



**YOUTH  
WITHOUT  
LIMITS**



# Operations Officer

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award  
Job applicant information pack

[DofE.org](https://DofE.org)

# OUR PURPOSE

We help young people build life-long 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.



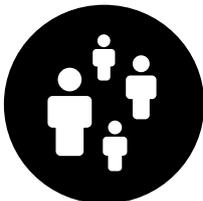
# OUR VALUES

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



## 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.



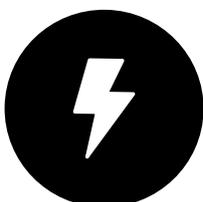
## I am inclusive

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 DofE a fun experience.

## A message from the CEO

# Welcome to the DofE! I am delighted that you are interested in working for The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.



The DofE is many things to many people, but one thing is for sure – for generations we have been helping young people to explore who they are, invest in themselves and develop the skills and experience they need to successfully navigate adult life.

Any young person can do their DofE– regardless of ability, gender, ethnicity, background or geography. Achieving an Award isn't a competition and it's not about being first. It's all about expanding your horizons, setting personal challenges and pushing yourself to achieve them.

It is our ambition to grow our reach so any young person in the UK can access a DofE programme. We are also focused on engaging those young people who face greater disadvantage as our impact research shows that these young people have most to gain from a DofE experience.

I am particularly excited about our work to reach more young people in young offenders' institutions, those experiencing social and economic exclusion, and those with disabilities as we know, for them, DofE can be life-changing.

If you are passionate about helping us to build meaningful partnerships with a wide range of organisations to help young people thrive in a rapidly changing world we'd love to hear from you. Thank you for your interest in the DofE. I hope after reading this pack you consider joining us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Marvel', written in a cursive style.

Ruth Marvel OBE, CEO

[View our Annual Review 2024 here](#)  
[and our Strategy here](#)

## Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion

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.

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**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 Officer

**Salary:** £28,580 - £33,624 pa  
dependent on experience (Grade L)

**Hours:** 35 hours per week (Mon-Fri 9-5pm)

**Contract type:** Permanent

**Portfolio area:** Pendle, Hyndburn, Burnley,  
Rossendale

**Place of work:** A field-based role working from  
home, involving regular car travel

**Reports to:** Operations Manager

**Benefits:** We offer excellent staff benefits including a generous pension contribution, an employee assistance programme, healthcare cash plan and volunteer leave. Also, 25 days holiday, plus Bank Holidays and an additional 3 days paid leave between Christmas and the New Year. Buy additional annual leave, benefits discount website, death in service benefit 4 x salary, incapacity benefit, generous family leave and sick leave.

## Main purpose

This position has arisen due to an internal career move. The Operations Officer will support the operational delivery and development of the DofE through managing a portfolio of Licensed Organisations (LOs). These LOs are mostly schools but we also work with other organisations including colleges, local authorities, charities, pupil referral units, youth groups, young offender institutions, youth zones and prisons, for example.

This position will involve working alongside a team of Operations Officers within England, each of whom will have a portfolio of LOs to support. The role will be field-based and when not attending meetings or events, applicants will work from home most of the time; applicants should live within or very close to the portfolio area, outlined above.

We are looking to recruit a dynamic, proactive and effective team player to join our team. The post holder will report to an Operations Manager and will be responsible for the day-to-day contact with, and management of, LOs to support delivery of the England business plan.

The postholder will be a passionate advocate for the work of the DofE and be driven to realise the DofE's strategic ambition to give more than one million young people the chance to participate in our life-changing programmes, over the next five years.

## Key accountabilities

- Establish and maintain strong working relationships with Licensed Organisations (LOs) to ensure the delivery of a high quality DofE programme across the portfolio.
- Ensure effective day to day contact and support for LO's, including induction and training for LO staff.
- Devise and implement effective development plans in collaboration with LOs to include both short term and long-term objectives.
- Regular use of online management tools provided by the charity to budget, forecast and track relevant targets as well as ensuring effective management and use of eDofE across the portfolio.
- Attend regular meetings with LOs, some of which will require early morning and evening working. Meetings will be a combination of online and face to face, as appropriate.
- Perform Licence reviews with existing LOs and contribute to the licensing of new organisations.
- Increase participation amongst those young people who experience marginalisation, expanding reach and ensuring programme inclusivity.
- Assist with the planning, promotion, and delivery of regional events, which may require occasional weekend working.
- Attend and support the delivery of national events, such as Gold Award Events. This may involve an occasional overnight stay.

- Collaborate with colleagues across the UK through active participation in project and working groups.
- Assist with the preparation of grant applications and, the monitoring and reporting of externally funded projects.
- Implement the DofE strategy and the England business plan.

### All DofE staff will be expected to:

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

### Person specification

- Strong skills in creating and building effective working relationships with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, and organisations.
- Able to influence and communicate effectively with external stakeholders.
- An understanding of the deprivation and needs in the local area.
- Self-motivated with the ability to work independently, as well as collaboratively within a team.
- Excellent administration and organisational skills with the ability to prioritise workloads, plan time effectively and meet deadlines.
- Excellent attention to detail with good written skills including writing/editing/proofreading materials for different audiences.
- Excellent verbal skills with the ability to organise and run effective meetings, deliver training and presentations, in both a face to face and virtual environment.

- A solution focussed approach and confidence to challenge poor practice.
- Ability to review, analyse and interpret data and act upon the results.
- Computer literate and competent in MS Office applications

### Skills that would be of interest

- Knowledge or experience of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.
- An understanding of education and youth provision and the challenges within these sectors.
- An understanding of VCSO sector in the local area.

### Successful applicants will be required to:

- Have a full UK driving licence, with access to a vehicle during the working week, and a willingness to travel to meet Licensed Organisations in your portfolio as required to meet the needs of the organisations within your portfolio.
- Work flexible hours including occasional early mornings, evenings and weekends.
- Live within or very close to the portfolio area.

**The DofE are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people. All successful applicants will be required to undergo an Enhanced 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.**



## Our story

Since its launch in 1956, the DofE has empowered millions of young people to become the very best they can be. It was established by HRH Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh, Founder, and is still guided by the same set of principles he laid down.

The flexibility and adaptability of DofE has allowed the DofE to spread around the world. We operate through a social franchise model in the UK, licensing and supporting a wide range of organisations to deliver DofE programmes to hundreds of thousands of young people every year.

This model allows our charity to reach far more young people than our staff of 250 might suggest.

We now manage a network of over 4,500 Licensed Organisations, 250 staff and over 38,000 volunteers delivering the DofE, including local authorities, schools, youth clubs, young offenders institutions, businesses and national organisations such as the Girlguiding and Scouts.

Our ambition is to give as many young people as possible the chance to access a DofE programme. We continue to engage new partners and develop innovative ways of working with businesses, voluntary sector and policy makers across the UK to ensure that any young person who wants to do their DofE can do so.

“

**I went from zero self-confidence to someone who could tell a whole school assembly about my DofE expedition.”**

DofE PARTICIPANT

## Impact of the DofE

An impact research study carried out by the University of Northampton, through generous support by the Pears Foundation, affirmed that the DofE offers highly successful personal development programmes for young people. It demonstrated the positive effect of good quality non-formal education:

- 90% of young people said doing their DofE has given them opportunities to help others.
- 82% noted their DofE has made them want to continue with volunteering/voluntary activities.
- 62% feel that doing their DofE has helped them make a positive difference to their local community.
- 74% of young people said they developed self-esteem.
- 74% of young people said it allowed them to try activities they would never have tried before.
- 71% of young people identified improved self-belief.

## Making a difference with young people in custody

One of our priorities is to make DofE accessible to young people who are at risk or marginalised and face considerable barriers to fulfilling their potential in adult life. We are very proud that DofE has a growing presence in 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.

# The Duke of Edinburgh's Award in numbers

April 2023 - March 2024



**330,984**

Young people started their DofE journey



**4,725,825**

Total volunteering hours given by young people

**30.1%**

Of 14 year olds in the UK started their Bronze DofE

**545,910**

Young people actively doing their DofE



**£24,952,356**

Estimated total value of volunteering hours given in support of others



Awards started by young people facing marginalisation



**50,277 (15.2%)**

Experiencing poverty



**88,530 (26.7%)**

From minority ethnic backgrounds



**25,691 (7.8%)**

Have additional needs



**39,457**

Leaders and volunteers delivering DofE programmes



**4,765**

Licensed Organisations actively delivering the DofE



**YOUTH WITHOUT LIMITS**

Awards started



Bronze 230,245



Silver 72,192



Gold 28,547



**155,502**

Awards achieved

## DofE strategic goals (2021-2026)

Our strategy, Youth Without Limits, is focused around four strategic goals and enabled by three strategic drivers, which we summarise below.

### Goals



### Drivers



People-powered and values-led



Data-led and digitally innovative



Financially and environmentally sustainable

# JON'S STORY



**Jon was a young offender who was offered the chance to do his DofE whilst in prison. Read Jon's blog below, where he talks about his journey and how he achieved his Gold Award... and ended up working as Sous Chef in one of Jamie Oliver's restaurants.**

## 'My life-changing DofE experience'

In 2016, the 'Duke of Edinburgh's award' celebrated its Diamond Anniversary. Over the last 60 years the charity has helped give young people the opportunity to be the best they can be.

I am particularly passionate about the work the DofE achieves with young people, as a few years ago I was in a situation where I needed help.

I left school at 16, after a brief stint at 6th form, I realised I didn't have to be there as it wasn't compulsory any more. I left, but with no plan or idea of what I wanted to do. I thought that I would be successful at something, but I had no idea how, I was young, lost and confused.

“

**There was only space for 15 in the first bunch of lads to be able to start working towards their Bronze Award, but I was hopeful, I had a long sentence, and I was far from being 21 at which I would be shipped to another prison, so I knew my chances were good.**

**“I was right, and I was picked, it was a moment that would change the course of the rest of my life...”**

Around this time I quickly found myself getting into trouble with the law for various offences, there was a period of time that I was being arrested every single weekend.

I had no drive or ambition, I was at war with myself and the world around me and it was escalating out of control. In January 2008 at 18 years old I was in court, this time for a couple of serious offences and I was sentenced to six and half years in a young offenders institute.

Now I was at rock bottom, for at least the next three and a bit years I was going to be locked up, I was going to be 22 when I was released and it hit me hard. Even when I was causing mischief at 17/18, I thought everything would sort itself out and by 22 I would have moved out and had a good job.

Anyway, here I was, 18 years old and in prison. I tried to sign up for everything I could, it was that or face 23 hours a day in a cell and there is only so much you can sleep in a day.

Through the guys in the gym I heard about the DofE coming into the prison, I had heard about it at school, but when I was a kid it was something for the 'good' kids, the ones that were going to university. That sure wasn't me.

This time however, Reading football club were providing the award, they came in one day and gave a big motivational speech about the award and how it could affect us. I was inspired and put my name down, along with probably 60 other young offenders. There was only space for 15 in the first bunch of lads to be able to start working towards their bronze award, but I was hopeful, I had a long sentence, and I was far from being 21 at which I would be shipped to another prison, so I knew my chances were good.

I was right, and I was picked, it was a moment that would change the course of the rest of my life.

There are four sections to a DofE Award, the first is Volunteering, and you would be forgiven for thinking 'how do you volunteer in prison?' A couple of the lads had different volunteering jobs, from race relations work to painting boards for the gym. I was a Listener. Listeners are prisoners who are trained by the Samaritans, we were on call 24/7 for other prisoners to speak to confidentially. It was very rewarding. As well as learning a lot from the training, it was also a pleasure to be there for some of the people who needed it most. When a person is in a dark place, talking to another person and 'letting it out' could be the difference between living and dying. Sounds extreme but it is true.

The next section was Physical, this part meant that I was staying fit and healthy. It also improved social skills and confidence while taking part in team activities like football and volleyball.

The third section, and the one that had the biggest impact on my life was the Skills section. I worked in the kitchen, and had the opportunity to work towards an NVQ in cooking. Knowing that the NVQ was going to give me a qualification that I could use outside of the prison and also that it was helping me towards reaching my Award kept me motivated.

I will come back to how the skill section changed my life, but first the last section of the Bronze, and Silver awards is the Expedition section. Obviously being locked up in a prison meant we weren't going to be going anywhere far, so we camped out on the football pitch, and took part in lots of teambuilding events.

All four of these sections together helped me to grow as a person, I got to know myself and what I was capable of.

Over the three and a bit years I was in there, I achieved my DofE Bronze award, Silver award, and was now working towards my Gold. After completing my offending behaviour programs I was able to move onto the resettlement unit. This was a semi-open part of the prison where I could be released for work activities. The fact that I had achieved things that I could be proud of, I felt sure of myself, the opportunity to work at one of Jamie Oliver's Restaurants came along, I didn't hesitate and got stuck in.

I was volunteering as a listener, I was taking part in physical activities, I was using my skills as a chef and I was planning a 3 night, 4 day expedition to the Brecon Beacons.

In December of 2010 I was invited to an event at Windsor Castle to tell my story, about how the DofE had given me new hope. It was an evening that really inspired me, I was talking to Royalty and many famous faces including Michel Roux jr. who I admired.

As 2011 came in I felt a massive sense of pride and achievement. In a few months I was to be released, with a career that I enjoyed and a Gold DofE Award. I had this image of myself standing at the gates and when they opened just soaring high. I had gone from a shy, lost young man with little hope to a man with confidence, skills and a motivated attitude to life. Taking part in the Award really saved my life, it unlocked my potential gave me the tools to succeed.

April 2011, I was awarded my Gold DofE Award by The Duke himself. It was filmed as part of a documentary on the Duke as he was turning 90 that year. (See clip below). It was the proudest day of my life, not just because of what I had achieved but also for how I had made my family proud. My Dad was there with Mr. Simmons and Mr. Stretton who were Officers who had helped me all the way through.

The same month I was released back into the big wide world.

I worked for Jamie Oliver's Restaurants for five years, I worked my way up from Commis chef to Sous chef. I really found my passion of cooking. I have cooked for Jamie and his crew on the set of his filming of two TV series. Also spent some time with Raymond Blanc in his 2 Michelin star restaurant and Angela Hartnett's Michelin starred Murano. In 2015 I started working for myself, I offer a private chef experience for dinners and events, in November of this year I expanded into street food, the growing trend of good food served on the street.

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**I love food, I love cooking, I love my career, I love my life. It is all down to my experiences with the DofE. I could be a million miles away from where I am now. But I am not, I am still a young guy with ambitions and dreams, I will be a success. I believe all young people regardless should take part and earn their award. It truly can unlock your potential and help you grow into who you really want to be.”**

[View BBC1 clip of Jon's story here](#)

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