



The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service

The MBE for volunteer groups

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service: *Background*

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the MBE for volunteer groups, recognises the outstanding contributions made to local communities by groups in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man voluntarily devoting their time for the benefit of others.

This is the highest national honour that can be bestowed upon groups of this kind. As such, The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service not only serves to provide recognition of volunteer groups, but also demonstrates the high respect in which volunteering is held.

The Award is overseen by the Office for Civil Society (OCS). As part of the Cabinet Office, OCS works across government departments to provide support to voluntary and community organisations and is responsible for delivery of the Big Society programme.

More than 980 groups around the UK have now won The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, since it was created by Her Majesty to mark the occasion of her Golden Jubilee in 2002.



BAPS Children's Forum - London

BAPS Children's Forum provides a meeting place for the Hindi community in London through cultural, educational and social activities to ensure young people retain their cultural identity and roots. The Brent 'Respect' Festival at Roundwood Park saw BAPS Children's Forum working alongside the local community to scoop the World Record for the Largest Finger Painting.

Nomination Process

How to nominate a group

Nominations can be submitted at any time throughout the year. However, for groups to be considered for the following year's Award, applications should be submitted by 30th September.

- 1) Nomination forms may be downloaded in pdf format from The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service website www.direct.gov.uk/qavs or requested in hard copy from The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service office.
- 2) All parts of the nomination form must be completed (this can be with the help of members of the group) and signed by the nominator. Self nomination is not permitted – the nominator cannot be part of the group (e.g. an active member or trustee).
- 3) The completed form must be sent to The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service Administrator with two signed letters of support from independent people.

Groups must satisfy **all** of the following criteria to be eligible for the Award:

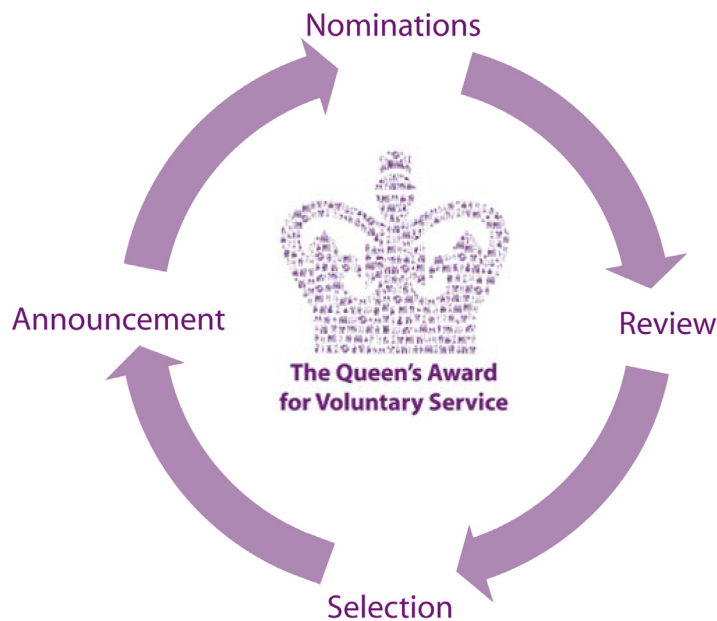
- The group has been operating for 3 or more years, continuously
- The group consists of more volunteers than paid staff
- The group is based in the UK and its beneficiaries are in the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man or abroad
- Members of the group have a legal right to reside in the United Kingdom
- The group meets a particular need and provides high-quality, voluntary activities
- The group is well respected locally and by beneficiaries



basketballpaisley – Paisley, Scotland

basketballpaisley is a community organisation supporting the needs of young people by improving opportunities and reducing crime. Since its inception in 1995, the group has made a significant impact on thousands of young people and their families throughout Paisley and beyond through the provision of a family-orientated basketball programme in a warm and safe environment.

The nomination process



- 1) A nominator completes and submits a nomination form to The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service Administrator.
- 2) Nominations for eligible groups are sent to the Lord-Lieutenants and Lieutenant Governors to be assessed by County Panels and Devolved Administration Panels.
- 3) The panels make initial recommendations, based on their knowledge of local volunteer activity and need, after assessing nominated groups in their area. In some cases this will involve a visit to see the group's work in action.
- 4) Recommendations are received by a national committee made up of experts in the voluntary and community sector and high profile individuals. The committee proposes the final selection of winners for any given year to the Minister for Civil Society who makes a recommendation to The Palace for Her Majesty's approval.
- 5) Winners are announced on June 2nd every year, after the Award Administrator has notified groups of their success.



RNID Hearing Aid Volunteer Project – Belfast, Northern Ireland

RNID Hearing Aid Volunteer Project empowers hearing aid users to understand the benefits of their hearing aids by providing essential practical support and friendship. As well as showing people how to clean and maintain their hearing aids, the volunteers, hearing aid users themselves, assist families and carers in improving their communication.



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Materials for download

Nomination form

Nomination forms can be downloaded in pdf format from the 'Nominating a group' section of The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service website www.direct.gov.uk/qavs or requested in hard copy from The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service office.



Promotional flyer

A double-sided A5 Queen's Award for Voluntary Service flyer is also available for download in printable format from the 'Nominating a group' section of the website.



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Frequently asked questions

What is The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service?

The Award is the MBE for volunteer groups and the highest honour that can be bestowed upon groups of two or more people in the UK (including the Channel Islands and Isle of Man) who are giving their time freely for the benefit of others.

Can a group win the Award more than once?

No, once a group has won, and still retains its same title and place in the community, it remains as a recipient of The Queens Award for Voluntary Service for the life of the group and should not be nominated again.

Do groups have to be volunteering in certain fields to win the Award?

A very broad range of groups have been recognised for their high standards in volunteering, across the following categories: Creche/Playgroup, Playscheme/Youth Group, Environment/regeneration, Educational, Health, Recreation – sports/arts/heritage, Self help/support group, Social preventive scheme (e.g. crime prevention groups), Social centre/Community, Emergency response.

What do winners receive?

As well as the significant prestige and recognition that comes with winning the Award, winners also receive a certificate signed by The Queen and a commemorative crystal for display at their place of operation at a presentation made by the Lord-Lieutenant of their county. Winning groups are also able to display the Queen's Award logo on their communications materials to underline their achievement.

How can groups be considered for the Award?

Groups must be nominated, for example by beneficiaries of their work, members of the public, or representatives of public bodies.

What's the closing date for nominations?

There is a rolling nominations process, meaning that nominations can be made at any time and there is no deadline for the receipt of nomination forms. However, for groups to be considered for the following year's Award, applications should be submitted by 30th September.

Are there any tips for nominators to give a group a better chance of winning?

Some basic points would be:

- Has the group acknowledged and filled a clear local need to improve the social, economic or environmental well being of the area?
- Has the group evolved locally and is it run day to day by local people?
- Has the group generated a high level of goodwill and respect among the community and those it serves?
- Has the group overcome significant obstacles outside its control, showing determination and commitment to bringing benefit to those they wish to help?

What happens to unsuccessful nominations?

If a group is not successful in winning an Award in the year that it is nominated, it can then be placed in a rolling nominations pool for up to three years, allowing it to be reconsidered for an Award.

How many Awards were made in 2011?

After careful consideration, 130 groups were given the Award in 2010. This was judged to be an appropriate number to acknowledge the diversity of voluntary groups nominated, recognise those that are making an outstanding contribution and ensure a meaningful spread of Awards across the UK by area and type of group.

Do winners receive any money?

No. Award recipients are recognised for their excellence in volunteering through the prestige of winning the Award and with the certificate and crystal which are received by winners.

Do the winners get to meet The Queen?

Four representatives from each winning group are invited to a garden party at Buckingham Palace or the Palace of Holyroodhouse where they are likely to meet either the Queen or a member of the Royal Family.

What are the benefits of winning the Award?

- Recognition and awareness of a group's work
- Increase in new members and volunteers
- Greater local and national publicity
- Pride and motivation for the volunteers



Growing Space – Newport, South Wales

Growing Space provides real work skills and a support network to help adults with mental ill health reach goals and improve their quality of life. Tackling problems of social exclusion, the group provides training in Horticulture, Woodwork, ITC, Craft and a work-based learning programme leading to accredited qualifications. The group also provides a mobile garden clearance service throughout Newport for elderly and disabled council tenants.



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Template Press Release

The following template press release has been created to assist Local Authorities in promoting nominations for outstanding voluntary groups in their communities.

Please get in touch with The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service team if you would like details of previous winners from your area, to tailor the information as appropriate for internal communications channels and/or local media.

Local Authority Template Press Release

PRESS RELEASE: [INSERT DATE]

[INSERT FULL NAME AND HONOURS, IF APPROPRIATE], the [INSERT TITLE] of [INSERT YOUR AREA HERE] **calls for nominations for prestigious volunteering Award**

The [INSERT TITLE] of [INSERT LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA], [INSERT NAME] today called on the local community to celebrate the work of volunteer groups in the area, by nominating them for The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

This prestigious National Honour – the MBE for volunteer groups – sets the national benchmark for excellence in volunteering. It recognises the outstanding contributions made by voluntary organisations devoting their time for the benefit of others in their communities.

[INSERT NAME], the [INSERT TITLE] said: "Voluntary groups across [INSERT LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA] are vital to all aspects of community life, however, they sometimes aren't recognised for the huge difference they make.

"The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service celebrates the work of voluntary groups across the UK who, in many cases, have dedicated themselves to improving local people's lives for many years. If there is a group in your area that makes a significant impact and deserves recognition, get out there and nominate them."

More than 980 groups around the UK have now won the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, over the nine years since it was created by Her Majesty to mark the occasion of her Golden Jubilee in 2002.

Nominations can be made at any time of the year, by members of the public who have been helped personally by a group or witnessed the benefits of its work in their community. Visit www.direct.gov.uk/qavs to download a nomination form or to find out more about previous winners.

– Ends –

For further information contact The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service press office on 020 7781 2300 or email queensaward@consolidatedpr.com

[INSERT CONTACT NAME, TELEPHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL ADDRESS HERE]

Notes to editors

About the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

In 2002, in celebration of Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee, the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award for Voluntary Service by Groups in the Community was established. Its purpose is to recognise groups of individuals who are giving their time freely for the benefit of others. It is the highest honour that can be bestowed upon groups of this kind and is equivalent in status to the MBE. As such, the Queen's Award not only serves to provide recognition of volunteer groups, but also demonstrates the high respect in which volunteering is held.

The Award is overseen by the Office for Civil Society (OCS). As part of the Cabinet Office, OCS works across government departments to provide support to voluntary and community organisations and is responsible for delivery of the Big Society programme.

Groups must be nominated for the Award – self nomination is not permitted. A group (two or more people) can be nominated if it is based in the UK, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. The group has to have been volunteering for the benefit of people in the UK or overseas for at least three years and more than half its members must be volunteers who have the right of residence in the UK. Further details on entrance criteria and the nomination process are available from www.direct.gov.uk/qavs.



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Contact Details

For all media, spokesperson, case study and general Award enquiries

Please contact The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service team on 020 7781 2300,
email queensaward@consolidatedpr.com or write to The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service,
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