



Celebrating 70 years of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

1956 – 2026



Since 1956, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) has empowered millions of young people to unlock their potential. Our 70th anniversary in 2026 isn't just a celebration, it's a moment to reflect on what matters most to us as a charity and to recognise our incredible volunteers and dedicated supporters who make our work possible. It's also a time to look ahead.

Today's generation of young people is growing up in a world full of uncertainty – from mental health pressures to a rapidly changing tech landscape, economic challenges and climate anxiety. In the next five years, they will need more support, more opportunity and more belief in their potential than ever before. We must act now to ensure every young person, especially those facing marginalisation, can access a life-changing DofE. Because over the last 70 years, we've seen how DofE enables a young person to build skills, resilience and the self-belief they need to take on life's toughest challenges.

We know DofE works. We're proud to reach over half a million young people every year, but we know that those who stand to benefit the most from the Award often face the greatest barriers. Financial hardship, lack of opportunity and systemic inequality mean too many are still being left behind. With your support, we can change the story – giving even more young people the tools to thrive in an increasingly complex world.



The DofE doesn't just change individual lives – it strengthens families, schools, communities and society as a whole. Ensuring every young person has the chance to do their DofE and discover their potential – regardless of their financial situation – will take all of us. We hope you will join us, in whatever way you can, to help make that ambition a reality. Thank you for your continued support. Together, we can achieve even more for young people.

Ruth Marvel OBE, CEO, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Front cover image: First DofE supporter's brooch.



“DofE gives you the chance to improve yourself, progress yourself; the chance to have more confidence in your abilities, knowing that you can do something if you really want to. DofE helps you commit more – it pushes you to not quit because you’re working towards a bigger goal. I won’t just give up when it’s hard now, [it taught me to] push myself and carry on going, that’s a crucial thing.”

Lesley, 15, Bronze Award holder, Salford

OUR STORY SO FAR

1956 The Duke of Edinburgh's Award for boys is piloted. The programme is made up of Rescue and Public Service Training, The Expedition, Pursuits, and Fitness.

1958 The Duke of Edinburgh's Award for girls is piloted. The programme consists of Design for Living, Interests, Adventure, Giving Service, and a Residential Training Course as an additional element at Gold.

1961 The Duke of Edinburgh's Award becomes a charitable trust.

1969 The Duke of Edinburgh's Award for young people aged 14 to 21 is launched.

1975 The number of young people starting their DofE programme worldwide reaches one million.

1980 One programme for all young people is launched. The new programme consists of Service, Expedition, Skills, Physical Recreation, and an additional Residential Project at Gold.

1986 HRH The Earl of Wessex and Forfar achieves his Gold Award.

1988 The International Award Association is established.

2001

HRH The Duke of Edinburgh hands over his role as Chairman of Trustees to Sir Tom Farmer but remains as Patron.

2006

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award celebrates its 50th anniversary and is awarded a Royal Charter.

2009

eDofE, the DofE's online management system is launched.

2016

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award celebrates 60 years and launches the DofE Diamond Challenge.

2020

The DofE responds to the coronavirus pandemic, with young people dedicating 1.8 million hours of volunteering to their local communities.

2021

The DofE family marks the passing of Prince Philip, aged 99. In the same year, the charity launches the Youth Without Limits strategy to reach one million young people by 2026.

2023

HM The King confers upon Prince Edward the title "The Duke of Edinburgh". His Royal Highness also becomes Patron of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

2024

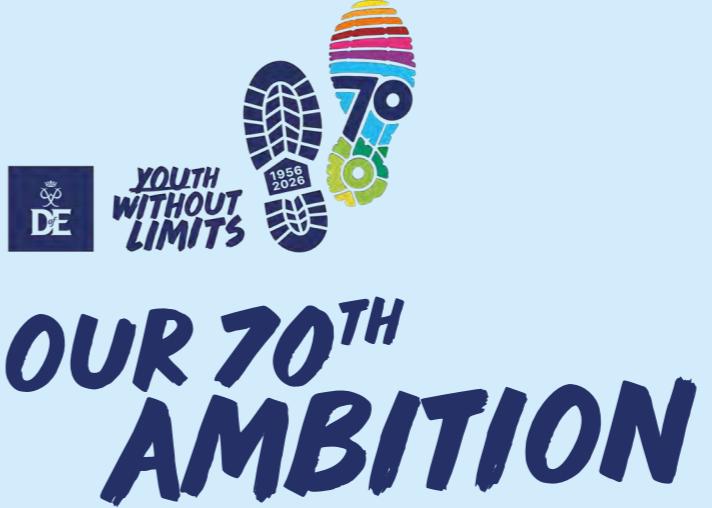
The DofE achieves its 2021 strategic goal of reaching one million young people, two years earlier than planned.





“ I think every special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) school in the country should run The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award. These young people can do anything with the right resource and equipment. Without funding, those opportunities would have been missed. Those young people wouldn’t have experienced and learned the things that they have. It’s just been life-changing for many of our young people. ”

Shivaun, Head Teacher - Sherbourne Fields School, Coventry



We know the impact a DofE experience has – boosting confidence, resilience, wellbeing and life skills. And we know that impact reaches far beyond the individual, benefiting employers, communities and wider society. However, we also know there are thousands of young people across the UK who can't access the DofE due to financial barriers.

That's why, over the next five years, we're redoubling our efforts to widen access – focusing on young people living in the UK's most deprived areas and expanding our reach into new settings.

To make this happen, we need your support. Whether it's attending an event, funding an assisted place, contributing to a bursary, or helping us grow our reach, the money you donate, or help us raise, unlocks opportunities for thousands more young people like Riyaadh, who need them most.



“ I wanted to do DofE because I was looking for confidence. It's motivated me to be more sociable, more friendly. Before DofE, I'd never set goals in my life. DofE has helped me find out more about who I am, and it's given me an escape, I'm much happier for doing it. I think it's important DofE is available to all young people, that everybody gets those new experiences, new skills and new opportunities. ”

Riyaadh is a Bronze Award participant whose school received a grant from the Resilience Fund.



FUNDING OUR AMBITION

We want every young person to have the opportunity to do their DofE and build the skills they need to take on today's toughest challenges. In our 70th year, we will be hosting a range of fundraising events, and we'd love to welcome you to one or more of them. We'd also be grateful for any introductions to individuals or companies who might be interested in our work or see mutual value in supporting the DofE. With your support, we can make our 70th year so much more than a celebration – together we can support more young people to start their life-changing DofE journey.

Do It 4 Youth Virtual Challenge

1-31 March 2026

Clay Shoot

Thursday 7 May 2026 – Windsor Great Park

DofE Trek Together

Saturday 11 July 2026 – Windsor Great Park

Cricket Day

15 July 2026 – Royal Household Cricket Club, Windsor Castle Estate

DofE Dragon Boat Race

4 September 2026 – Surrey Quays, London

Car Tour

Thursday 24 – Monday 28 September 2026
Northern Ireland

Golf Day

Wednesday 30 September 2026 – Royal Liverpool
Golf Club, Hoylake

70th Year Gala Dinner

November 2026 – London

Festive Concert

December 2026 – London

We hope you will be able to join us at one of the events during our 70th year.

For further information and pricing, please visit DofE.org/Events or email Events@DofE.org



**DO IT
4
YOUTH**

**120 MILE
VIRTUAL
CHALLENGE**
1 - 31 March 2026



Tie up your laces and join us for our annual virtual challenge. Walk 120 miles, whenever and wherever you want, throughout March to raise vital funds for the DofE. Everyone who signs up will receive a special 2026 Do It 4 Youth t-shirt and those who raise £50 or more will receive an exclusive DofE 70th anniversary pin badge.

DofE CLAY SHOOT

**Thursday 7 May 2026
Windsor Great Park**

Step into royal history for an unforgettable day at Windsor Great Park.

By kind permission of His Majesty The King, DofE invites you to join us for an extraordinary and exclusive day of simulated clay shooting set in the historic setting of Windsor Great Park. Enjoy a full day of hospitality including a thrilling selection of expertly curated drives, breakfast, elevenses, a drinks reception and two-course lunch accompanied by an auction, raffle and prize giving.



**DofE
TREK
TOGETHER**
WINDSOR

**Saturday 11 July 2026
Windsor Great Park**

New for 2026 – join Team DofE for a 10 or 20-mile sponsored walk, starting and finishing on the iconic Long Walk in Windsor Great Park. You'll enjoy the stunning backdrop of Windsor Castle as you begin your journey through the beautiful countryside.

After completing your walk, you'll return to the event village in Windsor Great Park. There, you can browse stalls and take part in fun activities that showcase the best of the DofE. You'll also be able to enjoy delicious food and drinks from our onsite caterers.



DofE CRICKET DAY

Wednesday 15 July 2026
Frogmore, Windsor Castle



Join us for a fabulous day of cricket at the Royal Household Cricket Club featuring a DofE All-Stars XI versus the RHCC XI. The day will begin with a drinks reception, followed by a two-course lunch, complimentary drinks, and an entertaining game of T20 cricket, plus afternoon tea and cake joined by some very special guests.

DofE DRAGON BOAT RACE

Friday 4 September 2026
Surrey Quays, London

Get a team together for a day of fun, adrenaline-pumping competition. Teams will take to the waters at Surrey Quays London, near Canary Wharf, to compete in a series of races across the day paddling their Dragon Boat in a bid to be crowned the DofE Dragon Boat Champions of 2026.

After a thrilling day of racing there'll be a prize-giving ceremony with a trophy and medals awarded to the winning team.

This is a fantastic team building opportunity for businesses, sports club, community groups and schools.



DofE CAR TOUR

Thursday 24 - Monday 28 September 2026
Northern Ireland



Join us on a unique classic car tour adventure, driving through some of the dramatic, stunning scenery of Northern Ireland and its coastline. The tour will transport you to some of the most glorious locations the region

offers, with exclusive access to private houses, gardens and collections along a carefully chosen scenic route. The tour will end with a special finale dinner at Hillsborough Castle.



Photo credit: Courtesy of Royal Liverpool Golf Club.

DofE GOLF DAY

Wednesday 30 September 2026
Royal Liverpool

Join us on the prestigious and exclusive Hoylake, one of the oldest of all the English seaside clubs. This renowned course has hosted 13 Opens delivering 13 different Champions.

Take part in the 18-hole competition with a shotgun start in the beautiful surroundings of

Hoylake, followed by a drinks reception and two-course dinner with wine. Have fun taking part in the longest drive and nearest-the-pin competitions. Finish off a great day of golf with prize giving, auction and raffle.

DofE 70th YEAR GALA DINNER

November 2026
London

Join us and some very special guests for a night to remember. Step into an evening of timeless elegance and sparkling celebration as we mark a magnificent milestone, with drinks, a seated dinner and live music.

A night featuring fine cuisine and wine, honouring the legacy built by supporters like you. We will commemorate the past and inspire the future.

We look forward to raising a glass with you in celebration!



DofE FESTIVE CONCERT

December 2026

Join us for a magical evening of music, celebration, and reflection at our Festive Concert in December 2026. You'll enjoy musical performances, inspiring DofE stories and seasonal bites.

Don't miss this heartwarming evening – a lovely event for everyone.



SUPPORT OUR WORK

A donation to the DofE enables us to keep reaching young people with a life-changing Award – helping them to build skills, confidence and resilience to support their transition from education to employment. Use the QR code to donate today.



**YOUR LEGACY,
THEIR FUTURE**



We don't know what the future holds, but we do know the positive impact DofE can have on the young people who will be shaping it.

Including DofE in your Will can help ensure we can continue to do all the things that make DofE transformational and accessible, while also helping us innovate and adapt to whatever challenges the future brings.

You can download your free Gifts in Wills guide at DofE.org/GiftsinWills or please contact a member of our fundraising team via GiftsinWills@DofE.org

Bringing our history to life:

THE DOFE ARCHIVE

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award has a rich history spanning over seven decades. Our archive collections offer a unique lens through which to tell our story and demonstrate our lifelong commitment to the support and development of young people since our founding days.

HRH Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh, first considered the idea of a national programme to support young people in 1954 at the request of his former headmaster, Kurt Hahn. His Royal Highness believed a youth programme would help young men bridge the gap between leaving school and entering National Service – it would improve their skills and equip them to make a valuable contribution to society, whilst building self-confidence and a sense of purpose.

Under the chairmanship of Prince Philip, a committee was formed to develop a proposal for a "royal badge". The group first met in October 1954 and over the following months outlined the aims and structure of "The Award Scheme". By February 1956, Buckingham Palace was ready to announce a trial of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and the scheme formally launched on 1st September 1956. The success of the trial led to the launch of The Scheme for Girls in September 1958, which comprised different sections and requirements. The DofE evolved over subsequent decades and revisions in the 1960s saw the age limits extended and conditions streamlined. In 1980 the sections were fully unified to offer one Award programme for all young people.

The DofE Archive follows the development of the DofE both as a programme and an organisation. Comprising a selection of documents, photographs, publications, objects and media, our holdings bring our history to life and enable us to explore and celebrate our heritage. Our work has unearthed some fascinating content along the way. We've rediscovered forgotten stories and gained a deeper understanding of the journey that has shaped the DofE into the leading youth development programme of today.

We are excited to be sharing our collection highlights for the very first time throughout 2026. We hope the archive will inform, inspire and encourage audiences to reflect on their own DofE experiences as part of our shared history.



We can't wait to see you at an event in 2026!

To find out about pricing and more details or to book your place, please get in touch with the team by emailing Events@DofE.org or visit DofE.org/Events

Together, we can continue to build on the legacy of HRH Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh and inspire generations of young people to get the most out of life and make a difference to the world around them.

