

KEEPING EXPEDITIONS GREEN

Tens of thousands of DofE expeditions take place all over the UK every year. Following the recent launch of the new *DofE Expedition Guide*, Alex Davies looks at some simple ways DofE groups can reduce their expedition's environmental impact.

The ever-increasing popularity of the DofE means that there are more and more expeditions taking place each year.

Since 2000 the number of Awards achieved annually has increased from 48,899 to 81,320 (up 66.3%) and so the number of expeditions has also greatly increased – for example, it's up 52% in our wild country areas over the same time.

This is all great news but it does mean we have an ever greater responsibility to manage our environmental impact.

All DofE participants must learn and follow the Countryside Code (or equivalent) in order to undertake their expeditions. This is a core minimum in teaching participants about environmental and countryside awareness, but there are some other easy steps to take.

Stay local

Where possible, keep Bronze teams close to home and take in any local landmarks. Most Bronze teams should not usually need to travel more than 30 miles away, often starting and/or finishing at their DofE centre if in rural areas. Keeping close to home can reduce fuel usage and travelling time for all involved and can help keep costs to a minimum. Perhaps parents could drop off and collect participants at the start and finish points.

Update parents with a finishing time about an hour before the agreed time to save them waiting around and encourage them to car share.

Unless the DofE centre is based in a wild country area, don't take Bronze teams into these areas.

Measure the carbon footprint as the team aim

Encourage teams to measure and reduce their expedition carbon footprint as part or all of their expedition aim and presentation. It can be a great way to get them to think about and take responsibility for all aspects of their expedition.

Ask them to think differently to recycle, reuse and repair their equipment, kit and other carbon uses.

Use multiple start points

Setting several teams off from the same location or using the same start location year after year can reduce the independence of teams' routes and over-use specific areas of land.

Often teams from many different centres will use the same convenient start/end point week after week, annoying land owners and disrupting local traffic. By spreading the start locations, not only do you reduce the impact of your group, but also the cumulative effect of many different teams over time, whilst also usually improving your team's route choices.

Use online Assessor Reports

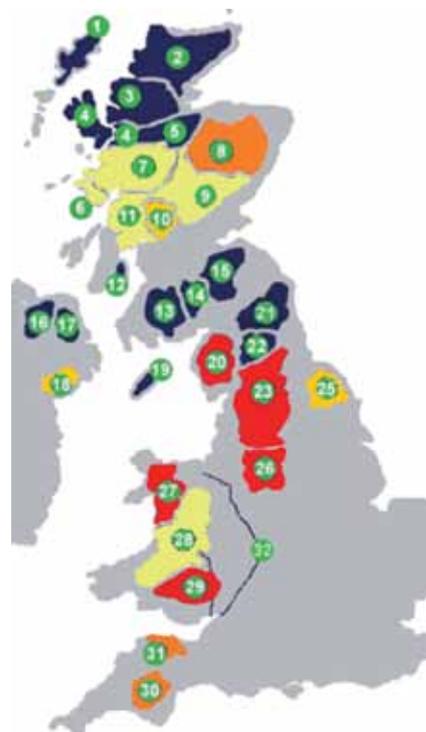
Reduce the paperwork of your expedition by providing the DofE Expedition Assessor with the participant's eDofE ID numbers so they can provide online Assessor Reports. During the last expedition

season over 34,000 expedition Assessor Reports were submitted via www.DofE.org/assessor.

Expedition in less used areas, particularly at Gold

See if there are some new areas to take your teams which DofE groups don't use very much. Wild country areas like Mid Wales, the North York Moors and the Cheviots are used much less than the Lake District, Snowdonia, the Brecon Beacons or the Peak District.

The DofE wild country map (from www.DofE.org/go/expeditionareas) is shown here with areas coloured by use to help you see if there are any alternatives for you to consider.



The number of DofE expedition teams using the wild country area during 2011:

