

Winners of the 2021 Queen's Award for Voluntary Service announced

Charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have received the prestigious award for delivering exceptional service within their communities over the past year and beyond.

The winners have carried out critical work to enhance the lives of others, from reaching people suffering with dementia through music and song in Gloucestershire, to providing support and friendship to refugees and asylum seekers in Merseyside.

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 recovery. This has been recognised through a special designation given to 164 of the group for providing impactful support during the initial lockdown.

Coinciding with Volunteers' Week, the Queen's Award recognises that volunteers have been vital throughout the coronavirus pandemic, and will continue to be as the country emerges from lockdown.

Minister for Civil Society and Youth, Baroness Barran, will be marking Volunteers' Week with a series of visits to some of the exceptional organisations carrying out critical work.

Volunteers' Week is an annual celebration for the UK to recognise those who have dedicated their time to support their local community, both through the pandemic, and over many years.

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

There is no finer example of democracy in action than people getting together at a local level to tackle a problem or issue at the heart of their community. This year's magnificent award winning groups touch virtually every area of need across our society.

They also highlight the growing and key role which volunteers are playing in times of rapid change and unprecedented challenges. Whether driven by a neighbourly passion to help others or to achieve that well recognised "high" of personal satisfaction, volunteering taps into a rich spirit of generosity, ingenuity and kindness. The Queen's Award's judges are proud to honour the achievements of those who help to make our country great.

Minister for Civil Society, Baroness Barran said:

I'm extremely grateful for the work being carried out by volunteers across the country, and this prestigious award is extremely well deserved. I'd like to congratulate all of the winners, and thank them for the dedication to their communities.

In these challenging times, charities, social enterprises and their volunteers have been the backbone of local communities.

Recent research has shown that 99% of people who have volunteered report positive personal benefits, including a sense of purpose, achievement and feeling as though they are making a difference. I hope today's award inspires people and I encourage everyone to consider how they could volunteer in some way.

This year's recipients demonstrate the diversity of organisations supporting our communities and also their ability to innovate – including:

- Second Wave Centre for Youth Arts in London provides a meeting place for young people, diverting them from criminal activity through theatre and writing projects. During the pandemic, they have established a series of small, socially-distanced support groups.
- Fellrunner Village Bus in Cumbria is a volunteer minibus service for rural communities across Eden District. They provide much-needed access to shops and services for the elderly and isolated. During the pandemic, they provided shopping and collected prescriptions for shielding villagers, and also delivered food parcels.
- Westhill and District Men's Shed in Aberdeenshire bring men together for friendship, to reduce loneliness and improve mental health. During the pandemic, they used a 3D printer to produce 2700 face shields for care staff.
- A Safe Space to be Me in County Antrim provides mental health support in a rural community. During the pandemic, they delivered 48 laptops for home schooling and provided practical support and financial aid.
- Barmouth Community First in Gwynedd provides a fast response to accidents and emergencies in a rural area until an ambulance arrives. During the pandemic, they have delivered prescriptions to shielded members of the community, and collect essential medical supplies to assist the local pharmacy.

Nominations for the 2022 awards close on 15 September 2021.

ENDS

Notes for editors

- Find your local recipient on our [map](#).
- Lord Lieutenants represent the monarch in each of the UK's ceremonial counties.
- This year there were 241 recipients of The Queen's Award Voluntary Service from across the UK. Of these 164 are also receiving a special designation for providing impactful support during the pandemic. More information on the recipients and the Award can be found at www.qavs.dcms.gov.uk
- Any group of three 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 are available at www.qavs.dcms.gov.uk