

WORLD READY

2026-2031 strategy
The Duke of Edinburgh's Award



**YOUTH
WITHOUT
LIMITS**

**Unlocking enrichment for
every young person**



**YOUTH
WITHOUT
LIMITS**

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A message from our Chair and Chief Executive

**Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson
DBE, DL, Chair of Trustees**

Every year the DofE inspires hundreds of thousands of young people, from every background and community, to explore who they are, grow in confidence and develop the skills they need to thrive in life and work.

Never has our mission been more critical. Today's young people, whose childhoods were defined by COVID-19, are coming of age at a time of seismic change, from geopolitical and climate instability to cost-of-living pressures, a broken social contract and an AI revolution which is transforming how we live and work.

As the name suggests, our "World Ready" strategy sets out to equip young people with the tools they'll need to navigate an age of global upheaval. To build networks and community, develop essential human skills, connect with nature, and boost resilience, independence and self-belief.

By 2031 we want to reach over two million young people with a life-changing DofE experience. We'll work with partners and Governments across the four nations of the UK to ensure every young person has equitable access to high-quality enrichment opportunities.

We want DofE to be accessible to everyone. We'll optimise our operating model to deliver the Award more efficiently, we'll raise vital funds to remove financial barriers for young people from low-income families and innovate to reach more young people in the youth justice system and on the margins of formal education.

We owe a huge debt to everyone who has fed into this strategy. To our participants, their parents and carers, DofE Leaders, alumni and our partners, supporters and staff – you make DofE possible, and your insights and ideas have shaped our priorities.

Thank you – for helping put our charity at the heart of a national effort to invest in young people and give the next generation the opportunities and support they so richly deserve.



**Ruth Marvel OBE,
Chief Executive**

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A strategic focus on **ENRICHMENT**

en·rich·ment /in'ritʃmənt/ *noun*.

The process of making something more meaningful, substantial, or rewarding.

“Enrichment” refers to structured, purposeful activities beyond the formal academic curriculum that support children and young people’s personal and social development – it encompasses volunteering and civic participation, sport and arts, access to nature and adventure, and skills for life. It sometimes goes by other names – “non-formal learning,” “experiential learning”, “extra- or co-curricular activities” – but whatever you call it, one thing is for sure: these opportunities are essential to a young person’s development.

DofE is committed to unlocking the benefits of enrichment. That’s why, over the next five years, we’ll work with young people and our incredible network of partners and advocates to ensure that every young person has access to the high-quality, meaningful enrichment opportunities they need and deserve. Because life can’t wait!

“For the first time ever, I saw something I could join in with. I had always spent my time isolated and alone, watching from the side. Suddenly I was part of something and encouraging others in too. DofE didn’t change my life. DofE showed me how I could change my own life.”

Having autism presented many challenges for Poppy growing up, and getting through each day could be a struggle. Poppy used her DofE as an opportunity for self-discovery. Fast forward six years, she has now achieved her Gold Award, headed to university and even shared her story with thousands at Buckingham Palace.



OUR PURPOSE

We help young people build lifelong belief in themselves, supporting them to take on their own challenges, follow their passions, and discover talents they never knew they had. Because when you prove to yourself what you're capable of, nothing can hold you back.

OUR VALUES

Underpinning every aspect of our work are our shared values which define our culture, show what we stand for and describe how we do things:



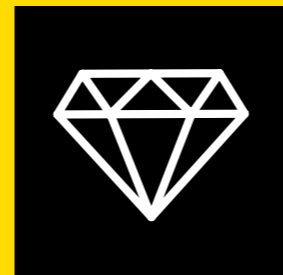
I am empowering

I trust my colleagues and I create opportunities for others to learn and develop. I am positive and solution-focused. I learn from my experience and that of others and I celebrate achievement in all its forms.



I am inclusive

I am a team player and collaborate with others to find the best outcomes. I am friendly and approachable; I value diverse perspectives and actively seek to understand and act on the insights and lived experiences of others.



I have integrity

I do what I say I will. I am tenacious about maintaining high standards and am always looking for ways to make things better – I willingly take on responsibility, and I stand up for what I believe to be right.



I am dynamic

The needs of young people are central to my decision-making. I am optimistic, enthusiastic and open to new ideas. I'm agile in my approach and I make working and volunteering with DofE a fun experience.

Our strategic

AMBITION

By 2031, we aim to give over two million young people a life-changing DofE experience, and help to transform access to high-quality enriching activities for all young people in the UK.

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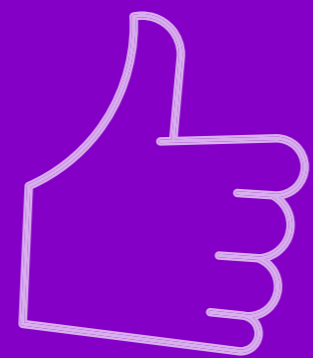
**2026-2031 strategy
Our ambition**



Our strategic

GOALS

Over the next five years, we'll focus on four strategic goals:



RELEVANCE



IMPACT



ACCESS



SUSTAINABILITY

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**2026-2031 strategy
Our goals and drivers**

RELEVANCE

We'll ensure the DofE is relevant, engaging and inspiring for young people and our supporters; and we'll advocate for all young people to have equitable access to high-quality enrichment opportunities.

To do this we'll:

- Put young people at the heart of shaping, championing and representing the DofE and support them to make a positive impact on issues they care about
- Advocate to ensure every young person has equitable access to high-quality non-formal learning and enrichment opportunities
- Develop our supporter community, including DofE alumni, so more people can stay connected to DofE and support young people to thrive
- Extend DofE's reach and better serve our audiences by building our brand and creating powerful partnerships with organisations that share our values.

Strategic goal: **RELEVANCE**

Amplifying youth voice



“The leaders of today need to open their minds to the leaders of tomorrow. It’s time to make our voices heard.”

The DofE Youth Ambassadors, quoted from the Youth Voices 2024 report which looked at the views of 3,000 young people on the issues they care most about.

[Read the full report here](#)

DofE exists to help young people develop and grow so it’s vital that young people’s voices and experiences are at the heart of everything we do.

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2026-2031 strategy
Goal: Relevance

IMPACT



We'll maximise the impact of DofE on young people, local communities and wider society, and ensure every young person has a high-quality, personalised DofE experience, supported by a trusted, trained adult.

To do this we'll:

- Review our operating model to emphasise the flexibility of DofE so it better aligns with the needs of our delivery partners, and empower leaders so they are confident and motivated to deliver inclusive, safe and impactful DofE experiences
- Improve access to meaningful, high-quality volunteering and enrichment opportunities so young people can get the most from their DofE journey
- Increase the proportion of participants who complete their Awards and develop new ways to recognise and celebrate young people's progress and achievements
- Support DofE participants to understand their strengths and motivations and make informed choices about their futures.

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2026-2031 strategy
Goal: Impact



Strategic goal: **IMPACT**

Boosting employability



“The DofE is a prestigious award so it will never go against you. You put that on your CV and everyone knows how good it is! It’s like having a university degree. You tell yourself it’s just a piece of paper but really, it’s helping you find out about who you are, what you can give society.”

Dan did his Duke of Edinburgh’s Award in Feltham Young Offenders Institution. Upon release from Feltham in January 2021, Dan was able to begin an apprenticeship which built up his skills and self-confidence. He is now head chef of a pub in Peterborough.

[Watch more about Dan’s story here.](#)

ACCESS



We'll make the DofE more widely available and accessible, increasing the number and diversity of young people who can access a DofE experience and removing financial barriers to participation.

To do this we'll:

- Significantly increase the number of young people who can access a DofE experience through state schools and colleges
- Develop strategic partnerships that enable more young people to access a DofE experience in their local community
- Ensure DofE participants reflect the diversity of the UK population, with a particular focus on removing barriers for young people from low-income families
- Design and test innovative new delivery models to expand DofE access for young people in youth justice, in education, in employment, in sports clubs and in the community.

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2026-2031 strategy
Goal: Access



Strategic goal: **ACCESS**

Expanding our access



“There isn’t always just the financial barrier – there can be the cultural barrier too. To be really honest, we never thought the DofE was for us. And now we’ve seen what providing this sort of space for young people from diverse backgrounds can do – it’s phenomenal, it’s huge. It breaks those inequalities. A DofE experience is a life-changing experience.”

Rusna, CEO of Kid Care 4 U. Their DofE delivery is supported by DofE’s Access Without Limits community funding, made possible by The Julia Rausing Trust.



“I think that camping is sort of unheard of in our community here, like as a Muslim girl. So, it’s really nice because now other people will have the chance to do that.”

Amira, 17, doing her DofE through Kid Care 4 U.



SUSTAINABILITY

We'll ensure the DofE charity is efficient, effective and financially sustainable, and play our part in safeguarding the natural world.

To do this we'll:

- Grow and diversify our income so we remain financially sustainable and can ensure no young person misses out on a life-changing DofE experience
- Benchmark our environmental and social impact and support our partners to embed sustainability and social impact into their DofE programmes
- Put our customers and partners at the heart of everything we do, harnessing data, technology and customer insight to improve user experience, boost engagement and maximise impact
- Attract and retain a diverse, high-performing team by making DofE a great place to work and volunteer, investing in learning and development and expanding our apprenticeship offer.

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2026-2031 strategy
Goal: Sustainability



Strategic goal: *SUSTAINABILITY*

Fit for today and for the future

Securing vital support to sustain the charity's life-changing work.

“We have worked with The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award for over 30 years and look forward to continuing our support into their next strategic period.

Understanding that our donation will help young people to challenge themselves and endeavour in a wide variety of active interests – to serve their communities, experience adventure and to develop and learn outside the classroom – really aligns with the values of The Bestway Foundation.”

Dawood Pervez, Trustee, The Bestway Foundation, one of the DofE’s long-standing supporters and partners.



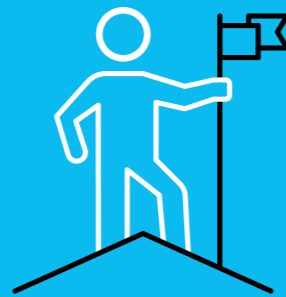
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**2026-2031 strategy
Goal: Sustainability**

During my programme



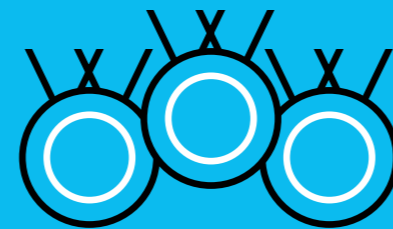
I've set myself goals and persevere to reach these.



I'm doing things I wouldn't have done otherwise and being challenged, in a good way.



I'm meeting new people and making new friends.



I think about what I have done and I'm proud of my achievements.



I'm being active and having fun.



I'm giving something back to my community.

Medium-term outcomes



I feel more confident. When things get tough I know I can work them through.



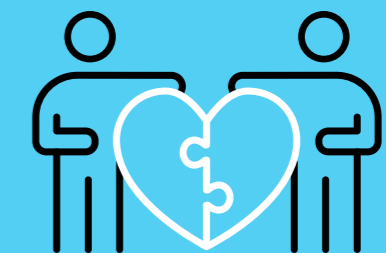
I feel good about myself.



I've learnt personal and practical skills that will help me now and will help me in the future.



I'm more aware of who I want to be and what I can do to get there. I feel I can make a difference.



I feel closer to my community.

Longer-term impact



I've got tools I can draw on that help my mental health and wellbeing.



I'm more likely to fulfil my potential, including in work and education.



I'm more willing to speak up and step up to help others.



I feel a lasting connection to the world around me.

My DofE JOURNEY

DofE is a personal challenge that helps me get the most out of life and make a difference to the world around me.

“Being able to sit under the stars outside and look at the sky is something I won’t ever forget. I even saw a shooting star for the first time in my whole life! I didn’t think they were real but I saw one. Doing DofE makes me feel proud, I am not proud of much but I am proud of this; I feel like I’ve achieved something good and I feel part of something and accepted.”

Letter to the Governor by a participant at HMP Hewell, a men’s prison which runs DofE as part of its rehabilitation efforts.

HOW DOFE WORKS



An impactful, personalised and accredited development framework

Powered by an engaged network of passionate advocates and supporters

DofE develops young people for life and work

Facilitated by skilled and trusted adults in diverse settings

Supported by an excellent delivery support team and effective technology

Enabled by access to high-quality, varied enrichment opportunities

PARTNERSHIPS

We can't deliver for young people without the support of an extraordinary network of partners and supporters.

United by shared values and a belief in young people, these include:

- **Delivery partners** who offer DofE in schools, further education, youth groups, businesses, the secure estate and many other settings
- **Activity partners** who provide expert support and resources for expeditions, volunteering, physical activity and skills
- **Funding partners** who offer vital financial support, ensuring every young person can access a DofE experience
- **Strategic partners** who collaborate with us to transform opportunities for young people in areas like youth justice and alternative education.

Over the next five years we will continue to grow this incredible network, expanding possibilities with our current partners as well as seeking new ones who share in our vision.

“What young people learn here stays with them as they find their path in life – whether that’s their education, their career or the community they live in. This is an investment in Britain’s next generation, delivered at the right time and in the right way.”

Sir Trevor Pears CMG. The Pears Foundation is a partner of the DofE.



OUR PEOPLE

People are the lifeblood of DofE, so making the charity a great place to work and volunteer is essential to our success.



"I'm proud to be part of a charity where every effort supports young people in realising their potential and empowering them to achieve – and our strategy reinforces this purposefully."

Anita Brooks, member of the Staff Consultation Forum.

CHRIS'S STORY

“The most important compass is in your heart – and it’s called courage.”

Less than a year after moving from Ghana to the UK, Chris set off on his Bronze expedition, admittedly not knowing much about the DofE. He discovered new passions, from map reading to spoken word poetry, and shared his Ghanaian culture through jollof and stories around the campfire. Helping in the library for his Volunteering section was a particularly transformative experience for Chris: “I never really enjoyed reading until I properly tried it – and then I realised I’d fallen in love with it! I especially like exploring new cultures through storytelling.”



Chris, 15, is currently completing his Bronze DofE Award at Skinner Academy, Hackney. [Read more](#) about how Chris embraced his cultural heritage through spoken word.



“In this increasingly technical age, DofE gives young people the human edge.”

HRH The Duke of Edinburgh

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HRH The Duke of Edinburgh visited Peterborough to hear about the positive difference DofE is having on young people and the wider community.



**YOUTH
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The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (the DofE) is a Registered Charity No: 1072490, in Scotland SC038254 and a Royal Charter Corporation No: RC000806.