

# Team volunteering – a guide for DofE Leaders

## What is this resource for?

The following pages provide you with support to help your group take part in team volunteering for their DofE programme. This resource contains five sections:

- Information on the benefits of team volunteering
- Guidance on finding ideas for activities, and case studies to provide inspiration
- A 40-45 minute session plan to help the team plan their activity and training
- A 40-45 minute session plan to help the team decide roles and responsibilities.

## Why team volunteering?

Individually, we can all make a difference, but as a team we can sometimes achieve far more for our communities and ourselves than we ever imagined. Team volunteering can allow young people to support each other to achieve their Volunteering section whilst developing a sense of purpose and individual responsibility within a team. This is why we are promoting team volunteering as one option for young people taking part in their DofE programme.

## Achievable by all

A Duke of Edinburgh's Award is achievable by any young person who chooses to take up its challenge, regardless of ability, gender, background or location. Doing team volunteering is one way of making the Volunteering section more accessible and enjoyable for those that may find it hard to source and undertake a volunteering opportunity alone, especially if they are under 16.

## Benefits of team volunteering

Through volunteering, participants:

- Learn about their community and feel a sense of belonging and purpose
- Learn to take responsibility for their communities and their own actions by committing and persevering with an activity

- Build new relationships with members of their community, decreasing fears and prejudice and increasing community cohesion
- Further understand their own strengths and weaknesses by evaluating their own progress and building confidence and self-esteem
- Get a chance to develop communication, negotiation, teamwork and leadership skills, increasing their employability and work experience
- Have the opportunity to trust others and in turn be trusted
- Enjoy new adventures.

## Gathering ideas

This resource focuses on helping you guide your group once they have chosen what activity they want to do. To help them explore ideas, we have a number of other resources:

- **Volunteering session plans:** session plans which help you explore the benefits of volunteering with your group and what volunteering that they want to do.
- **Opportunities listed on our website:** DofE Approved Activity Providers (AAP) offer team volunteering activities and other opportunities can be found on the DofE website.
- **Other people's stories:** We have included a few case studies in this resource to show the range of team volunteering opportunities young people can do. You could also:
  - Encourage your group to talk to other young people who have taken part in a team volunteering project.
  - Invite a member of the community involved with a local issue or charity to attend one of your meetings and explain the value that a volunteering team would bring for them.
  - Suggest that your group watch video clips/ research on the internet for other volunteering ideas.

# Session Plan 1: Planning the activity & training

## Aim:

For the volunteering team to plan the activity that they have already chosen, identify the training they need to do and how and when meetings will happen to ensure they are on track.

## Resources:

Flipchart, coloured marker pens, sellotape and different coloured Post-it notes.

## Useful DofE facts:

There are four simple steps for a young person to complete each section of their DofE programme:

- **Preparation:** Before starting their volunteering activity participants must thoroughly research the charity, organisation or people they are helping and have an Assessor willing to support them.
- **Training:** This must not take up more than one quarter of the total volunteering activity time.
- **Activity:** This must be unpaid work which benefits the environment, a community, organisation or individual.
- **Assessment:** Their Assessor can be a named contact in the organisation they are helping, or can be you as their DofE Leader.



Timing	Section	Activity
5 mins	Getting started	<p><b>Icebreaker:</b> The objective is to form a perfect zig zag circle. The team join hands in a circle. Each person is numbered one or two so that half the team are ones and half twos. On the Leader's command the ones lean forward and the twos lean backwards. To form the perfect zig zag the team must work together. Get them to keep going until they get it right and reflect on the importance of them working as a team to complete the task.</p> <p><b>Sharing aim:</b> Explain that for the rest of the session the team will be planning their volunteering activity, and what they need to do to prepare for it.</p>
10 mins	Group work	<p><b>Volunteering wishes</b></p> <p>Start the session by asking them to put wishes about their team volunteering in a 'wish jar' (e.g. jam jar or shoe box) about the experiences they want to have and skills they want to gain. At the end of their team volunteering the group can reflect on their wishes and see what new skills they have learnt, such as improving communication skills, learning about a charity or meeting people.</p> <p><b>Team volunteering programme planner</b></p> <p>Give each member of the team a programme planner and put an enlarged version (e.g. A3) up on the wall. Get them to work in pairs to answer the questions on the planner, e.g. what do you want to achieve; what are your specific goals; who is going to help you complete your activity; what evidence will you collect to show your progress? Get the pairs to feedback and then write the agreed answers on the A3 template on the wall. Have them copy the agreed version down to keep.</p>
20 mins	Group work	<p><b>Creating a timeline</b></p> <p><b>What needs to be done?</b> Ask the group to work in pairs to think about all the different things that need to be done, making notes on different coloured post-it notes for the different stages of their activity – preparation, training, activity and assessment.</p> <p><b>When will it be done?</b> Get the group to make their own timeline - this could be as simple as having pieces of flipchart which represent each month of the activity. Ask the group to place their post it notes on the month when it needs to be done. As a group they may need to sit and think about when different things need to happen and also negotiate time when they will be able to do different activities. The group's timeline can then be put up on the wall and can act a checklist so when something has been completed it can be crossed off throughout the period of volunteering.</p>
5 mins	Summary	Find out what the group has learnt by playing word association with starter words like 'teamwork' and 'goals'.

## Session Plan 2: Deciding roles & responsibilities

### Aim:

For the volunteering team to explore different team roles and responsibilities, and planning which role they will have in their team volunteering activity.

### Resources:

Flipchart, newspaper, coloured marker pens, spaghetti and marshmallows.

### Useful DofE facts:

As well as helping others and/ or the environment, team volunteering should be focussed on helping young people gain valuable skills and experience about how to work in a team, and what they need to do to make a team project successful.



Timing	Section	Activity
5 mins	Getting started	<p><b>Team icebreaker:</b> Stick two or more pieces of newspaper together and get the group to all stand on the paper. Gradually take away chunks of the paper each time asking the whole group to stand on the remaining paper. They will need to communicate and work closely together, promoting the skills of working as a team.</p> <p><b>Sharing aim:</b> Explain that for the rest of the session the team will be thinking about the set up of a team, the different roles people have and what responsibilities are linked to those roles.</p>
15 mins	Group work	<p><b>What makes an effective team?</b> Ask the group to think about and discuss what things are needed in order for a team to work (e.g. clear communication, trust, agreed aim, timing). Get them to write all their ideas down and have a group discussion on each idea, and discuss what things are most important to them as a team.</p> <p><b>Spaghetti Tower Task:</b> Now it's time to put them to the test with a competition! Split the group into smaller groups of three to four people. In their groups they have five minutes to make the tallest spaghetti tower. They can only use the spaghetti and marshmallows and the tower must be free standing. After the allocated time measure the towers to see which group is the winner. Come back together as a whole group to debrief and discuss what worked well in their teams and what didn't. Explore questions such as "Was everyone in the team included in the task?" and "If they could do the task again what would they do differently?". Did any of the teams discuss how they were going to build their tower before they started, how did this help? Did anyone notice the different roles people played?</p>
20 mins	Group work	<p><b>What roles are in a team?</b> Ask the group to think about what different roles there might be within a team. If they struggle, relate it to something they understand more clearly e.g. a football team.</p> <p><b>What responsibilities go with which role?</b> As a group go through each of the roles they have come up with and ask them to think of the top three responsibilities that go with each role. Link this back to the earlier task of what makes an effective team.</p> <p>By this point in the session the group should have an understanding on the different elements to good team work, the variety of roles and the key responsibilities which link to those roles.</p>
5 mins	Group work	<p><b>Who will do what?</b> Ask the group to go back to the time plan that they made in the last session (page 2) and put the names of the team members down next to the tasks they are going to do, based on what they have learnt about the roles in a team they would like to play.</p>

## Case studies

Below are some recent examples of team volunteering activities which were undertaken by young people for their DofE programme.

### Environment – Recycling project

A Gold DofE participant and a group of Bronze participants decided to make people think about their environment and how much waste there is in our society, so they set up a recycling project at their local youth club. The neighbours have noticed and this has helped to dispel some of the negative attitudes about young people in the local community, as well as helped the environment.

*“At first taking on a recycling project seemed a really big job, but once I got a team of helpers around me, it seemed more manageable.”* Andre, Gold participant

*“Doing the recycling is fun because you are with your friends.”* Kerry, Bronze participant



### Helping people – Dinner and activities club for older people

As a group, the young people decided to run a supper club for older people in a nursing home. They served food and ran activities for the residents of the home. Activities included singing, speed dating, a Lego competition and making scrapbooks.

*“Because the older people are interesting to talk to, the project is relaxing for the team of volunteers as well as the residents. Getting to know people over time and working together with them has been really good.”* George, DofE participant



### Helping people – Activities for young people with disabilities

As a team, a DofE group applied to the Youth Opportunities Fund and received a grant of £4000 to help set up a group for disabled young people and their peers. The team now runs regular weekly sessions with around 50 young people attending introducing a wide variety of activities.

*“I have made new friends and have much more confidence and I am no longer bullied. It makes me really happy.”* Tom, DofE participant

*“They have developed real confidence and their enthusiasm has helped to really drive the project”* DofE Manager



### Community action – Internet Safety Project with children

A local police officer set a team of DofE participants the task of creating a community project. The DofE group chose to promote safe use of the web on the internet. They decided to give presentations at primary schools as well as run workshop activities with the young children. It was such a success that they then adapted these for parents and students in Year 10.

*“Working in a team with other people made this experience a lot more enjoyable. We found out a lot about each member’s special skills and we all learnt to cooperate and work together, which made the task so much easier.”* Pippa & Charlotte, Silver participants

*“This project has had a lot of impact on the community. Many schools were interested in our presentation as they thought it was very effective for people our age to deliver it.”*

Rosie & Laura, Silver participants



**For more information email: [info@DofE.org](mailto:info@DofE.org)**

To find out more about the volunteering section go to [www.DofE.org/volunteering](http://www.DofE.org/volunteering)