

Gold Residential Project (GRP)

Temporary changes and requirements for use during COVID-19 public health restrictions

Introduction

The following temporary changes to the Gold Residential Project have been introduced to enable young people to complete their Award at the Gold Level. Award Leaders and volunteers are encouraged to work with participants to identify, shape and develop activities that match, as closely as possible, the original aims, ethos and requirements of the Gold Residential Project (see International Handbook for Award Leaders, 2019 edition).

They were developed by an international Working Group of National Award Operator and Foundation staff. Where COVID-19 public health measures restrict and/or limit a participant's ability to live away from home in a residential setting, participants are now able to take part in a Gold Project and should use the guidance provided below to identify and agree activities that meet as many of the original requirements as possible.

Whilst the temporary changes enable completion beyond a participant's 25th birthday, this guidance is designed to ensure those young people that want to complete now are able to do so.

Temporary guidance for where COVID-19 public health measures prohibit overnight stays and/or living away from home

Where complying with the central requirement of living away from home in a residential setting is simply not possible due to the pandemic, it is up to the Award Leader to agree the final plan with the National Award Operator and/or the Foundation (depending on the nature of licence that the Award Centre holds).

Where participants and Award Leaders wish to adhere as closely as possible to the original requirements of the section, the following are permitted as temporary changes:

- Participants are able to go home at night to sleep.
- Participants are able to complete some, or all, of their Gold Residential Project virtually – see guidance for a Gold Project below.

Delivering an alternative Gold Project without the residential component

Aim

To broaden experience through working and collaborating with others on a social action or research project. *(Social action is generally regarded as activity that involves people coming together to help improve their lives and solve the problems that are important in their communities. It can include volunteering, giving money, community action or simple neighbourly acts.)*

The Gold Project gives participants a shared, purposeful experience with people who are not their usual companions, working towards a common goal. It should be an experience that broadens the participant's outlook and horizons. Where possible, the type of activity should be developed, identified, and agreed by the participant and not the adult to encourage creativity and innovation.

Outcomes and benefits

The specific benefits to the participant will obviously depend on the type of Gold Project chosen. The outcomes and benefits include:

- Meeting new people
- Experiencing an unfamiliar environment
- Building new relationships
- Working as part of a team
- Taking responsibility
- Developing communication skills
- Developing confidence
- Showing initiative
- Learning new skills or enhancing existing ones
- Enjoying working with others

Guidance for Leaders

Completion of the Gold Project is a requirement to achieve the Gold Award. Participants are required to undertake a shared purposeful social action or research project, where the majority of the group are not their usual colleagues or friends and subject to COVID-19 public health restrictions, they spend some time away from home. The following should be treated as guidance only and approved by the Award Leader in advance of the activity commencing:

I. The GP must be undertaken within a group of people where the majority are not previously known to each other.

II. The GP must have a clear SMART goal, agreed as a group, and designed to address a social challenge for the benefit of others, the community, or the environment around them. In some cases, the goal might be agreed as a group, but the activity might be actioned individually once the participant returns home.

III. Where possible and COVID-19 public health restrictions permit, young people should spend some time away from home. The length and time away should be agreed with the Award Leader and relevant Assessor for the activity chosen. If it is possible to spend time away, the ideal time frame is five days away from home and assumes that a participant will return home each night.

IV. Where it is not possible to spend any time away from home, the recommended virtual time requirements are:

- a. The GP should take place over a period of no less than one month and no more than three months.
- b. A minimum of 30 hours of logged purposeful activity.

The Plan, Do and Review elements of the project should all be delivered in-line with the original requirements as set out in the Handbook.

Example projects

There are numerous ways in which young people can meet the above requirements and make a meaningful difference to others, their community and the environment around them. Award Leaders should encourage young people to research and consider a variety of opportunities and discuss these before commencing any activity. Where possible and practical, we encourage young people to speak with their National Award Operators about international opportunities to collaborate with other participants from other countries.

Examples could include – but are absolutely not limited to – the following:

- Development of an environmental campaign based on a specific issue such as tackling air pollution or addressing littering in your local area or nationwide.
- Online design project to develop solutions to a current research challenges, from reducing plastics in food packaging to innovations in education.
- Organising a response to a local social issue with another charity or NGO and campaigning to make a difference in your local community.

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