, do they have one? If you need a minibus driving, first aid or food hygiene certificate, check them now.

Core team planning meeting[6]																
Check insurance for residential & for individual activities																
Budget event[7] and agree with Treasurer																
Create *Residential* community on social media for leaders																
Produce publicity																
Create video/slide show of last year																
Set up booking online (if required)																
Book van for equipment (if required)																
Whole team planning meeting[8]																
Produce programme[9]																
Send out leaders' roles and instructions, inc. speaker																
Closing date for bookings[10]																
Contact young people who you might have expected to book up but haven't																
Arrange with service leader to have feedback Sunday after residential																
Produce themed Powerpoint and distribute to speakers																
Train AV operators																
Inform catering team of dietary requirements																
Kit list & final details to young people & leaders with health & photo permission form																

[6] Depending on the size of your team, this might be everyone! Key decisions to make at this stage are to decide the theme (which should filter through to your publicity), perhaps a team challenge theme and key roles (including speakers for talks/seminars and worship leader). You might also want to talk about the big picture. Details can come later but now is the time to change everything if you want to.

[7] Be realistic about costs and numbers expected! Some costs you know exactly (for example the price per person per night), some will be a guess e.g. how many people will come that you can divide any transport costs between. A key decision is whether leaders will pay themselves or you will cover their costs from central funds or by young people paying more. To cover everything, work through the programme. A sample budget is included in the Raising the Bar book.

[8] Overview. Finalise the programme. Gather seminar ideas if required. Do you know who is leading each item? What are wet weather alternatives? What do you need for sessions/games?

[9] Send the programme to the leadership team, catering team and venue. If you can't have breakfast at 8.30, you want to know before you get there!

[10] Now is the time to check whether transport is big enough for the bookings. Hopefully you haven't overbooked for the venue either!

Send leaders' instructions out																
Worship team organised (if applicable)																
Order bookstall (if required)																
Inform venue of programme																
Send directions for venue to coach company & leaders[11]																
Collect leaders' health details																
Write risk assessments																
Draw up dorm lists/teams/small groups[12]																
Draw up buddy list if necessary for newer members[13]																
Create a feedback form																
Put video clips, presentations, song words on laptop (if required)																
Put branded items on laptop/ memory stick																
Produce booklets for young people/leaders[14]																
Produce handouts for seminars																
Arrange payment for activities with Treasurer																
Buy cards and presents for venue, catering team, spouses, speaker, etc.[15]																
Produce dorm lists and door signs																
Produce large programmes																
Draw up washing up rota (if required)																

[11] We did once have the coach company get lost on the way.

[12] The nightmare of every youth leader. Easiest is a small youth group in a venue with one sleeping room for boys and one for girls. Leave this task as late as you can. Two weeks beforehand is perfect, but be aware with a larger group, you are likely to totally rewrite as someone books in the day before you leave. If you will accept late bookings (if not, why not?) then leave this job to the right moment but ask for help from other leaders/young people, unless you are so in touch that you know who isn't talking any more. Make it easier by asking on your booking form who young people want to share with. Check out the guidelines for putting young people in dorms on www.churchyouthministry.com.

[13] If you have people coming on the residential who have never been to the group, why not pair an older group member up with them to look out for them while they're away?

[14] You may want to give out handouts after teaching sessions/seminars. For longer residentials, you may want to list Bible passages for each session, where people need to be when, small groups, teams, whatever.

[15] People make a big sacrifice to come on a residential, so say thank you! If you have a visiting speaker, give a card, present, financial gift if appropriate (talk to your minister) and expenses. If you have someone who is married on the team, why not send a card to their spouse while you're away?

Check first aid kit															
Check young people's medical forms															
Create list of young people whose photos cannot be taken															
Check bookings for birthdays on the residential															
Distribute prayer notes to church[16]															
Final planning/prayer meeting.[17] **Brief on safeguarding etc.**															
Meet young people at coach and collect health forms/photo forms															
Collect medicines, health and photo forms as people board transport[18]															
Go to event															
Return															
Have people fill in feedback forms															
Return borrowed items															
Input/testimony in service															
Send feedback form to leaders/ speaker and review event															
Collect in final receipts and close account with Treasurer															
Have thank you dinner for team															

[16] In a perfect world (we haven't got there yet!), we'd put a photo of the leadership team on, but a programme is a great help to people. Get the whole church involved in the residential.

[17] This is a great time to encourage the leadership team, and especially if some are not regular team members. Run through the programme, a map of the site, any additional needs, child protection, expectations - whatever will mean that leaders can start off running, rather than not knowing quite what is happening for the first 24 hours. And pray!

[18] Give one person the role of Medical Officer. They should be the person talking to parents about medicines as young people arrive and collecting medicines. We had one residential where a young person had to take medicine every day, the young person forgot to ask for it and nobody gave it to him. What system needs to be in place as young people arrive to stop that happening?