



A strategic case for delivering the DofE in 2020-21

The DofE...

... is accessible to and achievable by all young people.

The DofE can help young people recover and rebuild after the COVID-19 pandemic. But the need for this intervention is greatest for disadvantaged young people, many of whom have been hardest hit by the outbreak's effects.

For young people living in poverty, those with special educational needs and disabilities, and those who are marginalised and at risk, the DofE is an accessible development tool, with low- or no-cost activities that can be done from home or in the community.

And, when they achieve, they gain a respected and internationally recognised Award that can help level the playing field.

You can [read some examples](#) from around the UK of the impact the DofE can have when offered to young people with additional needs or those who face barriers to participation, and [hear from students](#) with special educational needs and disabilities as they prepare for their expedition.

...supports young people's personal development

The DofE takes pupils outside the comfort zone of the classroom and their social circle, broadens their horizons and gives them a positive approach to overcoming challenges and reaching goals.

This boosts their independence, responsibility and ability to reflect on the impact of their actions. They learn to work well and respectfully with others, become more confident and expand their aspirations.

Two thirds of young people said their DofE improved their motivational skills, and three quarters said it helped them understand their own strengths and weaknesses better.

In addition, our participants and Leaders consistently report a boost to their resilience and mental wellbeing from taking part:

- Two thirds of Leaders said the DofE helped young people stay calm and overcome their anxiety in new situations.
- 85% said it helped young people adapt their thinking when things change.
- 82% said it helped young people take things in their stride and look for solutions.

...supports young people's mental health

Today's young people have risen to the challenges of COVID-19, playing their part in their communities and helping those who need their support. But the pandemic has hit their mental health and wellbeing hard. It's put their education, social lives and work on hold and, for some, led to increased stress, worry and loneliness.

As a new school year starts, offering the DofE to young people in your organisation will help them develop the skills and character traits they need – like confidence, resilience and adaptability – to get through this crisis and thrive in the future.

And the DofE can be particularly beneficial for disadvantaged young people – those who have felt the pandemic's impacts most starkly, who are at-risk or marginalised or have special educational needs and disabilities.

Our [new animations](#) tell the real-life stories of four DofE Award holders – Lucy, Lira, George and Catherine – in their own words. They explain how, through their DofE, they overcame personal challenges, found focus and motivation and achieved things they never thought they would.

...benefits the wider community

The DofE connects participants with new people and perspectives — whether in their expedition group, in clubs or teams for their Physical and Skills sections, or in their community when volunteering — fostering respect for others and an understanding of the value of active citizenship.

Volunteering encourages young people to play a part in their schools and communities, helping others and supporting causes they believe in, and for many the impact goes well beyond their DofE. Two thirds of young people carried on volunteering after achieving their Award, and 77% of young people said volunteering made them feel more responsible.

...sets young people up for the next phase of their education or career

Doing their DofE gives young people skills and attributes they can use in later life. Research shows that 95% of UK senior managers regard so-called 'soft skills' as equally or more important than exam results alone — and 90% said they were more likely to employ a candidate who demonstrates achievements beyond grades.

Leading employers look favourably on a DofE Award for the employability skills it develops, including confidence, resilience and teamwork – something which could be of particular value to young people as they navigate the long-lasting impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on their future opportunities.

The breadth of a DofE programme means young people also discover new passions and talents which can influence their future careers.

...benefits teacher-student relationships

DofE Managers and Leaders report an increase in pupils' confidence, motivation, responsibility and reliability, which can transfer to the classroom. Their commitment to the school and to extra-curricular activities improves as they work towards their DofE goals.

Students develop positive relationships with teachers as they interact with them outside of the classroom, and staff can increase their understanding of students' abilities, interests and aspirations.

57% of teachers said running the DofE had improved the way students respond to them in lessons, and 78% said it had improved the understanding and respect between teachers and students.

...can help schools excel in Ofsted inspections

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a world-renowned mark of achievement that can encourage all pupils – regardless of their background or academic ability – to expand their talents and interests, broaden their horizons and develop their character.

The DofE often features positively in school inspection reports. The Ofsted school inspection handbook (2019) states:

“Schools are crucial in preparing pupils for their adult lives, teaching them to understand how to engage with society and providing them with plentiful opportunities to do so. In this judgment, therefore, inspectors will seek to evaluate the quality and intent of what a school provides (either directly or by drawing on high-quality agencies and providers, for example The Duke of

Edinburgh's Award...), but will not attempt to measure the impact of the school's work on the lives of individual pupils."

Ofsted's inspection framework launched in 2019 – with its focus on personal development and broadening pupils' horizons beyond the classroom – means the DofE can [play an even bigger part](#) in helping schools excel.

...can give staff professional development opportunities

Running the DofE gives teachers valuable leadership and management experience, enhancing their professional development in their core teaching role, helping their career progression and benefitting the school as a whole.

In a 2018 survey of teachers and headteachers who help run the DofE, almost half of teachers believed volunteering had given them professional development opportunities – and 70% said positive student-teacher working relationships make a DofE school different.

* Statistics are from the DofE's impact survey of 14,555 Award holders and alumni and 623 DofE Leaders and Managers in 2017; and of 2,205 young people and 286 DofE Leaders working within the teaching profession in 2018.