

Awards Plus means

- youth awards – outdoors-focused, nature-based, adventurous.
- extra, tailored support, especially for those who benefit most from additional help.
- connections, pathways and progression between youth awards.

Awards Plus is for

- 14-25 year-olds.
- individuals, youth groups and schools across Edinburgh & The Lothians.
- young people who might miss out on opportunities - for practical or financial reasons, due to additional support needs, and for reasons associated with mental health difficulties.

Awards Plus provides

nature-based youth awards, expeditions and 1:1 mentoring support – with a focus on young people who might need extra support. This includes direct delivery, guidance, training and signposting.

Guiding journeys

Your path to awards



1:1 Mentoring Support



formerly



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Supporting achievement
for all
through youth awards

All young people should feel supported to fulfil their potential, regardless of barriers they may face.

Tailored 1:1 Mentoring support is a key strand of Awards Plus activity.

Who is Awards Plus 1:1 Mentoring for?

It's for young people aged 14-25, from Edinburgh & The Lothians, experiencing mental health difficulties, who are open to outdoor activity opportunities and youth awards involvement. Referrals can be from mental health services such as NHS Lothian Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), and via schools (e.g. nurture groups, additional support units, complex support needs units), youth clubs or community groups.

Why Awards Plus 1:1 Mentoring?

Issues relating to a young person's mental health are complex and varied. For some, additional support is beneficial. Youth awards offer a framework that can recognise achievement at every step of involvement; benefits of experiences in nature are well documented. But youth awards can feel unattainable for many young people who are struggling with motivation, focus, anxiety or self-esteem.

There's a need to hold open doors to opportunities which might otherwise seem closed.

Awards Plus brings a mental health-informed youth work approach to 1:1 mentoring. It can provide the time and support to identify suitable opportunities, reach appropriate milestones and celebrate every unique success.

What does Awards Plus offer? Personalised, practical support explores opportunities to broaden horizons and build a sense of self-worth. Following a referral process, a professional mentoring role from Awards Plus staff focuses on active engagement, self-paced challenges and goal-setting.

This can include:

- identifying suitable youth awards relevant to individual needs and interests, including Duke of Edinburgh's Award, John Muir Award, Heritage Hero Award, Ramblers Scotland Out There Award and others
- a focus on (re-)engagement with natural spaces, communities, active choices, volunteering
- routine – regular in-person and/or online meetings, regular group opportunities
- support to participate in appropriate aspects of the Awards Plus Open Programme, including DofE Expeditions
- understanding and exploring impacts of mental health difficulties as barriers to involvement and achievement

Awards Plus 1:1 Mentoring can be part of an 'Early Intervention' approach, part of a Recovery Plan where specialist provision from CAMHS is appropriate, or a pathway following discharge from CAMHS. It's not intended to be an element of crisis management, but of broadening horizons and supported challenge.

“Taking things one step at a time, with no deadline, took the pressure off me. Having someone to talk to about all sorts of things aided this process, I've really benefited from having met the mentor I have.”

“My self-confidence has gone from -3 to about an 8 out of 10.”

“I've had difficulties with my mental health. Doing an expedition and achieving my DofE Award has been the most positive experience of the past three years.”

