



A year of change

DofE Annual Review
2020

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A year of change



“
DofE is not just an award but it is a training and lesson for life. It teaches you... how to cope with the hardest things.”

DofE participant

Thank you

Our incredible young people; their supportive parents and carers; the inspiring adults who guide them on their DofE journeys; our exceptional delivery partners; our generous donors and partners; our awesome alumni advocates; and our superb staff. Thank you – without you, none of this is possible.

DofE story



EVERTON
FREE SCHOOL &
Football College

Everton Free School



“

Having attended numerous mainstream schools before coming to Everton Free School and participating in DofE, it has shown me that I can stick at something and see it through to the end.”

Liam, DofE participant

Everton Free School in Liverpool offers a high-quality alternative education for young people aged between 14-16 who are either at risk of exclusion or have been permanently excluded from school.

They offer a tailored curriculum to encourage young people to achieve their full potential and part of this offering is the opportunity to do their DofE.

Staff deliver Bronze and Silver DofE programmes and continue to grow the DofE at a rapid rate. By participating in the DofE, students have learnt the value of teamwork, enjoy new ways of thinking, tackle challenges without fear and opened new doors of opportunity.

Everton Free School DofE Manager Jon Aboo, DofE Assessor Les Harvey and other teaching staff at the school note that DofE participants improve in both their confidence and self-esteem.

Principal Richard Cronin said: “The DofE has given our students the opportunity to develop new skills and enhanced life experiences from learning outside the classroom. We have seen them forge stronger relations as a group and with staff through their team activities. Students have shown increased resilience and grit when tackling tasks and developed increased levels of self-belief.”

In a nutshell

Through their DofE young people learn, grow and transform – and the charity that enables them to do this is no different.

2019/20 was a year of change for the DofE; a change in leadership with a new CEO, fresh ways to communicate with the launch of the DofE app and Welcome Packs sent to home, creative methods to reach disadvantaged young people through the Diamond Fund and the seed of a new direction to shape our charity's future.

But throughout this change, we didn't divert from our mission to grow DofE and make it accessible to as many young people as possible, with record-breaking numbers starting and achieving their Awards this year, 25% of whom faced disadvantage or barriers to participating. With the end of the financial year marked by the start of the coronavirus pandemic in the UK, these figures are all the more pertinent. They mean that more young people today will benefit from DofE when they need it the most; strengthened by the resilience and confidence they need to get through this crisis and empowered with a respected Award to help them get ahead in an uncertain and challenging world.

**“
The DofE has improved my confidence and made me step out of my comfort zone – to talk to new people and try new things.”**

DofE participant



The DofE in numbers

1 April 2019
→
31 March 2020



How many young people started their DofE in 2019/20?

295,490 young people embarked on their DofE journey (↑ **2.6%** on the previous year), including **72,577** from disadvantaged backgrounds (↑ **6%** on the previous year)



201,958
Bronze Awards started

63,031
Silver Awards started

30,501
Gold Awards started



490,535
young people are currently doing their DofE programme

How many DofE Awards were achieved in 2019/20?

159,051

DofE Awards achieved – an increase of **3.9%** since last year



112,525

Bronze Awards achieved



34,123

Silver Awards achieved



12,403

Gold Awards achieved

13%

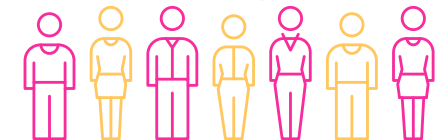
increase



in DofE Awards achieved by disadvantaged participants

Who helped to run the DofE in 2019/20?

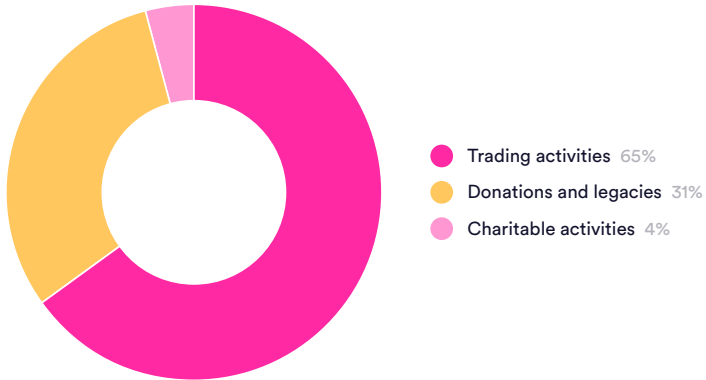
Around **40,000** Leaders and volunteers supported young people doing their DofE



3,937 Licensed Organisations (LOs) delivered the DofE

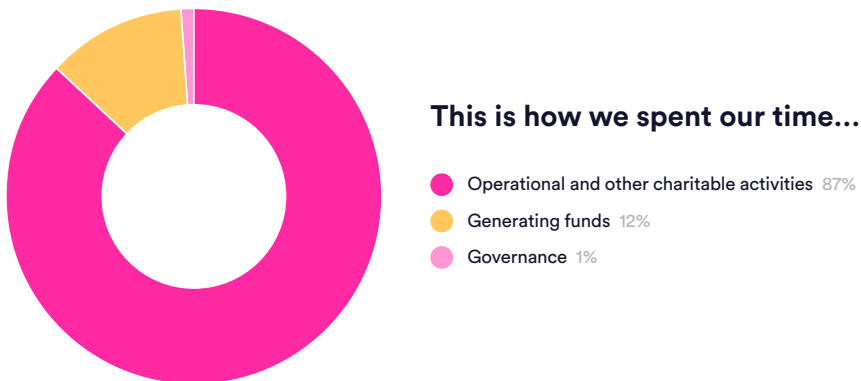
How we raised our money

First and foremost, we're a charity. We rely on generous donations to top up the income we receive from participation places and licence fees, to keep costs down for the young people we serve and make the DofE happen. A big thank you to everyone who supports us to do this – you're incredible.

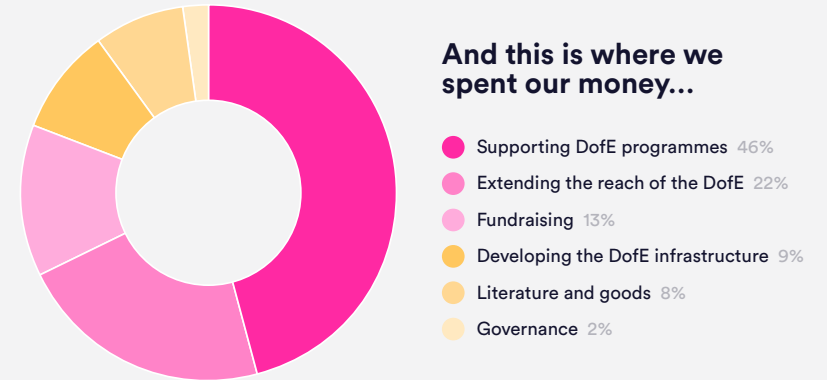


How we spent our money

We have a responsibility, to our donors, supporters, partners and participants to spend wisely, channelling the biggest portion into our staff teams. Our operational colleagues work one-to-one, on the ground, with organisations across the UK to run the DofE for their young people, providing training, resources, guidance and advice.



This is how we spent our time...



And this is where we spent our money...

“
Doing my DofE allowed me to find a purpose, and continuity... I feel so much more confident and positive because I achieved my DofE.”

Becky, DofE participant

Highlights:

Extending our reach



Boosting participation

We launched several pilot projects to boost participation from under-represented groups of young people, including:

In **Central England**, we targeted community-based youth and charitable groups who work with young people who are more marginalised and excluded. So far, we've licensed four new organisations, who've all enrolled young people on their DofE this calendar year (2020).

In **South East England**, we're working with eight schools in Kent and East Sussex, mostly in deprived areas, to build their capacity and widen access to DofE. In the first year of the pilot, 286 Year 9s started their DofE compared to 40 Year 9s forecast in the same schools before the pilot began.

In **London**, we piloted a new development model to license new organisations in deprived areas so they can offer DofE to more young people. Overall, 14 new organisations began offering DofE to their young people for the first time, with a number of schools planning a full year group enrolment from September 2020.

In **Northern Ireland**, the Ulster Gaelic Athletic Association (Ulster GAA) Board agreed to pilot the Joint Award Initiative within Ulster GAA. Leaders within Ulster GAA benefited from a range of training courses and, to date, 34 young people have achieved their Bronze Award through the partnership, enabling new communities to take part in Award programmes and benefit from internationally recognised accreditation.



Diamond Fund for young people facing disadvantage

We funded 333 projects to enable young people who face disadvantage to start their DofE. The Diamond Fund comprises donations from supporters as well as match funding from the #iwill Fund, a joint investment from The National Lottery Community Fund and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). In total we invested £646,860 in 2019/20 and were delighted that record number of young people facing disadvantage did their DofE this year, representing 25% of all our participants..

Secure estate

We licensed more centres in the secure estate to run the DofE, including our first women's prison. We also piloted a virtual expedition model in London to enable young people to complete their expedition without leaving the prison grounds. We explored delivering the DofE to young prison officers too, with a view to improving staff-prisoner relationships and prison officer retention within the sector.



Curriculum alignment

We raised education professionals' awareness of the value of DofE and the many ways in which it can support the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum for young people. For example: in England, we demonstrated how DofE programmes meet the character development requirements of the revised Ofsted inspection framework, launched in September 2019; and in Wales, we identified synergies with the new Curriculum for Wales 2022 and increased head teachers', teachers', parents' / carers' and young people's understanding of how doing DofE supports young people's education and achievement in Wales.



The Experience List

To complement the focus on character education in England, we launched The Experience List – a set of character-building activities every teenager should have access to. The List offered tangible support to young people and positioned the DofE as progressive and relevant.

It also received media attention, attracting over 80 pieces of overwhelmingly positive coverage.

“

The DofE has changed my life. It made me the person I am today. It gave me the experience and confidence to talk to new people. It made me realise how resilient and strong I am.”

DofE participant



Enabling achievement



DofE app

In autumn 2019 we launched the very first DofE app, to enable young people to track and record their DofE progress easily via their smartphone. So far, we've had over 190,000 app downloads and in October 2019, we were rated the fourth most popular lifestyle app in the Apple store!



Welcome Packs

We began sending Welcome Packs directly to the homes of young people starting their DofE, rather than through their Leaders. The refreshed Pack includes content targeted at parents – to inspire them to support their child through their DofE journey.



Regional Youth Ambassadors

We expanded the Regional Youth Ambassador (RYA) programme across the UK, encouraging participants to volunteer in their own LOs and become longer term advocates for the DofE. Through the initiative young people develop their leadership capabilities: in Scotland, our annual leader conference was hosted entirely by young people; and in Wales Young Ambassadors have acted as DofE spokespeople and represented us on national coalition projects with the wider youth sector.

Cancer Fund for Children



Cancer Fund for Children in Belfast support children and young people diagnosed with cancer or living with a parent diagnosed with cancer. The DofE Diamond fund covered the cost

of a minibus licence and expedition kit so that young people facing financial pressures weren't excluded from doing their DofE.

Gareth Beattie, DofE Manager and Leader at Cancer Fund for Children said: "By participating in their DofE, young people are less isolated. They meet others living similar lives and work with each other to achieve their Bronze Award.

"They experience improved confidence by learning new skills, gain a sense of achievement from attaining their Bronze, and become involved in their community through the volunteering aspect of their programmes. One stand-out achievement was helping to re-engage two young people back into school life, with one of the young people even coming on board as a fundraising volunteer in our charity."

“ Without this funding we would not be able to run the DofE.”





Looking forward

— Ruth Marvel, CEO

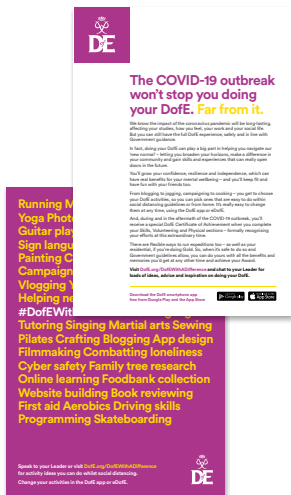


What a year it's been to start at the DofE. The growth of young people doing DofE across the UK, with a quarter facing disadvantage, and the increase in young people achieving their Award is incredible. I'd like to thank everyone involved in realising these results – young people themselves, their parents and carers, our DofE Leaders, Managers and volunteers, our donors and supporters, and of course, our staff – for their tenacity, passion and generosity. It's an honour to lead this fantastic organisation.

When we were working towards these goals in 2019/20, we didn't know how great the impact of young people doing and achieving their DofE would be in 2020. This year, their DofE will give them structure, focus and purpose whilst they adapt to new ways of learning; it'll benefit their positive mental health, as they digest and manage the events of the year, and transition back a school environment; it'll help them keep active, connected with friends and engaged with the outside world; and ultimately it'll enable them to achieve an Award that has currency, opening doors to work and life opportunities.

The future is uncertain and almost certainly challenging for today's young people, and our focus for 2020/21 is to be there for them when they need us most. We'll continue to take an agile approach to DofE, flexing our programme rules, promoting activities that can be done within Government guidelines and helping our Licensed Organisations to deliver when they have so many priorities to contend with. DofE is the tool that can support young people through these difficult times, and we're determined to extend our reach to benefit as many young people as possible.

Effects of the pandemic



As we neared the end of 2019/20, the world was turned upside down by the coronavirus pandemic. Our year of change continued and we had to adapt continuously to every changing circumstance. During the final two weeks of March we supported all our staff to transition to working from home and we launched **#DofEWithADifference** to help young people continue their DofE from home and adapt their activities in response to the restrictions of lockdown.

Disruption and uncertainty have dominated the first six months of the 2020/21 financial year and the impact on young people has been immense. But despite these challenges DofE has rallied behind our mission and the young people we exist to support. Our determination to help young people develop, adapt and ultimately thrive in these unprecedented circumstances is stronger than ever.

“DofE has reinvigorated and cemented my purpose and drive in life. It showed me that I am more capable than I believe and can do anything I put my mind to.”

DofE participant



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