



FOTA BEST PRACTICE GUIDE:

SETTING UP A 'FRIENDS OF THE AWARD' (FOTA) GROUP:

Introduction:

FOTA (Friends of the Award) organisations have the ability to provide added value to the development and delivery of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (D of E) within Operating Authorities.

The HMIE review of the D of E in Scotland recognised this contribution:

"Productive partnerships with Friends of the Award Edinburgh and Perth & Kinross D of E Association had accessed substantial additional funding for the D of E to enhance training, transport and develop specific projects in response to need."

A good FOTA will provide support to the Operating Authority in a similar manner as a Parent Staff Association supports a school. Therefore, the role of FOTA should be tailored to local need and aspirations for D of E delivery within either an Operating Authority or group of Operating Authorities. The organisation can be instigated either by the Operating Authority or their D of E volunteers. The FOTA needs to be independent from the Operating Authority to succeed.

The Right People:

Initially, the best people are the volunteers and youth work professionals who are working to deliver the D of E in your area. As well as being committed and enthusiastic they are aware of local need with regard to D of E delivery. The D of E manager is a key player and is often in the best position to organise a steering group.

Further into the process it is likely that additional people will be brought on board and roles will change. The additional people should be identified to fill skills gaps in the original team. It may be prudent to remove the D of E Manager from the committee to ensure that the FOTA is independent of the local authority. Where this decision is made, then the D of E manager should have a standing invitation to attend meetings.

The skills which you would find valuable on the committee would include: Business Planning, Financial Management, D of E delivery, Policy and Governance, Fund Raising and Advocacy.

What do you want your FOTA to achieve?:

Take time to consider what you would want a FOTA to deliver. In an ideal world what would D of E delivery look like in your area: what resources would be available?, who could participate? who would deliver?.....

Consider pulling ideas together into a broad based Vision for the future then identify the part you would wish FOTA to support.

Idea:

Using a post-it wall during a local D of E meeting can help to capture peoples' ideas.

Business Plan:

Ideally, the local authorities you intend to support will have a plan for their use of the D of E and targets for the future. If this is the case, then a discussion with the D of E managers will identify the areas where the FOTA can provide support. It is important that this support is 'added value' as opposed to work which is the core responsibility of the local authority.



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Where no such Local Authority plan exists, then it may be helpful to assist the D of E Manager to develop a plan for the local authority, prior to developing the support plan to be delivered by FOTA.

Time taken to develop the business plan is time well spent. It should take cognisance of Government policy and local priorities. Creating a plan which has set targets for 1 – 3 years will provide the template for future fund raising.

Type of Association:

The decision on what type of Association you form will be based on what you wish to deliver.

Constituted Body:

As a group you can become a constituted body simply by drawing up a constitution. Model constitutions are readily available and the process is straightforward. Your local CVS can offer help and guidance as well as here at FOTA Edinburgh.

This would allow you to set up a bank account and do local fund raising through events and some grant applications. It is of limited value as the majority of funding bodies require you to have charitable status.

Charitable Status:

Can be gained by registering your association with OSCR (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator). Once again straightforward process with excellent information and support provided on the website www.oscr.org.uk. Once registered there is a duty to provide annual returns to OSCR.

Company Limited by guarantee:

This requires registration with Companies House in addition to registering with OSCR. The benefits are that trustees are protected as their financial liability to the company is limited to £1. The disadvantage is that annual returns are required to both OSCR and Companies House and as a limited company, the accounts must be fully accrued.

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO):

SCIO's are part of legislation to be introduced in the summer of 2010. The intention is that charities will be able to register with OSCR to become a SCIO which will provide similar protection to trustees as the current process of registration as a company limited by guarantee. This should be the preferred route for new FOTA organisations.

Support Available from FOTA Edinburgh and Lothians:

Support to set up your committee
Assistance with business planning and costing plans
Advice regarding current government policies
Job Descriptions
Partnership agreements
Governance and Staff policies
Constitutions
Fund Raising
Dedicated pages for your FOTA on our website, www.fota.org.uk

In addition, we will research SCIOs once introduced and provide support in setting up.