



Guidance for nominating a volunteer for Pat on the Back and Local Volunteer Awards

Introduction

At Guide Dogs, we want all volunteers to feel that your contribution is valued and appreciated. One form of volunteer recognition is to acknowledge where a volunteer has gone above and beyond what's expected of them. We recognise such efforts internally with the Pat on the Back scheme and Local Volunteer Awards.

This document is a handy guide for volunteers to both recognition schemes, and will provide you with guidance on how to nominate a fellow volunteer (or a member of staff).

What is Pat on the Back?

[Pat on the Back](#) is a scheme whereby volunteers (and staff members) can be nominated for carrying out something over and above their usual activities or duties in line with our behaviours and contributing to our overall purpose. It can be a one-off activity or something that has taken place over a period of time.

How to nominate a fellow volunteer for a Pat on the Back

If you would like to nominate another volunteer for a Pat on the Back, you can do so by using a [form hosted on the Volunteer Information Point](#) (VIP).



How to nominate a member of staff for a Pat on the Back

If you would like to nominate a member of staff, you can do so by [contacting the Volunteering Office](#), who will be able to assist with your nomination.

What happens after I have nominated a volunteer for Pat on the Back?

When nominating a volunteer for a Pat on the Back, they will receive a special pin badge and a 'thank you' letter with your nomination message and endorsed by our Head of Volunteering.

They will also be automatically put forward for consideration for a [Local Volunteer Award](#).

What are the Local Volunteer Awards?

Local Volunteer Awards are celebrations hosted at local sites or within local communities to recognise the contribution of our volunteers and share their inspirational stories with others. They are awarded in six categories, following our PEOPLE behaviours:

- Person Centred
- Expert
- Optimistic
- Partner
- Lead by Example
- Engage

Volunteers may also be nominated for the following awards:

- Royal Patron Award
- Volunteer Newcomer

The Royal Patron Award recognises volunteers and employees who have been a part of Guide Dogs for 10 or more years. The Volunteer



Newcomer Award acknowledges the contribution of volunteers who have been volunteering in that role or have assisted with a specific short-term project or goal for less than one year.

What is the nomination process for the Local Volunteer Awards?

The nomination process is again through the Pat on a Back nomination form. Local Volunteer Awards are of course more “competitive” than a Pat on the Back, in the sense that a selection has to be made from a range of worthy nominations. It's therefore worth thinking about a Pat on the Back nomination from this perspective, when completing one, i.e. think about what you can say to demonstrate the impact and value of this volunteer, and what they have done.

How to write a nomination that stands out

When writing your nomination for a Pat on the Back, be sure to read [the full descriptions and examples](#) of each in order to accurately categorise the nominee's actions. Your Pat on the Back nomination would in any case greatly benefit from this, but for the volunteer to be considered for a Local Volunteer Award you will need to show why what they did is an exemplar of that particular behaviour.

For all the nominations and categories, look at what the nomination guidance for the award states, think about how the nominee meets that standard and how to evidence it. What might make them particularly stand out?

Make sure you are giving a good clear explanation of why you think the volunteer/member of staff deserves to be recognised.

The time and thought devoted to a nomination make a difference. People shortlisting nominations often find there are just two or three sentences about the nominee in the section that is meant to explain why they should win the award. The volunteer could be fantastic, but the judges need to know how they are, and why you think this.



If you are praising another volunteer for a particular value or behaviour, give examples. It's not uncommon for entries to an award to simply assert that someone is, say, passionate about their role. Telling the reader this isn't enough - you need to show them that this is true.

Outcome and Impact

When including examples, remember to describe the outcome and/or the impact of the volunteer's actions or behaviour.

Outcome means the positive, practical results of what they did. For example, they suggested a new fundraising opportunity - how much did it raise? What further opportunities did it lead to?

Impact refers to the difference an action or outcome made to others. E.g., if one of the things you are praising them for is being supportive to a team of volunteers, an example might be that they always make an effort to welcome new volunteers, acting as an informal buddy and making sure that they feel like an accepted part of the team from the start. This is good, but to really make it stand out, adding that new volunteers tell you how much they value this support really helps show what a difference the volunteer makes.

Highlight the value

If you're praising a volunteer for a particular action, highlight the values the action demonstrates (e.g. commitment), and any particular additional values the volunteer brought to what they did (stepping in to help showed commitment, but this is elevated if you can also say the way the volunteer behaved when helping showed empathy, team spirit, or the willingness to lead by example). If the writer's enthusiasm and appreciation for the volunteer comes across in the nomination, the people reading it will pick up on this.



Be aware of the information you are sharing

Volunteers presented with a Pat on the Back will receive a letter including the wording of your nomination. Nominations for any award will be read by people shortlisting and on judging panels - and if successful are likely to be read out at a ceremony and/or published in a public arena. Therefore, you mustn't include personal information in your nomination such as the full names of other people, any medical information or any other information which you would not want the volunteer or any other person to read. Please be considerate of your tone and content.

End of document.