



DofE Wales

September Newsletter | 2023



Croeso!

We hope you had a nice summer break and are feeling refreshed, ready for what the new term brings! In this newsletter, you will find information on current DofE Wales news and events, and useful links to support DofE delivery in your organisation.

Welcome from DofE Cymru Youth Ambassador – Elena

I am delighted to welcome you to your September 2023 edition of our DofE Wales Newsletter. I believe I speak on behalf of all young people, in saying a massive thank you to our DofE Leaders for their contribution and impact on the lives of young people throughout Wales.

I have been in my role as a Youth Ambassador for almost one year now. I wanted to be a Youth Ambassador because the DofE changed my view of life, particularly through the expedition section. My Bronze expedition was hard and I struggled, but I learnt to overcome these challenges in order to achieve my award.

It made me think about how the DofE compares to our everyday lives and future journeys. When you come across an issue or challenge, when trying to reach your goal, you need to push yourself and not give up.

The DofE is an experience which every young person should have the opportunity to take part in, as it can have a real impact on their lives.

The Youth Ambassador programme has been a great opportunity, allowing me to take part in workshops and events, to share my experience and help others begin their DofE journeys.

Our latest annual figures are out and enrolments are climbing, as a result of the hard work from all our young people, volunteers, supporters, and staff who make the DofE possible. An amazing 11,000 young people started doing their award the past year!

We have made some great progress and this year we'll continue to work to break down barriers and further widen access – giving as many young people as possible the chance to take part in a life-changing programme.

A lot of exciting things are happening currently within the charity, including the release of our new Podcast- Navigating Now, ExpedFest South Wales, our new Dysgu Cymraeg Welsh Learning Resource and much more! Have a read and catch up on all things DofE!

Elena

This is our third edition of the DofE Wales September Newsletter, and we would love to know how you are finding it! Please let us know [here](#).



Writing this welcome back message has given me a moment to reflect on everything that we continue to achieve together for the benefit of young people. As Elena says, over 11,000 young people started a DofE award last year, some just starting out and others progressing on to new levels. Every single one of these young people is reliant upon dedicated DofE leaders, like you. THANK YOU for creating the opportunities to take part in the first place, for stepping up to help when there are so many other demands on your time and for being the inspiration and motivation that gets young people involved. THANK YOU for getting yourself trained, qualified and keeping up to date with developments, THANK YOU for all the organising, cajoling, reassuring, and administering that keeps the young people on track.

It's really humbling to know that so many individuals and organisations share our ambition 'to help young people build life-long belief in themselves, supporting them to take on their own challenges, follow their passions, and discover talents they never knew they had.'

Together we are doing a great job and we'd like to build on this in the final two years of our Youth without Limits strategy in Wales. We want to make sure that DofE is thriving in the places and spaces where young people go to learn, to relax, to feel safe and to be supported.

We are reaching out to voluntary, statutory and community youth groups, to provide more opportunities for young people outside of schools to take part but we are also going to be working hard to bring about a step change in provision in FE colleges.

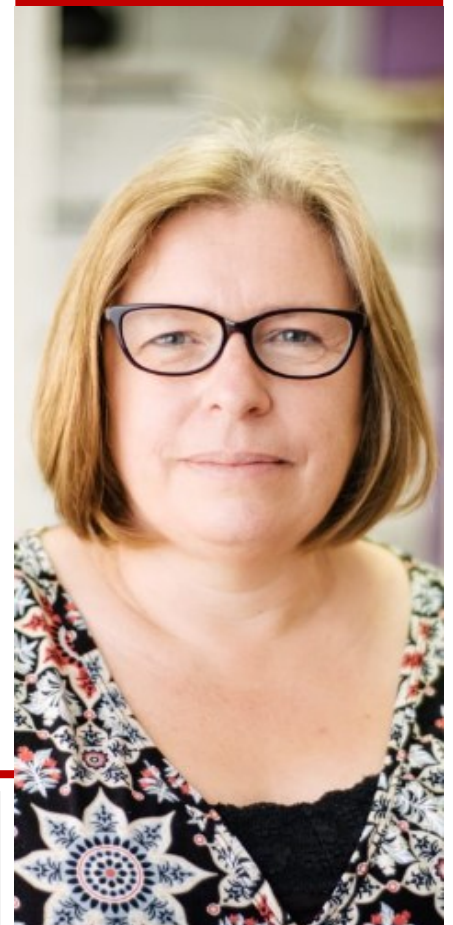
We've been lucky to be supported by the Hodge Foundation for a further two years – providing funding for schools which have a high number of young people receiving free school meals, helping us to reach more young people who are facing barriers to participation.

I hope you find some valuable information in this newsletter, but it's definitely not meant to be a one-way conversation so please give us some feedback on things we could be doing better or things you already think that we are doing well by filling in the short survey above.

Steph

**Steph
Price,
DofE
Wales
Director**

YOU
Without
Limits!



**ExpedFest
North**

Register
interest now

Following the great success of our ExpedFest event in **North Wales** last year, we are delighted to be planning another event that will take place on **9th to the 11th February 2024**. Please fill out our expression of interest form [here](#) to help us gauge interest, and to be the first to receive the booking link.



Wales Team Updates



Earlier this year we welcomed **Megan Hamer Evans** to the Wales team, Meg's role as Development Coordinator - Youth Development, works to develop our DofE Cymru Youth Ambassadors programme, as well as supporting our youth engagement work across Wales. Meg is also busy looking after our #DofEWales social media channels.

Our Operations officer **Gemma Watts** will be shortly leaving us to start her new adventure travelling around the world, it has been an absolute pleasure having Gemma as part of the Wales team for the last 18 month and she will be sadly missed, but we wish her all the best and a huge 'Pob lwc!' for her upcoming adventures!

As always you can find an up-to-date staff list with contact information [here](#).



ExpedFest South

Limited spaces remaining

A few months ago, we advertised an exciting new opportunity for DofE Leaders in Wales, expanding on our already successful **ExpedFest** event by adding an **ExpedFest South** option which is taking place in **October 2023**. We still have some places remaining on the **New to Expeditions** and **Camping Leader Assessments, including an additional Camping Leader Assessment on the Sunday**. You can find more information [here](#).

It has been a busy couple of months for our DofE Cymru Youth Ambassadors. We have welcomed 15 young people from across Wales onto our new 23-24 cohort.

Since starting their roles back in January, our ambassadors have been involved in a range of workshops aimed at developing their skills in important areas, including communication and leadership.

Our Youth Ambassadors have applied these skills, speaking at business meetings, presentation evenings and charity golf days where they have shared their positive experiences of their DofE journey. They have also promoted The DofE at events, including the Urdd Eisteddfod and the Youth Showcase Event in the Millenium Centre in Cardiff.

The group have helped with several social media campaigns, including Wales Outdoor Learning Week and Deaf Awareness week. One of our favourites, is the video created for Mental Health Awareness Week, talking about how different sections of the DofE has helped with their mental health. Take a look [here](#)!

With this cohort now halfway through their time as Youth Ambassadors, we look forward to continuing working with them, on our upcoming coming projects and campaigns!

DofE Cymru Youth Ambassadors




Young Leaders



We are excited to launch the DofE Young Leaders Programme, following a successful pilot. The programme is a key part of our new strategy, ensuring we put young people at the heart of what we do and is a tool to support centres to achieve this. The programme is a great opportunity for further youth participation in the DofE, and within your centre.

Each centre which is part of the programme has places available for two young people on the DofE Young Leaders Programme. These young people will be trained by the DofE directly through online training and supported by their DofE Leader with what activities they will be undertaking, empowering the Young Leader to support the DofE provision in their own centre.

There is a wide range of activities Young Leaders can support with, from promotion to mentoring to managing the Kit Store. It's entirely up to those involved to decide the best opportunities available in your centre. Young Leaders can then use this opportunity for their Volunteering section of their own DofE Award, if the timescales are met. This opportunity is fully funded by the DofE and there is no cost to the young person or centre.

Here is the [DofE Young Leaders Programme Toolkit](#), designed to support DofE Leaders to engage with the Young Leaders Programme providing the relevant tools and information to run a successful Young Leaders programme in your centre. 

It is good practice to get your young people logged onto their eDofE accounts as soon as possible. We've set ourselves the ambition of helping you to get your young people logged on within 30 days of their accounts being registered:

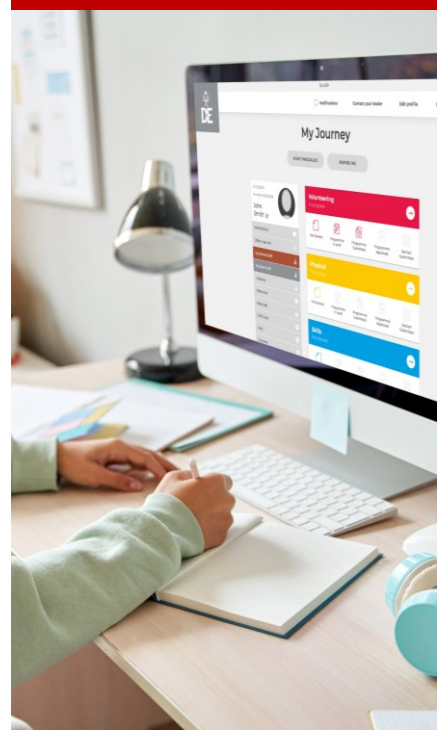
Why is this so important?

Young people don't receive a welcome pack until they have logged onto eDofE, which means that they are missing out on lots of information and inspiration to get them motivated:

- The welcome pack contains lots of information for parents which can help them to understand what support they can give to help their young person be successfully achieve their award.
- It contains the assessor cards they can use when they have completed a section.
- It contains their DofE discount card which they can use to purchase personal equipment ready for training and their expedition.

Having your participants logged in means you can better track their progress and make sure they have made appropriate choices for their sections. Your Operations Officer will be very happy to come and talk you through the best ways to support and motivate your young people to log in, remember participants can log on using the app or through the eDofE website.

Getting Participants Logged on





A Residential Experience

Tall Ships Youth Trust – South Coast Sailing Adventure

5 days of sailing sounded very scary for someone who had no experience sailing, but as soon as you set foot on the tall ship you were welcomed on board and it immediately felt less intimidating. I was taking part in a Tall Ship Youth Trust 5-day residential course as part of my Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award.

The ship was a 72ft yacht called the David Godwin, which had just come back from a trip round the world. The sleeping accommodation was unusual, a cross between a bunk bed and hammock, and I was glad that I wasn't seasick as we did have couple of stormy days.

I have learned a lot about sailing and sailing terms, was allowed to sail the ship and learnt how to tie quite a few knots. I also learnt about how superstitious sailors are, and not to walk in the "death zone" – where the boom could knock you overboard!

Looking back on my week sailing, I've picked up so many transferrable skills which aren't sailing based. For example, I feel my confidence and communications skills have significantly improved because meeting new people in an environment you are unfamiliar with, essentially pushes you in at the deep end – but not overboard!

Thanks to this amazing opportunity I've made friends for life and done activities I never thought I would have done, such as climbing up a 95-foot mast and cooking for 16 people. An experience like this teaches young people about the importance of teamwork whilst being in the challenging and unpredictable environment of the sea. I had the most wonderful time on my tall ship experience and miss it a lot now that it is over, and I will look back on by time with fondness. I have also discovered a passion for sailing and I can say that this voyage defiantly won't be my last!

I would like to thank DofE Wales and it's financial supporters for supporting me with this opportunity.

Hannah

Navigating Now Podcast

The DofE have now launched their new podcast Navigating Now. It is all about finding advice from unexpected places and how that can help to answer some of young people's biggest questions about life. Across eight episodes, Navigating Now features a range of themes from mental health to identity, relationships to social media.

If you haven't already, [listen now](#) wherever you get your podcasts.



Learning at The DofE

The way that The DofE delivers training courses has changed in the last few months. The newly formed UK Training team have been working hard behind the scenes and have developed a learning platform that aims to support adults in delivering DofE programs in a more flexible and user-friendly way.

Our new online learning pathways offer a training programme of online modules, followed by a facilitated discussion, and a final online assessment.

To get started, please go to the Opportunity Finder for DofE Leaders and click on the relevant pathway. You'll then receive an access link to the new platform via email.

If you've completed the Introduction to the DofE (IttDofE) introductory course or Expedition Assessor and Supervisor Training Course (EASTC) previously, you don't need to repeat this learning.


You can find more information about our new approach to learning [here](#).

New Skill Section Opportunities

We're delighted to launch two new skill section resources through partnerships with the National Centre for Learning Welsh and IBM. These resources are free for DofE participants and provide opportunities to develop skills that employers value.

Learning Welsh

The learning Welsh resource will introduce DofE participants to the Welsh language through a series of units that combine online learning with practical tasks. The units cover a range of themes such as Welsh music and culture, and helping others in an emergency.

You can find out more and register [here](#) 


The units are designed to cover a 3-month skill section timescale, and participants who complete the units will also receive a certificate from the National Centre for Learning Welsh. Participants need to be 16+ to access this resource.

Our partnership with IBM SkillsBuild gives DofE participants access to a wide range of courses and certifications covering employment skills and digital technology.

Participants can choose the courses that interest them to create their own SkillsBuild programme for their Bronze, Silver or Gold DofE skill section. They will also receive industry recognised digital badges for each course they complete.

Participants can register for and use SkillsBuild themselves, or DofE Leaders can register a group of participants and support them to choose courses and track progress.

IBM Skills Build

You can find out more and register [here](#) 

Up and Coming

We have several exciting developments coming up over the next few months, you can read about these below.

Volunteering section

We receive a lot of questions about the volunteering section, so we have recently revamped the guidance on this section to make it clearer and easier for participants and leaders to identify meaningful opportunities that meet the Awards criteria.

What is required?

Volunteering is about giving time to do something meaningful, being motivated by the difference that a young person wants to make, without getting paid for it.

When looking for a volunteering section, participants should look for impactful opportunities around them; this could be both in person and online, it's also worthwhile highlighting that meaningful volunteering can be mean something different for every individual.

There are lots of people and organisations that are willing to provide participants with opportunities for volunteering. Opportunities can be found within your community, at social enterprises, charities, not-for-profit organisations, and also volunteering Approved Activity Providers (AAP's).

Young people can also volunteer for social action causes, campaigns and within their licensed organisation (e.g. school or youth group).

Some commercial organisations can be considered, providing they can demonstrate that they offer volunteering opportunities in line with our outcomes and not as a financial benefit to themselves.

For some young people, there may be personal circumstances preventing them from being able to access these opportunities. These individuals may be able to volunteer at home or for a family member, provided they still meet the outcomes of the section. This must be agreed with their DofE Leader/Licensed Organisation and should only be used in exceptional circumstances.

Sectional activities are usually for around an hour each week, but it can help for the activity to be extended (in terms of hours per session) but less often. These decisions must be made with consideration for the individual and their overall programme and with the prior agreement of their DofE Leader / Licenced Organisation. Nonetheless, it is important that the overall timescale of the section is met.

For more information on this please visit our website and also keep an eye out for further guidance and FAQ's later this month.



Up and Coming

Expedition Changes

Just a reminder of the changes to the expedition section from November 2023.

By making these changes we hope to make the programme more accessible and inclusive for more young people – and to move closer to achieving our Youth Without Limits ambitions.

Summary of the changes

- We're removing the variations process. Instead of applying for flexibilities in your expeditions, you can adapt them as appropriate for the young people you're supporting.
- We're changing the 'Expedition Aim' to 'Team Goal', to align with how we talk about goals in other sections.
- The 20 Conditions are becoming Expedition Requirements, taking on board your feedback to create inclusive and accessible guidelines for the section.
- We're removing reference to recommended environments and replacing it with the idea of progressive challenge over different Award levels.
- We're removing the temporary flexibility to allow Silver and Gold practice expeditions to count for the lower level so participants can reflect and develop their skills across multiple expedition experiences.
- Leaders and AAPs can decide a reasonable gap between practice and qualifying expeditions.
- Some young people will be allowed to go home to sleep. This allows young people to take part who previously would not have been able to access an expedition at all.
- Leaders and AAPs can use motorised transport to support safe transit to camping sites and open up new expedition areas.
- Expedition Assessors can be known in advance to groups at all levels not just Bronze.
- Urban areas and restricted spaces expeditions will continue to be allowed, as they allow for equally challenging and meaningful experiences.

You can read full details on our website as well as find a range of resources to support you in preparing for expeditions from November 2023.



Parents & Carers Information Sessions

We will be hosting our virtual information sessions for parents and carers of DofE participants again this term.

If you're not familiar with these, they are designed to help parents/carers understand more about DofE and how they can best support their young person with their DofE programme. The sessions are aimed at parents/carers whose young person is starting – or considering starting - a DofE Award.

Parents and carers can choose between an English session **(16th November)** or a Welsh Language session **(14th November)**. The sessions are delivered on Teams Live - no booking is required.

Please find attached a flyer that you can share with the relevant parents/carers.



It contains all the information they will need about the sessions, including the links to join the session of their choice, so please feel free to share this with your groups.

Toolkit & Resource Spotlight

Here at The DofE, we have produced resources to support you with your role in running your DofE program. We would like to take the opportunity to signpost you to some resources links which we think you will find helpful this coming year!

[Wales Noticeboard - The Duke of Edinburgh's Award \(dofe.org\)](#)



Here you'll find everything DofE Wales, from meeting the team, events to bilingual resources for DofE participants and Leaders in Wales.

[Recruitment - DofE Recruitment Toolkit - The Duke of Edinburgh's Award](#)



Everything you need to inspire young people and their parents and carers to get involved with the DofE. It's all here – videos, presentations, email and letter templates, posters, social media suggestions and more.

[Delivery - Delivery toolkit - The Duke of Edinburgh's Award \(dofe.org\)](#)



Useful resources to help you plan and deliver the DofE over the next academic year.

[Hwb - Repository - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#)



DofE resources are now published and available on Hwb.

[Support - eDofE Support – DofE](#)



The eDofE Support Page can help you with a variety of general queries, logging in to eDofE, Assessor Reports, Expeditions Set-Up and Mapping. There are plenty of articles available to help with frequently asked questions with helpful guides to show you step by step how to make the most of eDofE.

Celebrating Achievement



Celebrating Achievement Pack


Back in May we launched our Celebrating Achievement toolkit, we developed this to help take some of the stress out of organising a DofE celebration event for all our busy Managers and Leaders!

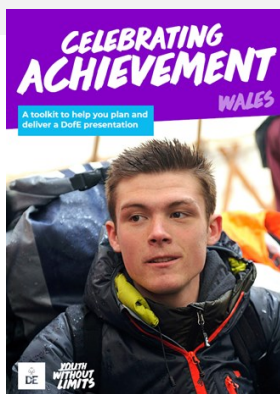
The document is packed full of tips and ideas which covers everything from programme suggestions to timings, to some interactive activities, speech ideas and much more.










The toolkit also has pre filmed videos of well-known Welsh famous faces congratulating young people on their DofE achievement that you can use in your presentations.

If you're planning a celebration event for the Autumn, make use of the toolkit, or if you need any help and suggestions from the team please get in touch.

We've had some great feedback from those that have used it so far, but we're always open to suggestions so feel free to let us know what you think.

You can request the toolkit by visiting [this link](#). 



Presenter	Name	Overview	Language	Clip length (mins)
	Alun Wyn Jones OBE	Professional Rugby Player, Ospreys	Welsh / English	00:40 (W) 00:40 (E)
	Andrea Byrne	Television Presenter and Journalist ITV Wales News	English	01:20
	Eleri Sion	Broadcaster and Presenter BBC Radio Wales / Radio Cymru	Welsh / English	01:50 (W) 01:41 (E)
	George North	Professional Rugby Player Wales, Ospreys	English	01:30
	Jennifer Jones	News presenter and Journalist BBC Wales	Welsh / English	01:31 (W) 01:24 (E)
	Lucy Owen	News presenter and Journalist BBC Wales	English	01:26
	Nicole Cooke MBE	Olympic Gold Medalist Cycling	English	01:36
	Sian Lloyd	Television Presenter and Journalist	English	01:30
	Tori James	Adventurer and Speaker	English	02:00

Completing A DofE Award with YHA

Written by the YHA



For over 60 years, YHA has partnered with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award to help young people complete their Residential, Volunteering and Expedition sections.

Get set for the experience of a lifetime as you make new friends and learn new skills in amazing locations. Here are all the ways YHA can support you with affordable and unforgettable experiences that help you achieve your award.

Expedition

YHA has been creating unique adventures since 1930. Our focus is young people and transforming their confidence and skills through memorable experiences in the great outdoors. With a vast network of locations throughout England and Wales, and discounted rates on DofE Expeditions, you're bound to find the perfect place for you and your group.

For full details and to claim your discount, please visit [here](#).

Residential

"Thank you to the YHA team for making this residential so enjoyable! This experience helped me develop lots of key skills. Thank you." DofE Gold Residential participant

YHA is the UK's largest single provider of cost-neutral DofE Gold Award Residentials. We even cover the cost of travel, so you only have to chip in for food. Our volunteering-based DofE Gold Residentials are typically held from October to May during school half-term, Christmas and Easter holidays with over 300 places offered each year.

Working as part of a team, you'll complete a practical task such as painting and decorating, gardening and grounds work. YHA hostels offer access to some of the most iconic landscapes in the UK. As part of your experience, you'll cook meals together and socialise in inspiring surroundings.

Because YHA doesn't charge, the charity receives a lot of applications so it's best to get ahead and register your interest as early as possible [here](#)

Volunteering

Complete your volunteering section with YHA by volunteering locally at one of our hostels or anywhere in the country by becoming a YHA virtual volunteer.

You could be involved in a range of tasks including housekeeping, reception, café, or kitchen tasks when volunteering at one of our hostels. Or virtually volunteer and get involved in photography, videography, social media and much more.

Investing in today's youth for a brighter tomorrow.

YHA in Wales

Find out more about how we're supporting communities in Wales in the pledges made in our [YHA in Wales strategy](#).



The Gower Walk



On the 9th of September over **200** people joined together on the wonderfully scenic coast along the Gower peninsular to take part in our brand-new Gower Walk challenge. The walk was attended by a wide variety of people from DofE leaders, participants, members of the public, sponsors and a few well-known faces too! The event went extremely well and was enjoyed by all who attended.

We'd like to say a huge 'Diolch!' to all those involved in making the event a success. Take a look at some of the photos from the day below.

