



The Impact of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award on young people – A summary of research findings for stakeholders and local decision-makers

Research by The University of Northampton 2007-2009





Foreword

How can a Charity like The Duke of Edinburgh's Award provide the sort of empirical evidence that some potential partner organisations and users of DofE programmes demand? How does an activity-based programme with over 50 years of experience of equipping young people for life's challenges convince the doubters, the sceptics and the non-believers? The straight answer is not easily. However, the Charity has embarked on a strategy of commissioning its own research as well as encouraging others to research into the DofE's impact with the aim of producing the necessary proof.

Some of our research has been on quite specific areas of operation, whereas this report is on a far more wide-ranging piece of research carried out over the last two years among a large swathe of DofE participants as well as those responsible for delivering it throughout the UK. The results are encouraging and fully support the anecdotal evidence that we've relied upon until now. Many of the recommendations for the management are of an equally broad nature and not especially surprising, but are useful in terms of focussing our attention and ensuring we do not become complacent. We are prepared and committed to improving what we do.

None of this would be possible without a considerable amount of effort, determination and some very generous support. Considerable thanks must go to the researchers, our friends at The Pears Foundation and of course all those who responded and contributed. It is thanks to you that we now have some very real proof of the considerable impact the DofE has on young people and those involved in delivering it. I sincerely hope that this report will not only positively assist our many advocates, but also be just the sort of inspiration needed to convince a few of those doubters to believe.

HRH The Earl of Wessex KG, KCVO
Trustee, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award



Acknowledgements

The DofE would like to thank The Pears Foundation for the generous support of this research project and the DofE's work to inspire, guide and support young people in their self-development and recognise their achievements.

The DofE would also like to thank all those participating in the research – the DofE's Regional and Country Directors and operational staff, DofE Managers and Leaders across the UK and young people doing their DofE programme, as well as those who have achieved an Award during the past 53 years. Each and every contribution was valuable and has guided this research.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a Registered Charity No. 1072490, and in Scotland No: SC038254, and a Royal Charter Corporation No. RC000806.

A few words from our project supporter

After supporting the DofE for several years, we were pleased to fund this research project. The report provides a solid evidence base demonstrating the lasting benefits of the DofE for its participants. We hope that the findings and recommendations will assist this important organisation with its future strategy, leading to an even greater experience for the quarter of a million young people who every year rise to the challenge and opportunity it represents.

Trevor Pears
Executive Chair of The Pears Foundation

Introduction

In 2007, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (the DofE), funded by The Pears Foundation, initiated in-depth research into the impact of the DofE on young people. The DofE had not undertaken systematic research into the effects of DofE programmes in its 50 years of developing young people, however, we knew from anecdotal evidence and experience that achieving a Duke of Edinburgh's Award has significant and lasting benefits for young people.

We knew that those with a Gold Award are much more likely to progress in their careers, hold senior positions and are sought after by employers. We knew Award holders developed a social consciousness, have self-confidence and positive self-esteem, enjoy teamwork, have an understanding of others' needs and are more likely to stay fit and healthy. It is such positive outcomes for young people that we sought to document.

The purpose of doing this research has been to improve the DofE for young people in the future; to influence the thoughts of leaders and policy makers to increase positive outcomes for young people through use of DofE programmes; and to seek further support for the DofE, therefore ensuring that more young people achieve and benefit from an Award.

The Centre for Children and Youth at the University of Northampton undertook this study between December 2007 and June 2009. This document contains a summary of their findings and has been prepared by the DofE. The full report is available by contacting our registered office at: Gulliver House, Madeira Walk, WINDSOR, Berkshire SL4 1EU.

About the research

The research project considered the impact of the DofE on young people. It sought to identify, document and analyse the outcomes of participation in DofE programmes. It had a particular interest in understanding the impact of how young people mix with others with different life experiences and developing a model of personal growth to support the DofE's long-term evaluation and monitoring.

The process

Following a tendering process, the University of Northampton undertook the 18-month research which came to a conclusion in the summer of 2009. The process was guided and monitored by a steering group comprising The Pears Foundation, the DofE and The University of Northampton. The data collected through the research process was analysed and the results and recommendations for the DofE to address were given to the DofE and The Pears Foundation in July 2009.

Research team

The research team from The Centre for Children and Youth at the University of Northampton was led by Professor Jackie Campbell. Her team included: Dr Victoria Bell, Sarah Cate Armstrong, Dr John Horton, Natasha Mansukhani, Professor Hugh Matthews and Professor Andy Pilkington. The research team was supported and monitored by a steering group of DofE Directors: Sarah Lindsell, Stephanie Price, Philip Treleven; and the Policy Officer, Helen Longworth. The Pears Foundation was represented by Deputy Director, Amy Philip.



Methodology

The study engaged six strands of data collection:

1. Desk-based review of existing evidence.

A literature review was conducted of research into the DofE and similar programmes.

2. Online survey of DofE participants. Two surveys of young people were carried out to track changes in attitude, relationships with others and community engagement over time. 1,848 young people responded to the survey, with representation from across the UK. Of those that gave the information:

- 37% were working towards Bronze, 27% Silver and 39% Gold.
- 36% were male, and 64% female.
- 93% were in full time education, of which 35% attended a comprehensive school, 15% attended an independent school, 13% attended a grammar school and 9% were in higher education.
- 10% were from a minority ethnic community, compared to 14% of young people who are doing their DofE overall, and 7.9% of the overall UK population.
- 9% had a disability, compared to 4-5% of this age range in the UK population.

3. Qualitative data collection with young people.

Over 100 interviews and nineteen focus groups with young people doing their DofE took place across the UK. One group of young people also recorded video evidence of their DofE experiences.

4. Survey of DofE Leaders and Managers.

383 delivery partners, covering Leaders and Managers, completed a questionnaire to collect perceptions of positive and negative factors for participation and delivery of DofE programmes.

5. Qualitative data collection from delivery partners and stakeholders. This used 54 interviews and focus groups to investigate in greater depth the perceptions of positive and negative factors of doing and running DofE programmes. In addition to delivery partners, stakeholders comprised corporate directors, local authority executives, funders and politicians.

6. Oral history interviews with past Gold Award holders. Gold Award holders from the past 50 years have given evidence on the lifelong benefits of doing their DofE. There were 25 interviews, with five Award holders interviewed from each decade.

The findings of the study were extensive, both qualitative and quantitative and were thematically examined using specialist research software and statistical techniques.



Some names have been changed in this document to protect anonymity.



Key findings

The results detailed in the full report, and in its accompanying statistical volumes and appendices have shown that DofE programmes are successful and effective methods for supporting the personal development of young people.

One of the most revealing findings was that doing a DofE programme and achieving an Award will have a stronger effect on those young people who are most in need of an intervention programme and the most to gain in terms of personal development.

The key findings of the report are set out below:

Attitudes towards new experiences

Summary

Doing their DofE gives young people practical skills, friends and new experiences. It also gives them a spirit of adventure, alongside the opportunity to build skills and confidence that they may not otherwise develop.

Statistics

- 84% of young people and 97% of Leaders feel the DofE has given participants totally new experiences.
- 81% of participants and 92% of Leaders feel that their DofE makes young people more adventurous.
- 74% of young people said it allowed them to try activities they would never have tried before.
- 69% of young people and 92% of Leaders feel that as a result of their DofE, participants have new interests/hobbies.

Personal development

Summary

Through their DofE, young people build resilience and self-esteem, gain independence and develop perseverance. Those with the lowest starting points are the most likely to benefit from participation in a DofE programme.

- 81% of young people and 92% of Leaders identified increased motivation.
- 80% of young people and 93% of Leaders said the DofE gave participants the ability to reflect on learning and an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses.
- 79% of young people and 94% of Leaders believe participants develop independence.
- 71% of young people identified improved self-belief.

Community engagement

Summary

Young people reported that they enjoyed volunteering within their community but they found it difficult to articulate how they were making a positive contribution. The benefits they gained were the ability to make a difference to something they are passionate about and learning how to work with other people.

Statistics

- 90% of young people said doing their DofE has given them opportunities to help others
- 82% noted their DofE has made them want to continue with volunteering/voluntary activities
- 62% feel that doing their DofE has helped them make a positive difference to their local community
- 54% of young people but 82% of Leaders think that participants learn to work with people from different backgrounds to themselves.

"The DofE has never let me down, all the way through my programme I knew I was supported. With this research I think that the DofE has the opportunity to perfect what it does."
Paula, Gold Award holder, DofE Leader and DofE Ambassador

Physical and mental well-being	
<p>Summary Building self-esteem and friendships, alongside raising their fitness levels through regular activity, were some of the main benefits of doing a DofE programme for participants.</p>	<p>Statistics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 93% of participants and 93% of Leaders feel that doing their DofE developed teamwork skills - 74% of young people said they developed self-esteem. - 61% of young people and 86% of Leaders thought participants develop a positive outlook on the future. - 64% feel that as a result of doing their DofE they are better at sport or physical activity. - 61% feel that doing their DofE has allowed them to try a new sport or physical activity. - 69% feel that doing their DofE means they are less bored.



Employment skills and prospects	
<p>Summary Duke of Edinburgh's Awards are very beneficial for young people's employment prospects. Stakeholders and delivery partners think of this as one of the main benefits of the programme, especially the ability to demonstrate commitment and transferrable skills, as well as the recognition it gets from employers.</p>	<p>Statistics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 84% of young people feel that they have become more responsible, 95% of Leaders agreed. - 80% of young people and 93% of Leaders reported the ability to reflect on learning and increased self-awareness. - Organisational skills were developed say 75% of young people and 92% of Leaders. - The ability to stick at tasks until they're complete was cited by 84% of young people and 92% of Leaders as a benefit of doing their DofE. - 84% of young people and 95% of Leaders noted improved decision-making skills.

Engagement with DofE Leaders	
<p>Summary Young people stated that the support they gain from their Leader as one of the most important things about the programme. There are also a number of benefits to being a DofE Leader; particularly the opportunity to develop positive relationships with young people and the pride felt when participants achieve their goals.</p>	<p>Statistics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 91% of Leaders feel that their involvement has given them opportunities to help other people. - 76% of young people think their DofE Leaders are inspirational. - 75% of Leaders feel that improvements could be made to the delivery of DofE programmes. - 71% of Leaders think the DofE makes a difference to their community. - 60% of Leaders feel DofE programmes are difficult to run due to lack of volunteer staff.

"We're learning all the time as well aren't we? And just building up our relationship with the kids as well which makes our other classes a lot easier... I think the kids then start looking up to us then, not as father figures I don't think, but as, well, maybe, role models. So our classes then, we've got the easiest jobs in the world you know, honest to God."
(Teacher and DofE Leader)



The DofE in schools

Across the UK there are moves towards personalising education towards the needs of each pupil. In England, this is the central element of the Pupil Guarantee and in Scotland it's a significant part of the Curriculum for Excellence.

In Scotland, the principles of curriculum design (Challenge and Enjoyment, Breadth, Progression, Depth, Personalisation and Choice, Coherence and Relevance) and the four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence outlined in National Outcome 4 are mirrored in the ten guiding principles and the four sections of DofE programmes. The DofE provides the vehicle to not just recognise the

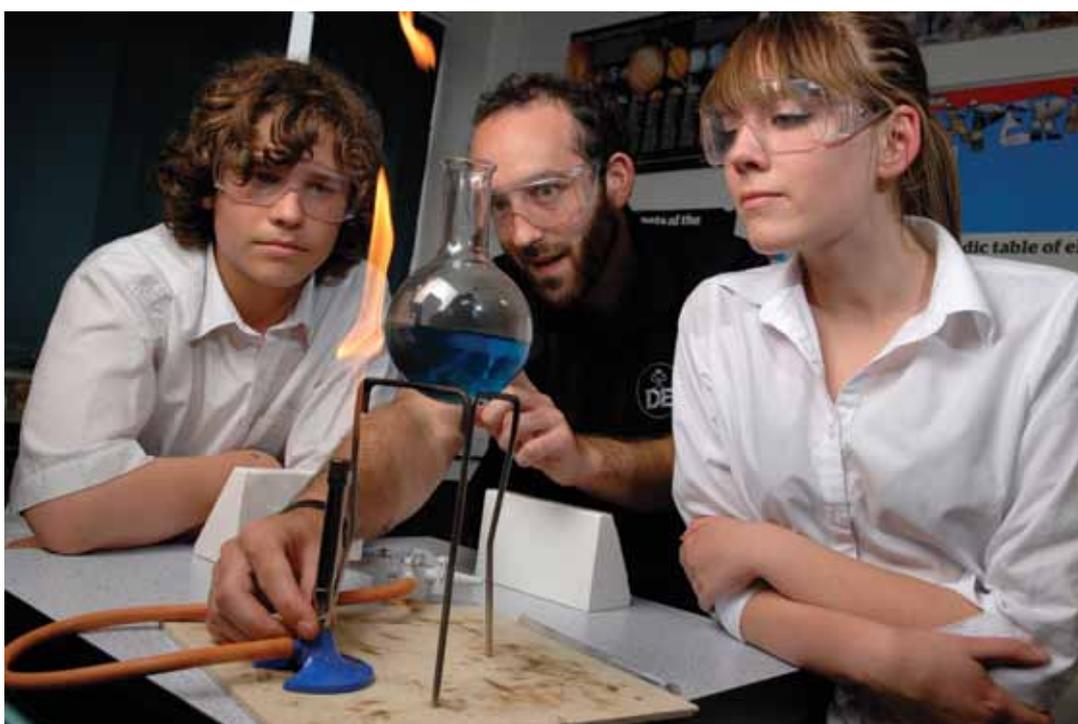
achievements of young people but provide them with an internationally recognised Award which has currency with employers and further and higher education.

In Wales, the 'The Learning Country' document highlights the ambition to transform education provision for 14-19 year olds by providing engaging, stimulating and flexible individual learning pathways which recognise wider achievement. Learning pathways include a core of skills and experiences including community participation, cultural, sporting, aesthetic and creative experiences. DofE participation can provide opportunities for these learning experiences.

The Impact Research has a number of implications for schools policy:

Pupil Guarantee Promoting high-quality learning opportunities for pupils whose behaviour is not suitable for a classroom environment, i.e. alternative curricula.	How can the DofE add value? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DofE programmes are often used as a tailored way to encourage reintegration into the learning system and are reportedly an effective way of doing this work. Last year around 150 young people achieved their Award in a Pupil Referral Unit. - The personal development effects are significantly stronger for those young people who need the most support.
A curriculum that allows 14-19 year olds to follow different routes, including Apprenticeships, Diplomas, the Foundation Learning Tier and GCSE/A-levels and that each 14-19 year old pupil will have the opportunity to undertake community service by September 2009.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DofE programmes add a universal system of recognition that can be minutely targeted to the needs of young people, broadening their experience. - DofE programmes require between three and 18 months volunteering, and recognise achievements.
The ability to take part in sport and cultural activities, with at least three hours a week of high quality sport, both in and out of school, by September 2009, and opportunities to develop skills in a sport of their choice and to volunteer within that sport's setting. There is an aspiration that there will be five hours a week of cultural activities, working with museums and other arts organisations, and that by 2010 every pupil will have access to out of school positive activities, special interest clubs and study support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DofE programmes take around five hours a week, with a range of cultural, physical and community activities. - DofE programmes broaden the experiences that young people undertake. 84% of young people said the DofE gave them totally new experiences and 69% developed new hobbies and interests.

Curriculum for Excellence Successful learners	What does the research say?
Confident individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DofE programmes encourage young people to manage their own programme of learning. 81% of participants noted better motivation and 67% said their DofE taught them how to achieve their goals in life.
Effective contributors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DofE programmes have a huge impact on personal development outcomes. 79% of young people and 94% of Leaders believe participants develop independence and 71% of young people identified improved self-belief.
Responsible citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Although DofE programmes are based on the individual's development, teamwork is a compulsory element. 82% of participants noted their DofE has made them want to continue with volunteering/voluntary activities and 93% of participants feel that doing their DofE has helped them to develop teamwork skills, as do 93% of Leaders. - The DofE was created to give young people a framework for becoming active citizens, and to recognise their achievements. 90% of young people said doing their DofE has given them opportunities to help others and 84% of young people feel that they have become a more responsible person.



“To me it’s about gaining new skills and meeting new people and facing challenges that you wouldn’t normally meet in your everyday life.”

Female, Gold participant

Supporting young people with additional needs policy

“Targeted youth support aims to ensure that the needs of vulnerable teenagers are identified early and met by agencies working together effectively in ways that are shaped by the views and experiences of young people themselves.”

DCSF

Case study

A mental health secure unit in the Midlands delivers DofE programmes. The Co-ordinator said: “I think it sets them on a different route... A lot of our young people have been on a downward spiral which is why they have ended up in a specialist unit like this. I think their families often feel quite negative about their young people and I think DofE gives them a bit of hope as well. Recently we had one of our young men going to get his Award at one of the outside ceremonies and his mother came to see the ceremony. She was so delighted to see this young man achieve something like that in his life. I think it's because it's an Award that all young people can be involved in, it's not something that's been adapted for our young people.”

Supporting young people with additional needs

All young people require access to high-quality universal services to support their development socially, educationally, physically and emotionally. But, young people with additional needs also require targeted support from services. Duke of Edinburgh's Awards are universally achievable and recognised, yet our programmes can be minutely targeted to the needs of participants. The DofE offers an excellent early intervention toolkit to support vulnerable young people.

There are a number of young people whose needs are not met by mainstream or specialist services in isolation. There are others who do not meet eligibility criteria for statutory services and others

who frequently do not get the balance of support and challenge they need. Young people can have multiple issues and needs, including: disruptive or anti-social behaviour; parental conflict or lack of parental support; involvement in or risk of offending; poor attendance or exclusion from school; experiencing bullying; special educational needs; disabilities; disengagement from education, training or employment post-16; poor nutrition; ill-health; substance misuse; anxiety or depression; housing issues; pregnancy and parenthood. It is with this group of young people that the DofE has most impact.

In England and Wales, targeted youth support services seek to provide support for these young people.

There are three desired outcomes, which DofE programmes support:

Desired outcome	What the Impact Research found that DofE programmes develop
Develop young people's social and emotional skills, enabling them to make positive choices, manage change and navigate risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 84% of young people and 95% of Leaders think that DofE programmes make young people more responsible. - 81% of young people identified improved motivation.
Raise young people's aspirations and help them to achieve and feel positive towards learning. This includes helping them to be engaged, and stay engaged, in the wider range of learning opportunities becoming available for 14-19 year-olds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 80% of participants and 93% of Leaders say DofE programmes allow them to understand their own strengths and weaknesses better. - 76% of young people and 92% of Leaders said that doing their DofE helps participants to stick to tasks until they are finished. - 61% of participants now feel more positive about their future, which 86% of Leaders also identified.
Help foster supportive and positive families, communities and peer groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 75% of young people said their DofE gave them new friends. - 90% of young people said they had opportunities to help people through their DofE. - 76% of participants think their DofE Leaders are inspirational.

Citizenship & participation

Every member of society is a citizen from birth. However, as young people grow into adulthood, they develop new rights and responsibilities. The DofE was established to provide a framework to guide and celebrate this transition. Like citizenship education, DofE programmes are about learning to be a good citizen now, being able to exercise that citizenship and learning to be an effective citizen in the future.

Active citizenship, taught in English schools as a classroom subject and part of the UK-wide agenda to improve social mixing and community cohesion, can take a number of forms. It means belonging to the communities around you, exercising the rights and responsibilities provided by these communities. It also includes the more general participatory activities, not all overtly political, that affect the welfare of communities.

In Scotland, a cornerstone of the Curriculum for Excellence is that all young people should be provided with experiences which helps support them to become Responsible Citizens.

Citizenship is a theme that should run through all 'curriculum' experiences which include opportunities to take part in informal learning opportunities such as DofE programmes. Citizenship is an entitlement enshrined in the new curriculum experiences e.g. "Every child and young person is entitled to experience a broad general education... and develop knowledge, understanding of society, the world and Scotland's place in it." Building the Curriculum 3: Scottish Government.

In Wales, Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship is developing young people's skills as citizens to take decisions and action that improves society's quality of life now and for future generations.

In Northern Ireland, DofE programmes have played a significant role in contributing to the Northern Ireland Department of Education's Strategic Plan 2008/09 which prioritises 'preparing every learner for life' – motivating and empowering our young people to contribute positively to society, now and in the future.

Outlined below are some attributes that are developed by DofE programmes that contribute to being an active citizen:

Attribute	What the Impact Research found that DofE programmes develop
Ability to work with other people and appreciating diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 73% of participants and 89% of Leaders feel that as a result of the DofE, young people have met people they would never have met before. - 54% of young people but 82% of Leaders think that participants learn to work with people from different backgrounds to themselves.
Participation in decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 84% of young people and 95% of Leaders feel that it develops decision-making skills. - 82% of young people and 93% of Leaders feel that it develops leadership skills.
Being able to communicate, discuss ideas and share information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 93% of participants feel that doing their DofE has helped them to develop teamwork skills, as do 93% of Leaders. - 81% of young people and 93% of Leaders noticed improved communication skills.
Being aware of issues facing their communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 82% of participants feel that doing their DofE has made them want to take part in volunteering/voluntary activities in the future.
The ability to work autonomously in pursuit of one's own needs and those of the communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 90% of young people said doing their DofE has given them opportunities to help others. - 62% feel that doing their DofE has helped them make a positive difference to their local community.

Citizenship policy
"Citizenship education is not about trying to fit everyone into the same mould, or creating the 'model', or 'good', citizen. It is about enabling citizens to make their own decisions and to take responsibility for their own lives and their communities."
 Citizenship Foundation

"Citizenship is about: the exercise of rights and responsibilities within communities at local, national and global levels; and making informed decisions, and taking thoughtful and responsible action, locally and globally."
 'Education for Citizenship in Scotland', Learning & Teaching Scotland 2002

Case study
 Grant recognises that his volunteering is the part of his DofE that has helped him to gain confidence in general. He chose to work with children with Down's Syndrome and realised the benefits of volunteering. He is aware of the contribution of his work and is currently doing physiotherapy at university. When he graduates he hopes to work with children and young people who have disabilities such as Down's Syndrome. This decision has been influenced by his volunteering experiences whilst doing his DofE.

Employability

Employability can be defined as:

"...having the capability to gain initial employment, maintain employment and obtain new employment if required."

Institute for
Employment Studies

"...the combination of factors and processes which enable people to progress towards or get into employment, to stay in employment and to move on in the workplace."

Scottish Government

Taking the common elements of most definitions, the DofE defines employability as:

"Possessing and being able to present the attitudes and skills that improve the likelihood of gaining and maintaining employment."

Case study

Nathan achieved his DofE Award in a school for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. His Centre Co-ordinator said: "It has really sparked an interest now in outdoor education and he wants to come back next year with a more responsibility as a helper, working with young people... you could see he was motivated and excited by it... you could see that he had finally latched on to something that meant something to him, something that motivated him and that he could potentially see a career in."

Employability

Employability is the extent to which someone has the capacity to gain and maintain a job.

Young people use their Duke of Edinburgh's Award on a CV or personal statement for university or job applications. It also gives them something that they can discuss at interview and they can offer concrete examples of abilities such as leadership skills, teambuilding,

commitment, perseverance and organisational skills.

For example, the Welsh Assembly Government's strategy 'Skills that work for Wales' has the ambition that everyone will have the skills essential to take up and maintain employment. The development of leadership and management skills are essential to achieving the One Wales ambition of a 'high employment Wales'.

In addition to an understanding of the business environment and numerical/IT skills, the UK Commission for Employment and Skills and the CBI define the skills and attitudes that make someone employable as:

Attitude or skill	What the Impact Research found that DofE programmes develop
Self-management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 84% of young people feel that they have become a more responsible person, 95% of Leaders agreed. - 84% of young people and 92% of Leaders noted increased resilience. - 80% of young people and 93% of Leaders reported the ability to reflect on learning and increased self-awareness. - The ability to stick at tasks until they're complete was cited by 84% of young people and 92% of Leaders. - Organisational skills were declared by 75% of young people and 92% of Leaders.
Problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Problem solving skills improve, according to 77% of young people and 87% of Leaders. - 84% young people and 95% of Leaders noted better decision-making skills.
Teamworking & communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 93% of participants and 93% of Leaders feel that doing their DofE has helped participants develop teamwork skills. - 54% of young people and 82% of Leaders noted improved respect for others. - The ability to contribute to discussions was identified by 81% of young people and 93% of Leaders. - An awareness of interdependence with others, according to 82% of Leaders and 54% of young people. - 81% of young people and 93% of Leaders mentioned improved communication skills.
Positive approach to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 71% of young people feel that they have more self-belief. - 79% of young people and 94% of Leaders believe DofE participants develop independence. - 81% of young people feel that doing their DofE has made them more adventurous, which 92% of Leaders agree with. - 81% of young people and 92% of Leaders reported that participants increased their motivation.

Health & well-being

Being healthy and improving wellbeing is a key outcome for young people across all of the UK Governments' policies. DofE programmes develop a breadth of outcomes that positively affect

all aspects of health, including physical, mental and social.

They also have a significant impact on resilience and the ability of young people to manage risk, change and adversity.

Health and well-being policy

"Learning in health and well-being ensures that children and young people develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes which they need for mental, emotional, social and physical well-being now and in the future."

Curriculum for Excellence: health and well-being; experiences and outcomes

"The Government has set itself a new ambition: of being the first major country to reverse the rising tide of obesity and overweight in the population by ensuring that all individuals are able to achieve and maintain a healthy weight."

Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: A Cross-Government Strategy for England, 2008

Attribute	What the Impact Research found that DofE programmes develop
Physical well-being <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can set goals and manage their own physical health - Can engage with physical activities regularly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 64% of young people feel that as a result of their DofE they are better at sport or physical activity. - 61% of participants feel that doing their DofE has allowed them to try a new sport or physical activity.
Mental and emotional well-being <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aware of and able to express feelings - Able to gain support - Self-confidence - Personal independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 61% of young people and 86% of Leaders thought participants develop a positive outlook on the future. - 79% of young people and 94% of Leaders felt participants become more independent. - 76% of participants believe their DofE leaders are inspirational.
Social well-being <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Able to exercise rights and responsibilities - Able to contribute to communities - Playing a part in bringing about positive change in communities - Able to work and make friends with different types of people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 75% of young people made some new friends through their DofE programme. - 90% of young people said doing their DofE has given them opportunities to help others.
Resilience and adaptability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can make realistic and informed choices, set manageable goals and plan transitions - Can reflect on their own learning and respond to any necessary changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 69% feel that doing their DofE means they are less bored. - 81% of young people and 92% of Leaders reported that participants increased their motivation. - 84% of young people and 92% of Leaders noted increased resilience.

Case Study

Alison achieved her Gold Award in 2005 and now volunteers as a DofE Leader. She spoke about the difference that her DofE had made to her health and well-being: "I was very quiet when I started my DofE. It's given me a whole boost of confidence, I don't think I would have settled in at university at all if I hadn't done my DofE because I was awful at making friends. When I was 14 and started it I was quite fat and unfit, and not interested in being in the outdoors. I was a couch potato and a bookworm. Now I do more sport, go to the gym, that kind of thing."



Positive activities policy

“By 2018 all young people will enjoy happy, healthy and safe teenage years that prepare them for adult life and enable them to reach their full potential.”

Aiming High for Young People

“The Government’s vision of a universal service of targeted support for those who need it most is one with which the DofE accords and is reflected in the direction of our own development over recent years.”

Peter Cloke, Director for Children and Learners, Government Office South West

Case study

In an English North East LEA, two schools lacked the capacity to provide the positive activities programme most suited to their pupils. A local special school for children with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, Autistic Spectrum Disorders and associated challenging behaviours established an after school club for young people aged 14-19. In return the special school established the DofE in the mainstream secondary school. The young people from the mainstream school continue to volunteer at the after-school club. Accessing positive activities accredited through the DofE created the opportunities for young people from differing communities and with diverse abilities to achieve and succeed together. The benefits for both groups of young people were immense, demonstrating that all young people can access positive activities and achieve a Duke of Edinburgh’s Award.

Positive activities

The Government’s ten year strategy for positive activities aims to ‘transform leisure-time opportunities, activities and support services for young people in England’. All English local authorities are legally bound to promote all the youth provision in their area.

In Scotland much work has been undertaken to strengthen school and youth work partnerships. The recently published document ‘Bridging the Gap’, by Learning Teaching Scotland captures the opportunities for informal education to play a stronger role within a school setting and how this can support schools to capture the achievements of young people.

Extending Entitlement is the Welsh Assembly Government’s flagship policy for youth support services in Wales. It recognises that the responsibility for supporting young

people through their development rests on a wide range of organisations. Delivering DofE programmes can help local authorities fulfil this strategy and recognise the commitment that young people give to the activities they do.

In Northern Ireland youth provision is a statutory requirement of the Education and Library Boards through the Education and Library Board Order 1972. At the time of writing the implementation of the proposed Education Skills Authority is unclear. However, delivery of DofE programmes clearly addresses the objectives of a number of policies and legislation such as the NI Children and Young People – Our Pledge: A ten year Strategy for Children and Young People 2006-16, the NI Education (Other Skills) Order August 2007 and the Department of Education’s Strategic Plan 2008/09 which prioritises ‘preparing every learner for life’.

According to the ‘Aiming High for Young People’ strategy, positive activities:	What the Impact Research found that DofE programmes develop
Are attractive to young people and inclusive	- The most popular reason given for young people doing their DofE is that it is fun.
Do not treat teenagers as ‘problems’ and address young people’s needs in the round	- The recognition of achievement gained through DofE ensures that those facing the most difficulties are likely to experience the strongest personal development effects.
Involve young people, and their parents, in design and delivery	- Young people design their own programmes. 79% of young people and 94% of Leaders felt participants become more independent.
Provide appropriate supervision in a safe environment and are supported by adequate resources	- Young people are supported by Leaders who become significant adults to them: 76% of young people said their DofE Leaders are inspirational.
Encourage sustained participation and retain young people as they mature	- The ability to stick at tasks until they’re complete was cited by 84% of young people & 92% of Leaders.
Are creative	- 81% of participants and 92% of Leaders feel that their DofE makes young people more adventurous. - 74% of young people said it allowed them to try activities they would never have tried before.
Support youth workers through good strategic and operational management and offer ease of access	- 71% of DofE Leaders feel supported by the organisation where they deliver programmes.