Executive Summary
- The Commission report contains little reference to the numerous benefits of wider achievement
- The DofE is the most popular wider achievement award in Scotland. It is an internationally recognised and valued by employers
  - It is the most recognised wider achievement award by employers surveyed by the CIPD
  - 83% of young people doing their DofE believe that achieving their Award will help them get a job
  - When included as part of Modern Apprenticeships, the DofE helps young people reach their “professional potential but also their personal potential”
- The DofE provides a pathway to achievement and to career information and advice, including schools, employers and higher/further education institutions in the approach.
- 13% of all DofE activity is from the lowest 30% SIMD areas, but socio-economic factors are not a recognised disadvantage in the report
- The benefits of wider achievement need to be better understood within the context of the Commission report

The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award
The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award (DofE) is a voluntary, non-competitive programme of activities for anyone aged 14-24. Doing their DofE gives young people the opportunity to develop skills for life and work.

In Scotland:
- There are 42,000 active DofE participants
- 89% of Secondary Schools have an active DofE group
- 1 in 6 young people aged 15 and 16 years old are undertaking a DofE programme
- 13% of all activity is with young people from the lowest 30% SIMD areas.
Doing a DofE Award
There are three progressive levels of programmes which, when successfully completed, lead to a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award. Young people create their own DofE programme by choosing a volunteering, physical and skills activity, going on an expedition and, for their Gold, taking part in a residential activity.

Delivery of The DofE
A wide range of organisations are licenced to run DofE programmes including, local authorities, businesses, voluntary youth organisations and independent schools.

Question: whether any measures other than those advocated in the report are needed to ensure more young people leave school with ‘high level vocational qualifications which have strong currency in the labour market’

The Personal Reflections provided by Sir Ian Wood in Education Working for All! identify the need to recognise wider achievement, specifically in Reflection 5 where he states:

“There’s similarly a clear requirement for better career information and advice and broader preparation for the world of work.”

However, the report does not go so far as to extend ‘broader preparation’ beyond formal education and training. Specifically, the Commission report does not discuss the benefits of wider achievement for young people and the very important role it can play in enhancing a young person’s employability.

The DofE in Scotland believes that in not providing support for young people to access wider achievement the Commission report does not fully grasp the ability of programmes like the DofE to contribute to a young person’s employability skills outwith formal education and training.

As outlined in the evidence below, failing to recognise wider achievement carries implications for young people and employers alike.

DofE and Employability
As is mentioned in the Commission report, employers are looking for "work ready and motivated young people with skills relevant to modern employment opportunities”.  

The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) define the skills and attitudes that make someone employable as

- Self management
- Teamworking
- Problem solving
- Communication

2 Ibid, p 3.
3 CBI Future Fit: Preparing graduates for the world of work. March 2009.
The DofE delivers on all of these capacities through a flexible programme that is achievable by all young people, regardless of their background or ability.

In new research undertaken by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) 67% of all UK companies surveyed believed entry-level candidates with voluntary experience have more employability skills to offer than those who don’t. ⁴

**The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award was the most recognised volunteering experience by the HR professionals surveyed with 37% of UK companies looking for a DofE Award in applications when they recruit, above other wider achievement programmes.**

82% said volunteering develops team working skills, 80% said communication; whilst time management and prioritisation, problem solving, adaptability and leadership talent were also identified as key competencies young people with volunteering experience can bring to the workplace.

Young people themselves also believe that doing a DofE programme strengthens their employability skills. Our research shows us that 83% of young people doing their DofE believe that achieving their Award will help them get a job. ⁵ In the same survey, 1/4 said that participating in DofE activities has given them some ideas for their future career.

In failing to include the wide range of employability skills that young people develop through participating in wider achievement awards like the DofE, the Commission has missed the opportunity to recognise development that happens outwith formal education and training.

Employability skills gained through doing a DofE programme are widely recognised by employers and young people alike, and in order to fulfil Scotland's need to produce ‘young people with skills relevant to modern employment opportunities’ the value of wider achievement should not be ignored.

The following sections provide further information about the value of the DofE to employers and young people.

**Employers recognise and support DofE**

The DofE works with a range of business partners ⁶ who believe that the DofE programme delivers work ready, motivated young people. Some, like Amey plc, guarantee an interview to anyone with a Gold Award on their CV who meets 70% of the skills needed for the role they applied for.

Mel Ewell, Chief Executive of Amey plc says: **“We believe the DofE is incredibly important, offering young people the opportunity to experience fresh challenges and achieve new skills, whilst contributing to their local community. Amey is proud to be working with The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award to help young people fulfil not only their professional potential but also their personal potential.”**

Amey plc and other national employer like First ScotRail, have offered the DofE to their apprentices as a way to develop their skills. In a recent survey ⁷, 80% of DofE Business Award holders reported that they have:

- Developed in confidence
- Developed leadership skills

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⁴ CIPD *Learning to Work* survey results, 2015.
⁶ DofE work with business includes Tesco, British Gas, John Lewis, First ScotRail, VINCI plc and more.
- Increased motivation and self-management

The public sector in Scotland has also offered the DofE to their Modern Apprentices as a way to develop employability skills.

Case Study – Stirling Council

Stirling Council has given their modern apprentices the opportunity to complete a DofE Award as part of their training with the local authority.

Andrea McFarlane, one of Stirling Council’s youth services workers explains that “The DofE just provides a really good fit with what the Council is wanting to offer apprentices in terms of opportunities to develop their skills and showcase what they're already doing.”

The apprentices themselves are also recognise the benefits of their DofE. Max McKinstrie, Fisheries Management Apprentice, said “my Volunteering section was coaching the Scottish Youth Fly Fishing team. I was picking up different bits of skills with the coaching that I’d never done before because I’d been in the team. Covering all those Sections I’ve gained a good bit of confidence in myself.”

The participants see the benefits of doing their DofE during their apprenticeship, but the Council also receives the benefit of a highly skilled workforce. Jane Taylor, Youth Services Worker commented that “now they are confident enough to take the lead. I think that’s been a mixture of building up their confidence in work and learning the job, but through their Duke of Edinburgh’s Award as well, and the sense of achievement from carrying out the task and seeing it through.”

DofE provides career information and advice

In Recommendation 2 of the Commission report, emphasis is placed on the need to provide appropriate careers guidance and resources to young people. Particular reference is given to ‘local authorities, Skills Development Scotland and employer representative organisations’.

The DofE, in partnership with employers, is already is providing career information and advice to young people through our careers platform The LifeZone.

The LifeZone is an exclusive and free site for DofE Award holders and participants designed to help them describe the skills they develop through their DofE on their CVs and applications and learn how to talk about them at interviews. It helps them make the most of the skills they gain through doing their DofE: leadership, teamworking and initiative demonstrated as part of their expedition; or the commitment, communication or positivity showcased through their volunteering and other activities.

The LifeZone also gives young people access to companies that actively believe in the DofE and look for Award holders when they recruit.

The Commission report, although recognising the need to support young people with careers guidance, does not take into account the ability of wider achievement to support this goal.

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Question: Whether the report – which includes a section on improving equalities – places enough emphasis on pupils’ socio-economic inequalities and how these could be overcome

One of the guiding principles of the DofE is that it is ‘achievable by all’ young people, regardless of their background or ability. Every participant’s programme is tailor-made to reflect their individual starting point, abilities and interests.

This is particularly relevant to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, who often have the most to gain from taking part in wider achievement.

By not including recommendations for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds the Committee report misses out a significant measure of inequality in Scotland and how it can be overcome through participation in wider achievement.

According to our annual statistics collection, 1 in 3 young people, aged 15 years old, from South Ayrshire Council, are involved in a DofE programme. In more disadvantaged areas, such as Glasgow Council, this falls to 1 in 17, a discrepancy in equality of provision which is significant. In total, 13% of all DofE activity is from the lowest 30% SIMD\(^9\) areas and our strategic aim is to work with our partners to reach even more young people in this group.

Without broad support for wider achievement within schools, the employability benefits of DofE will not be accessible to young people from all backgrounds. In not foregrounding socio-economic inequality in the Commission report, there is limited scope for working towards a solution to help young people out of a cycle of disadvantage.

Case Study – Robert from Glasgow
Robert, from Pollock, started his Bronze DofE Award through the Enhanced Vocational Inclusion Programme. The programme reengages disadvantaged young people in education. Robert had a history of general and persistent disobedience towards school staff and in the community.

Robert’s worker found him to be hard working and recommended he start his DofE in addition to the college work he was already involved with.

Robert said “the DofE gave me structure and helped me focus on the future. The more I achieved with DofE the more I wanted to achieve.

I used to tag wall, but when I volunteered with DofE I helped clean up walls at a school. It made me thing about my actions.”

Robert has gone on to be named apprentice of the year for Clydebank College and Apprentice of the year for his trade from construction skills Scotland. The EVIP team said “Robert continues to impress everyone with his attitude and is starting to fulfil the potential which we had all highlighted from working with him.”

\(^9\) Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)
Question: Whether there would have to be significant reorganisation in schools to accommodate all the proposed changes

Recommendation 1 outlines the need to develop pathways to industry recognised qualifications in partnership with colleges and other training providers.

For schools already providing the DofE to their students there are already pathways for those young people to connect with employers, colleges and universities while getting an internationally recognised qualification. The DofE in Scotland is committed to providing opportunities to develop employability skills at any age or stage of a young person’s life. Our record keeping system eDofE facilitates this. Young people who have not completed their DofE Award before they leave school can move their online account over to their higher/further education institution. We are currently working with higher/further education to expand their DofE provision.

Additionally, the aforementioned LifeZone is available to young people with an eDofE account. This gives them access to careers information and advice, and access to employers who support DofE Award holders.

Through doing their DofE, young people already have access to a qualification outside of academics that employers recognise and the connections are in place to help them progress through levels of education or training and link that to employment.

Conclusions
The Commission report is the starting point for a broader discussion around the employability of young people and what can be done to improve their employment prospects. The Commission report, while detailed in its recommendations in relation to formal qualifications, does little to recognise the extent to which wider achievement also helps develop work-ready young people.

The DofE, recognised globally by employers as a mark of excellence, is the most popular wider achievement award in Scotland. The DofE develops in young people the key attributes that employers look for.

The DofE also provides pathways for young people into employment through relationships with national employers. This is true for young people regardless of their ability or background.

The DofE in Scotland believes that wider achievement should be better understood within the context of the Commission report for the role that it plays in developing young people for life and work.