



The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

The MBE for volunteer groups

*Recognise the groups
volunteering in your
community*

Nomination *Guidance* Notes

Making a *nomination*

Who may make a nomination?

Anyone, including people who benefit from the group's activities, may make a nomination. Simply complete the form and send it to the Queen's Award Office at the address given overleaf. Please don't nominate your own group if you're a volunteer or paid staff member as we need to ensure that nominations are independent and supported.

When should I send in my nomination?

As with the UK national honours, there is no deadline for nominations. We consider them at any time within three years of the nomination. So please don't nominate a group for a particular year's Award.

The Awards are published on 2 June on the anniversary of Her Majesty's coronation. We'll let you and the Award recipients know about two weeks beforehand, but you must not tell anyone outside the group until 2 June.

Any advice on completing the nomination form?

Please complete the form accurately. Tell us as much as you can within the number of words allowed, and follow the instructions in each section. It is important that you provide full but concise information about your nominated group, and explain exactly how they contribute to the people they benefit and the community.

If you need help or advice to complete the form, please contact the Award Administrator.

Must I keep the nomination secret?

In contrast to other national honours, we do not expect you to treat nominations in confidence. This is because County Assessment Panels normally wish to visit groups to gain a better understanding of their work, and groups must have said they are willing to accept an Award if the nomination is successful. However, it is important that groups understand that a nomination won't automatically lead to an Award.

What proof of support must I show?

You must provide two letters of support from others who have first-hand knowledge of the group's activities and are willing to support the nomination. Please attach these letters to the nomination form. On the form, give the names of the two supporters, and their relationship to the group. Only nominations accompanied by supporting letters will be eligible.

What happens to the nomination after I have sent it in?

We will send an acknowledgement. We regret that we cannot enter into correspondence on the merits of a particular nomination while it is being considered or if it does not succeed within the three-year period.

What if I want to change the information I have given?

We may ask you to complete a form to update information about your nominated group during the three-year period.

What if the nomination is unsuccessful?

If, after three years, your nominated group has not been successful, you may assume that the nomination has lapsed. You or other nominators may re-nominate the group, but a different outcome is unlikely unless the group has additional achievements.

What are the eligibility requirements?

- A group must be of two or more people and must provide a specific benefit in a local area. The group may be part of a larger regional or national organisation as long as the volunteers started and developed the initiative and drive for the activity locally, and the group's achievements go beyond what is expected of similar groups in the wider organisation's network.
- Those who benefit from the group may be in the UK or overseas, but it must be UK-based.
- Groups may bring a direct or indirect benefit. Indirect benefit includes, for example, work to preserve the heritage or environment.
- Groups must have been operating at a high standard for at least three years.
- More than half the people who work in the group must be volunteers.
- More than half the group's volunteers must have the right of residence in the UK.

Groups that are solely involved in fundraising for charitable purposes are not eligible for an Award; for example groups involved in street collections, jumble sales or charity shops, whose primary purpose is to raise money.

What standards do you look for?

The Award recognises groups whose work has significantly benefited others and sets the national benchmark for excellence in volunteering by such groups. This is reflected in the criteria by which we judge nominations. We recognise that it is difficult to single out groups that deserve special recognition. However, because of the Award's high status, our assessment is thorough and rigorous so as to maintain the value of, and public respect for, the Award.

We look at evidence of need for the group's activity, the group's reputation and how it may have overcome obstacles. We also take into account how far the group has achieved, or is moving towards achieving, standards of excellence in its organisation and its volunteers.

Procedure for assessment and selection

Each nomination is first appraised in the county where the group works. This appraisal is led by the Lord Lieutenant, Her Majesty's representative in the county, helped by a County Assessment Panel of leading representatives from diverse sectors of the community. The Lord Lieutenant or their representatives, or both, normally wish to visit the nominated group. Nominated groups from the Crown Dependencies of Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man, and those from Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, are also assessed by the Lieutenant Governors of the Crown Dependencies and by panels established by the devolved administrations.

A Specialist Assessment Panel of independent volunteering experts from across the UK judge nominated groups against the Award criteria, taking into account the first appraisal. The panel passes its recommendations to the Main Award Committee, who advise the Minister.

HM the Queen makes the Awards on the advice of the Minister. Once the Queen has given her formal approval, we inform Award recipients, but the news must remain strictly confidential until the Palace makes the public announcement on 2 June, the anniversary of the Queen's coronation. A list of Award recipients is published in the London Gazette. Consolidated PR provides media advice and assistance to Award recipients.

Each nomination is judged solely on merit and there is no set number of Awards for a particular sector or region. However, we aim to achieve a reasonable balance over time of such factors as age, sector and demography.

Receiving an Award

The Lord Lieutenant of the county, as the Queen's representative, will present each group with a certificate, signed by the Queen, and a commemorative crystal at a local ceremony. Award recipients are entitled to use the Queen's Award emblem on their website, stationery and other printed material.

Four representatives of each successful group will also be invited to an annual royal garden party at Buckingham Palace in London or the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh.

Can I nominate an individual for an award or honour?

The Award recognises achievements by volunteer groups. If you wish to nominate an individual for a national UK honour, you can get further information and a nomination form from the Ceremonial Secretariat at www.honours.gov.uk or by calling 020 7276 2777.

Monitoring distribution

Please help us to assess the effectiveness of the system by filling in both parts of the form. One part is about you and the other is about your nominated group. We want to be sure that all areas of society have access to the Award, and the information you give will help us achieve this.

We use the information only for monitoring purposes. We will not take it into account in assessing the group.

Where you heard about the Award

Please provide the information requested to help us assess how effectively we are promoting the Award. This information will help us to ensure that we are using the most effective and efficient methods to increase awareness of the Award.

Enquiries

Many questions about the Award and its history are answered on our website www.direct.gov.uk/thequeensawardforvoluntaryservice. If you have further questions, please contact the Award Administrator

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