Impact Report

Access grant funding for schools

2025 Technical Report

Contents

Introduction

This report summarises the key information about our methodology and analysis of Impact Measurement Framework data in relation to the Impact Report for our Access Grant Funding for Schools completed in 2025.

Scope

The data analysis took place between January – March 2025 and was conducted by State of Life. We used the research questions developed for the DofE's Impact Report 2024 so that the analysis had a clear direction, scope and comparability to the findings for DofE generally.

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 through a series of test-and-learn pilots.

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 impact of DofE programmes against the backdrop of the general trends experienced by the wider UK youth population.

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[1] For more information see: Personal well-being in the UK - Office for National Statistics (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 1,207 "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 - Access Grant Funding for Schools 2025 presents and discusses findings from both types of analysis. Where comparisons are made to DofE generally, this refers to data from our 2024 Impact Report analysis, alongside our Annual Statistics 2023/24.

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.

Our explanatory variables include demographics, Award level, and other control variables. Where we explore the impact by different school factors, we focus on life satisfaction as the outcome, and use regression analysis.

In our case, the *change* in the outcome is our dependent variable. 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). The confidence intervals can tell us whether change is statistically significant.

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]

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).

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[2] For more detail on State of Life's approach to analysis or to learn more about the WELLBY, please visit www.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 (publishing.service.gov.uk)

The sample

The sample includes 1,207 participants who achieved Bronze, Silver and Gold DofE Awards between July 2022 – July 2024 in 182 mainstream schools, that received access grant funding enabled by the Department for Education (DfE) or the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

School sample

State of Life initially considered how well the 182 mainstream schools in our sample represent the full group of schools that received access grant funding enabled by DfE or DCMS[4] . They concluded that the sample schools suitably represent all Access funded mainstream schools, supported through these grant programmes. Additionally, after examining the distribution across schools, as well as the means, they concluded that the sub-groups are suitably drawn from a range of diverse schools.

The tables below show a breakdown of our sample data at a school level.

Urban/Rural	Analysis sample	Wider group of schools funded through DfE/DCMS
	N[5] =182	N=392
Rural	13%	11%
Urban	87%	89%

Table 1

Region	Analysis sample	Wider group of schools funded through DfE/DCMS
	N =182	N=392
East Midlands	13%	11%
East of England	13%	10%
London	17%	18%
North East	6%	8%

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[4] Schools were eligible for funding if they met the following eligibility criteria: The school is a state school that receives funding through their local authority or directly from the government. This includes Maintained Schools (funded and controlled by Secretary of State for Education).The school is not currently licensed to deliver the DofE or is not a DofE Centre in an Operating Authority (OA) area. The school has not terminated its licence or OA Service Level Agreement in the past 6 months at the point of application.

[5] N = number

North West	12%	15%
South East	12%	9%
South West	7%	6%
West Midlands	9%	11%
Yorkshire & Humber	13%	14%
Our sample was not large enough to explore regions separately. We therefore grouped regions into North, Midlands, South & London.		

Table 2

% Free School Meals (FSM)	Analysis sample	Wider group of schools funded through DfE/DCMS
	N =182	N=391
0 – 19	23%	17%
20 – 39	56%	51%
40 – 59	19%	30%
60 – 79	2%	1%
80 – 100	1%	0%
Information missing for one school in wider sample of funded schools.		

Table 3

School Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)	Analysis sample	Wider group of schools funded through DfE/DCMS
	N=182	N=392
IMD 1 – 4	59%	64%
IMD 5 – 10	41%	36%

Table 4

Urban/Rural	Analysis sample		
	N =182	Mean participants per school	Standard deviation
Rural	23	7.4	6.5
Urban	159	6.5	9.3

Table 5

% Free School Meals (FSM)	Analysis sample		
	N =182	Mean participants per school	Standard deviation
0-19	42	9.7	14.7
20-39	101	6.5	6.7
40-100	39	3.9	4.1

Table 6

Region	Analysis sample		
	N =182	Mean participants per school	Standard deviation
North	55	4.5	5.7
Midlands	39	6	5.7
South	58	6.5	6.1
London	30	11.6	17.1

Table 7

School Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)	Analysis sample		
	N =182	Mean participants per school	Standard deviation
IMD 1 – 4	108	5.7	7.4
IMD 5 – 10	74	8.0	10.8

Table 8

Participant sample

State of Life then considered how well our sample represents DofE generally[6] and found that this sample is similar in terms of additional needs and age, however the sample represents more males and ethnic minorities, compared to DofE generally.

We also found that individuals represent both DfE and DCMS funding, and most have done a Bronze Award.

The tables below show a breakdown of our sample data at a participant level. For information on the IMD data for participants, please see the main report.

Award level	Analysis sample	Wider group of schools funded through DfE/DCMS
	N =1,207	N=22,007
Bronze	96%	87%
Silver	3%	12%
Gold	1%	1%
Includes both Awards from 6 individuals who did two Awards in the timeframe. In all cases these are Bronze and Silver Awards.		

Table 9

Funder	Analysis sample
	N =1,207
DfE	628
DCMS	579
Includes both Awards from 6 individuals who did two Awards in the timeframe.	

Table 10

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[6] 'DofE generally' in these tables refers to findings from our Annual Statistics 23/24. All Awards in timeframe refers to the Impact Report 2024 sample.

Gender	Analysis sample	All Awards in timeframe	DofE generally
	N=1,187	N = 39,777	N = ~150,000
Male	58%	44%	46%
Female	41%	56%	53%
Describe another way	1%	1%	1%
Excludes unknown & prefer not to say.			

Table 11

Additional needs	Analysis sample	All Awards in timeframe	DofE generally
	N=1,201	N =39,301	N = ~150,000
Yes	6%	4%	7%
No	94%	96%	92%
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 12

Ethnicity	Analysis sample	All Awards in timeframe	DofE generally
	N =1,189	N =39,776	N = ~150,000
White British/Irish	56%	69%	75%
Ethnic minorities	44%	31%	25%
White other	8%	7%	
Asian	23%	15%	
Black/African/ Caribbean background	7%	3%	
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	6%	6%	
Other ethnicity	2%	1%	
Excludes prefer not to say.			

Table 13

Age at start of Award (years)	Analysis sample	All Awards in timeframe
	N=1,207	N=40,880
12	0.2%	0.1%
13	47%	47%
14	37%	41%
15	12%	9%
16	2%	2%
17	1%	1%
18	0.2%	0.1%

Table 14

Areas of interest

We explored the impact of DofE for participants in schools, specifically if and how the impact varies by geographical factors, local area deprivation and need of pupils in schools. The tables below show a breakdown of our sample data grouped by area of interest at a participant level[7].

Rural/urban	Analysis sample	
	N=1,207	%
Rural	171	14
Urban	1,036	86

Table 15

Participants across IMD of school	Analysis sample	
	N=1,207	%
IMD 1 – 4	614	51
IMD 5 – 10	593	49

Table 16

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[7] The 6 individuals who completed two Awards within the timeframe are counted twice here, because our analysis is at Award level.

% on Free School Meals (FSM)	Analysis sample	
	N=1,207	%
0 – 19	405	34
20 – 39	651	54
40 – 59	132	11
60 – 79	18	2
80 – 100	1	-
To improve our chances of obtaining meaningful findings, we grouped 40-59% FSM, 60-79% FSM, 80-100% FSM to increase the sample size of the sub-groups:		

Table 17

Region	Analysis sample	
	N=1,207	%
North East	40	3
North West	92	8
Yorkshire & the Humber	118	10
East Midlands	139	12
West Midlands	95	8
East of England	115	10
South East	208	17
South West	54	5
London	346	29
To improve our chances of obtaining meaningful findings, we grouped factors as follows: North East, North West, Yorkshire & the Humber; East Midlands, West Midlands; East of England, South East, South West; London.		

Table 18

Indicators of marginalised groups

We explored two main socio-economic indicators, to dig deeper into the impact of the Award in target schools. These were indicators of multiple deprivation (IMD) and percentage of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). Some more background information on these is included below.

Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

IMD is an indicator of relative deprivation. It is based on data from seven domains, including income, employment, and education, and ranks small population areas (LSOAs) from most to least deprived. This ranking is then divided equally into ten deciles, where decile 1 represents the most deprived areas and decile 10 the least. Using postcodes available in our dataset, we were able to match the locations of delivery schools to their corresponding deprivation decile. At the time of the analysis, the 2019 calculations were used.

Pupils on Free School Meals (FSM)

Eligibility for FSM[8] in England is determined based on criteria related to income levels and access to benefits, including Universal Credit. As of January 2024, an estimated 24.6% of pupils in state-funded schools are eligible for FSM. The proportion of pupils receiving FSM varies by school and can serve as a useful indicator of relative need within the school population. To explore this further, delivery schools were matched to publicly available data[9] on FSM eligibility. This matching process was completed by the DofE.

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 – Access Grant Funding for Schools were taken from case studies collected as part of the grant funding reporting process. Consent was gained for publication in a variety of DofE formats.

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[8] See gov.uk for more information on eligibility criteria for Free School Meals (FSM).
[9] 24.6% from House of Commons Library

Limitations

1. This analysis explored the impact of participation in relation to the completion of Awards. Therefore, it does not cover the experience of those participating in a DofE programme but not completing the whole of an Award). 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 the "completed" 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. This analysis did not compare the findings to national datasets. Some comparisons to national datasets were made in our Impact Report 2024 and are available to read. The approach has not included a 'control group', to determine whether the trends observed among the sample were also present in the wider population. As a result, we cannot attribute any observed changes solely to the completion of a DofE Award.

4. The sample was not large enough to meaningfully explore differences between Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards.

5. 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.

6. Wellbeing findings related to this analysis: On average, there was an increase of 0.31 in life satisfaction after completing a DofE programme for targeted schools. This is greater than the DofE's general Impact Report that found that average life satisfaction increased by 0.29. Due to the smaller sample size in this analysis, the estimate has a large confidence interval which overlaps with the general estimate of +0.29. Therefore, State of Life advised that it would be reasonable to apply the same social value as DofE generally; £4,400 per person per year.

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 areas for us to explore in the future. We look forward to gaining deeper insights into the experiences of young people participating in the DofE

Thank you

A huge thank you to the **Department for Education (DfE)** and **Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS)** for their generous support, which has made it possible for us to increase access to DofE in mainstream schools, additional needs and alternative provision settings.

We would also like to thank our fantastic participants, who made this report possible by responding to our impact survey while doing their DofE and by sharing their stories. Likewise, a big thank you to our brilliant DofE Managers who have also shared feedback throughout.

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

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.