November 2023 Volunteer Coordinators’ Forum

**Topic: Duke of Edinburgh Volunteering by DofE Head Office and Sutton Libraries**

Due to winter bugs, Rebecca Wing, Operations Manager, kindly replaced Jade Wilson virtually.

Additional notes by Souvi Das.

For any school or organization (like charities or volunteer organisations) to take young people to apply for the Duke Of Edinburgh award, they have to be licensed. If not schools then national youth groups like Scouts or Girlguiding also does it.

Ø  14-24 year olds can do a DofE programme in Bronze, Silver or Gold level award, 4 sections to be done for Bronze and Silver level and 5 sections for gold level.

Ø  **License fees** for schools are about £1400 + VAT , for charities or Volunteering organizations: around £370 + VAT.

Ø  Nearly every Secondary school in Sutton participates.

Ø  Charities and Volunteering org. gets a discounted rate for license purchases.

Ø  Dofe funded 50% of the license fees for them last year.

Ø  40,000 Young people signed up

Ø  Young people aged 18+ can DMB direct service

Ø  Young people need to pay a participation fee, somewhat around £30

* Stages Of the program: Expedition, Volunteering, 3 separate hours of activities in learning new skills section
* They get a Welcome pack as they register.
* Then they need to update the program planning.
* They can submit physical report cards (confirm the activity. What they have learned, etc.)
* Or there is online version of the report card which include a number (7digit number), dates of volunteering, answer 3 questions.
* Assessors: There should be an assessor assigned by the school or organisation who should be a person with knowledge of the work (can’t be family members).
* Assessors can change if needed. When volunteering at any charity or volunteering organisation there should be an assessor who will give the detailed report about hours and type of volunteer work which then have to be checked by the original assessor at the licensed school with DofE.
* Volunteering Organisations or charities can help young people with volunteering opportunities with fixed hours.
* The young people can work on different volunteering opportunities but it has to be under the umbrella of the same volunteering organisations.
* They can even do office-type work, but it has to be volunteer work that can't be put up for a paid job (charities can open up few positions like this).
* Young People who have participated in this program can also apply for: Youth Ambassador Program Youth Voice

**Topic: Sutton Libraries and DofE Students**

* The service has welcomed DofE participants for nearly 10 years.
* Pupils complete their bronze and silver awards with us
* Volunteers can apply via our Better Impact Volunteer Page.
* We promote the opportunity via schools.
* Currently have 38 DofEs
* Over a 5 year period, we’ve hosted an average of 63 volunteers each year.
* This equates to over 12,000 hours worth of volunteering hours.
* The roles they do are:
  + Shelving
  + Supporting with the summer reading project
  + Support with events
  + Create displays
  + Rhyme time and storytime assistants
  + Promoting resources

Barriers

* + The influx at times becomes too high and causes us to reject a large amount of applications or close it earlier than we could.
  + Due to a lot of movement in the service, there are times that there isn’t any staff on site.
  + We will then have to cancel their volunteering sessions.
  + At times, it just seems like a tick box exercise for the DofEs and we have to really engage them.

Advice for organisations

* + Ensure that the role you give the DofE varies - it’ll make them less bored.
  + Keep them engaged
  + Ask them what they want to get out of it.
  + Get their feedback - see what could be done differently or what is simply going well.

The group discussed ways to engage younger volunteers including if coming as a pair, making it competitive between them, setting timed tasks or placing them in a roles in physically separate locations if they need to be separated.