The Duke of Edinburgh's Award job applicant information pack



Operations Manager

DofE

YOUTH WITHOUT LIMITS

disability confident COMMITTED

OUR PURPOSE

At The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE), we help young people build lifelong belief in themselves, supporting them to take on their own challenges, follow their passions, and discover talents they never knew they had. Because when you prove to yourself that you're ready for anything, nothing can hold you back.









OUR VALUES

Underpinning every aspect of our work are our shared values. They define our culture, show what we stand for and describe how we get things done.



I am empowering

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



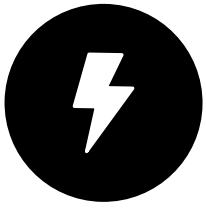
I am inclusive

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



I have integrity

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



I am dynamic

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

A message from the CEO



Thank you so much for your interest in joining The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

For 70 years, DofE has empowered millions of young people to discover who they are, grow in confidence, and build the skills they need for life and work. It's a charity I'm incredibly proud to be part of.

In recent years, through our Youth Without Limits strategy, we've reached more young people than ever before, expanded into new communities, and seen participants give back through millions of hours of volunteering. We've also helped shine a brighter spotlight on just how important enrichment is in young people's lives.

Now we're focusing on what comes next. Young people today are growing up in a world that feels more uncertain and fast-changing than ever, whether that's global challenges, rising costs of living, or the rapid pace of technology and work. For many, especially those facing financial hardship, the opportunities that build confidence, connection and resilience can feel increasingly out of reach. And that's exactly why DofE matters more than ever.

Our new strategy, *World Ready*, is about rising to that challenge. By 2031, we want more than two million young people to have the opportunity to start their DofE journey. Crucially, we're determined to reach more young people living in poverty and to open-up access to high-quality enrichment for all.

If you're excited by our mission and transforming young people's lives, we're so glad you're here. Thank you again for considering DofE, I wish you the very best with your application.



Ruth Marvel OBE, CEO

View our Annual Review 2026 here and our strategy here

Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion

The DofE is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive staff team and we are proud to be an equal opportunity employer.

We recruit, develop, promote and value people without regard to race, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, disability or age.

In order to meet the changing needs and aspirations of the most diverse generation of young adults ever, our staff need a range of perspectives, skills, and lived experience.

While we welcome applications from people of all backgrounds to join our passionate and friendly team, at present people of colour, disabled people, and people under 25 are not as well-represented as we would like. As such, we particularly encourage applicants from these backgrounds.

> **"DofE has changed my life. It made me the person I am today. It gave me the experience and confidence to talk to new people. It made me realise how resilient and strong I am."**
>
> **DofE participant**

Job title
Operations Manager

Salary: £40,210 - £47,306 pa depending on experience (Grade I)

Hours: Full time (35 hours per week) 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday with some flexible working. Occasional evenings and weekends

Contract type: Permanent

Location: England – Southwest

Place of work: Home Based – will involving regular travel across the portfolio area

Reports to: Senior Operations Manager

Employee benefits: Please see page 8 for full details of the benefits package

Main purpose

Working within our values and behaviours framework to manage, support and empower a team of Operations Officers, ensuring Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) are achieved in line with the organisational transition from Youth Without Limits to World Ready – maintaining our commitment to accessibility while strengthening our focus on preparing young people to be world ready.

An Operations Officer role involves managing and supporting a varied and expanding portfolio of Licensed Organisations (LOs) who offer DofE to young people. These organisations vary from schools and colleges to local authorities, charities, youth organisations and secure units.

We are looking to recruit an enthusiastic and experienced people manager who can lead a geographically dispersed team to achieve a quality experience for young people participating in DofE. You will be a keen and actively engaged member of the leadership team, developing, and delivering ways to meet our strategy, objectives, and specific KPI's. Alongside other DofE staff across the UK, you will be supporting the strategic work of the charity through involvement in working groups and projects.

The role will be field based with applicants working from home most of the time. However, it will also involve attendance at various meetings across the leadership team area, and occasionally in other parts of the UK. These would include, but not be limited to, internal meetings as well as external meetings as required to support your team of Operations Officers and to influence change with educational and community leaders and organisations.

What will be required of you?

- As a people manager, develop, empower and motivate a high performing team to achieve SMART objectives in line with the country business plan and the organisational strategy.
- Provide proactive leadership to oversee and enhance the wellbeing of your team, fostering a positive working environment which encapsulates the DofE's values and behaviours and where the team feel empowered, supported, and able to thrive.
- Manage and resolve any issues or concerns around delivery or quality raised by your team within their portfolio.
- Support your team in identifying and approaching prospective LOs whom the DofE might licence, particularly focusing on those most likely to help the charity to achieve its strategic objectives.
- Ensure that DofE's licensing requirements are fulfilled, that senior level relationships are maintained and a clear action plan, aligned with DofE's strategy, is in place with each organisation.
- Effectively analyse data and operational KPI's and targets, for example, the number of marginalised young people participating in DofE programmes; or the number of young people participating in the Young Leader's programme; putting in place mitigation where appropriate.

- Assist with the preparation and approval of grants issued by the DofE, and the monitoring and evaluation of funded projects in line with our organisational impact measurement framework.
- Ensure relevant Training Pathways are being followed and completed by the network, which are relevant to their roles.
- Implement and support the delivery of the network engagement plan, including but not limited to network meetings and events.
- Work with colleagues in the leadership team to contribute to the successful implementation of the business plan to support strategic goals.
- Contribute to national innovation and improvement through working groups, leadership responsibility areas and other relevant forums.
- Support the Senior Operations Manager and/or England Director in the introduction of new initiatives, projects or behaviours that assist in the achievement of organisational strategy.
- Keep abreast of government, local authority and other relevant policies and initiatives, and represent the charity at appropriate events, to the press and media as required.

All DofE staff are expected to:

- Be an enthusiastic, authentic ambassador for the DofE and engage positively with stakeholders providing a high level of customer service.
- Uphold the values of DofE working collaboratively with colleagues across DofE.
- Demonstrate the DofE's commitment to building a diverse and inclusive organisation.
- Follow DofE's Safeguarding and Data Protection policies and procedures at all times complying with legislation and statutory duties.
- Ensure that all health and safety procedures are followed at all times.

Person specification

Essential

Experience and knowledge

- Experience of successfully leading and supporting a geographically dispersed team.
- A proven track record of guiding and developing team members.
- Experience of managing multiple projects and a diverse workload, preferably in a third sector context.
- Experience of planning and leading the implementation of multiple projects using the principles of project management and attention to detail.
- Experience of using data and research to formulate strategy and planning.
- Demonstrable commitment to quality and continuous improvement, including ensuring your team have a good understanding of quality and impact frameworks.

Qualities and skills

- Demonstrable leadership and evidence based decision-making skills.
- Empowering and enabling leadership style.
- Passionate about increasing access and removing barriers for young people from marginalised backgrounds.
- Self-motivated and positive with the ability to work independently.
- Analytical and resourceful with good problem-solving skills.
- Flexible and strategic thinker.
- Ability to communicate with and influence a wide range of internal and external stakeholders at all levels.
- Excellent project management and prioritisation skills.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills including ability to tailor messaging for different audiences.
- Conscientious and solutions-focused, data-led and impact driven.

Desirable

- Experience or knowledge of youth/voluntary/ education sector including the challenges within these sectors.

Successful applicants will be required to:

- Have a full UK driving licence, access to a vehicle during the working week with a willingness to travel to meetings across their portfolio and on occasions within England.service.

The DofE is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people. All successful applicants will be required to undergo a Basic Disclosure and Barring Service check. (e.g., DBS/PVG or similar), including references covering any gaps of employment/education, confirm eligibility to work in the UK and complete a health check.

Employee BENEFITS

Health and wellbeing

Unum
A healthcare cash plan allows you to claim money back, up to a set limit, towards the cost of essential healthcare.

Virtual GP
DofE employees have 24-hour access to a virtual GP.

Mental health first aiders
As part of our commitment to supporting the health and wellbeing of all staff at the DofE.

Menopause experts
Through our easy-to-use online program, specifically designed to help women going through perimenopause or menopause.

Sickness and income protection
If you suffer from illness or injury and are unable to work, Income Protection provides monthly payments to protect you and your family financially.

Giving back

Charitable giving
We have linked up with Charities Aid Foundation (CAF).

Flexible working

Flexible working (role dependent)
Our approach to hybrid work puts into practice all four of the DofE's organisational values.

Working from home (role dependent)
We believe that offering choice and flexibility through Hybrid working is an important way to support colleagues' health and wellbeing, to grow a diverse and inclusive workforce, and to allow colleagues to balance the demands of work and their personal lives.

Purchasing additional annual leave
You will have the opportunity to purchase additional holiday twice a year.

Festive leave
We offer three days additional leave over the festive period.

Holidays
25 days of annual leave per year, plus bank holidays (pro-rata for part-time).

Bank holiday exchange
The opportunity to exchange two bank holiday dates from a choice of four statutory options, (Terms & Conditions apply).

Volunteer leave
Staff are encouraged to volunteer for a charity or community organisation of their choice for up to 28 hours per year.

Recognition

Long service awards
Employees are eligible to receive a monetary award on reaching 5, 10, 15 and 20 years of continuous service.

Making your money go further

Charity benefits
The DofE benefits platform provides access to discounts including shops and services from day one.

Gym discount
Discounts at a variety of gyms.

Your future

Pension scheme
We offer a generous pension and auto enrolment will be 4% with the DofE contributing 4%. After successful completion of probation, you may be eligible to increase your contributions to 5% which will increase the DofE contribution to 10%.

Life assurance
Life Assurance (sometimes known as Death in Service) pays out four times your annual salary should you die whilst employed by DofE.

Family friendly policy
Maternity and paternity pay for DofE employees.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Gold

Most of us will spend around 80,000 hours at work in our lifetimes.

For something that takes up so much of our time, we think people deserve to get more out of it than just a paycheque.

In our recent 'Investors in People' assessment, we achieved Gold. This is a brilliant recognition of how far we've come in strengthening our culture and how we work together. The Gold accreditation was awarded in recognition of our sustained progress in establishing consistent values and behaviours, strengthening our reward and recognition offer, and the fact we have a clear vision for making further improvements. These results will help shape our future actions and will play an important role in informing our next internal strategy.

The DofE aims to offer a workplace that develops people personally and professionally, supporting them to build their skills, broaden their experience and progress in their careers. It actively promotes workforce wellbeing and fosters an environment that encourages staff to bring their whole, authentic selves to work.

The DofE supports volunteer work, both in the organisation and through charitable projects. All employees are encouraged to act in a socially responsible manner and respect the environment in which they operate. The DofE has clear and accessible employee policies relating to health and safety, equity, diversity and inclusion, as well as family-friendly, hybrid and flexible working options.

Receiving the 'Investors in People' Gold accreditation means that the right principles are in place. But, more than that, it means people and leaders are making active efforts to make sure that there's real consistency and everyone in the organisation is feeling the positive impact.









OUR STORY

Since its founding in 1956 by HRH Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award has supported millions of young people to discover who they are, build confidence, and develop the skills they need for life and work. We remain guided by a simple belief: every young person deserves the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Today, DofE operates across the UK through a unique social franchise model. With a central team of around 400 staff, we support more than 5,000 Licensed Organisations, including schools, colleges, youth groups and youth justice settings, and nearly 39,000 volunteers to deliver programmes in communities across the UK.

This model enables us to consistently grow participation. In 2025/26, a record 589,000 young people were actively taking part in DofE, with over 345,000 starting their journey in a single year, the highest in our history. Around 30% of 14-year-olds in the UK are now beginning their DofE, reflecting its growing relevance and appeal.

The impact young people make is just as significant. In the past year alone, participants contributed around six million hours of volunteering, creating an estimated £45 million in social value for communities across the UK.

Beyond the numbers, the difference DofE makes is deeply personal. Our *Impact Report* shows that life satisfaction, happiness and feelings of worthwhileness improve from the start to the end of a DofE Award. The data suggests participation may act as a protective factor – helping to counteract some of the negative trends in young people's wellbeing during adolescence seen in the UK youth population.

Through our strategy, *World Ready*, we're responding to the challenges young people face with urgency and ambition. By 2031, we aim to give more than two million young people the chance to start their DofE journey. Crucially, we're focused on reaching more young people living in poverty and removing the barriers that prevent them from taking part.

Our ambition is simple but powerful: to open up access to high-quality enrichment for all, so that every young person, regardless of their background, has the chance to discover what they're capable of.



DAN'S STORY



Making a difference with young people in custody

Hear from Dan how his Award helped him get a job and build his skills and self-confidence.

One of our priorities is make DofE accessible to young people who face barriers. We are very proud that DofE has a growing presence in the secure estate and we currently partner with 41 prisons and young offenders institutions. A study into the impact of the DofE in the secure estate, carried out by a team of researchers from Glyndwr and Cardiff Universities, showed that after engaging in DofE activities young people demonstrated a more positive attitude in relation to:

- offending in general
- higher levels of victim empathy
- less perceived reward for crime
- reduced anticipation of re-offending
- perceived fewer life problems in future.

The CRIME-PICS II research, supported by Dr Chai Patel's Bright Future Trust, proved that a greater sense of self-belief and self-esteem helped to improve young offenders' chances for a brighter future and increase their resilience and resistance towards re-offending.





POPPY'S STORY



Poppy always says she found the DofE "by accident". Having a bad day at school, she looked at her teacher, Ms Watson, in "disbelief" when she encouraged her to go along to a DofE session. But fast forward six years, and Poppy has not only achieved her Gold Award, but has stood on the steps of Buckingham Palace sharing her story with thousands of people.

"DofE didn't change my life. DofE showed me how I could change my own life."

When Poppy first started the DofE, she had no idea of the journey it would take her on. Having autism, school presented daily challenges as she says, "I was struggling to understand myself as much as the others in my class were struggling to understand me too."

So when her teacher, Ms Watson, suggested she have a go at DofE, it was an overwhelming thought. Having never spent a night away from home, not knowing anybody doing the Awards and "already finding it difficult to manage each day", it seemed like a step too far.

Mastering all her courage, Poppy intrepidly went along to the first meeting and while she says, "I stood there glued against the wall, petrified", once she started listening to the presentation she couldn't leave. "Captivated by all the different possibilities" of what she could choose for her Awards, "for the first time ever" Poppy saw something she could join in with.

Through her Bronze and later Gold, Poppy used her DofE as a chance to try "so many new things". From volunteering as an NHS cadet and helping in a library to joining a police advisory board and NHS youth action group, Poppy was able to make positive change while challenging herself to reach new heights. For Skills she completed a first aid qualification, learnt sign language and became an "expert at cooking curry from scratch", which came in handy when in need of some delicious food to fuel her expeditions. Meanwhile running a 10k and discovering a love for conservation came out of her Physical and Residential sections.

A constant theme throughout every element of Poppy's DofE was, she says, that "my limits were my own to break and no one else's limits mattered".

Not wanting her DofE journey to end, when Poppy saw the opportunity to become a UK Youth Ambassador she jumped at the chance. From attending Number 10 Downing Street to sharing her story in front of royalty, Poppy was able to use her time as a Youth Ambassador to "make a difference".

Thinking back to the first time Poppy was introduced to the DofE, she remembers "crying in a corridor, afraid of what was wrong with me and why I could not be the same as everyone else". Now at the other end of her DofE journey, Poppy says it has shown her how she can change her own life, and highlighted the strengths she didn't know she had. As a result, she is proud to say,

"I am strong, I am different, but I no longer want to be the same as everyone else. I just want to be me."



AMIRA'S STORY

Amira describes Kid Care 4 U as an "important place" for her. A community organisation based in Newport, South Wales, they started with just six children and have now grown to over 200 with a waiting list. Amira has been there since the beginning, first attending when she was eight years old and now continuing to "give back" as a volunteer. With young people facing many challenges in the area, Kid Care offers a "huge sense of community" and celebrates diverse experiences.

"If you want to do DofE, it will be literally life-changing."

As part of Kid Care 4 U's first DofE cohort, Amira has nearly finished her Bronze and hopes to move on to Silver next. Attending Kid Care 4 U at just eight years old, it was initially a chance for Amira to make new friends and get a "head start" on her education. Little did she know how much more it would become, offering her lifelong friendship, a "sense of belonging" and a chance to find her voice.

Although she'd heard about the DofE through school, Amira was hesitant and hadn't taken up the opportunity. Hearing tales of the expedition was "daunting", and Amira says that camping was "unheard of" in her community: "I didn't think I was built for camping, I didn't think I was that type of person."

When Kid Care started offering Bronze DofE, Amira saw it as a "second chance" to get involved. She knew she'd be able to do the Awards alongside her closest friends, and with young people who share similar backgrounds and cultural experiences. It also meant she could continue supporting Kid Care by staying on as a volunteer.

Looking back on her Bronze Award, Amira thinks that the Volunteering section was her favourite part. She says, "I feel like I'm giving back to the community what I had - now I can be the person that can help kids who might need someone to talk to". As an organisation that relies on volunteers, Amira also feels glad to have been part of the "growth" as Kid Care continue to reach more and more people in Newport.

When it came to the Expedition section, Amira pleasantly surprised herself. She says,

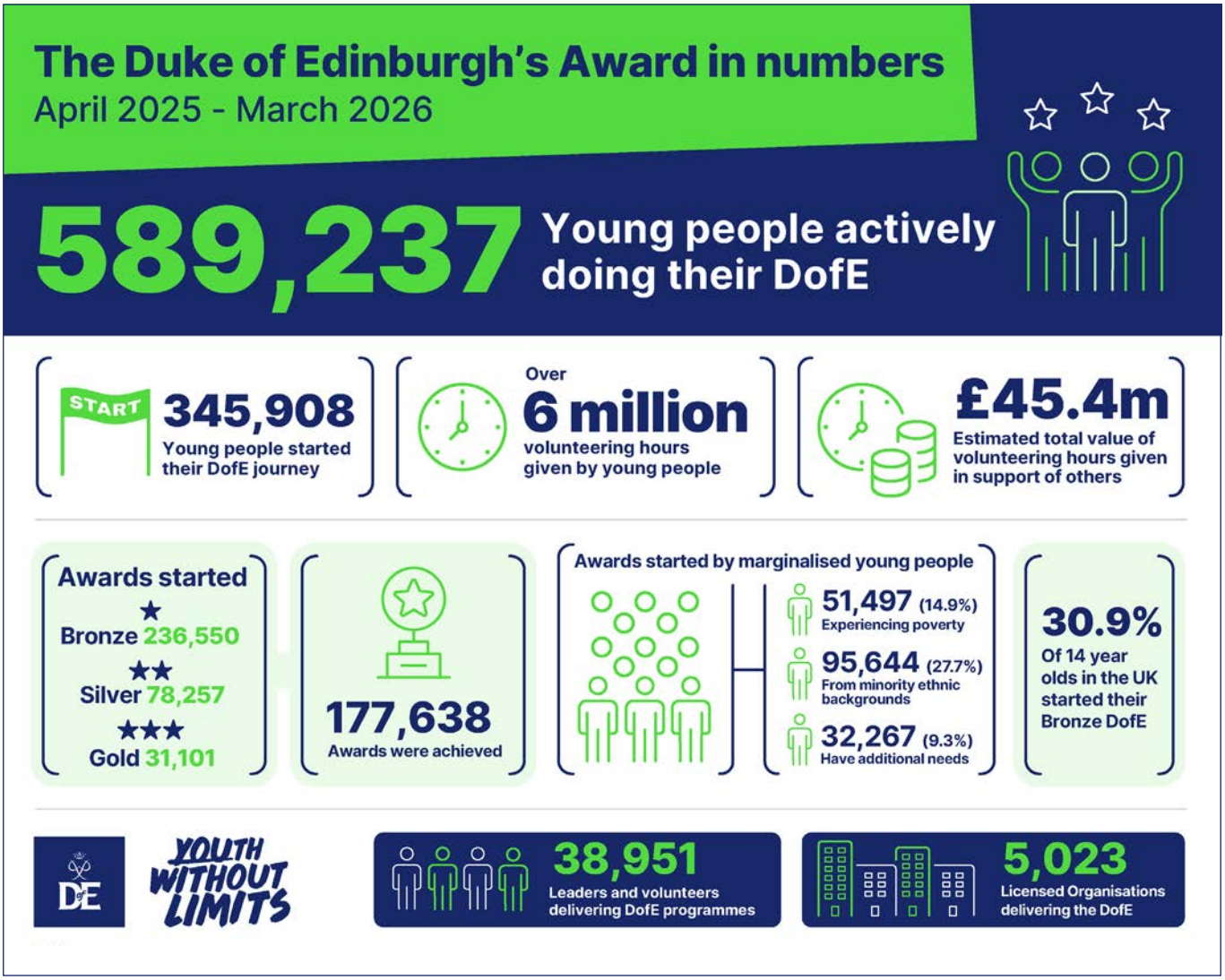
"it made me realise anything's possible" and now she's done it once, she'd do it "again and again and again".

Discovering her own sense of adventure, Amira is now proud to be setting this example for other young Muslim girls in her community.

Amira has also been able to apply skills she's developed through DofE into the world of work. Through her Skills section she gained qualifications in teaching swimming and food safety and hygiene, which has led to her gaining a job at the local leisure centre. With plans to study criminology at university next, Amira feels the skills she's developed through DofE will stay with her "forever".

While Amira has gained "life-changing" experiences, the biggest thing she'll take away personally from Kid Care is the social aspect. She says, "now I'm definitely someone who's confident, but I wasn't always that way growing up... Kid Care put me in a place where I had to socialise with people".

Amira hopes that more and more organisations like Kid Care are able to offer the DofE, as she feels it should be "prioritised" in areas which "might not get that opportunity" otherwise. Admitting she was initially "scared of it", her advice to others is to not to let that hold you back, because "if you want to do DofE, it will be literally life-changing."



Life-changing impact

Watch our videos and hear directly from amazing young people, volunteers and organisations how the DofE transforms lives.

Young at Heart

The first heart charity to run The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Young at Heart was able to adapt the Expedition section to meet its participants' needs.

Aleea-Mae

"The advice I would give to other young people who are deaf, is that you can take part in the DofE." Bronze Award holder Aleea-Mae shares her DofE experience and inspiring message to others.

Aspire 2 Inspire

Members of a community group in Rochdale, Aspire 2 Inspire, talk about the difference having access to DofE has made to them and broader impact it has had.

YOUTH WITHOUT LIMITS

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