

2021  
— 2026

YOUTH  
WITHOUT  
LIMITS





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# From our Chair and Chief Executive

**Every year the DofE inspires hundreds of thousands of young people, from all walks of life, to explore who they are, grow in confidence and develop the skills they need to successfully navigate life.**

As the UK recovers from the grip of a global pandemic, the benefits that the DofE offers young people are more important than ever.

Young people urgently need support to recover from the disruption to their education and social development, to help manage record levels of anxiety, loneliness and mental ill-health, and successfully navigate the most challenging employment market in recent history.

Here at the DofE we believe in young people, in their innate value and infinite potential. Our new strategy puts the DofE at the heart of the national effort to back young people through the challenging years ahead.

Since the DofE's inception in 1956, over six million young people have benefited from a DofE experience and, as we look to the future, our ambition is greater than ever.

We are determined to be accessible and appealing to more young people than ever before, reaching over one million young people with the DofE's life-changing programmes over the next five years and putting young people at the heart of shaping, championing and representing the DofE.

As part of this ambitious plan, we will focus particularly on those who experience marginalisation, ensuring that DofE is open to all young people and that our participants reflect the most diverse generation of young people ever.

DofE works with thousands of individuals and organisations across the UK and this strategy could not have been written, nor can it be achieved, without you. We are incredibly grateful for the insight and ideas shared by thousands of our stakeholders, including participants, parents, alumni, Leaders, partners, supporters and staff. You have shaped this strategy and we hope you recognise your feedback in the priorities set out over the next few pages.

We remain inspired by the DofE community's energy, passion and unshakable belief in the power and potential of young people. We can't wait to start on this journey with you!

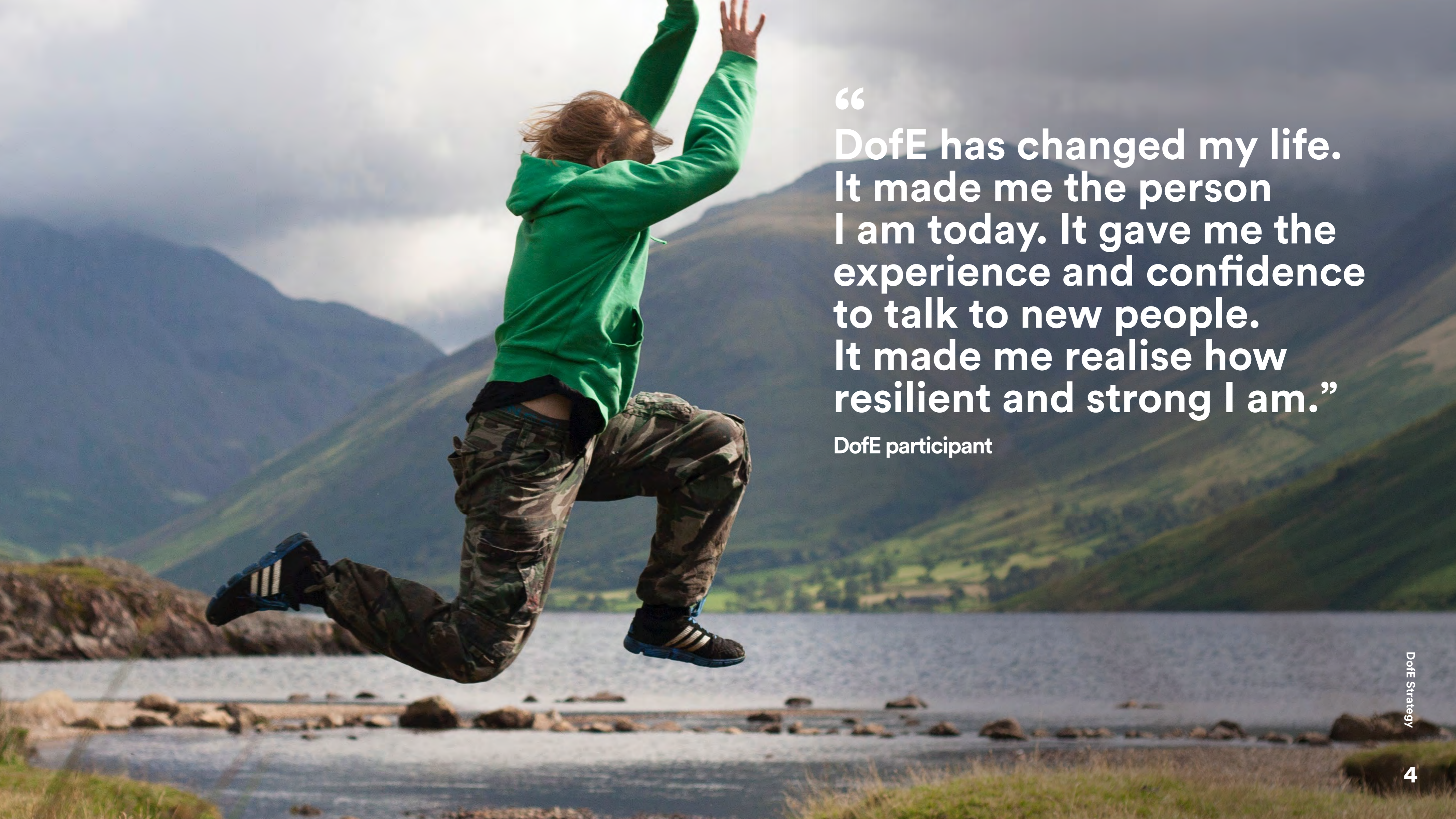


**Baroness Grey-Thompson DBE**  
Chair of Trustees



**Ruth Marvel**  
Chief Executive





“  
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



# 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.





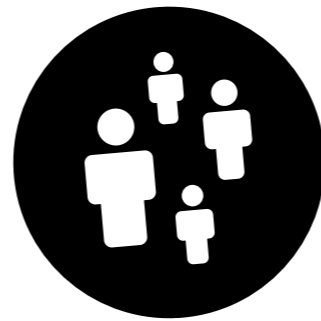
# OUR VALUES

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.



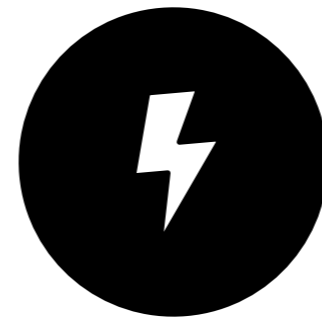
## I am inclusive

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.

# OUR STRATEGIC AMBITIONS

We want to make DofE more accessible and relevant, giving more than one million young people over the next five years the chance to participate in a life-changing DofE programme.





# Our strategic goals

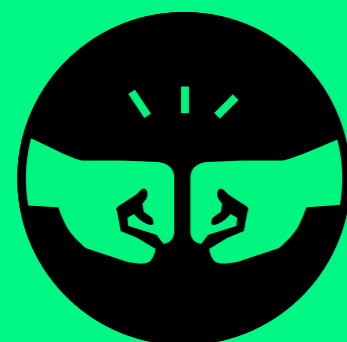
Over the next five years, we'll work towards four strategic goals.



Access



Relevance



Impact



Quality

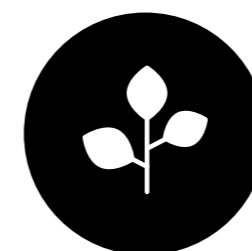
These goals will be powered by three strategic drivers:



People-powered  
and values-led



Data-led and  
digitally innovative



Financially and  
environmentally  
sustainable



# ACCESS

We'll make the DofE more widely available and accessible, increasing the number and diversity of young people who can access a DofE programme.



## To do this, we'll:

- work with existing and new partners and young people to better understand and tackle barriers to participation and progression
- develop new delivery models so we can take DofE to where young people are, particularly reaching those who experience marginalisation
- support and advise DofE centres so they can increase the number and diversity of young people who can access DofE programmes.





# RELEVANCE

We'll ensure the DofE is relevant, engaging and inspiring for young people and our supporters.



## To do this, we'll:

- put young people at the heart of shaping, championing and representing the DofE, and create support and leadership roles for young people, such as Young Leaders and Young Ambassadors
- connect young people with opportunities to help them make a positive impact on issues they care about
- engage and expand DofE's supporter community (including alumni and employers) to help expand DofE's reach and impact
- build DofE's brand and communication, adapting it to different audiences, to boost its profile, reach, influence and income.





# QUALITY

We'll ensure that all young people doing their DofE experience a high-quality, challenging and personalised programme, delivered by a dedicated DofE Leader.



## To do this, we'll:

- refresh our quality framework so DofE Leaders are supported to deliver DofE programmes in the most personalised and impactful way
- adapt and innovate DofE programmes to ensure they continue to be accessible, relevant and impactful for the new generation of young people
- support our diverse network of delivery partners by refreshing our digital training offer, facilitating local collaborations and streamlining programme administration
- improve access to meaningful volunteering opportunities and high-quality activities for young people doing their DofE.







# IMPACT

We'll measure and articulate the impact of DofE – and use our reach, credibility and partnerships to influence decisions and debates that affect young people's overall life chances.



## To do this, we'll:

- embed our new impact framework to measure and strengthen our short and longer-term impact
- recognise young people's achievements throughout their DofE journey, and support them to track and reflect on their own progress and outcomes
- explore ways for local centres to assess and communicate their impact
- influence debate and decisions on issues that affect young people's life chances and well-being – particularly education, personal development, employment opportunities and mental health.



**“  
When I was in my worst  
stages, I was doing DofE,  
it was an escape for me,  
it’s something that took  
my mind off in a different  
direction. I was more  
passionate than I ever was  
in life about wanting to  
achieve something that  
I really enjoyed.”**

**DofE participant**





# STRATEGIC DRIVERS

To deliver our strategic goals and drive progress towards our vision we'll have three strategic drivers.



## Strategic drivers

# Be people-powered and values-led

- Empower and invest in our staff team, uniting the whole organisation as #OneDofE
- Embed our new values and behaviours across DofE in order to develop a positive and productive organisational culture
- Champion and build our equality, diversity and inclusion practices across DofE.





## Strategic drivers

# Be data-driven and digitally innovative

- Strengthen our use of data and audience insights to inform our decision-making and continuously improve our offer
- Strengthen our use of digital technology and digital communications to meet our stakeholders' needs in the most efficient and convenient way possible.





## Strategic drivers

# Be financially and environmentally sustainable

- Review our pricing models to ensure we balance accessibility and diversity of participation with organisational sustainability
- Diversify our income, including growing our fundraising and commercial income streams
- Optimise our organisational structures, tools and processes to enhance efficiency and reduce our carbon footprint.



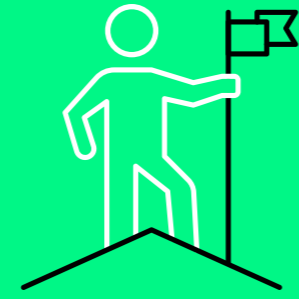


# My DofE Journey: Designed by me and for me

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

## During my programme

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



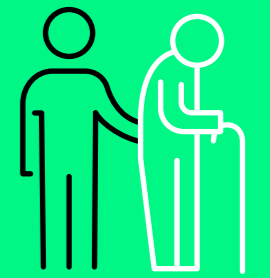
I think about what I've done and I'm proud of my achievements.



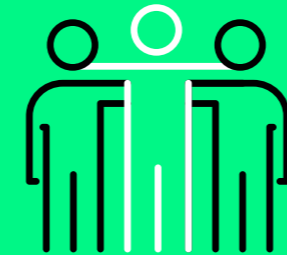
I'm being active and having fun.



I'm giving something back to my community.

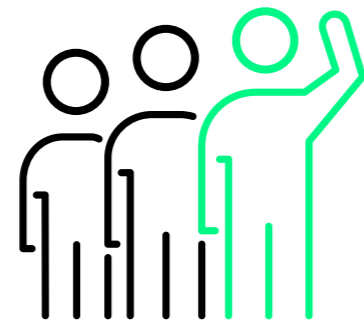


I'm doing things I wouldn't have done otherwise and being challenged, in a good way.



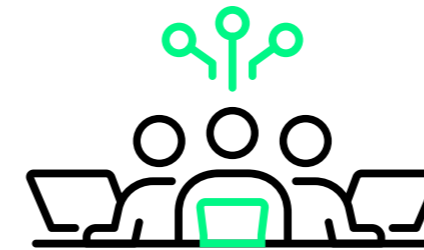
I'm meeting new people and making new friends.

## Medium-term outcomes

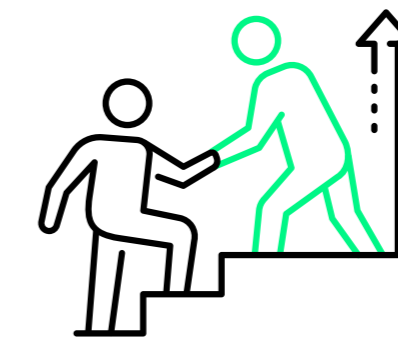


I feel more confident. When things get tough I know I can work through them.

I feel good about myself.

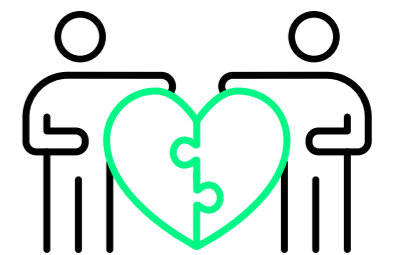


I've learnt personal and practical skills that help me now and will help me in the future.

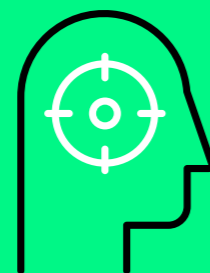


I'm more aware of who I want to be and what I can do to get there. I feel I can make a difference.

I feel closer to my community and to the world around me.



## Longer-term impact



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



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



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





**TOGETHER  
WE WILL  
MAKE THIS  
HAPPEN**

A huge thank you to all the participants, alumni, Leaders, supporters, staff and Trustees who have helped to develop this strategy. Your input has been, and will continue to be, invaluable. We can't wait to work with you to bring this strategy to life and empower the next generation of young people to discover their infinite potential.



“

The impact on young people will be invaluable. All we want is to be heard and be listened to, to have the chance to have our say on decisions that will impact us. There should be no decision about us without us. Consulting young people will make us feel valued and part of the team.”

Lucy Aur, DofE Regional Youth Ambassador and Gold Award holder







“

I'm confident the DofE's new strategy will really set our young people up for success, recognise the amazing work they have been doing and encourage them to develop themselves over what will continue to be challenging years ahead.

With a high quality programme supported by high quality Leaders I know we will be able to work together to make as much impact as possible for as many young people as possible, from all backgrounds.”

Richard Salter, DofE Manager – St John Ambulance



“

I've been working with young people with Additional Support Needs for thirteen years. I am always amazed at the extraordinary difference engagement with DofE makes to them. The huge increase in their own self confidence, the ability to challenge themselves and those round about them and the sheer fun they find in DofE.

Our new strategy will widen opportunities to engage with young people facing barriers to participation, and to make contact with centres, schools and establishments who may not have considered DofE for their young people.”

Tim McArthur, Centre Support Officer – DofE Scotland





“

As Strategic Partners of the DofE, we're committed to helping young people, and in particular, those from marginalised backgrounds, realise their full potential.

Offering the Gold DofE Award as part of our early career and apprenticeships programme allows us to support the employability of diverse young talent across the UK, empowering them to create a better future.

We look forward to working closely with the DofE in coming months and years to build on this significant and successful pillar of our partnership to date.”

Alex Davies, Head of Social Value –  
St James' Place Wealth Management





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**DofE.org**