

Winners of the 2020 Queen's Award for Voluntary Service announced

Charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups from Bristol to Belfast and Derbyshire to Dumfries have received the highest award given to organisations delivering exceptional service within their communities.

Many of those honoured have adapted their services to respond to the coronavirus outbreak as the voluntary sector continues to play a vital role in the national effort.

Coinciding with Volunteers' Week (1-7 June), this year's Queen's Award for Voluntary Service celebrates the work of a fantastic, diverse range of volunteer groups whose work has enhanced and supported local communities over a number of years.

The Queen's Award offers a chance to highlight their outstanding contribution to society and also to recognise the crucial role many have played to support vulnerable people during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service Independent Committee Chair Sir Martyn Lewis, said:

This year's Queen's Awards highlight the considerable achievements of groups of volunteers who have been making a real impact to the fabric of our country for many years – in some cases decades. Inspired by all that is best in the human spirit, they are made up of local people who have come together to address particular issues and problems facing their communities – often in new and imaginative ways.

All of these award winners have demonstrated a long-term commitment to volunteering that gives real meaning to society, and which shows Britain at its best. Moreover, some of them have also managed to provide valuable support with the fight against Covid-19. We owe them our gratitude – and our congratulations.

Minister for Civil Society, Baroness Barran said:

This prestigious award recognises the important work being done by volunteers across the country and I'd like to congratulate all of the winners for their hard work and dedication supporting their communities.

Charities, social enterprises and their volunteers are the glue that holds our communities together. In these challenging times, they have stepped up their response and been vital to the national effort, for which we are all grateful.

This year's recipients demonstrate the diversity of organisations supporting our communities and also their ability to innovate – many have been able to adapt their services in light of the coronavirus outbreak including:

- Forward Assist, in Tyne and Wear, has been supporting veterans in the community by setting up a virtual support service, in which a therapist checks in with 'safe and well' calls and offers one-to-one counselling. It has also arranged food parcels, offered financial advice and updated CVs for vulnerable, isolated veterans.
- When a local food bank closed in Neath Port Talbot because its volunteers were self-isolating, the Cymer Afan Community Library quickly decided to repurpose their building, staff and volunteers and transform the library into a temporary food bank for the community.
- North Somerset Black and Minority Ethnic Network have supported the local community through providing advice and assistance over the phone and have delivered over 5000 hot meals to vulnerable people, free of charge.
- To support the mental health and wellbeing of older people who usually attend the Eglinton Community Centre in Derry-Londonderry, volunteers have been running online dance exercise classes so people can keep active in their living rooms and kitchens while they stay at home.
- Gairloch Community Car Scheme in the Scottish Highlands have adapted their car service to collect and deliver groceries, pharmacy items and other shopping for those who are isolated during the pandemic. They have also extended the area they cover to a 150 mile radius to ensure the more remote, outlying families can access the help they need.

The recipients of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service are announced every year on 2 June, the anniversary of The Queen's Coronation.

Any volunteer-led group comprising two or more people having a positive impact on the lives of others in an exceptional way can be nominated for an award. A group must satisfy the eligibility requirements before the nomination can be processed through to the assessment stages of the award. More details can be found on the [Queen's Award for Voluntary Service website](#).

Nominations for the 2021 awards close on 25 September 2020.

Notes for editors

1: Find winners near you on our [map](#).

2: Lord Lieutenants represent the monarch in each of the UK's ceremonial counties. This year there were 230 recipients of The Queen's Award Voluntary

Service from across the UK. More information on the recipients and the [Award](#).

3: Any group of two or more people that has participated in voluntary work for more than three years can be nominated for the award. [Full details on how to nominate](#).