



Employer's Guide

# GROW YOUR TALENT



**YOUTH  
WITHOUT  
LIMITS**

Help young people develop  
valuable skills for their future

[dofe.org](https://dofe.org)

Introduction:

# THEIR SKILLS, YOUR BUSINESS



## When you recruit young talent into a growing business, you unlock the door to endless possibilities.

This fresh face could become a future leader, and an investment in them could also be a vital investment in your organisation. But only if they're equipped with the skills to get them there.

All too often, busy workplaces can only afford to focus on functional training, leaving important 'soft-skills' unaddressed. But young people entering the workforce might lack the communication skills, problem solving ability or initiative you'd expect from a more experienced staff member.

These are the skills that can transform them from new recruit to valuable team member - and then to talented leader.

This guide takes a look at how the DofE programmes help young people develop the skills and attributes that support them as they progress in their employment and into management positions; skills including communication, resilience, enterprise, leadership, drive, team working and commitment. It also explores how the DofE Gold Award is structured and how you can support the progress of your young employees as they have life changing experiences and grow in confidence.



Last year the DofE provided an important way to stay connected with the world, develop skills and boost wellbeing for many young people. In fact...

# 321,622

Young people started their DofE journey



# Skills for work, **SKILLS FOR LIFE**

**Any 18 to 24 year old entering the workplace will arrive with a limited set of practical skills.**

The problem – and your problem as their employer – is that classroom or on-the-job training often misses out on how employees develop the practical know-how to do their job well.

To give them every chance of becoming a productive member of your team, they need to learn a few essential 'soft skills' which is exactly what we do at the DofE and why we can help.

## **Basic life skills**

Skills like punctuality and good time management, being reliable and the ability to manage a varied workload are all essential qualities employers value.

But perhaps the most precious of all, and valuable to employers, is an ability to take the initiative. This boosts team productivity and frees up busy managers from spending too much time repeating instructions or allocating tasks.

## **Leadership skills**

What makes a good leader is hard to pin down and often takes years of experience in the making – so why would leadership skills be seen as essential for a new employee?

The attributes of a good leader are skills that can be gained by all employees – things like confidence and collaboration through team activities, or resilience and adaptability when given the positive encouragement to keep trying, even when things go wrong the first time.

It's the subtle skills like emotional intelligence, empathy, humility, and the ability to motivate others which can be difficult for some young adults. These can be improved by pushing these individuals to interact beyond their usual comfort zone.

As we've learnt over the years, if you give young adults practical life experiences that help them to build belief in themselves, they learn how to cope well with whatever life – and work – throws at them.



# Learning through meaningful **EXPERIENCE**

**Emotional intelligence is one of the most important skills to succeed at work.**

Recent research suggests that this statement is true, with around a third of small and medium enterprises saying that they have lost a client or customer because of an employee's poor people skills, and a similar number saying that productivity is lower where these skills do not exist.<sup>1</sup>

But while most employers know that interpersonal skills are harder to master than technical skills, few dedicate a similar amount of training budget or attention to developing these soft skills in their teams. Perhaps unsure on what will be effective or how to measure success. And that's where the DofE Gold Award can help.

Life skills programmes like the Gold Award are few and far between. Ours has also proven time and again that it works. Taking part exposes young adults to a range of challenging new experiences that expand their horizons and build their confidence. It raises their self-belief and gives them a real grounding on what it takes to be successful in life and at work.

1. [www.hrmagazine.co.uk/article-details/employees-poor-people-skills-negatively-affecting-smes](http://www.hrmagazine.co.uk/article-details/employees-poor-people-skills-negatively-affecting-smes)

**Doing their DofE Gold Award at work builds confident and capable young employees – making this the smartest investment any business can make.**



“ I did my DofE Gold while I was working and found it a really valuable experience. There are so many skills that are directly applicable to the workplace, from the discipline of planning the expeditions and making sure you've allocated time to the skills, physical and volunteering aspects, to having to take initiative to complete the full programme.

There are loads of opportunities to choose activities that align with your job, whether that's picking a skill that has a direct functional link to your role or improving your overall fitness if you do a more physical job. ”

**Ravi Chahal, Optometrist**

# Your role as **EMPLOYER**

## Lessons written in a notebook are easily forgotten but skills learned through experience last a lifetime.

When you decide to take on a young employee, you also take on the responsibility for their ongoing development. Our role is to help you to get them to a place where you can rely on them to deliver.

To achieve the DofE Gold Award, they'll start to recognise and act on the behaviours that deliver positive results, and drop those that don't. In simple terms, doing the Award is a fast track to how they can add long-term value to your business.



**An added benefit of the Award is that the cost is lower than you might think, which is why more businesses, small, medium and large, are encouraging their young employees to take part.**

**Sponsorship** – the up-front cost for each employee taking part is £75.

**Additional costs** – once the venues are set, we'll also ask employers to cover the cost of the expedition and for the Gold Award residential course. This is typically from £500 per participant.

**Time out** – participants will need to take time away from work to complete their Expedition and Residential sections.

For the Residential this is five days and four nights. *These can be split into two periods.*

For the Expedition this will require four days and three nights away to complete the training and practice expedition. Followed shortly after by another four day and three-night qualifying expedition. *These can be completed over long weekends.*

“ Going through the DofE Gold programme meant that I had to be really adaptable. I was thrown into situations with people I'd never met before and we had to quickly learn how to collaborate and build relationships.

This has been invaluable in the working environment, where I've been able to apply those teamwork skills and quickly forge relationships with colleagues. I would wholeheartedly recommend the programme for young people looking to develop their leadership skills. ”

Roberta Stringer, Teacher

## DofE Gold is open to employees aged up to 24

➔ Find out more by getting in touch today  
[dofe.org/direct](https://dofe.org/direct)

When young employees enrol on a DofE Gold Award, they start on a learning journey that will bring ongoing benefit, not only to them but also to your business.

➔ It couldn't be more simple

The business expresses an interest

A member of the Direct Team will get in touch

You decide to take part and the Direct team will enrol your participants

You will be invoiced for the £75 pp for the Gold places

A DofE Direct leader will work with you to arrange the launch of the Gold programme (In person or virtually)

Six weeks after launch a Direct Leader will arrange a progress meeting with you and your participants

Following this your participants will be able to continue their Awards at their own pace in line with the DofE Direct model

Your participants will work towards their Volunteering - Physical - Skills - Expedition - Residential

All progress is recorded on our system eDofE (only Participants & Leaders have access to this)

A Direct leader will keep you updated about progress and be there to support your participants until they complete

All Awards must be completed before a participants 25th Birthday

On completion your participants will be invited to a Royal Palace to celebrate

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## Over half

of young people said that they feel better about themselves

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## 71%

of young people said that volunteering had improved their confidence

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## 68%

of young people said that they are fitter than before they started their programme



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