

Impact Report

2024

Technical Report



**YOUTH
WITHOUT
LIMITS**



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Introduction

This report summarises the key information about our methodology and analysis of Impact Measurement Framework data in relation to the Impact Report 2024.

Scope

The data analysis took place in August 2024. We developed the following research questions so that the analysis had a clear direction and scope.

Research questions:

What is the impact of a DofE programme on the key outcomes in young people who do their DofE? More specifically:

- Do participants experience improved wellbeing at any stage of their DofE? [life satisfaction, happiness, anxiety, and feelings of doing things in life that are worthwhile]
- Do participants experience increased skills at any stage which help them in their future? [initiative, emotion management, empathy, teamwork, problem solving, resilience, confidence]
- Do participants experience a greater sense of community ties at any stage of a DofE programme? [agency, local trust, belonging]
- Do participants have increased physical activity at any stage?

Methodology

The questions included in our Impact Measurement Framework are integrated into participants' eDofE accounts where they record their activities throughout their DofE journey towards Award completion. These are aligned with the outcomes outlined in our Theory of Change.

Impact Measurement Framework questions

Question	
1	Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?
2	Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?
3	Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?
4	Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?
5	How likely is it that you will be successful and get ahead?
6	If I find something difficult, I keep trying until I can do it.
7	Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.
8	I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.
9	I feel I can make a difference to the world around me.
10	To what extent do you agree or disagree that most people in your local area can be trusted?
11	How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement – “I feel like I belong to this neighbourhood”?
12	I am able to do things as well as most other people.
13	I can usually solve my own problems.
14	In general, would you say your health is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?
15	In the past week, on how many days have you done a total of 30 minutes or more of physical activity, which was enough to raise your breathing rate?
16	I try to be nice to other people. I care about their feelings.
17	How confident do you feel about working with other people in a team?
18	How likely would you be to recommend the DofE to a friend?

None of the questions are mandatory, and participants can choose from a scale of responses, including “prefer not to say” for each question.

Questions 1-4 make up the Office for National Statistics (ONS) four questions on personal wellbeing which are collected at a national level.¹

We designed a safeguarding alert process and built this into the system, so that young people who respond with answers indicating a low level of wellbeing are supported by a trusted adult in a timely way.

Our framework is currently used in most settings where DofE programmes are offered, and we are in the process of adapting it for use in special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) school settings and secure settings such as prisons and young offender institutions.

National comparisons

The questions included in the Impact Measurement Framework were carefully chosen so that some comparisons to national data, and therefore the experience of the general UK youth population, can be made. We are still early in our journey of analysing the dataset in depth and there is a lot more that could be explored.

Studying national datasets alongside ours helps to give a clearer picture of participants' start and end point and to understand the value of DofE programmes against the backdrop of the general trends experienced by the wider UK youth population.

¹ For more information see: [Personal well-being in the UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

Analysis

We analysed a subset of the dataset which included records of respondents who had achieved their Awards and completed the “before” and “after” questions. This included a total of 40,880 “before” and “after” responses of young people who achieved Bronze, Silver and Gold DofE Awards between July 2022 and July 2024.

State of Life completed the analysis of the data, using both descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The Impact Report 2024 presents and discusses findings from both types of analysis.

Descriptive statistics

In descriptive statistics, we summarise the responses to outcome questions and compare them across different points in time (e.g., the end compared to the start, or the start, middle and end).

Statistical significance

We also wanted to test whether these observed changes are statistically significant. Running tests, such as statistical significance, allows us to be confident that the findings are not a result of chance alone and that DofE participation played an important role in this change. Statistical significance is a way to measure if a result is likely due to chance or a real effect or relationship in data. It's a way to determine if patterns or differences in data are meaningful. This is done using “multiple linear regression”. This is a technique which can simultaneously estimate the relationship between different “explanatory variables” and a “dependent variable” of interest.

- In our case, the *change* in the outcome is our dependent variable.
- Our explanatory variables include demographics, Award level, and other things observed in the data.
- After conducting this analysis, we can observe the ‘predicted’ change in an outcome, whilst taking into account influences from elsewhere.
- We then test whether this predicted change is significantly different from zero (using confidence intervals).

Using the WELLBY measure

The analysis also included applying a social value and WELLBY (wellbeing-adjusted life year)² methodology to the changes seen in life satisfaction, a recognised and recently updated approach following the HM Treasury’s “Green Book” Guidance.³

² For more detail on State of Life’s approach to analysis or to learn more about the WELLBY, please visit stateoflife.org.

³ HM Treasury (2021). Wellbeing Guidance for Appraisal: Supplementary Green Book Guidance. Available here: [Wellbeing guidance for appraisal - supplementary Green Book guidance.pdf](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/94444/wellbeing_guidance_for_appraisal_-_supplementary_green_book_guidance.pdf) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

The WELLBY measure is short for ‘wellbeing-adjusted life year’ and is a standardised unit of measurement for wellbeing impacts. It has been developed by HM Treasury so that wellbeing can be measured and valued in a consistent way and included in decision-making and policy discussions. Social value is calculated using the [WELLBY measure](#) following HM [Treasury Guidance](#), which states that a one-point change in life satisfaction on a 0-10 scale should be valued at £13,000 in 2019 prices per person, per year. Following this guidance we have adjusted for inflation to £15,300 in 2023 prices.

Comparison life satisfaction shifts

- Being employed rather than unemployed is associated with a shift of 0.46 in life satisfaction (valued at £6,000 per person, per year)
- Positive job quality characteristics – such as security, autonomy and support – are associated with a 0.25 shift (valued at £3,000)
- Experiencing flooding or sewage works with odour issues is associated with a -0.05 shift (valued at -£650)
- Exposure to daytime aircraft noise is associated with a -0.147 shift (valued at -£2,000).

From [HM Treasury Green Book \(2021\)](#), Annex 2 (in 2019 prices)

People in the sample

The sample includes participants who have achieved Bronze, Silver and Gold DofE Awards.⁴ As illustrated below, the sample gives us a very good understanding of how the Bronze DofE Award cohort, who form 91.4% of the sample, are feeling.⁵^[OBJ]

Compared to our annual participation statistics, it is slightly over representative of ethnic minorities and females, and slightly under representative of those living in areas of high deprivation. Our approach to analysis includes regression analysis which does account for this difference in the sample.

Award level	Analysis sample	% of sample
All	N=40,880	100%
Bronze	37,357	91.4%
Silver	2,987	7.3%
Gold	536	1.3%

Table 1

Gender	Analysis sample	All DofE participants (Awards achieved)
	N=39,777	N=155,502
Male	44.0%	43.7%
Female	55.5%	50.4%
Describe another way	0.5%	0.6%
Unknown		3.9%
Prefer not to say		1.2%
Not specified		0.01%
Excludes unknown, prefer not to say and not specified for the analysis sample.		

Table 2

⁴ The sample includes 472 individuals who completed two awards within the timeframe. In all cases these are Bronze and Silver Awards. (included in table 1). For the purpose of understanding who is in the sample (Table 2 onwards) these 472 people who completed two Awards within the timeframe are counted only once.

⁵ Across all DofE achieved Awards, the breakdown in our annual stats (2023-24) is as follows:
Bronze: 71.8%, Silver: 21.9%, Gold: 6.1%

Additional needs	Analysis sample	All DofE participants (Awards achieved)	National comparison
	N=39,301	N=155,502	100%
Yes	4.3%	7.1%	8.6%
No	95.7%	92.1%%	91.4%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excludes “prefer not to say”. The analysis sample includes those who have self-declared an additional need and does not include those who are in a SEND school. 			

Table 3

Deprivation	Analysis sample	All DofE participants (Awards achieved)	National comparison
	N=39,772	N=152,896	
IMD 1-3 (high)	11.6%	13.3%	30.0%
IMD 4-7 (medium)	35.5%	35.7%	40.4%
IMD 8-10 (low)	52.8%	49.3%	29.6%
Excludes missing information.			

Table 4

Ethnicity	Analysis sample
	N=39,776
White British/Irish	68.6%
Ethnic minorities	31.4%
White other	6.90%
Asian	14.9%
Black/African/Caribbean background	2.70%
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	5.80%
Other ethnicity	1.20%
Excludes “prefer not to say” and “not specified” for the analysis sample.	

Table 5

Qualitative data

Alongside the quantitative data collection and analysis, the DofE routinely collects first-hand accounts from young people from a wide range of backgrounds, enabling us to learn from young people directly about aspects of the programme which are working well for them, and about what can be improved. The young people's quotes included in the Impact Report 2024 were collected from DofE participants separately to the ongoing impact survey. Consent was gained for publication in a variety of DofE formats.

We also held a Focus Group Discussion with eight of our Youth Ambassadors in October 2024, in which we shared the main findings from the data analysis and gathered their feedback and views.

Limitations

1. Importantly, our approach has allowed us to explore the impact of participation in relation to the completion of Awards. We do nevertheless recognise that participating in a DofE programme and completing sections (and not the whole of an Award) can hold a lot of importance for young people – and this is something we would like to explore through further analysis of the dataset (for example, looking at “in progress” Awards).
2. We are also aware that looking at this sample also entails a selection bias as it includes only the young people's records belonging to those who have completed their Award and who have been willing to complete the survey throughout their DofE journey.
3. Our Gold sample in the analysed dataset is smaller than our overall reach, due to the time it takes to complete a Gold Award (roughly 18 months), meaning the dataset will accumulate over time to include more Gold participant records.
4. Among the Gold sample, there was a high proportion with missing information on gender – a data issue which we are working hard to resolve. We were able to adapt and still use this data, by including them in the sample as a group with ‘unknown gender’ rather than missing data.
5. Wellbeing increase, and social value, appears to be greater for higher Awards. During the regression analysis, we tested whether the predicted change is significantly different from zero (using confidence intervals). The confidence interval tells us that we are 95% sure that the true value is between 0.27 and 0.31. Therefore, we are confident in saying that the change in life satisfaction is 0.29, on average. The overall value is closest to the value for Bronze, capturing the fact that most Awards achieved are Bronze. By observing the confidence intervals, we can be confident that the value in Silver is higher than the value in Bronze. While the analysis indicates that the social value is higher for Gold Awards, the confidence intervals in this analysis are larger, meaning we have less confidence in this. This is due to the different sample sizes of Awards in this analysis. We are hoping that over time, as the database grows, we can continue to test, learn, and build a greater evidence base, including further social value analysis across all Awards levels.

Moving forward

As mentioned above, we are adapting the Impact Measurement Framework to suit a range of settings in which the DofE is delivered, allowing more young people to share their experiences. We would also like to more fully understand our long-term impact and undertake more detailed evaluations.

This process has generated further research questions and new avenues for data exploration, which we will be pursuing in the coming months. We look forward to gaining deeper insights into the experiences of young people participating in the DofE.

Thank You

We'd like to acknowledge colleagues from **State of Life** for their important role in the analysis and interpretation of this impact data and to **St. James's Place** for their generous support.

A huge thank you to our fantastic participants, who made this report possible by responding to our impact survey while doing their DofE, to our brilliant UK Youth Ambassadors, and to those who have shared their stories.

Finally, we are immensely grateful to our remarkable network of partner organisations, volunteers and supporters who make the DofE possible – giving young people life-changing opportunities, every day, across the UK.



Impact Report - featured data

The below table summarises the number of responses analysed for each graph included in the Impact Report 2024

Figure	Number of responses
Figure 1: Wellbeing Measures	34,854
Figure 2: Average life satisfaction by age	At start = 35,713 At end = 35,318 From national data = 57,574
Figure 3: Average anxiety by age	At start = 35,713 At end = 35,318 From national data = 3,653
Figure 4: Confidence	38,277
Figure 5: Problem solving	38,571
Figure 6: Emotional management	35,900
Figure 7: Initiative	36,014
Figure 8: Resilience	29,244
Figure 9: Empathy	519
Figure 10: Teamwork	508
Figure 11: Belonging	37,990
Figure 12: Local trust	38,156
Figure 13: Agency	37,824
Figure 14: Physical activity	37,169