



Recognition and Rewarding Volunteers

Recognising the contribution volunteers make to your organisation or service should be an integral part of your volunteering programme. Acknowledging the time they give and the difference they make demonstrates that you value them, and directly links to volunteer retention. Volunteers who feel valued are far more likely to stay!

It doesn't have to be costly, and it is worth bearing in mind that different people will prefer different forms of recognition, not everyone will be comfortable with public thanks. In January 2019, NCVO published a report on the volunteer experience Time Well Spent showing that the most popular form of volunteer recognition (42%) was verbal or written thanks from the organisation. There is a section on respondents' perceptions of volunteer recognition in the report.



<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/policy-and-research/volunteering-policy/research/time-well-spent>



Saying thank you – A thank you done in person, by email or sending a thank you card is a simple but effective way of showing your appreciation. Some organisations include personal messages from the Chief Executive of the organisation and/or messages from service users.



Let volunteers understand the difference they are making – Many volunteers are motivated by the mission of your organisation so let them know how their involvement has helped your organisation achieve its aims. You could list the top 10 outcomes volunteers have enabled your organisation to achieve, this information could be presented to volunteers as you would a certificate or it could also be posted on your website.

Give volunteers opportunities to enhance their personal development – Offering additional training or joining staff training is a good way to help volunteers increase their knowledge and develop their skills. You must ensure that the training is relevant to their role so as not to be perceived as recompense for their volunteering.





Inviting a volunteer to take on an ambassador role for your organisation

– Supporting volunteers to take on these roles can be viewed as an approach to demonstrating that the volunteer is valued and they are entrusted to represent your organisation.

Publicise what volunteers do – Produce a video of their work, get good news stories in the press, on your website and intranet sites so that the public and other staff can clearly see the great support they give to your organisation.

Involve volunteers in decision making

– Have volunteer meetings or invite volunteers to staff meetings. It is important that volunteers' voices are heard. Their ideas and insight can be an invaluable source of information for your organisation to feed into plans and decision-making processes.

Keep volunteers informed – Keep volunteers up to date with what is going on in the organisation, this is especially useful for volunteers that are supporting on a number of sites or in the community.


Certificates – This could be a simple thank you certificate or a certificate that marks length of service or anniversary of volunteer service.





Events – Some organisations arrange special events to celebrate volunteers' achievements. Volunteers' Week is a great time to formally thank and recognise your volunteers or if your organisation has awareness days/weeks you may want to ensure that celebrating volunteers' is part of this.

Badges/uniform – Some volunteer teams have badges and/or t-shirts and this can really help people feel part of a team and sense of pride in representing your organisation. This can be especially useful for volunteers in a public facing role.

 **Support and supervision** – Volunteers should have a named person who they can go to with questions and queries. Most support is done informally as part of day to day activities and is about taking the time to chat and getting to know your volunteers. More formal supervision is also beneficial as it allows two-way communication, any issues can be nipped in the bud and feedback can provide reassurance to volunteers.

Awards – Some organisations have their own in-house awards which is a great way of bringing the whole team of staff and volunteers together. You may also want to nominate your volunteers for external awards.

National Volunteers Week (1-7 June)

National Volunteers Week is an ideal opportunity to celebrate and to congratulate volunteers for all their contribution to the organisation.



<https://volunteersweek.org>

Volunteering Wales

Volunteers of all ages can log their hours on the Volunteering Wales website platform and earn digital achievement badges for 50, 100, 200, 500 and 1000 hours of volunteering.



<https://volunteering-wales.net/vk/volunteers/index-covid.htm>

Local Recognition Schemes

There are also local volunteer recognition schemes within most CVCs, contact your local Volunteer Centre for details.





National Recognition Schemes

WCVA (Wales Council for Voluntary Action) administers the Welsh Charity Awards, which includes several categories for volunteer recognition.



<https://wcva.cymru/training-events-awards>

Young Volunteers

#iwill Week is an annual week (in November), to share and celebrate the stories of young people that get involved in social action.



<https://www.iwill.org.uk>

The Diana Award

Established in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales, The Diana Award is the most prestigious accolade a young person aged 9-25 years can receive for their social action or humanitarian work.

This is the longest running award for young people through a retrospective nomination process only. Young people do not work towards the award, rather they demonstrate their suitability through their actions, without any expectation of reward.

Ask them!

If in doubt ask your volunteers. You can ask for this topic to be discussed at volunteer meetings and some organisations conduct annual volunteer surveys.



West Glamorgan Volunteering Support is a multi-agency project creating shared resources to develop the knowledge, management and coordination of volunteers and volunteer involving organisations across the Swansea and Neath Port Talbot areas. It has been funded through the Welsh Government Volunteering Recovery Fund.

The project partners are:

Neath Port Talbot Council, Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service, Swansea Bay University Health Board, Swansea Council, Swansea Council for Voluntary Service and West Glamorgan Regional Partnership.

For more information visit:

www.westglamorgan.org.uk/wgvs