

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Guide for parents in Hampshire



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Introduction

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is voluntary, non-competitive programme of practical, cultural and adventurous activities designed to support the personal and social development of young people aged 14-25, regardless of gender, background or ability. It offers an individual challenge and encourages people to undertake exciting, constructive, challenging and enjoyable activities in their free time. All Awards must be completed by the participants 25th birthday. The scheme started in 1956 and its Founder and Patron is HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.

Who operates the Award?

The delivery of the Award is entrusted to over 400 organisations (“Operating Authorities”) in the United Kingdom licensed to run the Programme. They include local authorities and national voluntary organisations and they authorise Awards once applicable conditions have been met.

Award groups are based in schools, colleges, universities, youth clubs, voluntary organisations (Scouts, Guides, ATC etc), open centres, young offenders institutes and many businesses. Award groups are run by adults, many of whom are volunteers, and include youth workers, teachers, employers, trainers, instructors, assessors and individuals from the community, all of whom are keen to share their skills, enthusiasm and organising abilities to help young people reach their potential.

Your son/daughter has shown interest in joining the Award through the Hampshire County Council Licence which is organised through the Hampshire County Youth Service, a part of the Education Department.

There may be times when s/he is working with Award participants from another Licence Holder, particularly if they are a member of a youth organisation offering the Award – in these cases it is important that all are clear which Licence Holder is taking responsibility (see section on “Insurance”). We have a County policy to encourage co-operation between the various bodies making the Award available, so in most cases Award Leaders are aware of the possible legal pitfalls. Where courses have been organised by Field Officers and Local Award Committees for participants from all Licence holders – these are the responsibility of the County Youth Service.

Entry into the Award

All participants need to complete a Registration Form available from the Award Group Leader. The Award Group Leader will advise you of the registration fee (payable to Hampshire County Council) which should be returned with the registration form to the leader. These are then sent to the County Award Office where a record book and entrance pack are issued to the young person registering. The entrance packs are sent to the Award Group Leader for distribution to participants. During busy periods of the year the County Award Office can become overwhelmed with entries and sometimes there can be a delay of a few weeks before receipt of the books but the official date of entry into the Award is that on which the applications are received at the County Award Office, not the date on which the book is made out so no-one is penalised. When moving to a higher Award, an additional fee is payable for the new record book

How long does it take?

The fastest anyone can complete an Award is six months, but most young people take their time or find that certain activities they wish to do are only available at certain periods of the year, so it often takes about a year to complete a Bronze Award.

Level	Minimum period of participation by:	
	Direct Entrant	Previous Award Holders
Bronze	6 Months	
Silver	12 Months	6 Months
Gold	18 Months	12 Months

The term *direct entrant* refers to those entering the Award at either Silver or Gold, and who do not hold the previous level of Award.

The Award can be fitted around the many other commitments young people have at different stages in their lives e.g. examination periods etc.

Participants can work towards any of their four sections at any time: some will choose to be working on two or more at the same time while others will undertake one at a time. There is absolutely no rush as the 25th birthday is the upper limit for completing any level of Award.

What activities are available?

The entrance pack contains brief details of the challenges acceptable for the Award though of course not all activities will necessarily be available in all parts of the county or at a price which everyone can afford. Award Group Leaders will have copies of the Programme File and Handbook giving a full list of the requirements and options available. Information is also available on the Award web site www.theaward.org. It is important that a chosen activity is checked out with the Award Group Leader before starting. Leaders will generally assist the young people in finding activities they would like to do for their Awards - often some will be hobbies in which the participants are currently involved. An activity followed prior to entry into the Award may count if undertaken during the preceding three months. The Expedition Section is usually organised through the Award group although sometimes participants will join up with young people from other Award groups.

How much does it cost?

The Award has a one-off registration fee as mentioned above. Sometimes participants may need to pay by instalments for the entrance pack - in these cases we will back-date the entry into the Award to the date of the first payment made to the Award Leader. We would ask that all payments are completed within two months and entrance packs will only be made out to participants when the total registration fee has been received by the County Award Office. Some Award groups, particularly in independent schools, may ask parents for an additional subscription to the overall cost of operating the Award in their school and these schools should make a clear distinction between the Award registration fee and the school subscription.

Any other costs fall broadly into those for activities and those for equipment. There is such a range of choice available to participants that most young people can find something that they'd like to do and something that they can afford without too many problems - the Service section is generally free unless the participant is enrolling on certain training courses e.g. First Aid; the Skills and Physical Recreation Sections can vary enormously in cost depending on what is chosen; the Expedition Section does involve young people in paying towards transportation, campsite fees, food and often something towards the expenditure of organising and supervising the venture. Most Bronze expeditions are undertaken locally and costs for each trip are often kept down to around £25.

Specialist equipment can often be borrowed though sometimes there will be a fee to do this - Award Leaders will be able to advise on what they have

access to in their area and what equipment you may already have which is appropriate. There is such a range of outdoor equipment available in the shops these days that it would be easy to believe that only the latest most expensive equipment is required - in practice a lot of participants will find that they have access to most of the equipment they need for the Bronze expedition through family and friends.

Please discuss any problems you may have with the Award group leader who may be able to assist you in securing some grant aid from a variety of sources.

How are leaders appointed?

All Award leaders operating through the Hampshire County Council Licence will have been police checked as required by law for Local Authorities. A reference is also required. Each is responsible to a senior officer of their establishment e.g. the Headteacher, Chair of the Management Committee of an organisation or to a delegated member of the County Youth Service. Ultimately, the responsibility for the Award under the HCC licence rests with the Youth Officer, (Duke of Edinburgh's Award/Outdoor Education) based in the County Award Office.

How are instructors and assessors for various activities appointed?

Award Group Leaders will usually discuss with your son/daughter the possibility of finding someone they know who might assist them with the activity they wish to undertake for the Award. All instructors and assessors of hazardous activities (including the Expedition Section) must register with the County Award Office which involves a police check, the provision of a reference and endorsed certificates covering the activities concerned - Award Leaders have a supply of these forms. Registered volunteers are then sent a copy of the current Hampshire County Council regulations and guidelines for the activities with which they have offered to assist.

Award Leaders are delegated by the authority to approve instructors and assessors of non-hazardous activities.

We generally do not police check and register adults with whom your son/daughter has already been working before they started to count that activity for the Award (e.g. perhaps a family friend takes your son/daughter fishing; you employ a piano teacher or your daughter assists with Rainbow Guides). If the Award Group Leader puts your son/daughter in contact with an adult who would have substantial unsupervised access, we would expect that person to have completed our registration system.

How safe is it?

All approved activities are undertaken within the current rules and regulations of Hampshire County Council. Parents/persons with parental responsibility/ participants aged 18+ are given information sheets about activities away from the Award base, e.g. expedition ventures, and asked for their written consent, as well as up-to-date medical information. The Award has a very good safety record and it is an aspect which is stressed on all leader training courses. If you have any questions or concerns, please check with the Award leader, the establishment responsible for the Award group or the County Award Office if more appropriate.

Insurance

It is vitally important that all participants check with their Award leaders what they will be doing for their Award activities. Failure to seek authorisation for the activity and the adult involved, will nullify the insurance cover and legal protection.

Please note that the Hampshire County Council Licence does not insure young people under 18 to undertake boxing, martial arts or hang-gliding as options.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award provides a basic personal accident insurance cover for all participants undertaking approved Award activities leading towards something being signed within the record book - details are enclosed in the entrance pack.

Hampshire County Council does not provide personal accident cover for Award participants undertaking activities in the establishment where the Award group meets, however a basic personal accident insurance and some cover for property is provided for approved hazardous activities away from the Award base - details can be obtained from the County Award Office. Hampshire County Council provides legal cover and personal accident insurance for all its registered adults undertaking approved Award activities within the County's regulations.

Neither Hampshire County Council or the Duke of Edinburgh's Award provides insurance cover for property and valuables taken or borrowed on Award activities other than authorised hazardous activities away from base - we would recommend that these are covered through your household insurance.

What happens when my son/daughter changes Award groups?

There is no problem in transferring from one Award group to another - all that is involved is taking the record book to the new Award group leader for checking and amending to the new Licence if necessary. Anyone can drop out of the Award at any time but providing they keep their record book, they can come back into it again at any time before their 25th birthday and carry on from where they left off. The County Award Office can always provide advice on other Award groups or Award contacts wherever a participant may be moving. The County Award Office can be contacted at the address below.

What happens if the Award group closes?

In spite of everyone's best efforts sometimes an Award group will close, often due to failure to recruit an appropriate volunteer leader when someone is moving on. In these cases the retiring leaders are asked to ensure that their Award participants are notified of the situation and steered towards other local Award groups if possible. Unfortunately this does not always happen or there may not be an alternative local Award group available - should you have any problems please contact the County Award Office.

Can you help?

Volunteers are crucial to the success of the Award. If you feel you can help in any way, please contact the Award Group Leader or County Office.

Problems and complaints

These should first be discussed with Award leaders and then, if appropriate, with the management of the establishment or organisation in which the Award group is based. The Youth Officer (Duke of Edinburgh's Award/Outdoor Education) in the County Award Office will decide issues related to the Award requirements and Hampshire County Council Licence policy.

More Information

Should you require further information or clarification, please contact your Award group leader in the first instance.

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