



## **The Impact of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award on Young People**

### **Final Report**

Presented to:  
Project Steering Group

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### 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE FINAL REPORT

This report presents the final results from the national evaluation of the impact of the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award on young people. Chapter 2 gives the background to this work and describes the research methods for the whole project. An extensive literature review of previous work relating to the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award and other youth programmes is included as Chapter 3. Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 present the results of the research by participant group. The first results chapter (Chapter 4) presents the results from all phases of the research with young people. Chapter 5 focuses on the results from both quantitative and qualitative research with delivery partners and Chapter 6 summarises the interviews with other stakeholders. Chapter 7 reports the findings from the oral history interviews with five decades of past participants in the DofE. The themes emerging from all of these strands of the research are collated and discussed in Chapter 8, which also gives the recommendations for future action.

The accompanying Statistical Volume gives more detailed descriptions of the statistical analysis performed on the data from the questionnaire surveys of young people and delivery partners. The Appendices to the Statistical Volume gives a detailed breakdown of the responses to the individual questions in each of the surveys. Copies of the research tools used (questionnaires and indicative questions for interviews and focus groups) can also be found in the Appendices.

### 2. 3. BACKGROUND AND METHODS

This project was commissioned by The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award and funded by The Pears Foundation. The project was undertaken by the Centre for Children and Youth (CCY) – a research centre based at The University of Northampton.

The project began on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008 and completed in June 2009. The aims, objectives and outline methodologies are given below.

### **3.1. Aim**

- To undertake a research project into the impact of the Award on young people.

### **3.2. Objectives**

- Identify, document and analyse the outcomes of participation in the Award Programme for young people.
- Bring understanding on how young people mix with others with different life experiences and the impact of this on young people themselves and on their communities.
- Develop a model of distance travelled to support the Award's long term evaluation and monitoring of the impact of the Award.

### **3.3. Methods**

#### **3.3.1. Data collection**

The project comprised six strands of data collection:

##### 3.3.1.1. Desk-based review of extant evidence:

A review of extant literature was conducted, placing the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in a wider context, including its relation to national policy and other young people's youth schemes. Previous reports and research conducted concerning the Duke of Edinburgh's Award are also included, together with statistical data about the programme and its participants.

##### 3.3.1.2. Online survey of all young people undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh's Award

This strand of the research provided baseline data and tracked short-term changes in attitudes, relationships with others and community engagement over time, producing evidence-based measures of 'added value' and quantitative dimensions of the DofE model.

An online questionnaire survey was developed. All young people undertaking their DofE programmes were invited to complete this survey through their programme delivery organisations via the DofE's communication mechanisms and other publicity organised by the DofE. At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were asked for their consent for a follow-up survey to be sent to them by the research team. Consent was via the provision of their e-mail address. They were also asked, as a separate request, for their consent to be contacted for a brief, confidential interview if required. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix 4 of the Statistical Volume of this report.

##### 3.3.1.3. Qualitative data collection with young people

This strand of the research produced rich case studies of individuals' and groups' engagements with the DofE and provided qualitative dimensions of the DofE model.

One hundred and four interviews were held with a representative cross-section of those web survey respondents who consented to be contacted for this purpose. The interviewees were contacted via the e-mail address that they provided and further information about the interview process was given at this point. The sample was stratified by programme level, region, age, gender and educational institution.

Nineteen focus groups were held with groups of young people engaging in Duke of Edinburgh's Award Programmes. These focus groups were organised through the organisations which deliver the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and normally consisted of 6-8 young people at different stages of their programme delivered through that organisation. The focus groups were held at the delivery organisation, but were facilitated by an experienced member of the research team. Ground rules for conduct of the focus group are established and agreed with the young people at the beginning of the group, including the right for anyone not to participate, and confidentiality rules. The focus groups were audio-taped, with the group's consent. The focus groups are being held across the four countries, at organisations that include young people from a broad range of socio-economic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

The interview and focus group indicative questions used for this work can be found in Appendix 4 of the Statistical Volume of this report.

One group of young people were invited to produce a video of their DofE experiences. The project team provided video equipment on loan together with access to and training by a professional video company. The broad theme of the video was agreed between the researchers and the young people, but there was considerable freedom for the young people to develop this project. The project was overseen by leaders in the delivery organisation (an Academy school). Three groups doing their DofE at the delivery organisation participated in this project, reflecting different levels of experiences across Bronze, Silver and Gold DofE programmes. The Gold group were involved at all stages, including the production, editing and voiceover of the visual data. The finished video has been qualitatively analysed for thematic content. Explicit consent has been obtained from the participants for research use of the video, including use in research presentations.

#### 3.3.1.4. Online survey of delivery partners

This strand gathered broad evidence concerning experiences of the DofE from organisational perspectives and collected perceptions of positive and negative factors for participation and delivery of DofE programmes.

Delivery partners were defined as all those who are involved in the delivery of the Duke of Edinburgh Award. This included youth workers, teachers, DofE co-ordinators etc. and involved both paid and voluntary staff.

The questionnaire was developed and produced as a colour insert in the September 2008 edition of the DofE Magazine. A web-based questionnaire was also developed on the DofE's web site and invitations to participate were sent to all delivery partners via the DofE's communication networks. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 4 of the Statistical Volume of this report. Participation was voluntary and consent was implied by the completion of the

questionnaire. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they would be prepared to be contacted for an interview, and to provide an e-mail address if they consented to this.

#### 3.3.1.5. Qualitative data collection from delivery partners

This strand investigated perceptions of positive and negative factors for participation and delivery of DofE programmes in greater depth.

Fifty four interviews were undertaken. Forty three of these were with delivery partners (including Regional Directors) and included a selection of respondents to the web survey who consented to be contacted. They were selected to ensure a geographical cross-section and to include organisations which deliver DofE programmes to a range of young people from differing socio-economic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. A further eleven interviews were held with key stakeholders. These include those with responsibility for delivering the scheme, but no direct involvement (e.g. head teachers, Heads of Youth Services, senior staff of corporate supporters of the DofE).

Six focus groups with delivery partners were conducted. These were mostly scheduled to take place immediately before or after a regional meeting of DofE Managers and Leaders. These were held across the four countries.

The indicative questions for interviews and focus groups for this strand of the research can be found in Appendix 4 of the Statistical Volume of this report.

#### 3.3.1.6. Oral history interviews with Gold Award holders over five decades

This strand of the research gathered evidence on enduring outcomes of the DofE and documented personal stories of experiences and change.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award has been in operation since 1956. Gold Award holders have experienced all aspects of it, and represent those who have been exposed to all the potential benefits of participation in the DofE. They are therefore well-placed to comment on if, and if so how, the Duke of Edinburgh's scheme has affected them throughout their life. Twenty five history interviews were conducted with Gold Award holders. Interviewees were contacted using the database of Gold Award holders maintained by the DofE. They were selected to give five who had undertaken their DofE in each of the ten year intervals since the inception of the DofE.

### **3.3.2. Data analysis**

Qualitative data was thematically analysed using NVivo software. The report includes anonymised quotations as exemplars of identified themes.

The quantitative data was analysed descriptively to identify frequencies, trends and associations. Inferential statistics were used to further investigate associations using chi-squared analysis, correlations, between groups analysis and regression analysis.

The likelihoods of key outcome measures were modelled using logistic regression analysis.

All quantitative data analysis was done using SPSS on data sets stripped of personal identifiers. Only aggregated results are shown.

### **3.3.3. Working with young people and ethical considerations**

All researchers working with the young people on this project had full CRB clearance. Only researchers experienced in conducting interviews and focus groups were involved in these elements of the project. The Centre for Children and Youth has particular expertise and experience in working with young people. The project methodology was approved by the University of Northampton Research Ethics Committee prior to the start of any data collection.

Access to the young people in this project was exclusively via the delivery organisations of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, who acted as the gate-keepers. The activities of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award are regulated by their own ethical codes of conduct, including procedures for consent. Any explicit consents were obtained by the delivery organisations, using their existing approved procedures.

4.

## **5. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **5.1. Introduction**

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) is a personal development programme that aims to offer a balanced programme of activities to the individual. It has been operating since 1956. The aim of this chapter is to review existing evidence of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and to contextualise the programme within policy and its position in relation to other youth programmes. The literature review begins by giving an overview of the DofE and how the organisation of the DofE is structured in sections 5.2 and 5.2.1. Section 5.2.2 then describes some of the other personal development awards that are available to young people and how they compare to the DofE. The next section (5.3) illustrates how the DofE is directly relevant to current government policy across the UK and its relation to teaching in school. Sections 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 then focus on the practical, personal and social motivations to the individual of taking part in a DofE programme. This will include discussion of engaging young people with their community and giving something back to society through volunteering. Methods that have been used to widen participation in the DofE programme are then discussed in section 5.7 and how participation can enhance an individual's future direction by increasing motivation and employability skills such as team work and social skills. The chapter concludes (section 5.11) with a short explanation of the recent changes to The Duke of Edinburgh's Award aimed at continuing the relevance of the DofE to young people.

### **5.2. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Programme**

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a voluntary activity programme open to any young person between the ages of 14 and 25. It aims to offer a non-competitive, challenging programme of personal development and learning that will instil commitment, responsibility and independence in the individual, making a positive contribution to their own and other people's lives (DofE website; DofE, 2007a; DofE Annual Review, 2006). McKelvey (2007: 34) sums up the aims of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award:

*"The Award is about personal development and teamwork. It is about realising one's strength and one's weaknesses. It is about developing*

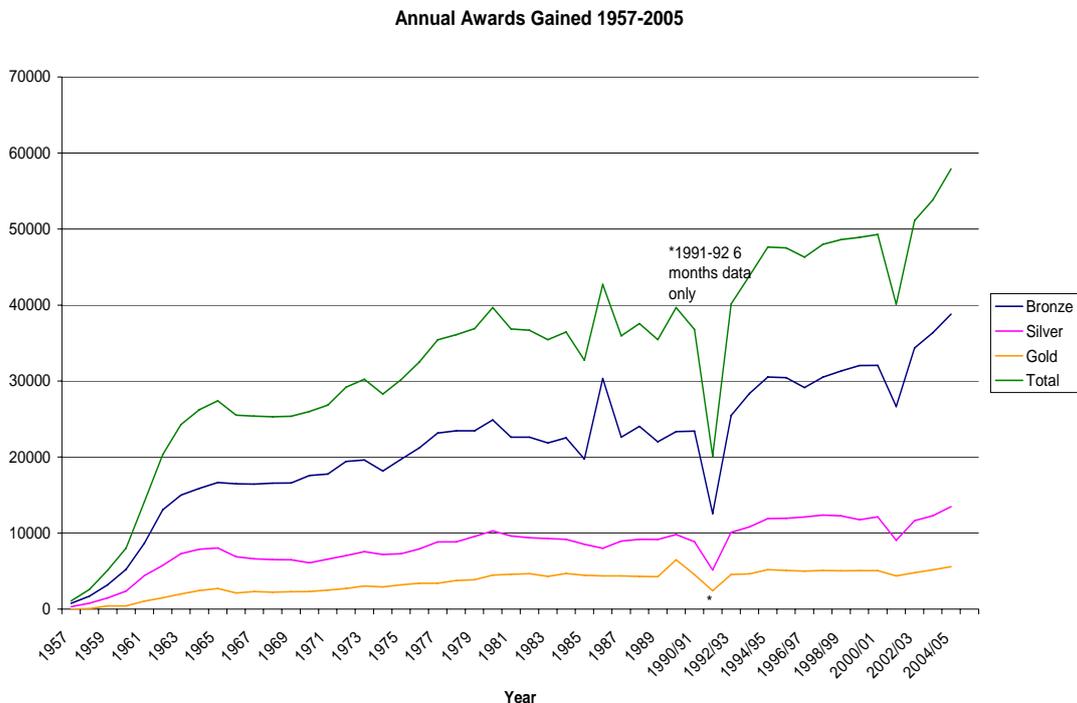
*skills and attitudes. It is about mental and moral growth as well as physical endurance. It is about goal-setting, bar-raising and the celebration of achievement."*

The overriding theme of a DofE programme is one of challenge to the individual (Wainwright, 1966; Copisarow, 1975). As one Award holder points out:

*"The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is not aimed to turn the Bright Young Things into the Beautiful People, but to make us all feel better within ourselves by teaching us independence and how to help others"*  
(Butterfield, 2001: 33)

There are three different levels of DofE programme: Bronze (14 years and above), Silver (15 years and above) and Gold (16 years and above), all of which have to be completed by the participant's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. These different levels require certain levels of commitment. For example, the Bronze requires a minimum of six months commitment and the Gold a minimum of 12 months, depending on the participant's previous involvement.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is the largest programme of its kind in the UK, with more than 168,000 young people becoming new entrants to a DofE programme in 2007/08, and 275,000 taking part in the UK at any one time (DofE website, 09.04.08). A total of 66,273 DofE Awards were gained in 2007/08 of which 43, 864 were Bronze, 16, 146 Silver and 6,262 Gold (DofE stats, 2007/08) (see also Figure 1). Though it is now being undertaken across the world, with 80 countries offering The Duke of Edinburgh's Award in one form or another, and often under a different name (for example The President's Award in Ireland) (DofE website, 09.04.08), this report will focus on the DofE in the UK.



**Figure 1: Duke of Edinburgh's Awards gained 1957-2005**  
Source: DofE

At each DofE Award level participants must undertake and complete activities in four sections:

- Volunteering – helping within the community.
- Physical – sports, dance and/or fitness.
- Skills – developing a hobby, skill or interest.
- Expedition – including training, planning and completing a journey, on foot, cycle, horseback or water.

In order to achieve a Gold DofE Award, participants are also required to complete a Residential Project of at least five days, where they take part in an enterprise with people that are previously unknown to them (DofE website, 09.04.08). The Duke of Edinburgh's Award has ten 'guiding principles' which it states are "at the heart of everything we do" (DofE, 2008c: 3). These principles shape the structure of the programme and underpin the philosophy of the DofE as a personal development programme for young people. Table 1 sets out the DofE programmes guiding principles (see DofE, 2008c: 3).

<b>Guiding principle</b>	<b>Description</b> (as set out by DofE)
Non-competitive	A DofE programme is a personal challenge and not a competition against others. Every participant's programme is tailor-made to reflect their individual starting point, abilities and interests.
Achievable by all	A Duke of Edinburgh's Award is achievable by any young person who chooses to take up its challenge, regardless of ability, gender, background or location.
Voluntary	Whilst DofE programmes may be offered within school, college, work time, custody or extra-curricular activity, young people chose to do a programme and commit some of their free time to undertake their activities.
Personal	A DofE programme inspires personal and social development. The value to young people is dependent on personal commitment, the learning process and the quality of the experience.
Personalised	Young people design their own programme, which can be tailored to suit their personal circumstances, choices and local provision. They start at whichever level suits them best and they can take as long as they wish (within the age limits) to achieve an Award.
Balanced	Our aim is to ensure that participants experience development of the whole person; mind, body and soul. By undertaking activities focusing on at least four different aspects of development, young people complete a balanced and wide-ranging programme.
Progressive	At each level of engagement, a DofE programme demands progressively more time, commitment and responsibility from the participant.
Achievement focused	Before starting an activity, young people are encouraged to set their own challenging goals. If they aim for these goals and show improvement they will achieve a Duke of Edinburgh's Award.
Demand commitment	A DofE programme demands persistence and commitment and cannot be completed with a short burst of

	enthusiasm. Participants are encouraged to continue with activities and to maintain their interest beyond their programme requirements.
Enjoyable	Young people and Leaders should find participation enjoyable, fulfilling and rewarding.

**Table 1: DofE Guiding principles**

### 5.2.1. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Charity – working in partnership

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a registered, national charity. The charity oversees the running of DofE programmes, with the responsibility of the delivery of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award carried out by over 400 licensed Operating Authorities throughout the UK (DofE, 2007b). The charity receives funding from a variety of sources including local and national government, industry, trusts and private individuals (DofE, Meet the Challenge).

The success of the DofE programme relies on effective partnership within and between organisations. In order to maximise accessibility to potential participants, the DofE programme is run by many different types of institutions and organisations, including: employers, voluntary and community organisations, state and independent schools, pupil referral units, further education institutes and universities, young offenders groups, and DofE centres (DofE, 2008a; DofE, Meet the Challenge). Table 2 shows the number of groups offered at different settings. The DofE Award is used by County Councils and other organisations as one of the methods for meeting local and national youth work priorities and agendas. For example, in 2002 Surrey County Council were using the Award, through the Youth Service, as the driver for developing initiatives across the County, encouraging young people to take part in activities offered by schools and colleges (Creaven, 2002: 13).

Location	Number of groups
Voluntary and community organisations	6,689
Secondary schools	2,412
Independent schools	709
Open DofE centres	336
PRUs and special schools	478
FE, HE and universities	354
Young offender groups	111
Employers	80

**Table 2: Reach of the DofE**

Source: DofE (2008d)

There are approximately 11,000 partnership organisations across the UK working towards delivering the programme, using the services of over 50,000 volunteers (DofE website). The emphasis is on sharing and accumulating knowledge, both for participants and adults involved in delivering DofE programmes: volunteers share their skills, experience and time with participants who are doing their DofE programme (DofE, Meet the Challenge). As Williamson (2000: 2), then of the Scottish DofE Award Office says:

*“One ingredient that links all these initiatives together is ‘partnership’; a word that is over used at times, but nevertheless entirely relevant to*

our work. The Award Programme is ideally placed to link people and organisations together from all sorts of areas across the public, private and voluntary sectors.”

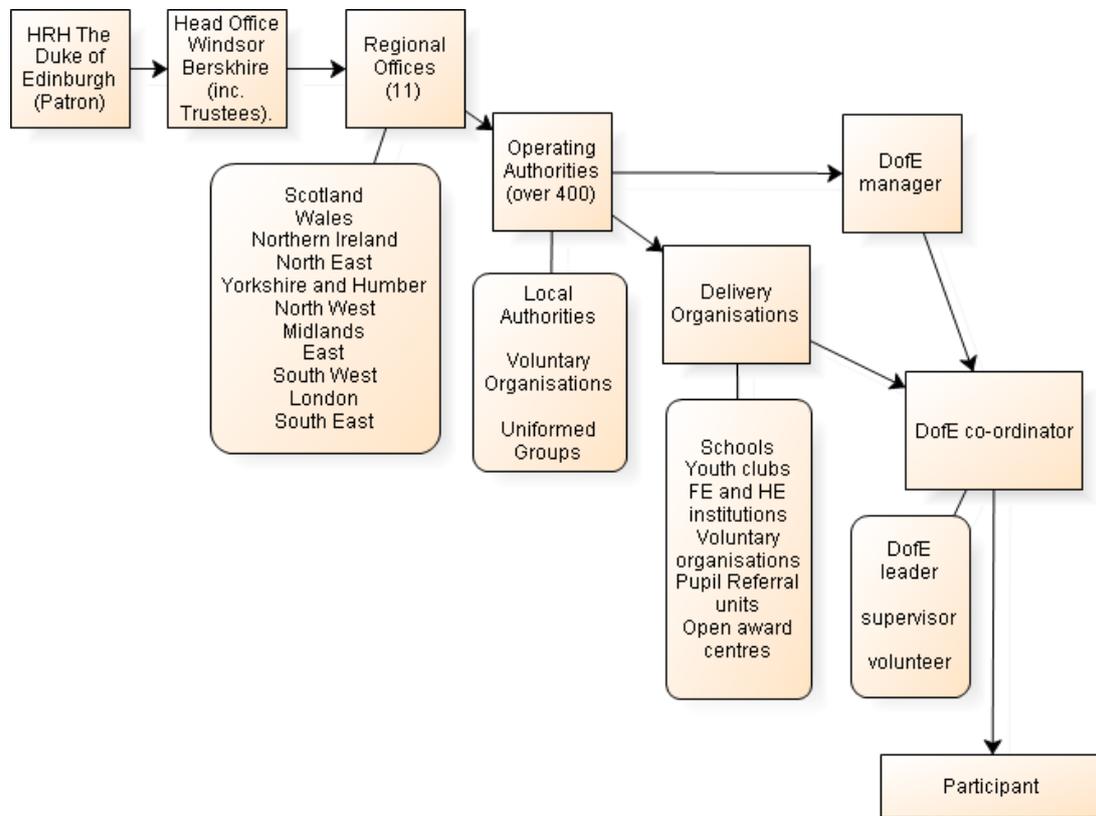


Figure 2: The organisational structure of the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award

### 5.2.2. Other Awards

There is recognised value and importance in engaging young people in progressive achievement awards (NYA, 2007a; Shearer, 2001). Although The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award is the most popular of the programmes to promote young people’s social and personal development, there are many others that young people can be engaged with. This section briefly describes some of the other non-formal educational schemes available to young people.

#### 5.2.2.1. Adventure Service Challenge

The Adventure Service Challenge (ASC) is an activity scheme aimed at young people between the ages of 8 and 14. The ASC scheme is a complete scheme in itself but can also be undertaken by young people to prepare them for a DofE programme. Similar to a DofE programme there are activity sections: Adventure, Service and Challenge. Again, like the a DofE programme, progress is assessed on individual achievement rather than in competition with other participants (ASC website, 23.04.08).

#### 5.2.2.2. The Youth Achievement Award

The charity UK Youth offers an accredited scheme which has a similar structure to the DofE. The Youth Achievement Award (YAA) was introduced nationally in 1997 with their Youth Challenge being offered since 2002, with approximately 20,000 young people on the scheme (YAA website, 14.04.08; NYA, 2007a: 46). The Youth Challenge is open to 11-14 year olds, with the Bronze to Gold for those over 14 and the Platinum for those over 16 (website, 14.04.08). Like The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, the YAA aims to engage young people in participation in non-formal educational activities to develop life-long skills.

#### 5.2.2.3. ASDAN<sup>1</sup> Award Programmes

The ASDAN Award is aimed at 13-19 year olds, with over 100,000 young people on the programme (NYA, 2007a: 16). Again, like the DofE and the YAA, it is a progressive award, from Bronze through to Gold, and also a further Universities Award. The ASDAN Award is a recognised qualification and, depending in the level, is equivalent to a GCSE or an A-S level (NYA, 2007a: 17).

#### 5.2.2.4. The Prince's Trust

The Prince's Trust runs a 12 week programme called 'The Team Programme', where unemployed UK residents aged 16-25 have an opportunity to get involved in community projects, go on a residential week and gain some work experience (Prince's Trust website, 23.04.08). The aim is for them to develop both practical and personal skills, make a difference in their community and gain a recognised qualification: a City and Guilds certificate in Personal, Teamwork and Community Skills. The Scheme is also open to employed young people who can opt to take part for 20 days in a block or 20 days over the 12 weeks, joining the unemployed group to work as part of the team.

#### 5.2.2.5. AQA – Unit Award Scheme

There are approximately 40,000 young people on the AQA Scheme. It is open to all students from Key Stage four (14-16 year olds) and involves young people taking part and being accredited for activities ranging from key skills to outdoor pursuits (NYA, 2007a: 13-14).

#### 5.2.2.6. Youth Associations

Awards offered by the Girl Guides and the Scouts can be incorporated into a DofE programme, thus giving the participant a wider scope of options. The Girl Guides carries out two Awards, a Leadership Qualification and the Queen's Guide Award. There are currently fewer than 600 young people doing the Queen's Guide Award, sections of which can be counted towards a Duke of Edinburgh's Award (NYA, 2007a: 31). The Queen's Scout Award has over 40,000 participants (NYA, 2007a: 39). This Award focuses on "*The physical, intellectual, social and spiritual development of young people.*" (NYA, 2007a: 39). The Award is for members of the Scout Association, aged between 16 and 25 and can be integrated with a DofE programme so that both Awards can be taken simultaneously (NYA, 2007a: 39).

The Girls Brigade and the Boys Brigade also offer similar ways to the Scouts and Guides of participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. The Jewish Lads and Girls Brigade offers DofE programmes both to its members and non-members by being the principal Jewish Operating Authority for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

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<sup>1</sup> Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network

#### 5.2.2.7. Gateway Award

The Gateway Award is run by MENCAP. It is aimed at 13-25 year olds and has approximately 1,500 participants (NYA, 2007a: 33). It is aimed at supplementing activities done within the Scouts and is an alternative award for those who have special needs who may not have the ability to do an award such as The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. It operates in conjunction with a DofE programme and is similar in structure. The Gateway Award has three levels, bronze, silver and gold and is split into sections: Hobbies; Service; Adventure Challenge; Physical Recreation; and Lifestyle.

### **5.3. Policy Context**

Whilst The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is used by government bodies, it remains independent from government initiatives. However, its continued use by these **bodies** illustrates the DofE's relevance to UK policy in many ways, from education to regeneration initiatives. This section concentrates on youth and education policy throughout the UK, which encompass a range of themes including social inclusion, health and well-being, volunteering and the national curriculum. The DofE Award reflects current child and youth policy agendas and it *"plays a positive role in contributing to the delivery of Government initiatives affecting young people"* (Shearer, 2001: 12). For example, it is used by Local Authority youth services for reaching targets for their youth development units.

The White Paper, *New Opportunities: Fair chances for the future*, sets out the Government's strategy for increasing social mobility for all ages by removing barriers and raising aspirations for UK citizens by offering opportunities for achieving personal potential irrespective of social background (see also van der Graaf, 2009: 1). As van der Graaf et al (2009:1), imply, at the heart of this White Paper is *"the notion that people from less privileged backgrounds need support so that they can raise their aspirations and achieve their potential in life."* The White Paper also acknowledges the value to young people of volunteering within their local community which, it says *"can prevent young people from feeling excluded from wider society and help unlock their potential"* (HM Government White Paper: 10).

#### **5.3.1. Youth policy**

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is relevant to and closely linked with policies regarding children and young people in the UK. In Northern Ireland, the document: *Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge (2006)*, has a six point outcomes framework, all of which are interlinked: *"Healthy; Enjoying, learning and achieving; Living in safety with stability; Experiencing economic and environmental well-being; Contributing positively to community and society; and, Living in a society which respects their rights"* (*ibid*: 7). These can all be linked in some way to participation in a DofE programme. The policy is underpinned by core values such as recognising that each child or young person is a unique individual with their own contribution to make to society and this can be fostered through active participation, in a peaceful, non-threatening environment to encourage individual potential (*ibid*: 11).

Similarly, the Welsh Assembly's *Extending Entitlement: Supporting young people in Wales* document sets out what they describe as their *"flagship policy for youth support services in Wales"* (Welsh Assembly, 2005: 1). As a foundation for the

policy, the Assembly sets out ten entitlements that it considers essential for young people to realise their potential: Your Rights; Being Heard; Feeling Good; Education and Employment: Taking Part/Getting Involved; Being Individual; Easy Access; Health and Wellbeing; Access to Information and Guidance; Safety and Security (*ibid*: 12-13). The five points directly relevant to the DofE are:

- Feeling good – feeling self confident and good about yourself;
- Education and employment – the ability to learn about things of interest, and the opportunity to get involved in activities that you enjoy, these include sport and leisure and music;
- Taking part/getting involved – “*To be involved in volunteering and to be active in your community*” (2005: 12);
- Being individual – to be recognised for your contribution and your achievement and to celebrate this; and
- Health and well-being – to be healthy both emotionally and physically (2005:12-13).

In Scotland, the *Curriculum for Excellence* (2004) sets out the curriculum strategy for children and young people aged 3-18. It has four main aims: successful learners; confident individuals; responsible citizens; and effective contributors (LTScotland website 14.04.08). These simple aims are further broken down to reveal objectives that are linked with the aims of The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award. For example, “*effective contributors*” refers to developing the child or young person so that they have resilience, self reliance and are able to “*work in partnerships and in teams; take the initiative and lead; and apply critical thinking in new contexts*” (LTScotland website, 14.04.08). This reflects some of the key personal developments stated by the DofE as reasons for participating (DofE, 2004a: 3).

English Government policy regarding children and young people is also highly relevant to The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award. The White Paper, *Building on Success* (2001), explicitly mentions doing a Duke of Edinburgh’s Award as a way of “*building character*” among the 14-19 age group (Building on Success, 2001) and for fostering “*positive values and attitudes to life and work*” (Shearer, 2001: 12). *The Every Child Matters* (2003) and *Youth Matters* (2005) documents both set out the same key aims for every child and young person: Be healthy; Stay safe; Enjoy and achieve; Make a positive contribution; Achieve economic well-being (Every Child Matters website, 11.04.08). These can be directly transferred as relevant to The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award. The consultation paper *Youth Matters* (2005: 5) has four key challenges including engaging more young people in positive activities and encouraging more young people to volunteer and be involved in their local community.

The government strategy that currently has most direct links to the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award is *Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities* (July, 2007). The research for the strategy found that roughly a quarter of young people do not take participate in positive activities (DCSF and HM Treasury, 2007). The strategy sets out ways to change the leisure opportunities and support services for young people in England (*ibid*: 3). The strategy illustrates how young people from all backgrounds are influenced by their peers and how participation in positive rather than negative leisure activities can have a significant impact on a young person’s future. Participation in a DofE programme aims to give young people participation in positive experiences to equip them with skills that can be used and transferred to other parts of their lives, both now and in the future.

The importance and significance of social and emotional skills is discussed in the DfES guidance booklet *Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning for Secondary*

*Schools'* (SEAL) (DfES, 2007)', which supports the Every Child Matters agenda. The booklet explains that by teaching and developing social and emotional skills pupils become better equipped later in life to deal with a wide range of situations, including: building and sustaining friendships; self-motivation; and managing feelings of anger, anxiety and frustration; (DfES, 2007: 4). As well as the topics already in the National Curriculum, such as citizenship, drama and the arts, the aim is to develop these skills and have separate lessons to teach and develop them in a structured way (DfES, 2007: 4). However, the Centre for Confidence and Well-being (Craig, 2007) has warned against the dangers of structured teaching of social and emotional skills. The Centre for Confidence and Well-being conducted a study into SEAL and produced a paper on their position of SEAL being taught to all young people in the education system under the age of 18. Craig (2007) concludes "*that SEAL may be well-meaning but formally teaching young people social and emotional skills could back-fire and ultimately make their well-being worse, not better.*" (Craig, 2007: 2). The report goes on: "*The Centre believes that any initiative which suggests that government departments, schools and teachers should micromanage young people's feelings is Orwellian and a good enough reason on its own to say we have to drop this idea altogether*" (*ibid*: 5). The Centre for Confidence and Well-being believes that by raising the question '*who says what is appropriate when it comes to emotional expression?*', that the potential bias and danger of this kind of exercise are revealed (*ibid*: 12).

The Centre for Confidence and Well-being warns further against the plan of SEAL to evaluate children between the ages of 3 and 18 against emotional learning outcomes, stating that those who are not naturally used to talking about their feelings being judged negatively (Craig, 2007). The Centre for Confidence and Well-being recognises the importance of school for improving a young person's well-being but suggests, rather than structured learning of social and emotional skills, schools should, as many already do, adopt a supportive role.

The value of learning outside the confines of the classroom is becoming increasingly apparent and has been recognised in the '*Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto*' (DfES, 2006). This English government manifesto sets out the importance of "*the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development*" (DfES, 2006: 2). The manifesto's vision is for the outdoor learning to be available to all and not just a privileged few (Driscoll, 2007). Young people often perceive the classroom to be boring, irrelevant and essentially they would rather be (Jones, 2000). Learning outside the classroom presents the young person with the opportunity to make links between their feelings and learning about themselves, the choices they make, and how they behave in certain circumstances. However, Driscoll (2007) states that if the manifesto is to go beyond rhetoric, then funding needs to be put in place to cover the cost of equipment for outdoor learning. Driscoll (2007) also highlights that the manifesto does not focus on the value of volunteering for young people in developing skills outside the classroom.

A report by the National Youth Agency and The Fabian Society (NYA, 2008) demonstrated how non-formal learning can have an impact on young people's life chances. The research describes how non-formal learning such as participation in sports, arts, recreation and other positive activities can, by increasing such things as interpersonal skills and motivation, have an impact on the future life chances of young people in areas such as employment, health and education (NYA, 2008: 3). Due to differences in social position, and unequal access to both non-formal learning and youth services, the challenge for policy and policy makers is to close that gap by broadening the opportunities for young people to engage with non-formal learning (NYA, 2008: 3). The *Ten year strategy for positive activities* (DCSF and HM Treasury, 2007), aims to do this by aiming to enhance young

people's prospects by creating a more fulfilling leisure time. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is therefore directly relevant to government policy for young people across the UK and can be and is used by local authorities within their youth services and schools for meeting youth development and participation targets. Some of the strategies suggested by the Centre for Confidence and Well-being can be taught and learnt by engaging in a DofE programme. The DofE advocates individual learning and progression outside the classroom rather than blanket structured emotional teaching that may not be beneficial to the individual and may, as suggested by Craig (2007), even suppress creative individuals. Further, as found by Driscoll (2007), DofE programmes can be used to encourage behaviourally challenged young people by encouraging positive behaviour and alternative learning strategies. Further, aims of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award reflects the aims of the *Ten year strategy for positive activities* and its continued utilisation by local authorities for meeting youth work targets encourages positive activities among young people.

### 5.3.2. The National Curriculum

There is an emphasis by the UK Government for young people to remain in education or training until the age of 18. To help achieve this, there is a focus on personal needs and individual learning appropriate to individual capabilities. With the introduction of topics such as citizenship education in schools, policy such as *Every Child Matters*, the *Learning outside the Classroom Manifesto* and the *ten year strategy for positive activities*, it is obvious that the value of knowledge and skills acquired and developed beyond qualifications is becoming increasingly important.

A DofE programme has close parallels with aspects of citizenship education that has been taught as a statutory requirement in England, Wales and Northern Ireland at Key Stages 3 and 4 (ages 11-16) since 2002 (Smith, 2004; Powell, 2002). Citizenship education concerns developing generic skills to encourage participation and responsible action by children and young people, and like the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, developing transferable skills and building emotional awareness and resilience amongst young people (Smith, 2004).

Smith (2004) researched the role of a DofE programme in promoting and developing citizenship within the curriculum, with the aim of establishing whether participation in a DofE programme is an appropriate way of developing citizenship education. He studied three schools, one state, one private and one international. He found that whilst pupils benefited greatly by doing their DofE programme in school and developed qualities advocated by citizenship, there were difficulties and frustrations in organising and managing DofE programmes for large numbers of pupils and seeing them through to completion of their DofE. There are links between the guiding principles of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the learning outcomes of citizenship education (Smith, 2004). For example, a DofE programme encourages young people to develop life skills, take on a challenge, be active in their community and improve their physical fitness (Powell, 2002). The citizenship programme is flexible: individual schools decide how they wish to include citizenship on their syllabus and many are now choosing the Duke of Edinburgh's Award as that vehicle (Powell, 2002). However, when asked about citizenship, only a small proportion of young people equated citizenship with being active in their community or volunteering to do things (Pirie and Worcester; MORI, 2002, cited in DofE, 2003a: 10).

A *Curriculum for Excellence* in Scotland, as introduced in section 5.3.1, aims to acknowledge the value of vocational learning through accreditation. Further, A

*Curriculum for Excellence* reflects the guiding principles of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. For example, the document states that the curriculum should include challenging experiences and characterised by individual progression. This is directly relevant to the principles of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

#### 5.3.2.1. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award in School

The structure of school life has proved to be a successful way of offering DofE programmes to young people. In 2007/08 secondary schools had by far the largest number of groups licensed to deliver the DofE programmes: 2,412, compared to 709 in independent schools, 150 in further education establishments and 60 by Youth Offending/Youth Justice Teams (DofE stats 2007/08) The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a valuable tool in schools by giving those students who might be struggling elsewhere a sense of achievement. This may help them to realise that they can be successful in areas other than formal qualifications (DofE, 2002: 34). The length of time participants spend on their DofE programme is also an important factor for helping pupils to develop a sense of responsibility towards their school work and to other parts of their lives (Smith, 2004: 26).

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award can benefit those in schools from three perspectives: for teachers involved in running DofE programmes; for the pupils participating; and the school itself. For the teacher, it can enhance career prospects, with the added satisfaction of helping a student realise their potential and enjoy their achievement. For the pupil, it is a chance to broaden both personal and social skills and their educational experiences. For schools, it can help to improve its reputation within the wider community by increasing social inclusion, offering extra curricular key skills, and active citizenship amongst their pupils. (DofE, 2002: 34). However, teachers and pupils are subjected to a multitude of pressures within the education system. This can lead to a limited amount of time available to staff for delivering DofE programmes. Also, if an increasing number of pupils want to take part in a DofE programme, there will be associated difficulties with the organising, management and delivery of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (Smith, 2004).

In some schools, whole years or classes are entered into their DofE programme. There is an argument that if the participants were restricted to activities offered within the school, this might dilute the individual challenge and progressive nature of a DofE programme and create a 'sausage factory' of Award participants. However, there is also the argument that by offering the Duke of Edinburgh's Award to whole year groups, it is opening up the ability to do a DofE programme to as many young people as possible.

### **5.4. Motivation and Participation**

The DofE is a voluntary programme, with two of its guiding principles being that participation should be enjoyable and voluntary. Thus, to some degree, getting involved will depend on the individual: the motivated and self-confident are more likely to become involved. Young people can be impressionable and their lives are often influenced by their peers. Outside school, the presence of friends has shown to be a strong mitigating factor in young people becoming and continuing to be involved in activities (DofE, 2007a; Hub consultants, 2002). Being involved in a group who have similar interests can instil a sense of belonging (Henley Centre, 2001, cited in DofE, 2007a; Hub Consultants, 2002; DofE, 1998b).

The findings of previous research reveal that there are wide-ranging reasons for participating in the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award. These include: it will look good on a CV or record of achievement; because friends are doing it; and participants are attracted by the expedition (both the images and by those who have previously done it) (Hub Consultants, 2002: 33). Hub Consultants (2002) carried out a qualitative study into awareness, perception and experience of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award with the aim of making recommendations on the development and positioning of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. They carried out focus groups with participants and interviews with DofE Leaders. They found that reasons for continuing with a DofE programme include: being able to gain credit for something that the participant is already doing, (*'it's a free badge'*); being involved because friends still were; and a Duke of Edinburgh's Award looking good on their CV. The motivations continue to be similar throughout doing their DofE programme (in this case Bronze), with particular emphasis on being part of their peer group and adding to their achievements for their CV (Hub Consultants, 2002). Smith (2004) found that the two main attractions of doing a DofE programme were giving something back to the community and the chance to go on an expedition. Only a few pupils that were interviewed by Smith (2004) stated that it was to learn a new skill or take part in physical recreation, however, this could be because they already take part in these activities. In Smith's (2004) study, although activities were varied, they were usually linked to the school.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award has to be perceived by potential participants as *"interesting, challenging, worthwhile and what might be described as fashionable"* (Duke of Edinburgh, cited in Ginty, 1993a: 8). In his speech to the General Council, Prince Philip stated: *"We must guard against the temptation to tamper with the basic structure of the Scheme, which has remained virtually unchanged since it was introduced 36 years ago" [...]* *"This suggests to me that the CONCEPT is valid. The point at issue is the DELIVERY"* (Ginty, 1993a: 8). This remains relevant to the future of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Due to the success in its structure, the concept of doing a DofE programme has remained largely unchanged. It is the delivery of the programme that has become more flexible, with more opportunities and ways for young people to get involved. If DofE programmes are to be offered to all those who want to take part, it is the delivery of these DofE programmes that remains the challenge for partner organisations.

Another challenge is how to reach those who do not naturally come forward to participate in order to include as many as possible from all different backgrounds. The Hub Research Consultants (2002) found that teenagers (14- 19) who took part in the DofE were team players who were sociable, highly motivated, active, with high self esteem. Academic ability was slightly higher than average, but not significantly. Furthermore, *"Award participants are significantly more likely to come from middle to high affluent households than the national average"* (DofE, 2004b: 2). Other findings were that DofE participants tend to act as a team, or part of a collective. They decide to participate together and this is one of the motivations for them to continue, and complete their DofE programmes from Bronze to Gold (Hub Consultants, 2002). This supports findings by Boomerang (2000) who found that young teenagers surround themselves with friends because this gives them the confidence in numbers to make collective choices. In contrast, non-participants were found to be those not considered to be high achievers and are non-active in sport and recreation (Hub Consultants, 2002: 37). The DofE has responded to criticism that it is largely middle-class by setting up projects specifically for young offenders, those with special needs or from the inner-cities. For example, a report by Stannard (2001) in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award *Award Journal* (issue 92) shows how the youth service and participation in

the DofE are helping young people develop their potential at a youth centre in Birmingham. Stannard (2001) reports on the positive impact that participation has had on their lives beyond The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. By raising self-esteem and learning key skills, young people at the centre have been able to confront other issues such as social exclusion and widen their employment opportunities. Atkenhead (1995) found, that for many of these young people, involvement in a DofE programme is the start of their qualifications and an opportunity to get something on their CV. Overall, research shows that participants see the benefit of having the DofE on their CV (Hub Consultants, 2002).

The 2020 Vision Programme was launched in 1995 by the Industrial Society (DofE, 1998c). It was a major study of over 10,000 young people aged between 12 and 25 from a wide range of backgrounds (DofE, 1998c). The survey was carried out with partner organisations including youth and voluntary organisations, educational institutions, youth services, charities working with young people (including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award) and others involved in developing young people's potential (DofE, 1998c). Key findings were as follows:

- 63% felt that school did not prepare them for the real world.
- 90% of 16-25 year-olds feel you carry on learning after you leave school.
- 82% of 16 to 25 year-olds thought practical vocational training should start at school.
- 54% felt being able to get on well with people was important.
- 81% of 12-25 year olds have had some experience of paid work.
- 67% of 16-25 year-olds said getting on well with colleagues made a job enjoyable.
- Only one fifth said they felt part of their local community (DofE, 1998c: 6-7).

A DofE programme can help participants to overcome some of the issues highlighted above. For example, by participating in progressive award programmes like the DofE young people can gain skills through experience. Participating in a DofE programme can contribute to wider learning both during and after school and develop skills such as team working. The Volunteering and Expedition sections are particularly relevant here, with the individual being part of the community, getting on with people and working as a team and making decisions (Ginty, 1993a: 9).

Driscoll (2007: 2) researched the social and community benefits of participating in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. His key findings were that, overall, doing their DofE programme was considered to be a positive experience for participants, they learnt new skills and developed team work. The Volunteering section was "*actively enjoyed*", with many of the participants continuing to volunteer after they had completed that section of their DofE programme. One of the suggestions made by participants of the study was that, due to their positive experience of doing their DofE, the availability should be increased to enable more to participate. However, as Smith (2004) points out, the increasing number of pupils in school wanting to take part in a DofE programme has created logistical and time factor problems for the schools and for the teachers who work as DofE Leaders. Further, parents are concerned that if The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is available to all, it will lose its exclusivity and the value of a DofE Award may decrease (Noel, 2006). One of Driscoll's (2007) key findings was that participants thought that in order to increase awareness of what doing a DofE programme actually involves and so encourage wider participation, more explanation was needed to change outside perceptions of the DofE which are currently focused on the Expedition section of the DofE Award. This is similar to the findings of Hub

Consultants (2002) who found that the DofE Award was dominated by the Expedition section. Noel (2006) used workshops and focus groups to research potential parental concerns, particularly within BME families, regarding participation in the award and the most effective ways that information could be disseminated to parents in order to support their child's participation in their DofE programme. One of Noel's findings was that the Expedition section was viewed as unsuitable by many in the Black Caribbean, Bengali and Pakistani communities. Thus, if it is this section that dominates imagery and perceptions of the DofE Award, more information is needed to further explain the programme in full and potential benefits of participating.

#### **5.4.1. Barriers to participating**

Young people's lives revolve around their own vicinity. They set their own boundaries, either actively or passively (they may have barriers out of their control, or psychological barriers). Research by v (2007) into barriers of involvement found that young people's passions are personal rather than local or international. It is what they do on a day to day basis, and things affecting them personally that is most significant. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a personal progression programme that, whilst accepting that the individual may get involved due to peer influences, is up to the individual to continue involvement and complete their DofE Award.

Barriers preventing young people from enjoying leisure fully include lack of facilities and opportunities in the local area, lack of time and other responsibilities such as homework and part-time jobs taking precedence (v, 2007; Nestle, 2002; DofE, 1998b: 13). Also, for some, the lack of access to transport (public and private) was also a barrier to taking part in activities, rather than lack of facilities themselves (v, 2007). Barriers to participating in a DofE programme include: the way the DofE is publicised; being put off by the teacher running their DofE programmes; they are too busy doing other things; none of their friends are doing it; and concentrating on school work (Hub Consultants, 2002: 37). Other reasons include that a DofE programme is offering nothing new and that they did not think they were good at working in groups or teams (Hub Consultants, 2002).

Some of the barriers identified by young people for getting into work were similar to those for not participating in programmes like the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. These include lack of self-confidence, self-esteem and development of skills outside school/the workplace (the Prince's Trust, 2001; DFEE, 2000; Adams, 2001, cited in DofE, 2003a). A study by nfpSynergy (2007) for The Scout Association focuses on the positive contribution of young people today. The research consisted of an online quantitative survey with over 1000 13-18 year olds and qualitative interviews with over 40 young people who were members of the Scouts Association. The study findings included: "*Family members are the most positive influences of young people*" and "*Young people who are members of youth/sports clubs are better citizens*" (*ibid*: 3). The second statement attributes participation in youth or sports clubs to healthier lifestyles, emotional closeness and more motivated young people than those who don't. The study also found that more than three quarters of 13-18 year olds agreed with the statement "*I like who I am*". This included young people from all social backgrounds. 67% of young people stated that they are good at solving any problems that arise (nfpSynergy, 2007: 4). This very positive study concluded that a high proportion of young people have a positive self-image and high resilience.

When asked what they thought to be barriers to participation, Gold Award holders stated: lack of resources; inadequate communication (particularly of costs); and lack of advertising and promotion (DofE, 2000b: 42). They suggested three ways of increasing participation: an advertising campaign featuring celebrities; use 'catchy slogans' as title add-ons; and use positive images and create role models. These young people selected practical or logistical barriers rather than personal or social ones. Two possible reasons for this are: they were attending a conference for the DofE and practical solutions may have been the focus, and; they are motivated and self-confident enough to have achieved a Gold Award.

There is concern about the number of entrants who drop out of DofE programmes. A report on future strategies for The Duke of Edinburgh's Award reported: "We will identify and develop strategies that will help overcome barriers to gaining an Award." (DofE, 2007a: 6). Currently, approximately 40% of those who start complete their DofE programme (Peter Westgarth pers. comm., 2008). These are shown, broken down by Award level and Region, in Figure 3 (source: DofE).

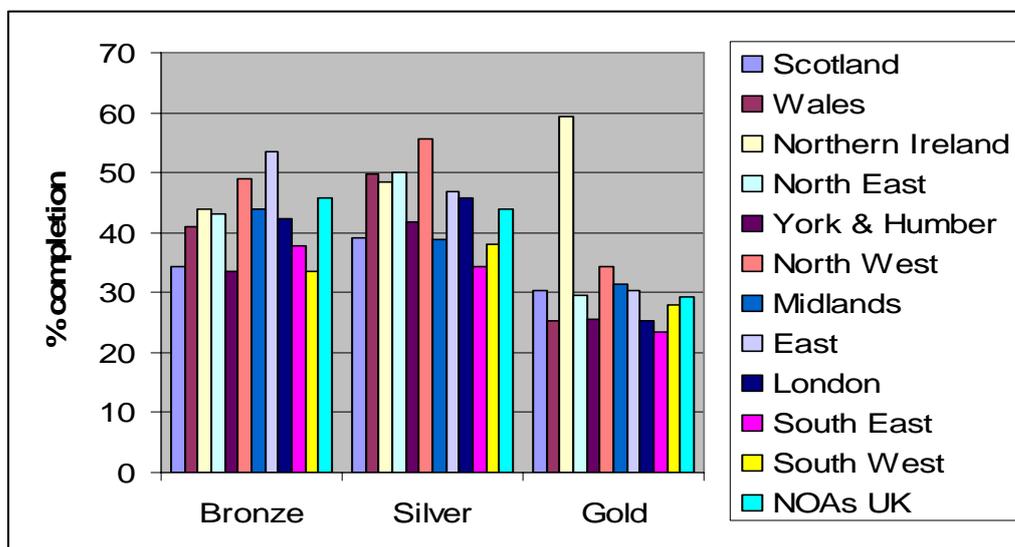


Figure 3: Completion rates<sup>2</sup> by DofE programme level and region.

Work by DofE Leaders has shown that if they can manage to keep in contact with participants when they choose to take a break from their DofE programme, this encouragement helps many still manage to complete their DofE Award (Hollier, 1991). This positive backing from the DofE Leader helps instil a sense of worth within the participant, both of themselves and the value of the DofE Award.

As well as teenage internal challenges, young people also face external challenges that can become barriers to them completing their DofE programme. These include: increasingly under-resourced and time stretched DofE Leaders and teachers; the nature of on-going coursework and deadlines which can result in less 'free' time; and, an increasingly risk-averse society (Hub Consultants, 2002). Another barrier to completion of a DofE programme was found by Hollier (1994) to be a lack of interest in their DofE programme once the participant leaves school. Personal commitment to their DofE programme may be lacking if

<sup>2</sup> Defined as number of 2007-08 completions as a percentage of number 2006-07 record books sold.  
Source: DofE 2007-08 stats

the participant only took part because their friends were. This links back to group peer pressure and being part of the collective, which may be lost on leaving school.

Schemes like the Duke of Edinburgh's Award can help raise expectations: through individual progress a young person can gain experience and qualifications (including non-formal qualifications) that can help them into employment (see below). The time frame of a DofE programme reflects the commitment required by the individual in undertaking the challenge.

## **5.5. Personal Development**

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is designed to develop social and personal skills in the individual that they can transfer to other parts of their lives and will continue to be relevant later in life. It encourages involvement with others, both within peer groups and the wider community. Research undertaken by the DofE in 2007 (DofE, 2007c) with Gold Award holders shows the positive impact that doing a DofE programme can have on young people and their lives. For example, 87% of those interviewed continued with the activities taken up as part of their DofE programme, reflecting the longevity of their interest and not just 'badge collecting'. 83% of those interviewed stated that participation in a DofE programme had taught them how to work with different types of people, thus raising their awareness of inclusion and equality. 85% of those asked said that it had improved their self confidence, which may be linked to the 79% who said that they had learned how to be a team leader (DofE, 2008a: 6, see also DofE, 2007c).

When parents were asked which of the DofE's ten underpinning principles they considered to be the most important, the top three were: 'enjoyable', 'achievement focus' and 'available to all' (DofE, 2004b). The study (DofE, 2004b: 8) also asked parents which were the qualities that they thought were the most important for their child's personal development. The top three (out of 13 set out in the handbook) were: "*Greater self-confidence*", "*A sense of Achievement*" and "*A stronger sense of responsibility*" (see DofE, 2004b). The research stresses the significance of the link between these and the underpinning principles selected by the parents as the most significant. However, the importance of the principle '*available to all*' is disputed by parents in a study by Noel (2006: 11) who believed that The Duke of Edinburgh's Award should remain exclusive and that it is in danger of dumbing down from its '*elite golden standard*' if participation is widened further.

Driscoll (2007) used the 13 benefits set out by the DofE in the *Award Handbook* (see DofE, 2004a) when asking participants what they thought the most important benefit is. He found that students participating in a DofE programme thought that the greatest social benefit to them was developing new talents and abilities, with the ability to lead and work as part of a team second, with awareness of your own potential and building new relationships a joint third. Self-belief, self-confidence and sense of identity were in the bottom four (out of 13). This could reflect the fact that those already taking part in a DofE programme have greater self-confidence and esteem than those who do not involve themselves in a DofE programme. This is in contrast to the results of the above study of parents. It may be that parents recognise these qualities and benefits more in their off-spring than the young people themselves over a relatively short time period.

Smith (2004) found that pupils doing their DofE programme thought that the skills that they developed would be useful in their lives outside school. The principal reason for this is that activities and skills are learnt through experience, giving the individual an opportunity to learn by doing rather than in a classroom situation (Smith, 2004). This reinforces the value of non-formal learning and learning outside the confines of the classroom. However, Smith (2004) was studying citizenship education and its links to the DofE Award and stressed that both teachers and pupils involved in the DofE Award were more likely to have positive attitudes both to The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and citizenship education. He also suggested that those pupils participating in a DofE programme could, by personality, be more likely to be involved in the community even if they were not working towards a DofE Award. His considers this to be the main weakness of his research: the study did not include those pupils who had dropped out or were not doing a DofE programme, or teachers who were not directly associated with the DofE Award. By limiting the range of views explored, Smith (2004) recognises the bias of his research.

### **5.5.1. DofE programme sections**

Whilst a Duke of Edinburgh's Award is seen as an individual achievement, it also requires team working. The aim of the different sections of a DofE programme is to achieve rounded personal development of the individual (Hub Consultants, 2002). Participants may choose to do the same activity as their friend, or they may be limited by what is being offered by their delivery organisation (Smith, 2004). Thus, areas of popularity have emerged within each section. The most popular activities in 2007 were:

- Volunteering: first aid (Bronze); helping children and youth (Silver and Gold)
- Physical: swimming (Bronze); hockey, then fitness activities (Silver); fitness activities, then hockey (Gold).
- Skills: playing an instrument (Bronze and Silver); playing an instrument, closely followed by driving (Gold) (reflection of age of Gold participants).
- Expedition: the mode of travel most commonly used was walking (96.1%) (DofE, 2007d).

Concerns have been raised that participants were undertaking some activities because that was what was on offer by the school or delivery organisation, rather than of their choosing (Smith, 2004; DofE, 2000b; DofE, 1990: 11). This goes against the individual choice philosophy of a DofE programme. However, participants are also restricted by the activities on offer in the area in which they live. Participants may not know the full range of options that could be available to them in their local area and may need guidance from their group leader (DofE, 2000b). Increased communication and collaboration between DofE Leaders and centres could open up availability of certain activities to participants. The benefits to participants would be a wider choice of activities and the opportunity to mix with other young people that they might not normally.

#### **5.5.1.1. The Volunteering section**

The Volunteering section (previously Service) provides an opportunity for young people to become part of their community. This section could be considered to be the most worthwhile element of a DofE programme: giving something back and learning more about the community in which the participant lives. The name of this section was changed from September 2008 to reflect the emphasis of this section and to be more in line with today's young people. Research has shown that young people's initial perception of the Service section was that of being

subservient and waiting on others (Hub Consultants, 2002; DofE, 1990: 10). The change in name will support the philosophy of the section of working within the participant's own community, and may encourage participants to get involved beyond the time span of their DofE programme. It may also promote DofE Leaders to encourage some participants to go out and find a volunteering need within the community instead of offering them a short training course with an established contact such as the Red Cross or the Fire Service. If participants are actively encouraged to go out into their community and find a real need within that community, this could instil a sense of local pride and community spirit, as well as making them more aware of local needs and local charities and organisations (Hollier, 1992b). This would also help to widen the impact and knowledge of the DofE Award in the community. This also links back to the participant having the maximum choices available to them to enable them to take ownership of their DofE programme.

However, some participants were disappointed by this section, and claimed that they did not get much out of it personally, or felt that they did not achieve much (Hub Consultants, 2002). Further, as one Gold Award participant stated:

*"The Service [Volunteering] section is designed so others benefit more than the participant, although there is satisfaction in helping someone other than yourself. However, many participants, especially at Bronze level, manage to complete the Service [Volunteering] section without actually helping anyone or doing anything practically useful"*

(Hollier 1992b: 16)

Knightbridge (2008) suggests three ways in which the DofE can develop the Volunteering section: quality, quantity and diversity. She states that more resources are needed for increasing consultation with young people about what kind of opportunities they want in issues that they feel passionate about, so more of these opportunities can be created. She argues that by doing this, volunteering amongst DofE participants is more likely to go beyond their DofE. This was also found in research by Horton et al (2008) who carried out a two month study with over 300 young people aged 12-24 in Northamptonshire into the opportunities and barriers to volunteering. The study found that: *"A large majority (86%) of the young people consulted indicated that they would participate in volunteering activities if opportunities existed to work in relation to their cares and passions"* (ibid: 27; see also Knightbridge, 2008; v, 2007). However, there is the question that if opportunities are created specifically to encourage volunteering for young people, what happens to the organisations that are already in need within the community and where is the place of real need? Is it volunteering for volunteering sake? Section 5.6 looks at young people and volunteering in more detail.

#### 5.5.1.2. The Physical section

The Physical section of the DofE Award is aimed at encouraging participation and improvement in a physical activity of the individual's choosing. Participation in physical recreation generates a sense of achievement and being active is essential for well-being, raises self-esteem and can lead to an enduring active lifestyle (DofE, 2004a; DofE, 1981). This links back to UK Government policy regarding being healthy, and emotional and physical well-being of the individual. Whilst young people recognise these benefits of being active and see the value of taking part, they can be self-conscious about taking part and wary of the hard work that is involved (DofE, 2003a: 37). For some, participation in the Physical section of the DofE Award has proved to be not overly stimulating because individuals continue with an activity that they are already doing previous to

participation (Hub Consultants, 2002). However, they did report it to be a positive experience because they were doing something that they enjoyed and that they were initially motivated to do (Hub Consultants, 2002).

#### 5.5.1.3. The Skills section

The Skills section of the DofE Award is designed to develop the young person's practical and social skills by undertaking a specific activity and developing their ability in this activity, whether it is new to them or developing an existing interest (DofE, 2004a). Hub Consultants (2002) found that, on the whole, participants did something that they enjoyed in the Skills section, but because of time constraints, they were more likely to carry on with something that they did already rather than embark on a new activity. This was reiterated at a meeting of participants and leaders from the South West of the UK (DofE, 1990). Two recurring points made were that participants should be encouraged to take on a new skill rather than continue with one that they already do, and that at each level of DofE Award, they should undertake a new skill (DofE, 1990). This would result in participants learning more skills and provide them with wider interests, though perhaps not to the same standard. However, possibilities for participants to do this may depend on the organisation they are doing their DofE programme with (for example, young offenders may struggle with this), and the activities offered by, and the abilities of, the DofE leaders.

#### 5.5.1.4. The Expedition section

The Expedition section has been, and continues to be, a very popular section of the DofE Award. This section requires the young person to work as part of a team and to plan, organise and execute a journey. It is designed to develop several skills including, the ability to work as part of a team; leadership skills; an awareness of issues affecting the environment; self-reliance and acceptance of the consequences of decision-making (DofE, 2004a). The Expedition requires much planning, and it takes the young person out of their 'comfort zone', making it one of the most challenging parts of a DofE programme. As a result, much emphasis is placed on the Expedition section of a DofE, both by participants and by DofE leaders (Smith, 2004; Hub Consultants, 2002). This has been one of the criticisms of the DofE, that the Expedition and imagery of the Expedition section can dominate The Duke of Edinburgh's Award to the detriment of other sections and this can alienate certain potential participants (Hub Consultants, 2002; DofE, 1989a). However, this emphasis is not unfounded and, because the Expedition gives the participant new and challenging experiences, it can have the most lasting effect on the participant. For example, as HRH The Prince Edward explained in 1989:

*"[T]he Expeditions section has become the most memorable bit about the award. This is because: a) it is more photographic, b) people are more terrified or more apprehensive about it c) it's the most challenging Section. Thus, at the end of their expedition, participants have more stories about it and a greater sense of satisfaction having completed it"*

(DofE, 1989a: 5; see also Wainwright, 1966)

Research by Hub Consultants (2002) more than 15 years later revealed that the majority of both participants and team leaders continue to place emphasis on the Expedition section of the DofE Award. They found that in some instances there is

an element of 'getting through' the other sections so that they can concentrate on the Expedition (Hub Consultants, 2002: 123). This also reflects the amount of planning and organisation involved and the fact that some of the other activities are already being done by participants prior to starting a DofE programme.

Furthermore, other research reinforces the health benefits of spending time in the natural environment. Peacock et al (2008: 6) found that the benefits to young people of physical activities in natural surroundings include "*enhanced psychological well-being and improved attention and concentration [...] opportunities for personal development and sense of purpose in adults.*" They found that physical activities in natural surroundings are now beginning to be used in lots of settings including local authorities and probation services. The research used a mixed method approach, employing both qualitative data such as interviews and participant observation, and quantitative questionnaires and involved seven young people and seven coaches on a nine month pilot project called 'Turnaround 2007' which was designed to use natural surroundings to help vulnerable young people, targeting those between 15-18 who were considered to be 'at risk' and in danger of offending. The primary aim of the Turnaround Project was to raise self esteem as it was thought that this determines psychological well-being and is characterised in positive behaviour. As part of their research, Peacock et al (2008) used the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) as a key component of their questionnaire in order to measure self-esteem over the time to determine whether the Turnaround Project could act as way of enhancing self esteem and changing negative behaviours. Some of the outcomes for young people of the project include (2008:11/12):

- Increased coping skills
- Enhanced communication and problem solving skills
- Team working skills
- Personal awareness and confidence
- Understanding of the outdoors
- Enjoyment
- Life skills
- Improved relationships with adults and peers.

Thus, for participants in Peacock *et al's* (2008) research, the impact of taking part in the project was significant. The results of the research show that: "*The beauty of the scenic environment is a fundamental part of the experience but establishing new and special friendships is also very important in having a shared experience.*" (2008: 19). The report went on to say that positive peer influences can result in, amongst other things, group cohesion which can in turn enhance sense of self worth and thus improve relationships with others. This also illustrates the potential of the Expedition section of the DofE for offering disengaged young people a similar positive experience and thus a potential turning point in their life. Furthermore, the Turnaround 2007 project found that the leaders of the project had a significant impact on young people taking part, for example, one young person said "*The coaches had a huge influence on me, they were non-judgmental and took a genuine interest in my life and me as a person*" (2008: 10).

Similarly, ippr (2009) undertook research for Raleigh International with young people who had taken part in their overseas expeditions over the last 25 years. They carried out 15 life history interviews with those who were deemed to come from disadvantaged backgrounds in order to look at the long term influence of taking part on their lives. Key findings from the research that are relevant here include:

- Raleigh has a long term impact on personal development through the experiential learning of going on an expedition

- *"The experience of being in an unfamiliar and extremely challenging environment was an important contributor to personal development"* (2009: 7).
- The impact that participating had on young people depended on levels of social support, both on the expedition and opportunities from home.
- Participants reported an increase in both confidence and interpersonal skills as a result of their Raleigh experience
- 83% of respondents said that taking part in a Raleigh expedition had *"increased their career ambitions"* (2008: 8)
- Survey respondents stated that Raleigh had broadened their horizons and increased their awareness of the world.

#### 5.5.1.5. Residential

The Residential is only for Gold Award participants. It involves them going away for five consecutive nights, working and staying with others that were unknown to them previously. It has been suggested that, whilst criteria are generally met, there have been instances where the spirit of this section of the DofE Award has been forgotten. One example of this is people going on skiing holidays as their residential project (DofE, 1990: 10).

<h3>5.6. Young people and volunteering</h3>
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Volunteering, however informal, is part of education and development. In 2008, youth volunteering charity 'v' released the results of a survey into the 'Barriers preventing young people acting on their concerns'. The survey involved 1,000 16-25 year olds. The research found that the main reasons that young people do not act on their concerns and volunteer was a combination of: lack of time; not knowing how to get involved; and thinking that they don't have anything to offer (v, 2007: 2; see also Horton et al, 2008; DofE, 2003a; IVR, 1997). Further reasons for young people not getting involved in positive activities included: access, both practical (information, cost, transport and safety) and personal (lack of confidence and low aspirations), and the need for high quality services (DCSF and HM Treasury (2007). Thus, more information is required aimed at young people about how to get involved in volunteering, and similarly, to find ways to increase understanding of what volunteering is about.

Volunteering, as discussed above, is not considered to be a 'cool' thing to do amongst teenagers (Hub Consultants, 2002; DofE, 2003a: 39). Peer pressure is at its height in teenage years, this and knowing about opportunities through word of mouth can have a major influence on what activities a young person takes part in (Horton et al, 2008; DofE, 2003a; Hub Consultants, 2002). Lack of self-confidence is also an issue. The Volunteering section of the DofE Award is one way of breaking down these barriers (Knightbridge, 2008). However, the young person first has to have the self-confidence to come forward, or be encouraged to take part in a DofE programme.

A report commissioned by DfES and carried out by the National Youth Agency supports evidence that volunteering can raise confidence and self-esteem, develop a range of skills such as communication and the ability to work with others. Through volunteering, individuals can be encouraged to engage more effectively with other learning, leading to qualifications and/or practical skills (NYA, 2007b). This contributes to their knowledge, skills and personal development. The report makes many recommendations for the development of young people's skills through volunteering including, making projects as flexible

as possible to encourage inclusivity and recording individual progress so that both the organisation and the young person can reflect on their progress and develop skills cognitively. This finding is supported by Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) (1997) who found that support is essential for young people when they volunteer in order for them to progress (see also DofE, 2003a). The DofE aims to both support young people and record their individual progress through their DofE programme. This support can also encourage participation in volunteering beyond the DofE Award.

The Russell Commission (2005: 6) recommended that there should be a "*new national framework for volunteering for youth action and engagement*". The report suggested that by broadening access to volunteering activities for young people, more will do so and by actively volunteering, young people will gain personally and by so doing, their local community and wider society will place more value on young people's contribution to society. The Commission recommended that these volunteering opportunities should be youth-led and, thus empowering young people to make meaningful choices about volunteering and also mentoring their peers through the process. The Morgan Inquiry (2008) sought to build on this recommendation by suggesting that 18-24 year olds should be given an opportunity to engage in volunteering for one day, or eight hours every year by their employers or institution.

Young people like to have some kind of recognition for their volunteering (NYA, 2007a; 2007b). However, the type of recognition wanted can vary between individuals, from a simple thank you to a formal certificate (NYA, 2007a: 6). Formal acknowledgement means that the young person can add volunteering to their CV. The DFES report suggests that "*The recognition and accreditation of volunteering should be built into all appropriate programmes and measures being developed by Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and the Learning and Skills Council.*" (NYA, 2007b: 8). There is an argument as to whether this is the way forward, raising questions of the structure of volunteering and the continuation of informal volunteering. It is suggested here that if volunteering is added to the curriculum as mandatory, then in essence it is no longer volunteering.

The emphasis therefore needs to be on raising awareness of how volunteering can benefit the individual and be of value to them and contribute to society, thus making the individual feel good about doing it, which in turn will raise their own self-confidence and esteem whilst also developing practical and social skills that they can use in other parts of their life.

## **5.7. Inclusion and community cohesion**

In principle, the DofE Award is open to everyone who wishes to participate. The 2004 Award handbook states: "*There is sufficient choice and flexibility within the Award to enable **all** young people to access the Programme*" (DofE, 2004a: 77). The DofE have worked to make the Duke of Edinburgh's award available to as many young people as possible. They have done this by targeting specific groups and setting up projects such as the New Start project in Scotland. However, by targeting groups of "*disaffected people*" the DofE can be omitting "*the run-of-the-mill Joe average*" (Tyas, 2000, cited in DofE, 2000a: 6). Tyas suggests that by not targeting those young people in school who want something structured and positive to do, the DofE Award is missing out on a "*captive audience*" (DofE, 2000a: 6).

Research carried out in 2006 reveals that some people's perception of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award remains the same as in the 1970s, i.e. it is for ambitious,

self-motivated, white middle-class students (Noel, 2006; Atkenhead, 1995; Ginty, 1993a; Copisarow, 1975). The DofE Award continues to be, and is perceived to be, predominantly a school activity for high achievers (Copisarow, 1975). However, in some cases this has gone to the other extreme, with the perception that the DofE is for disadvantaged and 'troublesome' young people. Furthermore, access to a DofE programme may not be the main barrier to an individual's participation. There may be many other reasons, including lack of time, not knowing how to get involved and peer pressure (v, 2007; DofE, 2003a; IVR, 1997; Ginty, 1993a). Whatever their background, young people have to continually "*negotiate patterns of inclusion and exclusion, with varying degrees of success*" (DofE, 1998c: 7). Personal development programmes like the DofE Award can equip the young person with skills to help them deal with situations that they might otherwise struggle with. The report by 2020vision (DofE, 1998b, 1998c) revealed that there is a considerable gap between young people's aspirations and expectations: that is, what they want to achieve and in reality what they believe they will (DofE, 1998c: 7). Participation in the DofE Award can help foster realistic expectations for participants and give them some direction in their aspirations for the future.

Further, a position paper published by the DofE (2008b) titled, *The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and Building Communities*, states that programmes like the DofE can encourage young people to become involved in a broad framework of activities which includes getting involved with people outside of their usual circle (DofE, 2008b). It states that one of the main ways of doing this is through the Volunteering section of the DofE where young people can make a positive contribution to their community and broaden their horizons (*ibid*).

The introduction of sectional certificates by the Duke of Edinburgh's Award has encouraged those with low aspirations or learning or behavioural difficulties more opportunities for getting involved and taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Young people can keep motivated with smaller milestones and certificates as they progress through their DofE programme. Some young people will not achieve a full DofE award, but their sectional certificates may be their first achievement or qualification and increase encouragement to further their education, either academically or practically. As the DofE (2001: 5) say about sectional certificates: "*They acknowledge individual achievements and underline the fact that the Award is more about the experiences made along the way than the Award gained at the end.*" However, the emphasis remains on completion of full DofE Awards.

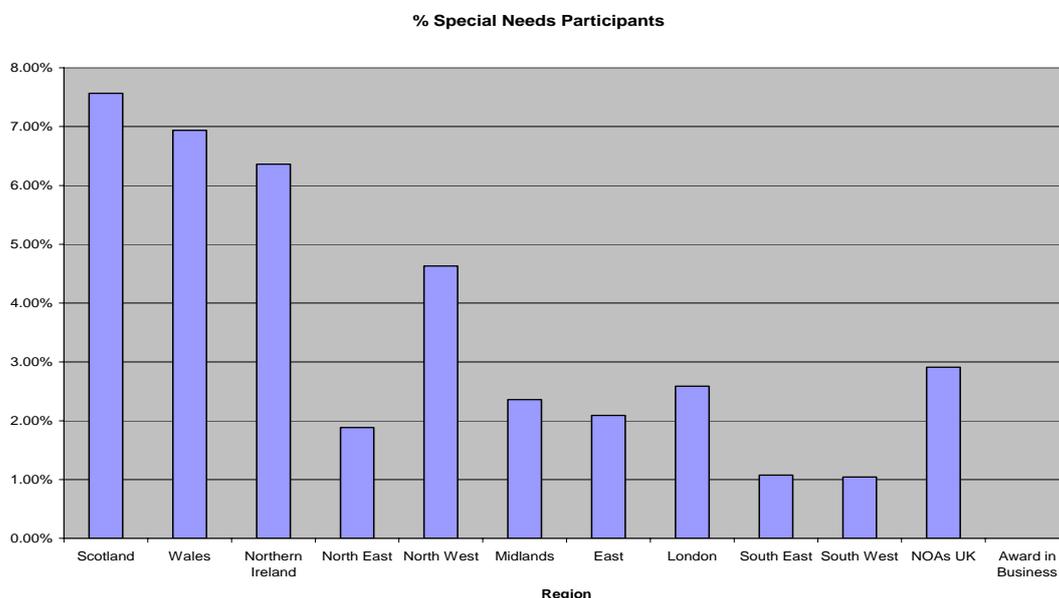
### **5.7.1. Special needs**

Initiatives and measures have been introduced into The Duke of Edinburgh's Award that concentrate on and assist those with special needs to participate in a DofE programme. The introduction of sectional Certificates introduced above (section 5.7 is a good example of this) and numbers of participants with special needs continues to grow. Figure 4 shows the number of special needs participants, by Region, in 2006-07 (source: DofE).

Halley Stewart (1980) conducted research into the extent of the DofE Award among the less able bodied and although the research was carried out nearly thirty years ago, it continues to be relevant. The research revealed that the DofE Award has positive effects on less able-bodied young people, in much the same way as it does on the able-bodied. Those with special needs were attracted to take part by the opportunity to learn some new and useful things. What they enjoyed most about their DofE programme was companionship and working with

others. One of the conclusions of the research was that, due to the personal individual nature of doing a DofE programme, there is no need for a special or different award for those with different needs (Halley Stewart, 1980).

Centres such as the Oakwood High Youth Club, a youth centre in Salford for people with special needs, offer DofE programmes to their members. The Centre's project workers work in partnership with parents to overcome some of the individual's obstacles to participation. They view the DofE Award as a support mechanism for their members (Appleyard, 2001). Participation in a DofE programme requires involvement of the individual, and for them to make conscious decisions. It helps them realise what they are capable of and can achieve (Appleyard, 2001; Jones, 2000). One of the greatest benefits to mental health patients of being involved with a DofE programme has been found to be the therapeutic value of stimulation of social awareness that patients are able to apply to their lives on leaving the hospital (Ginty, 1993b). DofE programmes are flexible enough for personal goal setting and achievement to be attained, and is recognised and valued in the wider community.



**Figure 4: Percent of DofE participants with special needs by region 2006/07**

### 5.7.2. Young offenders

Young offenders are one of the groups of young people who may have the potential to gain most from participating in a DofE programme. It promotes positive self esteem, confidence and personal development. For some, positive activities and experiencing success by participating in their DofE programme can increase aspirations and may be the catalyst for changing their life. As one warden said:

*“For most of our youngsters, ‘success’ is a word that they have seldom heard in their lives before coming to the Centre. In the world outside they have failed in schools, at home and within their own communities. It is therefore an important part of our work to give them some experience of success to build confidence and self-esteem.”*

(Willis, 1982, in Parkes and Willis, 1982: 8)

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award has targeted Young Offenders using several initiatives over many years to increase participation for this group. Currently, 16 Young Offender Institutes are running DofE programmes (DofE, 2006: 23). For example, HMP Holloway has been running the DofE programmes for groups of offenders since 2000. By doing this the prison is forging links with the community and the offender is developing valuable key skills such as respect, both for themselves and others, which in turn is reflected in their change of behaviour (Dowdall, 2001: 34-35). One of the challenges for young offenders is completing their DofE once they leave the Young Offenders Institute (Parkes and Willis, 1982: 8). Solutions to this have included the training of Probation Officers in the technicalities of DofE programmes so that they can guide and support young offenders through the process (Parkes and Willis, 1982: 8). Another successful solution has been to forge links with external support so that young offenders are given direction for their DofE programme once they leave the institute (DofE, 1999). As a result of participation in a DofE programme re-offending rates among young people who have participated in the DofE are dramatically lower than those who have not (DofE, 2001: 3), illustrating the positive influence that the DofE can have on young people.

In Wales, schemes such as a partnership between the Probation Service and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award has provided opportunities for young offenders to take part in activities such as rock climbing and horse riding and develop skills such as computing and money management (Weiner, 1997). The New Start project was launched as a pilot in Scotland in 1998 and due to this success ran as a project from 2003. The aim of New Start was to target young people "*who had, or who were at risk of, participating in offending and/or risk taking behaviour*" (Bitel and Campbell, 2005: 3). New Start increased accessibility of DofE programmes to young offenders by making use of the sectional certificates. Bitel and Campbell (2005) carried out research to evaluate the New Start project. The research involved participants and stakeholders in the scheme and was carried out over a year "*to examine the effectiveness of New Start in complementing and enhancing the work of organisations concerned with reducing and preventing youth crime and promoting community safety*" (*ibid*: 4). Bitel and Campbell (2005: 5) revealed that two-thirds of those involved were reported to be actively engaged in positive activities and involvement in offending behaviour had reduced by three-quarters. The report made six recommendations including: that the project should continue and be expanded; New Start should be mainstreamed to prevent further social exclusion; and, monitoring and tracking of participants should be improved (Bitel and Campbell, 2005: 6).

Further research on the DofE in the secure estate was carried out by The Social Inclusion Research Unit (SIRU) and the Cardiff School of Social Sciences who explored, identified and documented the ways in which the DofE engages young people in the secure estate (SIRU & Cardiff School of Social Sciences, 2009). The research was qualitative and involved both young people from seven establishments in England and Wales and key staff involved in providing DofE programmes in the secure estate. The research found that most of the young people who took part found out about the DofE either through induction or word of mouth from their peers. Other pertinent findings include, that the DofE allowed:

- young people to set their own personal targets
- participants to get involved with new people, in and out of their usual environment and hence develop relationships with the institution, both with their peers and leaders
- team work and group work within the institution
- young people the ability to give something back to the community
- the young person to go on expedition

- building resilience
- personal development including confidence and pride in achievement

Staff of the institutions who took part in the research saw the benefits of young people in the secure estate to include:

- broadening horizons
- gaining life skills
- the expedition was seen as key for personal development
- acquisition of social skills, including developing "trust, maturity, social relationships, reciprocity, self esteem and self confidence (47)
- fostering adult relationships

Changes to the programme that staff would like to see include:

- lower the starting age of the DofE
- have continuity of support
- promote better understanding of the DofE

### **5.7.3. Inner cities/disadvantaged/deprived areas**

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award has been used in many initiatives targeted at disadvantaged young people who are experiencing a range of difficulties in their lives. In many instances, the DofE has been used to encourage those who would otherwise leave their institution without any qualifications (NYA, 2005). The DofE Award can be a valuable tool for encouraging a young person to recognise life skills through accreditation that is also widely recognised by employers (Martin, 2001). For example, in Wales the DofE Award has been incorporated into partnership projects for disadvantaged young people. The Youth Work and Partnership Projects that were run across eight Local Authorities in Wales incorporated DofE programmes into the projects, thus increasing participation, raising awareness of the DofE and illustrating the recognition of the positive effect of doing a DofE programme on young people (DofE, 1999: 7).

Open DofE Centres were introduced in the 1980s, instigated by the Youth Service to provide a facility for those who were unattached to a group. The DofE centres have given independent participants the chance to take part in A DofE programme beyond schools, youth centres and other institutions (Nixon, 1992). The key to continued participation is often the presence of an enthusiastic and inspirational leader who can nurture and support the interests of those young people who may otherwise not get involved in projects and community initiatives in their local area (Parkes, 1983).

A research project carried out by DfES (1990) between September 1989 and April 1990 into the DofE Award in urban areas of England. HM Inspectors made visits to regional officers and 80 units offering DofE programmes in 20 local authorities (DfES, 1990: 1). The report made several common findings when compared to other research into the DofE Award (see for example, Smith, 2004; Hub Consultants, 2002). Significant findings included:

- The support and personal encouragement provided by teachers offering DofE programmes in school and leaders in open DofE centres was a key factor for many completing their DofE programme.
- The difficulty for teachers in continuing to co-ordinate DofE programmes without sufficient support staff.
- The emphasis on the expedition by leaders at open DofE centres.

These findings reflect other research already discussed, suggesting that the location of the DofE unit or group is not important, rather it is the way that it is managed, organised and implemented that makes a successful DofE group.

#### 5.7.4. Unemployed/NEET

*The Positive Contribution of Non-formal Awards to Learning* report (NYA, 2005) found that participation in non-academic personal development programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award is an overwhelmingly positive one. The research was carried out over two years by the National Youth Agency in partnership with the Learning and Skills Council and the Awards Network. The research looked at eight award programmes, including the DofE, being used by eight local Skills and Learning Councils. The report found that engaging with a non-formal award was positive for learners in many ways. For example, participation had a positive impact on motivation by improving personal and social skills. Also, accredited outcomes for personal and social development enhanced perceptions of the awards for both learners and providers. As well as improving the individual's social and personal development, non-formal Awards are also a way of demonstrating to employers' evidence of personal achievement outside the classroom (NYA, 2005). By participating, individuals were more likely to progress on to further training or employment than those who do not (NYA, 2005).

The report (NYA, 2005: 102) also found that the Expedition section of the DofE Award was the most well known section of the DofE Award and was "*the most commonly mentioned section when learners talked about their experience of the award*". When discussing the DofE Award, the research reported that:

*"taking part in itself builds confidence, but also adds trust in the provider staff as they interact with them outside the usual environment. This is also linked to recognising achievement for the first time. Providers also reported that for many learners a sectional certificate will be the first time they have had their work successfully accredited. Learners also report feeling confident that the achievements will be recognised by others"*

(ibid: 103)

Thus, by doing the DofE Award, the participant takes part in activities that they have not done before and gain key skills. This can give them the confidence to interact and trust others whilst gaining a recognised achievement that may help them in the future in terms of employment.

Further, YouGov, on behalf of The Prince's Trust carried out an online poll of young people in October 2008. Just over 2000 16-25 year olds responded to the survey which asked young people about, amongst other things, their emotional well-being and how they viewed certain aspects of their future. In terms of emotional well-being, 12% of those who responded felt that their life was meaningless and 10% did not find life really worth living. These figures were significantly higher for those not in employment, education or training (NEET). In response to questions about their future, the overall response was positive (73 average score). However, again, the score was significantly lower for NEET young people (63 average score). This shows, not surprisingly, that those young people who are not in employment, education or training are less positive about

their future and did not have as positive a sense of purpose or self worth as those who considered they had more opportunities (Princes Trust and YouGov, 2009).

Van der Graaf *et al* (2009) conducted an evaluation of UK Youth's Youth Achievement Awards (YAA). This research has been published at an opportune time for this study as it gives the research a comparison of the evaluation of another youth award programme, to which it is hoped that parallels can be drawn that will endorse the findings here and vice versa. The research, like here, used a triangulation of methods including qualitative and quantitative and the research team carried out observation and interviews with a wide range of individuals involved with the YAA programme, including young people, alumni, staff and stakeholders. Van der Graaf *et al* (2009: 1) found that young people benefited from doing a YAA in terms of supporting them "*in making positive life choices and transitions to adulthood*". Other key findings for young people include:

- The benefits of accreditation
- Improved employability skills – with young people demonstrating commitment, confidence and dedication
- Increased social networks among young people
- Young people's pride in achievement of a YAA

Key findings for the programme include:

- The value of non-formal learning as a viable alternative learning route for some young people
- The benefits of a flexible programme
- The benefits of individual progression routes within the programme and the progressive nature of the programme.

Other observations and recommendations of the report include:

- Integrating the higher levels of YAA into the National Qualifications Network
- Young people with "complex or troubled personal biographies" may require a high level of tolerance in overcoming personal challenges – findings of the research found that "for many young people very 'small steps' can represent 'giant leaps' in developmental terms" (2009: 3)
- Appropriate support from practitioners varied significantly and impacted on young people's success
- Self reflection by young people taking part in a YAA is an important component for developing confidence, raising their aspirations and making positive future choices
- Key resources that centres were dependent on: staff development and training, local support and funding
- Increased communication between UK Youth and local centres in order to provide up to date information on achievements and current and potential funding bodies.

#### **5.7.5. Ethnic minorities**

Research by Noel (2006) into understanding potential concerns of parents and carers of their children taking part in the DofE found that The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is still viewed as white and middle-class. As a result of this, and a lack of knowledge of the DofE, the uptake of DofE programmes in ethnic and lower social economic groups is much lower than in other groups (Noel, 2006). Figure 5 shows the percentage of black and ethnic minority (BME) participants in DofE programmes by Region (2007-08).

Young people from ethnic minorities may feel that the DofE Award is not for them or it is inaccessible. Also, their families and community may feel that the programme is culturally inappropriate and not wish to endorse participation in a DofE programme because they do not see the relevance of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (Noel, 2006; DofE, 2003b).

Noel (2006) found that the more affluent parents/carers of ethnic minorities were more confident and more likely to encourage their children to participate in activities. These parents had aspirations for their children to attend college and university. The less affluent parents were more concerned about what will happen to their children if they take part, which was linked to them being less likely to have a full understanding of life in Britain. Other barriers to participation were:

- The Expedition section – not wanting young people to go away, or mix, with those of the other gender.
- Instilling independent values in young people which will take them away from their community.
- It is not what young people aspire to.
- Practical barriers such as cost, transport and shortage of DofE Leaders (Noel, 2006).

One example of a project designed to encourage and increase participation by ethnic minorities is The Dudley Cricketing Project which was aimed predominantly at Pakistani young men aged 14 to 23 in deprived areas in the West Midlands to get them involved in a DofE programme through their passion for cricket (DofE, 2003b: 5). Of the young men that took part, all of them achieved at least one sectional DofE certificate (*ibid*).

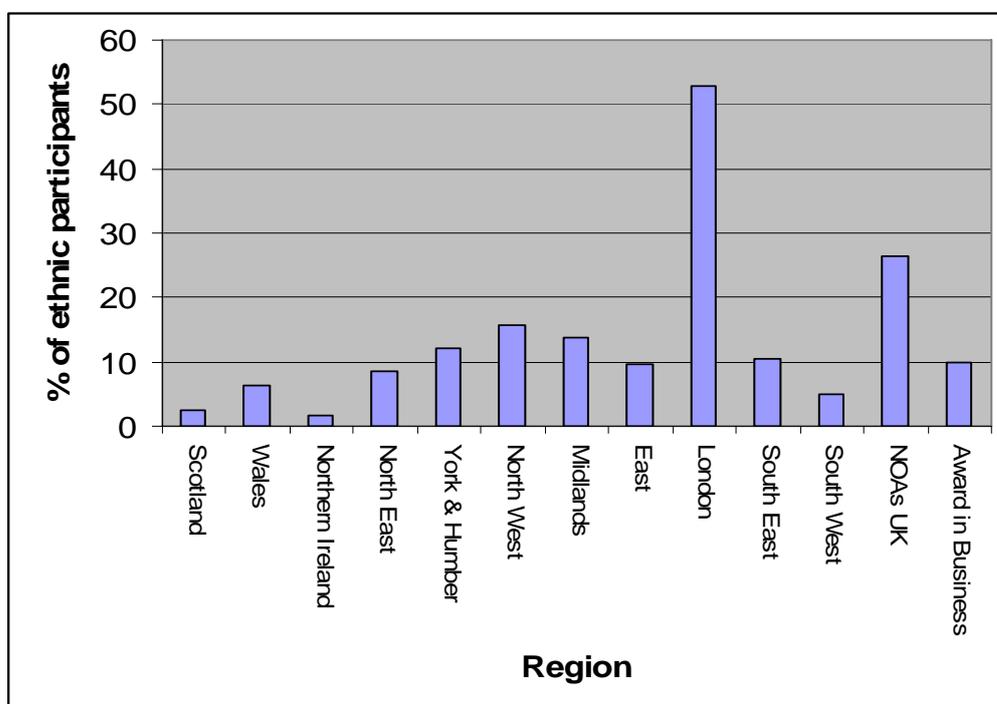


Figure 5: Percentage of BME DofE participants by region 2007-08  
Source: DofE

## 5.8. Leaders, youth workers and volunteers

The DofE Award relies on the continued support of its volunteers for delivery of the programme. The contribution of youth workers, both paid and voluntary, to the programme cannot be underestimated. Without them, the DofE Award would not be able to continue to run as it does (Copisarow, 1975). They help to provide opportunities and to support young people through the process of gaining a DofE Award.

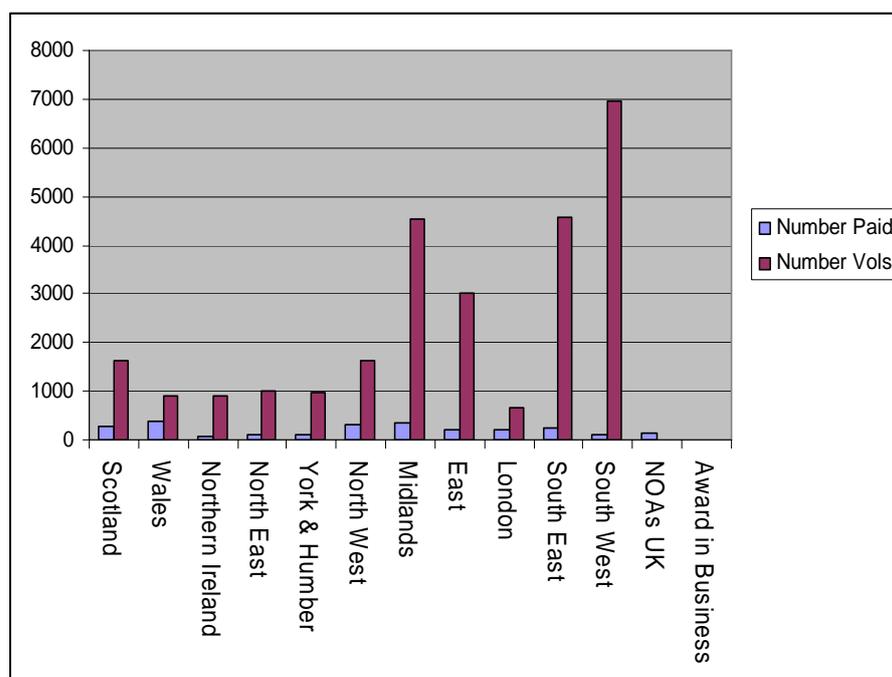
The key to successful youth work is the relationship between the young person, their peers, their youth workers and the wider community (NYA and the Fabian Society, 2008: 7). Relationships between youth workers and young people are voluntary, built on trust and reciprocity and as such, are an important part of a young person's personal and social development. These relationships help the young person to understand relationships more fully and to build their self-confidence and resilience (NYA and the Fabian Society, 2008: 7). The youth worker will put faith and trust in the young person. It can be a trusting relationship that the young person may not get in other areas of their lives (Stannard, 2001). In the wider sense, this building of relationships can assist in building community cohesion and understanding of different people and cultures in the wider community. A good example of this is the faith and trust given by the prison service at HMP Holloway to young offenders taking part in DofE programmes who are working with autistic children, all contributors are learning important values about themselves and others from this experience (Dowdall, 2001).

Research commissioned by the DofE and carried out by National Federation for Educational Research (Lines and Blenkinsopp, 2002) focused on the volunteering requirements of the Operating Authorities and the needs of the volunteers themselves. Interviews were carried out with DofE leaders and volunteers. The study found that the Award Leaders preferred volunteers to have generic rather than specific skills when working with young people (Lines and Blenkinsopp, 2002). This is reflected in research by DfES (1990: 12) who recommended youth work skills training for volunteers of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, stating that: *"The necessary skills of relating to, encouraging and supporting young people, described as youth work skills, are not always found initially in volunteers. If the Award is to succeed in making a significant impact in urban areas, credibility with the youth service is essential."* This training would be beneficial to both leaders and young people, particularly those who have expertise in their field but are not used to working with young people: greater understanding of supporting young people could help to increase completion numbers.

Volunteers gain a great deal of personal satisfaction from being involved with the DofE Award and, overall, volunteers reported that their experience of involvement in DofE programmes was positive (Hub Consultants, 2002; Lines and Blenkinsopp, 2002). This reflects the successful retention rates of volunteers throughout the DofE programme (Sarah Lindsell, pers. comm., 2008).

Figure 6 shows the numbers of paid staff and volunteers involved in the DofE in 2007-08, by Region. Although volunteers do not get involved with the DofE Award in order to gain recognition for their work, they do value any acknowledgments for their hard work (Warke, 2004; Lines and Blenkinsopp, 2002).

Further, research by Warke (2004) suggested that the DofE should offer incentives to their volunteers. It revealed that the DofE agreed that they should offer more recognition and thanks to their volunteers and that giving volunteers an opportunity for acknowledgement was part of their Marketing Strategy 2003-04 (ibid: 67). Warke's research was an Undergraduate Degree dissertation based on a marketing plan for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in Northern Ireland. A further suggestion included increasing communication with Gold Award holders to keep them involved with the DofE and encourage them to volunteer. Warke's suggestion was to do this through a magazine or newsletter aimed primarily at Gold Award holders. Warke (2004) also found that whilst the DofE is a respected brand, one of the main problems was that, due to demand versus supply issues, it failed in its mission statement to be available to as many young people as possible. The research concludes that in order to widen participation, young people that should be targeted are those between 18 and 25 and those that Warke categorises as *"in the middle of [the] spectrum"* (ibid: 105), that is, those who are neither the high achieving and motivated, or those who are disengaged.



**Figure 6:**  
Numbers of  
paid and  
volunteer

staff, by Region (2007-08)  
Source DofE

## 5.9. Enhancing employment opportunities

In 2005, the United Learning Trust in association with Ratcliffe Hall, carried out a major study representing 12% of all UK employers into the value of A DofE Award to potential employers (DofE, 2007e). Organisations rated the top 7 key employee attributes and determinants used in the selection of new staff as: *“leadership, teamwork, self-motivation, communication, confidence, consideration and the ability to learn”* (DofE, 2007e). Even though the study was concentrating on graduate recruitment (those over 21), it asked employers to state from a list of activities *“undertaken at school”* which they thought to be the most important. The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award was rated highest. The research shows that employers value key skills, rather than specific skills in employees. It also shows that the DofE Award is recognised and highly regarded within the employment sector. Furthermore, employers also recognise the value of a DofE Award, both when recruiting graduates and those with less formal qualifications (DofE, 2007e). An employer states the importance of the DofE Award to them when recruiting:

*“It seems to me that it generates this feeling in people of knowledge of themselves, and their own limits.[...] It is a good way to say ‘are you a real person?’ ‘are you true to yourself?’ ‘how challenged are you?’ ‘are you a ‘passenger’ or someone who’s active in life?’”*

(Gibbs, 1999:8)

The 2005 study by the United Learning Trust was a follow-up to research carried out in 1998 to ascertain if there was a change in attitude or key skills sought by potential employers of graduates. One of the findings was that *“60% of the sample said that the acquisition of these [key] skills was more important than five years ago. 32% said they had always been important.”* This illustrates the growing importance of transferable key skills in the increasingly mobile work environment. This growing pace and the need for individuals to be able to respond to change are also reflected in the key difference that was revealed from over the seven years: the ability to learn (DofE, 2007: 2).

Copisarow (1975) revealed that one in four participants to his study reported that they had been asked about participation in the DofE Award in the course of a job interview. Further, one in eight in his study believed that they would not have obtained their present job if it were not for the DofE Award.

## 5.10. DofE in the workplace

Although the DofE Award is more generally associated with schools, business involvement is important in many ways. Engagement in a DofE programme for employees has proved to be a positive experience for them and their employers (DofE, 1998a). Business involvement is also an important way of raising the profile of the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award, and for increasing revenue for the Charity. However, there can be difficulties delivering DofE programmes within a work environment.

In the early 90s, the DofE launched its Charter for Business which aimed to attract young people working in business to take part in a DofE programme. Companies such as Bernard Matthews plc and Mars Confectionary Ltd created opportunities for their staff to get involved with the DofE with the aim of also encouraging other businesses to offer DofE programmes to their staff (DofE,

1992a: 6). Other initiatives have been taken to get employees in the workplace involved in the programme. For example, to coincide with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the National Health Service in 1998, the NHS in Wales collaborated with the DofE to offer employees the opportunity to develop their skills by taking part in the Gold Award (DofE, 1998a). The programme had a positive effect on the employees, one of whom stated:

*"The Award made me more competent and has given me the enthusiasm to tackle a challenge. Work understands the Award gives me the leadership qualities to become a potential manager"*

(DofE, 1998a: 11).

In contrast to most industry training, a DofE programme is not short-term and instead of training participants in a particular skill, a DofE programme aims to develop a range of skills and attitudes that can be useful in industry and also transferred to other parts of the participant's life.

## **5.11. Recent changes to DofE programmes**

Since its inception in 1956 The Duke of Edinburgh's Award has continually adapted and changed in order to stay relevant to young people. Several major changes have occurred recently. They include a re-branding and re-marketing of the charity and the DofE programmes, including a change in logo. Two of the sections have received name changes (Service to Volunteering, Physical Recreation to Physical). Both of these changes were suggested by Hub Consultants (2002) who stated that these changes could help to alter outside perception of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and encourage different potential participants. Perhaps the most radical change within the DofE system is the gradual move away from a paper-based system to an online, internet-based management system. This includes online registration and record books and an integrated management system for the administration of DofE programmes. A pilot scheme began in October 2008 and will run for a year before more permanent changes are implemented.

## **6. RESULTS: YOUNG PEOPLE**

### **6.1. Introduction**

This chapter examines the findings of all of the research strands that involved young people as research participants. This includes the snapshot view of young people's perceptions of their involvement in their DofE programmes provided by the first survey; the results from interviews and focus groups with young people; the video project and the analysis of their 'distance travelled' as measured by the changes between the first and second surveys.

Section 6.2 will report on the findings from the first young people's survey; section 6.3 summarises the model of the 'distance travelled' by young people doing their DofE and section 6.4 describes the results of the qualitative data derived from the young people's interviews, focus groups and video project. Finally, section 6.5 gives a brief summary of the major findings relating to the data collected with young people.

### **6.2. Results of the first young people's survey**

This section will provide a summary of the results from the first questionnaire survey to young people doing their DofE programme. Full details of the data

analysis can be found in the Statistical Volume of this report. Appendix 2 to that volume provides the breakdown of the responses to each question of the young people's survey. The methods used in designing and delivering the survey can be found in Section 3.3.1.2. The questionnaire used for this phase of the research can be found in Appendix 4 of the Statistical Volume of this report.

It should be noted that the questions used in this survey were compiled and agreed before the re-branding and hence the wording may not be compatible with current brand guidelines.

Valid responses were received from 1,848 young people for this part of the research, and the results from these are summarised below.

The questionnaire was designed so that these individual statements formed clusters around a central theme. The broad themes were:

- Experiences
- Local community
- Physical and mental well-being
- Employment
- General views on the DofE

Each theme is examined from both the participant's view of themselves ('theme-self'), and of the influence of the DofE ('theme- DofE').

Section 6.2.1 will describe the characteristics of the young people who responded to the survey and compare this, where possible, to those of all young people engaged in DofE programmes and Section 6.2.2 looks at responses to specific survey questions which examined the perceptions and motivations of young people when deciding to take part in the DofE. Sections 6.2.3 to 6.2.7 then summarise the survey findings by the five themes listed above.

### 6.2.1. Characteristics of the respondents

Any survey can only reflect the views of those who respond. Although every effort was made to ensure that the survey was known about and available to all participants, the results may not be representative of the views of the entirety of DofE participants due to inherent variations in factors such as publicity, opportunity, motivation and encouragement. All of these factors were outside of the control of the research team. This section summarises the characteristics of those that did respond, and from whom the findings of this section are based. Where possible, the characteristics of the sample are compared with those from the whole population of young people on DofE programmes.

#### 6.2.1.1. Gender

Just over one half of the respondents indicated their gender (1,061 of 1,848 valid returns). Of these, 380 (36%) were male and 681 (64%) were female. This compares with approximately equal proportions of males and females (42% male; 40% female) who were known to be participating in DofE programmes in 2007-08<sup>3</sup>(see Figure 7). However, 43% of the survey respondents chose not to state their gender (compared to 18% unknown gender in the total number of DofE participants).

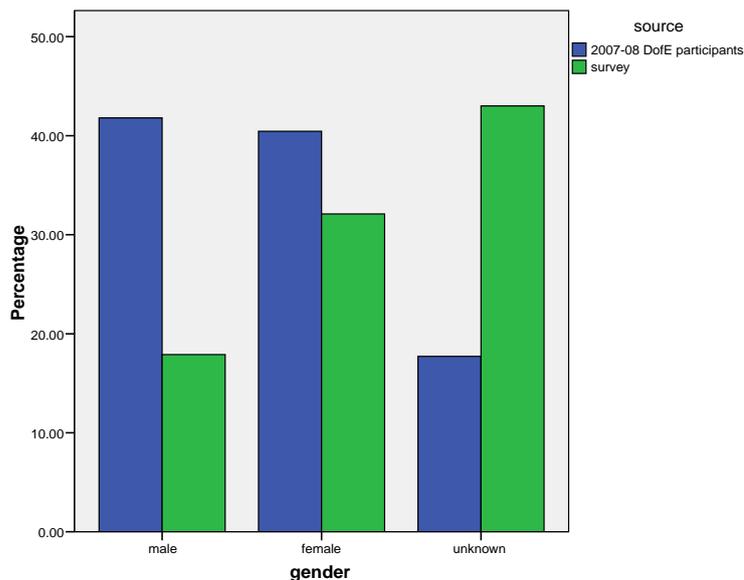
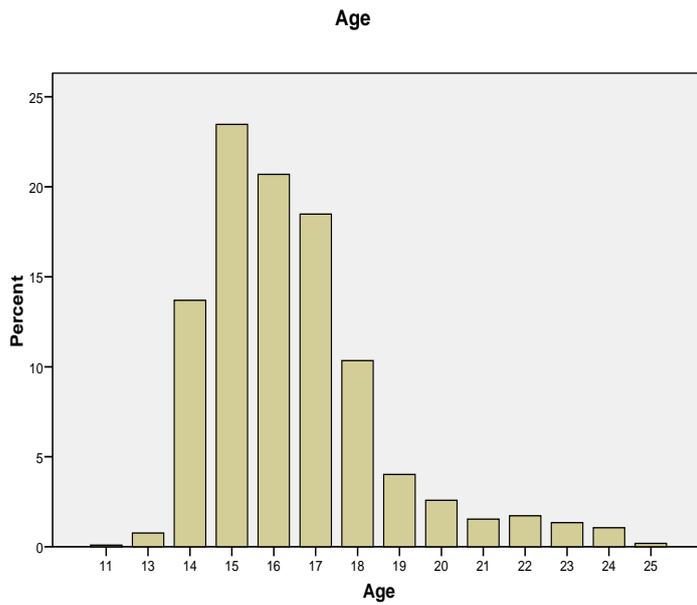


Figure 7: Gender balance of first survey respondents compared to all DofE participants

#### 6.2.1.2. Age

Figure 8 shows the age profile of those survey respondents who gave their age (n=1044). 53% of respondents did not give their age.

<sup>3</sup> Stats total 2007-08, DofE Head Office, Aug 2008

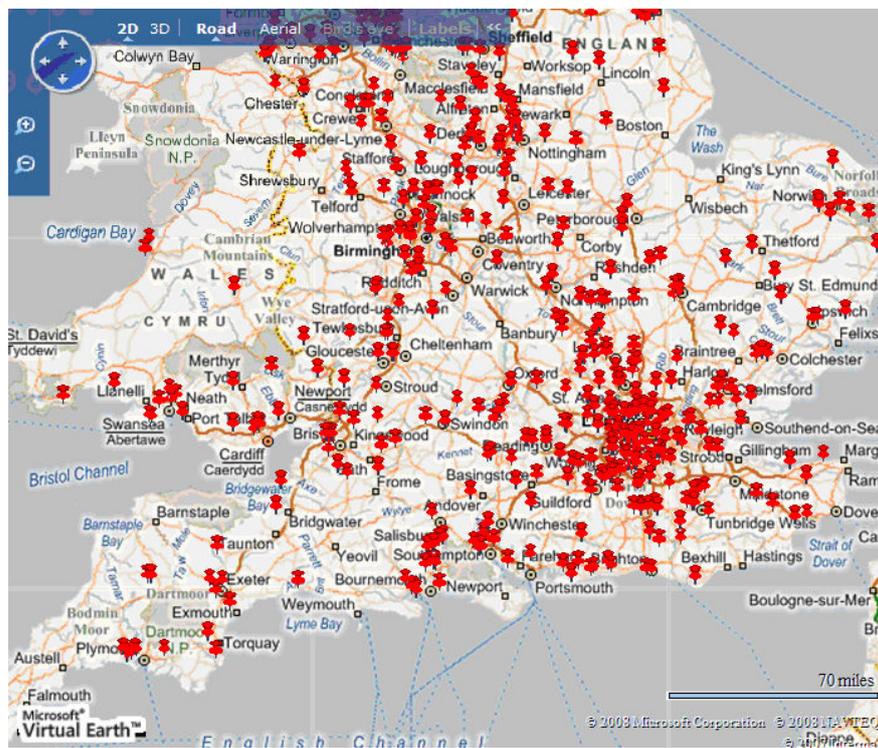


**Figure 8: Age profile of survey respondents**

The median age reported was 16 years.

### 6.2.1.3. Geographical spread

Figure 9, Figure 10 and Figure 11 show graphically the geographical location of the 664 respondents who gave a postcode.



**Figure 9: Mid-Southern England and Wales distribution of responses**

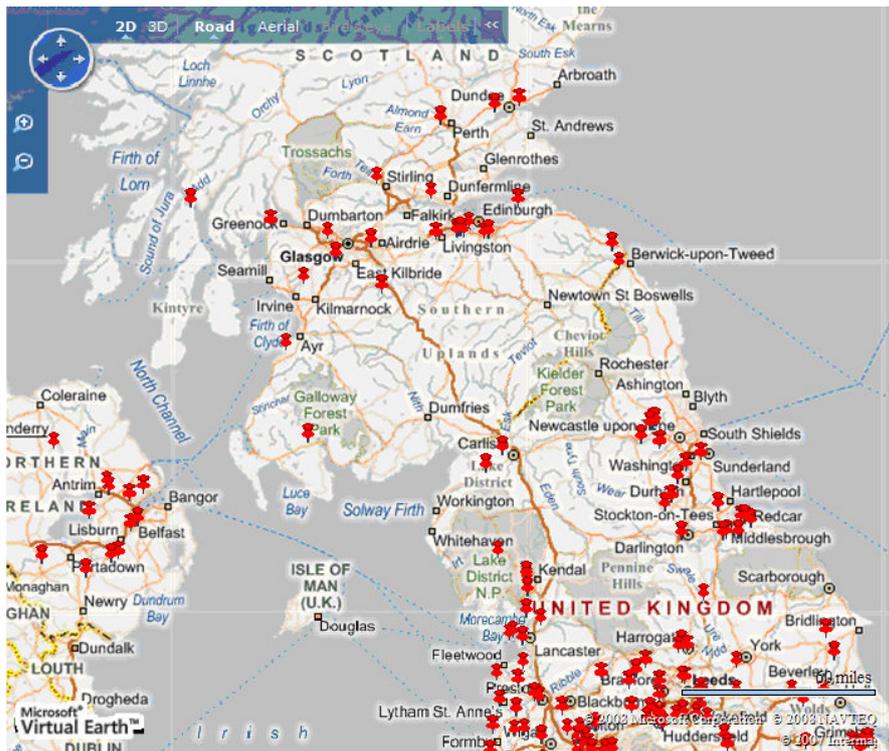


Figure 10: N England, NI, S Scotland distribution of responses

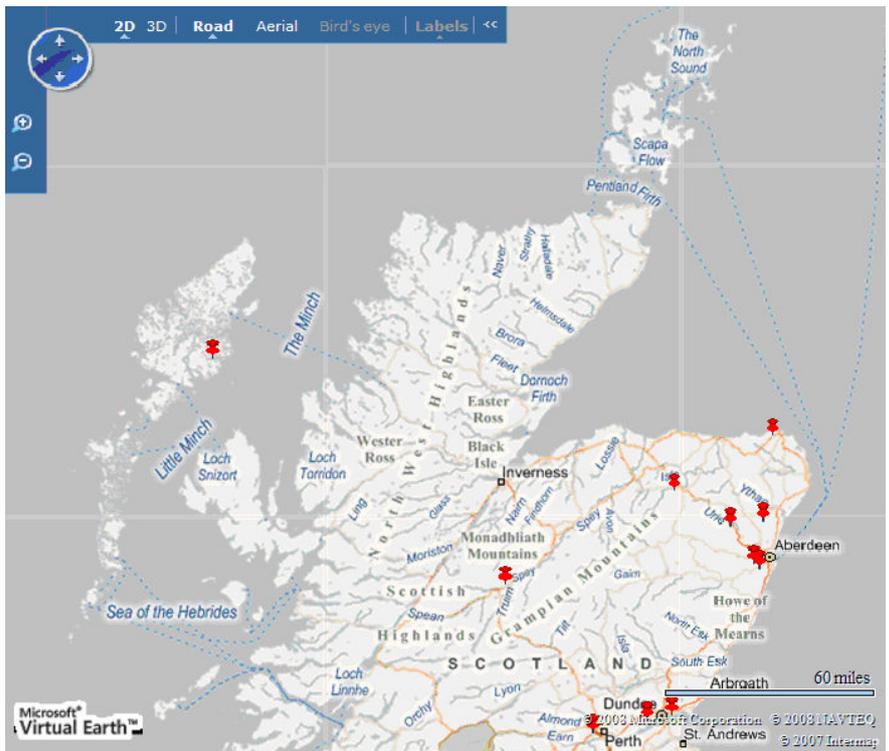
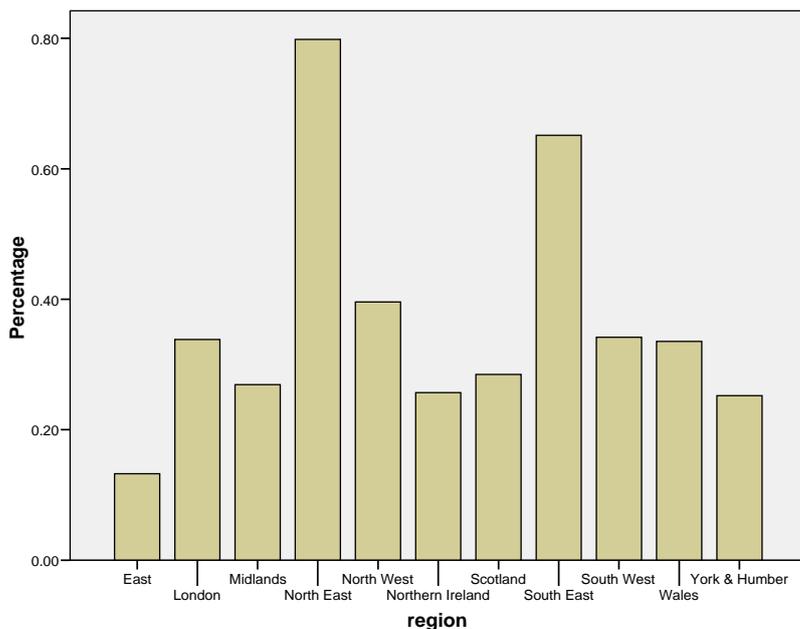


Figure 11: N Scotland distribution of responses

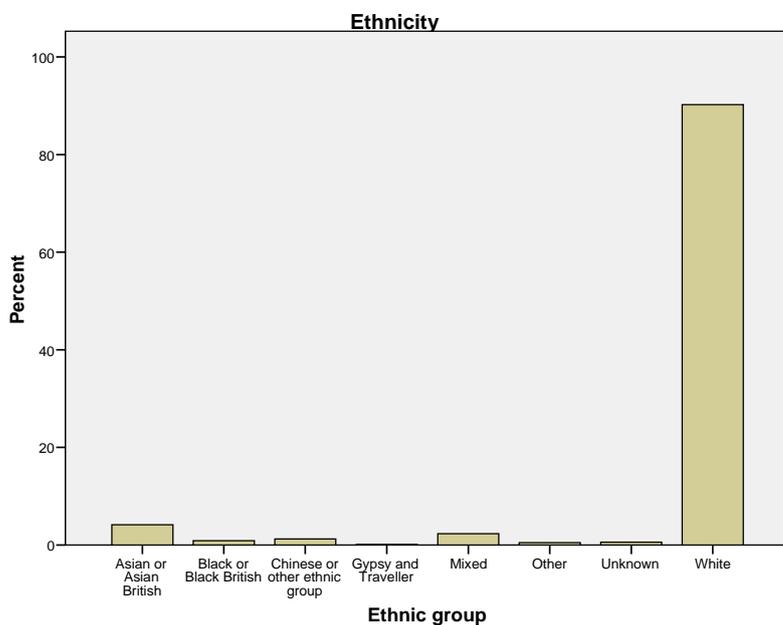
1,035 of the respondents (56%) indicated the region in which they live. Figure 12 shows the number of responses as a percentage of the total number of participants doing their DoFE programmes in each region. It should be noted that 44% of respondents did not indicate in which region they lived.



**Figure 12: Survey responses by region as a percentage of the total number of DofE participants**

#### 6.2.1.4. Ethnicity

1,032 respondents (56%) indicated their ethnicity. Of those, 90% were white. This compares with 84% of all DofE participants in 2007-08. Figure 13 shows the distribution of reported ethnic groups.



**Figure 13: Distribution of ethnicity**

#### 6.2.1.5. Programme level

96% of the respondents provided information about the level of DofE Award that they are working towards. 37% of these were working towards a Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award, 24% a Silver and 39% a Gold DofE Award.

Figure 14 compares these percentages with the overall percentages of all DofE participants as measured both by the level of Award gained and those purchasing the relevant level of record book in 2007-08. Although these measures are not exactly analogous to current participants working towards the three DofE Award levels, they can be taken as a guide. It can be seen that the survey attracted a disproportionate number of participants working towards the Gold DofE Award, whereas those working for the Bronze Award are under-represented.

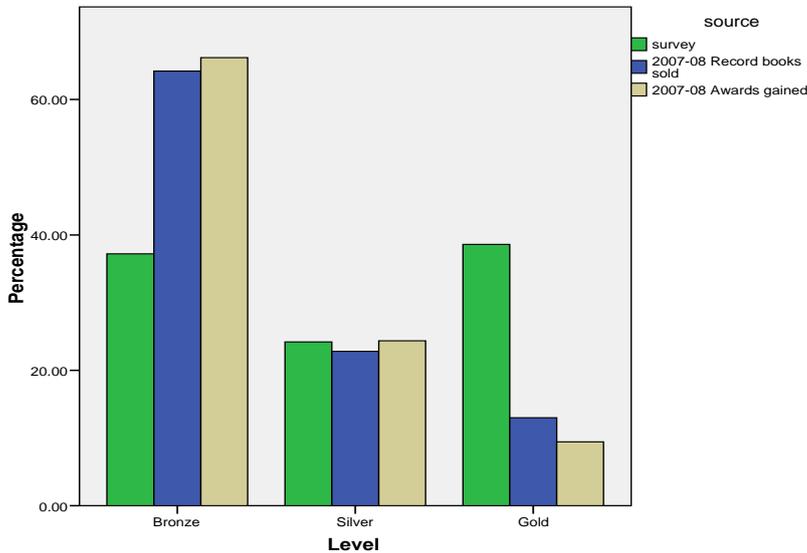


Figure 14: Percentages of Programme level for survey and all DofE participants

#### 6.2.1.6. Education

57% of the respondents (1,054) answered the question "Are you currently in full-time education?". Of these, 93% responded 'yes'. Figure 15 shows the type of educational institution attended by those respondents. It can be seen that most (35%) attended a community or comprehensive school, 15% attended an independent school and 13% a grammar school. 9% were in higher education.

This data is not collected centrally on all participants undertaking DofE programmes. However, there is data on where the DofE groups are based. In 2007-08, 52% of the participants attended groups based in secondary schools (which included grammar schools and faith schools), 16% were in independent school groups and 1.2% of the groups were based in Higher Education Institutions. Figure 16 shows the data on educational institution attended by the survey respondents and the percentage of all DofE participants' attending groups based in those types of educational institution (2007-08). Data has been combined where appropriate from both sources for equivalence. It can be seen that although there are similar proportions for those at secondary and independent schools, there are greater proportions of those attending FE and HE institutions among the survey respondents. This is likely to be because of the previously reported over-representation of those working towards a Gold Award, who are likely to be in the older age groups, amongst the survey respondents. However, it may also be that those attending HE or FE institutions attend groups based outside their education institution.

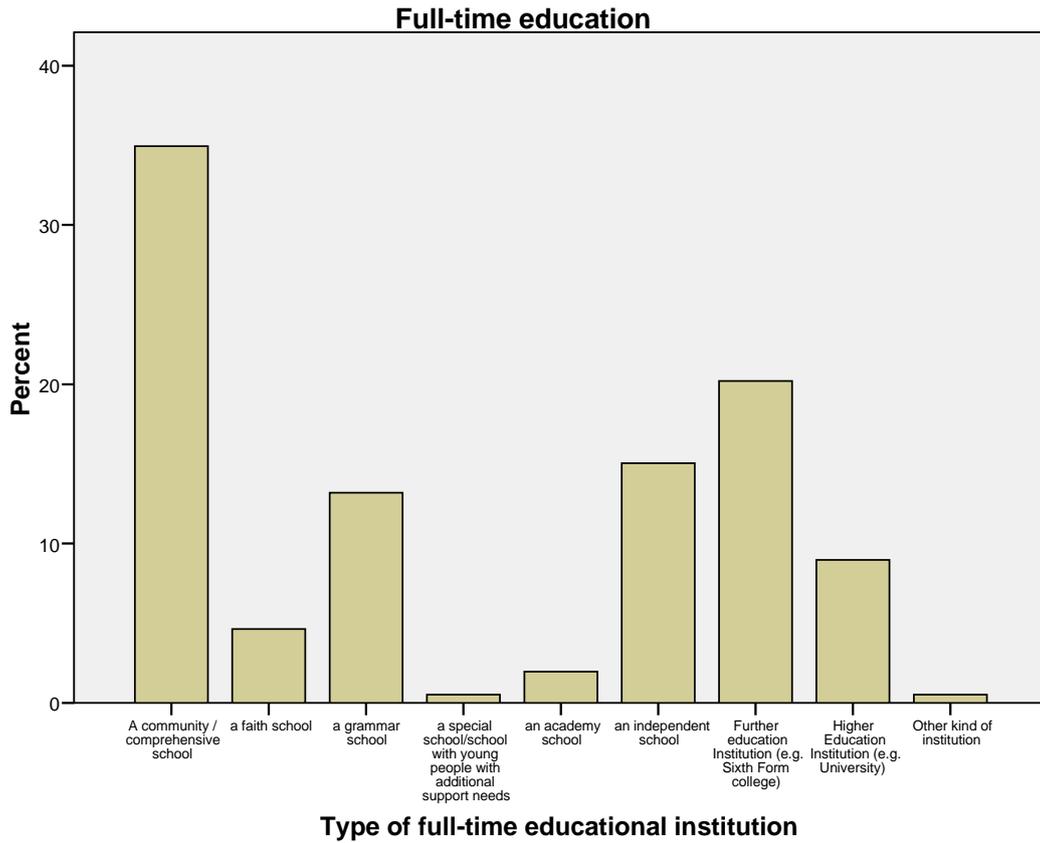


Figure 15: Type of educational institution attended for those in full-time education

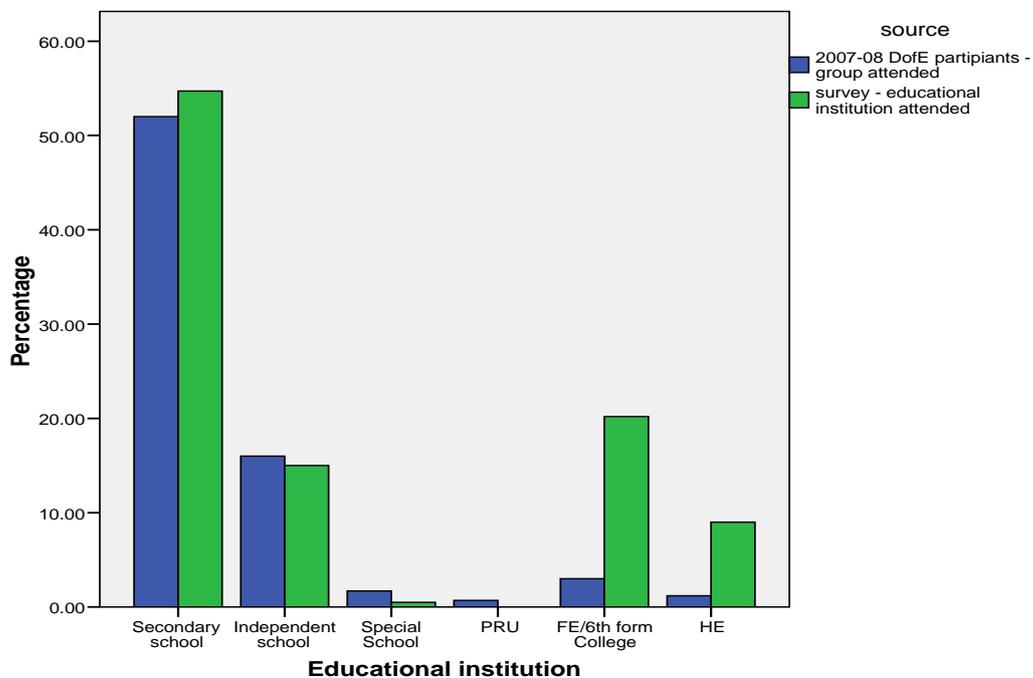


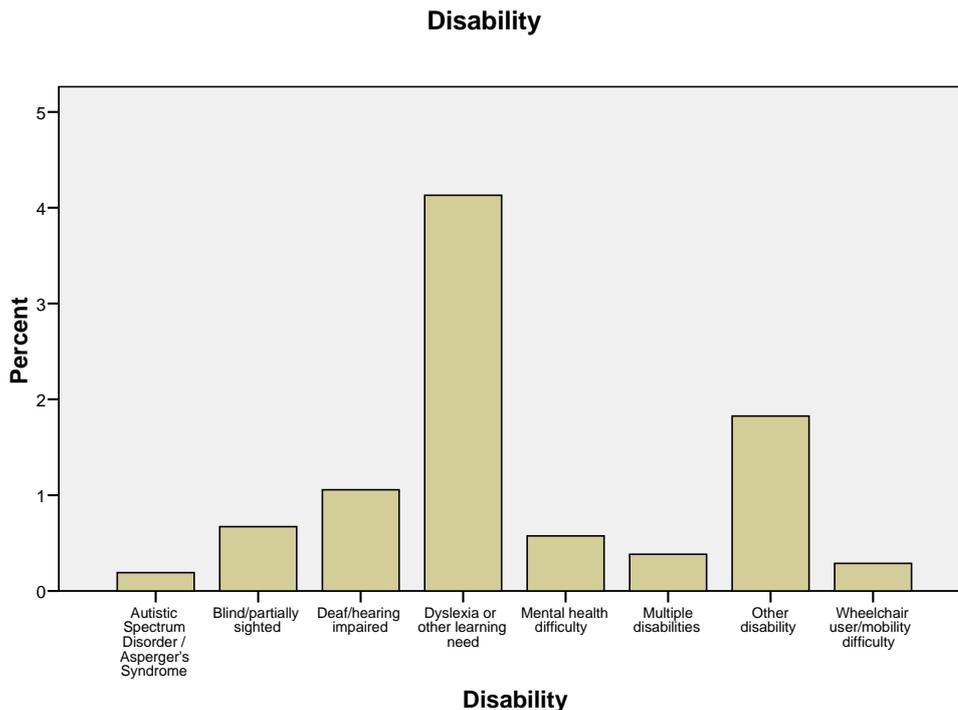
Figure 16: Comparison between type of educational institution attended for survey respondents and group attended for all DoFE participants

More than 45% of those not in full-time education were working in a full-time job. There were similar percentages (15-20%) not in education, employment or

training; taking a gap year and working in a part-time job and about 5% were doing a training scheme or apprenticeship.

#### 6.2.1.7. Disability

56% of the survey respondents (1,041) declared their disability status. Of these, 91% declared no known disability (9% with a disability). This compares with 2.3% from DofE statistical sources (4,196 of 181,855)<sup>4</sup>. The distribution of disabilities given in the survey are summarised in Figure 17.



**Figure 17: Details of declared disabilities**

#### 6.2.1.8. Survey language

Of the 1,848 valid survey submissions, 4 were submitted from the Welsh language version of the survey.

### 6.2.2. **General questions: getting involved**

Teachers were by far the most common source of information, followed by parents, siblings and friends. Word of mouth was therefore the method most often used by participants to find out about the DofE, with other methods being rarely cited.

The major source of encouragement to start the DofE was evenly spread between teachers, parents, friends and other DofE participants, but again word of mouth from a variety of sources was the most effective form of encouragement.

<sup>4</sup> Stats total 2007-08, DofE Head Office, Aug 2008

The young people were asked what they thought that their DofE programme would be like, before they started. Most thought it would be challenging, fun, exciting and interesting. About one quarter realised it would be time-consuming. Not surprisingly given that the survey was of young people that had started their programmes, only a few had negative expectations of their DofE experiences.

When asked what they expected to get out of involvement in their DofE, the most popular responses were related to self-improvement (improved CV, new skills, more self-confidence) and interesting experiences (good fun, new experiences). About one-third of the sample expected opportunities for altruistic activities (opportunities for community involvement, opportunities to make a difference).

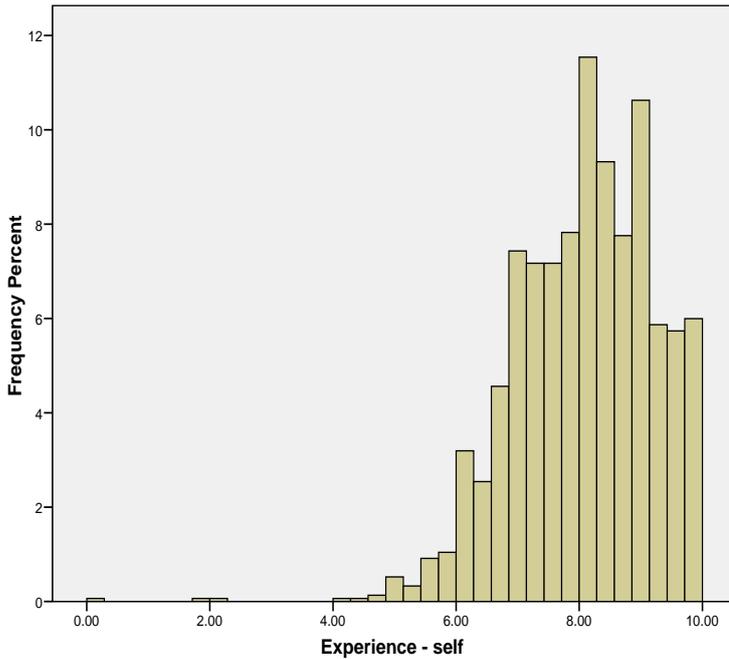
### 6.2.3. Experiences

#### 6.2.3.1. About the participants ('experiences – self')

The scores for this theme are based on the mean response of each respondent for the questions below (see Table 3). The scoring for the statements marked with an asterisk were reversed so that higher scores related to more positive attitudes for all statements.

I like trying new activities
I enjoy having new experiences
I like discovering new places
I have a lot of interests/hobbies
I like meeting new people
I enjoy learning about different people's cultures
*I am not a very adventurous person
*I think that going on an expedition is pointless

**Table 3: Questions comprising the 'experiences – self' theme (asterisk denotes scoring reversed)**

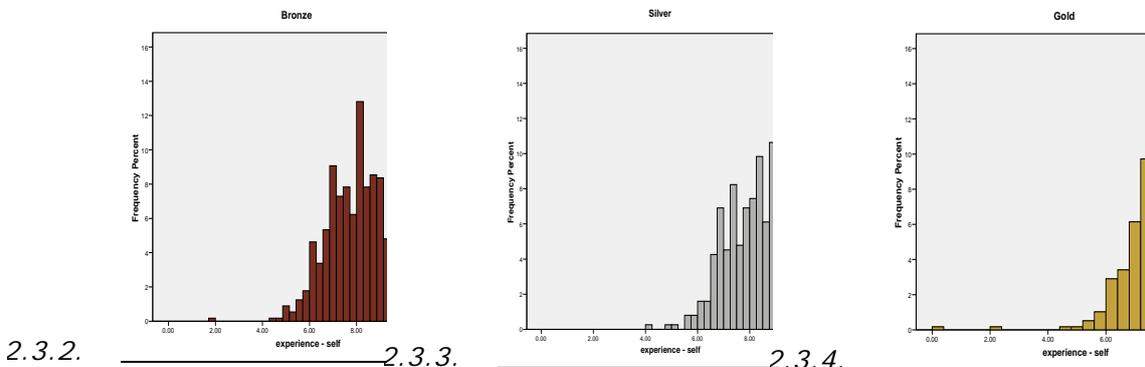


**Figure 18: Histogram of mean scores for participants' views on experiences**

Figure 18 shows that the young people who responded to the survey were very positive about having new experiences and interests.

When the responses to the individual statements are examined (see Statistical Volume, Appendix 2: section 2.1.1), it can be seen that there is much more general agreement, and a more positive average score, for the statements regarding new activities, experiences and places. There is a greater spread of opinion, with a lower average (although still positive) relating to having lots of interests and meeting new people. The statement with the widest distribution of scores was 'I enjoy learning about different people's cultures' where over 30% of the responses were less positive than 'agree' (score of 6 or less).

Figure 19 shows the distribution of these scores separated out for those working towards each of the three levels of DofE Award (all drawn to the same scale, as a percentage of the respondents who reported working towards that level). Moving from Bronze, to Silver, to Gold, the distribution of responses moves towards more positive scores, and the spread of scores becomes narrower.



**Figure 19: Histograms of 'experience – self' scores for respondents working towards Bronze (left), Silver (middle) and Gold (right) Awards**

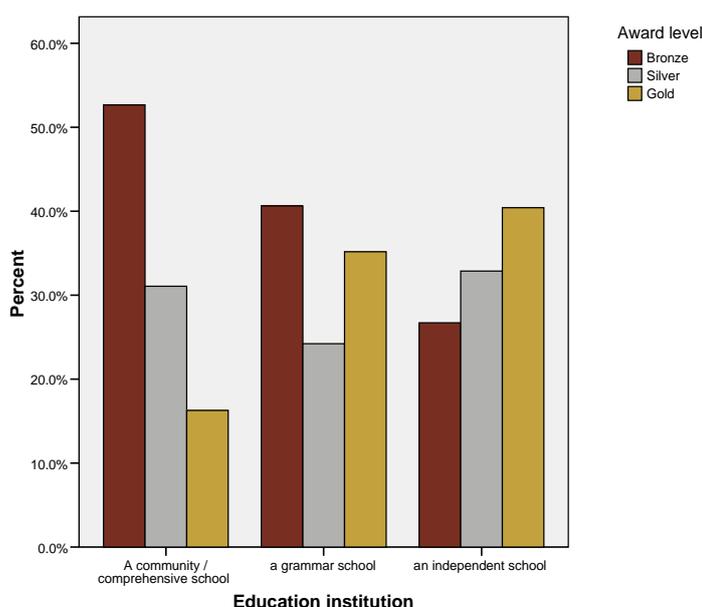
There was a statistically significant difference between the scores for participants at Bronze and Silver levels but not between Silver and Gold.

Although these results cannot show cause and effect, it might be postulated that this demonstrable difference between doing Bronze programmes and the higher levels could be either because increased length of participation in their DofE programme produces more enthusiasm in the participants towards new experiences. There is no statistical difference between the Silver and Gold levels, where increased length of participation might be expected. It may also be due to the increased independence of involvement in their DofE programmes from Bronze to Silver to Gold. It could also be that the observed differences are due to self-selection, in that those with a more adventurous attitude towards new experiences choose to progress, or to start at the higher levels.

The responses were also grouped according to the type of full-time secondary education institution that the participants attended. The three groups with the largest numbers of respondents were selected for comparison (community/comprehensive, grammar and independent schools).

Statistical tests showed a statistically significant difference between those from grammar schools and both comprehensive and independent schools, with those from the grammar schools having generally lower scores. There was no statistical difference between the comprehensive and independent schools groups.

In investigating whether other known variables were influencing this result, the distribution of DofE programme levels was examined at each of these types of education institution. This is shown in Figure 20 where it can be seen that the relative proportions of Bronze candidates decrease and Gold candidates increase from comprehensive to grammar to independent schools.



**Figure 20: Bar chart of the distribution of participants working towards each DofE Award level by type of school attended**

However, it was shown above that Gold candidates scored significantly higher in this theme than those working at other levels. The distribution of DofE programme levels cannot therefore explain the lower scores from grammar schools.

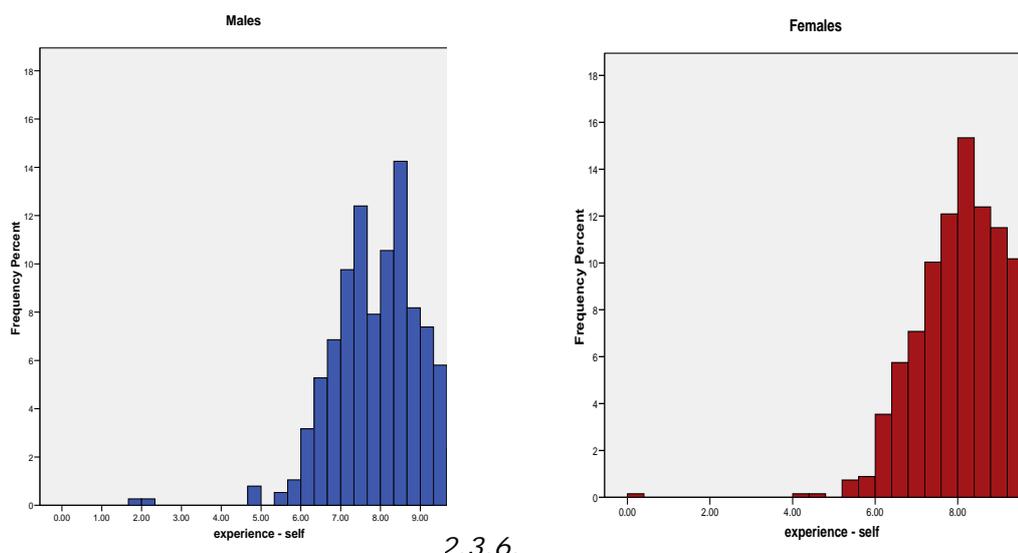
There was no statistically significant difference in the relative proportions of males and females respondents at these types of school. This indicates that possible gender differences can also not explain the observed differences in the scores between grammar school respondents and the others.

Grammar schools are not evenly distributed across the UK. Amongst the survey respondents attending these types of secondary school (603 in total), just over 20% attended grammar schools. Three regions had no grammar school respondents (North East, Wales, Scotland). However, 95% (n=18) of the respondents from Northern Ireland attended a grammar school.

The analysis of scores for 'experience – self' between types of school was repeated, excluding those respondents from Northern Ireland. However, there was still a statistically significant difference, with the scores from grammar schools respondents being lower than those from comprehensive and independent schools. The high proportion of grammar schools, and the lower scores across all respondents in Northern Ireland does not therefore fully explain this observed difference.

The scores for the 'experience – self' theme across the regions showed statistically significant differences. Respondents from the Northwest and Scotland regions had the highest median scores, whilst those from Northern Ireland had the lowest. However, there were no statistically significant differences in the distribution of DofE programme levels between Regions. The difference in observed 'experience – self' scores cannot therefore be explained by differences in proportions of candidates at each DofE programme level.

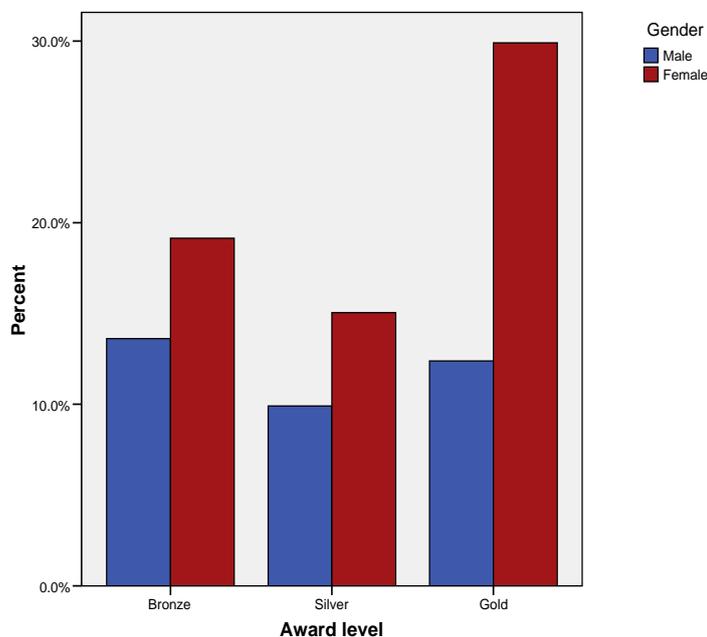
**When the responses were compared according to the gender of the respondent, there was a statistically significant difference between the scores for females and males, with females having rather higher scores than males. This is shown in Figure 21.**



**Figure 21: Comparison of scores by gender for the 'experience – self' theme**

In looking for possible explanations for this imbalance, the difference reported above between candidates in the Bronze programme and those taking Silver and Gold should be noted.

Figure 22 show the percentages of the survey respondents working towards each of the three DofE Award levels. It can be seen that although there are approximately equal proportions of males and females doing Bronze and Silver programmes, with approximately 20% more females than males at both levels, there are more than twice as many females as males working towards their Gold Awards. This difference is statistically significant. It is therefore possible that the apparent higher scores between males and females in this theme is more of a reflection of the self-selection of those more interested in new experiences that appears to be present in the Gold Award group. As there is a gender imbalance towards females in the Gold programme participants, this may contribute towards the observed differences in the scores in this theme between genders. Of course, the causal effect may be in the opposite direction, in that possible gender differences may explain the observed differences between levels.



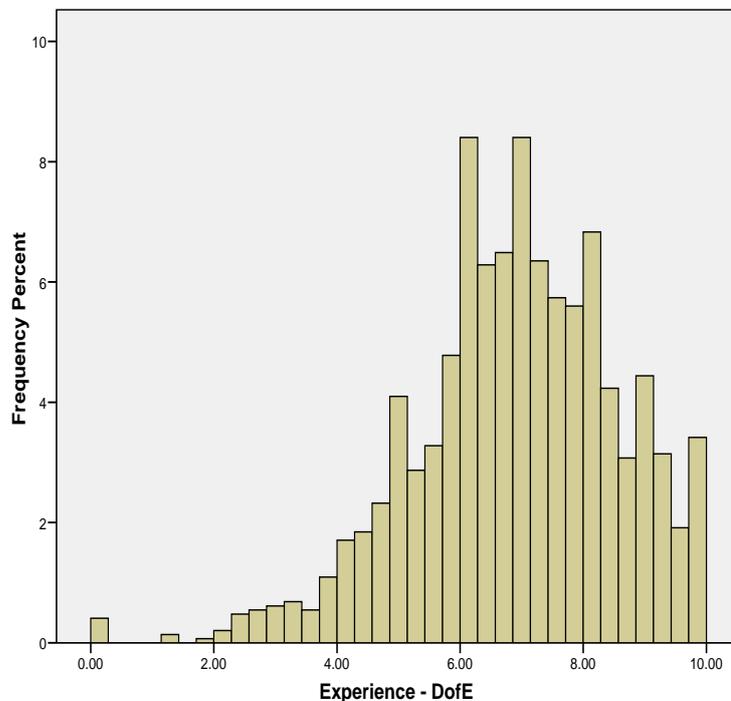
**Figure 22: Bar chart showing relative proportions of males and females at each DofE programme level**

6.2.3.7. Effect of doing the DofE ('experiences – DofE')

The scores for this theme are based on the mean response of each respondent for the questions below (see Table 4).

The DofE has allowed me to try activities I would never have tried before
The DofE has given me some totally new experiences
*The DofE activities are nothing new for me
The DofE has allowed me to visit places I have never visited before
As a result of The DofE I have some new interests/hobbies
As a result of The DofE I have met people I would never have met before
Doing The DofE has helped me learn about people with different backgrounds to myself
Doing The DofE has made me more adventurous

**Table 4: Questions comprising the 'experiences – DofE' theme (asterisk denotes scoring reversed)**

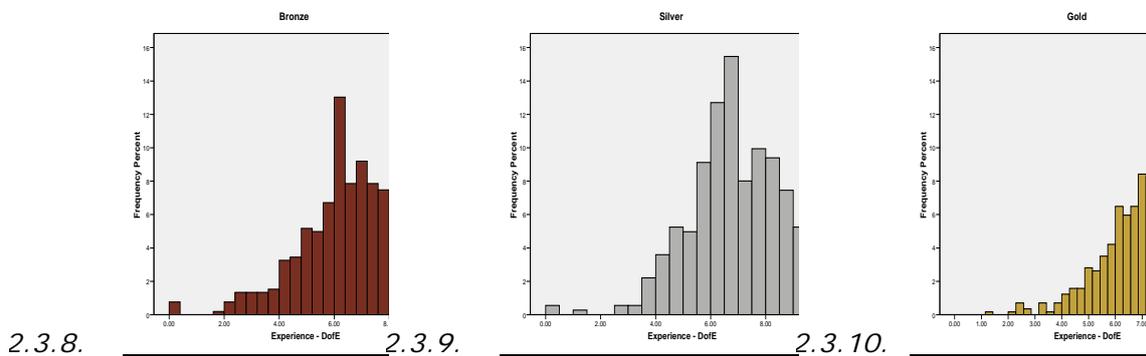


**Figure 23: Histogram of mean scores of participants' views on the effect of the DofE on their attitudes to new experiences**

Figure 23 shows that the young people who responded to the survey thought that doing the DofE had a positive effect on the way they viewed new experiences.

When the responses to the individual statements are examined (see Statistical Volume, Appendix 2: section 2.1.2), the lowest (least positive) individual statement scores were for the statement '*Doing the DofE has helped me learn about people with different backgrounds to myself*'. Over half (57%) of the respondents to this statement had a score lower than 7 ('agree') and 28% actively disagreed with this statement. The statement that scored most positively was '*The DofE has given me some totally new experiences*'.

Figure 24 shows the distribution of these scores separated out for those working towards each of the three levels of DofE Award (all drawn to the same scale, as a percentage of the respondents who reported working towards that level).



2.3.8. **Figure 24: Histograms of 'experience – DofE' scores for respondents working towards Bronze (left), Silver (middle) and Gold (right) Awards**

There was a statistical difference between the scores for the Silver and Gold groups, although not between Bronze and Silver, with the Gold group having a generally higher score and a smaller spread of scores.

Although no causal links can be established from this data, it could be suggested that this might be due either to increased length of participation in the DofE, or the fact that the Gold DofE programme offers a new experience in the form of the Residential which is not available at the lower levels.

There was also a statistically significant difference in the scores when the whole sample of respondents was grouped according to gender, with females having higher scores with lower variability than males.

However, this might be explained by the fact that the scores are higher for those working towards their Gold Award, and there are significantly more female respondents than males in the Gold group.

## 6.2.4. Local community

### 6.2.4.1. About the participants ('community – self')

The scores for this theme are based on the mean response of each respondent for the questions below (see Table 5).

I have some good friends
I enjoy helping other people
I feel strongly about environmental issues in my local area
I feel strongly about problems in my local area
*I do not care about my local community
I try to make a positive difference to my local community
I would like to have a say in making my local area a better place
I would like to have a better understanding of different cultures
I would like to have a better understanding of different religions
I regularly take part in volunteering / voluntary activities
I feel part of my local community
*I think that the 'service' section of The DofE is pointless

Table 5: Questions comprising the 'community - self' theme (asterisk denotes scoring reversed)

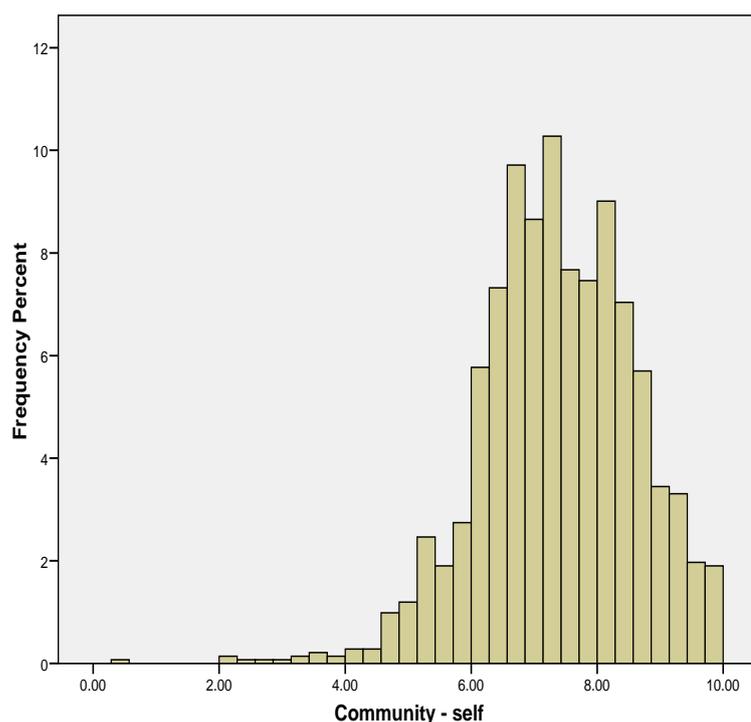


Figure 25: Histogram of mean scores for participants' views on their local community

Figure 25 shows that the young people who responded to the survey were generally positive about their local community.

When the responses to the individual statements are examined (see Statistical Volume, Appendix 2: section 2.2.1), those statements concerning relationships with others score very highly (*'I have some good friends', 'I enjoy helping other people', 'I (do not) think that the 'service' section of The DofE is pointless'*). Approximately 35-40% of respondents scored most of the more general

community statements lower than 7 ('agree') but there was greater disagreement with the statements 'I would like to have a better understanding of different religions' and 'I feel part of my local community' where about 50% of respondents gave scores lower than 'agree'. 13% of respondents actively disagreed with the statement about other religions and 20% definitely did not feel part of their local community (scores of 4 or below).

There were no statistically significant differences between the responses from the three groups, although there was a non-significant trend towards the Gold group having slightly higher scores than the Silver group.

There was a statistically significant difference between those from grammar schools and both comprehensive and independent schools, with those from the grammar schools having generally lower scores and less variability. There was no statistical difference between the comprehensive and independent schools groups. This difference cannot be explained by differences in the relative proportions of genders, programme levels or region.

The scores for the 'community – self' theme across the regions showed statistically significant differences. Respondents from Scotland had the highest median scores, whilst those from the Midlands had the lowest.

When the responses were compared according to the gender of the respondent, there was a statistically significant difference between the scores for females and males, with females having rather higher scores than males. This is shown in Figure 26.

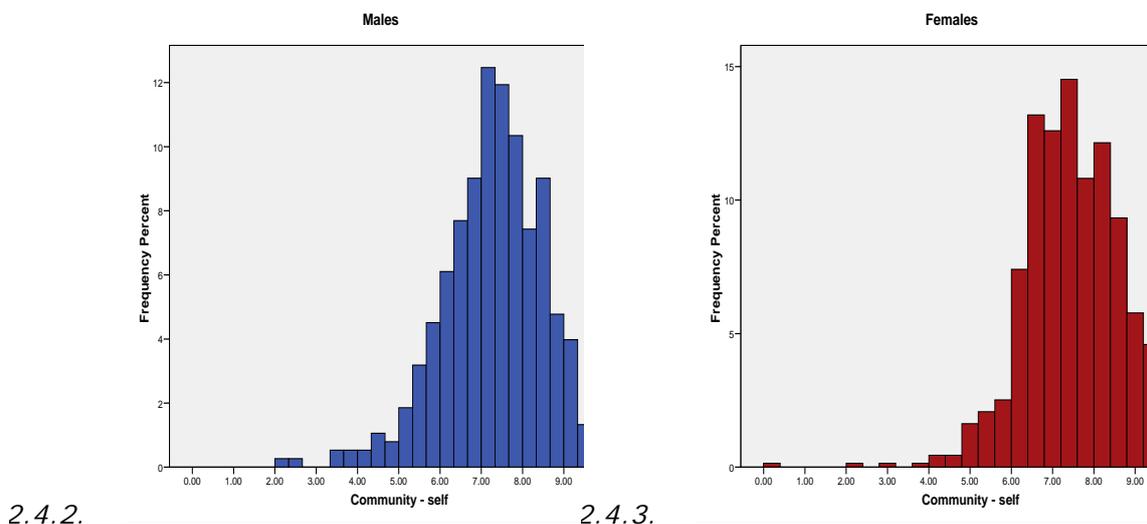


Figure 26: Comparison of scores by gender for the 'community – self' theme

As discussed previously (section 6.2.3.1), there is a relationship between gender and programme level but it is not possible to specify which is the cause and which the effect (or to eliminate other confounding causal variables).

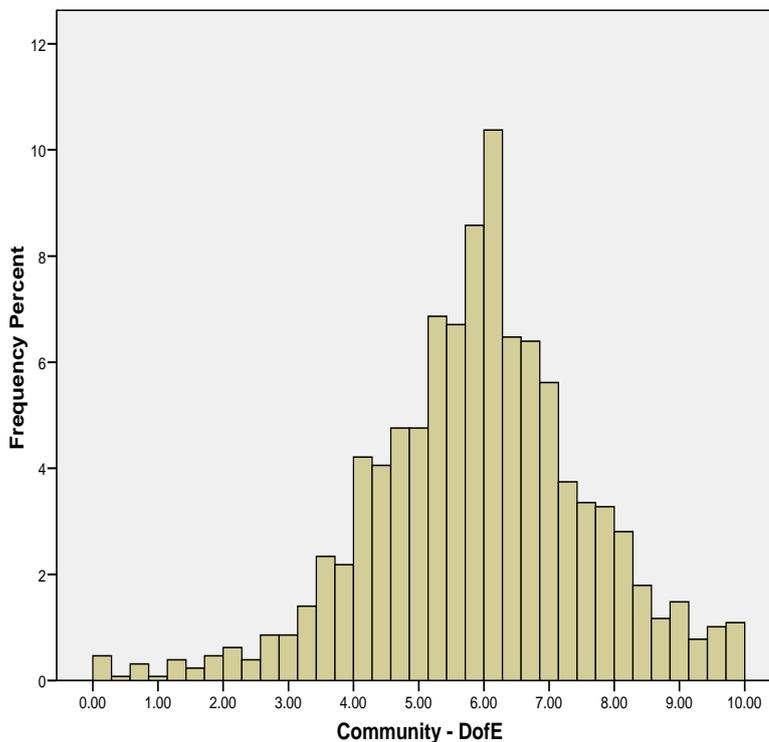
6.2.4.4. Effect of doing the DofE ('community – DofE')

The scores for this theme are based on the mean response of each respondent for the questions below (see Table 6).

Doing The DofE has given me some new friends
Doing The DofE has given me opportunities to help other people
The DofE has made me more aware of local environmental issues
*The DofE makes no difference to my community
The DofE has made me more aware of problems in my local area
Doing The DofE has made me feel more involved in my local community
The DofE has helped me to make a positive difference to my local community
Since starting The DofE I feel more able to have a say in making my local area a better place
Since starting The DofE I have a better understanding of other people's cultures
Since starting The DofE I have a better understanding of other religions
Doing The DofE has made me want to take part in volunteering / voluntary activities in future

**Table 6: Questions comprising the 'community – DofE' theme (asterisk denotes scoring reversed)**

There were generally less positive responses on statements relating to this theme. The scores for this theme across all respondents are shown in Figure 27. It can be seen that the scores are spread across the whole score range, with the most frequent scores towards the centre.



**Figure 27: Histogram of mean scores of participants' views on the effect of the DofE on their attitudes to their local community**

When the responses to the individual statements are examined (see Statistical Volume, Appendix 2: section 2.2.2), those statements concerning relationships with others have the highest scores (*'Doing The DofE has given me some new*

friends', 'Doing The DofE has given me opportunities to help other people'). The statements relating to the respondents' perceptions of the influence of the DofE in their attitude to wider community issues have generally quite low scores. These are summarised in Table 7 below. This shows the total percentage of the survey participants who responded with a score of 6 or less (lower than 'agree') and the percentage who explicitly disagreed (score 4 or less) with each statement. All statements have been transformed into the positive sense, with rewording from the original shown in brackets.

	<b>% score&lt;7</b>	<b>% score&lt;5</b>
The DofE has made me more aware of local environmental issues	64%	31%
The DofE makes (a) difference to my community	48%	20%
The DofE has made me more aware of problems in my local area	74%	40%
Doing The DofE has made me feel more involved in my local community	60%	26%
The DofE has helped me to make a positive difference to my local community	57%	19%
Since starting The DofE I feel more able to have a say in making my local area a better place	78%	38%
Since starting The DofE I have a better understanding of other people's cultures	73%	35%
Since starting The DofE I have a better understanding of other religions	81%	45%
Doing The DofE has made me want to take part in volunteering / voluntary activities in future	28%	7%

**Table 7: Percentage of respondents who did not positively agree (score <7) or actively disagreed (score<5) with statements relating to the effect of the DofE on perceptions of the local community**

The most positive of the above statements was in relation to wanting to participate in future volunteering activities. The statements where the participants felt that the DofE had helped least related to understanding of other cultures and religions, problems in the community and empowerment.

There was a statistically significant difference between the scores in this theme from participants attending grammar schools and those attending both comprehensive and independent schools, with those from the grammar schools having generally lower scores and less variability. There was no statistical difference between the comprehensive and independent schools groups.

As shown previously, this difference cannot be explained by differences in the relative proportions of genders, programme levels or regions.

## 6.2.5. Physical and mental well-being

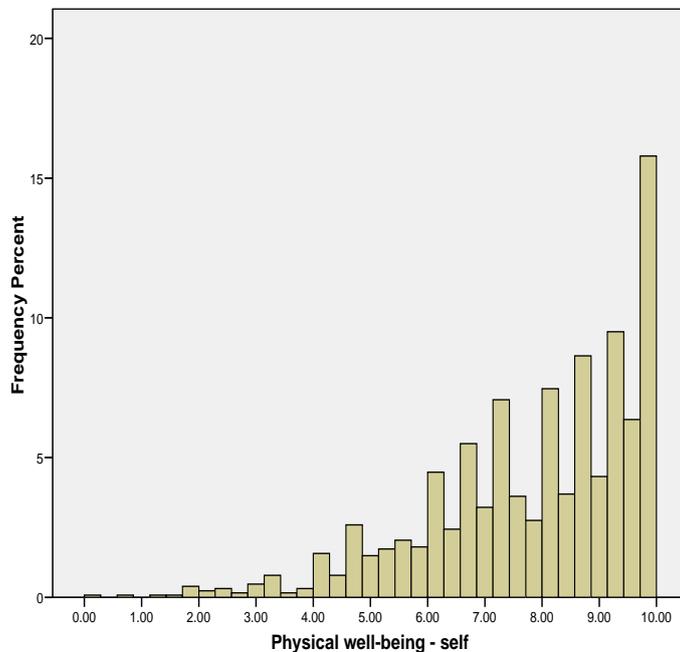
### 6.2.5.1. Physical aspects: about the participants ('physical – self')

The scores for this theme are based on the mean response of each respondent for the questions below (see Table 8).

I enjoy playing sports
I enjoy physical activities (e.g. walking, exercising)
I am good at sports and physical activities
*I can't stand sports and physical activities
*I think that the 'physical recreation' section of The DofE is pointless

**Table 8: Questions comprising the 'physical - self' theme (asterisk denotes scoring reversed)**

It can be seen from Figure 28 that the young people who responded to the survey were very positive about physical activity.



**Figure 28: Histogram of mean scores for participants' views on the physical aspects of their well-being**

When the responses to the individual statements are examined (see Statistical Volume, Appendix 2: section 2.3.1), the responses to the level of enjoyment of sports and other physical activities were highest, with their perceptions of their physical ability scoring slightly lower. There was a very strong positive response to having a Physical section as part of their DofE programmes.

There was a statistically significant difference between those from grammar and comprehensive schools. Scores from participants attending grammar schools had generally lower scores and less variability.

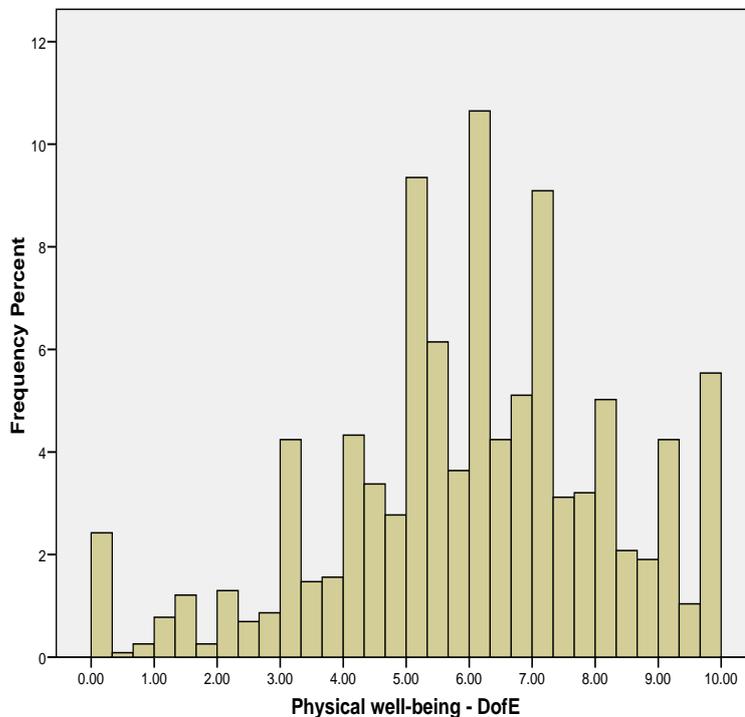
6.2.5.2. Physical aspects: effect of doing the DofE ('physical – DofE')

The scores for this theme are based on the mean response of each respondent for the questions below (see Table 9).

The DofE has allowed me to try a new sport or physical activity
As a result of The DofE I enjoy physical activities more than ever
As a result of The DofE I take part in sports or physical activities more often
As a result of The DofE I am better at a sport or physical activity

**Table 9: Questions comprising the 'physical - DofE' theme**

The scores for this theme across all respondents are shown in Figure 29. It can be seen that the scores are spread across the whole score range, with the most frequent scores towards the centre. This indicates that, on average, the respondents recognised only a slight positive effect on their attitudes to sport or physical activity from taking part in their DofE programmes.



**Figure 29: Histogram of mean scores for participants' views on the on the effect of the DofE on physical aspects of their well-being**

Examination of the responses to each constituent statement in this theme (see Statistical Volume, Appendix 2: section 2.3.2) shows that each were distributed in a similar way, with views spanning the whole spectrum of responses. The statement *“As a result of the DofE I take part in sports or physical activities more often”* scored slightly less positively than the others.

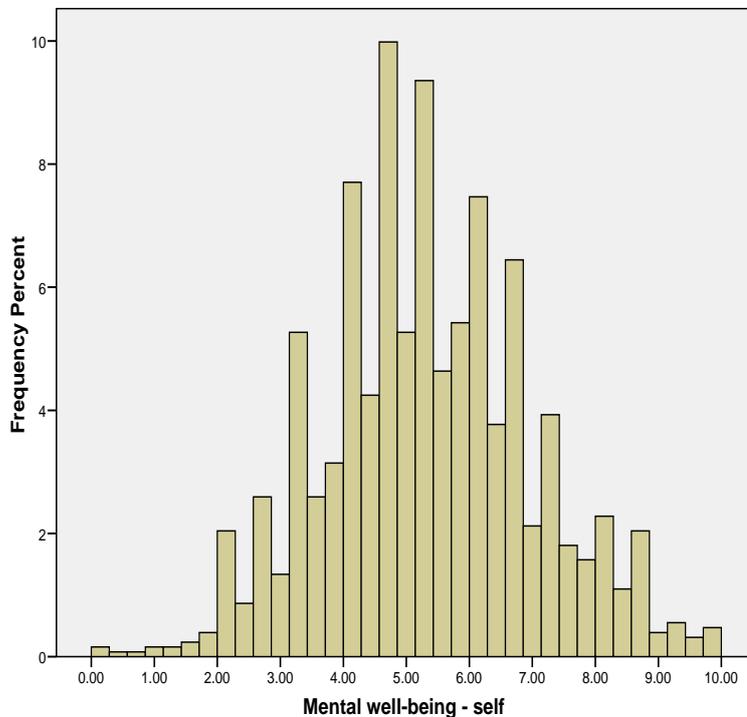
6.2.5.3. Mental aspects: about the participants ('mental – self')

The scores for this theme are based on the mean response of each respondent for the questions below (see Table 10).

I generally feel good about myself
*I wish I had more self confidence
*I sometimes get into trouble
*I am often bored
*To be honest, I sometimes waste my time

**Table 10: Questions comprising the 'mental - self' theme (asterisk denotes scoring reversed)**

The scores for this theme across all respondents are shown in Figure 30. It can be seen that the scores are spread across the whole score range, with the most frequent scores towards the centre.



**Figure 30: Histogram of mean scores for participants' views on the mental aspects of their well-being**

When examining the responses to the individual statements in this theme (see Statistical Volume, Appendix 2: section 2.3.3), the most frequent response to the statement "I generally feel good about myself" was 'agree' (score of 7), although there was a wide range of individual responses, but most wished they had more self-confidence. Similarly, most reported that they did not get into trouble but were often bored and sometimes wasted their time.

Those working on their Gold programmes had statistically higher scores in this theme than those working at lower levels, but there was no difference between Bronze and Silver groups.

### 6.2.5.3.1. Self-esteem

This section of the questionnaire included 10 questions that formed a widely accepted and validated measure of self-esteem (the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale). The score was categorised into 4 (almost) equal groups where a score of 0-7 was 'very low', 8-15 'low', 16-23 'high' and 24-30 'very high'. The distribution of the respondents between these groups is shown in Figure 31. It can be seen that the distribution of self-esteem scores across all participants was skewed towards the high end of the scale.

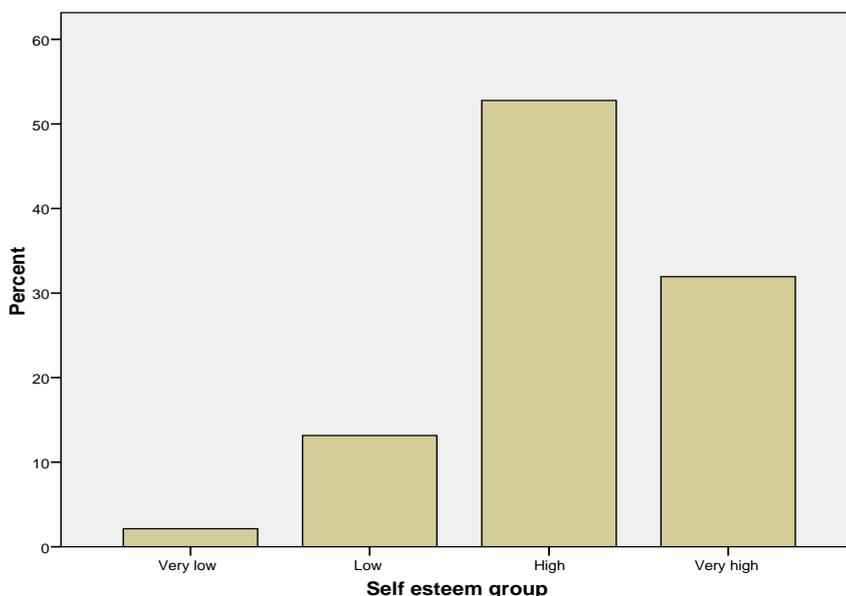


Figure 31: Distribution of self-esteem categories

When examining the participants' self-esteem scores between the three levels of the programme, there was a statistically significant difference between the responses from the Bronze and Gold groups, but not between Silver and the other groups.

There was also a statistically significant difference between the self-esteem scores of females and males, with females having lower self-esteem on average than males.

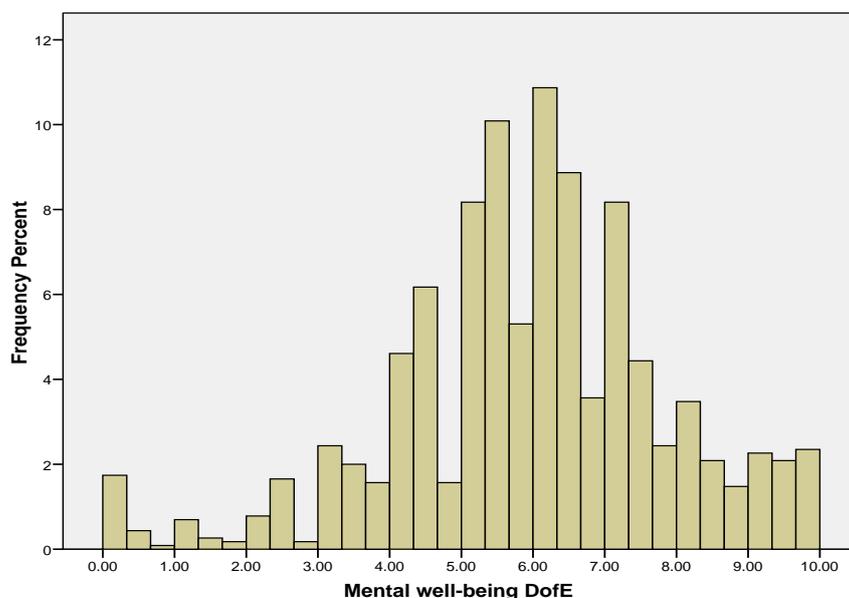
### 6.2.5.4. Mental aspects: effect of doing the DofE (mental – DofE)

The scores for this theme are based on the mean response of each respondent for the questions below (see Table 11).

Doing The DofE has changed the way I see myself
Since starting the Award I believe in myself more
Doing The DofE has helped me stay out of trouble
Doing The DofE means that I am less bored
Doing The DofE means I do not waste my time as much as before

Table 11: Questions comprising the 'mental - DofE' theme

The scores for this theme across all respondents are shown in Figure 32. It can be seen that the scores are spread across the whole score range, with the most frequent scores only slightly to the right of the centre.



**Figure 32: Histogram of mean scores for participants' views on the on the effect of the DofE on mental aspects of their well-being**

When the responses to the individual statements are examined (see Statistical Volume, Appendix 2: section 2.3.4), the statement which had the lowest median score was *"Doing The DofE has helped me stay out of trouble"*. Most of the respondents had no view one way or the other on this statement (score = 5), although there were smaller peaks at both extremes with 12% of respondents disagreeing strongly with this statement and 7% agreeing strongly. More respondents disagreed with this statement (32% with score 4 or less) than agreed (26% with score 6 or above).

The statements which scored highest in this theme were *"Since starting the Award I believe in myself more"* and *"Doing The DofE means that I am less bored"*, both with a median score of 7.0.

There was a statistically significant difference between the scores from respondents attending comprehensive schools and those attending grammar and independent schools, with the scores from the comprehensive group being higher than the others.

There was also a statistically significant difference between the 'mental – DofE' scores of females and males, with females having lower levels of agreement on the statements on average than males. There was no difference between males and females on the 'mental – self' scores which were on similar topics to the 'mental – DofE' statements. However, there was a difference in self-esteem scores, with females having lower self-esteem (see section 6.2.5.3.1). This may underlie the differences observed in their perceptions of how participating in their DofE programmes affects their mental well-being.

## 6.2.6. Employment

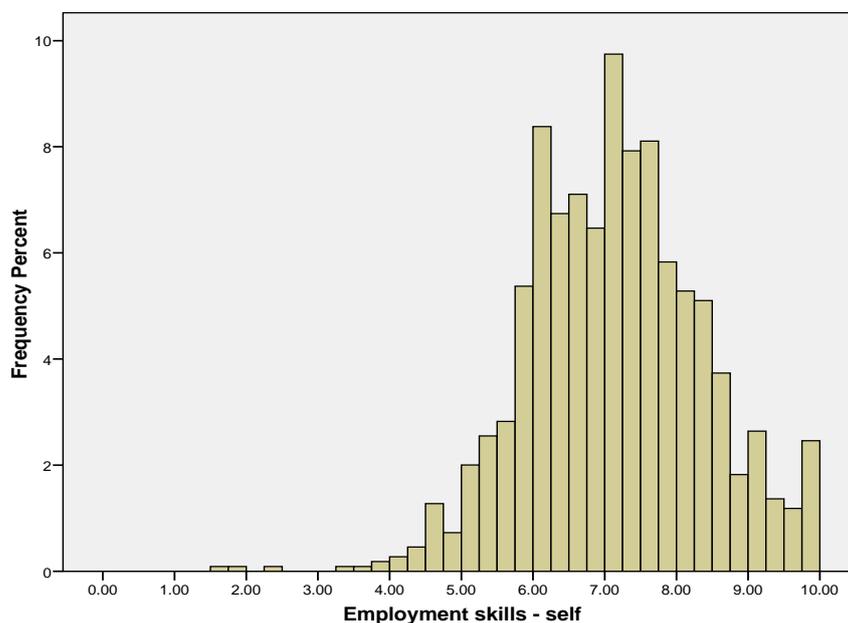
### 6.2.6.1. Employment skills: about the participants ('employment skills – self')

The scores for this theme are based on the mean response of each respondent for the questions below (see Table 12).

I know my strengths and weaknesses
I am pretty good at communicating with people
I am pretty good at team-work
*I am not very good at leadership
I am pretty good at taking responsibility for a task
*I am not very good at motivating people
I am pretty good at decision-making
*I am not very good at organising my time
I am pretty good at talking to groups of people
I am pretty good at solving problems
I am pretty good at working independently
I stick at a task until it is finished

**Table 12: Questions comprising the 'employment skills - self' theme (asterisk denotes scoring reversed)**

Respondents are generally satisfied with their employment skills (see Figure 33).



**Figure 33: Histogram of mean scores for participants' views on their employment skills**

The statements with the highest levels of agreement related to team work, taking responsibility, working independently and sticking to a task (see Statistical Volume, Appendix 2: section 2.4.1).

There was a statistically significant difference between the scores from respondents attending grammar schools and those attending comprehensive or independent schools, with lower scores (lower level of agreement with the statements) from the grammar school group.

There was also a statistically significant difference between the scores of females and males, with females having lower levels of agreement on the statements on average than males.

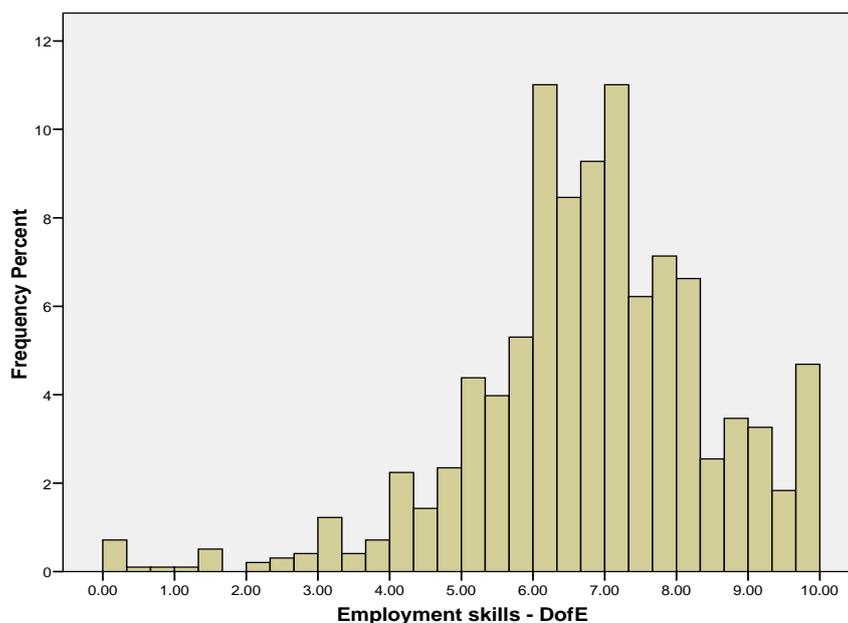
6.2.6.2. Employment skills: effect of doing the DofE (employment skills – DofE')

The scores for this theme are based on the mean response of each respondent for the questions below (see Table 13).

Doing The DofE has given me new many new skills
Doing The DofE has helped me to understand my own strengths and weaknesses better
Doing The DofE has helped me to develop communication skills
Doing The DofE has helped me to develop team-work skills
Doing The DofE has helped me to develop leadership skills
Doing The DofE has made me a more responsible person
Doing The DofE has helped me to develop motivational skills
Doing The DofE has helped me to develop decision-making skills
Doing The DofE has helped me to organise myself better
Doing The DofE has helped me to develop public speaking skills
Doing The DofE has helped me to develop problem-solving skills
Doing The DofE has helped me become more independent
Doing The DofE has helped me to stick at tasks until they are finished

**Table 13: Questions comprising the 'employment skills - DofE' theme**

The scores for this theme across all respondents are shown in Figure 34. The distribution is skewed to the right with a median score of 6.85, indicating that most respondents agreed with the statements.



**Figure 34: Histogram of mean scores for participants' views on the on the effect of the DofE on their employment skills**

Most of the responses to the individual statements were very similar in median score (7) and shape of distribution (see Statistical Volume, Appendix 2: section 2.4.2). The exception was the statement “*Doing The DofE has helped me to develop public speaking skills*” which had less agreement. Approximately 5% of the respondents disagreed totally with this statement (score = 0) and 31% disagreed at some level (score <5).

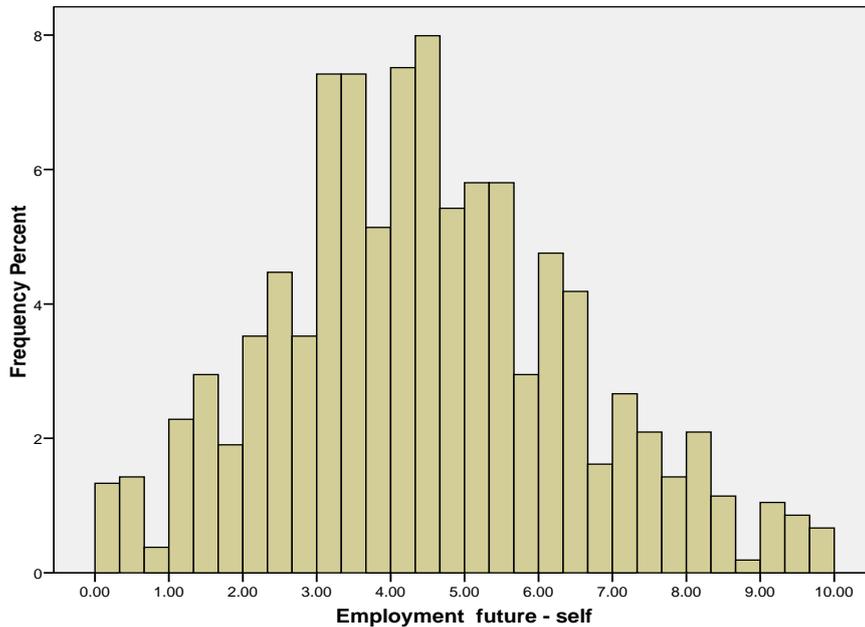
6.2.6.3. Future employment: about the participants ('employment future – self')

The scores for this theme are based on the mean response of each respondent for the questions below (see Table 14).

*I am worried about my future
*I need more help in making choices about my future
*I am worried about finding a job in the future
*I am worried about having enough money in the future
There are plenty of job opportunities for young people in my local area

**Table 14: Questions comprising the 'employment future - self' theme (asterisk denotes scoring reversed)**

The young people who responded had generally quite negative views about their future employment prospects. The scores for this theme across all respondents are shown in Figure 35.



**Figure 35: Histogram of mean scores for participants' views on their future employment**

All of the individual statements had a similar level of agreement, each having a median score of only 4 (*'disagree'*) (see Statistical Volume, Appendix 2: section 2.4.1). This indicates that the respondents were generally worried about finding a job and having enough money in the future. They did not feel that there were plenty of job opportunities in their locality and most felt they needed help to make choices for their future.

There was a statistically significant difference between the 'employment future - self' scores of females and males, with females having lower levels of agreement on the statements on average than males.

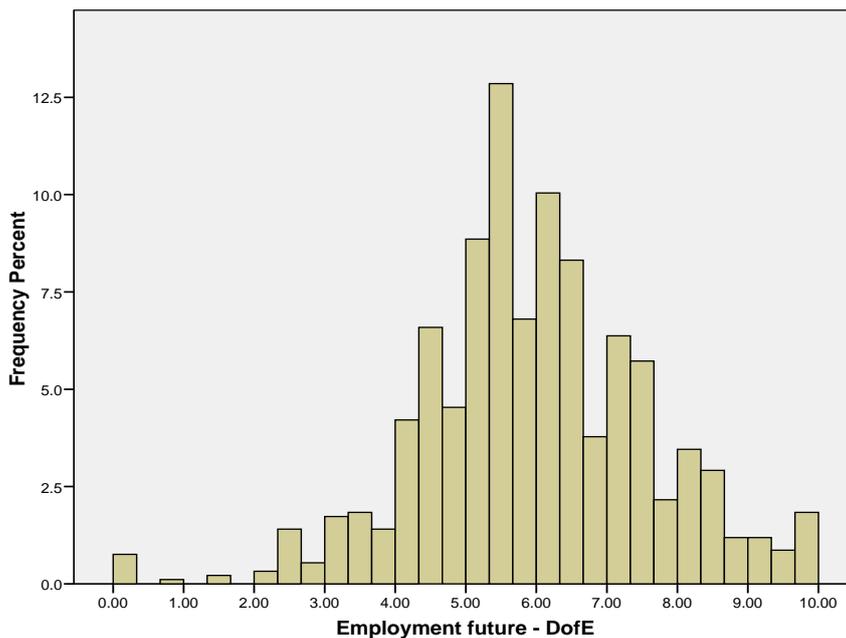
6.2.6.4. Future employment: effect of doing the DofE (employment future – DofE')

The scores for this theme are based on the mean response of each respondent for the questions below (see Table 15).

Doing The DofE has changed the way I see my future
Doing The DofE has made me feel more positive about my future
Doing The DofE will help me get a job/career in future
Doing The DofE will give me an advantage over other people in the job market
I have changed my opinion on the job I want as a result of doing The DofE

**Table 15: Questions comprising the 'employment future - DofE' theme**

The scores for this theme across all respondents are shown in Figure 36. The responses are spread across most of the range, with the most frequent responses being towards the centre and skewed slightly to the right, indicating that, on average, there was moderate agreement with the positive statements comprising this theme.



**Figure 36: Histogram of mean scores for participants' views on the on the effect of the DofE on their future employment**

The highest levels of agreement were with the statements "Doing The DofE will help me get a job/career in future" and "Doing The DofE will give me an advantage over other people in the job market", each having median scores of 7 (agree) (see Statistical Volume, Appendix 2: section 2.4.2). Most respondents had not changed their opinion about the job they wanted as a result of doing the DofE.

There was a statistically significant difference between the scores from respondents attending comprehensive schools and both independent and grammar schools, with higher scores (higher level of agreement with the statements) from the comprehensive school group.

There was also a statistically significant difference in the scores for 'employment future – DofE' between the Regions. Northern Ireland had the highest average score for this theme, with the South-East having the lowest. This might be a reflection of the relative deprivation and perceptions of difficulties in gaining employment in Northern Ireland compared with Southern England (for example), leading to a greater appreciation of the added benefit for employment in those areas.

### 6.2.7. General views on the DofE

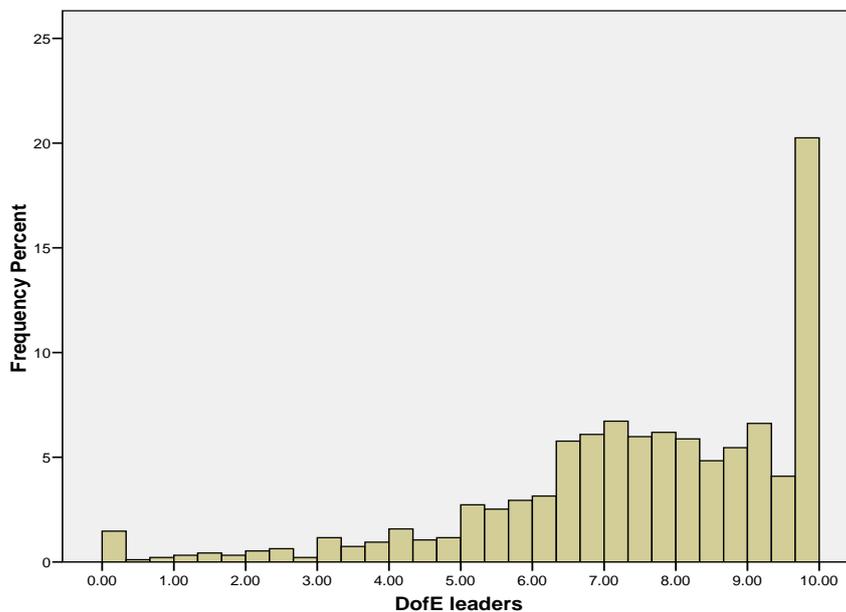
#### 6.2.7.1. General views on the DofE: leaders (general – leaders)

The scores for this theme are based on the mean response of each respondent for the questions below (see Table 16).

My DofE Award leaders are supportive
My DofE Award leaders are inspirational
My DofE Award leaders listen to young people's views

**Table 16: Questions comprising the 'General - leaders' theme**

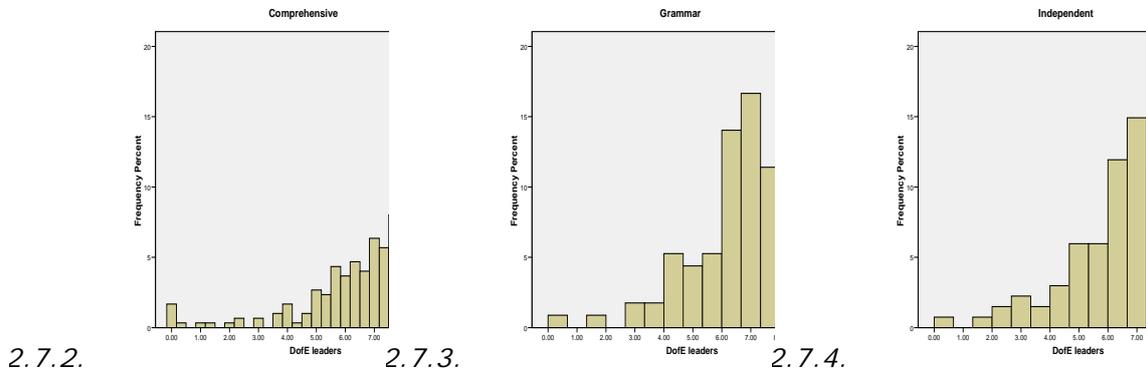
The scores for this theme are shown in Figure 37. It can be seen that over 20% of the respondents gave the maximum possible score and the vast majority were very positive in their views of their DofE leaders.



**Figure 37: Histogram of mean scores for participants' views on DofE leaders**

When examining the individual responses to the constituent statements (see Statistical Volume, Appendix 2: section 2.5) it can be seen that there were similar, very positive views expressed for each statement.

There was a statistically significant difference between the scores from respondents attending comprehensive schools and both independent and grammar schools, with higher scores (higher level of agreement with the statements) from the comprehensive school group (see Figure 38).



**Figure 38: Distribution of scores for the 'general - leaders' theme for respondents from comprehensive (left), grammar (middle) and independent (right) schools**

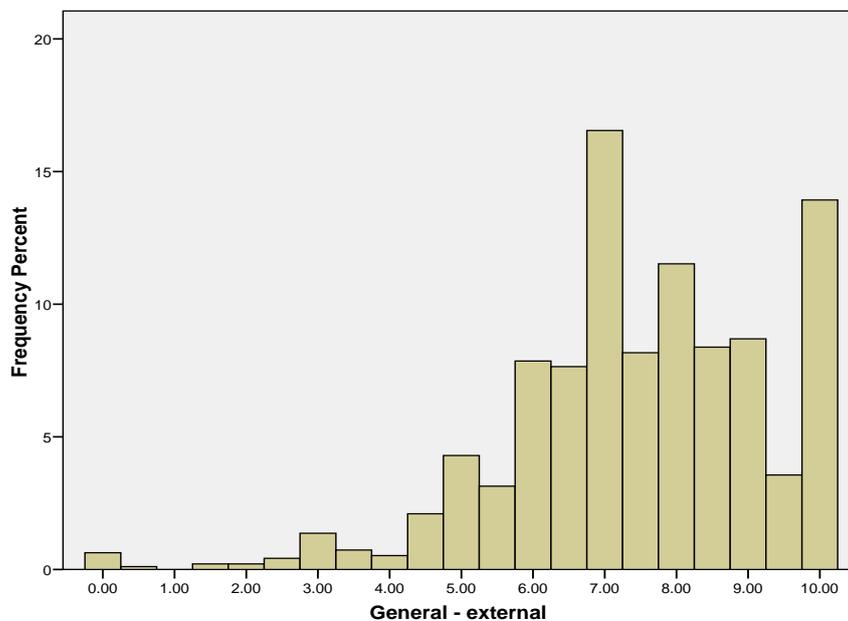
6.2.7.5. General views on the DofE: external value (general – external)

The scores for this theme are based on the mean response of each respondent for the questions below (see Table 17).

I want to do The DofE because it is valued by others
I want to do The DofE because it is attractive to employers

**Table 17: Questions comprising the 'General - external' theme**

There was strong general agreement with the statements in this theme (see Figure 39).



**Figure 39: Histogram of mean scores for participants' views on the external value of a DofE Award**

There was a statistically significant difference between the scores from respondents attending independent schools and both comprehensive and

grammar schools, with lower scores (lower level of agreement with the statements) from the independent school group. There is a similarity in these results with those from the 'employment future – DofE' theme which comprehensive school respondents gave significantly higher scores to than grammar or independent schools. In the case of the 'general – external' theme, the grammar school group was more similar to comprehensive than to independent school group. However, in both cases, respondents from comprehensive schools indicated higher levels of agreement than those from independent schools. Both themes are concerned with the attractiveness of the DofE to employers and the outside world. In the case of the 'employment future – DofE' theme this was focussed on the doing of their DofE programme (the perceived benefits of the process), whereas in the 'general – external' theme the focus was on having the DofE Award (the perceived benefits of the product). One explanation of these results is that respondents from independent schools (and, to a lesser extent, grammar schools) perceive that they have other advantages to employers and the external world and hence the influence of doing or having their DofE is seen as less strong.

There was also a statistically significant difference in the scores for this theme from respondents in different Regions. The South West had the lowest scores, and Northern Ireland had the highest.

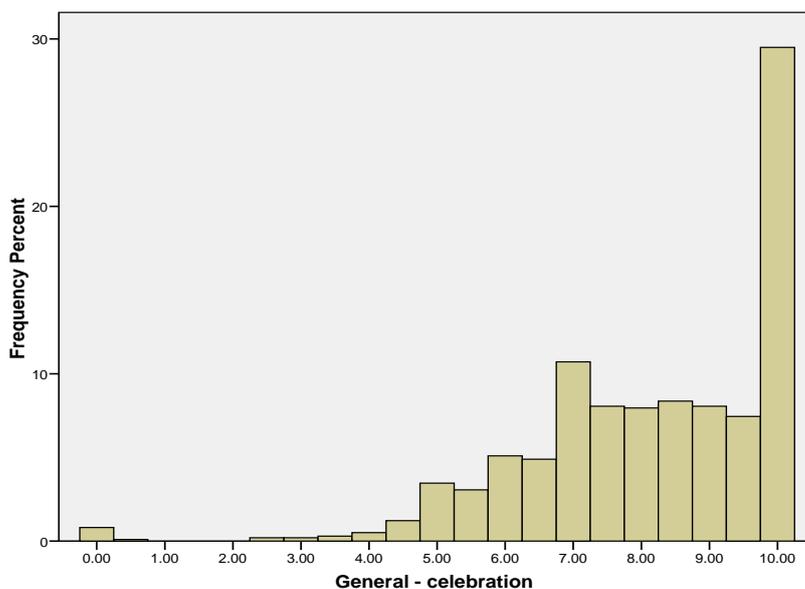
6.2.7.6. General views on the DofE: ceremony and badge (general – celebration)

The scores for this theme are based on the mean response of each respondent for the questions below (see Table 18).

I am looking forward to receiving my certificate and badge at a DofE ceremony
I will be proud to wear my DofE badge

**Table 18: Questions comprising the 'General - celebration' theme**

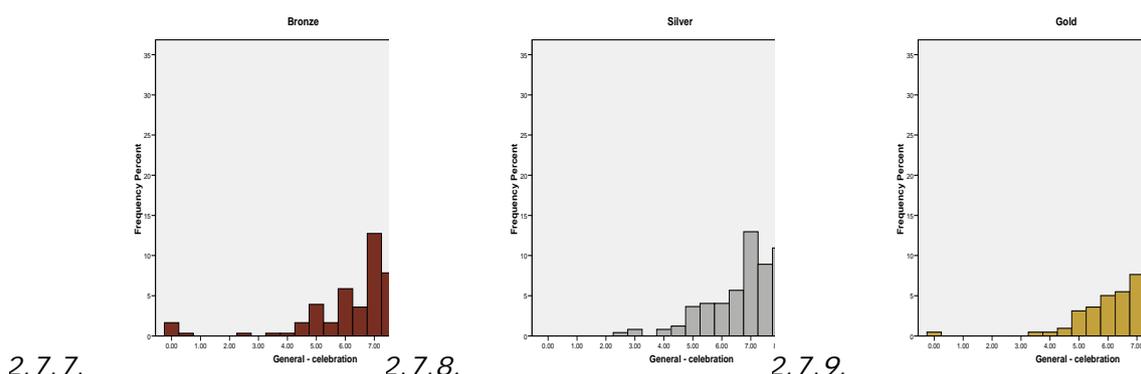
As can be seen in Figure 40, most respondents had high scores on this theme, with nearly 30% having the maximum score possible.



**Figure 40: Histogram of mean scores for participants' views on the celebratory aspects of achieving a DofE Award**

The responses to these two statements had similar distributions, each with approximately 40% of the respondents agreeing totally (score = 10).

When examining the participants' perceptions of the celebratory symbols (DofE Award ceremonies and badges) of achievement between the three levels of the DofE Award, there was statistically significant difference between the respondents working towards their Silver Award, which was less positive than those working towards Bronze and Gold. Figure 41 show the distribution of these scores separated out for those working towards each of the three levels of DofE Award (all drawn to the same scale, as a percentage of the respondents who reported working towards that level).



**Figure 41: Histograms of 'general - celebration' scores for respondents working towards Bronze (left), Silver (middle) and Gold (right) Awards**

The observed difference may be a result of the Bronze candidates looking forward to their first DofE Award, and the Gold candidates looking forward to the special celebrations associated with the top level of DofE Award, whereas many of the Silver candidates may have already experienced one award ceremony and not yet be anticipating a Palace ceremony.

There was a statistically significant difference between the scores from respondents attending grammar and comprehensive schools, with higher scores (higher level of agreement with the statements) from the comprehensive school group.

There was also a statistically significant difference in the scores for this theme by Region. The East and South East had the lowest scores, and London, the North West, Northern Ireland and Yorkshire and Humber had the highest. As discussed in section 6.2.3.1, this cannot be due to imbalances in respondents working at the different programme levels.

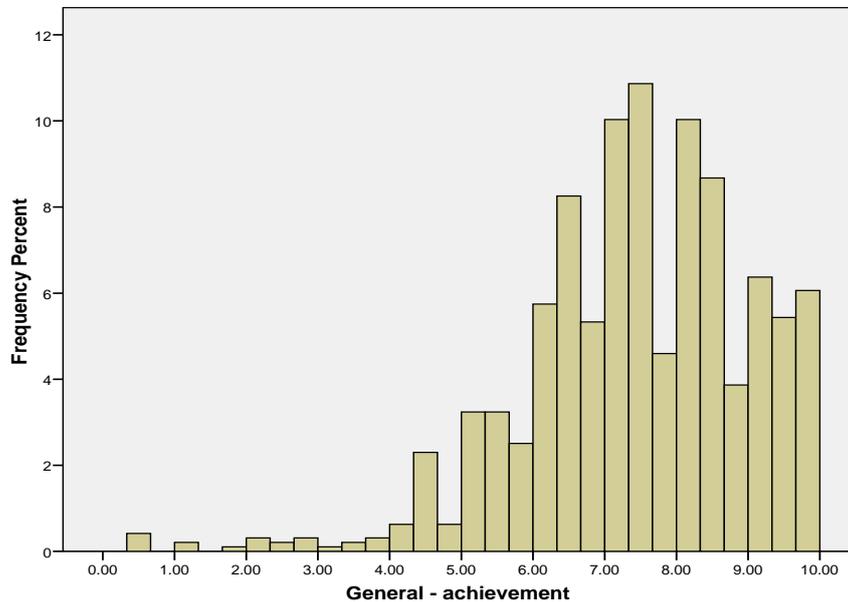
6.2.7.10. General views on the DofE: achievement (general – achievement)

The scores for this theme are based on the mean response of each respondent for the questions below (see Table 19).

The DofE Award has helped me achieve my goals in life
The DofE Award has exceeded my expectations
The DofE Award has changed my life
*I have not got much out of The DofE Award
*The DofE Award is pointless

**Table 19: Questions comprising the 'General - achievement' theme (asterisks denote scoring reversed)**

Figure 42 shows the total distribution of scores for this theme. Respondents were generally positive about these aspects.



**Figure 42: Histogram of mean scores for participants' views on the achievement aspects of doing the DofE**

When the scores for the constituent questions are examined individually (see Statistical Volume, Appendix 2: section 2.5), nearly all respondents *'totally disagreed'* that the DofE Award was pointless', and there was strong disagreement with the statement *'I have not got much out of the DofE Award'*. The statement which got the most equivocal responses (i.e. the lowest scores when all were transformed to positive statements) was *'The DofE Award has changed my life'* which had a median score of 6 (*slightly agree*) with responses distributed across the possible range.

Those working towards their Gold Award are more positive in their perceptions of the achievement aspects of their programme. This might be expected as the achievement associated with the Gold Award is greater than at the other levels.

There was a statistically significant difference between the scores from respondents attending grammar and comprehensive schools, with higher scores from the comprehensive school group.

There was also a statistically significant difference in the scores for this theme by Region. The Midlands, East, London, South East, South West and Yorkshire and Humber all had the lowest median scores (7.4), and Northern Ireland had the highest (8.4).

As discussed previously, this cannot be due to imbalances in respondents working at the different programme levels.

### **6.3. 'Distance travelled' by young people doing their DofE**

The modelling of personal change, or 'distance travelled' of young people undertaking their DofE was done by inviting all those who had contributed to the first survey to do a repeat questionnaire later in the project. 555 young people validly completed both questionnaires and were included in the analysis. The time interval between the surveys was limited by the constraints of the overall timescale for the project and the practical requirements of designing and conducting these national surveys. The median time between submitting the first and second surveys was 28 weeks (7 months).

Logistic regression modelling was performed in order to investigate which, if any, factors influence the 'distance travelled' by a young person undertaking their DofE programme. This process was defined for the purposes of this work by identifying those young people who participated in both surveys and who increased their scores for the 'self' (perceptions of or attitudes towards themselves) themes and their self-esteem measure between the first and second survey. A separate model was constructed for each outcome of personal success defined in this way.

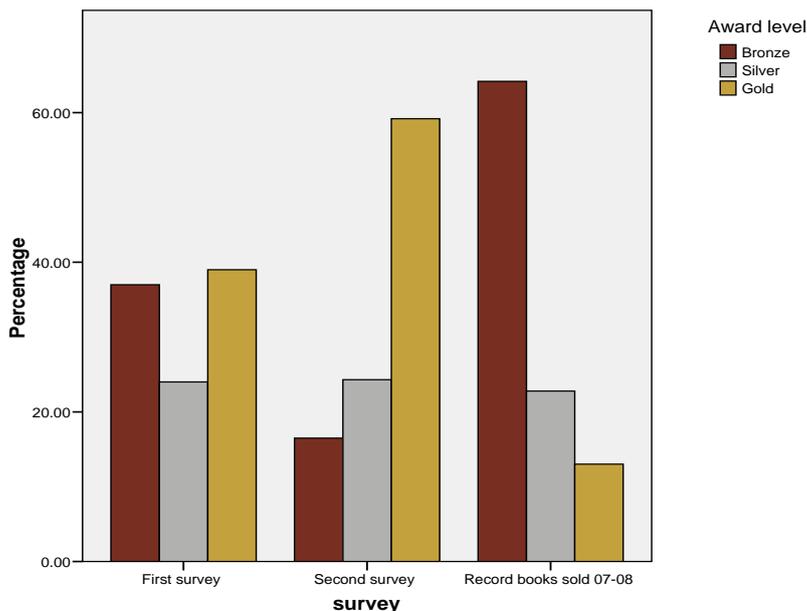
The possible predictive factors included in each model were as follows:

- Gender
- Age
- Educational establishment attended at first survey (comprehensive school, independent school, grammar school, FE college, HEI, other)
- DofE Award level being worked towards at first survey (Bronze, Silver, Gold)
- Time interval between survey completions
- Initial self-esteem score (at first survey)
- Initial scores for the following themes:
  - Experience – self
  - Physical – self
  - Mental - self
  - Community – self
  - Employment skills – self
  - Employment future – self

#### **6.3.1. Characteristics of respondents who completed both surveys**

The sample characteristics of those young people who completed both surveys were very similar to those who completed the first survey (reported in section 6.2.1). The exception to this was in the distribution of Award levels that the respondents were working towards.

89.7% (483) of the respondents to the second survey stated which level of DofE Award they were currently working towards. Figure 43 compares the percentages of those working towards each of the levels of the participants in the first and second survey and for the record books sold in 2007-2008 (as a surrogate measure of all DofE participants working towards that Award level).



**Figure 43: DofE programme level distributions**

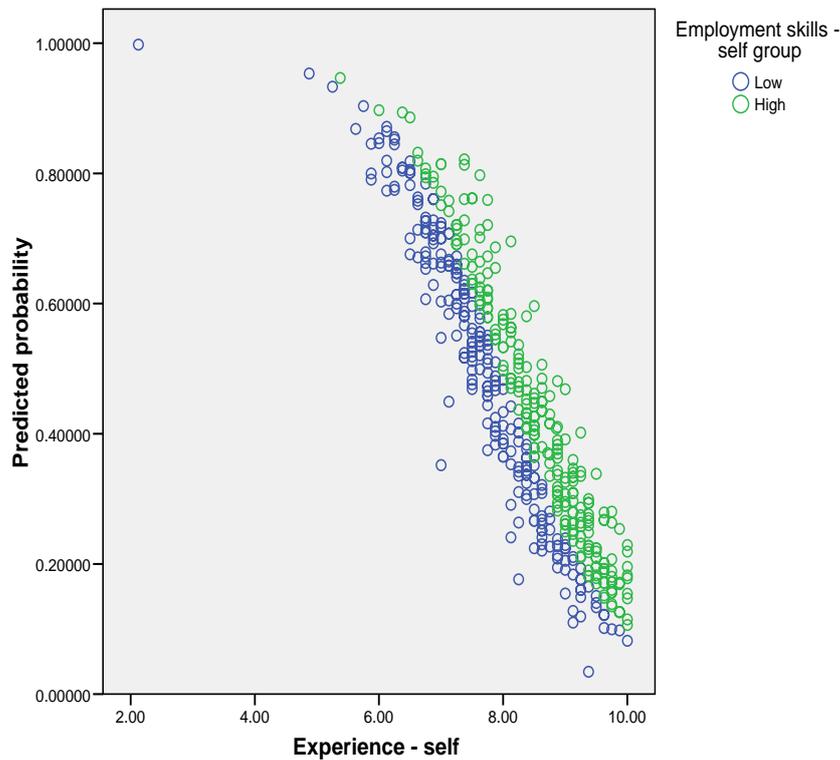
As was discussed in the analysis of the first survey (section 6.2.1.5), disproportionately more of those working towards Gold responded to the surveys than in the whole population of DofE participants. Similarly, there are proportionally fewer Bronze candidates represented in the survey respondents. This disproportional representation of Gold candidates increases from the first to the second survey. However, this is to be expected, as the second survey participants are drawn from those who responded to the first survey, and so this represents their progress through their DofE programme. It can be seen that the proportion of Gold candidates has increased by approximately the same proportion as the number of Bronze candidates has diminished. This suggests that, in the period between the first and second surveys, approximately 20% of the participants had progressed from Bronze to Silver, and about 20% had progressed from Silver to Gold. The majority of non-responders to this question (c. 10%) had completed their Gold Award in the interim period.

### **6.3.2. More positive attitudes towards new experiences**

This was measured by increased scores for the 'experiences – self' theme, described in more detail in section 6.2.3.1. The logistic regression modelling produced two significant predictors for this theme: initial experience–self score and initial employment skills (self).

This model predicts that young people with lower initial experience-self scores are more likely to increase this score over a 7 month period of doing their DofE programme than those with higher starting points. It also predicts that those with higher scores in the employment skills (self) theme have a greater likelihood of increasing their experience-self scores, after taking in to account their starting experience-self score. The questions which constitute the employment skills – self theme are shown in Table 12. This would suggest that those young people who had better transferable skills such as leadership, communication, team working and independence are likely to take advantage of the new personal experiences offered by engagement with their DofE programme.

The results of this model are shown in Figure 44. The points in green are for participants whose employment skills (self) scores were above the median (high scores) and the blue are for those with scores lower than the median (low scores). It can be seen that for those young people having low employment skills, those with an initial mean experience-self score of 6 (low) have about an 80% chance of improving this score after 7 months involvement with their DofE programme, whereas those with an initial score of 8 (high) have only about a 30% chance of seeing improvement. For those with high employment skills, these probabilities are boosted by approximately a further 10%.



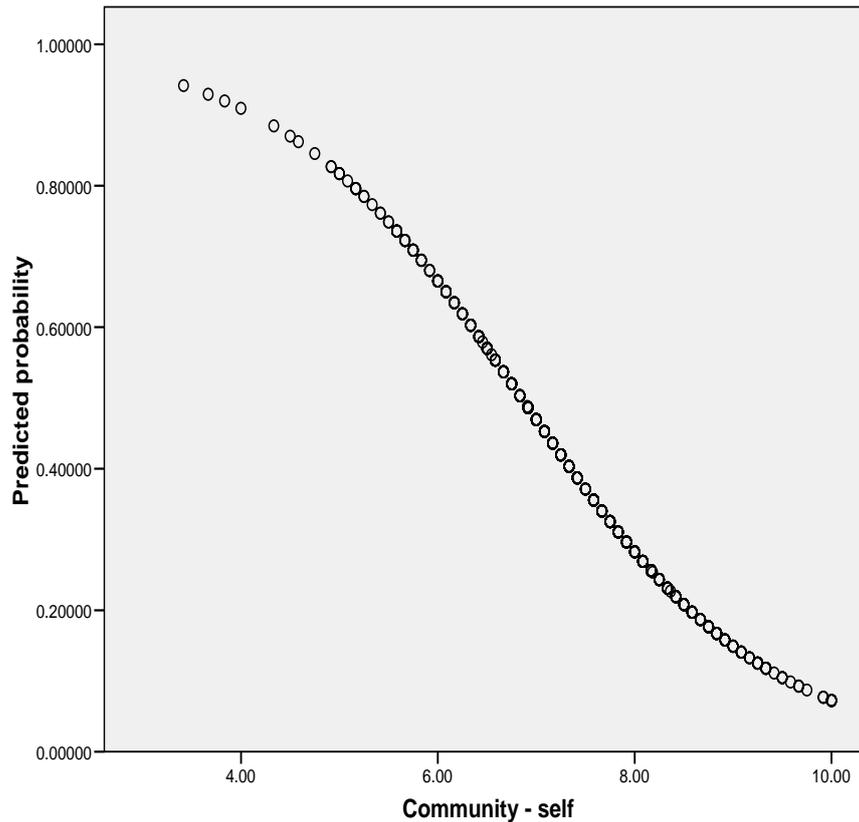
**Figure 44: Predicted probability of increased experience - self between the two survey points in relation to initial experience-self and employment skills scores**

### 6.3.3. More positive community attitudes

This was measured by increased scores for the 'community – self' theme, described in more detail in section 6.2.4.1. The logistic regression modelling produced only one significant predictor of increased community-self score: initial community–self score.

This model predicts that young people with lower initial community-self scores are more likely to increase this score over a 7 month period of doing their DofE programme than those with higher starting points.

The results of this model are shown in Figure 45. It can be seen that for those young people with an initial mean community-self score of 4 (low) have about a 90% chance of improving this score after 7 months involvement with their DofE programme, whereas those with an initial score of 8 (high) have only about a 25% chance of seeing improvement.



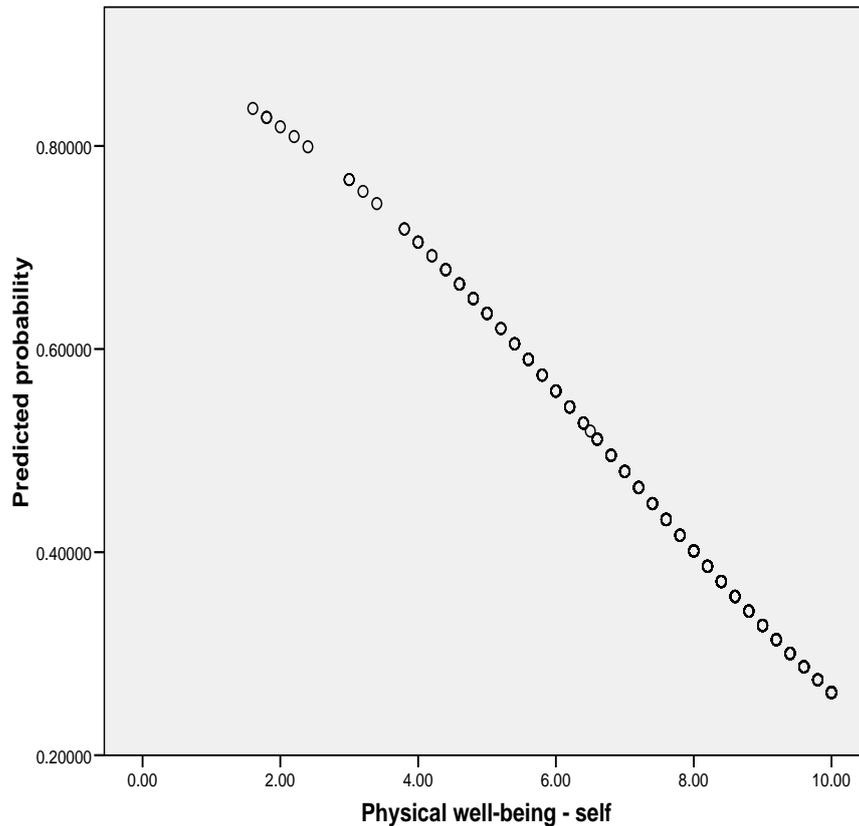
**Figure 45: Predicted probability of increased community- self between the two survey points in relation to initial community-self scores**

#### **6.3.4. Increased perceptions of physical well-being**

This was measured by increased scores for the 'physical – self' theme, described in more detail in section 6.2.5.1. The only significant predictor of increased physical-self score from the logistic regression modelling was initial physical-self score.

This model predicts that young people with lower initial physical-self scores are more likely to increase this score over a 7 month period of doing their DofE programme than those with higher starting points.

The results of this model are shown in Figure 46. It can be seen that for those young people with an initial mean physical-self score of 4 (low) have about a 70% chance of improving this score after 7 months involvement with their DofE programme, whereas those with an initial score of 8 (high) have about a 40% chance of seeing improvement.



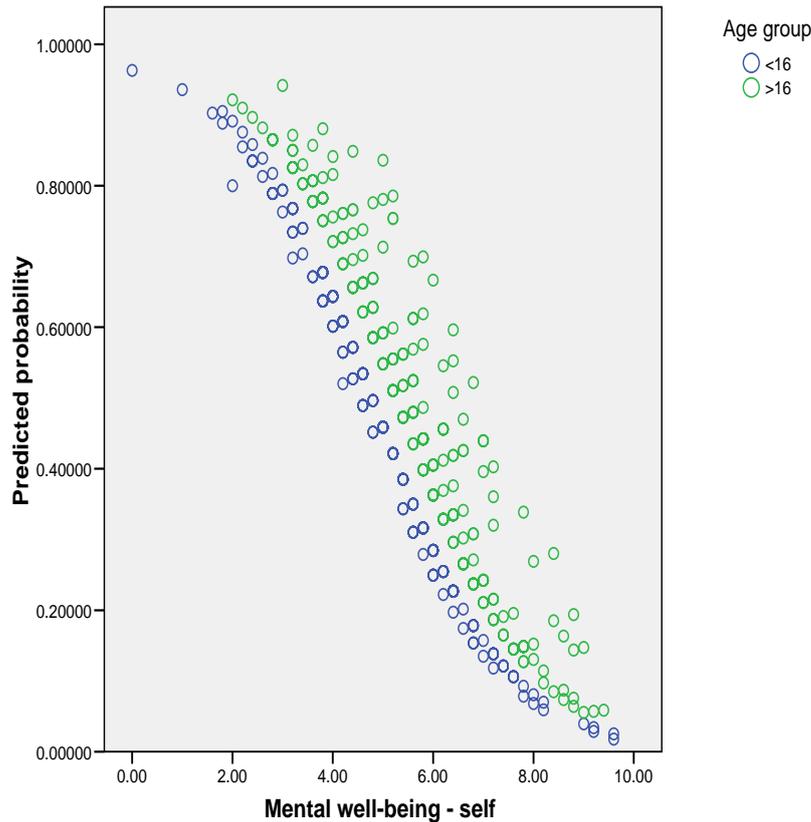
**Figure 46: Predicted probability of increased physical- self between the two survey points in relation to initial physical-self scores**

### 6.3.5. Increased perceptions of mental well-being

This was measured by increased scores for the 'mental – self' theme, described in more detail in section 6.2.5.3. There were two significant predictors of increased mental-self score from the logistic regression modelling: initial mental-self score and age.

This model predicts that young people with lower initial mental-self scores are more likely to increase this score over a 7 month period of doing their DofE programme than those with higher starting points. It also predicts that the older the young person is then the greater their likelihood of increasing their mental-self scores, after taking in to account their starting mental-self score. This would suggest that the older the young people are, the more likely they are feel better about themselves and the less bored they are, which may be as a result of engaging with the increased opportunities available within their DofE programme.

The results of this model are shown in Figure 47. The points in green are for participants whose ages were above the median (16 years) and the blue are for those with ages lower than the median. It can be seen that for the younger age group, those with an initial mean mental-self score of 4 (low) have about a 60% chance of improving this score after 7 months involvement with their DofE programme, whereas those with an initial score of 8 (high) have only about a 10% chance of seeing improvement. For those in the older age group, these probabilities are higher, and increase further with increased age.



**Figure 47: Predicted probability of increased mental- self between the two survey points in relation to initial mental-self scores and age**

### 6.3.6. Increased self-esteem

The logistic regression modelling produced two significant predictors of increased self-esteem (as measured by the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale): initial self-esteem and gender.

The initial self-esteem score (which is measured on a scale from 0 to 30, with higher scores denoting higher self-esteem) is a significant predictive factor of an increase in self-esteem, with those starting with lower self-esteem being more likely to increase their self-esteem. Gender is also a significant predictor of increased self-esteem, with males having a greater likelihood of increasing their self-esteem than females, all other factors being equal. This takes into account the fact that the previous analysis of the first survey showed that males had a higher self-esteem than females. The logistic regression model indicates that for equal initial levels of self-esteem, males are more likely to increase their self-esteem than females. The odds for increased self-esteem (over the length of the period between the two surveys) for girls is only about 60% that for boys.

The results of this model are shown in Figure 48. It can be seen that a female with a low initial self-esteem score of 10 has approximately a 75% chance of increasing her self-esteem over a period of about 7 months of doing her DofE programme, compared with only a 30% chance for a female with a high initial self-esteem (score of 25). For males these predicted probabilities would be about 85% and 45% respectively.

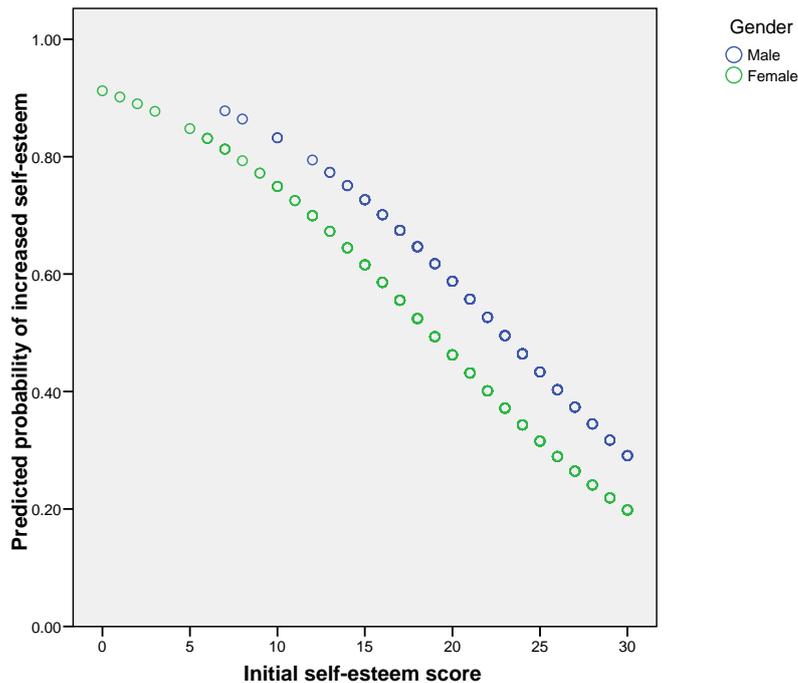


Figure 48: Predicted probability of increased self-esteem between the two survey points in relation to gender and initial self-esteem level.

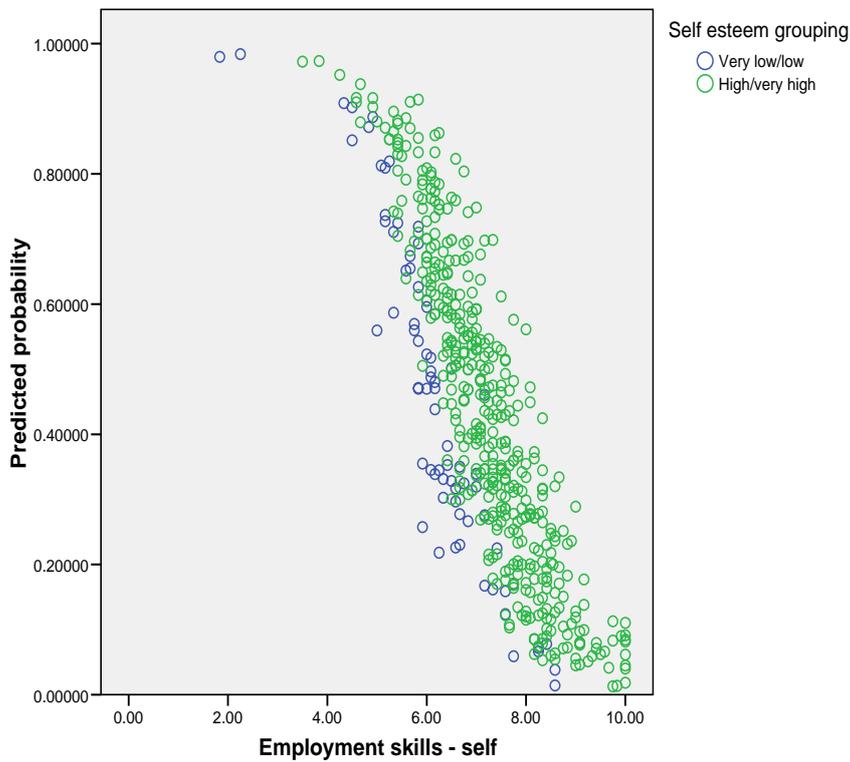
### 6.3.7. Improvement in perceptions of employment skills

This was measured by increased scores for the ‘employment skills – self’ theme, described in more detail in section 6.2.6.1. There were three significant predictors of increased employment skills-self score from the logistic regression modelling: initial employment skills-self score, initial self-esteem score and initial employment future- self score.

This model predicts that young people with lower initial employment skills-self scores are more likely to increase this score over a 7 month period of doing their DofE programme than those with higher starting points. It also predicts that those with higher self esteem have a greater likelihood of increasing their employment skills-self scores and that those with higher employment future-self scores also have a greater chance of increasing their employment skills, all other things being equal. (The questions comprising the employment future theme can be found in section 6.2.6.3). This would suggest that the more confident in their future the young people are and the greater their self esteem, the more likely they are to increase their transferable employment skills over the 7 month period of doing their DofE.

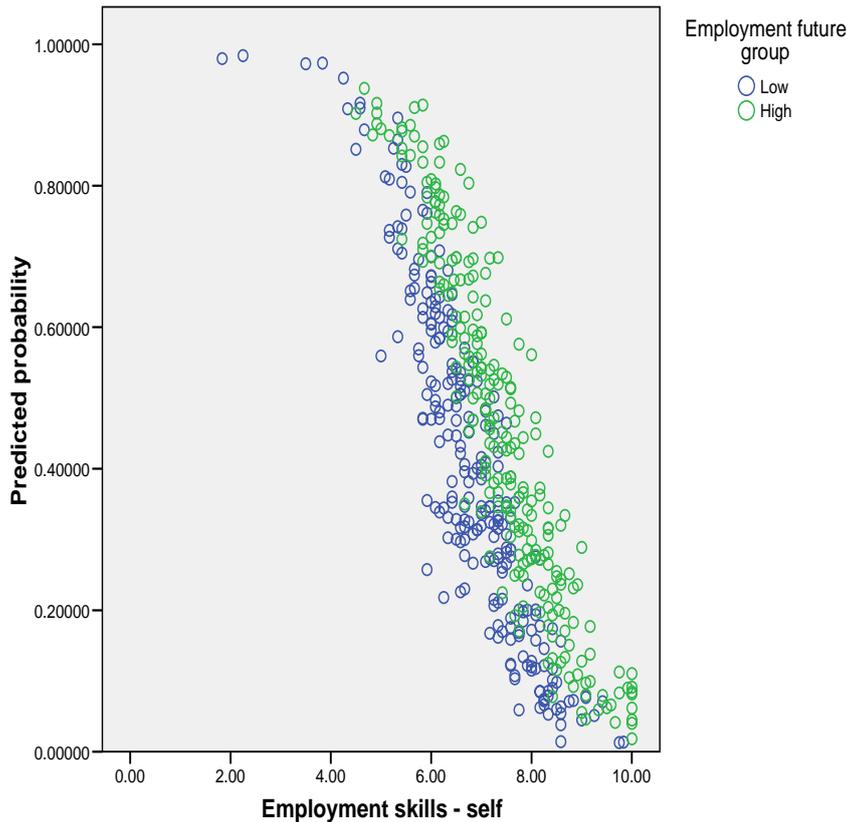
The results of this model are shown in Figure 49 and Figure 50. Figure 49 shows the additional effect of self esteem. The points in green are for participants whose self esteem scores were in the very low to low range and the blue are for those with high or very high self esteem scores. It can be seen that for the low self-esteem groups, those with an initial mean employment skills-self score of 5 (low) have about an 80% chance of improving this score after 7 months involvement with their DofE programme, whereas those with an initial score of 8 (high) have only about a 10% chance of seeing improvement. For those in the higher self esteem groups group, these probabilities are higher. The large range of predicted probabilities seen is a consequence of the further effect of the other

significant factor (employment future score) in this model, which cannot be separately identified on the graph.



**Figure 49: Predicted probability of increased employment skills- self between the two survey points in relation to initial employment skills-self scores and self-esteem**

Figure 50 shows the effect of employment future on the predicted probability of increasing a young person's employment skills score over the 7 month period of involvement with their DofE programme. Here, the blue circles are those with low (below the median) initial scores for this theme and the green circles represent those with a higher than the median score. Again, it can be seen that those with a higher employment future score have higher predicted probabilities of increasing their employment skills. The spread in this graph is due to the confounding effect of self-esteem, which cannot be separately identified in a 2-dimensional graph.



**Figure 50: Predicted probability of increased employment skills- self between the two survey points in relation to initial employment skills-self scores and initial employment future score**

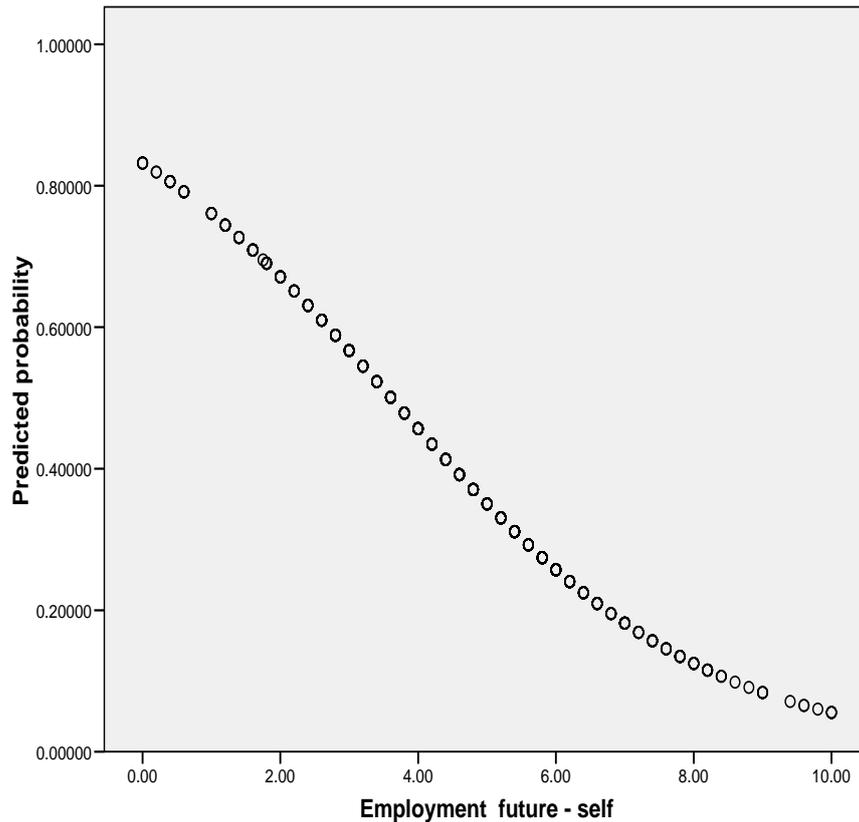
As the young people's employment future scores reflects confidence in their future employment prospects, it is not surprising that their self-esteem has a similar enhancing effect on the chance of them improving their employment skills as their employment future score. Again, those with low initial employment skills are more likely to increase them over the period of measurement than those already possessing a high level of these skills, but increased confidence in themselves and their future enhances the chance of them being able to take advantage of opportunities to increase their employment skills.

### **6.3.8. Improvement in perception of future employment prospects**

This was measured by increased scores for the 'employment future – self' theme, described in more detail in section 6.2.6.3. The only significant predictor of increased employment future-self score from the logistic regression modelling was initial employment future-self score.

This model predicts that young people with lower initial employment future-self scores are more likely to increase this score over a 7 month period of doing their DofE programme than those with higher starting points.

The results of this model are shown in Figure 51. It can be seen that for those young people with an initial mean employment future-self score of 4 (low) have about a 40% chance of improving this score after 7 months involvement with their DofE programme, whereas those with an initial score of 8 (high) have only about a 15% chance of seeing improvement.



**Figure 51: Predicted probability of increased employment future- self between the two survey points in relation to initial employment future-self scores**

#### **6.4. Qualitative results**

The following part of the report represents evidence from the interviews and focus groups that have been carried out with young people.

These follow the broad themes of the young people's quantitative survey:

- Experiences
- Local community
- Physical and mental well-being
- Employment
- General views on the DofE

Additional in-depth information regarding these themes has developed them further and contain sub themes that inform experiences of those involved in DofE programmes. Many of the subjects discussed and issues raised are considered in more than one section and it is possible to cross reference between experiences. This reveals the significance of many of the topics discussed by research participants and the following experiences should not be considered in isolation. They provide in depth evidence of the impact of a DofE programme, not just on the young people who take part, but also for the wider involvement of delivery partners, stakeholders and past participants that are discussed here. Thus many

of the themes that are discussed overlap and compliment each other. Cross referencing between experiences is kept to a minimum here and will be explored in more detail in Chapter 8 of this report.

It should be noted that some of the questions used in this work were compiled and agreed before the re-branding and hence the wording may not be compatible with current brand guidelines.

The themes discussed in this chapter have been informed by the interviews and focus groups carried out with young people doing their DofE programme. Copies of the indicative questions used in the interviews and focus groups can be found in Appendix 4 of the Statistical Volume of this report.

This section begins with a description of the characteristics of the sample of young people who participated in this phase of the research (section 6.4.1). Section 6.4.2 discusses the experiences of young people of doing their DofE programmes. Section 6.4.3 explores barriers to participation. Section 6.4.4 then discusses young people's experiences in relation to their local community, including their interaction with others from different backgrounds and cultures. The theme of physical and mental well-being is discussed in the following section (6.4.5). The next section, 6.4.6, discusses employment themes. This is followed a section which discusses general views on the DofE which includes young peoples' suggestions for widening participation, increasing completions, improvements to the programme and the importance of Leader support (section 6.4.7). The final section (6.4.7.4) explores a sense of belonging that can be gained from taking part.

### **6.4.1. Characteristics of the respondents**

#### **6.4.1.1. Interviews**

The interviews conducted with young people were selected from those who replied to the first quantitative survey and elected to be willing to take part in a follow up interview. Participants were selected to get a representative sample across gender, region, ethnic background, programme level and institution where they are doing their DofE programme.

The breakdown of participants can be summarised as:

- 64 female and 36 male
  - Bronze: 33
  - Silver: 32
  - Gold: 35

Region	Number	Programme level	Male / female
East	9	2 bronze 3 silver 4 gold	3 male 4 female
London	8	3 bronze 3 silver 2 gold	3 male 5 female
Midlands	13	5 bronze 3 silver 5 gold	6 male 7 female
North East	9	5 bronze 2 silver 2 gold	2 male 7 female
North West	10	5 bronze	4 male

		3 silver 2 gold	6 female
Northern Ireland	3	0 bronze 1 silver 2 gold	3 female
Scotland	9	1 bronze 2 silver 6 gold	3 male 6 female
South East	12	3 bronze 6 silver 3 gold	5 male 7 female
South West	12	7 bronze 3 silver 2 gold	5 male 7 female
Wales	6	1 bronze 2 silver 3 gold	2 male 4 female
Yorkshire and Humberside	9	1 bronze 4 silver 4 gold	3 male 6 female

**Table 20: DofE programme level, Region and gender of interview participants.**

#### 6.4.1.2. Focus groups

The focus groups involved a total of 135 young people across the four nations and participants can be summarised as:

- Female 56 and male 79
  - Bronze 58
  - Silver 48
  - Gold 29

The focus groups were carried out in locations such as open DofE centres, with uniformed youth organisations such as The Scouts Association and Army Cadets, a faith group, those at risk of offending, an independent school, a grammar school, comprehensive schools, and with young people with special educational needs.

Therefore, the total of young people who participated in the interviews and focus groups can be summarised as:

- Male 115 and female 120
  - Bronze 91
  - Silver 80
  - Gold 64

Respondents in this chapter of the report are identified by gender and DofE programme level that they were on at time of interview. Case studies have been identified by interview number as their situation is described in the study.

#### 6.4.1.3. Video production

The young people that participated were all from the same school in Northamptonshire. The numbers for each programme level were as follows:

- 27 Bronze
- 6 Silver
- 7 Gold

## 6.4.2. Experiences

### 6.4.2.1. What the DofE is about for young people

Young people consider the Duke of Edinburgh's Award to be an opportunity to expand their horizons in many ways. The main way of doing this is through learning and developing new skills, by having new experiences and opportunities that present themselves due to taking part in a DofE programme. Young people stated the importance of having fun whilst they were doing their DofE and the significance of team work. Different aspects of team work and team building were discussed by young people, usually in relation to the expedition:

*"[I]ts all about team work and working together and you've got to understand what your other team members go through, this is expedition, you've got to be there, you've got to learn to be there for each other and you know that whatever happens you've got to stick with it you can't just give up because it means quite a lot to everyone to every individual who takes part in it and then when you're doing your skill and your physical activity you know that you're doing it for yourself as well as for other people you're going to be helping out you know you're going to be helping out a lot of other people so you can't just do anything, you can't just mess around, I think yes it's a really good experience."*

(Female, Bronze participant)

Team work was also referred to by young people when discussing other sections of the programme. For example the Volunteering section of the DofE is an opportunity for young people to mix with and work with those that they usually wouldn't come into contact with:

*"New activities, helping your community obviously and getting stuck in with things, obviously helping yourself, getting yourself somewhere, getting something out of it but helping other people and learning new skills and techniques from adventurous things down to simple things like team work and getting on with people."*

(Male, Bronze participant)

Young people also considered that meeting people, building friendships and the challenge of doing a DofE were important aspects of their DofE and contributed to their personal development.

*"Well I think it is about, it's kind of building a base of skills, practical skills, personal skills, it is probably also about confidence building, it's a building exercise of personality and different strengths."*

(Male, Gold participant)

*"To me DofE is about: improving skills (communication, teamwork, planning, organisational), personal achievement, personal satisfaction, persistence, good will. It is also about enjoyment, especially on expeditions."*

(Male, Gold participant)

*"To me it's about gaining new skills and meeting new people and facing challenges that you wouldn't normally meet in your everyday life."*

(Female, Gold participant)

As illustrated above, young people stated many aspects of doing their DofE. Other popular answers include:

- achievement/sense of achievement;
- new activities;
- doing community work; and
- something to put on their CV. As one participant pointed out, it can be about getting recognition for activities they are already doing:

*“For me it’s been about getting a formal recognition of the extra-curricular activities I do, mainly for UCAS...”*

(Male, Gold participant)

There were many other answers to this question including:

- fitness
- recognition
- strengths and weaknesses
- gaining confidence
- commitment
- an extra curricular activity.

This range of responses reflects the individual nature of the award and the personal progression through the DofE programme for the individual. It also indicates the many different experiences that are potentially on offer for the individual when they do their DofE programme and the four (or five for Gold) sections of their DofE.

When young people were asked what, in their experience, were the main benefits of doing their Duke of Edinburgh’s Award, the most popular answers were (in order):

- friendships
- learning new skills
- CV enhancement
- fun
- meeting new people.

Other answers included:

- having new experiences
- confidence building
- communication skills
- building resilience
- fitness, and
- a sense of achievement.

Whilst these answers are similar to those given above, there is a change in the emphasis of the answers. It reveals that whilst young people are aware of what their DofE programme is about: overall personal development, even if only a small number explicitly stated this. The main benefits they derived from taking part were making friends and meeting people, whilst learning new skills and thus enhancing their CV. This will be discussed further in section 6.4.5.1 where these responses and benefits will be discussed in terms of physical and mental well-being.

Word of mouth was cited as the most popular way for young people to get involved with doing a DofE programme; it is the influence of their family and friends that initially gets them involved with a programme. The enjoyment of doing a DofE is the main reason that they continue with doing their DofE,

followed by the influence of others, a chance to be with their friends and the challenge of doing a DofE.

#### 6.4.2.2. The Expedition

As an experience, the expedition dominated discussions by the young people about their DofE programme. Many young people were contradictory in their responses about the expedition. For instance, doing the expedition was overwhelmingly stated as the best activity, finishing the expedition was the most rewarding experience, but it was also stated as the least enjoyable activity and the most cited part of a DofE that young people would like to change. It is this range of answers that shows that the expedition is the section of the DofE programme that consistently has the most impact on young people. It was the one section of the programme that young people wanted to talk about and share their experiences.

The expedition was cited as the most popular activity. This was usually for a combination of reasons. The most popular answers concerned having fun and friendships. Young people found that the expedition gave them the independence, time and ability to work as a team in, sometimes, adverse conditions. These conditions, for some, gave them the best and worst times on their DofE, and hence were the most memorable. It is apparent that building friendships and relationships is an important part of doing a DofE and the expedition gives young people the opportunity to do this. They get the chance to share experiences and create bonds with their peers. It is the one section where they have to work as a team, whereas the other sections are an individual achievement. Even if a young person decides to do a team sport for their Physical section, they may be the only one doing a DofE within that team.

*"The expedition, it's always the best bit. [...] it's really sort of hard when you're walking it and stuff and it's like miserable but when you've done it and you get to the end of a day and you're sort of just sitting round with your friends and just having a laugh, it's the best thing. It kind of makes everything worthwhile I guess."*

(Male, Silver participant)

*"I would say the expeditions is good, because at the end you feel you've done something, you've got a sense of achievement especially I noticed a big change between silver and bronze and I found the expedition much more challenging but I found it a lot more rewarding completing it..."*

(Female, Silver participant)

As mentioned above, the expedition, or aspects of the expedition, was cited as the least enjoyable activity by young people. Doing the expedition itself was the least enjoyable activity for several reasons, many of which are linked to the physical challenge of doing the expedition. For example, walking long distances whilst carrying heavy loads, the sometimes adverse weather conditions, combined with camping skills such as cooking after a day's walking can be physically demanding for a young person, particularly if it is a new experience. Further, the expedition route planning was the aspect of the expedition that young people would most like to change, for reasons such as it is time consuming, tedious for some and has to be accurate.

It is apparent that the experience of doing the expedition gives young people increase skills and awareness in many situations:

- A sense/discovery of their strengths and weaknesses

- Learning their own capabilities
- Ways of overcoming challenges
- Team work, learning how to cope when something goes wrong
- Independence – not only achieving something without parental supervision but also learning valuable skills for themselves, being able to cope on their own
- An opportunity to build friendships
- New experiences
- Fun.

#### 6.4.2.3. Most rewarding thing

Participants found that achievement and sense of achievement, firstly with the expedition and secondly completing the rest of their DofE was, on reflection, the most rewarding thing about doing their DofE. The reasons for this include being able to achieve - *'achieving the impossible'*, realising their own capabilities, overcoming personal and team challenges and pride at their achievement. It is also the recognition by others of having a Duke of Edinburgh's Award. The following quotes illustrate each young person's sense of achievement of going on and completing their expedition and overcoming a personal challenge:

*"[T]he most rewarding, just like at the end of it you've got something to show for all the time and effort that you've put into it, you've got the award and it just shows how you've stuck at it and you've gained something realistic and you can see it in paper."*

(Male, Gold participant)

*"The most rewarding thing is possibly, yes is most definitely actually, completing the expeditions because they are such hard work compared to everything else and you just feel a real sense of relief and fulfillment when you finish."*

(Female, Gold participant)

*"My most rewarding moment was when I reached the campsite on my actual expedition, we were in [], it was really hilly and muddy, I really struggled, but my whole group got together and encouraged me. One of the girls in my group slowed down and actually held my hand at one point, I'm not very touchy feely, but it felt good to have someone by my side to help me along. I felt really great when I was finished."*

(Female, Bronze participant)

*"[T]he sense of achievement of finally coming to the end and that everything is completed because, you're really, sort of really doing your skill, service and you sort of know you are going to complete them but the expedition is one where you could break down or you could just mentally, it is mentally demanding as well so it is just that sense of achievement once you reach your destination, that's it's, of having done it, I've completed it, that's what I think anyway."*

(Male, Gold participant)

*"[T]he feeling is just, I don't think it's ever been matched before you just, you're so tired but you're just so happy and you're so like, you feel so proud of yourself."*

(Female, Gold participant)

The focus groups were carried out with peer groups who, although were not necessarily all in the same expedition group, are experiencing the programme at

the same institute or organisation. This may have some bearing on the topics that they wish to discuss – they are sharing their collective experience with the other young people present and comparing their experience that is independent to the place where they usually meet with these other young people.

This also reveals the importance to the young people of a sense of belonging, not only with the group of friends that they did the expedition with, but also the place in which they are doing their DofE and the wider community of the DofE – it is their DofE expedition experience that initially binds them together (see also sections 6.4.5.1, 6.4.7.3 and 6.4.7.4). Further, the interviews were carried out on a one to one basis and thus the young people were not influenced by their peers at the time of interview. This reinforces the impact of the expedition on their lives as individuals and the significance of the expedition within the programme structure.

#### 6.4.2.4. A chance to do something new

The expedition, or different elements of doing the expedition, was the most cited response when young people were asked if doing their DofE programme had given them a chance to do something new. This was then followed by the Volunteering section of their DofE and thirdly, activities undertaken in the Skills section, suggesting that it is the Physical section that is the least likely to give young people a chance to do something new to them. This result reflects the comments given by participants about one of the reasons they enjoyed the expedition: it is something different and, perhaps, something that they would not get an opportunity to do again under similar circumstances. It is apparent that the Volunteering section also introduces young people to completely new experiences: young people have the chance to get involved with others within theirs and the wider community (see sections 6.4.2.5, 6.4.4 and 6.4.4.2 below). However, it is evident that the expedition means much more to participants than just being something different to their usual activities.

#### 6.4.2.5. Volunteering

As cited in section 6.4.2.2, the most cited response for the best activity was the expedition. The second most popular answer for the best activity, with less than a fifth of the responses that the expedition received was volunteering. Young people enjoy this section of their DofE for several reasons. Firstly, young people can choose something that they are passionate about. Secondly they learn about others and how to get along with different people. Thirdly, they can see the difference that their contribution can make to others, either individuals or organisations.

For example:

*"[T]he voluntary work, it just gave me an insight of how, like experience of working in a working environment with people older than me, a lot older than me."*

(Female, Silver participant)

*"There's a lot to choose from but, to be honest I would actually probably say, even though my expeditions were really fun, I would probably say it was actually helping out on my service because just seeing people get so much out of what I put in is really enjoyable."*

(Male, Silver participant)

Many of the participants volunteer for an organisation that they are already involved with. For example many young people volunteer with younger groups at a uniformed organisation such as Girlguiding UK or the Scout Association. Others help in a different capacity with sports clubs, coaching younger people, many others help within their own or another school community. This is an efficient way of engaging the under 16s with volunteering as many organisations will not exploit volunteers under that age. Through previous involvement with the organisation, the young person has an attachment or a belief in the organisation or activity. As the following quote illustrates, it is also beneficial for organisations to encourage their own young person to volunteer with them as they are a resource to the organisation, and once involved, are more likely to carry on working with their volunteering beyond the life of their DofE.

*"...I help out at the brownies, that's obviously a benefit to them because now I am a qualified leader that I can actually run my own pack so, and in the future it will benefit the community as well because I'm looking to run my own pack when I'm older."*

(Female, Silver participant)

With regard to an activity such as sports coaching, or teaching others, a young person can gain in confidence and learn communication skills for a group of people that they may only have had little contact with previously. However, for the young person doing their DofE this may limit their interaction with others, particularly if the young person is doing their DofE volunteering within their own school.

Volunteering was also cited as the third most rewarding thing about doing a DofE for young people. One of the reasons for this, as discussed above, is that through the Volunteering section, young people can see that they are contributing to other people's lives and appreciate the benefits of this. Benefits to the community are discussed in section 6.4.4.

*"If you're doing something to help somebody else and then you see your affect on the people around you I think that's really rewarding as well because you feel that I helped those people or I did something that affected the outer world, not just my own little bubble."*

(Female, Silver participant)

Another example is a participant who is doing her volunteering at a local hospital, assisting with feeding patients at lunchtime and this is appreciated by both the staff and the patients:

*"[M]y Service section at the moment, the kind of things that I do, everyone's so grateful for it and it really does give you a sense of achievement."*

(Female, Gold participant)

Another participant talked about the personal satisfaction of volunteering with riding for the Disabled:

*"The most rewarding was working with Riding for the Disabled for my service, that was a really good experience and you left every week feeling that you'd done something really positive."*

(Male, Silver participant)

Other most rewarding things about doing a DofE (in order):

- Friendships
- Something to put on CV
- Presentation of DofE Award
- Meeting new people.

It is apparent that the Volunteering section is popular with young people. It is the second favourite activity and second most cited as something new for participants, and the third most rewarding activity. It is consistent in its popularity with young people for reasons discussed above and thus it is apparent that the Volunteering section, in terms of personal development within the DofE programme gives young people the opportunity to gain interpersonal and communication skills, awareness of theirs and the wider community and an experiential learning experience.

#### 6.4.2.6. Least enjoyable activity

Many young people said that there was no '*least enjoyable*' aspect of doing their DofE as they had enjoyed all of their DofE programme, and '*nothing*' was the second most popular response to this question. There were many reasons for this. Firstly, as was pointed out by several young people, they are free to choose the activities that they do for their programme so are more likely to embark on something that they do already and enjoy or a new activity or experience that they had been wanting to try and not yet had the opportunity to.

The thing that most people said that they least enjoyed was the expedition, or aspects of the expedition (see also sections 6.4.2.2 and 6.4.2.6). Other than the expedition itself, it was the planning of it that young people found the most onerous task and some, whilst they could see the benefit of doing route cards, questioned the need to do so in the age of satellite navigation systems, particularly when they have pressures on their time due to school work commitments. For example:

*"[T]he planning, I think the way it's done is you can see the idea behind it, trying to get you to learn how to sort of do directions by yourself without having the comfort of technology but the fact that we do do it that way means it's so long winded and can seem pointless, well you do it but it kind of makes you feel better about it at the end. [...] I think it's very long and drawn out sometimes, I mean we started preparing for the practice expedition before half term last year and we've been there, what every week? Sometimes twice a week and we just have to do the same jobs over and over again and the fact that we're only going for three days, it can be irritating when it's so time consuming at such a busy time as well."*

(Male, Silver participant)

*"The route planning and route sheet. The route sheet is particularly boring, as you have to write everything and do lots of calculations. The route planning is better at Silver because you have more to do like using the compass. Also, our leader is a lot better now, so the sessions are much more fun."*

(Female, (originally) Bronze participant)

This shows the personal progression through the DofE, as the young person when originally part of the research was a Bronze participant. It illustrates her increased understanding of route planning and navigation skills and this is one of the reasons she has begun to enjoy it. The other reason is the leader, who is making the sessions more enjoyable. The importance of leaders is discussed further in section 6.4.7.3.

The contradiction of the expedition being the best and worst for some is illustrated well by one young person:

*"It's expeditions because when you are away it feels like you are just in the mud and everything is dragging and it takes ages, and it's so much hard work and you think 'oh all this is for nothing', but once you get back from the expeditions it's the opposite because you realise that you actually achieved something, but expeditions are, and doing your routes for the expeditions can be really difficult, and you have to work towards like your fitness and everything for the last nine, and you think to yourself, 'all that for this', but then at the end of it like I said it's enjoyable when you think back."*

(Female, Gold participant)

### **Case Study 1. Resilience / overcoming a challenge**

It is often the most challenging, or least enjoyable part of a DofE programme that can be the most rewarding and beneficial for a young person's personal development. This has been evident from the testimonials of participants and their discussion of overcoming unforeseen problems, obstacles and perceived weaknesses when they do their expedition.

YP20 admitted that she had not learnt any new skills for her Bronze DofE as she was already doing them, however, she used one of her skills, playing a musical instrument, as the basis for her volunteering: YP20 went into an elderly persons' residential home with a friend to play for the residents. For her, this activity constituted her least enjoyable activity and the most challenging, but also the main benefit and the most rewarding thing about doing her DofE. YP20 stated that it was the least enjoyable activity because she found it tiring due to the

hurdles involved with engaging with elderly, and sometimes ill, people for the first time. However, this personal challenge had a positive outcome for this participant. When asked what the main benefit of doing the DofE was for her, she replied:

*"[It gives] you confidence in different ways that you wouldn't have thought like playing in front of the old people and talking to them makes you consider other ages as well."*

YP20 went on to discuss how the most rewarding thing was the elderly peoples response to their playing of traditional music:

*"[W]e played 'Pack up your Troubles' and 'Cock linnet' and the old traditional songs that they knew and they were singing along [...] that was probably the most satisfaction out of the whole, the elderly people service part."*

This illustrates that even though YP20 found the experience of going to the elderly persons' residential home to be challenging, it was this part where she ultimately gained most satisfaction: through her volunteering, she was able to gain confidence communicating with others and make a difference to other peoples lives.

#### **Case Study 1. Resilience / overcoming a challenge**

##### **6.4.2.7. Most disappointing thing**

Young people were asked what they thought the most disappointing thing was about doing their DofE. Most replied '*nothing*', with aspects of the expedition the second most popular response. This reinforces the effectiveness of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award for engaging young people once they begin their DofE. If they had experienced too many disappointments they are more likely to have stopped midway through their DofE.

Some of the disappointments surrounding the expedition relate to occurrences outside of anyone's control such as the weather. Other disappointments include getting lost on the expedition and disbandment of the expedition due to others dropping out.

Further disappointments include:

- the time consuming nature of the DofE
- others not finishing or dropping out of the programme
- issues surrounding the presentation of the DofE Award
- bad administration
- their DofE ending
- cost, and
- number of places available to do a DofE.

These responses show that on the whole, young people were satisfied with their DofE programme. But, as has been emphasised previously, this research is into young people who are doing their programme and those who were dissatisfied may have chosen to leave. Some young people did admit that they are not going to progress on to the next level of DofE Award and Case Study 2 is one example of this. However, this Bronze participant illustrates that whilst he is not going to do a Silver programme once he has completed his Bronze, the experience has still been a very positive one for him.

**Case Study 2. Not progressing to the next programme level – remains a positive outcome.**

YP36 is a Bronze participant and has made the decision that he is not going to progress on to either a Silver or Gold DofE programme. This is because he doesn't "*think it could get any better.*" Whilst doing his DofE YP36 took up archery for his physical section and this has since become one of his main interests. Likewise, for his Volunteering section, he worked at a local animal rescue centre, learning how to care for a range of animals. Whilst working at the rescue centre he also learnt social skills such as communication, public speaking and the opportunity to work with others from different backgrounds. He plans to continue with both of these activities when he finishes his Bronze DofE Award.

This example shows the value of the DofE for introducing young people to new interests and experiences, and although this young person is not going to progress on to the next level of the DofE Award, this should not be seen as a failure: he began doing two new activities, including volunteering, for his DofE and will continue to do these once he has gained his Bronze Award.

It could be argued that the benefits gained from doing new activities for their DofE but not progressing is more valuable to a young person than doing their DofE through to Gold using activities that they were doing prior to beginning their DofE programme.

**Case Study 2. Not progressing to the next programme level – remains a positive outcome.**

**6.4.3. Barriers to participation**

There were over twenty reasons given why young people thought others did not take part in a DofE programme. The most cited responses were laziness of the individual and not being able to make the commitment to succeed with the programme. Young people also thought that many young people were not aware of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, what the benefits of doing a programme are or only had brief knowledge what doing a programme entails.

The following quotes exemplify these reasons:

*"Some people don't know about it but then some that do, they just don't think that it's for them or whatever and they don't think they should bother going so yeah, just being lazy again, but some people aren't lazy, they just don't bother coming because they've got other things to do."*

(Male, Gold participant)

*"[T]hey may not know about it and you know, people need to know about it so they can join in and find out, not enough people know and know what it is and what we do here."*

(Male, Silver participant)

*"I think a lot of people don't know about it cos it is not advertised like that well, I only found about because like I heard people talking about it in school so apart from that I wouldn't have known to come."*

(Male, Bronze participant)

*"[T]here's a lot of people that have said to us about, because I mean when we first started I remember everyone was like "oh my god, you're doing Duke of Edinburgh, what's that?" and stuff and like when anyone asked me like what it was, I could never answer them because I never knew what it was."*

(Female, Bronze participant)

Young people linked the lack of knowledge of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award with a shortage of publicity outlining the methods for getting involved, what a DofE is and the benefits of getting involved. Further reasons for non-participation included that the programme is perceived to be too time consuming, or young people are too busy, the programme is perceived to be 'not cool' and a further barrier was thought to be the prospect of doing the expedition.

Examples of this are given below:

Time consuming:

*"[My friends said] 'oh it takes up my Friday nights', but they don't go out anyway [...] so you are just sitting at home watching television anyway so you might as well go and do something constructive."*

(Male, Bronze participant)

Not cool:

*"When I've mentioned it to my friends at school, they always say 'it's for geeks' so they don't know what kind of fun we have and they need to know about it."*

(Male, Silver participant)

The expedition:

*"[T]he expedition as I think [...] said or [...] said, is putting people off because people do their bronze and they are put off by one night and they can't imagine going out for three nights, so I think that's sort of the only thing..."*

(Female, Gold participant)

#### **6.4.4. Local community**

##### **6.4.4.1. Benefit to the local community**

Young people were asked several questions relating to their awareness of and involvement with the local community and how their actions, through doing their DofE, may benefit the community. This reveals that many young people are not aware of how their actions, through doing their DofE, are helping the local community, or in fact, did not believe that they were making a positive contribution.

Many young people expressed the view that doing their DofE did not benefit the local community. This was the second most frequent response.

For those that did feel that there was a benefit to the community, the following ways that this was achieved were suggested (in order of frequency):

- volunteering with a uniformed organisation

- working within the school community
- working with children
- teaching others or sports coaching.

These responses reflect the fact that young people reported that they enjoyed volunteering within their own community and volunteering was the most popular response given as their best DofE activity.

As discussed in section 6.4.2.5, young people (especially the under 16s) were encouraged to volunteer within an organisation that they already had a connection with. For example, within the Scouts, one of the participants was volunteering with the Beavers and continues to do so:

*"I helped out, like started helping out at Beaver group when you had to do it for like three months but I really enjoy it and I've been helping out for over a year now."*

(Female, Bronze participant)

And another for Girlguiding UK:

*"[F]or my service I help out at guiding and I help run a local guide unit and also a Brownie pack so by going down every week the girls benefit from having new opportunities and new experiences through Guiding."*

(Female, Silver participant)

Other young people gave more pragmatic ways in which their involvement benefits the local community. There are DofE groups who make a concerted effort to get their young people involved in the local community. Some groups have a strategy of increased community involvement so that their young people are visibly seen doing something positive in their own community. Examples given by young people included litter picking and gardening in their neighbourhood which, they are aware, raised their profile in the community in a positive way. As one young person pointed out:

*"I think its changed older people's views as well because they think we do nothing but get into trouble and hang about the streets and all that and we turn round and say to them 'well how can we be hanging about the streets and causing trouble if we are there' so I think it kind of changes older folks when they why they, the way that they are looking at us."*

(Female, silver participant)

As revealed above, participants were often unsure of how their DofE programme is benefiting the local community, if at all. For example, one group visited was an open DofE centre in an urban area. When asked how taking part in a DofE programme was beneficial to the local community, the young people unanimously said that they did not have a local community there. This related to the location of the open DofE centre. They also equated this to the fact that they live in a large city and so the effects of their community involvement may not be immediately apparent:

*"[W]e haven't got like a small community where you can see the effects, like we do our service and whatever and it probably doesn't make that much of a difference but it's meant to like in smaller places it would probably."*

(Male, Bronze participant)

However, this group of young people turned this into a positive comment about getting involved with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (and reflecting the complexities of the term 'community'):

*"Well we don't all really live in the same community anyway because we [are] all..."*

*"Spread out"*

*"See, which is another reason why this is good"*

*"This is also good because it makes people, brings people together who don't, like, live next to each other."*

(Two males, Bronze participants)

Again, the young people talk about friendship and the community of where they are doing their DofE and their sense of belonging to that group. The two young men quoted above went on to talk about their friendship and how it has evolved since they joined the group at the DofE centre.

As mentioned above, the third most cited way of benefiting the community was within the young persons school and helping their peers within the school environment:

*"Within my school community it has because obviously I've helped the younger groups but within my wider community I'm not so sure I haven't really been in my wider community too much."*

(Female, Gold participant)

*"I'm not sure because I live in quite an isolated area there's not much I could do in my personal community but for instance for my service I'm helping in a maths lesson at school so it's, I guess, helping them."*

(Female, Gold participant)

*"Yes through the service part of the Award I've, that's been of benefit [...] I worked as a mentor at my school sort of helping younger children with their studies and encouraging them to take a more positive attitude towards education."*

(Male, Gold participant)

This reveals that young people over the age of 16 are continuing to volunteer within their school community. However, they have obviously made a valuable contribution to their school community and, in the long term, this contribution is potentially wider than within the school gates. They are mentoring younger students and helping them with their education, thus potentially raising aspirations and educational qualifications of the future workforce. As one participant pointed out, this volunteering within school has also had a positive impact on her:

*"[O]bviously with the helping out with the children in school that's helped them quite a bit and it's helped me also with gaining new skills and also the skills I learnt with interacting with the children I now use elsewhere as well, erm, outside of school with different clubs and things like that so that's definitely benefited them."*

(Female, Bronze participant)

Those young people who stated that doing their DofE did not benefit the local community gave several reasons for this view. This included being unsure of how they were benefiting the local community, or not knowing what constitutes their local community, even when it may seem obvious to others. One good

example of this is where a young person is doing their DofE within the Army Cadets. Within this organisation there is an element called 'Cadets in the Community' where the cadets go out and do something positive for the community and raise funds for the squadron. Even with this explicit community element, some of the young people were still unsure of how they were helping others.

The quotation below exemplifies the confusion for some relating to what constitutes the local community. This participant is helping out at an after school club for those younger than herself, but could not see the connection with helping within her local community:

*"I'm not sure if anything I did benefited my local community but I suppose if you did do something like conservation it would but I don't think me doing it has [...] I helped out with clubs at my church that are for younger children, sort of lower school age, after school clubs for them."*

(Female, Silver participant)

#### 6.4.4.2. Increased interaction or involvement with local community

As part of this strand of the study, young people were asked how doing their DofE has increased their interaction or involvement with the local community.

Most young people did not think that doing their DofE had increased their interaction or involvement with the local community, and 'none' was the most popular response to this question. They gave several reasons for this opinion, including:

- they are doing their DofE in school and have not changed their actions since embarking on their DofE programme
- choice of activities – the Volunteering section in particular (especially if they are doing their DofE in school)
- location – some young people were limited by what they could do simply due to their rural location
- they considered that they were already involved with their local community, for example:

*"[N]ot really because I did, for my service I did fund raising but I was already quite involved with things already."*

(Female, Bronze participant)

There were several ways that young people thought that their interaction or involvement was increased due to taking part in a DofE programme. They included:

- by helping out or getting involved at a uniform organisation
- getting more involved with the local community
- through meeting others in the community
- becoming more aware of their own community and what is going on, and
- making new contacts and knowing more people.

*"[W]ith helping the Cub Scouts obviously, at first it was an issue, they wouldn't have been able to continue running without my assistance but obviously then we've continued and grown, the group's grown and got more members and more leaders so, yes although it doesn't stand*

*out, it isn't in the forefront of the community, without it, probably wouldn't have happened."*

(Male, Bronze participant)

When young people reported that doing their DofE had increased their involvement with the local community, it was usually through interaction at the clubs or groups they either previously attended or went to as a result of doing their DofE. If they were already part of the club they were likely to get involved in a different capacity such as leading younger children at Scouts or coaching them in a particular sport.

*"Well to be honest I didn't really get out very much then, helping out but it, because now I am constantly helping down at the Cubs now, every Tuesday."*

(Male, Bronze participant)

*"Yes certainly, I mean I've gone out with the local mountain rescue team and it's broadened my horizons to what actually happens in the community."*

(Male, Bronze participant)

Other young people who stated that they had become more involved saw doing their DofE as a opportunity to meet new and varied people in their community:

*"I've met loads of new people like all the people doing the award like people in my group and in other groups I've met people which I wouldn't normally speak to at school and like the leaders doing it, teachers, people at the shop, people at the charity shop where I work, I see them and just talk to them its good, meeting all new people."*

(Female, Silver participant)

### **Case Study 3. Increasing interaction with the community.**

YP76 is doing her Silver DofE programme, having progressed from Bronze. She is doing this at school who are very supportive of the DofE, but, she believes the motivation predominantly comes from the staff who encourage the students to take part:

*"There's a great ethos within the school that I go to, to try and excel and challenge yourself and we've got some really, really good teaching staff there that help us out and try and motivate us and so they were really the main reason [that I am doing a DofE]".*

This illustrates the importance of having supportive and encouraging DofE Leaders.

Through doing the Volunteering section of her DofE programme, she has increased her interaction and involvement with the local community. She did her volunteering by helping with the younger children in school. This introduced her to new skills of working with children and also to a wider network that she was keen to get involved with. Consequently, she is now involved with other youth groups

*"helping out with the children in school that's helped them quite a bit and its helped me also with gaining new skills and also the skills I learnt with interacting with the children I now use elsewhere as well, outside of school, with different clubs and things [...] I go on weeks away camping and things like that with different groups outside school*

*and things like that, I also still help out with the school and younger members of the community there, so yes I now help out at Scout groups and things like that which is quite good."*

### Case Study 3. Increasing interaction with the community.

#### 6.4.4.3. Interactions with others with different backgrounds and cultures

Young people were asked if their participation in a DofE programme has given them a chance to learn about others from different backgrounds and different cultures. These two questions produced the most negative responses from the young people who took part in the research.

The DofE is a personal development programme for young people which, through doing the different sections, includes aspects of engaging with the wider community. Whilst increasing interaction with the wider community is not one of the guiding principles of the DofE programme, it usually occurs by involvement in the programme although, it is, of course dependent on the activity/activities that a young person decides to participate in.

Over half of the young people asked stated that doing their DofE programme had not given them the chance to meet others from different backgrounds. Those that did give a positive answer, gave a variety of explanations. It was up to the young person to interpret for themselves what *'different background'* meant to them, with the result that responses related to various demographics such as culture, age, class and (dis)ability. The answers given were not specifically related to one of the sections of the DofE, but usually connected to interaction and contact and where this took place for the young person. For example one participant spoke about how he helped out at the Beaver Cub group that was part of his own unit:

*"I helped out at Beaver Cubs for children with special needs and I've carried that on and I'm really enjoying that and I'm doing a lot more volunteering with that [...] the beaver and cub pack for children with special needs so like you get to communicate with the adults as well so you try and help them just as much as the children really."*

(Male, Silver participant)

He went on to say why this activity has been the most rewarding for him:

*"Definitely working with the beaver and cub pack for children with special needs, because just getting a simple smile out of some of the kids just makes it all worthwhile."*

For other young people it was about interacting with people that they would not usually meet and meeting others in the different environments that their DofE introduced them to. This included, for example, meeting new people on the expedition, as part of their uniformed organisation activities, at social events and, through volunteering, meeting others with different abilities.

Girlguiding UK and the Scout Association encourage their members to be aware of others in the wider community and this became apparent when talking to some of the young people who are doing their DofE with these organisations:

*"Everyone who I have met within the Award and who is doing the Award have been from different backgrounds, as in they've been different locations due to it being county at Girlguiding, we do it at*

*county, so they've come from different parts of [] so their experience of the Award in their local area is totally different to mine."*

(Female, Silver participant)

#### **Case Study 4. Interacting with others from different backgrounds.**

YP32 stated that the most significant skills she gained from doing her Gold DofE programme was the ability to interact and communicate with a wide range of people, gained through doing her residential and volunteering, combined with overcoming the challenge of doing the expedition:

*"I think for me in terms of sort of being able to speak to and interact with people from different walks of life that I wouldn't normally interact with, so for example when I was doing my residential I got to work with young children who had had a difficult upbringing and it taught me to appreciate people from different walks of life and when I was doing my community service I was working with another group of children and it was quite good in terms of developing me in that way [...] the expedition section, that was something that I never thought I could do because although I'm quite sporty it involves quite a lot of sort of carrying a lot of heavy stuff and you know walking for ages and I suppose roughing it a bit and I didn't really think I could do that so I think its really sort of helped sort of, me learning that I can achieve something and persevere with something and I can actually do things that I never thought I could do."*

She illustrates that through doing a DofE, a young person can learn lots of different social skills and also the ability to push themselves to do things that they previously would not consider possible.

#### **Case Study 4. Interacting with others from different backgrounds.**

Over two thirds of the young people who were asked did not consider that doing their DofE programme gave them a chance to learn about or mix with others from different cultures.

Whilst most young people gave a straight 'no' answer, some did offer further explanation:

*"No because our school is mostly white Christian English people like that so I didn't really get to meet many people from different cultures unfortunately."*

(Female, Gold participant)

*"No, I haven't learned anything about different cultures, all the people I interacted with throughout this course are from the same cultural background as me."*

(Female, Bronze participant)

*"Not really, because I do the Award at school I already know the people in my year group from different backgrounds that I would have got to know by doing the Award."*

(Female, Bronze participant)

*"Not particularly, the area where I am isn't particularly mixed, it's all quite white Caucasian, I haven't really met a lot of new people or met people from different cultures."*

(Male, Silver participant)

The ways that they did interact with others was either through the expedition, through their group or in the Residential section for the Gold DofE programme. For example:

*"Yes if I've met a few people from different places and that, especially on the expedition from college, you learn more about them and you get to know them, I wouldn't say specifically about their culture, just generally the person and their background."*

(Male, silver participant)

Another participant was doing her DofE at an open DofE centre:

*"Yes I'd say so because I went to a catholic school and I didn't really meet anyone that wasn't a catholic so much but at the Award like you meet lots of people from lots of different backgrounds and stuff."*

(Female, Gold participant)

This illustrates that there may be many factors that prevent young people who are doing a DofE programme from interacting with others from different cultures, including, geographical location, doing the DofE within school or another organisation that the young person is already affiliated, and therefore mixing with the same group of people for their DofE.

#### **Case Study 5. Meeting others.**

YP54 considers that where she lives, *"they are all sort of middle class [...] and pretty, sort of white"*, and there were few opportunities to meet with either those from different backgrounds or cultures. However, rather than join the DofE group set up within her school she decided to join an open DofE centre in her neighbouring town because

*"I wanted to make a different friendship group from outside of my school friends [...] so I joined the [] open group which is a different area from where I live which enabled me to expand my friendship group"*.

Further, when asked, she admitted that for her Gold Residential section, she would be going to the Lebanon to work with a church group, giving her the opportunity to meet with and work with those from a different culture.

Through doing her DofE programme, she has been able to make new friends and extend her friendship group to others outside school and her residential has given her an opportunity to work with others from a culture different from her own.

#### **Case Study 5. Meeting others.**

#### 6.4.5. Physical and mental well-being

This theme covers the social and personal development described by DofE participants who participated in the research. As the Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a progressive personal development programme, the personal outcomes of a DofE programme relate directly to these broad themes.

Young people were asked several questions relating to personal and social development, and the responses to some other questions have revealed ways that the DofE assists with personal development of the individual.

The DofE is a programme of personal development for the individual. Most of the young people consulted with did not talk explicitly about personal development, but their explanations of the influences and impact on them of doing a DofE programme revealed many instances of personal and social development, which in turn will affect their physical and mental well-being. The themes that emerged from their responses included:

- building confidence
- overcoming challenges
- learning about themselves and their capabilities
- practical skills

These are related to the reported top three benefits of doing a DofE: friendships, learning new skills and enhancing their CV, which are discussed next.

##### 6.4.5.1. Main benefit of doing the DofE

Most of the young people interviewed discussed several main benefits of doing their DofE. Friendship was considered to be the main benefit of doing a DofE by participants, followed by learning new skills and the advantage of having a Duke of Edinburgh's Award on their CV or personal statement.

Friendship and meeting new and different people was discussed mainly in the context of the young person's DofE group and the community where they are doing their DofE. Participants also discussed how friendships develop over time whilst doing a DofE, with many references to how the expedition was a catalyst for further bonding by spending concentrated time in a small group, and through the experience of learning about each others strengths and weaknesses in order to work as a cohesive team. This aspect of mental well-being is exemplified in Case Study 6 below.

#### **Case Study 6. Successful DofE Centre**

Socialising and a sense of security and belonging is a major part of a young person's personal development. This DofE centre runs DofE programmes as part of a youth club setting, getting the young people together to do their DofE programme, but giving them the freedom to do other things alongside their DofE. The young people meet once a week for a whole evening. The centre offers training for both the Skills and the Expedition section of the DofE and offers support and guidance for the Volunteering and Physical sections. The evening begins at 7.30pm with half an hour of free time for the young people to catch up with their friends. Between 8 and 9pm the young people get into their DofE groups for either skills or expedition, depending on the time of year. The last slot of the evening is used to get all the young people together in their specific DofE programme levels and do team building or management style exercises in a large group. This DofE centre is very popular and access to all those who want to

take part is a problem – the centre is limited in numbers it can accommodate due to size of the building and numbers of volunteers available. One of the attractions is that the youth club is not part of school. However, the paradox of this is that this DofE centre attracts young people who are predominantly from one school. Whilst this school encourages the students to take part in a DofE programme, they do not offer the programme. The result is that they come to the centre to do their DofE programme. This has the consequence that this centre is not attracting the cross section of young people it could be.

#### **Case Study 6. Successful DofE Centre**

The following quotes are also good examples of how doing a DofE can create and enhance friendships and make new friends:

*"[Y]ou become closer in your groups, the groups that you do Duke of Edinburgh in, its erm, you become so close to the other people because you practically live a year of your life with them because its such a commitment to do..."*

(Female, Silver participant)

*"[Y]ou get to know the people that you're with, you get to become closer to them and like better friends if you are already friends and sometimes you get to meet new people if you haven't really seen them before and you get put in a group with them and I think you realise that if you work hard you can achieve anything."*

(Female, Gold participant)

Young people were aware of the personal development that they experienced whilst doing their DofE. Even if they didn't explicitly state this, they did discuss important elements of personal development that they considered to be one of the main benefits of doing a DofE and what it had done for them. Many of these were related to the top three responses themes of friendships, learning new skills and enhancing their CV.

One of the important elements for young people was that they had fun whilst doing their DofE. This was one of the reasons that they remain engaged with the programme: if they were not enjoying the experience they would not continue with the programme. Further elements of personal development that young people considered to be amongst the main benefits of doing their DofE were:

- having new experiences
- building confidence through taking part
- team building
- communication skills
- resilience, and
- fitness.

#### **Case Study 7. Socialisation, health and well-being, and career prospects.**

YP41 is a good example of the wide ranging positive impact a Duke of Edinburgh's Award can have for a young person. YP41 is doing her Bronze Award. For her, a DofE programme *"is a great way to socialise with other people"* and her DofE has *"given me a chance to actually make me go out because I need something that will make me so it kind of pushes me"*. So, firstly, the DofE has helped her become more sociable and to get out meeting new people.

Secondly, she considered that the most rewarding thing about doing her DofE

programme has been *"actually getting more healthy and understanding other people"*. For her Physical section she has been going to the gym and stated *"it's helped me get fit as well."*

Thirdly, which she alludes to above, through her volunteering YP41 she has been working with those in her community and has gained understanding of others. In fact, it is the Volunteering section that has had the most profound impact on her life. She is working with children with special needs and this, she has decided, is what she would like to do for a career. Doing a DofE has given her the opportunity, not only try this kind of work, but also the confidence to pursue it further.

In conclusion, she stated:

*"To be honest I just recommend it to anyone out there who is looking for a chance to go out and increase their socialisation and just to get more confident because to be honest it will really help you when you move on in life, when you go to college and uni, you'll just understand that doing the Duke of Edinburgh it will help you with talking to people and actually becoming more confident."*

#### **Case Study 7. Socialisation, health and well-being, and career prospects.**

##### **6.4.5.2. Personal development**

Young people stated that doing their DofE programme has given them the opportunity to learn more about themselves in terms of their capabilities and discovering their strengths and weaknesses. This in turn has increased their confidence. Several young people gave examples of how a DofE gave them more confidence, enabling them to transfer this to other areas of their lives (see also section 6.4.5.3 below).

For example:

*"I'm more energetic and I feel more comfortable because I've done a lot of community work, I can go out into the community and join a group and wouldn't think twice about it, joining the groups and that."*  
(Female, Silver participant)

*"I just feel that I can go into a place and a group of people and just start talking to them whereas a lot of the time I would sit and say nothing and that would be after quite a while I would start to join in and stuff but I feel I can go in and just start talking to people now, make conversation."*

(Female, Silver participant)

Both of these young people were taking part in their DofE programme within a scheme offered to disengaged young people who have offended, or are at risk of offending. Whilst the programme cannot be taken in isolation to other positive activities they are also being encouraged to take part in, it is considered that these young people have gained much by taking part in the DofE. This is evident when they are at ease talking about themselves. One of these young people also talked about how, for her, the DofE had significantly improved her fitness:

*"Better fitness levels [...] All the time like, you come here unfit to begin with and really struggle but eventually you just keep trying and*

*it just gets easier for you and you start to enjoy yourself a lot more than you did to begin with because it's not as hard."*

(Female, Silver participant)

Several other young people discussed how doing their DofE has raised their fitness levels. Taking part in a Duke of Edinburgh's Award encourages a young person to get more active. The expedition requires a certain level of fitness and the Physical section is designed to get young people involved and improve in a sport or activity. Many of the young people discussed the physical challenge of the expedition (see below). Further, the Expedition section of the DofE in particular was highlighted by young people as a means of them learning about themselves and their capabilities as a person; giving them their first taste of independence and being able to cope in a hostile environment with their friends to support them. As in section 6.4.5.1, friendship was quoted as the main benefit of taking part in a DofE for young people. It was not just the making of friends but actually learning what friendship means, the give and take, and this became apparent to young people whilst on their expedition. Some were surprised by their own capabilities:

*"I'm surprised that I could do it, I thought I would give up because I give up a lot so I haven't given up and so that's great."*

(Female, Bronze participant)

One participant who had just completed his Gold Award summed up:

*"It is also good for you personally because it helps develop new friendships and it helps you to realise how hard you can actually push yourself when you need to, you know, because well I have probably never really had to push myself as hard as I did in Gold you know what I mean, because you are never really put into that sort of demanding situation, so it teaches you how hard you can actually push yourself and then I just think like the mental development through determination and things like that."*

(Male, Gold participant)

Participating in their DofE programme gives young people practical skills and new experiences that contribute to their personal and social development. For example:

*"[The Duke of Edinburgh's Award] is just so broad, it just covers so many different aspects of life like your silver, all your service skills and practical and the expedition as well which gives people an opportunity to do activities which they never really [would] have got to."*

(Male, Gold participant)

*"I think because you are getting all these opportunities and your confidence is getting built up, but I think it's the two main threads we are talking about. You really feel like there is, I think, you know, you are saying the idea that if there is a challenge before you, well yeah, I could do it, I could try it, I could give it a shot and so what I said at first really, empowering you, it really does make you feel like you could take on whatever it is you are planning to take on and I would have never have really seen myself as a particularly active, outdoor person, navigating, whatever, but I have somewhat to my own detriment been responsible for getting myself round hills and losing myself, and finding myself, and getting back on track."*

(Male, Gold Award holder)

This young person has only recently completed his Gold Award and is now helping to lead groups within a DofE centre.

Young people were also asked what new skills doing their DofE has given them. The most popular responses to this were centred around personal development and soft skills, rather than practical skills or achievements. The most cited response was interpersonal skills, including social, people and communication skills, followed by team building, confidence and leadership skills.

The response to this question reveals that young people recognise and value the transferable skills that doing a DofE allows them to accumulate. More significantly, it is apparent that a DofE programme gives young people the opportunity to acquire skills that they may not otherwise develop.

*"I think for me in term of sort of being able to speak to and interact with people from different walks of life that I wouldn't normally interact with, so for example when I was doing my residential erm I got to work with young children who had had a difficult upbringing and it taught me to appreciate people from different walks of life and when I was doing my community service I was working with another group of children and it was quite good in terms of developing me in that way."*

(Female, Gold participant)

*"I've learnt how to work as part of a team when things aren't going exactly as you would like them to be going and to work with people that I wouldn't usually work with because of, you know, of the groups we were put in."*

(Female. Silver participant)

*"I think it's given me skills in talking to people because at first I'd never really talked to other people that I'd never met properly before and I didn't really have the confidence to go up to them and talk to them about things and I think that's one of the main skills that I've gained from the experience."*

(Female, Gold participant)

Other personal development skills include:

- organisational skills
- resilience
- life skills
- independence
- commitment
- helping others

Young people described a wide variety of practical skills, which reflects one of the guiding principles of the DofE: that it is personalised.

#### 6.4.5.3. Change way you feel about yourself / Alter personal perception

Young people were asked if they had changed the way they felt about themselves by taking part in a DofE programme. The overwhelming answer to this was 'yes' and most felt that this change was gaining or building confidence.

Young peoples' increased confidence manifests itself in many ways, depending on the individual, their circumstances and the context of the situation. It is possible to divide participants' responses into four further categories:

- realise own capabilities / personal qualities
- self esteem
- personal development
- external qualities (how they believe others now perceive them as a result of doing a DofE).

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award helped participants to realise their own capabilities in many ways. Young people discussed how they felt they had become more capable through doing their DofE by finding 'inner strength' and resilience. Many young people considered that doing their DofE had made them a stronger person, capable of problem solving and achieving goals.

*"[I]t made me more confident and more, it made me feel like I can actually achieve what I can aim for, because I'm scared of heights I thought no way, I can't climb these little hills but then working with others and then just keeping myself going and it did it..."*

(Female, Bronze participant)

*"[I]ts given me more confidence to go off and be able to volunteer to do stuff and get involved in different groups and stuff and things which I wouldn't have done before undertaking the Award."*

(Male, Gold participant)

For those who are confident, it gave them a chance to increase their friendship groups, interaction with others and further increase their sense of self:

*"[A]s you can probably hear I'm quite a confident person anyway but, yes I just think it's been a great opportunity just to mix with other types of people and I suppose that makes you feel a little bit different about yourself because if you've got different friendship groups and when something goes wrong with one of them you've always got the other friends and that's nice and I do meet up with my Duke of Edinburgh friends outside of the Duke of Edinburgh meetings..."*

(Female, Silver participant)

The external quality that several young people stated as the most significant was commitment. They believed that the demonstration of commitment through doing a DofE had changed the way others now perceived them. This was important for increasing their sense of self worth.

*"[P]ossibly not how I feel about myself, but how I like to think people feel about me. Many people are far sportier than myself and therefore from the outset appeared to be better suited to the challenge of D of E, however when it came to it, many of those people, just didn't have the determination or will power. And I think others have now realised, that I can adapt to completely different tasks."*

(Female, Gold participant)

Young people perceived that doing their DofE has increased their self esteem. This is through increased confidence, instilling self belief, pride, becoming more positive and having more faith in themselves. In terms of personal development, participants considered that doing their DofE had given them inner strength and resilience, equipped them with inter-personal, social and team building skills and an awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses.

A significant number of young people (about a quarter of those asked) stated that doing the DofE had not changed the way they felt about themselves. This may be for several reasons, including:

- they may already be doing activities equivalent to those they do for their DofE programme
- they may not want to admit this in front of a group of their peers.

This second point was evident when talking to a group of vulnerable young people. This may have been that they may not have wanted to talk about their emotions, or are not used to sharing thoughts about themselves in such a context.

#### **6.4.6. Employment**

In the qualitative strand of the research, young people were not asked specific questions about their future or possible employment but responses to other questions relate directly to their ideas about the potential benefits of doing their DofE on their future prospects. Responses related to broadening their horizons, the benefit of having a recognised achievement on their CV and how they thought it has or it might impact on their future decisions with regards to their career. These qualities were discussed under diverse themes, such as the main benefit of doing a DofE, new interests, new skills and why young people had decided to do a DofE programme.

As already discussed in section 6.4.5.1, the potential advantage of having their Duke of Edinburgh's Award on their CV was one of the most cited benefits of achieving a DofE. Young people considered that having a DofE gave them demonstrable skills that they can use on a CV or personal statement for university or job application. It also gives them something that they can discuss at interview and they can offer concrete examples of abilities such as leadership skills, team building and commitment.

*"I think that the D of E award is about working in a team to get a qualification primarily, but the things you have to do and learn, like navigation, teamwork and cooking are all essential life skills."*

(Female, Bronze participant)

*"[I]ts helps getting you into university [...], the unis look on it well, erm, it helps, [...] I did my Gold leadership award as part of my gold and we had to do a twenty minute presentation for that and before I'd done that there's no way you would get me to stand up in front of people and give a presentation and now it's a lot easier to do."*

(Female, Gold participant)

The young people spoken to about their DofE experience were self aware and reflective about how doing their Duke of Edinburgh's Award equips them for the world of work and gives them a competitive advantage over other young people when applying for jobs and university. Young people were conscious that a Duke of Edinburgh's Award was recognised externally by employers and others which also encouraged them when doing their programme:

*"One of the main benefits of DofE is how highly regarded it is by employers and universities. This is very helpful when applying and going to an interview."*

(Male, Gold participant)

*“Well its learning new skills and gaining social side of it [...] its also for the broader aspect of like job opportunities in the future, how its recognised in the wider community as something that you’re seen to have stuck at for a while especially with getting through to Gold.”*

(Male, Gold participant)

*“One influence was that how employers like in the future really look upon it and think that it’s a great thing to have and it looks really well because it gives you an edge [over other people] if it came to an interview about past experiences, people told me how much they enjoyed it so I thought ‘definitely want to have a go’”.*

(Male, Gold participant)

*“I would say, it’s a good thing to put down on your personal statement first of all for applying to universities and it’s a good thing in later, for going for any sort of interview, you know what I mean, because it shows you can work as part of a team, it shows you’re determined, it shows you’re dedicated, it shows you’re good working with other people and it shows like problem solving abilities and working, able to work through hard times.”*

(Male, Gold participant)

Some participants explained how their DofE has had a positive impact when applying for jobs and during interviews:

*“[I]t looks very good on your CV, every job I’ve had since I completed my DofE, especially at Gold level, it’s been commented on because I feel that employers do actually know the value of having a DofE.”*

(Female, Gold participant)

*“I can definitely say being in that position at the moment having worked through the Award and applying for different courses and jobs etcetera, the Duke of Edinburgh Award gets probably the best reaction and things. It has a good status and currency amongst employers etcetera.”*

(Male, Gold participant)

For several young people who participated in the research, their main motivation for getting involved in a Duke of Edinburgh’s Award was to enhance their CV and, for some of them, it is an opportunity to get recognition for activities they are already doing:

*“I was doing all three things anyway [...] I really did it just to get a qualification to look good on my personal statement [...] and as I did something that fitted into each category and I do quite a lot of walking anyway, I just thought it was something extra that I could do [...] I think it’s a sense of personal achievement, a personal challenge and I think something that will look good that now I feel proud to put on my personal statement and it feels that I could be more successful because I’ve done this.”*

(Female, Gold participant)

*"[I]t looks good on your CV [...] like that was the reason that I started doing it, like I wanted something to put on my CV, my UCAS or whatever, but it's actually like, there's better things like it's made me more confident and happy and I've just really enjoyed doing it."*

(Female, Gold participant)

*"For me it's been about getting a formal recognition of the extra-curricular activities I do, mainly for UCAS."*

(Male, Gold participant)

*"I first started the Bronze mainly because it would be something extra to say on UCAS stuff and university stuff but then continued because it was just a lot of fun."*

(Female, Gold participant)

*"I do my Duke of Edinburgh's (laughs) because I thought it would be good on my CV and my university application..."*

(Male, Bronze participant)

As most of these young people revealed, whilst their initial motive had been to enhance their CV, their DofE experiences have exceeded their expectations and whilst they appreciate the added value of a DofE for recognising their activities, they have gained more than just something extra to put on their CV.

One of the main advantages in relation to employment, other than having a Duke of Edinburgh's Award on a CV, is the transferable or life skills that a young person can gain from doing a DofE:

*"I think it really broadens your horizons and generally when you're doing applications for jobs and things you find that all the things you've done towards Duke of Edinburgh have all got indirect benefits to what you are going in to, because the skills that they give you are all life skills [...] the four different sections each one of them is so important to certain skills."*

(Male, Gold participant)

*"I mean you learn new skills which will be helpful later on in life, it looks great on your CV and you make some great friends on the way. [...] having something to say about yourself because I find that quite a lot of people at my school are quite, for want of a better word, boring and I don't mean that in any horrible way but they just don't have much to say about themselves..."*

(Male, Silver participant)

In a few cases, doing their DofE has helped young people decide what direction they would like to go in their future or careers that they would like to pursue. For example:

*"I actually worked with children with Down's Syndrome in my local community and that really boosted my confidence of working with people with disabilities which led me to do more sports days with children with different disabilities and it also helped me pursue what I'm doing at university now which is physiotherapy."*

(Female, Gold participant – see also Case Study 8)

*"[I]t was probably one of the most hardest things I've ever done and just yeah, the walking gives you so much time to think about things"*

*and put things into perspective but also just gave you lots of different aspects to look at and career wise I think because I started doing the guides I am now training to do a PGCE where as I was working in industry before, working as a scientist, so it just kind of broadens your horizons I guess."*

(Female, Gold participant)

*"[I]ts influenced my career choice [...] I've decided to go on to university to study forensics with the intention of becoming a police diver."*

(Male, Silver participant who took up scuba diving for his Skills section)

For the disengaged young people consulted with, their DofE programme, as shown in section 6.4.5.3, gave them the opportunity to get involved, which in turn has built their confidence, and thus they are more likely to get involved in other activities. This is associated with ways that the DofE can have an effect on many elements of a young person's life.

#### **Case Study 8. Career.**

YP52 is aware that she has benefited from doing her DofE programme in many ways, not least because "*it boosts your personal statement for university*". She also recognizes that there are personal benefits and those achieved by getting a young person involved in their local community. It is this element of doing her DofE that, arguably, she has benefited from the most.

She considered that the activity that she chose for her Volunteering section was one of two most enjoyable activities of her DofE programme. She states that her volunteering is the part of her DofE that has helped her to gain confidence in general. She chose to work with children with Down's Syndrome. By doing this, she has realised the benefits of volunteering both to herself and to others within her own community. She was aware of the valuable contribution that she made in working with children with Down's Syndrome and children with disabilities as a volunteer. She carried on with her volunteering after finishing her Gold Award and revealed that the only reason that she stopped was because she moved to go to university. She is currently doing physiotherapy at university and when she graduates she hopes to work with children and young people who have disabilities such as Down's Syndrome. This decision has been completely influenced by her volunteering experiences whilst doing her DofE.

#### **Case Study 8. Career.**

#### **6.4.7. General views on the DofE**

Overall, comments, thoughts and perceptions made by research participants about the Duke of Edinburgh's Award were positive. This might be a result of the research participants either being actively involved in doing their own DofE programme or in its delivery. The following section will discuss ways that respondents thought the DofE could work towards widening participation and how they would like to see the DofE improved.

#### 6.4.7.1. Ways to widen participation and increase completion

Young people were asked what they thought would be the best way of widening participation in the DofE programme and how other young people could be encouraged to take part. Overwhelmingly, the most cited answers covered the broad themes of advertising, publicity and raising awareness of the DofE among other young people. Young people thought that more information should be available to others and their parents about getting involved in the DofE so that they could make a more informed choice. It was thought that the best way to increase numbers would be to change the type and methods of publicity, on both a local and national level.

The second theme of solutions offered was widening accessibility of the programme to young people, by making it more widely available. It was suggested that this should be done through strengthening links with schools, and opening more open DofE centres. The overall positive experiences of the young people spoken to meant that they were keen for other young people to get involved. For example, one female Scout said:

*"I just think it's an amazing experience and everyone should be able to have the opportunity to access it, because if they had the opportunity I think everyone would enjoy being away from your school friends, being away from your family but once you're out there it is probably one of the best experiences you'll ever get."*

(Female, Bronze participant)

More specific ways that participants thought others could be encouraged to do a DofE programme included presentations by peers who are doing the DofE who can talk effectively about their experiences and the merit of doing a DofE. It was thought that DofE Award holder testimonies would be another effective way of encouraging others to take part. Other methods suggested include:

- peer presentations in schools
- peer mentors to support a young person through their DofE
- involving parents more when the young person is deciding to get involved, perhaps in an induction so that they know what their child is getting involved with
- extend the age range of the DofE

This last suggestion could link in with a leader qualification for Gold Award holders who wish to, or could be encouraged to become future leaders of the DofE.

#### 6.4.7.2. Improvements to programmes

Young people were asked, if they had the opportunity and they could change or improve anything to make their DofE better, what would it be? The majority of young people spoken to were, overall, happy with their DofE and said that they would make no changes to the programme. Suggestions that young people did make did not, on the whole, relate to changes in the programme structure, but were improvements related to how their organisation or institution delivers elements of the DofE programme.

*"When I applied for my Silver it took like three months for my book to come through like from my operating authority [...] and like again when I handed in my Bronze book when I finished that it took like a year for me to actually get my certificate and stuff [...] it was a bit, because I'd already started and finished my Silver so, and they were*

*saying well here's your Bronze Award and I was like can I have my Silver one as well?!"*

(Male, Silver participant)

The section of the programme that young people wanted to make most changes to was the Expedition section. This is the section that, from a delivery partner perspective, takes the most planning and training as the young person does most of the organising of the rest of their DofE independently with appropriate support and guidance from their leaders. Suggested changes to the expedition covered a range of areas such as altering the way the expedition planning was organised, timing of the expedition and not having to produce a report on completion of the expedition.

The third most popular change that the young people spoken to would like to make to their DofE is to have an increase in support or guidance for a range of reasons, including:

*"I think [be] given more ideas about things to do because it can be quite difficult to come up with something that you can do, it is I must say there wasn't a lot of, I mean although there was ideas given, they weren't always helpful for your specific location [...] so it might be helpful to have a few more ideas about things that are more local, like specific to your area. "*

(Female, Bronze participant)

*"I think if we'd had more help sort of finding things to do like, if through school or through the organisation that you did it with, if they, if you had more help with finding groups that you could join for your skills and sports because I think that was quite difficult and financially it was quite expensive to sort of join groups and buy the equipment and stuff."*

(Female, Silver participant)

One participant suggested she needed further guidance for her expedition training:

*"Maybe more information given to like gold candidates, we haven't quite been explained to like what we need to do for our own Award, like will we need to physically do our own expedition, map it out and everything, and we have now picked up some skills on how to do that but have not been shown in depth, so maybe that."*

(Female, Gold participant)

This is quite unusual as most DofE centres concentrate on the expedition training. It may be because this participant did her Silver expedition abroad and so her Gold expedition presents completely different challenges again.

Other changes that young people would make to their DofE include:

- financial assistance or help with fund raising;
- extend the capacity of the DofE so that more young people can take part;
- increase the age range;
- making it compulsory for the individual to do something new to them;
- more international opportunities;
- speed up the processing of DofE's; and
- promoting the DofE wider in the workplace.

#### 6.4.7.3. Leader support and guidance/influence of leader/inspirational leader

Young people stated that their leaders and the support of the leaders was the best thing about the place where they are doing their DofE programme:

*"I like the way our leaders are really supportive and help you along the way and they like come and visit you [when on expedition] and you can have a laugh with them and they'll like help you and it makes you, it makes me feel more comfortable when I do it than if I was in school."*

(Female, Bronze participant)

*"[T]he support you get in school I think, 'cos you are in here every day, I think you get, and then you're doing you're whatever it is, an afternoon a week on your [Duke of Edinburgh's Award], especially when you're in first year, you get to know like the teachers a lot better because you're sort of designated to a teacher at the start so we get an awful lot of support from the school through the [Duke of Edinburgh's Award] and a lot of encouragement to do it..."*

(Female, Gold participant)

The participants quoted above were taking part in their DofE programmes in different situations, one with a uniformed organisation and one within school. Both of them highlight the significance of leader support from different perspectives for keeping a young person engaged in their DofE and the impact that their positive input has on a young person. The pivotal role of leaders in a successful group is exemplified in Case Study 9.

Other reasons for the best thing about doing their DofE where they do include:

- meeting new people
- it's not school
- range of opportunities
- it's fun
- making friends
- activities
- two qualifications in one.

#### **Case Study 9. Leaders – the importance of good leadership.**

The experience of YP60 is an example of how poor leadership from a DofE leader can result in a young person deciding not to carry on with her bronze DofE programme.

The Volunteering section was the one new experience for YP60 whilst doing her DofE and something that she would not have done otherwise.

Her experience of poor leadership refers to her expedition training. Her impression of the leaders, one of them in particular, was that whilst they were competent in what they were teaching, they had difficulty interacting with the young people and this has had a negative impact on her DofE experience:

*"I think they all knew what they were talking about and they were fine to be there, just, as I say like one of them in particular just did not know how to interact with us."*

This continued when she was unable to complete the scheduled qualifying expedition due to a combination of being in the middle of her GCSEs and

inclement weather. YP60 She was not encouraged by her leaders to try again and has been put off doing so by the attitude of one person. This illustrates the need for balancing skills when leading young people. The leader concerned obviously had many expedition skills to share with the young people involved but was lacking some communication and/or social skills and/or pastoral skills required when working with young people.

**Case Study 9. Leaders – the importance of good leadership.**

6.4.7.4. Sense of belonging

As discussed in section 6.4.7.3, young people stated that the best thing about doing their DofE is the support and guidance of their leaders. This was followed closely by their friends and peers doing a DofE with them. It is apparent that the place that a young person is affiliated to for their DofE programme can have an effect on their experience. In some instances the importance to a young person of a sense of belonging became evident and this can be strengthened by doing a DofE programme. This was apparent in discussions about the place where a young person does their DofE and in dialogue about the expeditions and the significance of friendships throughout doing their DofE programme. Overall, this illustrates the importance of building relationships, both with peers and adults and the effect this has on a young person in terms of personal development, as some of the quotes from young people exemplify:

*"[S]ome of the teachers you wouldn't really be as close to but when you are out there with them, they are sort of helping you a wee bit and encouraging you and you get a lot closer to them so that's another good thing."*

(Male, Gold participant)

*"And the support you get in school I think, 'cos you are in here every day, I think you get, and then you're doing you're whatever it is, an afternoon a week on your Duke of Ed, especially when you're in first year, you get to know like the teachers a lot better because you're sort of designated to a teacher at the start so we get an awful lot of support from the school through the Duke of Ed and a lot of encouragement to do it so I think that's something that as [...] said you get to know the teachers a lot better because they are, at the end of the day they are only human as well so..."*

(Female, Gold participant)

*"Friends and people around you that help you do it and what you learn from people who teach you..."*

(Female, Silver participant)

## **6.5. Summary**

Overall, this chapter has shown that young people gain many aspects of personal and social development from doing their DofE programme.

### **6.5.1. Experiences**

The quantitative results show that young people thought that doing a DofE gave them opportunities for new experiences. In this section, the statement that

scored most positively was *'The DofE has given me some totally new experiences'*. The statement that scored the lowest (least positive) statement score in this section was *'Doing the DofE has helped me learn about people with different backgrounds to myself'*, with 28% actively disagreeing with this statement.

Other positive responses include:

- The DofE has allowed me to try activities I would never have tried before
- The DofE has allowed me to visit places I have never visited before
- As a result of the DofE I have some new interests/hobbies
- As a result of the DofE I have met people I would never have met before

For young people in the interviews and focus groups, doing their DofE was about many different elements which reflects the individual nature of doing a programme: young people will benefit in different ways. However, the recurring themes are learning and developing new skills, having new experiences and team work. This supports the results of the survey. For young people it was also about meeting people, building friendships and the challenge of achieving a DofE Award.

The Expedition section of the DofE remains the most popular activity, introducing many young people to new experiences whilst having fun and creating and enhancing friendships. It was also cited as the least enjoyable activity and the part of the programme that most young people would like to change.

The sense of achievement or actual achievement involved in finishing the expedition and the programme and subsequently gaining their DofE Award were seen as the most rewarding things about doing the programme.

Key outcomes of expedition:

- A sense/discovery of their strengths and weaknesses
- Learning their own capabilities
- Ways of overcoming challenges
- Team work, learning how to cope when something goes wrong
- Independence – not only achieving something without parental supervision but also learning valuable skills for themselves, being able to cope on their own;
- An opportunity to build friendships;
- New experiences;
- Fun.

The experiences gained by Volunteering were frequently discussed by young people in the context of many different aspects of their DofE and, after the expedition, was seen as the second most significant part of their DofE programme. It was cited as the second most popular activity and was also the third most rewarding. It is the section of the programme that encourages young people to mix with and work with others in their community, enhancing their inter-personal and communication skills and giving them the opportunity to meet new people.

The majority of participants did not find any of their DofE disappointing. Young people thought that the main barriers to participating (for others) are laziness, lack of commitment and lack of awareness of the DofE which stems from a lack of information available to young people about the DofE.

The 'distance travelled' model predicts that young people with less positive initial attitude to new experiences are more likely to become more positive over a 7

month period of doing their DofE programme than those with higher starting points. It also predicts that those who perceived themselves to have better employment skills have a greater likelihood of becoming more positive in their attitudes to new experiences, after taking into account their initial attitude to experiences.

### **6.5.2. Local community**

There were generally less positive responses from young people who responded to the survey relating to how the DofE contributes to communities compared to other themes in the survey. Statements concerning relationships with others had the most agreement (*'Doing the DofE has given me some new friends'* and *'Doing the DofE has given me opportunities to help other people'*).

There was greater disagreement with the statements *'I would like to have a better understanding of different religions'* and *'I feel part of my local community'* where about 50% of respondents gave scores lower than 'agree'. 13% of respondents actively disagreed with the statement about other religions and 20% definitely did not feel part of their local community (scores of 4 or below).

A significant proportion of young people expressed the view during interviews or focus groups that doing their DofE did not benefit the local community. Others indicated that their programme had benefited their community in the following ways:

- volunteering with a uniformed organisation
- working within the school community
- working with children
- teaching others or sports coaching.

These responses could, in part, reflect the limited opportunities for external volunteering for the under 16s.

Most young people did not think that doing their DofE had increased their interaction or involvement with the local community. Reasons given for this include:

- they are doing their DofE in school and have not changed their actions since embarking on their DofE programme
- choice of activities – the Volunteering section in particular (especially if they are doing their DofE in school)
- location – some young people were limited by what they could do simply due to their rural location
- they considered that they were already involved with their local community

Further, over half of the young people asked stated that doing their DofE programme had not given them the chance to meet others from different backgrounds and over two thirds of the young people who were asked did not consider that doing their DofE programme gave them a chance to learn about or mix with others from different cultures. This again supports the relatively negative responses relating to these areas in the questionnaire survey.

The 'distance-travelled' model predicts that young people with initially low disposition towards community-mindedness have about a 90% chance of improving this score after 7 months involvement with their DofE programme, whereas those who are already strongly community-minded at the outset have only about a 25% chance of development.

### 6.5.3. Physical and mental well-being

Young people who responded to the survey were very positive about physical activity. However, despite being very positive about the inclusion of physical activity within DofE programmes, they acknowledged only a slight positive effect on their attitudes to sport or physical activity from taking part in their DofE programmes. The statement '*As a result of the DofE I take part in sports or physical activities more often*' scored slightly less positively than the others in this section. This is likely to be because they were already taking part in physical activity or would have done so regardless of their involvement with the DofE.

Participants in the interviews and focus groups stated that the main benefit to them of taking part in a DofE programme was creating, building and enhancing friendships, which has been a recurring theme throughout. Personal development aspects such as the raising of fitness levels through regular active participation were recognised by young people. Having fun was an important aspect for young people taking part in programmes, and this, combined with friendships and meeting new people, keeps them engaged with a DofE programme. Thus, the environment where they do their DofE is significant for encouraging completion of programmes.

In the interviews and focus groups, young people overwhelmingly indicated that they had changed the way they felt about themselves by taking part in a DofE programme. They cited building confidence as the main change that they had seen in themselves which in turn helped them in the following ways:

- realising own capabilities / personal qualities
- self esteem
- personal development
- external qualities (how they believe others now perceive them as a result of doing a DofE).

Thus, doing a DofE programme gives a young person personal development of practical and transferable skills and gaining an Award results in a demonstrable achievement for themselves and for others.

The 'distance travelled' model predicts that young people with relatively limited engagement with or enjoyment of physical activities and sports have about a 70% chance of improving this score after 7 months involvement with their DofE programme. However, those who are strongly engaged in sports/physical pursuits at the outset have only about a 40% chance of development.

Similarly, those with initial low self-esteem are more likely to improve their self-esteem during their participation in their DofE programme than those with a high initial level. Young people with relatively low self-esteem have about a 60% chance of improving this score after 7 months involvement with their DofE programme. (YP1.3.5)

#### 6.5.4. Employment

The majority of questionnaire respondents agreed, to varying extents, with the following statements:

- *Doing the DofE has given me many new skills*
- *Doing the DofE has helped me to understand my own strengths and weaknesses better*
- *Doing the DofE has helped me to develop communication skills*
- *Doing the DofE has helped me to develop team-work skills*
- *Doing the DofE has helped me to develop leadership skills*
- *Doing the DofE has helped me to develop decision-making skills*
- *Doing the DofE has helped me to develop problem-solving skills*
- *Doing the DofE has helped me become more independent*

The qualitative data support these findings. Young people identified the following skills that they had developed as a result of doing their DofE:

- Organisational skills
- Resilience
- Life skills
- Independence
- Commitment
- A wide range of practical skills – reflecting the personalised nature of the DofE

The statement in this section of the quantitative data which had the least agreement was '*Doing the DofE has helped me to develop public speaking skills*'. Approximately 5% of the respondents disagreed totally with this statement and 31% disagreed at some level.

In terms of future employment, respondents to the questionnaire were in highest agreement with the statements 'Doing the DofE will help me get a job/career in the future' and 'Doing the DofE will give me an advantage over other people in the job market'. Again this is supported by the interviews and focus groups where participants stated that the main way that they considered that their DofE develops their employment skills and employment prospects was through enhancing their CV. This was firstly by having a DofE Award on their CV and secondly by giving them demonstrable transferable skills that have the potential to give them 'competitive advantage' over others either on their CV, personal statement or at an interview.

The 'distance travelled model predicts that young people with lower initial employment skills are more likely to improve these skills over a 7 month period of doing their DofE programme than those with higher starting points. It also predicts that those with higher self esteem have a greater likelihood of improving their employment skills and that those with more positive attitudes to their future employment prospects also have a greater chance of improving their employment skills, all other things being equal. This would suggest that the more confident in their future the young people are and the greater their self esteem, the more likely they are to increase their transferable employment skills over the 7 month period of doing their DofE.

### **6.5.5. General views on the DofE**

There was strong general agreement from questionnaire respondents with the following statements (which are also linked to 6.5.4):

- *I want to do the DofE because it is valued by others*
- *I want to do the DofE because it is attractive to employers*

Young people thought that the best ways to get other young people involved with doing a DofE programme is to increase publicity and advertising and to make the programme more widely available.

Overall, most of the young people spoken to were happy with their DofE programme and would not change anything. Most popular changes that young people would make include elements of the expedition and an increase in support and guidance, particularly when they first embark on the programme.

Questionnaire respondents agreed strongly with the following statements:

- *My DofE Award leaders are supportive*
- *My DofE Award leaders are inspirational*
- *My DofE Award leaders listen to young people's views*

This is supported by the qualitative data where young people considered that their Leaders, or the support that they are given from their DofE Leaders, were the best things about their programme.

Young people who responded to the questionnaire agreed to the following statements:

- *The DofE Award has helped me achieve my goals in life*
- *The DofE Award has changed my life*

The research has shown that doing a DofE programme can instil a sense of belonging for a young person. This is firstly within the groups of friends that they do their programme with, secondly with the place where they do their DofE.

Young people's suggestions for improvements to the DofE can summarised as:

- More effective information/publicity for young people and their parents, to enable informed choice
- Widening accessibility of the programme to young people
- Using presentations by peers who are doing the DofE or Award holder testimonies to encourage others to take part.
- Introduce peer mentors to support a young person through their DofE
- Extend/increase the age range of the DofE
- Provide financial assistance or help with fund raising
- Make it compulsory for the individual to do something new to them
- Provide more international opportunities
- Speed up the processing of awards

## **7. RESULTS: DELIVERY PARTNERS**

### **7.1. Introduction**

This chapter examines the findings of all of the research strands that involved, as research participants, those involved in the delivery of the DofE, or those associated with the DofE in other ways. The term 'delivery partners' is used to describe those who are involved with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in many

different capacities, assisting young people through their DofE programmes. Delivery partners were defined as all those who are involved in the direct delivery of the Duke of Edinburgh Award. This included youth workers, teachers, DofE co-ordinators etc. and involved both paid and voluntary staff.

Section 7.2 will present the findings of the national questionnaire survey of delivery partners. Section 7.3 will summarise the findings from the interviews and focus groups with delivery partners and other stakeholders. Finally, section 7.4 will summarise the findings from delivery partners, by theme.

## **7.2. Results of the Delivery Partners' survey**

This section will provide a summary of the results from the questionnaire survey to delivery partners. Full details of the data analysis can be found in the Statistical Volume of this report. Appendix 3 to that volume provides the breakdown of the responses to each question of the survey. The methods used in designing and delivering the survey can be found in section 3.3.1.4. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 4 of the Statistical Volume of this report.

There were 383 completed surveys. Of these, 231 (60%) completed a paper survey and 152 (40%) did the on-line version. Although this was a disappointing response rate (46,000 surveys were distributed in the Award Journal in addition to the web-based version which had a prominent position on the DofE web site), there are sufficient respondents to be able to summarise the results and perform tests of statistical significance.

The questionnaire was designed so that these individual statements formed clusters around a central theme. These themes were generally equivalent to those used in the young people's survey. In some cases, the statements referred to the respondents own experiences or views; others related to the delivery partner's views on the effect of the DofE on young people.

The broad themes were:

- Experiences
- Local community
- Employment and skills
- General views on the DofE

This section will first describe the characteristics of the survey respondents (section 7.2.1). It will then examine the responses to questions in the survey which focussed on motivation for involvement in the DofE (section 7.2.2) before summarising the responses by each of the themes above (sections 7.2.3 - 7.2.6).

### **7.2.1. Sample characteristics**

The characteristics of those that responded are summarised below. As with any survey, the results from the respondents is used as an estimate of the results that might be obtained if all those involved in delivery of the DofE had responded, which assumes that the sample is representative of the whole. However, data is not routinely collected about those delivering the DofE and it is therefore difficult to judge how representative this sample is.

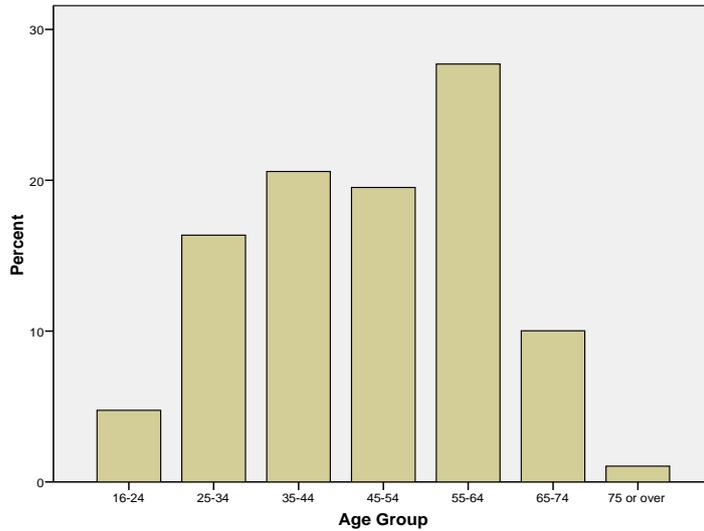
#### **7.2.1.1. Gender**

There was an approximately equal split of males (53%) and females (47%) in the sample of delivery partners who responded to the survey.

#### 7.2.1.2. Age

The median age of the respondents fell in the 45-54 years group. The biggest age group was 55-64 with 28% of the respondents falling in this age range. 68% of the respondents were between the ages of 35 and 64.

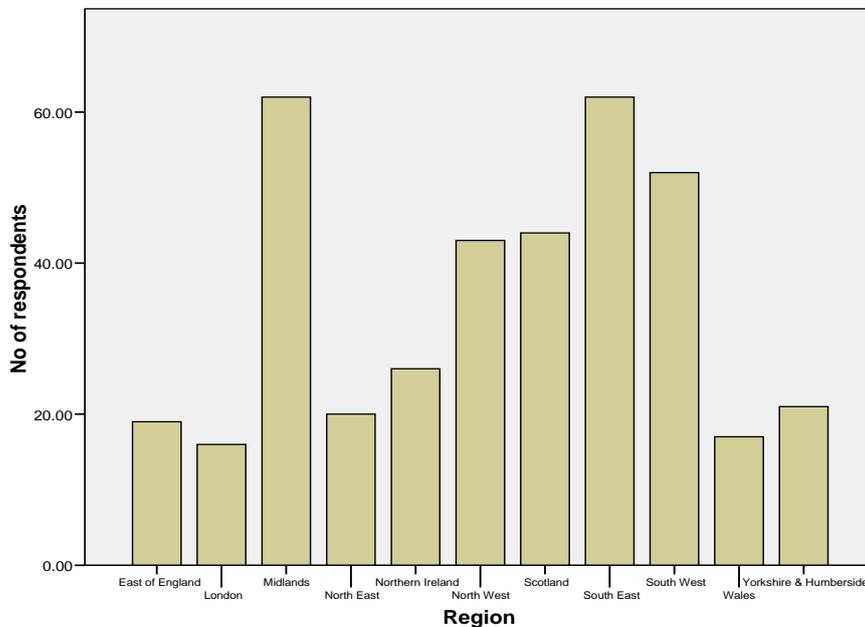
The distribution of ages can be seen in Figure 52.



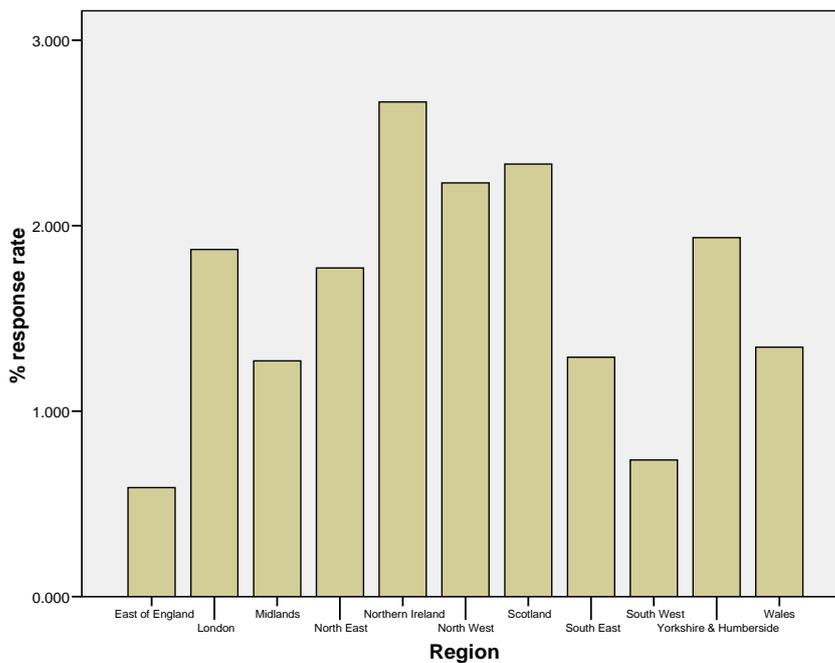
**Figure 52: Distribution of ages of respondents**

#### 7.2.1.3. Geographical spread

Figure 53 shows the number of delivery partners who responded to the survey by Region. Figure 54 shows the participation rate as the percentage of the total number of delivery partners for each Region. The total number of delivery partners was calculated as the sum of the paid and volunteer adults involved with the programme (DofE statistics, 2007-08).



**Figure 53: Number of survey respondents from each Region**



**Figure 54: Percentage of respondents from each Region, as a percentage of total number of paid and volunteer staff**

Although the absolute rates were small (between 0.6% and 2.7% of those involved with the programme), it can be seen that Northern Ireland had the greatest participation rate and the East of England had the lowest.

#### 7.2.1.4. Ethnicity

Nearly 97% of the respondents stated their ethnicity as white. Of the 9 respondents that responded 'other', none provided more details (this option was not available for web respondents). A few (n=10) respondents on the paper

survey chose to add more details to their selection of 'white'. These were mainly descriptions of nationality (mainly 'Scottish' or 'British'). There were no respondents who stated they were from black and ethnic minorities.

#### 7.2.1.5. Disability

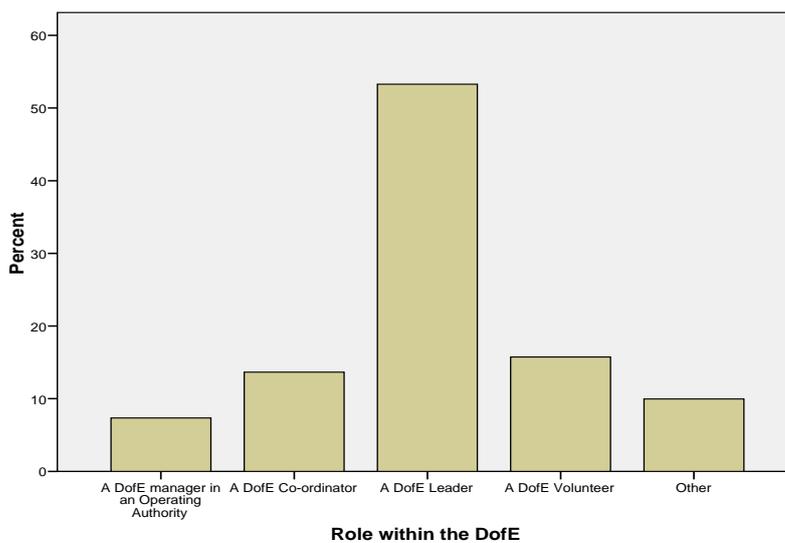
80% of the respondents reported no known disability. The frequency and percentage of reported disabilities is shown below in Table 21.

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid		
No known disability	297	80.5
Blind/partially sighted	34	9.2
Deaf/hearing impaired	1	.3
Wheelchair user/mobility difficulty	6	1.6
Mental health difficulty	2	.5
Dyslexia or other learning need	7	1.9
Autistic Spectrum Disorder/Asperger's Syndrome	9	2.4
Multiple disabilities	1	.3
Other disability	12	3.3
Total	369	100.0
Missing	14	
Total	383	

**Table 21: Reported disabilities**

#### 7.2.1.6. Role within the DofE

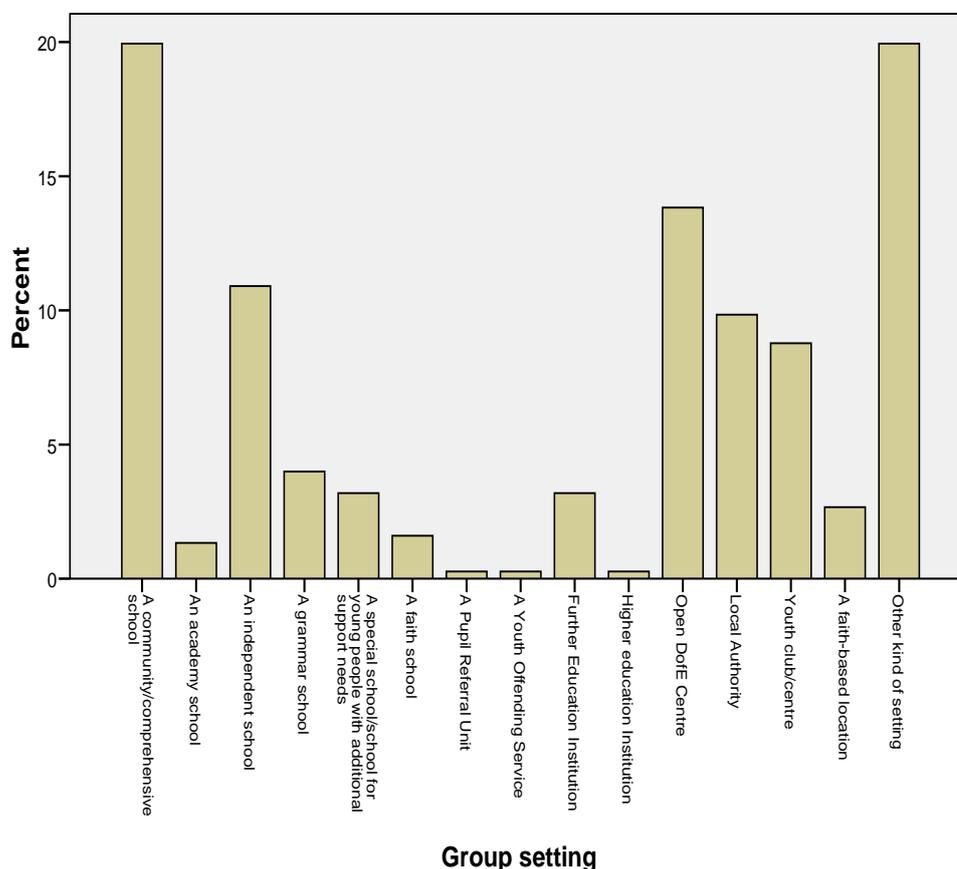
53% of respondents described themselves as a DofE Leader. The distribution of roles of the respondents is shown in Figure 55.



**Figure 55: Distribution of respondents' roles within the DofE**

### 7.2.1.7. DofE group setting

Figure 56 shows the distribution of the settings of the DofE groups in which the respondents work. The most common setting was within a comprehensive or community school (20%). 14% worked with open DofE centres and 11% within independent schools. However, nearly 20% responded 'other'. There was no opportunity given to explain this response.



**Figure 56: Setting of DofE group in which respondents work**

### 7.2.1.8. Award holders

42% of the delivery partners responding to the survey had a DofE Award themselves. Of these, the great majority (73%) had a Gold Award. The remainder were approximately equally split between Bronze (13%) and Silver (14%).

### 7.2.2. **General questions: getting involved**

Most delivery partners reported that they took the initiative to get involved with the DofE themselves.

The most common expectation was the opportunity to make a difference, closely followed by the chance to work with young people. Nearly half of the respondents (47%) expected it to be good fun. The least common response was that it was something to do (5.5%).

42% of the respondents had done a DofE Award themselves. 73% of these had a Gold Award (see section 7.2.1.8). Overall, respondents were equally divided about whether having a DofE themselves influenced their decision (48% said no,

52% said yes). However, when comparing the responses of those that had a DofE to those that had not (see Figure 57) it can be seen that most of those that did not have a DofE said that this did not affect their reasons for getting involved, whereas most that had a DofE Award were influenced by this.

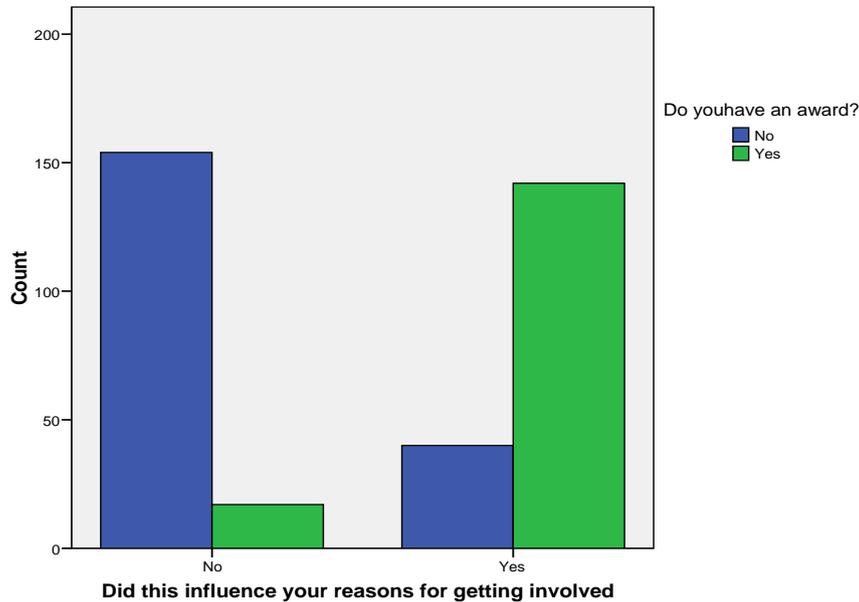


Figure 57: Relationship between having an Award and reason for getting involved

Nearly three-quarters (74%) of the respondents also worked with young people in other contexts.

### 7.2.3. Experiences

#### 7.2.3.1. About the participants (experiences – self)

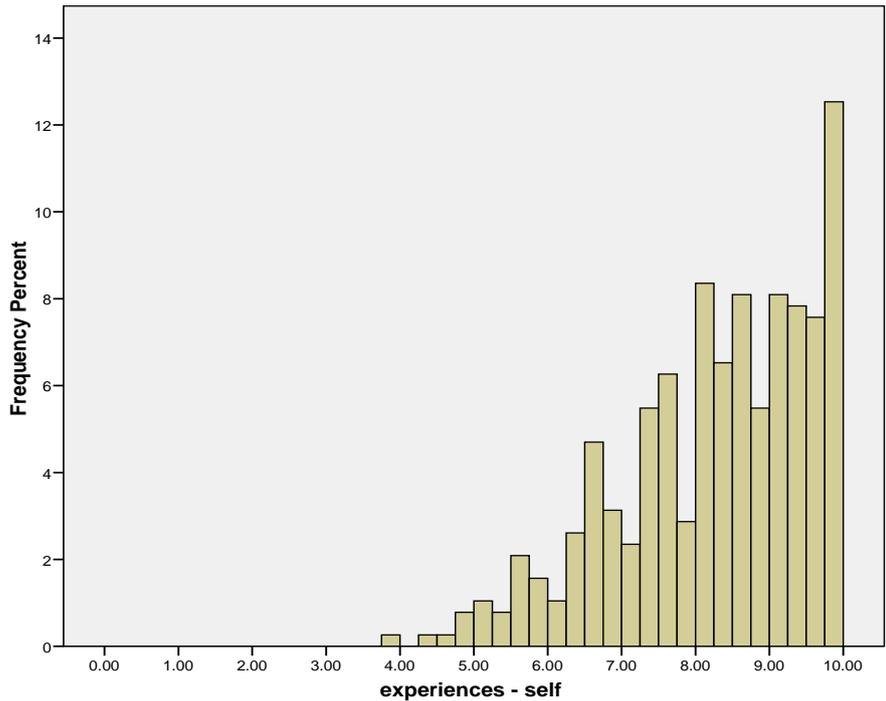
The scores for this theme are based on the mean response of each respondent for the questions below (see Table 22).

I like trying new activities
I enjoy having new experiences
I like discovering new places
I have a lot of interests
I like meeting new people
I enjoy learning about different people's cultures
I am a very adventurous person

Table 22: Questions comprising the 'experiences – self' theme

Figure 58 shows that the delivery partners who responded were generally very positive about having new experiences and interests.

The most positive attitudes were expressed to those statements relating to new activities, experiences and places (see Statistical Volume, Appendix 3: section 3.1).



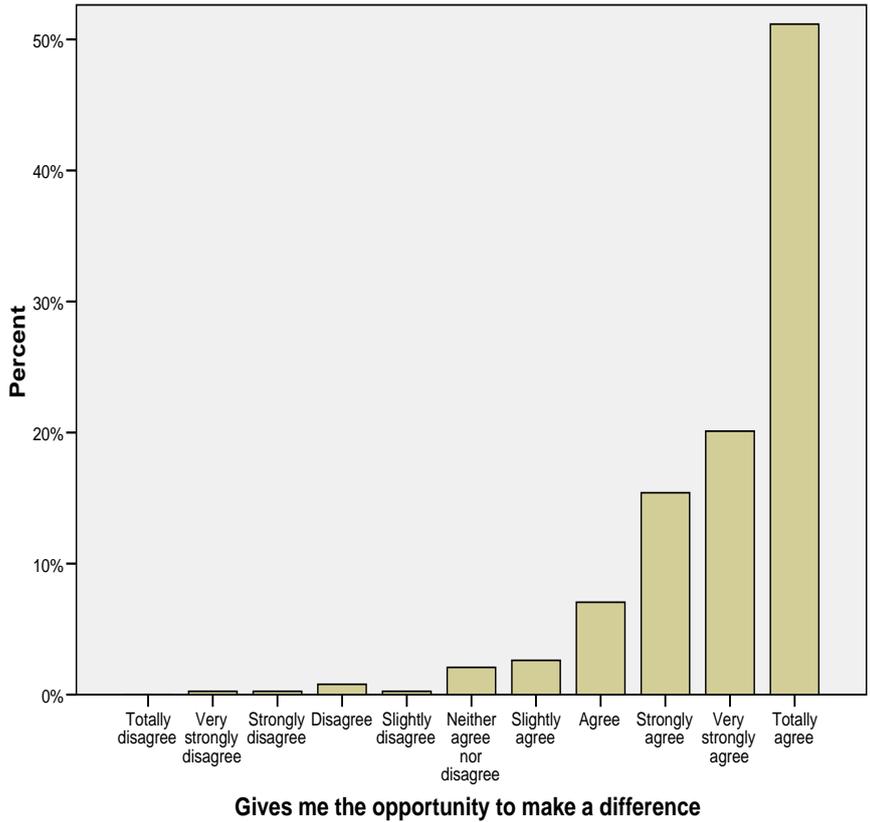
**Figure 58: Histogram of mean scores for participants' views on experiences**

There was a statistically significant difference in the scores for this theme between the three broad age groups. The youngest age group (under 35 years) recorded the highest (most positive) scores, with the oldest age group having the lowest scores.

#### 7.2.3.2. Opportunity to make a difference

The statement "*I think that involvement with the DoFE gives me the opportunity to make a difference*" was analysed separately.

There was very strong general agreement with this statement (see Figure 59).



**Figure 59: I think that involvement with the DofE gives me an opportunity to make a difference**

There was a statistically significant difference between the responses to this question from respondents from the oldest age group (>54) who had more positive responses than the 35-54 years group. There was no statistical difference between the responses from the two younger groups.

7.2.3.3. Experiences – young people doing their DofE (experiences – DofE)

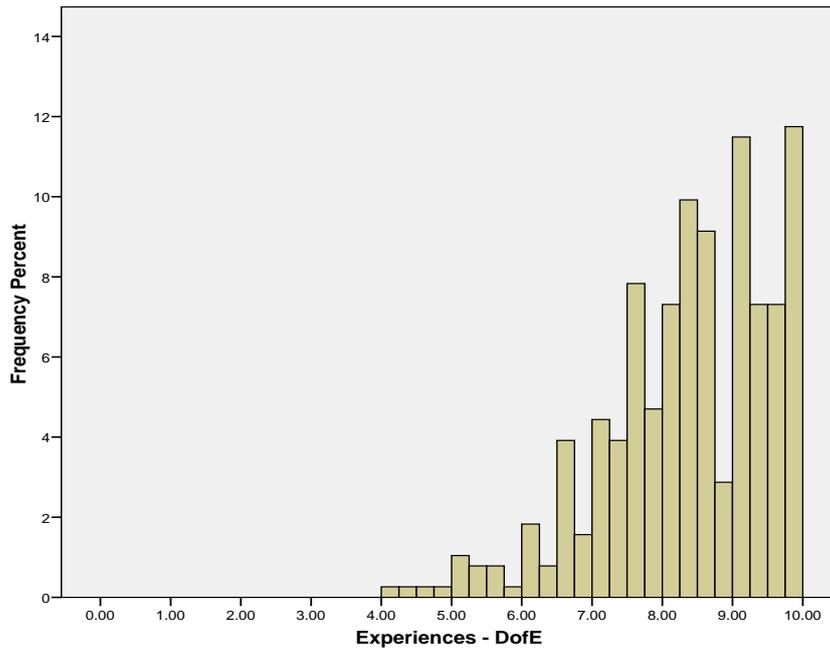
The scores for this theme are based on the mean response of each respondent for the questions below (see Table 23).

It allows young people to try activities that they've never tried before
It gives young people some new experiences
It allows young people to visit places they have never visited before
As a result of doing their DofE young people find new interests
As a result of doing their DofE young people meet other people they would never have met before
Doing their DofE helps young people learn about others with different backgrounds to themselves
Doing their DofE makes young people more adventurous

**Table 23: Questions comprising the 'experiences – DofE' theme**

Figure 60 shows that the delivery partners who responded generally agreed strongly that young people gained new experiences through doing their DofE.

When the responses to the individual questions are examined (see Statistical Volume, Appendix 3: section 3.2) it can be seen that the least positive attitudes are expressed to the statement relating to young people learning about people with different backgrounds to themselves (see Statistical Volume, Appendix 3: Figure 123, section 3.2). Nearly 30% of respondents recorded a response lower than 'agree' (score 6 or less) to this statement.



**Figure 60: Histogram of mean scores for participants' views on the experiences gained by young people doing their DofE**

Female respondents recorded statistically higher scores for this theme than did the male respondents.

### 7.2.4. Local Community

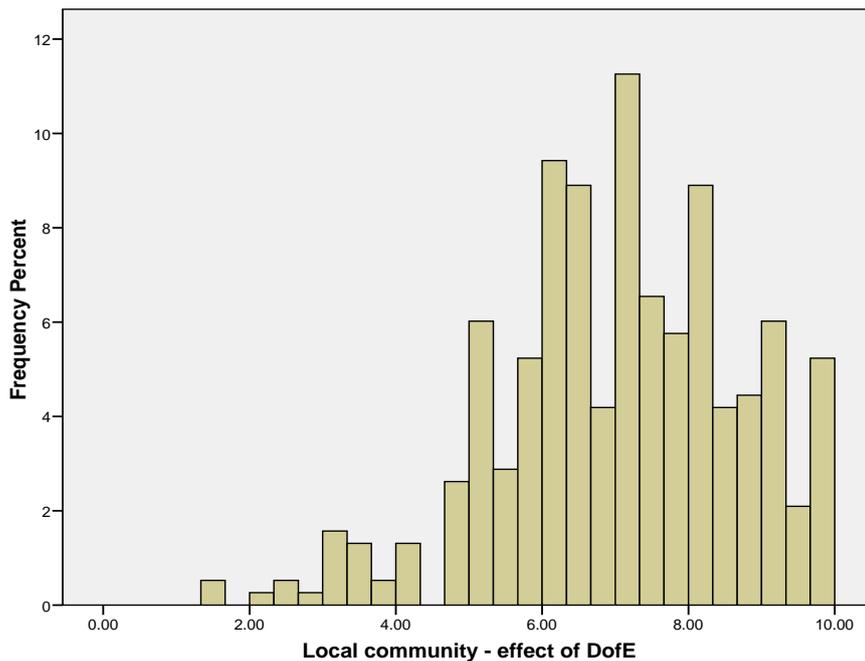
#### 7.2.4.1. The effect of the DofE on the local community (community – DofE)

The scores for this theme are based on the mean response of each respondent for the questions below (see Table 24).

Being involved has given me some new friends
Involvement has given me opportunities to help other people
Involvement has made me more aware of local environmental issues
The DofE makes a difference to my community
The DofE has made me more aware of problems in my local area
My involvement has made me feel more involved in my local community
My involvement has helped me to make a positive difference to my local community

**Table 24: Questions comprising the 'community - DofE' theme**

Figure 61 shows that there was a wide spread of responses to these questions. The median value of respondents' scores for this theme was 7 ('agree').



**Figure 61: Histogram of mean scores for participants' views on the effect of the DofE on their local community**

The individual statement that got the most positive responses was *"Involvement has given me opportunities to help other people"* (median score = 9). The statements *"Involvement has made me more aware of local environmental issues"* and *"The DofE has made me more aware of problems in my local area"* had the least positive responses, with median scores of 6.

### 7.2.5. Employment and skills

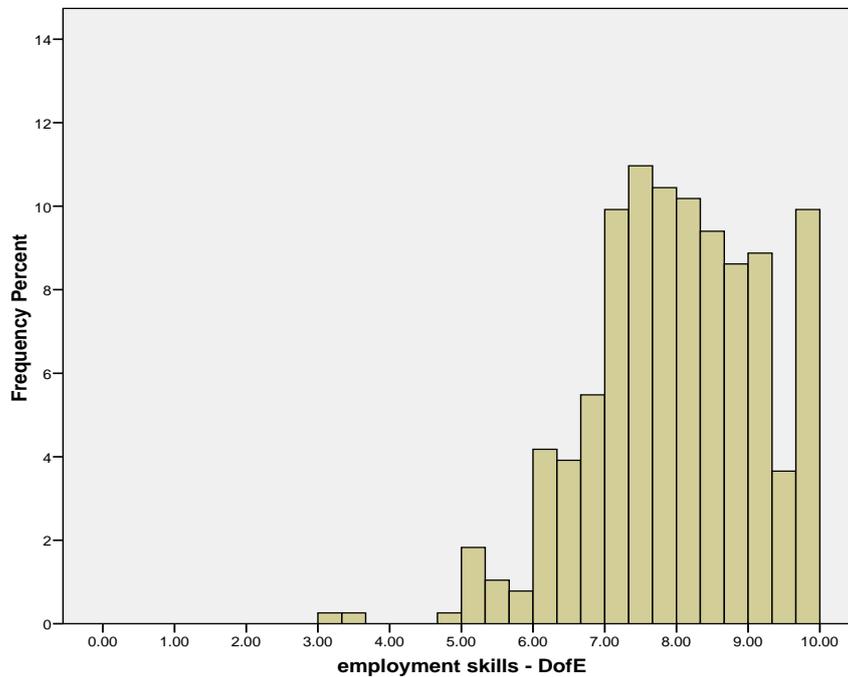
#### 7.2.5.1. Young people's skills for employment (employment skills – DofE)

The scores for this theme are based on the mean response of each respondent for the questions below (see Table 25).

Doing their DofE gives young people many new skills
Doing their DofE helps young people to understand their own strengths and weaknesses better
Doing their DofE helps young people to develop communication skills
The DofE develops team-work skills in young people
Doing their DofE helps young people to develop leadership skills
Doing their DofE helps young people become more responsible
Doing their DofE helps young people develop motivational skills
Doing their DofE helps young people develop decision-making skills
Doing their DofE improves young people's ability to organise themselves
Doing their DofE helps young people develop public speaking skills
Doing their DofE helps young people develop problem-solving skills
Doing their DofE helps to make young people become more independent
Doing their DofE helps young people to stick at tasks until they are finished

**Table 25: Questions comprising the 'employment skills – DofE' theme**

Figure 62 shows that respondents generally strongly agreed that young people gained employment skills from doing their DofE.



**Figure 62: Histogram of mean scores for participants' views on employment skills gained by young people doing their DofE**

The statement with the greatest level of agreement related to the development of team-work, whilst development of public speaking had the lowest level of agreement.

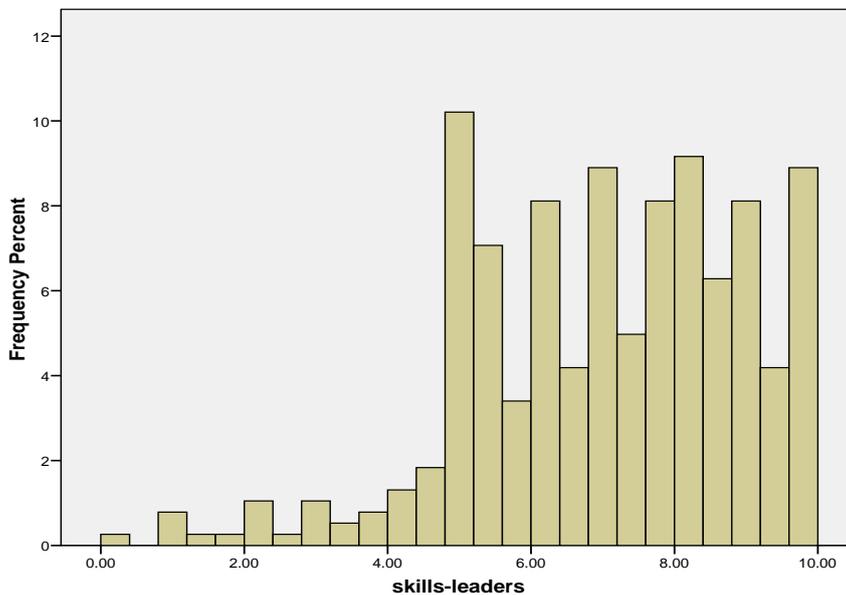
#### 7.2.5.2. Developing delivery partners' skills (skills – leaders)

These statements were similar to those which addressed the development of employment skills in young people, but were addressed to the delivery partners under the heading "What has the DofE done for you?". The scores for this theme are based on the mean response of each respondent for the questions below (see Table 27).

I am better at knowing my strengths and weaknesses
I am better at communicating with people
I have improved my team-work skills
I am better at leadership
I am better at taking responsibility for a task
I am better at motivating people
I have improved my decision-making
I am better at organising my time
I am better at talking to groups of people
I have improved my problem solving skills
I am better at working independently

**Table 26: Questions comprising the "skills – leaders" theme**

As can be seen in Figure 63, although there were generally positive responses to this theme, there was a wide spread of opinions, with participants' mean score for the statements comprising this theme ranging from 10 to 0 (median = 7).



**Figure 63: Histogram of mean scores for participants' views on skills gained by their participation in the DofE**

The response distributions to each of the constituent statements were broadly similar.

There was a statistically significant difference in the mean scores for this theme between those who had a DofE themselves and those who did not. Those who are Award holders scored more highly than those who are not. However, as the wording preceding these statements was "Since becoming involved with the DofE...", this would include their total involvement, including when they were a young person pursuing their Award) rather than just as a Leader.

There was a statistically significant difference between the responses to this question from respondents from the youngest age group (<35) who had higher mean scores than both the other age groups.

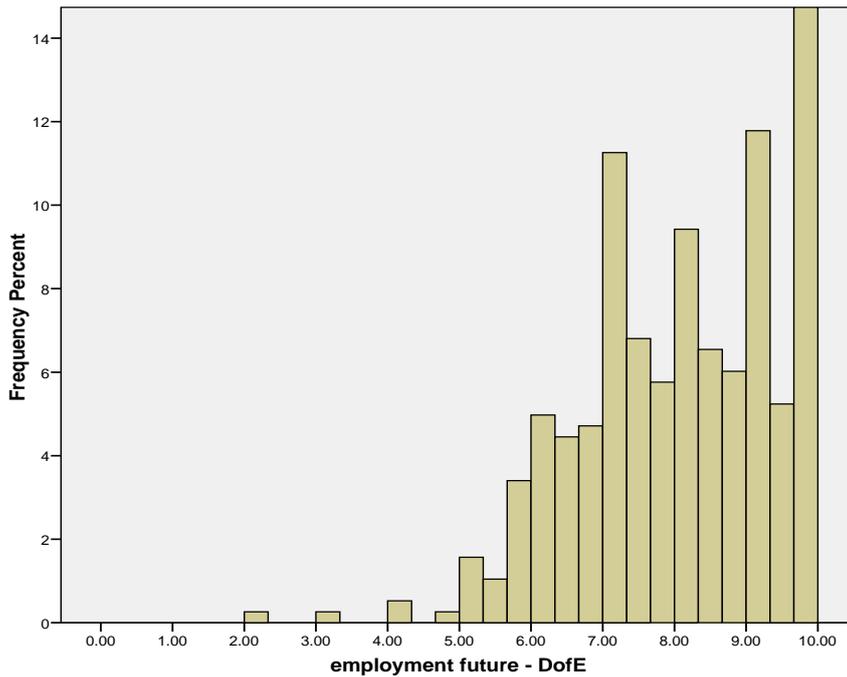
7.2.5.3. Young people's future employment prospects (employment future – DofE)

The scores for this theme are based on the mean response of each respondent for the questions below (see Table 27).

Doing their DofE can change the way young people see their future
Doing their DofE makes young people feel more positive about their future
Doing their DofE will help a young person to get a job/career in future
Doing their DofE gives a young person an advantage over other people in the job market

**Table 27: Questions comprising the 'employment future – DofE' theme**

Figure 64 shows that respondents generally strongly agreed that young people's prospects for future employment were improved by doing their DofE.



**Figure 64: Histogram of mean scores for participants' views on prospects for future employment of young people doing their DofE**

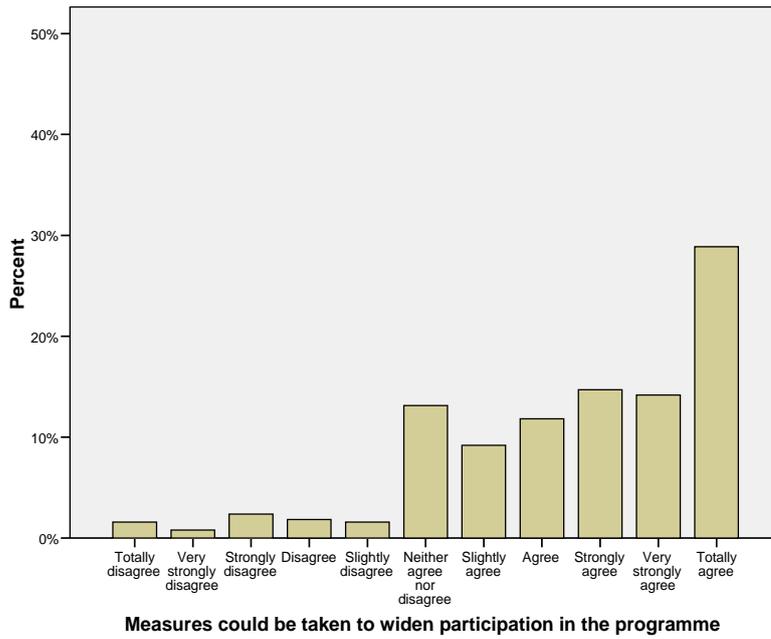
The distribution of responses to each statement were broadly similar, but the statement with the greatest level of agreement was *"Doing their DofE gives a young person an advantage over other people in the job market"*.

### **7.2.6. General views on the DofE**

These statements addressed different aspects of the delivery and development of the DofE. Rather than combine these into one or more themes, they are presented as the distribution of responses to each statements by all respondents.

#### **7.2.6.1. Measures could be taken to widen participation in the programme**

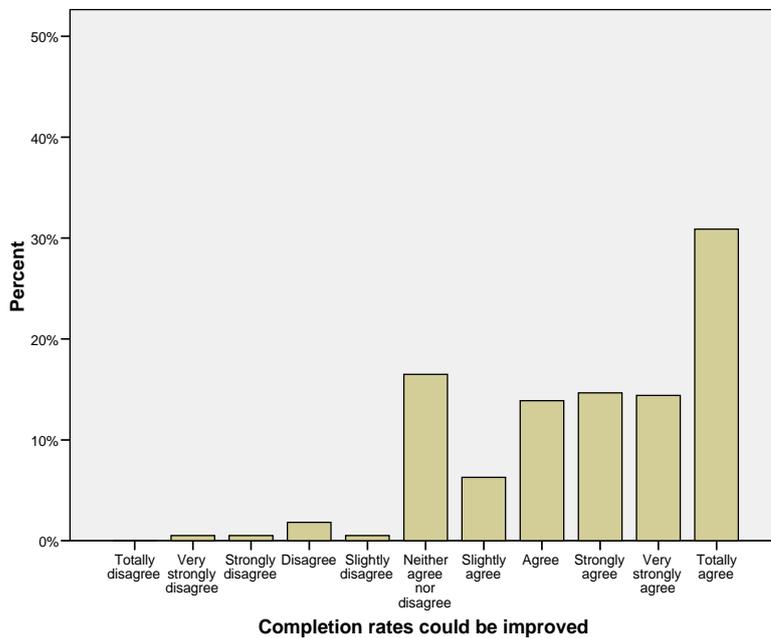
Most respondents agreed with this statement with about 30% agreeing totally (see Figure 65).



**Figure 65: Measures could be taken to widen participation in the programme**

7.2.6.2. Completion rates could be improved

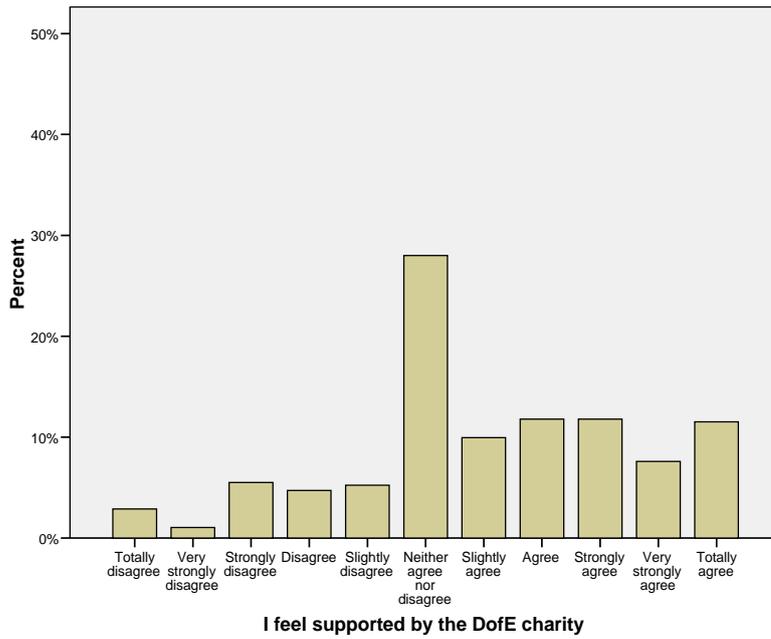
This statement also got widespread agreement, with approximately 30% agreeing totally (see Figure 66).



**Figure 66: Completion rates could be improved**

7.2.6.3. I feel supported by the DofE charity

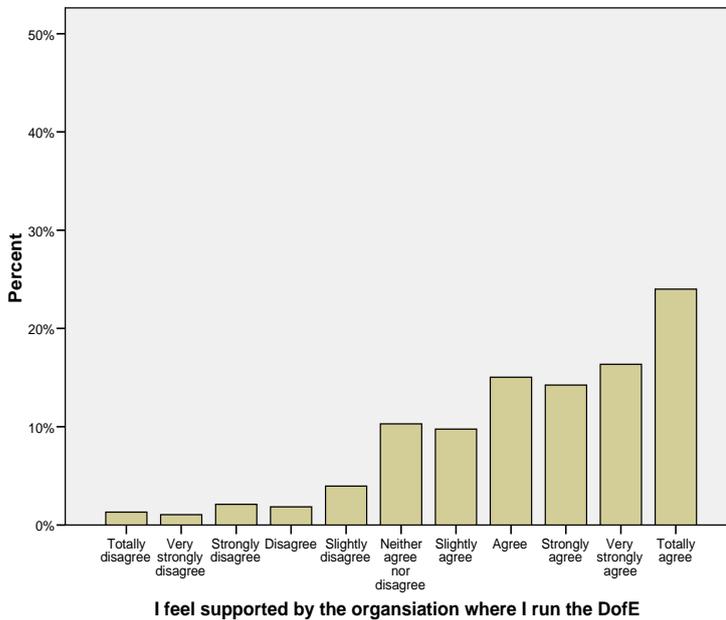
Respondents were equivocal on this statement, with nearly 30% expressing a neutral view. The average (median) response was 'slightly agree' (see Figure 67).



**Figure 67: I feel supported by the DofE charity**

7.2.6.4. I feel supported by the organisation where I run the DofE

Many more respondents felt supported by their local DofE organisation than by the Charity and the average response to this statement was 'strongly agree' (see Figure 68).



**Figure 68: I feel supported by the organisation where I run the DofE**

Further evidence that respondents have a stronger attachment and affiliation with their local organisation than with the DofE Charity can be found in the responses to the questions 'I would like to be more involved in the development of the DofE charity' and 'I would like to be more involved in how my organisation delivers programmes'.

In response to the question about development of the charity, over 35% of the respondents expressed a neutral view on this statement. The other responses were almost uniformly distributed across the whole spectrum of attitudes (see Statistical Volume Appendix 3: Figure 168). In response to the question about being more involved with delivery of programmes, again, most (over 40%) did not express a view on this statement indicating that there is no general desire to become more involved in the delivery of programmes. The other respondents expressed views right across the spectrum of attitudes (see Statistical Volume Appendix 3: Figure 169).

This shows that whilst delivery partners are committed to the DofE Award through their work or volunteering, on the whole, they have no wish to become more involved with either development of the charity or the delivery of programmes. They do not see this as a component of their commitment to lead groups or volunteer within the programme. This is reinforced further by Figure 72 and Figure 73). As these figures show, even though respondents may not wish to get more actively involved, it does not mean that they do not want to be informed.

7.2.6.5. Improvements could be made to our delivery of DofE programmes

On average, respondents strongly agreed that improvements could be made to delivery of the programmes (see Figure 69).

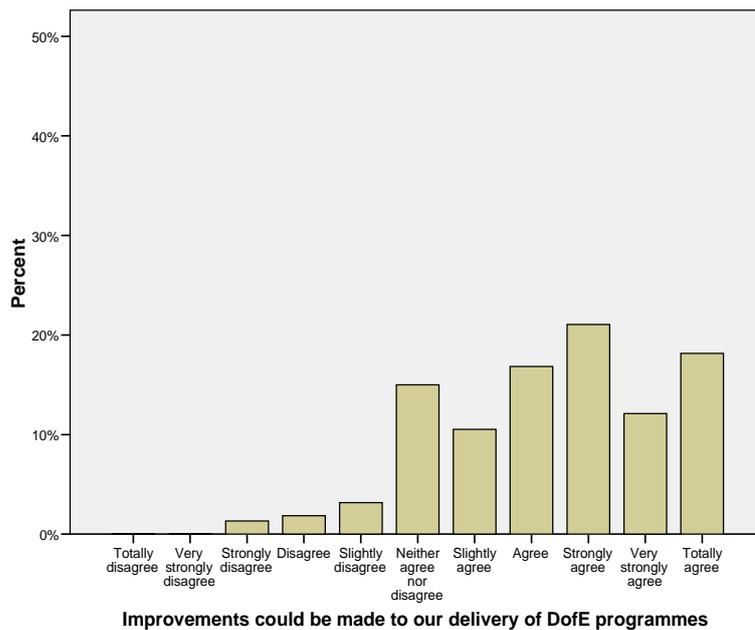
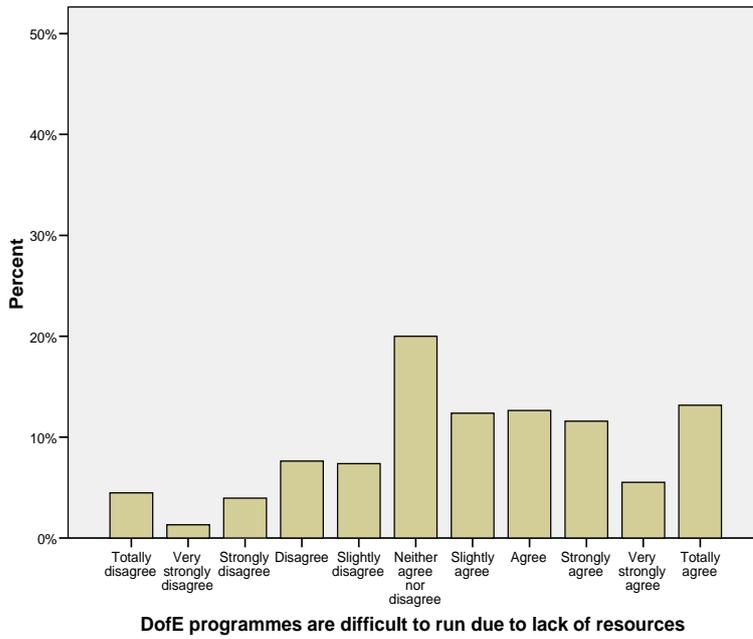


Figure 69: Improvements could be made to our delivery of DofE programmes

7.2.6.6. DofE programmes are difficult to run due to lack of resources

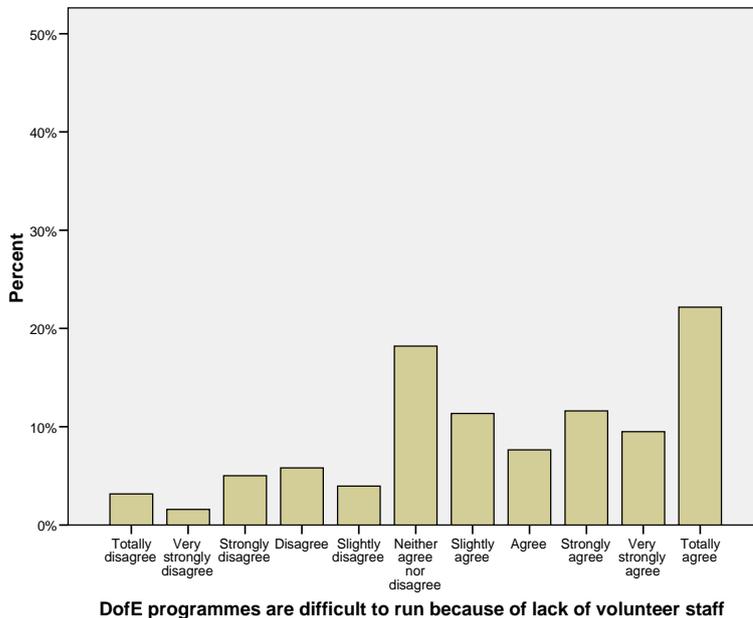
This statement attracted a wide range of responses (see Figure 70), with about 5% totally disagreeing and nearly 15% totally agreeing. On average the response was 'slightly agree' but there are obviously a diverse set of experiences of delivery partners with respect to resource issues.



**Figure 70: DofE programmes are difficult to run due to lack of resources**

7.2.6.7. DofE programmes are difficult to run because of lack of volunteer staff

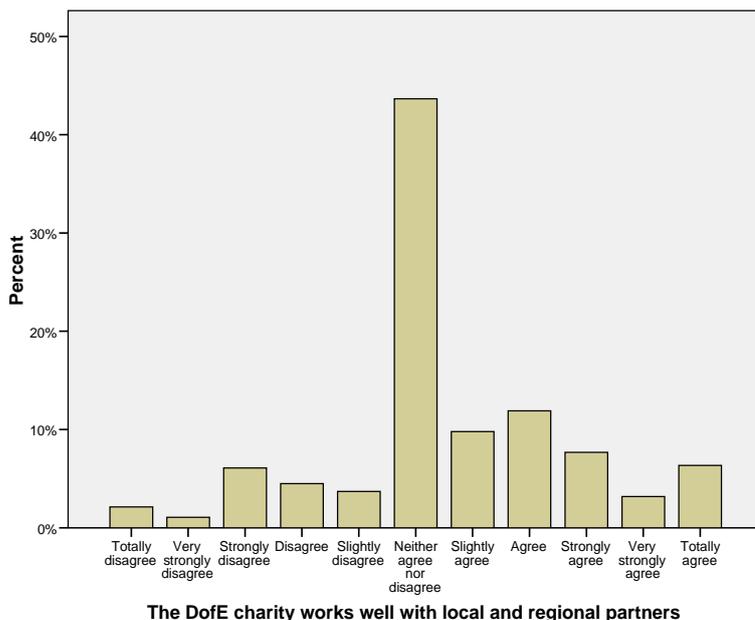
Nearly a quarter of the respondents totally agreed with this statement, with the average response being 'agree' (see Figure 71).



**Figure 71: DofE programmes are difficult to run because of lack of volunteer staff**

7.2.6.8. The DofE charity works well with local and regional partners

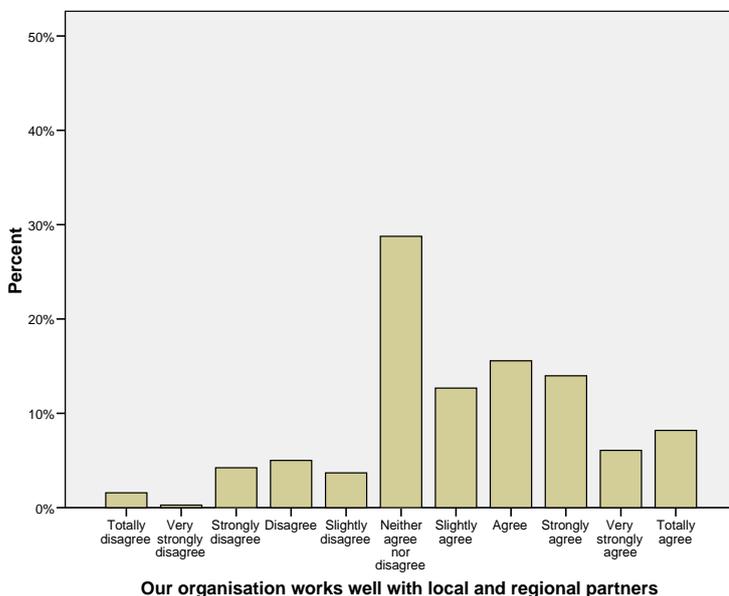
Respondents were generally unsure about this statement with over 45% expressing a neutral attitude (see Figure 72).



**Figure 72: The DofE charity works well with local and regional partners**

7.2.6.9. Our organisation works well with local and regional partners

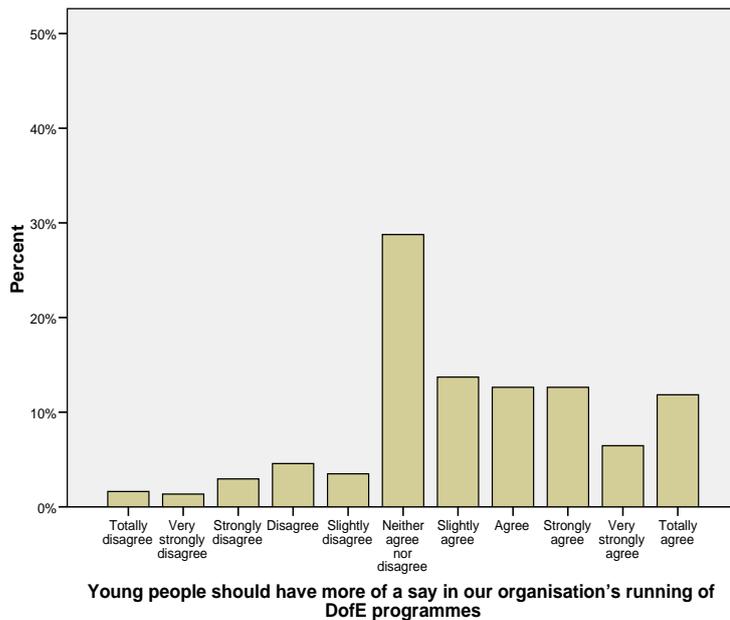
Although nearly 30% did not express a particular view of this statement (see Figure 73), there was rather more agreement that their organisation worked well with partners than for the partnership working of the Charity. This is perhaps inevitable as respondents will have a greater knowledge of their own local organisation than of the central structures.



**Figure 73: Our organisation works well with local and regional partners**

7.2.6.10. Young people should have more of a say in our organisation's running of DofE programmes

Perhaps surprisingly, about 30% of the respondents did not have a particular view on whether young people should have more of a say in the local delivery of DofE programmes. Where a view was expressed, rather more agreed than disagreed and the average response was 'agree' (see Figure 74).



**Figure 74: Young people should have more of a say in our organisation's running of DofE programmes**

### 7.3. Results from interviews and focus group

The themes discussed in this section have been informed by the interviews and focus groups carried out with delivery partners who assist young people through their DofE programmes. The indicative questions used in this phase of the research can be found in Appendix 4 of the Statistical Volume of this report.

The themes will be discussed under the similar headings to those of the young people's experiences. The section begins (section 7.3.1) by describing the characteristics of the people that took part in this part of the research. Section 7.3.2 explores the participants' attitudes towards experiences of the programme, both theirs and those of young people. Section 7.3.3 looks at benefits to the community and section 7.3.4 at employment opportunities for young people by doing a DofE programme. Section 7.3.5 discusses delivery partners' general views of the DofE.

Individual respondents in this section of the report are identified by the prefix DP (delivery partner), the number allotted to that interview (not chronological) and their role within DofE programmes. Participants in the focus groups are identified by the prefix DP, then FG (focus group), and again the number of the focus group and their role as far as can be identified, for example DDPFG1, DofE Leader. Further responses are taken from the open-ended questions which were part of the quantitative survey and are identified by the prefix DP and are stated as an online response (although some are taken from paper responses).

It should be noted that some of the questions used in this survey were compiled and agreed before the re-branding and hence the wording may not be compatible with current brand guidelines.

### **7.3.1. Characteristics of the respondents**

#### **7.3.1.1. Interviews**

A total of 43 interviews were carried out with delivery partners, who are involved with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in many different capacities assisting young people through their DofE programmes. These interviewees assisted young people through their DofE programmes in many different ways. These included (amongst others): School Co-ordinator and teacher; volunteer Co-ordinator; Development Officer; local authority worker and DofE unit Leader; local authority youth worker; Open DofE centre volunteer Co-ordinator/Leader; Open DofE centre local authority youth worker; uniformed organisation DofE Co-ordinator; DofE Leader and grammar school teacher; DofE Leader; DofE Leader at an independent school; DofE Leader at a comprehensive school, and DofE Regional Director.

Fifteen of the 43 delivery partners interviewed were known to hold DofE Awards themselves.

#### **7.3.1.2. Focus groups**

Six focus groups were carried out in six different DofE Regions. These Regions were selected by the research steering group to represent the diversity of the Regions and were: London, Northern Ireland, Scotland, North West, South West and Wales. The focus groups were organised through the DofE Directors.

The participants included: representatives from Operating Authorities; uniformed organisations running DofE programmes such as the Police Force and the Fire and Rescue Service; DofE Managers from many organisations including local authorities and charities; Youth Service Managers and Youth workers; DofE Development Officers; and unit Leaders of DofE programmes.

### **7.3.2. Experiences**

#### **7.3.2.1. The DofE programme**

##### **7.3.2.1.1. *Programme effectiveness***

When asked, the majority of delivery partners stated that they thought that the Duke of Edinburgh's Award is an effective programme. This would explain their continued involvement with the DofE (see below). Many of them expanded on this, suggesting factors that help to make the DofE an effective programme. These mostly relate to the local organisation of the DofE programme, with the emphasis on the importance of the leader and the support offered. For example:

*"When it works, it works really well [...], it falls down, not because youngsters aren't interested, you give a young person a challenge, they'll follow through but if you haven't got the support to drive it through, it will lose it's momentum, you can't expect young people to generate that, certainly at 13, 14, they are learning as they are going through so if the support isn't there and the factors that make for a successful group, the infrastructure and other, then it will flounder..."*  
(DP23, DofE Regional Director)

*"They've got to be guided and they've got to be supported, and I think the nuts and bolts are excellent in that the Award's been going for*

*over 50 years and if you go back to the original 50 years ago it hasn't actually, the framework hasn't changed significantly, it's pretty well stood the test of time and of course it's been tweaked a bit and it's being significantly tweaked at the moment. [...] But yes, it's like I say, I think when it's working properly it can't be beaten, it's very, very effective and when it's not working properly it's probably still better than nothing at all."*

(DP10, Development Officer, uniform organisation)

*"I think overall it's very effective, the actual way it's been set up on a national level, and I think it obviously depends on who the person is running it in your area."*

(DP19, school DofE Co-ordinator)

### **7.3.2.1.2. Main achievements**

Delivery partners were asked what they thought the main achievements of the DofE were since they had been involved. Responses depended on their length of involvement and the context in which they work within the DofE. Delivery partners perceived achievements within the DofE programme can be broken down into three categories:

- young people's achievements
- programme delivery achievements
- historical achievements of the programme.

The main achievement overall for delivery partners was the number of young people participating and completing their DofE programme (with the emphasis on completing), followed by the widening of participation of the programme, the impact of doing a programme has had on young people's lives and the personal achievement involved respectively.

*"I think the number of students who've participated is one of our biggest achievements and the cohort of students that we started with, they still form a relatively large part of the participants but also the pride that you know, the student, the staff and students have in their achievements, [...], the sense of young people finding out that they have a range of skills, a wider range of skills that they wouldn't have been able to even explore if we didn't you know, have the Duke of Edinburgh Award so I think as a college I think that's been the main achievement really, yes, the participation and the sort of personal side of you know, individual achievements."*

(DP38, school DofE Co-ordinator)

The fact that the programme is still available, remains competitive and continues to be relevant to young people was also seen to be significant for many delivery partners. Further, it was thought that the growing numbers of participants endorses its relevance as a valid personal development programme for young people.

*"But it's good to see that the programme still remains relevant and still you know, the kind of messages we are throwing out are a) attractive to young people and b) also the leaders still see how the Award is relevant to them so I am pleased that that's maintained."*

(DP21, Regional Director)

*"I'm as excited about it now as I was then and I've seen hundreds and hundreds of young people coming through, [...] they've got lots out of it and I think that's probably, that's the nitty gritty of it, it's stood the test of time and is standing the test of time."*

(DP10, Development Officer, uniform organisation)

*"[T]here is nothing I personally know of that is credible with as much status in terms of an informal accreditation in this country, possibly the world, that has such longevity and such calibre and standing. You say DofE or the Award or whatever they're calling it now and people know about it because it's years old."*

(DPFG5, DofE Manager)

### **7.3.2.1.3. Main disappointments**

Delivery partners were asked what the main disappointment was since they have been involved with the DofE. The three most cited disappointments by delivery partners are:

- non-completion of DofE programmes by young people;
- lack of capacity to enable widening participation; and
- lack of consultation and communication.

This shows a disparity with the delivery partners' views on the main achievements of the DofE which included the numbers participating and completing their DofE programme (see section 7.3.2.1.2). This could be explained by individual experiences of delivering the programme and the success (or not) of the DofE group that the respondent is affiliated to. It could also reflect the ambitions of those involved in seeing the benefits to one set of young people and a desire to make the DofE programme available more widely. As discussed above, it could also be due to the participant's context of involvement.

The following quotes are examples of the most cited disappointments.

Lack of capacity:

*"[I]t's not as widely used as it could be, partly because lack of staff, lack of confidence by particular groups, groupings of people that don't have any, you know, 'oh DofE yes, we'd like to do it but we don't know what to do'."*

(DP15, DofE Co-ordinator, uniform organisation)

Non-completion:

*"It is disappointing as well I think the number of people that drop out [...], whether if we were training people in smaller groups so they had more kind of personal input, whether that would help [...], obviously some people will drop out simply because they are not interested and they should never of really come in the first place had they thought about it but there are some people that you get the impression that they're quite, they're a little bit interested, their not really sure and they just need a bit more kind of an oomph than we can actually give them, yes, because we've just got too many to deal with or there is other people with more pressing concerns and etc. etc. (laughs)."*

(DP32, DofE volunteer)

Lack of communication / consultation:

*"[I]t is constant change, it is just the continual change to the Award and the evolvement you know, and I think there is sometimes that lack of realisation of how long it takes to actually filter some of that stuff through into the actual working field to make that real, you know, if you have got three hundred volunteers and there is a sizeable change in the programme, that is a sizeable piece of training..."*

(DPFG3, DofE Manager)

*"I think these decisions being made without consultation is a disappointment when there's enthusiasm and you know, passion for what the Award does [...] but it would be easier if they would just say 'this is how it is going to be' without giving you the feeling that you can have some input into that but totally wasting your time and I do find that a bit of a disappointment and I think if there's going to be change, we've all been around long enough to accept that change and go with it, [...] but not to belittle people by thinking they're being hoodwinked into having a say when the decision is already made and I find that over the past years the Award have done that and that's been a disappointment."*

(DPFG2, DofE Manager)

Other notable disappointments include pace of programme development (both too much and too little) and volunteer appreciation.

It should be noted that several respondents stated that they did not consider that they had any disappointments regarding the DofE Award programme or its delivery, for example:

*"Do you know I don't think I have any disappointments about the programme. [...] The programme is sound."*

(DPFG5, DofE Manager)

Further disappointments include:

- a top-down approach to the management of the DofE;
- young peoples motivation for doing their DofE (CV focused);
- the time delay from completing a DofE to being awarded it; and
- the complexities and barriers of running a group (unaffiliated).

As one delivery partner explained:

*"Well none apart from this very long time delay and having, when boys say 'any chance of my gold yet?' each time they say it, you see an expression in their eyes which increasingly says 'I'm not expecting you to say yes' and that's a real disappointment that they are being, you can see them becoming disillusioned and that's a pity."*

(DP16, DofE Leader, independent school)

#### 7.3.2.2. Delivery partner experiences

##### **7.3.2.2.1. Personal and professional benefits**

Delivery partners were asked about the benefits for them of being involved in the DofE. Due to the individual nature of the question, the answers to this were varied. However, a pattern of motivations for involvement has evolved,

revealing the benefits that delivery partners gained that contribute to their continued association with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Delivery partners were, in general, very positive of the personal and professional benefits to them of being involved in many different ways with the DofE programme. It is apparent that the benefits for delivery partners are independent of their connection to the DofE programme and the professional capacity of their association with the DofE. The three main benefits that delivery partners expressed were:

- the opportunity to work with young people, and linked with this,
- seeing young people develop
- seeing young people achieve.

They enjoyed being involved in the development of a young person over time, seeing that young person achieve their DofE and having been part of that process.

*"I think seeing young people develop, the personal satisfaction, well you have actually helped young people get from stage a to b whether it is an expedition, they have overcome, seeing them overcome difficulties and circumstances where they thought they couldn't cope, seeing somebody from a disadvantaged background complete the Award and they thought you know, they will never get there or whatever and seeing young people with maybe even learning difficulties achieve their Award and the hurdles they have to overcome to get there and ultimately as a person the experiences I have had from the Award have developed me and strengthened me as an individual."*

(DP2, school DofE Co-ordinator and Gold Award holder)

*"I love seeing the kids every week seeing them grow and mature helping them with their problems, seeing how they grow when they come here at 14 and then they leave at 18 or 19 seeing how much they have changed in that time which is a real buzz."*

(DP3, DofE Co-ordinator – open DofE centre)

Other popular responses to this question relate to social situations. Delivery partners felt that benefits of involvement include:

- building relationships and meeting new people in different environments, (this relates to both young people and other adults)
- enjoyment
- sharing skills and experiences
- giving something back, either to the community or the DofE.

*"My job is a teacher and what it's done for me, it's put me in contact really with all areas of the school and not just pupils that happen to choose to take the subject I teach and I agree with you, it is also working with colleagues that I wouldn't necessarily work with..."*

(DPFG1, school DofE Leader)

*"I get to interact with young people who are, on the whole, students at my school and build positive and less-formal relationships with them which has a huge impact on my working life."*

(DP online 60)

*"I mean what I have gained from it has just been amazing, just the personal experiences as an individual and it's the feeling of success when you achieve something and also seeing the success in others and their personal achievement when they finish their expedition..."*

(DP35, school DofE Co-ordinator and Gold Award holder)

These quotes reveal that, along with the satisfaction of seeing young people develop and achieve, delivery partners also gain personally from their involvement. They have the opportunity to build relationships with others that they might not and for some this has had a positive impact on their professional life. Also, for others (DP35 and DP2 above and the quotes below) who are past participants, it is an opportunity to give something back. They are able to compare their experiences of doing their own DofE and this can act as a resource for supporting others through their DofE. The significance of giving something back, both to the DofE and the community is also relevant in terms of investigating a young Leaders programme (see sections 7.3.5.2.1 and 7.3.5.3.3).

*"Being able to repay some of the experience I gained 45 years ago. Seeing young people turn their lives around to become useful members of the community."*

(DP online 41)

*"Opportunity to give something back to the organisation that helped me gain so much self worth & achievement."*

(DP online 24)

*"I was involved in new activities when doing my award and now enjoy working with young people and seeing them complete their expeditions."*

(DP online 64)

And one described the importance of the DofE to him personally, the significance of inspirational leaders and why he continues to be involved today:

*"I came from a background where you didn't mention the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, it just wasn't associated with the area that I was brought up in []. I got drawn into it from a perspective of I was either going to be a very positive person in society or else I was going to jail, that was the two choices, and most of the time I spent in school was surviving until three o'clock, until you left school so I give you a bit of background to it. The Award itself, and more so the leaders of the Award who I still work very closely with today, were the ones that gave direction and pointed me and other people that I work with in the right kind of direction and gave them some kind of self confidence to be able to make decisions, [...] to be able to give them the opportunity to go and advance themselves. [...] the fact of getting somebody from a deprived area or regardless of what their background is, the opportunity to make decisions and base their outcome on what they have actually achieved, is a very big aspect, especially when you are not given the opportunity to make decisions. That then progressed onto me actually delivering training to the Award, [...] I deliver training to both cross community groups, deprived groups and also very well to do schools. My biggest disappointment out of the whole lot was the fact when I asked a group recently why they were doing the Award was the fact that it looked good on their CV. Now I accept that it is*

*actually a really good thing, I accept that is a positive aspect but from my perspective, it wasn't, it was the fact that I learnt to stand on my own two feet, I learnt to progress..."*

(DPFG2, DofE Manager – uniform organisation)

For many of the delivery partners being involved was also an opportunity for them to develop their own skills. This includes new interests and new skills such as camping and the outdoors and communication skills. The Expedition section in particular has given several delivery partners a chance to continue taking part in, and in some cases lead, outdoor activities or training related to the expedition.

*"I now have more interests, I didn't walk at all, I didn't go out and about at all before I did the programme. [...] I am a straighteners kind of girl and you know, camping is not for me but it's, I've actually started camping, I you know, get down in the [] every weekend I can, it's completely changed me in the last two years, [...] I've never ever had such an outdoors life as I have done (laughs)."*

(DP12, school DofE Leader)

*"I think posed myself new challenges is kind of from the interaction that I have with young people and the kind of, which has taught me a whole lot of new skills as well and thinking about you know, how to deal with different situations, compared to my day job as it were, it's a much more sort of interactive sort of activity so I've had to sort of learn more presentation skills and how to work effectively with people through this and it's got me involved with a sort of different range of people as well, [...] people I wouldn't otherwise know which has been good actually, really positive."*

(DP17, DofE Co-ordinator)

This section is linked with delivery partners' perceived main achievements of the DofE which is discussed in section 7.3.2.1.2. Further, there is a connection with this and delivery partners' most cited disappointment which is non-completion of a young person's DofE programme.

These comments all illustrate that these delivery partners believe in the benefits of the DofE for personal and social development for the young person. It also shows that they gain a lot of satisfaction and enjoyment themselves from engaging with the DofE programme. Further, the delivery partners consulted with who revealed that they had done a DofE themselves reported that they have good memories of doing so. Overall, they saw doing their DofE as an enjoyable time in their lives and could still see the value of a DofE Award. They feel that a DofE Award not only instils a sense of belonging in young people but also it is one of the reasons that people come back, or give something back to the DofE later in life. In some cases doing a DofE themselves was the reason that they were involved now. They wanted to give something back and as one partner suggested, others could be encouraged to do the same:

*"Trust and teamwork, working as a team and realising what you can give to others, I think that's what we're trying to encourage in the people who do the Award, you have come through it and all the help that you've got, if you can give something back to the Award, Gold Award holders organisations, to encourage people to give something back to the Award in their local area."*

(DP2, DofE Co-ordinator, teacher and Gold Award holder)

### 7.3.2.3. Young peoples' experiences

#### **7.3.2.3.1. Benefits to young people**

Delivery partners cited many ways that the DofE is beneficial to young people; some are elements of personal development, whilst others are more practical, for example new skills. Others refer to benefits which are more difficult to quantify such as confidence. However all of these reflect, in some way, the guiding principles of the DofE.

It should be noted that most delivery partners did not state only one benefit, but considered that a range of benefits were available to a young person taking part in a DofE programme and the breadth of answers reflects this.

The most frequently cited benefit to young people of doing a DofE programme was the advantage of career enhancement by having a DofE on their CV or personal statement. This illustrates that delivery partners again saw completion of a DofE programme as an achievement (the second most cited perceived benefit). They consider that this demonstration of commitment is important for potential future prospects. It also indicates that the delivery partners perceived the external perception of the DofE to be important: that it has a reputation and is recognised externally.

One delivery partner explains how he perceived that the DofE contributes to a sense of identity and the importance of external recognition:

*"[I]t's a universal translator, it's a universal language [...] the Duke of Edinburgh's Award provides that timeless continuity or that timeless mark of right of passage for a young person. [...] there are young people that will leave school with no qualifications but to have had one section of the Award and if the Award has that same badge of honour and the same equality of currency for having completed just one section of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award as opposed to a whole gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award [...] and for the person judging them, you've shown commitment, you've shown dedication, you've shown self-sacrifice [...] it's a badge of honour [...] it gives you an advantage over everyone else.*

(DP23, Regional Director)

Another explains the external value of a DofE for employment:

*"[T]here is distinctly an opportunity around CVs, you know there is no question to me that actually the Award is enormous currency, people don't intimately know what the programme is about but if they look at it they think you know, 'that's a very positive statement about young people' so if they see it in a CV they actually do believe that they are instantly more employable."*

(DP21, Regional Director)

The transferable skills that doing a DofE offers a young person were recognised:

*"[F]or me it's that they take on a significant amount of responsibility and that they become self reliant, the programme it makes them become independent as well in a way although they may work for an Award group, to actually complete their Award they need to become independent and, but also developing their team work skills so I think*

*it really does develop their skills significantly but gives them a lot of skills really for life and particularly entering, for young people that are entering the world of work."*

(DP29, Regional Director)

Similarly, another discussed the advantage of having a DofE to talk about at an interview:

*"[O]ne of the classic reasons that young people get involved is it looks good on your CV. Now, the DofE used to say 'that's not really all that important', well actually it is really important because when a young person goes for an interview almost certainly the person the other side of the table is going to have a positive vision of what DofE is and [...] they've got something to talk about, something positive, there's something to hang a hook on, hang their coat on, and as I say it doesn't really matter whether the person knows the nitty gritty as long as they know it's positive and it is."*

(DP10, Development Officer, uniform organisation)

Finally, it was acknowledged that young people are aware of the advantage of having a DofE:

*"A lot of young people these days are switched on to the fact that it does make a difference for their applications to universities and to jobs, they are very, they know that this is going to differentiate them when they are up against all the three As and they have got the DofE so I think that's quite significant. I often tell them I hope they're not doing it just for that reason but they recognise that that will in fact be a plus for them when they reach that stage in their lives."*

(DPFG4, DofE Manager)

There were a group of significant benefits stated by delivery partners that relate to the personal development of the individual. Particular emphasis was given to social and inter-personal skills. Delivery partners considered that young people benefited by:

- making friends and building relationships;
- meeting new people; and
- gaining a better understanding of other people.

*"The young people have met so many other people in doing this, I think that's another thing, and broadening their horizons in a way, that going out and doing things they wouldn't have done probably before. They [...] have got to rely on one another, they can't have one marching off the top (laughs) and leaving the others down the bottom which sometimes in the early stages you do get that, but they soon realise that actually they have got to work together as a team, you have to rely on other people and that's very good."*

(DP6, DofE Co-ordinator within secure mental healthcare)

These benefits enable them to enhance their inter-personal and social skills. They also benefit from learning to work as a team which again in turn increases their ability to mix with and get on with other people. This has been particularly evident for those with behavioural or other personal issues. For examples of this see Case Study 10, Case Study 11 and Case Study 12 where three youth workers describe how participation in a DofE programme has contributed to broadening horizons and a change in direction for the individual.

One delivery partner described how the Volunteering section of the DofE has given her group of young people a wider understanding of those around them:

*"[I]t was absolutely marvellous for our young people because they were able to see how other people out there are living and I think a lot of them are quite surprised at the poverty that some of the elderly people are living in so it's been a good thing for them in lots of ways."*

(DP6, DofE Co-ordinator within secure mental healthcare)

The following quotes are good examples of increasing inter-personal skills by mixing with different groups of young people:

*"A lot of young people, they tend to hang around in the same peer groups and because of the way the Award is structured, it puts them in touch with other groups that they wouldn't normally associate with so they can make new friendships and new links with other organisations. [...] it has been allowing them to transition between maybe a peer group that's not been very productive for them as people in that society or that environment, allows them to associate with other people, throughout the different sections of the Award."*

(DPFG3, DofE Manager)

*"[W]ith the vulnerable kids that I have worked with in the school, we have mixed them, with the mainstream, high achievers so when they've both all been together in the one camp for example on an expedition, they've all worked well together and they've realised that working with their peers, it's brought them on, both groups of people, it's brought them on in different ways and they have seen sort of a different side to life by just mixing with those peers, good side and bad side it's really good, plus it focuses them on just long term goals, nothing is just a quick fix and they have, you know, they do realise that to achieve something in the Award, it has got to be a long term commitment from them."*

(DPFG3, DofE Leader)

#### **Case Study 10: How DofE programmes can change young peoples' lives.**

This example illustrates the currency of a DofE Award, how others perceive it and the positive impact participating can have on an individual by helping to overcome difficulties, gaining confidence and finding a career path from their Skills section:

*"Well I think it puts, it sets them on a different route, I mean obviously most, a lot of our young people have been on a downward spiral which is why they have ended up in a specialist unit like this, and I think the people, also their families often feel quite negative about their young, their daughter or son, and I think it gives them a bit of hope as well. An example of this was recently we had one of our young men going to get his Award at one of the outside ceremonies and his mother came to see the Award ceremony with her younger son, and she was so delighted to see this young man achieve something like that in his life and it's and it's, I think it's because it's an Award that all young people can be involved in, it's not something that's been adapted for our young people, they have to do what is required by the Award, and it meant such a lot to her. She was, you know, she was very grateful for the unit having got him through that."*

*But I said, 'well actually, it's him, he got himself through it' (laughs) but you know, so I think it does change parents' perceptions of what their young people can achieve as well, and I think having done something like that, that often our young people haven't done very well at school, that's the other thing, they haven't have exam results and things like that. So I think getting an Award like this is having some, a really positive achievement for them and then they can say 'yes well I could do something' and quite a few of them have maybe started something in skills that then they have taken on to college, one of our young men actually went off to train as a chef, and I believe he is still working as a chef, but you know, where he, where he moved on to, so you know, it sets them off in the right way I think, it's good."*

(DP6, DofE Co-ordinator, mental health secure unit)

Therefore, for disengaged young people, it can also give their parents more idea of what their child is capable of, they are also seen to be on a 'level playing field' with other participants.

**Case Study 10: How DofE programmes can change young peoples' lives.**

### **Case Study 11: How DofE programmes can change young peoples' lives.**

This example illustrates how, when a DofE programme is used as part of a wider programme, those with behavioural problems and at risk of social exclusion can overcome difficulties and change the direction of their life to a more positive one:

*"We have examples of young people whose lives have been changed dramatically, I can give you one in particular who springs to mind is a boy who did the antisocial behaviour programme with the snowboarding so he was referred, he was a persistent offender, that means that at the time of referral he had more than five offences within the previous six months so he had a very high level of offending and some of the offences were quite serious, he was behaving in a manner which any normal person would find pretty terrifying. [...] he started doing the programme, he started to see the consequences of his actions and to actually think about what he was doing and he also gained a bit of confidence so he was able to work with people who didn't just push him away as soon as he misbehaved [...] he joined a group doing mechanics [...] he loved learning about the motor mechanics of the car and he was very good at it and he responded very well to being told that he was very good at it and getting the opportunity to then help other people so then we gave him the opportunity to go into a different group but as a peer educator [...] at the end of it he completed his full Bronze Award, he got himself a job, he's still and this must be two years on I think, he is still holding down a full time job and is no longer offending at all."*

(DP8, DofE Leader)

**Case Study 11: How DofE programmes can change young peoples' lives.**

### **Case Study 12: How DofE programmes can change young peoples' lives.**

This example is one of a young man who three years previous to gaining his DofE Award had been in an EBD school (emotional and behavioural difficulties). His teachers have seen the young person develop both mentally and physically:

*"I mean it is very difficult for us to gauge in the you know long term how it would change [a young person]. But certainly one particular student, one pre-foundation study student, who for him it has really*

*sparked an interest now in outdoor education and he wants to now come back next year with a little bit more responsibility as a helper if you like, as a volunteer, working with young people [...] he wants a career in kind of outdoor education now and that's a big thing to see. [...] you could see he was genuinely motivated and excited by it and yes, OK, you know, I mean I sometimes see his temper and I see it on the corridors and I see sometimes how he can be but that's just his, you know, his challenge I guess, but in the main you could see that he had finally latched onto something that meant something to him, something that really motivated him and something that he could potentially see a career in."*

(DP37, school DofE Co-ordinator)

**Case Study 12: How DofE programmes can change young peoples' lives.**

**7.3.3. Community benefits**

Delivery partners were asked how they thought doing a DofE gets young people involved in their local community. Responses mainly related to the benefits to a young person of being more involved. For example, as stated in section 7.3.2.3.1 above by DP6, young people engage more with the community and become aware of the value of helping others. Through doing this, delivery partners thought that young people become more socially responsible. The Volunteering section was also considered to be a valuable source for experiential learning. By engaging with their community young people are able to enhance their social skills by meeting new people and becoming more aware of and helping others, and also, to a certain extent, become more aware of issues in their local community, which in turn can instil in them a sense of social responsibility. This is linked to the above perceived benefits to young people of developing social skills and the ability to work with others.

Delivery partners did not perceive that benefiting the local community was one of the main benefits to young people of doing their DofE programme. They saw the young person's DofE programme as being focussed on the personal, individual personal development and achievement of the young person and gaining an advantage over others of being able to use their DofE in the current competitive market of university places and employment.

The community benefits, as have been established in the previous chapter, are more apparent for those young people who are doing their volunteering outside of their usual surroundings.

Delivery partners gave practical examples of how young people have benefited their community whilst doing their DofE programme. For example, one delivery partner explained how a group has worked on local gardens and improving their own environment:

*"Well young people would often got to the village just up from [town], for their Service section, boys would help with the Village Improvement Committee and they help with the gardening and helping the older people look after their gardens and they look after all the flowers down the village and water them and generally tidy up the village and take pride in their home environment and their community [...] and boys have actually worked as part of that for their service and they get pride in that."*

(DP2, school DofE Co-ordinator)

Another described how young people had got involved with cleaning a local pond and in so doing have improved their reputation and built relationships with others in the community:

*"I can remember we've had youngsters in [] where they've got involved in restocking and sorting out the old village pond, you know, and it was full of prams and supermarket trolleys and things like that and over a period of time they did a whole major piece of work that would engage the community. And I think the worse the reputation of the school where the Award is or the youth centre where the Award is and the more those youngsters got engaged in the community, the greater the benefit it was, you know, and it really built, it really built new relationships, you know, it's a very practical thing that people can do for the Award that would change the image and the reputation and you know."*

(DP39, DoFE Manager)

One interviewee described how some of their young people were volunteering within their own, or the school community:

*"We have had volunteers, sort of more able students if you like, who are on the Award supporting students, pre-foundation students who have you know, significant barriers, they will come and assist in the sessions that we hold on a Wednesday afternoon so we've got that you know, example if you like of volunteering and benefiting the college community rather than the wider community."*

(DP37, school DoFE Co-ordinator)

It is widely accepted that there are certain challenges for finding volunteer placements for young people under the age of 16 and this is one of the main reasons that they volunteer within their own community. However, volunteering within their own community, as explained in the previous chapter still has the potential to have an impact on both the young person and the community:

*"I would say more at the silver and gold level, you've got opportunities for young people to engage in wider aspects of their community sort of external to their group. Quite often at bronze level their community is very much their school or their group or their immediate local area or something that they can do that's fairly easily organised because they're a little bit younger, there are a lot of agencies that actually won't accept volunteers until they're 16 so with the bronze level, we're talking kind of immediate community and helping sort of near neighbours or in your own school but I think at the silver and gold levels, the opportunities are massive, [...] certainly as they get towards gold, if you're talking about 12 months of volunteering, that's a really, really significant impact, an hour a week for 12 months in a local school helping with reading is going to have a massive impact on that particular school."*

(DP30, Regional Director)

### 7.3.4. Employment

As discussed in section 7.3.2.3.1, delivery partners consider the main benefit to young people of doing their DofE programme to be the ability to enhance their CV once they have achieved a DofE Award. They consider the demonstration of commitment and transferable skills is an advantage to the young person, with the added benefit of the external recognition that the DofE receives from employers.

Delivery partners gave specific examples of how doing a DofE has changed young peoples' lives for the positive. For example, a DofE can help a young person change the direction of their life by broadening their horizons. By learning transferable skills, this can motivate the young person to try new things, or develop skills they have learnt on their DofE. Delivery partners are in a position to comment on the changes that they see in the young person that the young person may not necessarily a) be aware of and b) not feel comfortable talking about. For exemplars of this, see Case Study 10, Case Study 11 and Case Study 12.

### 7.3.5. General views of the DofE

#### 7.3.5.1. Ways to enhance and improve the DofE

The majority of delivery partners responded that increased support would enhance the DofE. This is discussed further below. However, many did not see that any improvements were necessary (this was the second most cited response):

*"No, I think the way it's set up is really good, I think the four sections are really good and the three levels are really good, I think I'm not so keen on the fact that we're being sort of dictated to about funding and how to use things, the words like the Award and the programme, I think that's not really necessary but I think the Award is very, very good."*

(DP8, DofE Leader)

*"It would be hard to improve on an already all-round award. I find it suits my groups of young people really well."*

(DP online 35)

*"I think it is brilliant! I like the new logo, & the new names, I like the volunteering change & I am proud to work on it. It cannot be improved."*

DP online 218)

Most of the issues raised by delivery partners were linked to improving their ability to deliver the DofE or to slightly changing the existing system. There are 6 themes that cut across all of the suggested improvements: support, funding, communication, resources, training and volunteers. The issues raised under these themes can be categorised as follows and will be discussed further below:

- Methods to improve the effectiveness of existing system
- Improvements to provision / delivery of programme
- Improvements to structure
- Marketing and promotion

### 7.3.5.1.1. *Improvements to effectiveness*

The most cited improvement that delivery partners would like to the ways the current system works is an increase in support for delivery of the programme. Though some did state where they thought the support should come from, the fact that it is the most frequently cited augmentation reveals a perceived lack of assistance or encouragement from higher up in the management of the programme system.

*"It's just we're sort of a little bit concerned that sometimes individual units, volunteers, schools, call it what you want, don't always get the support they perhaps deserve."*

(DPFG5, DoFE Manager)

*"I think the Award itself is, through the quality review is very much a more robust technique and procedure than what we're trying to deliver but it would also hugely benefit with having some support in an area, be it financial or be it whatever incentive, for leaders to be more valued and more involved, it would help us no end, tremendously."*

(DPFG5, DoFE Manager)

*"More support to local authority teams facing pressure from the service within which they operate."*

(DP online 113)

*"Better involvement of leaders on the fringe. In my county D of E is largely school based. I have had very little to no support from any one in my efforts to run this scheme in my St John Ambulance Cadet Group."*

(DP online 156)

*"More support from local Authority rather than seeing the Award simply as a generator of outcome numbers."*

(DP online 201)

One partner stated:

*"I feel that the DoFE staff in my area work really hard to support me in the delivering of the programme."*

(DP online 103)

The second most cited improvement was increased communication, which can be directly linked to increased support. Delivery partners stated that lack of communication and consultation often made them feel isolated from the bigger picture of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and/or from their local authority or operating authority and they felt that this is a major failing of the current system. These following quotes exemplify these suggestions:

*"Support for a more bottom up approach. At the moment volunteers who work with the young people often feel dictated to from the centre by central charity and operating authorities."*

(DP online 9)

*"More communications—too many decisions seem to be made behind closed doors."*

(DP online 230)

*"More communication to those at the front line."*

(DP online 6)

*"More two-way communication between regional and national offices and group leaders."*

(DP online 88)

*"The new Award magazine addresses a lot of the previous problems. By improving communications between regional HQ and the volunteer groups at the grass roots."*

DP online 159)

The third most frequently suggested improvement to the existing system was the provision of more resources. This was followed by training, volunteer recognition and the opportunity to network with other DofE groups. Networking with other DofE groups was seen to be important in order to increase support, meet other volunteers and leaders and to encourage cross working to support each other, for instance for expeditions and other activities where more volunteers are required than some units have available.

Participants were quite vocal about wanting some kind of volunteer recognition, either in the guise of expenses paid, credit from their employers, a certificate or badge of recognition or, in some cases, a simple thank you:

*"It's all good and well having volunteers but and you volunteer not to get paid but you are still relying on goodwill to an extent like you should be able to cover things like general expenses and..."*

(DPFG5, DofE Leader)

*"[R]eimburse volunteers, you know, the most you can do is give them a certificate, yes I can ask the Award to give me a certificate to say 'thank you for volunteering for a year' and people don't expect to be paid, you know, you volunteer..."*

(DPFG5, DofE Leader)

*"[T]he pressure on the teachers now it has become so intense that some of them are just bailing out and saying 'we love it, we really do want to do it but quite frankly the head is not sympathetic or we get no extra points on our salary or we get no TLR's' and I think if there's something that could be done to make that easier for the teachers who want to do it to do it and to be rewarded for it although a lot of them do a lot of work voluntarily and they're to be commended for that..."*

(DPFG4, DofE Manager)

*"I think if there is one thing I could add, it would be this celebrating for the volunteers on a local level. Celebrate and you know, sharing that good work for them and a more public display of that celebration I think."*

(DPFG3, Manager)

Other elements of improving the existing system related to improving the paperwork system, offering more clarity of requirements for leaders and young people and producing good practice guides.

### 7.3.5.1.2. *Improvements to programme delivery*

The most cited suggestion for improvement to aid delivery of the programme was funding, closely followed by communication, resources, training, volunteer recognition and volunteer recruitment. The expedition section was also highlighted as an area for improvement.

These improvements are somewhat generic and could be stated for many of the other sections. Delivery partners felt that, as above, if communication was increased, this would enhance their ability to deliver the DofE, which is directly linked to increased resources and training. Volunteer recruitment and recognition are, again, linked to the capacity of ability to deliver the programme. The importance of retaining volunteers by recognising their efforts will also be discussed in section 7.3.5.2.2.

The Expedition section of the DofE was cited as an area delivery partners would like to develop in order to improve their delivery of the programme. In particular, delivery partners would like to:

- get rid of the purpose of the expedition
- improve the expedition training pack
- reduce the cost, and
- be more flexible with more emphasis on exploration and learning skills such as team building rather than physical challenge (includes mention of multi-faith groups, those with learning difficulties and females).

*“Expeditions, getting rid of the purpose. Students do enough studies/presentations at school/college. Why make them write more when this section is primarily about a navigation and team building exercise. A purposeful debrief with highs and lows. Something about the area they are in would satisfy the learning points of the expedition. Students do not complete their awards because they cannot find time with their other studies/commitments.”*

(DP online 6)

Improvements related to the capacity and availability of the programme to young people were also suggested. Linked to this were suggestions relating to both widening participation of the DofE to other groups of young people and reducing the cost of the programme to facilitate this. There were concerns that young people who wanted to get involved with the programme were unable to due to not enough places being available and this was directly linked to a lack of leaders and volunteers to run units. It was reported that, in some places, there is a highly competitive selection process for the small numbers of places available and other units which are over subscribed and not available to new applicants. Both instances are excluding a large number of young people. This illustrates that whilst delivery partners believe in the programme, they are concerned that there is not adequate opportunity for those who want to, to be able to take part in a DofE programme. This is also linked to problems with sufficient training for leaders and volunteers which has been discussed above.

#### **Case Study 13: Successful DofE school group.**

This school has a successful record of DofE programme participants and Award completions. Last academic year (2007-2008) they had 136 start their Bronze programme and 72 on both the Silver and Gold programmes. Of those who started in academic year 2006, 113 out of 123 bronze and 70 out of 73 Silver participants completed their Award (Gold completion numbers not yet available). The school attribute this to the system they have in place for students who take

part: they must complete their volunteering, service and physical before they embark on their practice expedition or be allowed to participate in the actual expedition. The downside of this is that it puts the teachers under enormous pressure. There is a team of teachers at the school involved in doing the programme. At the school there is one teacher responsible for each of the DofE levels, who then has support staff to help. Also, a number of teachers and other staff help out and assist on the expeditions. This support system, together with the enthusiasm of the teachers and the method of delivery has proved to be successful for this school, as one teacher said of his involvement in the programme:

*"I really enjoyed it and I just think it is a great thing for young people to be involved with and also a great thing for me to be involved with because you do get to know them so much better and just be outside and away from school as well I think is a big thing."*

(DP36, school expedition co-ordinator)

#### Case Study 13: Successful DofE school group.

##### **7.3.5.1.3. Improvements to programme structure**

Delivery partners were, on the whole, satisfied with the structure of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme. The few suggestions for improvement include: extending or changing the age range of the programme, reducing the cost of doing the programme, offering clearer guidelines and clarity of requirement for each section and introducing different 'taster' Awards such as an expedition only prior to bronze.

Several delivery partners suggested that the DofE programme age range should be extended or the start age should be slightly changed. For instance, the starting age is currently 14 and when done in school this can mean that the younger age group from a year group can be prevented from starting the award at the same time as their peers. It is suggested that the starting age should be aligned to the academic year rather than individual birthday, which would be relevant in a school setting.

Introducing new DofE programmes was another suggestion:

*"[I]ntroduce new awards – such as taster sessions and short courses that young people can put forward in their record of achievement. Different from the sectional award as it would incorporate a wide range of activities rather than one of the sectional activities as present."*

(DP online 46)

Some delivery partners did not have any issues with delivery of the programme, but, as mentioned above, the cost of doing the DofE programme and paying for each book as the young person progresses is seen to be prohibitive for some:

*"I don't think really in the ability to be able to deliver, I mean the biggest problem we have really is the expense. [...] I think it's one of those things that everybody is always gonna struggle with that but I mean a lot of the kids when they go to annual camp, they do an expedition anyway and that usually covers their bronze and/or silver practice at least."*

(DP13, DofE Leader, uniform organisation)

#### **7.3.5.1.4. Marketing and promotion**

Suggestions for improvements to the marketing and promotion were largely linked to promotional and publicity material, with a few comments about the rebranding of the DofE programme.

*"By making promotional material, more colourful and eye catching for young people, so that its user friendly."*

(DP online 115)

*"More publicity at a local and regional level. Very few pictures and stories appear in the local press or on local television. I am sure the public, in general, would like to see and hear about the good work that is being done, especially working in the community by young people under the guidance of leaders."*

(DP online 60)

*"We need to improve our public image and advertise ourselves more through the media. Few young people aged 14-18 have heard of D of E and those who have don't know what it entails."*

(DP online 219)

#### **7.3.5.2. Volunteers**

Delivery partners were asked the question: *'How could more leaders and volunteers be encouraged to support young people who are doing their DofE?'* The responses to this relate to both recruitment and retention of leaders and are discussed in these categories below, but as with other sections, these overlap in several places.

##### **7.3.5.2.1. Recruitment**

The most cited, and probably most obvious method, for recruiting volunteers given by delivery partners was through advertising or increasing publicity aimed at encouraging volunteers to get involved. Examples of these included raising local awareness, offering more information about being a DofE leader or volunteer, having a local or national recruitment campaign and making the range of opportunities clear to potential volunteers.

*"More advertising of the Award in prominent local places."*

(DP online 4)

*"More information and publicity to wider public about the terrific work D of E does with young people."*

(DP online 25)

Delivery partners suggested that the groups of people that should be targeted as potential leaders was firstly, participants or past participants of the programme, secondly to encourage parents to get involved and thirdly, to encourage employers to support their staff if they wanted to be involved with the DofE Award programme.

*"By positively contacting and 're-cycling' the many older Award holders currently not involved or who have not returned to support a scheme for which they generally say they got a deal from participation."*  
(DP online 15)

*"More encouragement of gold award holders to 'give back' to their award groups by volunteering."*  
(DP online 18)

*"Many Golds are eager to help – encouragement from Main D of E units to encourage them back on training evenings etc."*  
(DP online 162)

Delivery partners also thought that structured training and support for leaders and volunteers was an important part of attracting potential volunteers into the programme.

#### **7.3.5.2.2. Retention**

Delivery partners come from a range of backgrounds and are involved with many different organisations, therefore they gave different suggestions with varying emphasis for methods of retaining leaders and volunteers. However, there are two broad areas suggested for improvement of the management of volunteers: recognition and support. This links directly back to improvements to the programme discussed above in section 7.3.5.1. Delivery partners considered these two areas as the most effective way of retaining current volunteers. It could also be seen as a way of recruiting leaders through successful word of mouth recommendation.

Several practical methods of volunteer recognition (a recurring theme) were offered by delivery partners:

*"All leaders, volunteer names [should be] given to new regional office. Then these people are sent out an invite to annual event to thank volunteers."*  
(DP online 40)

*"Leaders and volunteers need to receive praise and recognition at regular intervals. A simple badge with 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 etc years bars would be much appreciated. Regular get togethers at a local and regional level gives the opportunity."*  
(DP online 60)

*"More recognition of their contribution. Many people who give a lot of time to the award which is taken for granted by the Award. Maybe certificates for 10 years service ? or something like?"*  
(DP online 103)

*"Be given financial assistance towards training opportunities & personal expenses."*  
(DP online 110)

*"Show them more of the vision, give them more of the glory – at the palace – called appreciation."*  
(DP online 200)

Concerns were voiced by delivery partners that although training is becoming more widely available through the modular training programme, not enough courses are available at convenient times for volunteers to be able to take part.

Other ways of recruiting and retaining leaders and volunteers that were suggested include: linking DofE providers and making local networks, offering incentives, extra funding, paying expenses and more resources.

#### 7.3.5.3. Barriers

##### **7.3.5.3.1. *Barriers to participation***

The most commonly cited barrier to participating in a DofE programme by delivery partners was lack of leaders or volunteers available to run a unit. The second most popular answer was the lack of capacity or availability of somewhere for a young person to do their DofE. These are, of course, intrinsically linked. Similarly, the most frequent answer for what prevents young people engaging with the DofE was the lack of access to a DofE programme for young people. Without increasing access to DofE programmes and thus recruiting and retaining more volunteers as DofE Leaders, it is not possible for all young people to take part in the DofE:

*"[Y]ou can enrol as many as you want, go into a school, throw a lot of application forms out, a lot of glossy brochures and everything else, draw them in, but if you haven't got the adults and the system, and the infrastructure to ensure you can take them all the way through, you promised them something you can't deliver which isn't fair."*

(DP4, DofE Development Officer)

*"Well the number one is basic the lack of leaders, I mean you know, still very much a volunteer led organisation in terms of you know, I mean teachers may run the Award but it really is predominantly very much in a voluntary capacity and they are in a difficult situation which you know, we very much understand that there is really genuinely only so many young people that you can support and it is very difficult to sort of open up the whole of the programme to everybody when actually the reality is they would just be stretched..."*

(DP1, Regional Director)

*"Capacity and funding, they're the same, my job's just been mainstreamed but a lot of the time you set these projects up and it's short term funding or I now have some members of staff who are on short term funding, now when that funding goes and even prior to the funding ending, we are going to have to reduce the capacity we have because we can't run it all off volunteers."*

(DP8, DofE Leader)

Following on, and linked to, this is the importance of adequate support from leaders. This was mentioned by delivery partners as the best way to encourage participants through their DofE and sometimes it is this encouragement that gets a young person through to completion of their DofE (see section 7.3.5.3.2 below).

The joint third answers were DofE Award image and perception, and cost of doing a programme. Delivery partners felt that some young people still consider

the Duke of Edinburgh's Award as something that they do not want to get involved with and this is, possibly through lack of understanding.

For example:

*"The man on the street or the young person on the street does not necessarily know what the Award is all about, you know, if they do or they can be introduced to it, brilliant but that still is a problem."*

(DP22, Regional Director)

*"There's a possible perception that it's still a bit middle class, I think that's beginning to disappear a bit, it's never been a problem within the [] because we've got every sort of background involved and as I say lots of our kids are coming from disadvantaged backgrounds and they're perfectly happy to get out there and do the Duke of Edinburgh's Award."*

(DP10, Development Officer, uniform organisation)

The perceived or actual cost of doing a DofE (and particularly the expedition) was felt to prevent wider inclusion in the programme. One delivery partner explained how, with additional funding from a local charity, they have overcome this issue:

*"Finance, it does play a part, to be honest, we were fortunate that we got funding from [] because most of the cost is based round the expeditions, this is where, because it's a group activity that's the greatest cost of all [...] We've got greater numbers of kids going through the Award because of that, money's been devolved back into schools, offset the expedition costs and we can run a multi activity weeks' programme..."*

(DP11, DofE Leader)

#### **7.3.5.3.2. Non-completion**

Delivery partners stated many reasons why they thought young people failed to complete their DofE programme, with many of the reasons cited being personal to the individual. However, the most common reason cited was thought to be lack of sufficient support from adult leaders.

The second most common failure to complete was thought to be the challenge of the expedition. This can be for several reasons including:

- it is too far out of their comfort zone;
- the organisation does not have the Leaders available to deliver the expedition to all those that are doing a programme;
- individuals may have difficulty finding a group to go on expedition with;
- time pressures from other commitments; and
- personal restrictions (e.g. they may be in a secure unit).

For example:

*"[W]hen it comes to the expedition that we do get drop out because people just don't fancy it you know, and part of it is because it's outside of their comfort zone, it's outside literally and I think at that point some students say "no, I don't want to."*

(DP38, school DofE Co-ordinator)

*“Gold’s are actually really hard work to organise the expeditions for because their A Levels, going off to uni, gap years, plus trying to have holidays and jobs, trying to get four people together [...] to do the training or the assessment is a nightmare.”*

(DP5, DofE Co-ordinator)

The new on-line record system may alleviate many of the problems associated with non-completion as it will be possible for a leader will be able to track a young person’s progress and give them the support when felt that it is needed. However, the importance of face-to-face interaction and support has been illustrated as one of the strongest elements of doing a DofE Award and the ability to mix with others in a different social environment.

#### **7.3.5.3.3. Widening participation**

The main methods of widening participation suggested by delivery partners are linked directly to comments made above (section 7.3.5.3.1). The first was capacity building in three main ways:

- increase availability of the DofE
- target hard to reach young people
- recruit volunteers so that existing groups can expand.

The second suggestion was to recruit and train post-Gold participants and encourage them to become Leaders. Ways of doing this that were suggested included:

- a structured young Leaders scheme
- training badges
- a Platinum Award

Past participants who took part in the research revealed why they continue to be involved with the DofE:

*“It’s nice to give something back, I got a lot out of doing it myself, I know it sounds corny but it’s nice to see other people get the same opportunity I did.”*

(DPFG5, DofE Leader)

*“Because I’ve been a participant and now being a leader you’re getting very quickly the kind of skills that you’ve been learning and the confidence you’ve been getting is being channelled, you know, back into doing Duke of Edinburgh and [...] I was doing Duke of Edinburgh and I’m now helping someone else get through Duke of Edinburgh so it just feels really good and when the opportunity came up to do leading I was very keen on getting involved and doing that because I just know how much the benefits have been for me personally.”*

(DP40, DofE volunteer)

#### **Case Study 14: Overcoming barriers to participation – working towards community cohesion.**

A DofE Leader, DP19 works at a comprehensive school in Yorkshire. She explained why they had to suspend offering DofE programmes to their students and how they have overcome this barrier through partnership working with the local mosque.

One of the reasons the school stopped offering the programme was the issue of

young Muslims not being able to participate fully in a DofE programme. The Muslim community could not take part in the expeditions and thus could only gain sectional DofE certificates:

*"[W]e had a lot of children who were only getting sectional Awards and never completing, cos obviously a lot of Muslim girls are not allowed, would never be allowed to go on expeditions."*

Further, within the community, DP19 stated that the young people give their priority to the mosque:

*"[C]hildren having to go home to go to mosque or not being able to come to activities because they have to go to mosque.[...] But slowly we're, as I say now we've got a mosque working with us, we're getting there slowly."*

Using sectional certificates was in counter to the objectives of the local authority who put pressure on the school to only offer full DofE Awards, which as stated was not always possible. Thus, the school suspended the programmes until a solution could be found.

Through building relationships over time, DP19 has encouraged the local mosque to get involved and the result is that they are now in a position to offer expeditions to young Muslims, and in particular females in the group. Another way of furthering participation has been to encourage the young people to use learning the Koran for their Skills section, showing them how they can incorporate their DofE into their lives. This is a really good example of overcoming barriers to include as many in the community as possible and encourage community cohesion.

**Case Study 14: Overcoming barriers to participation – working towards community cohesion.**

## **7.4. Summary**

Previous DofE experience is an important factor in getting involved as delivery partners. 42% of the delivery partners responding to the survey had a DofE Award themselves. Of these, the great majority (73%) had a Gold Award. Those who had a DofE were influenced by this when getting involved.

The survey respondents had a limited demographic profile. The biggest age group was 55-64 years with 28% of the respondents falling in this age range. Nearly 97% of the respondents stated their ethnicity as white. No respondents stated they were from black and ethnic minorities.

### **7.4.1. Experiences**

Delivery partners were very positive about the experiences and outcomes of acting as a delivery partner. There was very strong general agreement to the statement *'I think that involvement with the DofE gives me the opportunity to make a difference'*.

Responses to the survey show that delivery partners generally agreed strongly that young people gained new experiences through doing their DofE. The least positive response in this section was for the statement *'Doing the DofE helps young people learn about others with different backgrounds to themselves'*

where nearly 30% of respondents recorded a response less positive than 'agree' to this statement.

Delivery partners consider the DofE to be an effective personal development programme for young people but that its success depends on how it is run and this highlights the importance of the Leaders who run it.

Delivery partners considered the main achievements of the DofE since they had been involved to be young people participating and completing the programme, and the widening participation of the programme.

Positive experiences and outcomes for delivery partners include:

- the opportunity to work with young people,
- seeing young people develop
- seeing young people achieve
- building relationships and meeting new people in different environments, (both young people and other adults);
- enjoyment
- sharing skills and experiences
- giving something back, either to the community or DofE.

Delivery partners therefore consider that the main benefits to them of being involved with the programme are the opportunity to work with young people, and seeing young people develop and achieve. They also considered the discovery or development of new interests to be an added benefit of their delivery partner role. They consider the main benefit to young people of taking part to be the potential of career enhancement by having a Duke of Edinburgh's Award on their CV and the achievement of gaining a DofE. They also felt that external recognition is important.

The main disappointments for delivery partners were:

- non-completion of DofE programmes by young people
- lack of capacity to enable widening participation
- lack of consultation and communication
- a top-down approach to the management of the DofE
- young peoples' motivation for doing their DofE (CV focused)
- the time delay from completing a DofE to being awarded it
- the complexities and barriers of running a group (unaffiliated).

#### **7.4.2. Community**

There was a wide range of responses to statements by delivery partners in this section. The individual statement that got the most positive responses was '*Involvement has given me opportunities to help other people*'.

Delivery partners believe that involvement in a DofE programme can encourage young people to become more aware of issues in their community. They gave practical examples of how involvement has got young people engaging more and helping others in the community. They considered that by doing this young people are gaining better understanding of other people and becoming more socially responsible. They use examples of community involvement primarily as a vehicle for the personal development of the young people, rather than as a contribution of the DofE to the community.

### 7.4.3. Employment

The survey shows that respondents generally strongly agreed that young people gained employment skills from doing their DofE. The statement with the greatest level of agreement related to the development of team-work, whilst development of public speaking had the lowest level of agreement. This is supported by the qualitative data where delivery partners considered that in terms of employment, involvement in a DofE programme enhances young peoples transferable skills and broadens their horizons. They perceived that the completion of a DofE Award was an important addition to the CV or personal statement for a young person.

Respondents to the survey show that delivery partners generally strongly agreed that young people's prospects for future employment were improved by doing their DofE. The statement in this section with the greatest level of agreement was *'Doing a DofE gives young people an advantage over others in the job market'*.

### 7.4.4. General views of the DofE

General views from the survey can be summarized as:

- Most respondents agreed that *'Measures could be taken to widen participation in the programme'*
- Most respondents agreed that *'Completion rates could be improved'*
- A significant minority disagreed, to varying extents, with the statement *'I feel supported by the DofE charity'*
- Many respondents felt more supported by their local DofE organisation than by the Charity
- 15% *'totally agree'* that their DofE programmes are difficult to run due to lack of resources
- About 25% of respondents totally agreed that *'DofE programmes are difficult to run because of lack of volunteer staff'*
- There was considerable agreement that *'Young people should have more of a say in our organisation's running of DofE programmes'*

These views can, on the whole, be supported by the qualitative data which is summarised below, together with further suggestions from delivery partners about improvements that could be made.

In the interviews and focus groups, delivery partners suggested ways that the programme could be enhanced and improved – these essentially centre on increasing support, funding, communication, resources, training and numbers of volunteers. However, it should be noted that the second most cited response was that they did not want to enhance or improve the programme (see below).

In terms of volunteer recruitment and retention, they suggested increasing publicity and advertising for new volunteers and also targeting groups such as Award holders to become Leaders. The most popular suggestions for volunteer retention were for more recognition and support available for current volunteers.

Barriers to participation, non-completion of programmes and ways to widen participation are all linked. Delivery partners considered that the main barrier to participation is lack of leaders and volunteers; non-completion is due to lack of sufficient support; and participation can be increased by capacity building and recruiting more volunteers, particularly post-Gold participants.

Delivery partners' suggestions for improvements to the programme can summarised as:

- Improve assistance or encouragement from higher up management structure
- Improve communication and consultation
- Improved/targeted advertising or increasing publicity aimed at encouraging volunteers to get involved
- Capacity building to increase availability of the DofE by targeting hard to reach young people and recruiting volunteers so that existing groups can expand.
- Recruit and train post-Gold participants as Leaders
- Have a structured young Leaders scheme
- Introduce training badges;
- Introduce a Platinum Award
- Develop Expedition by getting rid of the 'purpose' of the expedition, improving the expedition training pack, reducing the cost and being more flexible with more emphasis on exploration and learning skills such as team building rather than physical challenge

## **8. RESULTS: OTHER STAKEHOLDERS**

### **8.1. Introduction**

The themes discussed in this chapter have been informed by the interviews carried out with stakeholders who are involved with both The Duke of Edinburgh's Award charity and the DofE programme, but who are not directly involved in delivery of the programmes to young people. The indicative questions used in this phase of the research can be found in Appendix 4 of the Statistical Volume of this report.

Stakeholders were asked about their involvement with the DofE charity, their views on the DofE programme and how they viewed the DofE as a personal development programme for young people. The chapter begins by giving some background to the respondents (section 8.2) and their views of involvement with the DofE are summarised in section 8.3. The chapter will then follow similar themes to the previous results chapters, that is: experiences (8.4), community involvement (8.5) physical and mental well-being (8.6), employment skills and future prospects (8.7) and general views of the DofE. Their suggestions for improvements to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award are presented in Section 8.8. Section 8.9 summarises these findings.

It should be noted that some of the questions used in this phase of the research were compiled and agreed before the re-branding and hence the wording may not be compatible with current brand guidelines.

### **8.2. Characteristics of the respondents**

In total, eleven interviews were carried out with stakeholders. The participants interviewed for this part of the research were involved in working with the DofE in a diverse range of capacities. These included: a Principal Youth Officer for a local authority, the Chief Executive of a national youth agency, the Chief Executive of a national uniformed organisation, a charity director, a senior banker, a youth service manager for a local authority and a training and development worker.

This research is investigating the impact on young people of involvement with the DofE. Only people from businesses or organisations involved in the DofE were therefore interviewed as it was felt to be important to get the views of those who use or champion the DofE as a personal development programme within their organisation or locality, rather than explore the reasons why organisations are not supporting the DofE.

Respondents are identified in the text by the prefix ST (stakeholder), followed by the number of the interview.

Five out of the eleven stakeholders interviewed were known to be Silver or Gold Award holders.

### **8.3. Association with the DofE**

In general, the respondents were involved, and continue to be involved, with the DofE because they believe in the programme as a personal development programme.

All of the interviewees said that, on the whole, being associated with the DofE brand was positive for their organisation. Examples of how why this was the case included:

- Being a recognised brand, which can help with fund-raising and is a selling point (4/11 responses)
- The reputation of the DofE within the youth work sector (3/11)
- Being a positive promotion with a local authority youth service (2/11).

*“I mean I think it’s got a very good reputation within the sector and with local government etc. and it’s a, you know, it’s a partial selling point in many ways. We use the fact that they are members in a sense and groups like them are members to encourage other folk to join, that kind of thing, and as I say it’s seen as a very positive thing in general. Some of it’s quite intangible, but it’s there just the same.”*  
(ST11)

*“I mean certainly in the world that quite often as a head of service you are responding to all the problems that happen [...] it is really nice to be able to say ‘and hey, come and look at this’ (laughs) because it’s generally, you know, people don’t complain about the DofE or the young people who are doing it you know, so generally it is a very positive thing so it’s really good to be able to sort of promote it that way.”*  
(ST7)

The main benefit of stakeholders association with the DofE depended on their business and connection, but there was overall consensus that it is important that the DofE is a recognised award with a high profile, and being associated with the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award was beneficial to them. The theme of a DofE programme being a recognised award programme continued through many of the respondents’ views on the benefits of a DofE programme to young people.

#### **8.4. Experiences**

When asked what they thought the DofE was about for young people, interviewees confirmed that they considered the DofE to be a successful personal development programme. The challenge and benefit of taking part in a DofE programme was summed up by one respondent:

*“[C]hallenging individuals to perform outside of their comfort zone as I see it. [...] I’m part of the [] recruitment team and I see lots of people coming in with wonderful GCSEs, wonderful A Levels, wonderful degrees and they sit in front of you and sometimes they are terrifically vibrant and sometimes they are like, have a lack of personality, one of the things the DofE [...], doesn’t matter if it’s Gold, Silver or Bronze, it’s a participation, it’s something which takes them outside of the box and challenges them as an individual to play the team game, to get involved in the community, to do sporting things...”*  
(ST8)

Further, one stakeholder considered that not only is a DofE programme about personal development, but it also encourages responsible citizenship among young people:

*"I think the first sort of thing I would say is unknowingly to them it's about citizenship, the young people don't see that, it's not written up in big bold lights, but the four sections shape them and give them opportunities to look at their morals, their values, their physical abilities, to meet with others and to socialise and all of those things I think impact on their ability to be positive young citizens."*

(ST10)

## **8.5. Community involvement**

The interviewees reported that the community involvement benefit of a DofE programme was a result of the engagement by the young person in the wider community. They believed that engagement with the wider community helps young people to become aware of others in their community, gain a sense of social responsibility, and a sense of belonging in their surroundings (7/11 responses). They referred to the Volunteering section of a DofE programme as giving young people the most opportunities to become engaged positively in their local community:

*"I think the fact that it's encouraging young people to be part of a community is by far the best thing, we are getting to a stage where society, some people are just blocking themselves off from society and don't see themselves as part of the community and so it's engaging them in that in whatever way they choose to do [...] and by encouraging them to do that it is making young people realise that there is something beyond them and their family and their friends and this thing called community still does exist and so I think it is giving them a huge sort of sense of achievement in doing that and making them appreciate that what they do does have a knock on effect to the community and so hopefully would point their behaviour in the right direction so that they are not going to be a detriment to the community either."*

(ST6)

*"[T]he Service section in particular gives a fantastic opportunity for young people to show to their community that they're putting something back and they're positive and it's back to that citizenship thing, you know, an ideal young citizen is a young person who has some kind of care and compassion towards their own community and tries to put something back in and it's just an ideal tool for that because at the end of the day these young people may not think of doing something of a service nature in their community but the Award kind of forces them, you know, forces their hand to consider that and to choose something that's suitable to them."*

(ST10)

Others considered that the Volunteering section helps give young people a greater understanding of others which can encourage social responsibility and this can lead to a sense of belonging:

*"[T]hings like the service part of it broadens people's minds, it's great in terms of sort of, even things like inter-generational understanding, you know. If your service happens to be doing something with, whether it's maybe with a disabled group, maybe it's with an older group of people, maybe it's visiting, you know it could be any one of a hundred things, but it brings you out of yourself and it gives you a*

*wider perspective in terms of what community is and how we all depend on each other on the planet, and I think, you know I think that's really, really important because again it's about undermining the kind of selfishness that we've all got in a sense and giving us a greater sense of belonging and responsibility for each other."*

(ST11)

## **8.6. Physical and mental well-being**

Interviewees were specifically questioned about the social, leadership and self-esteem benefits for young people doing a Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

They reported that the most important social benefits of a DofE for young people are meeting new people (4/11 responses), communication skills (3/11) and interaction skills (3/11). Through meeting, mixing and getting on with people that they may not otherwise come into contact with, young people doing their DofE have the opportunity to engage in different social skills. This also links to aspects of community involvement. Engaging in social interaction with others outside of a young person's friendship group or age group can enhance their awareness of their wider community and give them the skills to relate to others over the long term.

*"I suppose looking at some of the community, some of the sort of community projects that have developed but also the fact that then young people retain those contacts within, in those sort of those environments..."*

(ST2)

As the quotation above illustrates, young people are given the opportunity to engage in social skills and demonstrate the benefits of this with increased self-confidence:

*"[C]ertainly when you see some of the presentations about the expeditions, you know, you just realise the sort of the teamwork and the social interaction and certainly you see a young person that perhaps was really quite shy initially and quite nervous about the skills, you then see them when they've done their presentation and you think 'yes, you know, that's where they've benefitted in terms of engaging with those social skills.'"*

(ST2)

For some young people, the social benefits are apparent within their peer group. This manifests itself in team building skills and by enabling them to get on with other young people that they have not known previously:

*"[C]ertainly we meet and get involved with young people who are having difficulty perhaps relating to other young people, don't do social things, so for those young people quite often it's a group, that because there is a common interest they can work with and they make friends through doing the Award [...] so some real social, the socialising bit of it I think works really well for them and builds relationships, some of which last, yes."*

(ST7)

For others, the DofE could enable young people to get together with others from different backgrounds and religions, which was seen to be fundamental for community cohesion:

*"[I]t's really interesting when you see the dynamics, you know generally they're very difficult at the beginning of the year, the academic year that they sort of follow through their Award in, it's difficult to make those bonds and relationships and yes, within a year to two years some of those people can become the closest of friends and if you look at their backgrounds and even their religions and the areas of the city they come from, you know, this is a melting pot, it's an opportunity to learn, you know about other cultures, other identities and they most definitely wouldn't get that if they weren't doing their Award, you know there would be some of those young people would go do down a very fixed route in life, you know within their own community and that's a big thing about what we do and some of the other work that we do here is to do with community relations and we're trying to build that into our programmes that, you know, we try to get people to accept each other for who they are, not where they've come from you know?"*

(ST10)

The interviewee quoted above appreciated the community cohesion benefits of the DofE in his region and as a result is building a community relations aspect into other programmes that are offered by his organisation.

### **8.7. Employment skills and future prospects**

In terms of employment opportunities, the benefit most cited by the interviewees was the fact that a DofE is recognised by employers (8/11 responses). They reported that the main reason for this was that being a DofE Award holder demonstrates personal qualities as well as educational attainment:

*"I am not alone in being an employer or a potential employer that actually recognises that that's quite an achievement and something that's to me, on a par with you know, all the more academic type of qualifications because it does show that young people can demonstrate a commitment and can actually show that they've benefitted as a result of that so I think certainly it does have, give very good positive opportunities there."*

(ST2)

For another interviewee, having a DofE award is a demonstration of effective team working skills:

*"[T]here will be questions [in an interview] around how they operate in a team you know, and if they've done Duke of Edinburgh's, wow, what a great example, of course that gets a very good tick as far as I'm concerned, you've still got to have it but it's just a differentiator, yes, a very positive differentiator."*

(ST8)

Those interviewed revealed that the presence of a DofE Award on a young person's CV or personal statement was an indication of their abilities outside the classroom and is regarded as an important achievement (5/11 responses):

*“Well, it’s the old thing of showing consistency and continuity, that if a young person sticks with something, whatever it is, for a period of time and achieves an end goal and it is very much the journey, I don’t think employers look necessarily at the fine detail but there’s a national recognition and a national credibility with the Award and a lot of that is about the stickability and the achievement that young people have gone through something and completed it, so...”*

(ST10)

It was also seen as a demonstration of organisational skills and a DofE Award was recognised as an additional qualification:

*“[B]asic qualities and time management etc, if you’ve got an Award, it shows people you’ve got those abilities to do something by yourself to plan it, to do it every week, to get better at something, to learn more skills etc to take on a challenge, to go out, you know, rough it in the wilds it as it were. It’s probably the best non-qualification physical thing you can actually say, [...] we think of the DofE very much as a qualification...”*

(ST1)

## **8.8. General views of the DofE**

### **8.8.1. Improvements to the DofE**

The participants were asked how they thought the DofE could be improved, either to meet their needs, or those of young people. Due to the range of backgrounds of the respondents, the answers were varied and some gave more than one response. The four most popular answers were:

- Improved communication at all levels (3/11 responses)
- Regular updating of the programme to meet young people’s needs (3/11)
- Encouraging past participants to become leaders (3/11)

Two respondents did not consider that any improvements were necessary.

The interviewees would like to see improved communication at all levels of the DofE. This included, to themselves, to leaders of DofE programmes and to the young people taking part:

*“Just keep talking to us about what our experience is like”*

(ST7)

*“[T]here is sometimes a feeling from the units that perhaps strategically the sort of the DofE, the Award doesn’t always listen to feedback and while they appreciate they have to take on board feedback from a lot of different areas and you know, again it is trying to update things but still make them attractive.”*

(ST2)

*“I couldn’t hand on heart say they’re focussed, whether they, they need to listen to leaders as well because they depend on them but they need to listen to the young people who, and they need to get hold of young people who leave the Award and find out why they leave. There could be very good reasons for it, but you need to know what they are.”*

(ST11)

They were conscious of the upgrading and re-branding of the DofE that was in progress and this was reflected in some of their responses:

*"I think it needs to just keep modernising, I think that the measurement of personal development, that would be my big thing so that it is actually really, really an integral part of the Award and what the young people achieve, that would be my main thing. The rest of it is just about keeping modernising."*

(ST7)

*"You can always improve things. [...] But I mean I really do think they're trying, you know, to change things, and to try and to uplift the image etc. etc. and I would just encourage them to keep going and keep looking at change constantly, be looking at the market place and looking at the clientele and they need to listen to young people as well. How good they are at that I couldn't really tell you."*

(ST11)

Interviewees also thought that past participants of the DofE should be encouraged to become involved in a leadership capacity:

*"I think one thing we perhaps do need to emphasise is around encouraging those young people that even if they've, when they finish their Award with us or even if they've only gone so far, that there are ways that they could contribute to the Award by coming back as volunteering or sharing their experiences and I think again that is going to not only help them but also help us give messages to young people that you know, well you're too old, you don't remember that but if a young person sort of says "well I only did it two years ago and this is what it was like for me" there's a lot of benefit there."*

(ST2)

*"I think that the main improvement would be to look at the leadership side of things, [...] something that I would suggest in terms of an improvement or a change is an adult orientated Award which is solely focused on them achieving something which helps them in the leadership of young people and, you know, qualifies them more to do that, might be a novel idea to think about for the future."*

(ST10)

Other suggested improvements included increased publicity and promotion, cost reduction, the introduction of an alumni scheme and increased access to funds for young people.

## **8.9. Summary**

Stakeholders were positive about being involved with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. They believe that it is an effective personal development programme and that it encourages responsible citizenship in young people.

Stakeholders indicated that, being associated with the DofE brand was positive for their organisation. Key reasons included:

- DofE's recognised brand can help with fund-raising and is a 'selling point'
- DofE's excellent reputation within the youth work sector
- being a positive promotion with a local authority youth service

Stakeholders reported that young people are encouraged to be more aware of others by engaging with the wider community through involvement with the programme. This, they felt, can enhance their sense of social responsibility and sense of belonging.

Positive outcomes of DofE for young people taking part in DofE programmes as viewed by stakeholders include:

- encourages responsible citizenship among young people
- personal development
- social benefits and social skills (meeting new people, communication skills, inter-personal skills)
- community involvement
- enhanced awareness of wider community
- development of skills to relate to others over the long term.

Stakeholders commented on the prestige of the DofE Award and that it is widely recognised as an additional qualification by employers. They also felt that possession of a DofE Award is seen by employers as evidence of effective team working skills, abilities outside the classroom and organisational skills.

The most cited suggestions for improvements by stakeholders are:

- Improved communication at all levels
- Regular updating of the programme to meet young people's needs
- Encouraging past participants to become leaders.

## **9. RESULTS: PAST PARTICIPANTS**

### **9.1. Introduction**

This section of the research explores the experiences of five decades of past participants of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. The chapter concentrates on Gold Award holders, using oral history interviews. The aim of this phase of the research was to investigate the long-lasting impact of participation in the Award. Gold Award holders were selected as they had had the opportunity of experiencing the most that the DofE could offer them. All of the past participants were randomly selected from the DofE Gold Award holders' database (but purposively by date of birth to get a range of participation dates throughout the DofE history) and invited to take part in the research.

This chapter begins by briefly describing the characteristics of the participants that took part in this part of the research (section 9.2). The chapter then follows a similar pattern to the previous chapters, following the themes of the research: Section 9.3 discusses participants' experiences of doing their DofE; section 9.4 summarises interviewees' comment on the theme of community involvement and continued volunteering, including continued involvement with the DofE (section 9.4.1.1). The following section (9.5) relates to physical and mental well-being, which includes social and personal development. Employment skills and future prospects are then explored in 9.6, followed by general views of the DofE (9.7). Section 9.8 is the summary.

The experiences reported by the respondents in these oral history interviews reflect the individual, personal nature of doing and gaining a DofE Award. Participant narratives will be used to draw comparisons of certain elements of doing a DofE programme. Also within this section there are case studies that will

concentrate on selected respondents in order to tell their 'DofE story' in keeping with the aims of this research, ensuring that their experiences do not become diluted.

## 9.2. Characteristics of the respondents

A total of twenty five Gold Award holders were interviewed. These were selected from amongst the Gold Award holders to give five who had undertaken their DofE in each of the ten year intervals since the inception of the DofE in 1956. The years in which they had completed their Gold Awards are shown in Table 28. The year of birth of those that took part in this strand of the research range from 1939 through to 1987 (age range: 22 to 70 years).

1958	1968	1979	1988	1999
1962	1971	1980	1989	2004
1963	1971	1983	1990	2005
1966	1974	1985	1992	2006
1967	1974	1985	1994	2007

**Table 28: Year of Gold Award completion of respondents**

Oral history respondents got involved with the DofE through many different organisations including The Scouts Association, The Police Cadets, Girlguiding UK, Girls Brigade, Boys Brigade, school, Army Cadets, open DofE centre and youth club.

The respondents have a range of educational backgrounds including comprehensive, grammar, faith, and public schools, with a range of qualifications from CSEs (Certificate of Secondary Education), an apprenticeship, to A Levels, Degrees and a PhD.

12 female and 13 male Gold Award holders were interviewed.

Respondents are identified in the text with the prefix OH (oral history) and an interview identification number (1-25).

All interview questions for this phase of the research were open-ended: participants were free to give as many responses to as they wished and to talk about whatever they felt was important. Hence, many of the responses given may exceed/not add up to 25.

It should be noted that some of the questions used in this survey were compiled and agreed before the re-branding and hence the wording may not be compatible with current brand guidelines.

## 9.3. Experiences

Past Gold Award holders' experiences of doing their DofE were very positive. Perhaps not surprisingly, the outstanding collective memory for past participants of doing their DofE programme was the expedition (12/25 responses), this was followed by going to The Palace to collect their DofE Award (6/25), their

residential project (5/25) and the Volunteering section (3/25) respectively.<sup>5</sup> Many others were stated (twelve in total), including working with others and shooting.

The over-riding memories of the expedition were the part the weather played in the experience, particular incidents that occurred whilst on the walk, and aspects of team work and team building involved with the expedition. For example, one interviewee remembered the challenges of the expedition for effective team work and overcoming the physical challenge:

*"We were all in the Lake District and, as I'm sure everyone says, it just rained for three and a, three and three quarter of the four days, as you would expect it to. You just get wet and it's just, and you know, different people with different levels of fitness and it challenges you in terms of working as a team really, there's lots of, you know [...] it's about trying to overcome that mentally, you know, stay behind and help people and, you know, the times where you carry other people, you know I remember we swapped rucksacks because a lot of people had lighter rucksacks than, you know, the guy, the guy was struggling, [...] you just take his rucksack and swap and off you go..."*  
(OH7)

Doing a DofE expedition is a unique experience and, for most young people, is unlike any other experience that they will have had up until that point in their life. Past participants revealed the unique nature of this experience. The experience is summed up by the following quotation:

*"I mean I'll probably never do an expedition like that again, [...] it takes organising and basically and so to do it, people mostly will do it, are doing it cos of the Award, [...] so I guess it's gonna be harder in the future to get that experience again so that's probably the reason, that's why I remember that, I mean because I haven't had an experience like that since so..."*  
(OH23)

The rewarding experience of actually finishing the expedition was also reported by past participants as an outstanding memory. For the interviewee quoted below, this is combined with the significance of the people that she met whilst doing her DofE programme:

*"[A]ctually finally achieving it, it felt brilliant and just, I suppose it's the amount of people that I have met doing DofE. From people that I have done the Award with to all the different people that have signed my log book for various different things, I have done so many different things through DofE that I wouldn't have got the chance otherwise to have done. [...] and some of them have been so, sort of inspiring to listen to. For example, some of the old ladies that I worked with in the charity shop, they are just fascinating to listen to and it kind of made me see people, again in a different light and yeah, I just met some brilliant people over the last five years since I have been involved."*  
(OH20)

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<sup>5</sup> Only Gold Award participants get the opportunity to do a residential and go to The Palace to collect their Award

A number of the past participants also told the interviewer that the expedition, and the training required, had encouraged them to become more active and they had maintained this healthy lifestyle by remaining involved in outdoor activities. Again, OH20 is a good example of this and her experiences are illustrated in Case Study 17.

Another memorable moment for part participants was going to The Palace to be presented with their DofE Award:

*"I mean I actually went to Buckingham Palace and got mine from the Duke, Duke himself in I think it was early 1980 it must have been or, no, it was late '79 and that was, and that was a real experience as well and I went down there with my mother and, to London and actually got the Award from the Duke himself.[...] As it turns out I have been in Buckingham Palace since to do things with the Army, but at the time, you know, to go to London and go into Buckingham Palace was an absolutely fantastic opportunity and certainly one most people wouldn't get the opportunity to do. So that really was something."*

(OH12)

For some it was a combination of the expedition and their residential project:

*"Really the expedition, just really the group that I was with, obviously like you spend the four days together so I guess just the teamwork involved and sort of things that happened and just memories from that really and I guess that's the main thing that stood out and I guess the residential as well, I, like volunteering for that, I think I gained a lot out of that cos it was kind of teaching the kids as well so that was quite useful and I probably wouldn't have done that if I hadn't had been doing the DofE so it was quite a good experience."*

(OH23)

The impact of the Volunteering section of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award is discussed further in the Employment section (9.6) below. It was apparent that all these experiences are memorable for DofE participants as they were something different compared to their everyday activities.

### **Case Study 15: Memories of doing the expedition**

OH13 gained her Gold Award in 1974. She got involved with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award through the Ranger Guides. As for many, her outstanding memory of doing her Duke of Edinburgh's Award is doing her expeditions for all levels of the programme and she explained why:

*"I remember doing some of the expeditions, we had some good expeditions, I think they're the things that always sort of last in people's memories. [...] It is, the expedition, because it's something that you need to do with other people and I think whereas some of the other things that, you know, you can do the physical and whatever on your own, you've got to find other people to do the expedition with and then, I don't know, it just creates more memories I think of, you know, doing something which you can't just decide to do on your own and go and go out and I think it's a sort of slightly different experience."*

She therefore gives some of the reasons that the expedition remains one of the

most enduring elements of doing a DofE programme in people's minds: it cannot be done individually and thus requires team work; it is a unique experience and is an enjoyable, if challenging, experience.

#### Case Study 15: Memories of doing the expedition

### 9.4. Community

Of the twenty five interviewees, sixteen of them carried on volunteering after finishing their Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Ten of the participants are still actively volunteering, with nine of those working with young people, either through a uniformed organisation, the DofE or sports coaching. Six are continuing to volunteer with the uniformed organisation that they originally did their DofE with. This illustrates the potential of keeping volunteers engaged with an organisation that they believe in. This generates a sense of belonging and, in one case, corresponds with a set of personal values that has become more apparent to the individual since they have had a family of their own.

One interviewee describes this as follows:

*"[I]t is about doing things that I wouldn't have done otherwise and I do think it has changed my values now. [...] I think it's about two things, I think it's about developing some value for the work that, a set of values about the world that's around you, [...] I think you become, I think people become much more self aware but they also become group aware and they, they start to notice what's happening to other people around, particularly to other people around them, and I think people, it does tend to make people become more forward in what they do instead of metaphorically just sitting there waiting for someone to ask all the time."*

(OH2)

It is apparent from the testimonials of those that took part in the research that volunteering and getting involved with the community has had a lasting effect on participants' lives in many ways. As described above, many continue to be involved in volunteering, for others it has changed their views and values about helping others and for some, it has shaped their future employment (see section 9.6). Case Study 16 is an example of continued voluntary involvement.

#### Case Study 16: Continued community involvement

OH5 gained her Gold Award in 1988. Throughout her time as a DofE participant she was involved with Girlguiding UK and has continued to be involved with the organisation. Her DofE Award programme initially began in the Ranger Guides. On the suggestion by the leader of the group, her whole unit began doing the Bronze DofE Award, and she subsequently went on to do her Gold Award independently whilst studying at polytechnic.

She fulfilled her Volunteering section of her DofE Award by doing her adult leader certificate for the Guides and carried on leading throughout her time at polytechnic:

*"I did my Duke of Edinburgh's through the Guide movement, I stayed in it and when I went off to [ ] Poly, a Guide leader up there took me in to do my adult leaders for my Gold Award and I stayed up there with her throughout the whole of my time up there and stayed on as a*

*qualified Guide leader and then when I came back home to [], I went back to the Guides that I used to be in but it didn't really work out because the Guide leader still treated me as a Guide but they asked if somebody would be willing to help out with the Brownies because somebody had left Brownies and I went until they could get somebody else and I'm still there. [...] I've got two daughters and what, three and a half years ago the Guide leader had to retire [...] one of my daughters was about to go into Guides and I thought 'well, what do I do?' so I'm now running both a Brownie and a Guide company."*

She describes the difficulty for her of finishing her Gold Award and the positive impact of outside support in helping her to complete her Gold Award:

*"[T]owards the end of my Duke of Edinburgh because I started, with my Gold I sort of you know, you get in and you start it and then your A Levels get in the way and everything gets put on hold so I'd done part of it but not all of it and the Army Cadets actually encouraged me to carry on and finish it and when I got it, even though I got it through Guides, the Army Cadets made a huge fuss about it..."*

So even though she did her Gold programme with the Guides, it was the encouragement that she received from the Army Cadets that helped her complete her DofE programme. The significance of leaders and continued support is continued in Case Study 21. It also resonates with current experiences of both young people and delivery partners.

**Case Study 16: Continued community involvement**

#### 9.4.1.1. Continued involvement with the DofE

Those that continue to be involved in some way with the DofE explained how and why they had decided to remain affiliated with the DofE after completing their Gold Award. For some it was incidental and linked with their other youth-orientated volunteering, whilst for others it was a more deliberate connection.

Case Study 17 is a good example of how remaining involved with the DofE through helping out on expeditions as a BELA qualified leader can be a positive experience:

*"I mean to be honest I try and encourage anybody who's got an interest in being, working with, as a leader, if anybody does have an interest in working with young people to try and get involved and that it is a really good thing to do and really positive and that it is worthwhile. [...] I have just really enjoyed being involved with it and I wouldn't change doing it for the world. [...] and I certainly wouldn't have done my BELA qualification if I hadn't done DofE myself, no."*

(OH20)

Another past participant explained how she enjoyed the experience of giving something back and seeing others achieve and how practicing her leadership skills is still beneficial to her:

*"I call them my current Gold group because I helped them through Bronze, they have just seen that as well because when we, when we were on their Gold walk [...] we used to talk about it and they were like, 'oh wow' you know 'you have actually helped me' and it kind of, DofE isn't just about being there and just that one thing, it's on a whole big scale and it helps you with everything."*

(OH11)

OH19, quoted below, initially got involved with the DofE through Girlguiding UK. She gained her Gold Award in 1966, having previously completed her Bronze and Silver Awards. As part of her volunteering, she became a leader for the younger groups:

*"And I thought this was enjoyable, again I was sort of being groomed towards being a young leader myself without realising it, and I just carried on because I was enjoying doing it, it gave me a wider view of life and being a loner it was managing to meet people and enjoy their company."*

(OH19)

She went on to explain that how, when she returned to her home town with a young family, she was asked to become involved again:

*"In fact I got involved as an Award leader and as a field officer for the Award. So yes, I have still kept involved with activities and outdoor activities. [...] He remembered my link with the Award when we moved back into the area with small children and getting the oldest one involved in Cubs and he turned round and looked and he said, 'I know you, you've got your Award. Can you come and help?' So that's how it all started, I got involved as an Award adviser for the scout movement and it grew from there. So I helped sort of Scouts and Guides and Rangers with their Awards."*

(OH19)

## 9.5. Physical and mental well-being

Only one of the past participants did not think that doing their DofE programme had changed them or had an effect on them personally. One interviewee, quoted below, said that the philosophy of the DofE was already part of her personal values and went on to describe the personal benefits of her DofE programme: the number of social activities, the chance to mix and interact with others, and the physical challenge of doing her DofE programme:

*"Whether I would have tackled so many different things, you know, that it was quite physically demanding going and uprooting trees and sawing them down and damming up the river up in [], that was physically quite demanding but you know, the fact that you were with other young people and you know, there were rewards of meeting different people, different new people which I quite liked, impromptu discos in the evening and that sort of thing was, you know, the spin offs from it [...] I don't think anything now about picking up a saw and having a hack at a tree (laughs) you know, things that give you practical skills as well which I probably wouldn't have done."*

(OH9)

The main change for past participants of taking part in their DofE programme was that it broadened their horizons (5/25 responses). The second most cited change was their resilience: realising their own capabilities and their ability to problem solve and overcome challenges (4/25 responses). The joint third responses were instilling self belief, gaining a sense of achievement and learning how to be a team player (all with 3/25 responses), which are all linked to the previous responses. Participants were free to give many responses to this question, resulting in nearly thirty different personal changes being cited, reflecting the individual nature of the DofE.

The following quotes are good examples of how doing their DofE programme was personally beneficial to past participants, particularly in terms of resilience:

*"I think I could say with my hand on my heart, I'm a different person now to what I was, well I guess most people are really, but I think the Award has taught me, forced me, whatever you like to call it, far more confidence than I ever, ever had before without a shadow of a doubt. It's forced me into, and I say that, I use that deliberately, forced me into situations that I would have shied away from and it's made me face those and deal with them and the result of that, it's given me the confidence to do it again and again and again."*

(OH15)

*"I think, I think it's made me a much stronger person, I mean I speak for myself obviously. I think I've become much more sort of independent in a sense and I have got much more confidence in believing in what I do and that I can do it if I just persevere and I just keep at it I can do it and that I think is the main thing for me it, it's just, it's completely made me who I am today."*

(OH11)

*"I think my team, especially in the expedition, my team working skills improved because obviously you, there was a few times when we got into a bit of a pickle and had to sort out problems and things so it was kind of like a good insight to coping with those situations."*

(OH23)

Past participants are more likely to have the opportunity to be reflexive about their time spent doing a DofE programme than current participants and are able to consider how doing a DofE may have had an impact on their personal development and wider aspects of their lives. This personal development is evident in their narratives and is exemplified in Case Study 17.

#### **Case Study 17: Physical and mental well-being.**

OH20 gained her Gold Award in 2005 and has remained involved with the DofE since then by volunteering as a leader on expeditions with her local authority. She considers a Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme to be about personal challenge and expanding horizons. The most important thing to her personally was achieving a DofE Award and the personal pride of her achievement:

*"Having pride in myself to be honest and just saying, 'I've done this', you know, being able to finish it and to show that I was capable of doing it."*

The confidence and self esteem that she gained from taking part and achieving her DofE Award was evident when she discussed how doing her programme had enhanced her social skills:

*"For me I was very, very quiet when I started DofE, I wouldn't have said boo to a goose to be honest. I just kept my head down at school, [...] meeting new people I always found quite difficult. And so for me it's given me a whole boost of confidence, I don't think I would have settled in at all at university if I hadn't done DofE because I was awful at making friends and meeting new people and for, especially for Gold when I did my residential, because obviously you have got to do that with people you don't know and also my expedition I did through an open group, [...] that really helped me settle in I think and for me it's just given me so much more confidence to just, you know, introduce myself and get on with things. [...] I am definitely much happier in that sense."*

Further, she discussed how embarking on the Bronze Award and progressing through to the Gold has had a significant impact on her lifestyle, resulting in choosing an active, healthy lifestyle:

*"[T]o be honest when I was fourteen and started it I was really quite fat and unfit, and not interested in being in the outdoors. So that side I found quite hard to be honest, but now I am completely different in that sense and I just love being outdoors. [...] I was very much a couch potato and a bookworm to be honest and now I do a lot more sport, go to the gym and that kind of thing."*

#### **Case Study 17: Physical and mental well-being.**

#### **Case Study 18: The DofE and enduring friendships.**

One of the recurrent themes throughout the results of this research is that of friendship, and how taking part in a DofE programme generates and enhances friendships, gives young people the opportunity to mix with others that they would not usually and to create new bonds.

Fifteen out of the twenty five Gold Award holders who took part in the oral

history element of the research continue to be in contact with someone that they did their DofE programme with. Enduring personal relationships and friendships that have been built, some directly through the DofE and others that were enhanced by taking part in the programme. Communication between these friends ranges from occasional email contact and sending Christmas cards to being their best man at their wedding and marriage. The following are three examples of continuing friendships from doing their DofE programmes.

Firstly, an example of regular contact. OH7 did his DofE programme with a school friend at an open DofE centre:

*"Yes, one of them, absolutely, yes. One of them I was at their daughter's christening and then their other daughter's third birthday party on Sunday, just gone, so yes, and, so I still see a lot of him."*

Secondly, OH12 continues to be in contact with two friends that he did his DofE with (he gained his Gold Award in 1979). As well as doing their DofE together, they were also in the Cadets, and the two experiences complemented each other. Of one of them he said:

*"[W]e are well life long friends and I am sort of god, godfather to two of his children and, you know, I was best man at his wedding (laughs)."*

Thirdly, one Gold Award holder not only continues to be friends with another participant, he also met his wife at the youth club that was formed as a consequence of doing his DofE. OH10 gained his Gold Award in 1963 after being encouraged to get involved at school. Of being in contact with friends he said:

*"[I keep in contact with] only one very briefly, now, on the original Gold. One of them I know has died since, he was a bank manager and just, well we're all retired now of course, so (laughs) that's the thing, so there's only just the one lad I do occasionally see."*

More significantly for OH10, he met his wife through doing his DofE Award which got him more involved with other activities, including forming a local youth club:

*"So you can tell the way things went after the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, because it spawned a lot of other things, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award did in my life I think. I did, I went on Outward Bound course and in the course of it we, through the Duke of Edinburgh's because the lads all had to get together somewhere and it was St. Martin's youth club was in a large room within the St. Martin's group and we eventually we formed a youth club. [...] well what we did we was all in there doing all these activities, listening to music and that and I think one of the lads had a sister who knew some girls and they started coming down and so we formed a youth group (laughs). They were all married off and my wife, who I met in the youth club is sitting next to me now."*

**Case Study 18: The DofE and enduring friendships.**

## 9.6. Employment skills and future prospects

This section concentrates on selected examples of how respondents believe doing their DofE programme enhanced their skills, and had an impact on their future career choices.

Firstly, in Case Study 19, one participant gives their view on how a DofE helps a young person acquire employment skills.

### Case Study 19: Employment skills.

OH7 gained his Gold Award in 1994. He got involved with doing his DofE programme at an open DofE centre. He considers that doing and gaining a DofE Award is a personal challenge and that, at the time, young people may not be aware of the skills being gained:

*"it's more in my mind it's about giving you the, the opportunity to test yourself in lots of different situations and build up, you know almost subconsciously a bank of, bank of skills that are, that a) you've got and b) you can tell other people you've got because you've got plenty of stories."*

And in terms of demonstrable skills:

*"it's useful in terms of it's, on two levels, it helps you, it helps build up those organisation, interpersonal, motivational skills, and on the flip side when it comes to later in life when you might going for university placings or work it provides lots of case studies almost of where you've been in a difficult situation or where you've been, you've had to motivate yourself or you've had to, that allow you to get further, because you've done more than just watch the telly."*

He also considered the value of the activities that he did for his DofE programme in motivating him to try other things and broaden his horizons by 'having a go' at new activities:

*"Firstly you know, to do them all you have to be motivated, organised, able to do the research and, you know, decide on all these things, so to get on with them and do them all you need have all those boxes ticked, and then when you're doing them itself it, you know, pushes you to do different things if you weren't doing the Award, you probably wouldn't end up doing it [...] I think it opens up your mind into the amount of activities and other things that are available to people, young people, whatever, to do, so, and then it allows you to sort of guide you into, you know, forces you to do a number of those, so it broadens your horizons as to what's available, then stretches you in terms of you do lots of different things and you, you then gain those skills, [...] so if you've tried, you know a wider range, you, you know, you can then go, whether that's a job, or university or just other hobbies outside the Award, you can go "I like doing those things, those are the things that I, those are the qualities and those are the types of things that I want to be doing more of".*

Finally, he commented on the merit of gaining an award that is not achieved by all who take part:

*"I suspect there's quite a high fall out rate and there's a question as to*

*whether that's good or bad as to whether, you know, an Award that everyone gets isn't as valuable as one where you know, people know that there's been a high fall out rate and you've been one of the few that have, have got through."*

**Case Study 19: Employment skills.**

Secondly, two participants in particular revealed how their future careers were shaped by experiences that they had whilst doing their Volunteering section. OH21's experiences are discussed in Case Study 20 and OH1's can be found in Case Study 21.

**Case Study 20: Changing career path**

OH21 decided on a change of career choice as a result of doing some volunteering for her DofE. She did not get the opportunity to do the DofE at school and was introduced to direct entry Gold whilst at university. She was already doing three activities that qualified to be counted towards her DofE and one of these, the volunteering, turned out to have a long term impact on her career path:

*"[I]t was the beginning of the sort of multiple drug users, the sort of early 60's, late 60's, early 70's, where you know, young people were on drugs and underneath the arches literally so it was a question of going out in the evening and finding people, bringing them into a centre, giving them some food, giving them some, talking to them, making them feel you know, that they belonged to society, you know, we talk about inclusion nowadays, basically that somebody cared for them and it was very early work with multiple drug abusers who were on the streets of London so that's what I ended up doing. [...] running the project was a psychiatric social worker and I actually then went into psychiatric, I was going to be a history teacher but I then actually went into psychiatric social worker and then into childcare. So it actually started the foundations of my career basically."*

She then went on to describe how the leader of the drugs awareness and inclusion project was a major influence on her pursuing this type of career:

*"I can still remember her name [ ] was the project leader, very sort of charismatic social worker, rather ancient Swiss woman but full of wisdom [...] and really taught me a lot about working with people who could be very aggressive, could be very dangerous but were human under, you know, they were human beings with the same feelings and thoughts and needs that we all have so yeah, she opened my eyes and I'd been fairly well protected, you know, I'd been sort of a, yeah, I was very, very traumatised by it all, started writing [...], so I suppose it a) gave me my foundation of my career, social work and b) because I'd had to write, you know, somehow I'd found that by writing about my experiences but in a fairly objective manner..."*

Continuing with her volunteering therefore gave her an insight into another profession and helped her decide to embark on a different career path post-university.

**Case Study 20: Changing career path**

In terms of career prospects and self belief, one participant in particular spoke of how doing his DofE had given him the self belief to aim higher for himself:

*"I think it gave me a lot of confidence that I probably otherwise wouldn't have had because my family background, although it's a very loving and caring family background, my dad was a foundry-man and my mum was a school dinner lady you know, they come from a background of working hard. I think it helped me to raise my sights and to aim higher than maybe I would have done otherwise. I think it gave me self belief and it helped me to apply myself to things, you know, not to expect an instant result..."*

(OH22)

However, one of the participants was keen to explain that, for him, the benefits of doing a DofE and having it on his CV were only short term and, even though it helped him initially with his CV, it was no longer relevant in his life:

*"[I]t was quite a short term thing for me and it was more about the doing it I think than the affects that it had afterwards, being able to put it on my CV maybe for five or seven years after I'd achieved it and then feeling like it wasn't perhaps relevant any more, so much more the doing it than what affect it had on me afterwards [...] it made an introduction to things that people never would have thought of doing otherwise, I mean certainly for me the voluntary work, the residential things probably I wouldn't have you know, off my own back gone and done something like that."*

(OH4)

#### **Case Study 21: The lasting influence of the DofE.**

OH1 was born in the early 1970s. He is currently a Squadron Commander in the Army. Like his two sisters, he is a Gold Award holder, which he was formally presented with in 1993. For him, memories of doing the Duke of Edinburgh's Award are dominated by the expedition:

*"I hinge the Duke of Edinburgh's Award on the expeditions and the memories are the friends that I had through the Boys' Brigade and the rehearsal expeditions and then the actual expeditions themselves and that was probably the highlight as far as doing things were concerned."*

The experiences of expedition and the lasting friendships that he made whilst doing his Award are the main reasons he remembers the Award:

*"I am still best friends with the three guys that I shared a tent with on my Gold expedition. [...] we did the Boys' Brigade together but the expeditions were the time when we all sort of, when we all sort of got to know each other very well. [...] and for the last 16 years on the Saturday before Christmas we all walk up Slieve Donard which is Northern Ireland's highest mountain together."*

Whilst the expedition was the most significant for him personally, it is not this section of the Award that he feels has had the most lasting impression on him:

*"As far as things that left a lasting memory, the service element of the Award probably had the biggest impact on me as far as an area"*

*that challenged me”.*

For his service section (now volunteering) he worked in a local residential care home for the elderly doing odd jobs such as running errands, cleaning and reading the newspaper to the visually impaired. It was this section of the Award that helped OH1 decide on the type of career he wanted to embark on:

*“...the service piece probably being the biggest driver for sort of picking out you know, what I decided to do in life. [...] The whole issue of service is pretty important, I wasn't particularly interested in a career whereby I was doing things for money [...] I wanted to be involved in something where I was giving something back as opposed to, I suppose to taking, now I ended up in my chosen career and the expedition bit proved actually to be quite a useful skill to have and obviously the physical bit has proved to be quite useful but the service piece was by far the most influential as far as, I think shaping me as a person was concerned.”*

Whilst serving in the army, he continues to fundraise for charities such as The Royal British Legion, The Army Benevolent Fund and more recently, Help for Heroes. He also continues with some of the other activities that he started whilst doing his Award. For example, he still does orienteering as a hobby, continues to play the piano and uses his first aid skills:

*“...the first aid has been unbelievably useful, it's, I think it's one of those you know, when you learn something when you're quite young it sort of probably stays with you a little bit longer so long as you continue to develop it and you know, I have been in situations with the army where you know, it's the, it's the basic sort of first aid skills that have come straight to the front of your mind and you know, you just drag it up from years ago.”*

The positive support of leaders has been shown to be one of the perceived reasons for success or non-completion of the DofE. OH1 went further in his praise for his Award leaders. After his parents, he considered his two Duke of Edinburgh's Award leaders to be the most influential people in his life to date:

*“My experience of Duke of Edinburgh's Award was shaped by probably two individuals, one was a guy called [...] and another guy was called [...] and they are, you know, to this day, they are probably, bar my parents clearly which are you know, they are the two, they have been two of the most influential people in my life. One guy, [...] was the leader in Boys' Brigade, ran the of Duke of Edinburgh's Award within the BB and [...] was his assist, the sort of bloke who did all the expeditions and stuff [...] the leadership that they showed and the inspiration that they provided got me to where I am sort of now. So it comes down to, the quality of the volunteer and you know, I physically don't know how they fitted, holding down a job, raising a family and doing all the things that they had to do with children in normal life and still made time to do all the things that they wanted to do with us.”*

**Case Study 21: The lasting influence of the DofE.**

## 9.7. General views of the DofE

### 9.7.1. The most important thing about doing the DofE

Past participants were asked what they considered to be the most important thing for them about doing a DofE programme. For most of the participants interviewed, the most important thing was the achievement of doing and gaining a DofE Award and the pride that this generated for the individual (16/25 responses).

*"Well it was again achieving something, you know, setting a target and going out and achieving it."*

(OH17)

*"It was an achievement. At the time before I started the Duke of Edinburgh's Award I never really thought about doing a lot if you know what I mean, it was sort of, I was like a typical teenager just sort of drifting aimlessly through. It gave me goals and things like that, something to go for."*

(OH10)

For both the interviewees above, the achievement was in goal setting and achieving those goals. OH10 went on to discuss the importance of recording these achievements in his DofE record book:

*"You know, we had a little book in those days, I don't know if they still have, you know where you put all your achievements in and they sign the book and it goes off. I used to love that little book. And you used to see your achievements as you got better and as you did longer and more difficult expeditions, as you did more and more community service and things like that, and it's very good looking retrospectively back on it."*

(OH10)

For another, his record book and DofE badge are tangible symbols of its importance to him:

*"I can't think of one thing to be honest, I mean the fact that, you know, even now 40 years later or whatever it is, I've still got the booklet, I've still got the badge, I suppose that shows that it's important to you, isn't it"*

(OH14)

The record book seemed to be an important artefact for many of the past participants'. Many of the interviewees revealed that they sought out their DofE record book between agreeing to be interviewed and the interview taking place. They then referred to the book within the interview to aid with recalling memories of doing their DofE programmes.

The second most important thing personally for past participants was the opportunity to try new things and have new experiences (7/11 responses).

*"[T]he best bit for me I think would still be just going out and doing all these new things, that's what I think I enjoyed most about it."*

(OH3)

*"For me I think it was just the chance to experience new things and meet new people really, I don't think it was getting the Award or anything like that, it was just the opportunities to get out there really and try new things."*

(OH24)

For many of the past participants, the sense of achievement and the pride of achieving their Duke of Edinburgh's Award was invaluable for their sense of self esteem and confidence. Quite simply, one said:

*"The most important thing to me about doing the Award is achieving it at the end."*

(OH15)

Other responses related to the achievement for the individual:

*"Having pride in myself to be honest and just saying, "I've done this", you know, being able to, to finish it and to show that I was capable of doing it."*

(OH20)

*"A sense of pride I think at the time, you know, my mum and dad coming with me to Buckingham Palace and shaking hands with the Duke which of course we did in those days (laughs)."*

(OH8)

### **9.7.2. The value of DofE activities**

Past Award holders were asked about the value of the activities that they undertook when doing their DofE programme. Of the many answers given the four most cited were, communication skills (4/25), meeting new people (4/25), confidence (3/25) and team building (3/25). Overall, there were over 30 responses to this question. This illustrates that past participants recognise the importance of doing a DofE programme for widening their social circle and also equipping them with effective social skills for the future. Case Study 19 is a good example of this. Case Study 17 also illustrates how doing the DofE has given the respondent social and other skills that she has transferred successfully to other parts of her life.

### **9.7.3. Improvements that could have been made**

Over three quarters of the past participants thought that their DofE would not have been better if it had been done any differently. Three of them stated that it was a difficult question to answer retrospectively and overall they had enjoyed their experience.

The element that had the most suggestions for change was the expedition. This included doing an expedition abroad, doing more expeditions and not doing an expedition at all. Other suggestions for how they thought it would be better if done differently were a combination of personal changes and changes to the programme. For instance, one useful suggestion was to provide support to the young person if they leave school or the organisation where they are doing their DofE, (for example go to university). This continues to be a challenge for young people completing their DofE today. OH16 completed her Gold Award in 1983 after returning from university and said:

*"[I]t wasn't sort of at that point easily available for somebody you know, coming back from university. I had to make the effort to do it but because I wanted to do it. You know I got on and did something, I don't know what the situation is now obviously but at that time, perhaps if it had been more easily or more readily available for people to carry on with after they'd left school, that might have helped, I don't know."*

(OH16)

Another practical suggestion was to lower the age that young people can begin their DofE. This came from a Gold Award holder whose daughters are now doing their DofE programmes. Personal changes included having the opportunity to do the Bronze and Silver Awards as well as the Gold and not taking a break between doing the DofE Awards.

## **9.8. Summary**

### **9.8.1. Experiences**

Most of the interviewees for this part of the research reported that their experiences of doing the Duke of Edinburgh's Award were positive. They revealed both short and long term impacts of achieving a Gold DofE Award. The key enduring memory of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award for past Award holders is doing the expedition. This is followed by going to The Palace, their residential and the Volunteering section of their DofE. The weather was often recalled as an enduring memory of the expedition but the expedition in general was, and in some cases remains, a unique experience for the individual. It has also fostered an active lifestyle for some.

### **9.8.2. Community**

A significant number of past Award holders continued to volunteer after completion of their DofE (16/25), with ten of them still actively volunteering. Nine of these volunteer activities are with young people. Most continued their volunteering with the organisation that they were already affiliated with (for example Girlguiding UK). This provides evidence that previous participants of the DofE are potential and willing volunteers and they enjoy their continued allegiance with the DofE. In fact, many interviewees described a sense of belonging to a DofE community years or decades after completing their Gold Award.

### **9.8.3. Physical and mental well-being**

Past Award holders are in a position to be able to reflect on the impact that doing their DofE may have had on them or their lives. In terms of physical and mental well-being, they discussed the influence of doing a DofE on their social and personal development. Changes included: the ability to work as a team, broadening their horizons, realising their capabilities, gaining confidence and enhancing communication skills.

They also discussed the friendships that they gained whilst doing their DofE and that have continued since. It is apparent that the influence of others was important for both continued participation in and completion of their DofE. This included interacting and mixing with other people doing their DofE, their Leaders and the wider community.

#### **9.8.4. Employment**

Interviewees revealed that taking part in a DofE programme had enhanced their employability skills, broadened horizons and for some, it changed their career direction, particularly through their Volunteering section.

#### **9.8.5. General views of the DofE**

The most important thing about doing their DofE for past Award holders was the achievement of gaining their DofE Award followed by the opportunity to try new things and have new experiences.

Past Award holders consider the main benefits of the activities that they did for their DofE were in gaining communication skills, meeting new people, increased confidence and developing team building skills.

Three quarters of those interviewed stated that they did not wish that their DofE had been done any differently.

In summary, past participants identified personal and enduring changes that resulted directly from taking part in a DofE programme. Common changes included:

- opportunities to try new things and have new experiences
- broadened horizons
- realising own capabilities
- ability to problem solve
- overcoming challenges
- instilling self belief
- gaining a sense of achievement
- learning how to be a team player
- personal development
  - communication skills
  - meeting new people
  - confidence
  - team building.

In response to suggestions for improvements that they would have liked to have seen to the DofE, over three quarters of the past participants thought that their DofE would not have been better if it had been done any differently. Where suggestions were made, these related to the expedition (doing an expedition abroad, doing more expeditions and not doing an expedition at all) and the need for support for young people if they change where they are doing their DofE (e.g. if they go to university).

## **10. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **10.1. Introduction**

This large and wide-ranging evaluation project into the impact of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award on young people has shown that it continues to be a successful personal development programme for young people. The results detailed in previous chapters, and in the Statistical Volume and Appendices, have shown that the DofE has the potential to support personal development in many ways and that participation in DofE programmes is widely recognised as

benefitting young people. However, there are some areas identified which could further enhance the quality and effectiveness of the programmes and this report also identifies areas for quality enhancement. This chapter will summarise the broad findings of the evaluation. This will be followed by a series of recommendations for quality enhancement that arise from the research for future consideration.

This chapter will summarise the main findings of the research from all sources of information: data from interviews, focus groups, oral histories, video work and questionnaires from participants who were young people undertaking their DofE, delivery partners, past Gold Award holders and other stakeholders. Relevant information from other research identified within the literature review (Chapter 3) will also be incorporated where appropriate. These findings will be summarised by the themes used throughout this research: experiences (section 10.2), community (section 10.3), physical and mental well-being (section 10.4), employment (section 10.5) and general (section 10.6). Section 10.7 in this chapter will review these findings in the light of internal (DofE) and external policy drivers. Finally recommendations for future consideration are summarised in section 10.8.

## **10.2. Experiences**

This theme was examined from two main viewpoints: the attitudes towards new experiences and the opportunities for new experiences that participation in the DofE can bring.

### **10.2.1. Attitudes towards new experiences**

Young people were very positive about having new experiences and interests. The majority agreed very strongly with survey statements relating to new activities, experiences and places, but support was much weaker for the statement *'I enjoy learning about different people's cultures'* (see Chapter 6.2.3.1).

There was a significantly more positive attitude towards new experiences amongst the Silver and Gold award participants than amongst those doing their Bronze. Although no cause and effect relationship can be demonstrated from this research, it could be explained by the increased independence of involvement in their DofE programmes from Bronze to Silver to Gold. It could also be that the observed differences are due to self-selection, in that those with a more adventurous attitude towards new experiences choose to progress, or to start at the higher levels. Also, females had more positive attitudes to new experiences than males and twice as many females than males who responded to the survey were doing their Gold Award, compared to only a 20% imbalance in favour of females at the lower Award levels.

The 'distance-travelled' model predicts that young people with less positive initial attitudes to experiences (lower scores) are more likely to become more positive over a 7 month period of doing their DofE programme than those with more positive starting points (see Chapter 6.3.2). It also predicts that those who perceived themselves to have better employment skills have a greater likelihood of becoming more positive in their attitudes to new experiences, after taking into account their initial attitude to experiences. This would suggest that those young people who had better transferable skills such as leadership, communication, team working and independence are more likely to take advantage of the new personal experiences offered by engagement with their DofE programme.

Delivery partners were also very positive about having new experiences (Chapter 7.2.3) and they mirrored the findings from young people in that the most positive attitudes were expressed to those statements relating to new activities, experiences and places. Age was a factor in how positive the delivery partners were about new experiences; they were significantly less positive with increasing age.

### **10.2.2. New experiences from participation in the DofE**

#### **10.2.2.1. General**

During the interviews and focus groups, young people said that the Duke of Edinburgh's Award gave them an opportunity to expand their horizons by learning and developing new skills and having new experiences (Chapter 6.4.2.1). This was reinforced by the results of the young people's survey where the respondents reported that doing the DofE had given them new experiences. A substantial proportion of them agreed, to varying extents, with the following statements:

- *The DofE has allowed me to try activities I would never have tried before*
- *The DofE has given me some totally new experiences*
- *The DofE has allowed me to visit places I have never visited before*
- *As a result of the DofE I have some new interests/hobbies*
- *As a result of the DofE I have met people I would never have met before*
- *Doing the DofE has made me more adventurous*

The statement that scored most positively was 'The DofE has given me some totally new experiences'. The least positive responses were for the statement 'Doing the DofE has helped me learn about people with different backgrounds to myself'. Over half (57%) of the respondents to this statement had a score lower than 7 ('agree') and 28% actively disagreed with this statement (see Chapter 6.2.3.7).

Delivery partners were asked for the strength of their agreement with statements about what they thought young people got out of doing their DofE. Their responses closely matched the young people's responses. Delivery partners generally agreed strongly that young people gained new experiences through doing their DofE. The least positive attitudes were expressed to the statement '*Doing their DofE helps young people learn about others with different backgrounds to themselves*'. Nearly 30% of respondents recorded a response lower than 'agree' (score of 6 or less) to this statement. Female delivery partners recorded statistically more positive attitudes towards the experiences that involvement with the DofE provides for young people than males (see Chapter 7.2.3.3).

The young people's survey reflects the findings reported by the DofE (2007d) relating to the most popular activities undertaken for each DofE section. For example, the survey shows that the most popular skill-based activities for respondents are playing a musical instrument (24%) and driving (7%). This raises a question about the extent to which young people are being encouraged to take part in new activities for their DofE programmes, rather than gaining DofE Award recognition for activities that they were doing, or would have done, irrespective of their involvement with the programme. This was supported by reports from young people during the research that they were primarily taking part in the programme to gain credit for activities that they already undertake in order to gain recognition of this participation. However, some participants in the interviews and focus groups revealed that doing their DofE had encouraged them

to continue playing a musical instrument that they would otherwise have given up.

Young people working towards their Gold Award had significantly more positive responses towards the experiences that the DofE could offer than those working at lower levels. Although no causal links can be established from this data, it could be suggested that this might be due either to increased length of participation in the DofE, or the fact that the Gold DofE programme offers a new experience in the form of the Residential which is not available at the lower levels. It might also be due, at least in part, to a reflection of the gender imbalance at Gold level, as females generally responded more favourably than males towards the statements in this theme.

Young people discussed the fact that meeting people and building relationships were important aspects of doing their DofE (see Chapter 6.4.2). This illustrates that whilst young people were generally less positive about meeting people different from themselves, they saw the value of their DofE for giving them the opportunity to meet new people in general and that involvement in a DofE programme has a positive effect on a young person's ability to meet new people. Delivery partners also stated the importance to them of being involved with and working with young people (see Chapter 7.3.2.2.1). The building of relationships and meeting new people is therefore important for all those directly involved in DofE programmes.

Oral history interviewees identified personal and enduring changes directly resulting from taking part in their DofE. Common changes reported that are pertinent to this theme included:

- opportunities to try new things and have new experiences
- broadened horizons
- meeting new people

(Chapter 9.7)

#### 10.2.2.2. The Expedition

Experiences associated with the Expedition section of the DofE featured so strongly in the research that it warrants a separate section. The expedition dominated the focus groups with young people and was the experience that they most wanted to talk about and share. It was also the main focus of the video project, which was under the control of the young people involved. It was also a main topic of the reminiscences of past DofE participants.

The Expedition was overwhelmingly cited as the best activity by young people, but it was also cited as the least enjoyable activity and as the part of a DofE that young people would most like to change. This range of responses indicates the depth of feeling that young people have towards the expedition and it is the section of the DofE programme that consistently has the most impact on young people. (Chapter 6.4.2.2)

When talking about the expedition, young people reported that the main outcomes of the experiences associated with this section were:

- A sense/discovery of their strengths and weaknesses
- Learning their own capabilities
- Ways of overcoming challenges
- Team work, learning how to cope when something goes wrong
- Independence – not only achieving something without parental supervision but also learning valuable skills for themselves, being able to cope on their own

- An opportunity to build friendships
- New experiences
- Fun

The Expedition section has, in the past, dominated publicity, promotion and anecdotes about the DofE (Driscoll, 2007; Smith, 2004; Hub Consultants, 2002; DfES, 1990; DofE, 1989a, see also Wainwright, 1966). This has been attributed to the fact that the expedition takes the young person out of their comfort zone and the experience is totally different to something that they either have done or would normally do. These conclusions are further supported by the results of this project. The expedition was cited as the best and the worst activity by young people and also the element of the programme most likely to be something new to them. Further, this study has revealed that the expedition also helps young people to develop their skills and raise awareness in many situations. This positive impact of an outdoor or wilderness experience is supported by research by Peacock et al (2008) who also found that young people benefit greatly from the experience (see Chapter 5.5.1.4).

It is clear from the results of the current study that participants of DofE programmes gain a lot of satisfaction from completing their expedition and this was cited as one of the most rewarding things about doing a programme. The expedition was also significant to them in terms of friendship, trust and a sense of belonging. This is supported by research by The National Youth Agency (2005) in their report *The Positive Contribution to Non-formal Awards to Learning*.

The expedition was cited by the past participants as their outstanding memory of their DofE. It is apparent that the collective memory concerns friendships and giving participants something in common to talk about, whereas the other sections are often done in isolation and may be completely different to the next person. Young people stated that the main benefit to them of doing their DofE is meeting others and making friends, with the expedition also cited as the best activity due to friendship. There can be no doubt that the expedition is, and will continue to be, the section of the DofE that overrides all the others in both individual and collective memory, and the external perception of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in general. This is not surprising considering the evidence of the impact it has on young people and its distinctive nature.

### 10.3. Community

The results from the young people's survey reflect the findings of work by v (2007; see also Horton et al, 2008) who established that young people's passions are personal, rather than local and what they do on a day to day basis is most significant to them.

Young people who responded to the survey had generally positive attitudes about community concepts. They were most positive about those aspects which related to their relationships with others, with very high agreement for the survey statements '*I have some good friends*' and '*I enjoy helping other people*'. However, they were less positive about wanting to have a better understanding of other religions (13% actively disagreed) and feeling part of their local community (20% definitely did not feel part of their local community). Females in the survey had significantly more positive attitudes towards community aspects than did males (see Chapter 6.2.4.1).

The Volunteering section is the most obvious vehicle for community involvement within a young person's DofE programme. The most popular type of

volunteering reported by the survey respondents was within Girlguiding UK or the Scout Association (25.2%). Other common volunteering included within the Cadet Forces (5.3%), within DofE groups (2.5%) and within Boys and Girls Brigades (1.4%) (see Appendix 1 to the Statistical Volume, section 1.1) . This is perhaps not surprising as voluntary and community organisations offer the most opportunities for young people to get involved with the DofE (DofE, 2008d). Whilst it is accepted that there are difficulties for young people under 16 to do volunteering for an outside organisation, some volunteering choices offer more opportunity to interact with others.

However, young people who participated in interviews and focus groups reported that they did not think that, or were unsure of how, their DofE programme benefits the local community. The research found that the most negative responses from young people relating to the community theme concerned opportunities to learn about others from different backgrounds and different cultures (see Chapter 6.2.4.4) .

Most young people also said that doing the DofE had not increased their own community interaction and involvement. They gave several reasons for this opinion, including:

- they are doing their DofE in school and have not changed their actions since embarking on their DofE programme
- choice of activities – the Volunteering section in particular (especially if they are doing their DofE in school)
- location – some young people were limited by what they could do simply due to their rural location
- they considered that they were already involved with their local community.

The more positive responses about benefiting their local community came from those who were doing something active or visible in their community such as volunteering with a youth group, visiting an elderly person's residential home or activities such as gardening or litter picking.

As in the survey, the most cited method of community involvement in the interviews and focus groups was through volunteering with a uniformed organisation, followed by working within the school community, working with children and teaching others or sports coaching (see Chapter 6.4.4). It was apparent that they are more likely to volunteer within an organisation or institution that they already know, are aware of, or were part of already. This may be one reason that they do not equate their DofE programme with getting more involved with the local community, as they are already involved in that community activity.

Research by Horton et al (2008) and v (2007; see also Knightbridge, 2008) suggests that if young people have some input into the type of volunteering that they do, they are more likely to continue. Young people choose what voluntary activity they do for their DofE programme and it is obvious from the results shown above that, generally, they choose something that they are familiar with. However, this does not encourage young people to go out into their local community and find areas of real need or to mix with others with different experiences to greatest effect (see also Hollier, 1992b).

Both delivery partners and stakeholders reported a much more positive and explicit appreciation of the increased sense of community that involvement with the DofE brings to young people (See Chapters 7.3.3 and 8.5). They reported that the DofE gives young people the opportunity to become more aware of their

community, instilling a sense of social responsibility, responsible citizenship and belonging, although, as reported above, the research shows that this view is not necessarily shared by the young people themselves. However, the interviews with previous participants shows that they recognise both short and long term influences on community involvement of doing and achieving a Duke of Edinburgh's Award (Chapter 9.4). The fact that a number of past Award holders continue to actively volunteer within their community reinforces their commitment to altruistic activities. Delivery partners, stakeholders and past Award holders are in a position to reflect on experiences of doing a DofE that participants might not be immediately aware of.

Delivery partners were clearly aware of the community benefits that personal involvement in the DofE brings and the survey statement "*Involvement has given me opportunities to help other people*" got very strong agreement from most people. More general statements about the local area however ("*Involvement has made me more aware of local environmental issues*" and "*The DofE has made me more aware of problems in my local area*") had the least positive responses from delivery partners (see Chapter 7.2.4). However, one DofE group reported having a strategy for getting their young people visibly doing something positive as a group in their local community. This seems to also be positive for the young people as they are clear about how they were benefiting others, and themselves, by doing these activities.

The 'distance travelled' model predicts that young people with initially low disposition towards community-mindedness have about a 90% chance of improving this score after 7 months involvement with their DofE programme. Young people who are already strongly community-minded at the outset have only about a 25% chance of development (see Chapter 6.3.3).

## **10.4. Physical and mental well-being**

### **10.4.1. Physical**

There was a very strong positive response from young people in the quantitative survey to having a Physical section as part of their DofE programmes. The strongest agreement was seen for statements relating to their level of enjoyment of sports and other physical activities with those relating to their perceptions of their physical ability scoring slightly lower. On average, the respondents recognised only a slight positive effect on their attitudes to sport or physical activity from taking part in their DofE programmes. This suggests that the respondents to the survey were already actively motivated to take part in sports or recreation. However, the survey also shows that, in general, they thought that they got better at a given sport or physical activity as a result of their DofE programme and participated more often. They recognised that the DofE gave them opportunities to try new sports (see Chapter 6.2.5.1 and 6.2.5.2).

The findings from interviews and focus groups with young people are similar, suggesting that the activities they do for the Physical section are the least likely to be new to them (Chapter 6.4.5). This is supported by the research by Hub Consultants (2002). However, the young people revealed that their DofE programme has encouraged them to improve their fitness levels and maintain them.

The 'distance travelled' model predicts that young people with relatively limited engagement with/enjoyment of physical activities and sports have about a 70%

chance of improving this score after 7 months involvement with their DofE programme. Young people who are strongly engaged in sports/physical pursuits at the outset are less likely to improve, with only about a 40% chance of development (see Chapter 6.3.4).

#### **10.4.2. Mental**

Young people generally agreed with the statement "*I generally feel good about myself*", although there was a wide range of individual responses. Most reported that they did not get into trouble but were often bored and sometimes wasted their time. Most also wished they had more self-confidence, although the validated self-esteem scale included in the questionnaire indicated that about 85% of all respondents had high or very high self-esteem (See Chapter 6.2.5.3). This is in agreement with the work by Hub Consultants (2002) who found that the teenagers (14-19) that they spoke to who were participating in a DofE programme were team players who were sociable, highly motivated, active, with high self esteem.

Females had significantly lower self-esteem than males. Those working on their Gold programmes had significantly more positive attitudes towards their own mental well-being than those working at lower levels, which may be a reflection of increased maturity.

The effect of doing their DofE on young people's mental well-being were explored during the research (See Chapter 6.2.5.4, 6.3.5 and 6.4.5). The statements in the young people's survey which scored highest relating to this aspect were "*Since starting the Award I believe in myself more*" and "*Doing The DofE means that I am less bored*". There is also evidence to suggest that young people have gained in self-confidence through doing their DofE programme. During the interviews and focus groups, young people cited '*self-confidence*' to be the main way that they had changed since doing their DofE.

Interviews with past Award holders revealed that some felt that involvement with a DofE had instilled a sense of self-belief and achievement.

Respondents attending comprehensive schools had significantly higher levels of agreement with the statements relating to the effect of the DofE on mental well-being than those attending grammar and independent schools. There was also a statistical difference between females and males, with females having lower levels of agreement on the statements on average than males. As reported above, females had generally lower self-esteem (see Chapter 6.2.5.3.1) and this may affect their perceptions of how participating in their DofE programmes affects their mental well-being.

The 'distance travelled' model shows that those with low self-esteem are more likely to benefit from involvement in a DofE programme than those with higher levels. Young people with relatively low self-esteem have about a 60% chance of improving this score after 7 months involvement with their DofE programme, although as seen above, only about 15% of the participants in the survey would fall in this category (Chapter 6.3.6).

All aspects of this research have consistently revealed the importance of friends and taking part and experiencing the DofE in a friendship group. This can instil a sense of belonging and is important for self-confidence and general mental well-being. Hub Consultants (2002) and Boomerang (2000), for instance, report that young people tend to act as a team and this gives them the confidence to make collective choices. Also, peer pressure has a major influence on activities a young

person chooses to take part in (Horton et al, 2008; DofE, 2003a; Hub Consultants, 2002). This has been apparent in the interview and focus group research with young people, where they reported that involvement in the DofE was influenced by their peers and that they considered friendship to be the main benefit of doing their DofE. This research also supports studies done previously that friends are a popular reason for young people to carry on with their DofE programme and also to continue to the next level of DofE (DofE, 2007a; Hub Consultants, 2002; Henley Centre, 2001, cited in DofE, 2007a; DofE, 1998a).

## **10.5. Employment**

For some young people, taking part in and achieving their DofE Award is the first of their qualifications or recognised achievements (Stannard, 2001; Atkenhead, 1995). Learning new skills, and getting recognition for them, can help to raise aspirations and self esteem, which in turn can widen their employment opportunities. This research supports the findings by The National Youth Agency (2005) for the value of non-formal Awards for increasing motivation and improving personal and social skills that will be useful for future employment.

### **10.5.1. Employment skills**

The young people's survey results show that, on average, respondents were positive about their own transferable employment skills. There was a significant difference between females and males, with females generally reporting less positive attitudes towards their own transferable skills abilities (See Chapter 6.2.6.1). This is most likely due to the previously reported lower self-esteem amongst females (see Chapter 10.4.2 above, and Chapter 6.2.5.3.1). The statements with the highest levels of agreement related to team work, taking responsibility, working independently and sticking to a task. They also generally felt that doing their DofE had helped them develop these skills. The exception was the statement "*Doing The DofE has helped me to develop public speaking skills*" to which over 30% of the respondents actively disagreed (See Chapter 6.2.6.2).

Talking to young people revealed that they felt they had developed a wide variety of skills as a result of their DofE programmes. These included:

- organisational skills
- resilience
- life skills
- independence
- commitment
- helping others
- a wide variety of practical skills

(Chapter 6.4.5.2)

The precise nature of these skills varied from person to person and reflects one of the guiding principles of the DofE: that it is personalised.

Delivery partners, responding to their survey, also generally strongly agreed that young people gained employment skills from doing their DofE. The statement with the greatest level of agreement related to the development of team-work, whilst development of public speaking had the lowest level of agreement, which again reflects the views of the young people (Chapter 7.2.5.1).

The interviews with past Award holders revealed that they acquired skills during their DofE that they were unaware of at the time (See Chapter 9.6). They reported that involvement with the DofE had realised their own capabilities, in particular their ability to problem solve and overcome challenges. They recognised their own personal development in terms of communication skills, confidence and learning how to be part of a team. Some of them also revealed that their DofE programme had had a major influence on their future career choices.

DofE stakeholders, who are not directly involved in the delivery of programmes, felt that the possession of a DofE is seen by employers as evidence of effective team-working, organisational skills and abilities outside the classroom. They felt that a DofE Award is therefore widely recognised as an additional qualification and that employment opportunities for young people arise as a result of this recognition amongst employers (Chapter 8.7).

The 'distance travelled' model predicts that young people with lower initial perception of their own employment skills are more likely to increase this over a 7 month period of doing their DofE programme than those with higher starting points. Furthermore, the more confident in their future the young people are and the greater their self esteem, the more likely they are to increase their transferable employment skills over the 7 month period of doing their DofE (see Chapter 6.3.7).

### **10.5.2. Future employment prospects**

Young people were also questioned about their attitude to their future employment prospects. The young people who responded had generally quite negative views about their future employment prospects. They were generally worried about finding a job and having enough money in the future. They did not feel that there were plenty of job opportunities in their locality and most felt they needed help to make choices for their future. Females were statistically more negative in their attitudes than males (Chapter 6.2.6.3). However, young people generally felt that doing their DofE would positively affect their future employment prospects. The highest levels of agreement were with the statements "*Doing The DofE will help me get a job/career in future*" and "*Doing The DofE will give me an advantage over other people in the job market*" (see Chapter 6.2.6.4). Most respondents had not changed their opinion about the job they wanted as a result of doing the DofE, however, during interviews, individual instances were revealed of where a young person's career path has been greatly influenced by their DofE programme (see Chapter 6.4.6).

This is supported by the interview and focus group data where young people revealed that they considered having a DofE Award on their CV to be the third main benefit of achieving a DofE. The reasons for this include the recognition of the achievement in the wider community and the accreditation of skills that the young person can then talk about at an interview or on a personal statement.

This was also reflected by delivery partners who stated in their interviews that the main benefit to young people of having a DofE was having it on their CV, and therefore giving them an advantage in the job market. They stated that the achievement shows commitment by the individual and they considered the external reputation and recognition of the DofE to be an added benefit (Chapter 7.3.4). Additionally, in the survey, the statement "*Doing their DofE gives a young person an advantage over other people in the job market*" had the greatest level of agreement in the section of the survey relating to employment prospects (Chapter 7.2.5.3).

Similarly, stakeholders considered the fact that the DofE is recognised by employers and being able to put it on their CV to be the main advantages for young people having an Award. They stated that, for an employer, it demonstrates personal qualities as well as educational attainment (Chapter 8.7).

There was a statistically significant difference between young people's attitudes to the impact of doing a DofE on their future employment prospects depending on the type of school they attended. Those attending comprehensive schools had statistically higher level of agreement with the statements relating to this area than those from independent or grammar schools (see Chapter 6.2.6.4). It may be that those who perceive themselves to have fewer educational advantages can see the added benefit of doing a DofE.

There was also a statistically significant difference between the Regions, with Northern Ireland having the most agreement with the associated statements for this topic and the South-East having the lowest. This might be a reflection of the relative deprivation and perceptions of difficulties of gaining employment in Northern Ireland compared with Southern England (for example), leading to a greater appreciation of the added benefit for employment in those areas.

These differences are supported by the 'distance travelled' model which predicts that young people with more negative initial views of their employment prospects are more likely to become more positive over a 7 month period of doing their DofE programme than those with higher starting points (Chapter 6.3.8).

## **10.6. General**

### **10.6.1. Role of Leaders**

The vast majority of respondents to the young people's survey were very positive about their leaders. About 35% of the young people reported total agreement with the statement '*My DofE Award leaders are supportive*', and over 20% totally agreed that '*My DofE Award leaders are inspirational*' (see Chapter 6.2.7.1). Several past participants also described the importance of good leadership for not only supporting them through their DofE programme, but for also being inspirational which helped them to achieve other things in their lives (Chapter 9.7).

The building of relationships and the personal satisfaction of working with young people and seeing them develop and achieve were reported by delivery partners as the main benefit to them of being involved with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (Chapter 7.3.2.2.1). These findings are also supported by previous research (Hub Consultants, 2002; Lines and Blenkinsopp, 2002).

The relationship that leaders build with young people has been shown here to be a significant part of the DofE experience for both young people and group leaders and supports past research by the NYA and the Fabian Society (2008), DofE (2003a), IVR (1997) and DfES (1990). The support and encouragement that a leader gives a young person may not just be a significant aspect for helping young people through to completion of their DofE, it can also instill a sense of worth in the individual and promote a change in attitude towards their future actions (NYA and the Fabian Society, 2008; Hollier, 1991).

### 10.6.2. Achievement

External recognition of their achievements through gaining a DofE is important to young people (see 10.5.2, above). This is also demonstrated by their very positive reactions to both the Award ceremony and to wearing their badge. Over 40% of the young people responding to the survey agreed totally with the statements '*I am looking forward to receiving my certificate and badge at a DofE ceremony*' and '*I will be proud to wear my DofE badge*' (Chapter 6.2.7.6). Those working towards their Silver Award were less positive in their responses to these statements than those working towards Bronze and Gold. This may be a result of the Bronze candidates looking forward to their first DofE Award, and the Gold candidates looking forward to the special celebrations associated with the top level of DofE Award, whereas many of the Silver candidates may have already experienced one award ceremony and not yet be anticipating a Palace ceremony.

The research also showed that young people recognised many achievements that were possible through doing a DofE. There was general agreement with the statements '*The DofE .. has helped me achieve my goals in life*' and '*The DofE .. has exceeded my expectations*'. During the interviews and focus groups, young people expanded on this and they reported an extensive list of key outcomes of involvement in their DofE programmes. These included:

- fitness
- recognition
- strengths and weaknesses
- gaining confidence
- commitment
- expanded horizons
- extra-curricular activity
- sense of achievement
- new activities
- doing community work
- something to put on their CV.
- friendships
- learning new skills
- fun
- meeting new people.
- having new experiences
- communication skills
- building resilience

(see Chapter 6.2.7.10 and 6.4)

### 10.6.3. Suggested improvements

As part of the interviews and focus groups, young people were asked what they thought was the most disappointing thing about doing their DofE. Most replied '*nothing*'. This indicates that young people were generally satisfied with their DofE programme. However, this research was conducted with young people who are doing their programme and those who were dissatisfied may have chosen to leave. It does, however, provide evidence for the effectiveness of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in engaging young people who choose to participate and continue.

The main reported disappointments concerned aspects of the expedition. Some of these related to external factors such as the weather; others included getting lost on the expedition and disbandment of the expedition due to others dropping out.

Other reported disappointments with their programmes included:

- the time consuming nature of the DofE
- others not finishing or dropping out of the programme
- issues surrounding the presentation of the DofE Award
- bad administration
- their DofE ending
- cost
- number of places available to do a DofE

(Chapter 6.4.2.7)

As might be expected, the disappointments of delivery partners focussed mainly on issues relating to the administration and delivery of the programmes. They included:

- non-completion of DofE programmes by young people
- lack of capacity to enable widening participation
- lack of consultation and communication
- a top-down approach to the management of the DofE
- the CV-focus of young peoples' motivation for doing their DofE
- the time delay from completing a DofE to being awarded it
- the complexities of and barriers to running a group

(Chapter 7.3.2.1.3)

All participants in the research were asked what improvements, if any, they would wish to see relating to DofE programmes.

Young people's suggestions for improvements to the DofE can summarised as:

- More effective information/publicity for young people and their parents, to enable informed choice
- Widening accessibility of the programme to young people
- Using presentations by peers who are doing the DofE or Award holder testimonies to encourage others to take part
- Introduce peer mentors to support a young person through their DofE
- Extend/increase the age range of the DofE
- Provide financial assistance or help with fund raising
- Make it compulsory for the individual to do something new to them
- Provide more international opportunities
- Speed up the processing of awards
- Promoting the DofE more widely in the workplace

(Chapter 6.4.7)

Delivery partners' responses were broadly in agreement with many of these points. Most thought that it is an effective programme, but that measures could be taken to widen participation and improve completion rates. In particular, they suggested the following improvements:

- Improve assistance or encouragement from higher up the system
- Improve communication: delivery partners stated that lack of communication and consultation often made them feel isolated from the bigger picture of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and/or from their local authority or operating authority
- Improved/targeted advertising or increasing publicity aimed at encouraging volunteers to get involved (e.g. target past/present participants, encourage parents to get involved, encourage employers to support staff if they wanted to be involved)
- Capacity building to increase the availability of the DofE: target hard to reach young people, recruit volunteers so that existing groups can expand.

- Recruit and train post-Gold participants and encourage them to become Leaders through a structured young Leaders scheme; training badges; and a Platinum Award
- Develop the Expedition by getting rid of the 'purpose' of the expedition, improving expedition training pack, reducing the cost, and being more flexible with more emphasis on exploration and learning skills such as team building rather than physical challenge (e.g. to support inclusions of multi-faith groups, those with learning and physical disabilities).

(Chapter 7.3.5.1).

More than three-quarters of the past participants reported that they thought their DofE could not have been improved. However, these were all Gold Award holders and, although they were in a position to comment on the range of opportunities at all levels, they were likely to be more satisfied with the programme as they had actively chosen to continue to the end. Their suggestions for improvement mainly related to modifications for the Expedition section and for support for those who have to change their DofE organisation (Chapter 9.7.3).

The stakeholders reinforced the need for improved communication at all levels. They also suggested that past participants should be encouraged to become leaders and they felt that the programme should be regularly updated to ensure that it met young people's needs (Chapter 8.8.1).

Within the range of suggestions for improvements, two areas are worthy of particular consideration as they were most often cited by the widest range of participants: increasing and widening participation; and communication.

The 'distance travelled' modelling undertaken for this research concludes that, for each aspect of personal development considered, those with the lowest starting points are the most likely to benefit from participation in the DofE. However, the survey shows that only a small percentage of the participants have low levels of each attribute (see Chapter 6.2.3.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.2.5.1, 6.2.5.3, 6.2.6.1, 6.2.6.3). It seems therefore that the Duke of Edinburgh's Award is not reaching those that might benefit most.

The young people spoken to in this research think that the DofE should be more accessible to others and were keen that others should be involved. They thought that the main barriers to others' participation were their lack of commitment, lack of time or laziness but also thought that there was lack of awareness amongst young people of the DofE and its benefits (Chapter 6.4.3). This is supported by Driscoll (2007) and Noel (2006) who both stress the need for information and publicity about the DofE to be more widely disseminated in order to increase participation and further understanding of DofE programmes. However, issues of capacity, funding and shortage of leaders that have been highlighted by delivery partners and so the number of places for participants remains limited and it is unlikely that the need could be met. It is interesting to note the recent changes in guiding principles of the DofE which suggests that they are also aware that some young people may not be able to do the Award because of access issues. One of the guiding principles has changed from '*available to all*' to '*achievable by all*', which represents a significant difference in aspiration (DofE, 2008c).

Young people respond well to positive peer influences. The impact of positive peer influence was found by Peacock et al (2008) to play a key role in improving cohesion within groups, augmenting a sense of worth and enhancing communication skills of the participants of a wilderness experience similar to a

DofE expedition. This has been illustrated in this research, particularly young people working together on the expedition and assisting each other through the challenge of completing the expedition. Young people suggested two additional ways of increasing participation in DofE programmes using their peers as the main inspiration. Firstly, for their peers to give presentations about their experiences and secondly, to act as mentors to support younger people through their programme (see Chapter 6.4.7.1).

Improvements in communication were strongly suggested by both delivery partners and other stakeholders involved with the DofE (see Chapters 7.3.5.1 and 8.8.1). These were exemplified in the operational aspects of running this research where, despite considerable efforts by all involved, invitations to participate in the surveys, and other aspects of the research, only reached a small number of the targeted groups. Communication in a devolved organisation such as the DofE is a difficult process but improvements in communication could give significant benefits and address some of the perceived administrative problems. Communication may well be linked to perceptions of support where a significant minority disagreed, to varying extents, with the statement *'I feel supported by the DofE charity'* (Chapter 7.2.6.3). Many delivery partners also felt more supported by their local DofE organisation than by the Charity.

## 10.7. Policy considerations

The delivery of the DofE is set within the contexts of both internal and external policies. The tables below attempt to summarise the outcomes of involvement in DofE programmes, as defined by young people, within these policies.

Table 29 summarises young people's perceptions of the outcomes of their DofE programmes against the aims of the DofE, as defined by the Guiding Principles.

<b>DofE guiding principle</b>	<b>Key outcome identified by young people</b>
1. Non-competitive	
2. Achievable by all	
3. Voluntary	Extra-curricular activity
4. Personal development	Fitness Strengths and weaknesses Gaining confidence Communication skills Building resilience
5. Personalised	Expanding horizons Learning new skills New activities Having new experiences
6. Balanced	Learning new skills Fitness Doing community work New activities
7. Progressive	Expanding horizons Gaining confidence Building resilience
8. Achievement focused	Sense of achievement Something to put on CV Recognition

9. Demand commitment	Commitment
10. Enjoyable	Fun

**Table 29: Key outcomes for young people in relation to the DofE Guiding Principles**

It should be noted that the two most important outcomes of doing their DofE for young people were friendship and meeting new people. These do not easily relate to the guiding principles of the DofE.

Table 30 summarises the major current UK policies which affect children and young people and associates the young people's perceptions of the outcomes of the DofE with the main elements of each of these policies.

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Specific element of policy</b>	<b>Key outcome identified by young people</b>
<b>New opportunities: fair chances for the future</b>	Removing barriers and raising aspirations for UK citizens by offering opportunities for achieving personal potential	Sense of achievement Learning new skills Expanding horizons CV enhancement Gaining confidence Communication skills Doing community work Building resilience
<b>Every Child Matters and Youth Matters (England)</b>	Enjoy and achieve	Fun Sense of achievement Learning new skills Recognition
	Make a positive contribution	Doing community work Meeting new people Friendships
<b>A Curriculum for Excellence (Scotland)</b>	Successful learners	Expanding horizons Sense of achievement Learning new skills CV enhancement
	Confident individuals	Gaining confidence Building resilience Communication skills Friendships Meeting new people
	Responsible citizens	Doing community work
	Effective contributors	Doing community work Learning new skills Communication skills Friendships Meeting new people
<b>Extending entitlement (Wales)</b>	Feeling good	Sense of achievement Fitness Recognition Friendships Meeting new people
	Education and employment	CV enhancement Sense of achievement Communication skills Learning new skills
	Taking part / getting involved	Doing community work Meeting new people
	Health and well-being	Fitness Gaining confidence Building resilience
<b>Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge</b>	Healthy	Fitness

<b>(Northern Ireland)</b>		
	Enjoying, learning and achieving	Fun Having new experiences Learning new skills New activities CV enhancement
	Contributing positively to community and society	Doing community work Meeting new people Friendships
<b>Aiming high for young people: A ten year strategy for positive activities</b>	Active participation and positive leisure activities for young people	Doing community work Extra curricular activity Learning new skills New activities Expanding horizons Meeting new people Friendships
<b>Learning outside the classroom manifesto</b>	Opportunities for outdoor learning	Learning new skills New activities Extra curricular activity Having new experiences

Table 30: Key outcomes for young people in relation to major external policies

## 10.8. Recommendations

This section summarises the recommendations for quality enhancement that arise from the results of the project. They are intended as an indicative guide of issues for consideration by the DofE executive team and no opinions are presented in this report as to methods of implementation.

### 10.8.1. Recommendation 1 – Widen young people’s participation in DofE programmes

The research has shown clearly that those young people who are most likely to benefit from participation in a DofE programme are those with the lowest starting point, for whatever area of potential gain is examined (Chapter 6.3.2 - 6.3.8). However, the profile of the current participants is skewed towards those who already have relatively high levels of each of those attributes (Chapter 6.2.3.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.2.5.1, 6.2.5.3, 6.2.6.1, 6.2.6.3). Although there are undoubtedly severe challenges in extending the appeal and availability of the DofE to those who have traditionally not participated, this would seem to be the area of greatest untapped potential and the area where the impact of DofE programmes is likely to be the greatest.

Some of the associated issues raised by research participants in relation to widening participation have been the prohibitive financial costs for some young people (see Chapters 6.4.2.7, 6.4.7.2 and 8.8.1) and the need for targeted marketing and publicity, possibly involving young people as peer mentors and champions (see Chapters 6.4.7.1 and 7.3.5.3.3).

This research has only examined the barriers to participation as perceived by those who are engaged on their programmes, and no direct evidence is therefore available relating to why young people choose not to participate, or drop out. It is recommended that more research is undertaken to investigate how widening participation might be achieved.

### 10.8.2. Recommendation 2 – Increase capacity of DofE programmes

The research has suggested that there are various barriers to participation. However, the main barrier perceived by those already involved in the DofE is the availability of a DofE programme to the individual (see Chapters 6.4.2.7, 6.4.7.2, 7.3.2.1.3, 7.3.5.3.1 and 7.3.5.3.3). Successful units and centres are over prescribed and the DofE is to some extent a victim of its own success. If participation is to be increased, there is the inevitable challenge of increasing the numbers of leaders and volunteers and of providing an adequate support system for groups to enable them to run sustainably.

Recommendations 3 - 7 are also related to issues of increasing capacity of DofE programmes.

### **10.8.3. Recommendation 3 – Recruit leaders from more diverse backgrounds**

Young people reported that their leaders were a very important part of their DofE experience and many said how much they were inspired by their leaders (Chapter 6.2.7.1, 6.4.7.3). However, the relatively small number of delivery partners responding to the survey revealed a very limited demographic profile in which almost all were from white ethnic backgrounds and whose age were skewed towards older age groups (7.2.1.2, 7.2.1.4). Targeted recruitment of younger leaders and those from black and ethnic minority backgrounds would help to attract young people from similar backgrounds and provide them with role models.

### **10.8.4. Recommendation 4 – Increase support for delivery partners**

Delivery partners described the complexities and difficulties that they encounter when running a group (Chapter 7.3.2.1.3) and many reported that they would like more support from the DofE in delivering programmes to young people (Chapter 7.3.5.1, 7.3.5.2.2). They also suggested that there could be an element of self-help in this support, for example building networks of leaders within regions to share experiences and to act as a source of additional help when needed (7.3.5.1.1). This may also help to retain experienced leaders.

### **10.8.5. Recommendation 5 – Recognition of volunteers**

The delivery of the programme relies on the goodwill of many thousands of volunteers. The delivery partners involved in the research strongly identified the need for improved volunteer recruitment (7.2.6.7, 7.3.5.1.2, 7.3.5.2.1). They also recognised the need for improved retention of existing volunteers, and the role that support and appreciation plays in this (Chapter 7.3.5.2.2).

Due to the devolved structure of the management of DofE programmes, there is no central database of current volunteers and no detailed information on the volunteer profile. Improved management systems would enable better communication, support and recognition of volunteers.

### **10.8.6. Recommendation 6 – Increase structured training and support programmes for leaders and volunteers**

Delivery partners voiced concerns that although training is becoming more widely available through the modular training programme, there are not enough courses available at convenient times (Chapter 7.3.5.2.2). Increased access to training would give the DofE / operating authority an opportunity to mix with more of their volunteers and their achievements would be formally recognised. Regional training events would also allow volunteers to build networks with

others in their region which would also serve to increase support, both by the DofE / operating authority and of each other (Chapter 7.3.5.1.1). It was also recognised that there may need to be positive incentives for training, and for the abolition of disincentives by, for example, reimbursing expenses to volunteers.

#### **10.8.7. Recommendation 7 – Encourage Gold Award holders to become future DofE leaders**

It is evident from many aspects of this research (with young people, delivery partners, past Award holders) that a significant number of those who gain a DofE are interested in continuing their affiliation with the DofE (Chapters 6.4.7.1, 7.2.1.8 and 9.4). However, there do not seem to be any structured routes for their continued involvement and this pool of motivated and experienced young adults are not routinely encouraged to become leaders. There are therefore opportunities to develop a programme for post-Gold Award holders to encourage young people to 'give something back' to the DofE. It is suggested, in order to take the emphasis away from the expedition, that this could perhaps be linked to a youth work qualification, rather than BELA training. A Platinum Award, or similar, was also suggested by young people, delivery partners and stakeholders (Chapters 7.3.5.3.3 and 8.8.1).

#### **10.8.8. Recommendation 8 – Review the expedition section**

The Expedition section is cited by young people as both the best and the worst part of the DofE experience (Chapter 6.4.2.2, 6.4.2.6). Some reasons for it being their worst experience relate to the physical and mental difficulties encountered which when overcome, led to it being the best experience. However, they also reported elements such as the high financial cost, problems with administration, people dropping out and perceived irrelevance of elements of planning and execution required (Chapter 6.4.2.7). There was also some question whether the expedition, in its current form, should be a compulsory part of the programme. Given the high public profile of the expedition, consideration should be given to reviewing all elements of the expedition section to ensure that it is fit for purpose and will be attractive and accessible to the widest range of young people.

#### **10.8.9. Recommendation 9 – Greater recognition of achievement**

It is apparent that, for some young people, getting involved with a full DofE programme is not always possible. There is a mechanism for recognising partial completion using sectional certificates which issued on successful completion of one section of a young person's DofE programme. However these are not universally used and are not recognised in DofE reports. By only recognising completion of full DofE Awards in the annual statistics, the DofE organisation is counting those who do not complete their DofE as failures, rather than celebrating achievements in sectional certificates. Increasing success rates was cited as one of the improvements that delivery partners would like to see (7.2.6.2, 7.3.2.1.3).

#### **10.8.10. Recommendation 10 – Induction for young people new to the DofE**

It was reported that young people often begin their DofE programme not quite sure of what they are embarking on (6.4.3, 6.4.7.1). It was suggested that an induction programme, which could include their parent/carer, could be an effective way of discussing expectations and concerns (Chapter 6.4.7.1). This

induction may help to retain those who are committed to the programme and reduce the number who may drop out at an early stage.

In addition, it was suggested that a form of foundation award, or series of taster sessions, could give young people an idea of what doing their DofE programme will be like and help with recruitment of under-represented young people (7.3.5.1.3, 7.3.5.3.3).

#### **10.8.11. Recommendation 11 – Improved communication, administration and support**

The different phases of the research, and the operational issues associated with conducting the research project, have consistently revealed that the devolved structure of management of the DofE results in difficulties in communication and consultation with those that are involved in working with young people, and with the young people themselves (7.3.5.1). This results in a lack of awareness of the opportunities available and improvements that may have been implemented due to the time it takes for information to filter down to grass roots level (Chapters 7.3.5.1.2 and 8.8.1). A structured mechanism for increasing communication between all parts of the DofE management structure, from Head Office to the unit leader and young person would also increase delivery partners' sense of involvement, worth and recognition.

Young people and delivery partners also negatively comment on the time it takes for certificates to be issued (Chapters 6.4.7.2 and 7.3.2.1.3) and related perceived administrative problems.

Good communication and administrative systems are particularly needed to identify and support young people identified as being vulnerable, or when young people need to move to another delivery organisation, e.g. when they are leaving school or moving house. A system of transferring information and flagging support needs to a new organisation is necessary to help young people continue and complete their DofE programme.

Good administrative systems are also required to track DofE participants through their programmes, and particularly to identify those who have dropped out. Currently there seems to be little information on participants who do not complete their DofE Awards. Better intelligence is needed on the reasons why young people leave their programmes in order to implement improvements to increase retention and to maximise the benefits for young people.

### **10.8.12. Recommendation 12 – Wider appreciation of DofE benefits**

Young people and delivery partners both stated that more publicity is required to increase awareness and appreciation of the breadth of opportunities that the DofE offers (Chapters 6.4.3, 6.4.7.1, 7.3.5.1.4 and 7.3.5.2.1). It is apparent that the expedition remains the section of the DofE that people most associate the DofE with. Promotion of the wider benefits of participation in the DofE may increase understanding of the different elements of the programme, such as social responsibility, community involvement and a sense of belonging.

The research has shown clearly that friendship and meeting new people are the most important aspects of involvement in the DofE for young people (Chapters 6.2.4.4, 6.4.2.1, 6.4.2.2, 6.4.2.5, 6.4.5.1, 6.4.5.3, 7.3.2.3.1, 9.5 and 9.6). However, these social attributes are not recognised in the aims of the programmes, as defined by the DofE guiding principles. Incorporation of these unintended outcomes in the aims of the programme, and targeted publicity about these benefits could also increase the popularity to those not currently interested in involvement.

### **10.8.13. Recommendation 13 – Increase opportunities for young people to reflect on their personal and community development**

It has been shown that some young people doing DofE programmes are unaware of how their participation in their programme impacts on themselves and others (Chapter 6.2.4.4, 6.4.4.1 and 6.4.4.2). This is particularly true for aspects of community involvement.

It is suggested that, as the participant progresses through their DofE programme or completes a section, there should be structured reflective time for the young person with their leader. This could also be built into group activities. In addition to making the participants more aware of their personal development, and their potential positive impact on others, it enhances their ability to articulate their achievements when, for instance, filling in personal statements, writing CVs and at interview. This could also have a positive impact on how young people view their future employment prospects which has been shown by this research to be an area of concern for them (Chapter 6.2.6.3). Reflection on community aspects of DofE involvement could also help to encourage more activities which have a tangible impact on local communities and social interactions between young people from different backgrounds and cultures.

Although the delivery partners and other stakeholders recognise the community benefits of the DofE, these aspects are not built into the aims of the programmes, as defined by the guiding principles. More explicit focus on these outcomes would enable leaders and young people to reflect on their community and social interactions, and more structured community links may also be considered to facilitate increased community involvement. Increased visibility in the community might also help to increase recruitment of young people from under-represented communities to the DofE.

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