Summary

Over one million young people in the UK are unemployed and are not receiving any form of education or training, a figure that will grow during the economic downturn. This has a huge impact on their well-being and life chances.

A Duke of Edinburgh’s Award is achievable by any young person who chooses to take up its challenge. This gives disadvantaged and disengaged young people an opportunity to follow a programme that is both non-stigmatising and truly suited to them.

The impact of young people not being in education, employment or training

The estimated cost to the economy of failing to help a 16-18 year old who is disengaged from education, employment or training in this group is £45,000 per person over their lifetime, meaning that the financial impact for this age group alone is up to £5.8 billion.

How the DofE supports disengaged young people

A Duke of Edinburgh’s Award is internationally recognised as a demonstration of personal achievement and vital workplace skills. Young people who have underachieved academically have an opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning, build their self-esteem and confidence and achieve a valuable Award.

Any young person can do their DofE. At the moment, there are young carers fulfilling the Volunteering section using their caring experiences, young people with disabilities leading expeditions, young parents sharing their skills and researching baby friendly city design, and young people with a history of truancy completing DofE residentials.

Young people at risk of disengagement

The two main risk factors for a young person being outside education, employment or training in the long term are disadvantage and educational disaffection. Symptoms include truancy, exclusion and low attainment. These young people often experience multiple barriers to their progression, including:

- Educational underachievement: Young people leaving school without the equivalent of five good GCSEs are far more likely to be unemployed. 20% of this group were outside work, education and training in 2005.

- Young people in care: Those in care are eight times more likely to be permanently excluded from school.

- Young parents: 90% of teenage parents receive income support, and teenage mothers are more likely than lone mothers generally to rely on benefits alone.

- Young carers: There are 175,000 young carers in the UK. Around 27% of young carers of secondary school age show signs of educational difficulties.

- Young people with disabilities: Young people with a disability are twice as likely not to be in education, employment or training as those without.

- Young people who truant: A quarter of those who truanted persistently in year 11 were not in education, employment or training the following year.

Because it is a personalised programme, doing their DofE programme can help any of these young people to develop new skills and achieve their potential.

“What people learn from The Duke of Edinburgh's Award stays with them for life, and we can see that leadership, determination and commitment are key qualities for tomorrow’s successful business leader.”

Mike Faulkner, Managing Director, National Business Awards
Young people outside education, employment or training

The group of young people outside education, employment or training in the UK is not homogenous. There are some young people not in employment, education or training for whom this position is less risky, for example those doing gap years before university. However, many young people in this group have experienced a background of deprivation, educational underachievement, disability or being carers of others and need significant support.

According to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), in England, at any one time over half of the NEET group is actively seeking education, employment or training. Doing their DofE can give each of these young people, no matter what their personal circumstances, the skills, opportunities and proven experience that make a significant difference to their employment prospects.

Unemployment among young people can cause lasting damage to their prospects. It can cause ‘wage scars’, which means that people who have been unemployed are likely to earn less overall in their subsequent jobs than those with a full employment record. Unemployment is also linked with an increased risk of crime. 63% of young offenders were unemployed at the time of arrest.

Excluded young people in England

According to the DCSF, in England:

- The NEET group is getting older – around half of those NEET are of academic age 18, compared with just 40% 5 years ago.
- The gender gap is widening – 16 year old boys are now more than twice as likely to be NEET as 16 year old girls.
- A higher proportion of young people are ‘inactive’ and are not looking for work or learning.
- 39% of those with no GCSEs are NEET at 16, compared to 2% of 16 year olds who attained 5 or more A*–C GCSEs.
- Persistent absentees are 7 times more likely to be NEET at age 16.
- Young people with learning difficulties and disabilities are twice as likely to be NEET as those without.
- An estimated 20,000 teenage mothers are NEET.

Young people outside education, employment or training and the DofE

Doing a DofE programme has a substantial impact on any young person who undertakes the challenge. This is particularly the case for young people at risk of disengagement, for whom our programmes offer advantages in three areas:

- Recognising achievements
- Preventing exclusion
- Supporting young people already outside education, employment or training.

Recognising the achievements of each young person

Over 275,000 young people, over 30,000 of whom are experiencing significant disadvantage, are doing their DofE each year. Because young people from across society are doing their DofE, achieving a Duke of Edinburgh’s Award is highly valued. Unlike some other personal development programmes, achieving a Duke of Edinburgh’s Award does not stigmatise young people as being from a particular social or academic background, allowing their perseverance and commitment to their own development to shine.

DofE programmes are youth led and based entirely on the needs of the young person. This flexibility allows the participant to be the architect of their own programme, which is crucial at a time of adolescence when the young person is developing an understanding of who they are.

This helps any young person outside education, employment or training to learn more about their personal and social skills and receive recognition for their achievements.

Preventing exclusion for those at risk

Doing the DofE helps young people to avoid falling outside employment, education and training by increasing their employability and motivation. We help them to develop the skills and personal qualities that make it easier for them to get a job or to succeed in education or training. This reduces the chance they will become unemployed or ‘drop out’.

The recognition we offer is highly valued by employers. Independent research by the United Learning Trust showed that the UK’s major employers cited the DofE by name as the most important non-academic activity undertaken, above activities such as work experience and overseas residential.
Supporting young people who are not in employment, education or training

We help young people who are not in employment, education or training by giving them a tailored route back into their community, allowing them to improve their skills and change the direction of their lives. The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award is frequently used to support alternative education programmes and community based interventions. They are available in thousands of non-educational settings that are located in communities across the UK and open to all, through partnerships with voluntary organisations and youth charities.

Last year we spent £3.1m extending the reach of our programme, raising awareness of and developing our programme in harder to reach communities and new areas of activity, and in offering direct support to excluded young people to help them take part.

This can have a significant impact on skills and employability. According to our research among Gold Award holders14:

- 93% of young people felt that having the DofE on their application form helped them secure employment or preferred college places
- 64% believed that having achieved a Duke of Edinburgh’s Award helped them gain their most recent/current job.

Success story

Sarah faced multiple difficulties in her childhood. She moved into a refuge with her mother when she was 12 and truanted frequently. She was at risk of complete disengagement from the community. Sarah started doing her DofE in a special intervention unit, with the help of Merseyside Police and personal mentors. The activities she did for her DofE programme transformed Sarah’s life. She volunteered to provide first aid cover and took up dragon boat racing for her physical activity, which she excelled at. This gave Sarah a purpose and the realisation that she could succeed at something.

Sarah achieved eight GCSEs and is still in education, working towards further qualifications to enable her to become a paramedic.

“Sarah is making real friends, enjoys school and plans to complete two years in sixth form – a far cry from the girl who two years ago had a less than 40% attendance rate and had nearly fallen off the ‘social radar’. Doing her DofE has turned her life upside down.”

DofE Leader

“Before I started dragon boating [for my DofE] I had never really set myself any goals in life and didn’t have much self-belief. But now I train several times a week which requires a lot of discipline but is very enjoyable and helps take my mind off any problems at home.”

Sarah Jones, DofE participant and member of the GB Dragon Boating team.

2 Estimating the cost of being ‘Not in Education, Employment or Training’ at age 16 to 18 ES Research Report RR346. Nearly 200,000 people aged 16-18 are NEET.
3 OECD, Disadvantaged youth in Britain need better skills and effective job-search help, July 2008
4 Care Matters: Time for change, Department for Education and Skills, 2007
5 Position statement, Brook 2008
7 Mind factsheet, Mind, 2007
8 Young people with disabilities, Prince’s Trust, 2008
9 Bridging the Gap: New opportunities for 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training, Social Exclusion Unit, 1999
10 Reducing Re-offending by ex-prisoners, Social Exclusion Unit, 2002
12 Young offenders, unemployed young people, young carers, young people with a care background, with disabilities, young parents, and young people who live in areas of high deprivation, asylum seekers, refugees, young people with low educational attainment.
“I can’t believe I’ve gone from not being able to make friends at school to being able to teach. It has put me in step for a great career.”

Rachel, Gold Award holder

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

The DofE Charity
Youth charity The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award supports over 275,000 people aged 14-24 every year, including 30,000 who are excluded and vulnerable.

Our ethos is to enable every young person of every background to take part in our programmes and succeed, regardless of any barriers.

Our mission
To inspire, guide and support young people in their self-development and recognise their achievements.

DofE programmes
Anyone aged between 14 and 24 can do a programme at one of the three progressive levels which, when successfully completed, lead to a Bronze, Silver or Gold Duke of Edinburgh’s Award.

There are four sections at Bronze and Silver level and five at Gold:

- **Volunteering**: undertaking service to individuals or the community.
- **Physical**: improving in an area of sport, dance or fitness activities.
- **Skills**: developing practical and social skills and personal interests.
- **Expedition**: planning, training for and completion of an adventurous journey in the UK or abroad.
- **At Gold level, participants must do an additional fifth Residential section, which involves staying and working away from home doing a shared activity.**

Achieving a Duke of Edinburgh’s Award
Young people will achieve a Duke of Edinburgh’s Award if they show persistence, commitment and personal development over a period of time.

Every activity must be successfully completed and assessed. The result is the world’s leading achievement award for young people, recognised by employers and universities alike.

Where is it run?
DofE programmes are delivered under licence by over 400 partners (Operating Authorities) who offer it in over 10,000 DofE groups run in centres such as youth clubs, voluntary organisations, schools, colleges, Young Offenders Institutions and businesses, which are run and supported by over 50,000 adult volunteers.

Our impact
Young people doing a DofE programme develop skills for work and life and become better citizens.

Independent Impact Research, carried out from 2007-2009 by The University of Northampton and supported by The Pears Foundation, showed:

- 93% of participants developed teamwork skills
- 84% feel the DofE gave them totally new experiences
- 82% of participants want to continue volunteering after they’ve achieved their Award
- 79% of young people believe they develop independence
- 74% of participants developed their self-esteem
- 81% feel their DofE makes them more adventurous
- 84% of participants felt they became more responsible
- 84% felt more able to stick at tasks
- 81% had increased motivation.

We have a lasting impact on young people’s behaviour, skills and life chances.

Further information
For further details about delivery of DofE programmes to help disengaged young people please contact:

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Principles of all DofE programmes

- Non-competitive
- Achievable by all
- Voluntary
- Personal development
- Personalised
- Balanced
- Progressive
- Achievement focussed
- Demand commitment
- Enjoyable

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BARCLAYS WEALTH

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