



BRIEFING

IMPACT RESEARCH

results & information for Leaders

What is this briefing for?

This document outlines the findings from the *Impact research* which has been undertaken during the last two years. Through it, you can see how much of an effect the work of the Charity has had, and continues to have, on participants across the UK.

About the research

In 2007, supported by The Pears Foundation, we commissioned the University of Northampton to carry out a groundbreaking study into the value of the DofE. Their work was completed in June 2009. We now want to use the information to recognise the work of our staff and volunteers, to gain support for the DofE and to identify areas which need further support.

The research methods included a review of existing evidence, surveys completed by 1,848 participants and 383 Leaders, as well as interviews and focus groups with young people, delivery partners, employers, local authority executives and government ministers, and Gold Award holders.

How can you use this information?

- **To help promote DofE programmes** to young people and gain support from your centre and as evidence as how the DofE meets any agenda set by local or national governments.
- **Change local perceptions** of the DofE so that it's seen as worthy of support and funding.
- **Collect a case study** about how you've used the DofE to respond to an issue that's affecting you, such as Extended Schools, positive activities or youth participation, and send it to your region and local authority.
- **Consider if there are any innovative partnerships** that you could create, for example, is there a local employer who would sponsor your group, provide volunteers or even offer DofE programmes to their employees?
- **Find out what your centre or authority's targets are** and work out how your delivery of DofE programmes can help to achieve them.
- **Engage Award holders** by finding opportunities for them to promote what they've done and the difference they've made through the press, at work or by becoming Leaders.

"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 & Trustee
of The Pears Foundation

Three quarters of young people think their DofE Leaders are inspirational.

Find out more

An executive summary of the research is available on www.DofE.org/go/impact If you have any ideas for using the research or if there are any resources or support we could give you, please let us know at info@DofE.org



“I love seeing how they grow when they come here at 14 and then they leave at 18 or 19, seeing how much they have changed in that time ... it’s a real buzz.”

“It’s about citizenship. The young people don’t see that; it’s not written up in big bold lights, but the four sections shape them and give them opportunities to look at their morals, their values, their physical abilities, to meet with others and to socialise. All of those things, I think, impact on their ability to be positive young citizens.”
Politician



“What the Pears Impact Research has shown us is that the real power of DofE programmes comes from our volunteers, particularly the Leaders. It is their passion for supporting young people and their ability to create inspirational programmes with them that has made this Charity go from strength to strength. We now need to make sure that our Leaders are fully supported, with systems that meet their needs, an organisation that understands their requirements and a Charity that values their contribution.”
Andrew Smith
DofE Trustee

Key findings

The *Impact research* showed that the DofE continues to offer a successful personal development programme for young people. It showed that young people do their DofE to have fun, and that support from Leaders and friends keeps them engaged.

The benefits	What you can say based on the findings	The evidence from the research
An enjoyment of community engagement	Young people enjoy volunteering within their community but they find it difficult to articulate how they make a positive contribution. The benefits they gain are the ability to make a difference to something they are passionate about and learning how to work with other people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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.
Increased physical and mental wellbeing	Building self-esteem and friendships, alongside raising their fitness levels through regular activity, are some of the main benefits of doing a DofE programme.	<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 DofE they are better at sport or physical activity - 61% feel that doing DofE has allowed them to try a new sport or physical activity - 69% feel that doing DofE means they are less bored.
Better employability prospects	DofE 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.	<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 & 93% of Leaders reported the ability to reflect on learning and increased self-awareness - 75% of young people & 92% of Leaders say that organisational skills were developed - The ability to stick at tasks until they’re complete was cited by 84% of young people & 92% of Leaders as a benefit of doing their DofE - 84% of young people & 95% of Leaders noted improved decision-making skills.

“The DofE has given me totally new experiences; to try new activities, go to new places and to meet new people.”

<p>More positive attitudes towards new experiences</p>	<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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.
<p>Improved personal development</p>	<p>Through their DofE, young people build resilience and self-esteem, gain independence and develop perseverance. Those with the most to gain experience the greatest level of personal growth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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.



“It really does make you feel like you could take on whatever it is you are planning to take on.”
DofE participant

“I did something that affected the outer world – not just my little bubble.”
DofE participant

What the research said about DofE Leaders

Young people stated that the support they gain from their Leader is one of the most important things about their 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.

- 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**.

“My experience of my DofE was shaped by probably two individuals...they have been two of the most influential people in my life.”
DofE participant

How the DofE will be reacting to the research

The following are six areas of development that we will endeavour to improve upon over the next few years:

1. **Provide more support** to young people, especially to help completion, widen access and increase the diversity of DofE participants.
2. **Create a pathway** for Gold Award holders, to inspire new Leaders.
3. **Increase recognition, support and training** for volunteers, to ensure our volunteers know just how much their hard work is appreciated.
4. **Develop support** to delivery partners.
5. **Improve our communication and administration** particularly using digital technology.
6. **Promote ourselves** to decision makers in local and national government and look at how we can support their targets.

We will need the support of all DofE Leaders in making sure that each one of these is achievable and works towards the best interests of young people. Look out for opportunities for you to contribute to these developments.

“I really enjoyed it and I just think it is a great thing for young people to be involved with and also a great thing for me to be involved with because you do get to know them so much better.”
Teacher/DofE Leader



“I’m applying for different courses and jobs. The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award gets probably the best reaction. It has a good status and currency amongst employers.”



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 11,000 DofE groups run in centres such as youth clubs, voluntary organisations, schools, colleges, Young Offender Institutions and businesses, which are run and supported by over 50,000 adult volunteers.

Principles of all DofE programmes

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

We help instil a sense of adventure and have a lasting impact on young people’s behaviour, skills and life chances.

Further information

For further details about delivery of DofE programmes contact:
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