

***Recognising and Rewarding
Sports Unsung Heroes
and Heroines –
The Volunteers!***



Fact: Without volunteers, most sports organisations would grind to a halt

Fact: Sport volunteers represent over 26% of the volunteer work force in England

Fact: If every volunteer were paid for their time and expertise the cost to sport in the UK would be in excess of £14billion each year

Fact: The majority of volunteers willingly give their time and expertise week after week, month after month and year after year with no recognition or reward – except the satisfaction of a job well done

Fact: Sports organisations that invest time and effort in recognising and rewarding volunteers find it easier to recruit, retain and develop their volunteers than those that don't

This step by step guide aims to help sport organisations to identify:

WHY they should recognise and reward their volunteers

HOW to go about establishing a recognition programme that is appropriate to the organisation and its volunteers

WHERE NEXT – opportunities to link into other volunteer recognition programmes in the local and wider sporting community

The principles are the same, whether your organisation is a small local club, a national governing body of sport, for example, The Football Association, or a district or county sport organisation. By working through the seven steps, you will develop a volunteer recognition and reward programme that reflects your organisations values and priorities, and meets the needs of your volunteers.



Step One –

Putting Volunteering on the agenda

Volunteers will be your organisations' most valuable asset. If you need any convincing about this, just set aside ten minutes to do some sums!

How many hours have you given to the organisation in the last month? My hours

Think about five other volunteers that you work with regularly.

How many hours, collectively have they given over the last month? Their hours

Total:

Multiply this total by 15.

£15.00 is an approximate average hourly cost for the type of expertise that goes into running a sports club – (accountancy, painting, general maintenance, timekeeping, administration, pitch marking, legal)

Total @ £15 per hour £

Now multiply this by 12 (months) to give you an idea of the value of **just 6** volunteers over a typical year.

Convinced? **But volunteers are worth far more than money – they are worth their weight in gold to the organisation, making possible all the sport and physical activities that your members and others enjoy.**

Things to think about:

What priority does your organisation give to looking after its most valuable asset?

Is volunteering a regular item on your agendas?

Who is responsible for the recruitment, retention, recognition and reward of volunteers?

Before you continue to Step Two:-

- Think about the way in which your organisation invests in its volunteers
- Identify one or two people who can work with you to take responsibility for developing a recognition and reward programme



Step Two –

What's important to your volunteers?

This step encourages you to find out about the volunteers in your organisation, and what recognition and reward they would value. A definition of volunteering is that people willingly give their time and expertise for no financial gain or reward. But there is something that triggers all volunteers to get involved – some intrinsic reward, which might be different for every volunteer in your organisation, and so it cannot be assumed that everybody else volunteers for the same reasons as yourself.

If your volunteer recognition programme is going to be volunteer centred and to meet the volunteers', as well as the organisations' needs, you need to gather some information about your volunteers.

What motivates people to volunteer? – Your volunteers may give some or all of these responses and possibly some others

- Because their children/family members are involved
- To put something back into a sport from which they've gained enjoyment
- For social contact
- For personal development, to learn a new skill, to gain experience

- Because somebody recognised their expertise or value and asked them to get involved
- To make a difference to an organisation – introduce new policies, practices, help an organisation to develop

And they may have some additional reasons:

- _____
- _____
- _____

What motivates them to keep volunteering?

- Their initial motivation is still being met
- They are presented with new challenges and opportunities
- They know that they are making a difference and that their time and expertise is valued
- They enjoy the work
- Someone takes the trouble to notice their work and to say thank you

Anything else?

- _____
- _____
- _____

What de-motivates volunteers?

The opposite of all these!

How would volunteers like their work recognised and rewarded?

Ask an individual volunteer this question, and the response will probably be "*No reward needed, I do it because I enjoy it*".

Ask the question to all volunteers, about all volunteers and the answers will probably include some or all of the following, and probably some others:

- Someone who actually knows what they do, says thank you occasionally
- Someone who asks how things are going occasionally offers some help or support
- A phone call now and then to find out whether or not they are still enjoying what they're doing, and if they are interested in any other roles
- Being asked for their opinion about things
- A social gathering, at the end of the season, to say thank you
- Photos on the notice board, to let people know who does what
- A section in the club newsletter that recognises the behind the scenes players as well as the sporting success
- A specific mention at the Annual General Meeting
- A Volunteer of the Month award, presented along side the Player of the Month Awards

- Shorter term recognition not just long service awards
- Something that recognises all types of volunteers – even those who can only give a couple of hours a month
- Seeing someone from our club being nominated for the district, county, regional and national awards
- One of our Unsung Heroes on the BBC Sports Personality Awards Unsung Hero Programmes!

Things to think about:-

How will you find out what makes your volunteers tick?

- A questionnaire
- An open meeting
- A section on the membership renewal form
- A web based questionnaire
- An article in your newsletter

Anything else?

- _____
- _____

Who will do this, and by when?

Now onto the next step...



Step Three –

Identifying *WHY* volunteer recognition and reward is important to your organisation

Sports organisations that have developed recognition and reward programmes have identified the following benefits – to the organisation and to volunteers.

Recruiting and Retaining volunteers	Volunteers feel valued. They see that their time and expertise is acknowledged and that they make a significant difference to the running of the organisation. Volunteers who feel valued tend to stay with the organisation and to encourage others to volunteer.
Profile of the organisation	Volunteer Awards programmes are good news and create a positive impression of the organisation, and a great publicity opportunity within the organisation, and externally.
Values and ethos of the organisation	Volunteer recognition can be tailored to reflect the organisations' values and ethos. Volunteer recognition can help to demonstrate that all members are equally important to the organisation, whether they have served for 25 months or 25 years, and whether they are 16 or 65. Participants, players and performers respect and value the volunteers who make it possible for them to play or take part in their sporting activity.
Recognising volunteers as individuals	A flexible, volunteer centred recognition programme means that individual volunteers can be recognised in a way that is appropriate to them matching their motivation to volunteer to the way in which they are rewarded.
Feel good factor	An organisation that values its people creates an infectious 'feel good' factor. Members feel ownership of the organisation and are more likely to contribute positively to the organisations development.
Development of the organisation	A recognition and reward programme can be tailored to form an essential part of the organisation's development plan – helping to achieve the 'people' part of the plan.

Things to think about:

Why is it important for your organisation to recognise and reward volunteers?

Recruiting and Retaining volunteers	
Profile of the organisation	
Values and ethos of the organisation	
Recognising volunteers as individuals	
Feel good factor	
Development of the organisation	

Now to Step Four...



Step Four

Now you have a picture of your volunteers needs and the benefits that volunteer recognition and reward can bring to the organisation. Step four encourages you to think about the specific aspects of volunteering that you want to recognise and reward.

Sport organisations, in line with other volunteer-dependent organisations, have traditionally and quite rightly recognised volunteers' long service. But is it really necessary to serve for 25 years to gain recognition and thanks?

Depending upon the development priorities and reasons for recognising and rewarding volunteers in your organisation, you may have thought about:

A volunteer of the month award to:

- Keep the profile of volunteering high on the agenda
- Reward at least twelve people each year – different categories every month
- Make members aware of volunteers, watching out for those that they would like to nominate
- Provide a great news story every month
- Build progressively over the year to an annual award

A range of volunteer recognition and reward programmes, from low key to high profile to match rewards to individuals helps to ensure that as many volunteers as possible are recognised and rewarded, at a level that is appropriate to them.

- Thank you letters or cards, personalised to specify the contribution of each individual volunteer
- A certificate of thanks and recognition that would enhance any young person's National Record of Achievement
- Access to a coach education or officials training course that would recognise the hours of volunteering given by a Level One Sport leader, keen to develop their skills in a specific sport
- A Volunteer Recognition and Award Event
- Onward nomination to local community or sport specific volunteer awards

Recognition and rewards to reflect the range of volunteers and voluntary roles – a flexible way of focussing on the organisations' changing priorities, which could include: the recruitment of young volunteers; a recruitment drive across the board; school – club links; the need for people to become qualified coaches and officials, fundraising or getting more parents involved. You may choose to recognise a wide range of volunteer awards to celebrate the value of 'volunteering' as well as individual volunteers.

For example:

New volunteer, young volunteer, volunteer who has 'made a difference'; player nominated volunteer, fundraising volunteer, recruitment of other volunteers; event volunteer, committee volunteer, parent volunteer, long serving volunteer; teams or groups of volunteers.

Onward nomination to other awards

It may be that the profile of volunteering and volunteer management in your organisation is something that you want to promote locally, regionally or nationally. Linking your own volunteer award winners into other award programmes is a great way to raise their profile and the organisations. The availability of other award programmes may influence your own, making links between the two easy and progressive (more about this in Step Six).

Things to think about:-

- Clarify your organisations priorities and balance these against the needs of your volunteers
- Select volunteer recognition and reward ideas that will help to deliver these and that are realistic within the time and financial resources you have available
- Remember, it's better to start small, achieve success and progress, than to be over ambitious and fall at the first hurdle

Now to Step Five...





Step Five

How will you begin to put a volunteer recognition and reward programme in place?

Once you have decided the purpose and the focus of your volunteer recognition and reward programme, you'll be ready to put the systems in place to make it happen.

Other sport organisations that have successfully established volunteer recognition awards recommend that the simpler the system and the easier the nomination process, the more successful the programme.

Here are some questions and ideas to guide you through the process.

What **time scales** are you working to?

- Is there a major event in your calendar that would provide a great presentation opportunity?
- Are there external awards with which you wish to link, that will determine the time scale for your own organisations awards?
- Is there a natural 'end of season' which would provide an opportunity for a Volunteer Award Event?
- Allow plenty of time between promotion, inviting nominations, collecting nominations and working through the judging/assessing process. It ALWAYS takes longer than you think!

What **criteria** are you going to use to determine who is recognised and rewarded?

- Keep them simple and as objective as possible
- Make them specific to the award, and word criteria to help nominees to recognise what you are looking for, so that they can provide relevant information that supports their nomination
- The example below is for a Young Volunteer Award:-

The young person must have demonstrated some or all of the following:

- *Commitment to volunteering on a regular basis, over a period of at least one year*
- *Made a significant contribution to creating opportunities for other young people to play or to be involved in the sport, either as players or helpers*
- *Developed their own skills, knowledge and experience through on-the-job learning or by completing more formal education and training programmes*
- *Demonstrated their ability to work as a member of a team and to take individual responsibility for completing tasks to a high standard*
- *Achieved and sustained something as a young volunteer that makes them stand apart from their peers*
- *Introduced new ideas that have been adopted by the club*
- *Championed the role of young volunteers by acting as an excellent role model within the club/organisation*

What **nomination procedures** will you use?

In writing, on the web, on a special form, with or without additional information to support the nomination; by members only – or from other people; through self-nomination; by committee members or member organisations only? With or without the nominees' permission/knowledge; countersigned by others?

A standard nomination form will help to ensure that you get all the information you need in a standard format, which makes assessment much easier. Don't forget to include space for contact details of the nominee and person making the nomination!

How will you **promote** the recognition award and invite nominations?

On the web site, notice board, newsletter, by word of mouth, canvassing, direct mailing?

What is the **closing date** for nominations?

Does this give you sufficient time to follow up additional information and to notify recipients in plenty of time before the award presentation, (if relevant)?

Who will **receive** nominations and **assess** them against the criteria?

Think about inviting appropriate people from outside the organisations to help assess the nominations – they are more likely to be objective if they do not know the individual

nominees. And if confidentiality is an important part of your nomination process, keep the number of people 'in the know' to a minimum!

How many 'awards' will you make in each category – winner and runner up? Or maybe first, second and third?

Will all nominees receive a certificate?

The answer to these questions will depend on the frequency of the awards, and the organisation's resources.

When and how will the awards be announced and presented?

How will **you publicise and promote** the volunteer recognition awards, within the organisation and externally?

Success stories are good news – particularly those that feature local people, involved in local activities being recognised locally or nationally for their contribution to the community so don't forget to send stories and pictures to your local or regional newspaper alongside your own internal publicity systems – the web, newsletters, notice boards.



Step Six – What Next?

Have you ever wondered where those community or national Sports Volunteer Awards winners come from? Perhaps you have read reports in your local or regional newspaper, read your sport governing body magazine or visited the web site; or even watched the BBC Sports Personality of the Year Unsung Hero programmes, regionally or nationally and thought – "We have volunteers just like that in our club or county. I'll nominate themnext year!"

Well, make this the year! It could be much easier than you think, especially if you look outside your own organisation to see what other awards are out there to support your volunteer recognition and reward programmes, as you begin to develop the criteria for your own awards.

What Awards are there?

- Many governing bodies of sport, such as The England and Wales Cricket Board, The Royal Yachting Association, Squash Racquets Association have volunteer awards that link club to county awards, then onto regional awards and finally to national awards
- The Millennium Volunteer programme recognises commitment to volunteering by young people in sport and the Whitbread Young Achiever Awards have a special category for the Young Sport Volunteer of the Year

- The Central Council for Physical Recreation offers two award programmes that recognise volunteers. There are a number of 'non-sport' organisations that recognise the value of sport volunteers too
- At a local level, the local Council for Voluntary Action, or your local Volunteer Centre almost certainly runs a volunteer award programme to recognise local community volunteers – so why not put sport on the agenda too! Check out your County Sport partnership, sports forum or local authority sport unit– many of these now run a county level volunteer award programme, bringing together volunteers from a wide range of sports

Where can you find out more?

Sport England has produced a Volunteer Recognition Awards Calendar to guide you through the wide range of national level awards. The Guide offers details about each award, closing dates, nomination criteria, some hints and tips for nominations and lots more. You can access this at

www.sportengland.org/runningsport

At a local level, contact your local authority sport development officer, or your County Sport Partnership team – their contact details are available from your Sport England regional office or the web site www.sportengland.org

Things to remember, if you wish to link into other volunteer awards:-

- Criteria – nominations are much easier if your own awards have similar criteria to the link awards
- Timing – make sure that your awards are made in plenty of time for you to make an onward nomination within the closing date
- Promoting volunteering and your organisation – this is a great opportunity to raise the profile of your volunteers and your organisation locally, regionally and maybe nationally
- It's easy to do – and most of the information you need can be found, or accessed through the Sport England Volunteer Award Calendar, your County Sport partnership or your own governing body of sport
- The volunteers that you see receiving national awards are there because someone took the time to nominate them!

Now to Step Seven...





Step Seven –

What difference will this make to your organisation and your volunteers?

Think back to Step Three which encouraged you to think about WHY your organisation should recognise and reward its volunteers and Step Four which looked at the specific aspects of volunteering upon which you wanted to focus.

So how will you know how effective the recognition and reward programme has been?

Things to think about:

Take a few minutes to note 'Where you are now' and what you hope to achieve. Once the volunteer recognition and reward programme has had time to develop, check back to see just how successful you have been.

For example

The reason WHY we're doing this	Where we are now?	What have we achieved?
Recruiting and Retaining volunteers	We rely on the same people to do too many jobs, for too long. We need to recruit 20 new volunteers and to hang on to them once we've found them. We want particularly to attract some younger volunteers, under 25 years of age	

Running Sport is Sport England's' Club Development programme of workshops & resources. It is designed to help sports clubs and sports volunteers run their clubs as effectively as possible by addressing key issues such as volunteer management, club finances and development planning. The Running Sport Support Team (RSST) is a dedicated centre that co-ordinates the programme with partners, and supports the regional tutors who deliver the programme at local level.

Subjects in the current programme are:

- Volunteer Management
- Funding & Promoting Your Club
- A Club For All
- Sports Development Planning
- Developing Sporting Partnerships & Junior Clubs
- Sports Facility Development

For further information & an information pack, please contact the Running Sport Support Team.

And finally - remember: A volunteer recognition and reward programme should have benefits to the volunteers AND the organisation! And it can take a lot longer than you think! The example below will give you a time guide if you are starting from the beginning.

December
Step One –

October AGM identified a real issue around volunteering.
The Committee meets in December and makes a decision to do something about it!

January
Step Two –

Ask the volunteers for their views
An Open Forum is held

February
Step Three –

What do we wish to achieve through our recognition and reward programme?
The members' views are analysed
Retaining and supporting new volunteers are the agreed priorities

March
Step Four –

What aspects of volunteering do we need to recognise and reward?
Getting involved and keeping involved is agreed as the key message!

April
Step Five

Begin designing the recognition and reward programmes
Find out what else is out there – locally, regionally, nationally.
How does this affect the programmes?
We discover that the national governing body has a young volunteer award programme!

May

Finalise nomination procedures and closing dates.

The local youth sport development officer and the Mayor agree to help with judging!

June, July and August

Promote and publicise the awards programme.

The Committee make a special effort to get to know all the regular volunteers and to spend some time talking to them about their interests – (implementing the day-to-day recognition and reward ideas)

September

Closing date. Nominations received. Judging takes place and the awards are announced.

The Young Volunteer of the Year
The Newcomer Volunteer of the Year

Step Six

Onward nomination to the National Governing Body Regional Awards

October

Awards presented at a Volunteers Awards Evening

The Mayor comes to present the Awards and the local newspapers run a feature article!

November

National Governing Body Awards announced.

Our Young Volunteer wins and goes forward to the National Awards. The local paper runs a follow up article – "*Local youngster lends a helping hand and achieves regional accolade*"

December

Step Seven

Review the recognition, reward and awards programme.
90% of new volunteers sign up for another year!
New award introduced for next year – Parent Volunteer of the Year



YEAR
OF THE
VOLUNTEER
2005



and helping



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www.sportengland.org/runningsport