

Health and wellbeing

By doing a Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) programme, young people from all backgrounds can improve their health and wellbeing. All sections of the DofE contribute towards this learning.

In the Volunteering section participants contribute to their community, enhancing their mental wellbeing. For the Physical section, they build their fitness and health. They learn a new skill for the Skills section and grow their self confidence. The benefits of the Expedition section go far beyond the great outdoors; it develops their sense of resilience and self-reliance.

Taking part in DofE programmes can have a lasting impact on a young person's mental health by reducing anxiety and building confidence, as DofE participant Molly explained:

"I suffer from anxiety and depression, which made it hard for me to get involved in new groups when preparing for expeditions. However, since starting my DofE journey, my confidence has improved immensely."

"It has helped me to become the person I am today and... I no longer suffer from anxiety or depression as much as I used to."

Volunteering through the DofE makes participants happier

For many young people, giving back to their community through volunteering can be the most positive part of their DofE programme - and beneficial for their mental wellbeing.

A recent survey of DofE participants found:

- 97% of young volunteers feel happier.
- 88% believe volunteering helps them feel more satisfied in life.
- 96% say volunteering gives them a sense of achievement.



"We see the impact of the DofE in our school. Students are coming in with more maturity and it's got a lot to do with what the DofE gives them. Many are boys who didn't want to be in class at all but now they attend regularly. It builds up their resilience."

Linda Davis
Auchenharvie Academy

"The DofE was the best thing that could have happened to me in school. It's helped me think about the future."

David
DofE Award holder

DofE participants in Scotland undertake **2.8 million** hours of positive activity each year, including nearly **370,000 hours of volunteering** in their communities.

DofE benefits the whole family

A young person taking part in the DofE can have a positive impact on the whole family. Cora achieved her Bronze, Silver and Gold DofE Award with Moray Council – a long journey which she was supported by her parents to complete.

She explained that her confidence and organisational skills improved by doing her DofE, but she also recognised that it had a positive impact on her relationship with her parents. She said: *"Not long after I went on my Bronze expedition I had a week away from home for school. My mum said if I hadn't done my DofE then she would have wanted to check my suitcase and make sure I had packed everything. She trusted me more after I did my expedition because she knew I was more prepared."*



Cora's mother, Elaine, also recognised the positive benefits of her daughter taking part. She said: *"By taking part in the DofE, Cora has become much more independent and capable of managing difficult situations and her emotions... Her experience with the DofE has helped us have better communication as a family."*

Elaine also explained the impact the DofE has had on her personally, saying: *"Cora taking part in the DofE made me want to better myself. Cora needed support for her Volunteering section because they needed a parent to help the local cheerleading group where she was coaching. I have experienced anxiety and so this was a huge challenge for me to take on the responsibility of being the parent support for the group. To help her complete her Award, I had to push myself beyond what I thought I was able to do. It has been a very positive experience for us both."*

Our impact

By taking part in a DofE programme, young people gain long-term health and wellbeing benefits.

- 84% of young people and 95% of DofE Leaders noted improved decision-making skills.
- 80% of young people and 93% of DofE Leaders said the DofE gave participants the ability to reflect on learning and an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses.
- 62% of young people feel that doing their DofE has helped them make a positive difference to their community.
- 61% feel that doing their DofE has allowed them to try a new sport or physical activity.



"Doing my DofE made me more confident in speaking to new people. Finding a volunteering activity was scary at first and made me anxious. I had never made phone calls or sent emails to strangers asking them to support me before. After doing it for my Bronze, Silver and Gold DofE programmes, I got used to it and the practice and confidence I gained has been really useful to me now that I'm looking for jobs."

Cora
DofE Award holder
from Moray

"Cora taking part in and achieving her DofE Awards has helped us feel more confident about her going off to university and living away from home. She can draw on her DofE experiences to make life choices and get through."

Elaine
Cora's mother