

Local youth work charity celebrates 20th anniversary

Friends of The Award are celebrating their 20th year of supporting young people from across Edinburgh and the Lothians to complete the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.



The newly appointed Board of Trustees for Friends of the Award in Edinburgh & the Lothians (FOTA), joined in the photo by Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP, who hosted the Parliamentary Reception, and Barry Fisher, Director of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in Scotland.

This milestone was recognised by Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP, who invited the charity to a Reception at the Scottish Parliament last week.

This event was attended by [FOTA](#) trustees, staff members, project partnerships, volunteers, as well as young people and family members from a range of FOTA projects from the last 20 years.



Lewis Melrose (Right) receiving his Duke of Edinburgh's Award Silver level from Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP during the FOTA Parliamentary Reception.

Friends of the Award was set up in 1997 to help make the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) accessible to a broad spectrum of disadvantaged young people across the region. By working closely with the City of Edinburgh Council Outdoor Education Department, as well as partners from a range of provisions

across Edinburgh and the Lothians, FOTA are continuing this work across numerous projects including the CAMHS DofE Project, Youth Development Project, Midlothian Schools Project, as well as the inclusive and Open Expedition provision.

More recently FOTA have introduced their own youth achievement award – the Junior Award Scheme for Schools (JASS) which aids transitions for 5 – 13 year olds. Both the DofE and JASS are accredited programmes designed to promote wider achievement across a range of activities, aimed at developing confident individuals who engage with their community and are able to work as part of a team.



Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP said: “Youth development is an incredibly important part of our society. By providing a range of opportunities to complete the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award and the Junior Award Scheme for Schools programme, FOTA are improving the skills and confidence of young people from a range of backgrounds across Edinburgh and the Lothian’s. To have been doing so for 20 years is outstanding, and I wish the charity continued success into the future”.

Peter Wright MBE, Trustee of FOTA says: “Enabling young people to achieve recognition for their own success, and to overcome life’s challenging circumstances along the way has been at the forefront of all that FOTA has done for the past twenty years. Our record in this is outstanding, and a great many young lives have been transformed.”

“As the founder of FOTA, it gives me great pleasure to

congratulate the
organisation on such a worthwhile contribution to youth work
in and around
Edinburgh, and especially on this notable anniversary. I take
much pride in all
that FOTA has and continues to do so well, and it is an honour
to be able to
serve alongside the immense tide of voluntary and professional
goodwill that
sustains it."