Submission of Evidence
Scottish Parliament Education and Culture Committee – Educational Attainment Gap, Role of the third and private sectors

Executive Summary
- DofE and wider achievement more broadly have a significant role in developing employability skills in young people
- DofE develops skills for life and work in young people from all backgrounds and abilities, across over 320 secondary schools in Scotland
  - 1 in 6 young people aged 15 and 16 are undertaking a DofE programme
- Employers, learning providers, young people and parents recognise the value of achieving a DofE Award
- Schools and teachers need time and resources to deliver wider achievement programmes within the flexible framework of Curriculum for Excellence

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 DofE
A wide range of organisations are licensed to run DofE programmes including, local authorities, businesses, voluntary youth organisations and independent schools.
**Question:** the scale of the third and private sectors’ involvement in schools, in terms of improving attainment and achievement, and the appropriate dividing line between their role and the role of education authorities

The DofE is unique in the third sector in the ability to collect and analyse participation records. DofE statistics reveal the significant reach of the programme across Scotland, currently **1 in 6 young people aged 16 and 15 are doing their DofE Award**.

The DofE is currently offered by 825 groups across the country. This includes,

- 89% (327) of all secondary schools in Scotland, across all 32 local authorities
- 37 Additional Support Needs units
- 6 Further Education institutions
- 4 Higher Education institutions

Work with diverse backgrounds:

- 13% of all participants from lowest 30% Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation areas
- 6% of new entrants from Ethnically and Culturally Diverse (ECD) backgrounds, equivalent to the ECD representation in Scotland’s population.

Adults who run the DofE, both teachers and volunteers, contribute over **1,660,420 hours each year** to help young people achieve their DofE Award. **Over 2.9 million hours of positive activity** is undertaken by young people each year through their DofE. The contribution that the young people make by their own volunteering hours is £1,502,646 based on rate of £6 per hour.

**Dividing line**

Schools and other organisations run the DofE by licence. **Built into our licence agreements are very clear roles for all involved.** It is the local authority that is responsible for the running of the whole of the DofE programme for participants. The DofE runs quality checks and supports adults involved in the running of the DofE through running training courses and addressing any questions or issues that may arise.

The DofE is generally managed within Community Learning and Development departments. The increased financial pressure on these departments within Local authorities challenges the capacity of CLD to deliver the DofE.

**Partnership Working Case Study: ScottishPower Foundation funding**

Employers work with the DofE to help young people develop employability skills. This partnership working takes many forms, including everything from offering DofE to Modern Apprentices to funding.

Thanks to ScottishPower Foundation funding support, the DofE Award in Glasgow has grown by over 500% with 55 centres across the city now offering the programme, up from 10 centres in 2010.
The importance of this support is most evident in the Enhanced Vocational Inclusion Programme (EVIP). Through EVIP, young people who come from financially disadvantaged backgrounds, are brought back into the educational system with vocational training and DofE activities and develop their skills for life and work.

Pupils work towards their DofE Award and their attainment of 5 SQA national qualifications at level 3 or above.

EVIP Development Officer Nicola McKenzie said that after going through the DofE and volunteering in their community, the young people “gain a feeling of being worthy, of being equal to their peers, of being able to help people in their community”.

Nicola said of the ScottishPower Foundation support: “The fact that an organisation, a huge organisation, like ScottishPower, has faith in looked after children makes our faith in the wider business community more positive”.

**Question:** whether the full potential of the third and private sectors in helping to improve children’s attainment and achievement is being realised

DofE Scotland does not believe that the third sector has reached its potential to help improve attainment in Scotland.

Despite a high percentage of young people doing DofE programmes in some areas of Scotland, in others the DofE is not an option at all for young people hoping to further their employability skills.

In South Ayrshire, 1 in 3 young people 15 and 16 years old are doing a DofE programme. In Fife however it is less than 7%, a difference of over 26%.

This **achievement gap** offers a significant opportunity for local authorities to commit to Scotland-wide provision of wider achievement for young people. **In order to deliver consistent opportunities for all young people, schools and councils should prioritise their delivery of wider achievement and enable groups to access resources to support it.**
**Question:** whether their approaches have been particularly successful in improving achievement and attainment for school pupils. If so, whether their methods could be more embedded in the curriculum

The DofE has had great success with increasing wider achievement within schools which offer DofE programmes. The DofE framework complements Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and delivers a programme that is personalised, progressive, challenging and enjoyable.

Traditionally, the DofE was something to be done outwith school hours, but the design of CfE has brought it within the scope of the curriculum and has changed the way the programme is viewed and delivered by learning communities.

In response to the curriculum changes, the DofE has provided guidance on what can be delivered within school time. There are numerous examples of how DofE adds value to a school, improves teacher/student relationships and broadens the activity offer with greater community links. In addition to providing meaningful interdisciplinary learning for pupils that achieves CfE targets, the DofE also provides an internationally recognised award that helps them stand out in a competitive labour market.

**If schools are fully committed to closing the achievement gap, resources should be allocated to support it.**

If the measure of attainment is focussed merely on what level of credit young people are achieving, rather than their learning, there is a danger that wider achievement can get left behind. Also, with the emphasis that employers are putting on the skills DofE develops, there is a potential disconnect between what education offers and what employers need.

**Case Study: Firrhill High School, Edinburgh**

Firrhill High School offers the Bronze DofE within the curriculum. Participants attend two teaching periods during the week to cover activities such as First Aid training and expedition planning. Teachers are given the time to oversee sections completed outwith school, assist with inputting evidence into the online record-keeping system eDofE and to develop DofE capacity.

Running the DofE in the school has been a way for Firrhill to build positive relationships with parents and the wider community. Sarah Brown, Head Teacher at Firrhill explains that “parents support the DofE and recognise the great things that it develops in their child”. Additionally, through their volunteering in the community Sarah believes that pupils become more independent and start to recognise their responsibility to the community and are “better prepared for life beyond school”.

Further information on the DofE in Mainstream Schools can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Taa-uqW0Lf4
**Question:** how successful schools have been in reporting on pupils’ wider achievements such as those the third sector helps to deliver. Whether such achievements are valued by parents, employers and learning providers as much as formal qualifications.

**Reporting and value to Learning Providers**

The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award occasionally receives favourable mentions in Education Scotland inspection reports suggesting that schools do consider their DofE provision a mark of quality in their offerings to pupils.¹

The benefits of DofE are clear to teachers. Paul, a teacher and DofE Leader said: “It makes them independent. It ticks every box of Curriculum for Excellence. Also it looks great on a CV, so if they’re going for a very competitive course in university it makes them different. It makes them stand out”.

The DofE is also valued by higher and further education institutions. According to World Challenge research²:

- 27.7% of universities believe that DofE adds the most value to a personal statement of all non-academic activities.
- 97% of universities and students say that it is important for prospective students to demonstrate their involvement in extra-curricular activities in their personal statement.

The DofE provides its own detailed reporting to local authorities on how many of their young people are doing the DofE and in which learning communities. In addition, school and local authorities can collect their own data through our online achievement system eDofE.

*It is therefore disappointing that there is no formal way for schools to benchmark wider achievement other than through levelling on the SCQF.* This is particularly true of the Insight Benchmarking tool. Without a way to capture the benefits of all wider achievement learning it is in danger of being marginalised within the education system.

**Value to Young People, Parents and Carers**

Achieving a DofE programme can be a life-changing adventure for young people. According to World Challenge research 39.32% of young people think the DofE Award adds the most value to their personal statement of all non-academic activities.³

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¹ Recent examples of Education Scotland reports mentioning DofE include Stirling High School, Knightswood Secondary School and Craigroyston Community High School.
² Giving You the Edge: *What is the real value of extra-curricular experience in the university application process?* 2014. [http://www.world-challenge.co.uk/university](http://www.world-challenge.co.uk/university)
³ Giving You the Edge: *What is the real value of extra-curricular experience in the university application process?* 2014. [http://www.world-challenge.co.uk/university](http://www.world-challenge.co.uk/university)
Neil, a pupil, Firrhill High School said: “It’s helped me gain some more confidence as well. How to interact with people better and also work in sort of more of a work environment when I was volunteering. And in the future I think it will help me to get the job I want and also into the university I want”.

When they have completed their DofE Award, young people can create an Achievement Pack, which contains information about their DofE activities. It gives them an official record that they can show off to potential future employers.

Parents also see the value of the DofE to their children. Jayne Kennedy, parent of a participant said: “Since signing up for her Bronze DofE Award, Ellen’s confidence and maturity have increased 100%. Ellen has learning difficulties and is on the Autistic spectrum. She has always found developing relationships difficult and prefers her own company. With DofE she has met a new group of girls who accept her as she is.”

Jenny St John, parent of an Award holder said: “The skills learned are like a rehearsal for life, developing communication skills, teamwork, commitment and meeting personal goals… There is simply nothing to lose and everything to gain”.

**Case study: Polmont Young Offenders Institute**

The DofE at Polmont Young Offenders Institution (YOI) is run in partnership with Barnardos Scotland and the PE department. The Physical Section is run by the Physical Education team and it ties into the Volunteering and Skills sections run by Barnardos.

One young person took part in the contemporary dance project in Polmont as part of his Physical Section. He had no previous experience with dance, but fell in love with it. Now that he’s left the YOI he’s still involved with dance and has taken it so far as to join a college course in dance and performing arts.

He said the DofE “has given me the confidence and belief in myself that I can achieve. It was a fantastic experience and has helped me enrol in a college as well as helping me gain employment when I was released”.

Lisa Hogg, DofE Coordinator at Polmont YOI sees the difference that the DofE makes to the participants. She said that getting involved with sport and developing their skills “gets them feeling confident and trying new activities”. They then are able to take that experience back into the community when they are released and continue that positive involvement, as did the young person involved in the dance project. Doing their DofE opens them up to different forms of learning, but also different ways of developing themselves.

**Value to Employers**

Completing a DofE programme can improve young people’s employment prospects. It requires resilience and commitment. It enables young people to see how their efforts add value and impact others as well as themselves; it adds to their motivation and positive attitude. Young people are able to demonstrate the essential skills and commitment desired by employers, citing real life examples of transferrable soft skills.

In a recent survey, The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award was chosen by UK HR professionals in a Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) survey as the most recognised
volunteering experience a candidate can demonstrate during the recruitment process. **37% of UK-wide companies look for a DofE Award in applications when they recruit, above other recognition programmes.***

In a recent **CBI Scotland** report, the characteristic, values and habits that make young people employable include: confidence and ambition, resilience, self-control and emotional intelligence. The DofE delivers on all of these capabilities through a whole of person approach to learning and development.

The DofE works closely with a variety of employers to offer the programme to their Modern Apprentices. Additionally, the DofE works in partnership with employers, to provide 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.

**Case Study: First ScotRail DofE Modern Apprentices**
First ScotRail has been running an award-winning Modern Apprenticeship in Customer Service since 2011. This programme gives young people aged 16 to 23 the chance to achieve their Gold DofE Award, get their Level 2 SVQ in Customer Service and train as a ScotRail employee.

Achieving a Gold Award is a main objective of the programme which trains apprentices in key customer service roles: ticket examiner, station staff and hospitality. Steve Montgomery, Managing Director of ScotRail, explained that the programme: “gives the apprentices the skills and confidence they need to be a part of a highly skilled and loyal workforce”.

The apprentices themselves also see how completing the rigorous programme adds value to their CV and benefits their future employment prospects. Sarah Graham, who lives in Barrhead with her partner and young daughter, said: “The apprenticeship is a great way to learn on the job, develop skills and secure a better future for me and my family, particularly during a time when so many young people are unemployed. I have been wearing my uniform with pride”.

For more on this case study please see our DofE and Employability film: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cw37NXPplaM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cw37NXPplaM)

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*4 CIPD Learning to Work survey results, 2015.
6 Companies offering DofE to employees include: First ScotRail, Amey, Lloyds Banking group and more.*
Conclusions
The DofE is recognised the world over by young people, parents, employers and educators as a mark of excellence.

The reach of the DofE in Scotland is significant with 1 in 6 young people 15 and 16 undertaking a programme which develops their employability skills.

It is frustrating that there is no formal way for schools to benchmark and celebrate wider achievement other than through levelling on the SCQF.

Delivery of wider achievement in general, and DofE in particular, is not consistent across local authorities.

Councils should consider the achievement gap in conjunction with the attainment gap and seek ways to increase capacity to deliver wider achievement to more young people.