

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) as it offered in Wirral and will bring Members up to date with the current delivery.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is the world's leading achievement award for young people. It was launched in 1956 and is dedicated to the personal development of young people from all backgrounds. With the widest reach of any UK youth charity, 275,000 young people (30,000 are from disadvantaged backgrounds) across the UK undertake DofE programmes to achieve their Bronze, Silver or Gold Awards every year.
- 1.2. Wirral Council holds a Regional Licence to operate the DofE, and the scheme is offered in over 30 establishments in Wirral.
- 1.3. Wirral DofE, as is legally required, is approved by the Adventure Activity Licensing Service (AALS) to carry out Expeditions in so-called "Wild Country". During the last inspection, AALS was sufficiently confident in the Youth Service practices to grant a two year operating licence
- 1.4. Wirral is consistently placed within the top three DofE operating authorities when the DofE National Office evaluates the number of Awards gained.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES AND VALUES

- 2.1. As the holder of the regional operating licence for the delivery of the DofE in the borough of Wirral, Youth and Play Service has responsibility for granting Unit Operating Licences to local organisations and establishments.
- 2.2. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award requires that the Youth and Play Service must:
 - Be able to safeguard young people;
 - Maintain the DofE's aims and standards;
 - Have relevant policies and procedures in place;
 - Have an administrative framework to function correctly and ensure continuity.
- 2.3. In addition the service is responsible for:
 - Ensuring staff and volunteers receive relevant training;
 - Validating and authorising participants Awards;
 - Advising young people on appropriate programmes;
 - Offering training in expedition and exploration skills.
- 2.4. Currently the DofE is being offered from a diverse range of agencies including, secondary schools, special schools, an open Award Centre, local authority youth clubs, foundation learning companies, parent groups, voluntary youth groups, Further Education colleges and the Youth Offending Service.
- 2.5. In each of these agencies the guiding principles for the delivery of the DofE is the same.
 - Non-competitive
 - Achievable by all

- Voluntary
- Personal development focused
- Personalised
- Balanced
- Progressive
- Achievement focused
- Demanding commitment
- Enjoyable

3. **PARTNERSHIPS**

3.1. As a DofE operating authority we are always keen to explore new ways of delivering the Award to young people. This often involves working in partnership with other organisations that have similar aims to the Youth Service or are able to offer opportunities that fit in with the service's curriculum.

3.2. Strong working relationships have recently been built with:

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
 Merseyside Police
 Wirral Metropolitan College
 Entry to employment schemes (e2e)
 The Bank (St. Mary's Church Upton)

4. **STAFFING**

4.1. DofE staff, a mixture of salaried staff and volunteers, usually fall into one or more of the following categories:

DofE Co-ordinators: who set up and manage the DofE in a youth centre, school or voluntary organisation.

DofE Leaders: who are responsible for a DofE group. These Leaders guide, inspire and encourage young people; they agree their programme choices and sign off Record Books.

DofE Assessors: who check on a young person's progress and agree the completion of a section of their programme. Assessors need knowledge of the activity they're doing and will be asked to sign off their Record Book to confirm completion.

Expedition Assessors: Expeditions must be assessed by a competent adult who is approved by the Operating Authority and accredited by the DofE through the Expedition Assessor Accreditation Scheme.

DofE Supervisors: are people with a good understanding of a participant's chosen activity. They help them set their goals and regularly meet with the young person to check on their progress, address any potential issues and adjust goals. A Supervisor is essential for the Expedition section as they are responsible for supervising and supporting a team of participants to ensure their safety and well-being whilst on their expedition.

4.2. The majority of assessors operating under Wirral's DofE Licence have now attended an Assessor Accreditation Course. Unit leaders, hub managers, other key Youth Service staff have attended an Introduction to the Award Course and a Supervisor's course is scheduled for the autumn.

5. **eDofE**

- 5.1. The delivery of DofE is now entering a new phase with the recent introduction of eDofE, an innovative online system that allows young people to design their own DofE programme and collect evidence online. The eDofE system is also ideal in allowing managers, coordinators and DofE staff to monitor participant's progress and issue appropriate accreditations. Wirral DofE staff are currently embarking on a series of familiarisation and training staff to enable them to use eDofE efficiently.

6. **LOCAL DELIVERY**

- 6.1. Following the successful launch of the four district youth hubs there will now be further opportunities for young people to engage in DofE activities. Each hub has identified at least one evening per week as a DofE Award session. The Youth Hubs have all been designated as Open Award Centres and as such are accessible to any young person in the borough. Each hub has assigned members of staff to be responsible for the delivery of DofE and enhance its development within the unit.
- 6.2. Wallasey Open Award Centre has had another successful expedition season. Ten expeditions have been run this year, enabling approximately 200 young people to complete either their practice or qualifying ventures.
- 6.3. Due to the fact that some of these expeditions take place in "Wild Country", it is a legal requirement that Wirral DofE is approved by the Adventure Activity Licensing Service (AALS). During the last inspection AALS was sufficiently confident in the Youth Service practices to grant a two year operating licence.
- 6.4. The number of units delivering the DofE and the number of young people engaging in the Award is steadily increasing. The number of young people achieving Awards has also risen. The period 2009/2010 produced particularly good results with several hundred young people receiving Bronze and Silver Awards, and 58 young people in the borough achieved Gold Awards. Consequently, these recipients were invited to visit St. James' Palace to collect their certificates from HRH Prince Philip. These results reflect well when Wirral is compared to other authorities in the North West. Wirral is consistently placed within the top three DofE operating authorities when the DofE National Office evaluates the number of Awards gained.

7. **BENEFITS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

- 7.1 The benefits of a young person participating in DofE are very significant. There are four sections to every level of Award: Volunteering, Skills, Physical and Expeditions. The completion of each section provides each young person with a number of valuable experiences and skills as well as a nationally recognized accredited outcome.
- 7.2 Research has shown, the completion of a full Award, at any level will result in a young person gaining:
- Self-confidence
 - A sense of identity
 - Independence of thought and action
 - Respect and understanding of people from different backgrounds, cultures
 - A sense of responsibility
 - New talents and abilities
 - An understanding of strengths and weaknesses
 - The ability to plan and use time effectively
 - The ability to learn from and give to others in the community
 - The ability to lead and work as part of a team.
- 7.3 Further recent research carried out by the Pears Foundation confirms that both young people and employers rate highly the DofE Award for the above reasons.

8. **OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPERIENCE AND LEARNING**

- 8.1 Wirral young people participating in DofE programmes have, over the last twelve months, participated in a wide range of activities. The following list represents a small selection of their endeavours.

Volunteering

- Charity shop assistant
- Helping at an animal sanctuary
- Helping young people with special needs achieve their DofE
- Assisting Wirral Rangers
- Shopping for the elderly

Skills

- Designing a low maintenance garden
- Cookery
- Big band
- D.J.ing
- Skills for employment

Physical

- Climbing
- Judo
- Rowing
- Dancing

- 8.2 A young person's achievement in a DofE programme is now recognised at every stage. Participants will set their own goals and aims with their youth worker or teacher and work towards those goals over an extended period. Once each objective has been met the operating authority will reward the young person with a sectional certificate. Once all the required sections have been completed, then the young person is entitled to a full DofE certificate and badge. This stage is often recognised by organising local or borough wide presentation ceremonies.

9. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None

10. **STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

None

11. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

None

11. **COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

None

13. **LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

None

14. **PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

None

15. **ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS**

None

16. **SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS**

None

17. **LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS**

None

18. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**
None

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to note the report.

Howard Cooper
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