



# The King's Award for Voluntary Service



## The King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS) Guidance for His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenants

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## Foreword

The King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS) aims to recognise outstanding volunteer-led groups from all across the UK.

This guidance aims to provide a practical manual to help Lord-Lieutenants (LLs), their Deputies (DLs) and staff carry out their role as local assessors when evaluating groups during the local assessment process for the 2024 round.

We recognise that this can be a demanding role and are keen to support you in any way we can. Please do get in touch with us if you have any queries or would value some additional advice. Our contact details are set out in section 9 (pg.19).

The KAVS Team

[www.kavs.dcms.gov.uk](http://www.kavs.dcms.gov.uk)

## 1. Introduction

The King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS) is the **highest award given to local volunteer groups** across the UK to recognise outstanding work done in their communities. It was created in 2002 to celebrate the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation, previously named The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, and following HM King Charles III's accession, His Majesty indicated his desire to continue the Award. It is the MBE for volunteer groups and is awarded to organisations for life.

**Successful groups receive** a crystal award and a certificate bearing His Majesty's signature - both presented by the local Lord-Lieutenant. They gain the right to use the KAVS emblem, subject to certain guidelines. They are also invited to nominate two volunteers to attend a Royal Garden Party the following year.

**The annual announcement of awardees is on 14 November** on HM The King's Birthday. A list of the successful groups with their individual citations is published in The Gazette, available online at <https://www.thegazette.co.uk>, and promoted widely elsewhere.

**Lieutenancies have a key role** in the process. You are responsible for assessing local nominated groups, presenting awards and promoting awareness of KAVS locally. In doing this you will need to **access the KAVS admin website**. This will allow you to download forms, upload your reports and receive automatic notifications at key stages of the process. Advice on using the website is at **Annex B but a separate pdf is also attached**. Please read this advice (introduced in 2021).

**The KAVS Team** at the Department for Culture, Media & Sport administers and promotes the Award on behalf of the Royal Household. The small but dedicated team is keen to support Lieutenancies in their role and is available to help with any queries or provide training events locally.

## 2. Overview of the KAVS Process

A brief description of the process is provided below. You can also find a diagram at **Annex A**.

### **Nomination (1 September - 1 December)**

Members of the public submit nominations via the KAVS website <https://kavs.dcms.gov.uk>.

### **Eligibility checks (Mid-September - early December)**

The KAVS Team reviews nominations to check that they are eligible and assigns them to the appropriate Lieutenancy.

### **Notification to Lieutenancies (Mid - Late December)**

Lieutenancies with nominated groups in their area receive an email inviting them to log in to the KAVS website for details.

### **Local Assessment and Reporting by Lieutenancies (1 January - 12 April)**

This involves:

- making initial checks on the group's governance and reputation, followed by a visit to see them in operation
- completing the online local assessment report form
- deciding whether to recommend / not recommend
- adding a written citation by the Lord-Lieutenant supporting the decision (or explaining why the group has not been recommended)
- submitting the online form by mid-April

### **Review by the KAVS Independent Assessment Committee (21 April - Late June)**

All the groups recommended by Lieutenancies are assessed in detail by the National Assessment Committee, resulting in a shortlist of proposed awardees. More information on the Committee can be found [here](#).

### **Royal approval (July)**

The Committee's proposed list of awardees is submitted to HM The King for approval.

### **Successful groups and LLs notified in confidence (Early- Mid October)**

An e-letter is sent in confidence to leaders of successful groups, explaining that they are to receive an award, congratulating them and describing next steps, which includes keeping the news confidential until the official announcement on 14 November. LLs also receive details of the successful and unsuccessful groups.

### **Media pack sent (Late October)**

Awardees and Lieutenancies receive a media pack (available to view or download from the KAVS website). This explains arrangements for the announcement and encourages successful groups to promote the Award. It additionally includes useful material, such as template press releases, graphics for social media etc.

### **Unsuccessful groups notified (Early Nov)**

A physical letter signed by the Chair of KAVS, Sir Martyn Lewis CBE, is sent to leaders of unsuccessful groups explaining that they have not been successful, but congratulating them on their work.

### **Formal Announcement (14 Nov)**

The list of awardees with short citations is published formally in The Gazette and announced on the DCMS website. The KAVS Team, DCMS colleagues, Palace, Lieutenancies and awardees use press and social media engagement to celebrate the Awards. This includes a promotional video, an interactive map of awardees, press releases for the UK and each devolved nation, as well as blogs/posts featuring inspiring case studies from the round.

### **Lord-Lieutenant presents Awards (Mid Dec - Apr)**

Lieutenancies contact successful groups to agree arrangements for a presentation event, usually at the group's premises. The Award crystal and certificate are sent directly to the LL in November; however, please note that delivery times may vary and therefore we recommend that presentations are arranged from Mid December onwards.

### **Attendance at Royal Garden Parties (following May/Jun)**

Two people from each successful group will be invited to attend a garden party in May/June the year after they receive the Award.

### 3. What groups are eligible for KAVS?

KAVS aims to celebrate outstanding local voluntary groups across the UK. It is a prestigious award of Royal recognition, only given to around 250 of the nominated groups each year. We are therefore looking for groups whose level of initiative and impact are truly exceptional.

#### What type of groups are suitable?

KAVS awards are intended for groups that are led by volunteers and provide a benefit for local communities. They can range from very small unconstituted groups consisting of friends to larger more established organisations and registered charities. No matter their size or scope, to be considered for a KAVS they must meet basic eligibility requirements summarised below. (N.B. this is now included for reference in the local assessment form).

The group **must**:

- be made up of three or more people
- be based in the UK, Channel Islands or the Isle of Man
- have been in operation for at least three years before nomination
- have over half its volunteers eligible to reside in the UK
- be led by volunteers, not by paid staff; over half its members should be volunteers
- provide a specific and direct benefit to the local community

The group **must not**:

- have been nominated for a QAVS/KAVS award in the past 3 years
- have already received a QAVS/KAVS award
- operate as a national organisation, as KAVS is aimed at local volunteer groups.\*
- have fundraising or grant-making as its primary focus
- be based within or in support of a public service, unless they have a separate identity from the public service organisation.\*\*
- operate solely for the benefit of animals, unless it can demonstrate that its work provides significant other benefits to the local community (for example, therapy pets).

\* A group of a larger regional or national organisation can be nominated instead. See our [online guidance](#) for more information.

\*\* See our [online guidance](#) for more information.

If you are unclear whether a particular group is eligible, you can check <https://kavs.dcms.gov.uk/> and the FAQs in **Annex F**, or contact the KAVS team for further advice.

## What are we looking for?

A successful group will normally have the following characteristics:

- **Volunteer-led:** The volunteers are ‘in the driving seat’, setting the direction for the group’s work and spotting opportunities to develop it further each year.
- **Making a considerable difference locally:** The initiative of this group and the efforts of its volunteers have changed the community dramatically for its beneficiaries.
- **Exceptional compared with comparable groups:** This group is likely to be one of the best of its kind in the UK.
- **Well-run:** High standards of governance, financial management, safeguarding etc. are clearly in evidence.
- **Outstanding reputation locally:** The group has a high standing in the community and has an excellent reputation with beneficiaries, service providers and council officials (if appropriate).

Some examples of excellent groups can be found on our official [website](#)

## 4. Local Assessment - a step by step guide

We recognise that each Lieutenancy has developed its own way of approaching local assessment, reflecting the resources available to them and the geographical size and nature of their area. We do not want to be prescriptive about how things should be done, as the local situation will be unique. However, the following sections will give an idea of good practice.

**Please note** - This section describes how to use the KAVS administrative website; there is also a separate manual that has been sent to the lieutenancy on this which is additionally available to be downloaded from your lieutenancy dashboard.

### Step 1: Decide who will take the lead on KAVS

Most Lieutenancies assign responsibility for KAVS to a DL with a keen interest in the voluntary sector. This DL, assisted by the Clerk if there is one, will take charge of inviting pairs of DLs to visit and assess any nominated groups. They might also co-ordinate the eventual decision-making process and the uploading of final reports to the KAVS website.

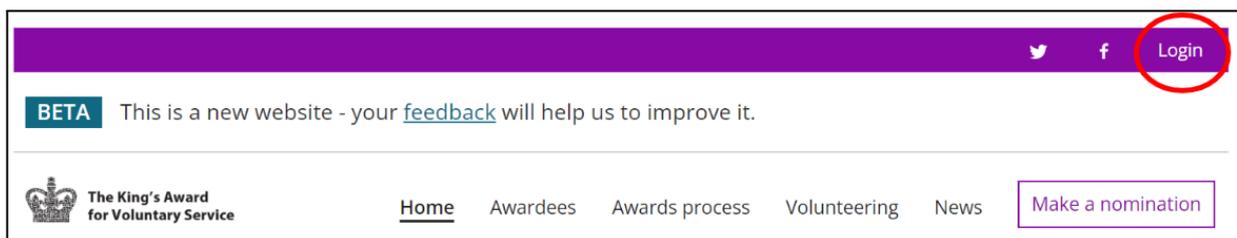
### Step 2: Ensure access to the KAVS website

At the end of November, the Lieutenancy KAVS lead or Clerk should check that all potential users are registered on the KAVS website [www.kavs.dcms.gov.uk](http://www.kavs.dcms.gov.uk) and can log in successfully. We will also send out an email reminder to Lieutenancies to ensure that their KAVS lead or Clerk have the correct access to the KAVS website. **Annex B** explains how to do this but if you have any questions, do contact us at [kingsaward@dcms.gov.uk](mailto:kingsaward@dcms.gov.uk).

### Step 3: Access your nominations online

The central KAVS team starts to check the eligibility of incoming nominations from mid-September and aims to assign all eligible nominations to the correct Lieutenancy by mid-December. Once this has been done, you will be able to see the nomination when you log in. Some Lieutenancies like to make occasional checks during October and November so they can start planning. However, please don't 'jump the gun' before we formally launch the local assessment stage in early January, as the list of nominations and the format of the local assessment form could still change.

In early December, all Lieutenancies with nominations will receive an email advising them to log on to the website to view them. Click on 'login' at the top of the menu bar.



The first thing you will land on is your Lieutenancy dashboard. You can click on the green button to start looking at reviewing the nominations, but do take time to see the other resources available on that page, including:

- a downloadable copy of this guidance
- access to leaflets and other promotional materials
- the KAVS logos and guidelines.

Click the green button to go to the nominations page. This will show the nominated groups for your area in the current round, along with their postcode and activity type.

Group name	Status	Postcode	Type of group	Last updated	View
<a href="#">African Families in the UK</a>	Local assessment in progress	CO1 1UG	Family Support Cultural		<a href="#">View</a>
<a href="#">Bar 'n' Bus</a>	Eligible by admin	SS7 2AP	Children and Young People Mental Health and Wellbeing		<a href="#">View</a>

Simply click on the name of the voluntary group to view the information on the nomination and get the relevant details to start the assessment. **If you think a nomination should have been assigned to a different Lieutenancy, please let the KAVS Team know as soon as possible.** Note - the nomination includes personal data for the nominator and group leader. **Annex G** has important advice about handling this securely.

**Step 4: Assign groups and arrange visits**

Usually, two DLs will be asked to assess a group. Try to decide this as soon as possible so that they can agree a date for their visit in good time before the panel meets. A suggested email explaining the purpose of the visit is at **Annex C** and a new introduction document outlining the key information needed is attached with this guidance. The contact details for the group leader will be on the nomination form.

**Step 5: Download the Local Assessment Form and start your initial research**

Before the visit takes place you should look at the questions in the local assessment form, so that you can refer to it when planning your assessment and start any background research.

We recommend that you prepare your answers offline - either printing off the form or completing it as a Word document on your laptop. You can download a blank Word version from the menu bar. If you prefer to start completing the online version straight away, just click on 'Complete local assessment form'.

The screenshot shows a nomination page for 'The Lovely Volunteer Group'. On the left, there are status indicators: 'Eligibility status' is 'ELIGIBLE' and 'Local assessment status' is 'RECOMMENDED'. Below this, it lists 'Type of group' as 'Arts' and 'Heritage', and 'Nomination submitted on' as '14 Sep 2021 at 19:23'. The main section is titled 'Nomination and local assessment form' and contains two green buttons: 'View nomination form' and 'Complete local assessment form'. Below these buttons is a link: 'Download nomination and local assessment form (PDF)'. Further down, there is a 'Letters of support' section with 'Name of the first supporter' as 'John Supporter' and 'Relationship to the group' as 'friend'. At the bottom of this section is a link: 'Download the first letter of support (PDF)'. Annotations with arrows point from the text on the right to the 'View nomination form' button and the 'Download the first letter of support (PDF)' link.

Provides a copy of the completed nomination form and anything you have entered on the LA form so far.

You can also download an editable Word version of the form from the top menu bar to use as a working document.

Letters of support here

The form asks around 30 questions about the group and is the key working document for your assessment. If, having started your research, you feel that the group does not meet the eligibility criteria (incorporated into the form) please let us know.

**Duplicates** - occasionally there might be multiple nominations for one group. If that happens, we will flag these in the list as duplicates and recommend that assessors conduct one assessment as normal on the one that we marked as eligible. You can view the duplicate nominations and incorporate information from them into your assessment and citation as necessary.

**Step 6: Initial research**

We recommend that you start by doing some due diligence online, researching the group’s reputation and governance and identifying any points to check with them. **Annexes D and E** provide further advice on this.

**Step 7: Visit the group**

The visit enables DLs to check key facts (e.g. number of volunteers, governance) and talk face to face with volunteers about the quality and impact of their work. The process will take about 2-3 hours and you should try to arrange it during their normal working hours. Please read the detailed local assessment tips at **Annex C**.

**Step 8: Complete the online local assessment form and select your recommendation**

After the visit, you should decide your answers to the local assessment questions and enter them onto the online form (see step 5 above). Click on the download PDF option if you need to share them with any colleagues without access to the website. If you don’t have time to complete it in one go, you can save a draft and return to it later using the ‘Save and come back later’ button at the bottom of the page.

Once you have filled in the online form and are happy with your answers, select either ‘recommended’ or ‘not recommended’ as appropriate. If the panel reaches a different conclusion, this can be changed later by the Clerk or lead DL.

<b>Local assessment outcome</b>	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Recommended	<input type="radio"/> Not recommended

**Step 9: Notify the KAVS lead that your report is ready for review by the LL (and panel, if there is one)**

You now need to let the Lieutenancy office (or lead DL) know that the report is ready for review. It’s also a good idea to download the pdf version of the report for your records.

If you are a Deputy Lieutenant, and can see the “Submit local assessment” button, **please don’t click it**. This will be done at the end of the process by a designated person at the Lieutenancy office with enhanced permission (usually the Clerk or lead DL for KAVS). See **Annex B**.

**Step 10: Decision to recommend**

The LL/panel should consider the information from the nomination and local assessment forms, as well as central guidance on the aims of the Award, when deciding whether a group is exceptional enough to be recommended. This can be hard to benchmark, so we would encourage you to research similar groups online and consider the examples of previous awardees on our public [website](#). Sometimes, you might feel that the group needs more time to mature. If so, this can be explained in the LL’s citation and the group encouraged to seek renomination in 3 years. If you decide that the group is unlikely to be considered outstanding at the national level, please mark it as ‘not recommended’. **Unsuccessful groups are not told at which stage they were rejected, so this will not jeopardise your future relationship with them. Nor will the detail of your reports and citations be made available, since these are treated as confidential. This information is also covered by Section 37 (1)(b) of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and is exempt, subject to a Public Interest Test.**

Once the outcome is decided, the LL’s citation will need to be drafted and agreed by the LL. Some advice on drafting the citation is at **Annex D**. We suggest around 400-600 words. If it is under 400 words, the National Assessment Committee might have insufficient evidence to judge the merit of the group and as a result they may be unsuccessful.

**Step 11: Online submission of local assessment form & citation**

The form and citation must be submitted via the website by the closing date, or the group’s nomination will not be sent to the National Assessment Committee. The completed version will be uploaded by an advanced user (usually the Clerk/lead DL), but the LL must have reviewed and approved it. The advanced user will check that the final decision is correctly stated for the group, either ‘recommended’ or ‘not recommended’. Only ‘recommended’ groups will go on to be assessed by the National Committee.

<b>Local assessment outcome</b>	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Recommended	<input type="radio"/> Not recommended

The advanced user will then click ‘Submit local assessment’ at the bottom of the page.

Save and come back later	<b>Submit local assessment</b>
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**Further advice**

Some tips on conducting the visit and completing the Local Assessment Form are at Annexes **C and D**.

## 5. National Assessment and Announcement

### National Assessment Committee

All nominations recommended by LLs will be considered by the [National Assessment Committee](#). The Committee is formed of members from across the UK with a breadth of experience and expertise in the voluntary sector. They are appointed on a pro bono basis. The Lord-Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, Johanna Ropner, currently sits on the Committee as the representative of the Lord-Lieutenant's Association. She does not get involved in assessing the nominations. Her role is to contribute the views of the LLs to discussions on the administration and development of the Award. Sir Martyn Lewis CBE is the Independent Chair of the Committee. He has a key role in observing and overseeing the committee assessment process to ensure it is fair and consistent.

Nominations are allocated to sub-groups with 3 assessors in each. The assessors will consider all the material in the nomination form, local assessment form and LL citation in advance. They will then come together at a moderation meeting to compare views on each group and decide which ones are worthy of the Award. **The bar is very high and only around half the nominations considered are likely to be successful.**

### Attending as an observer

It can be very useful for Lieutenancy representatives to attend the sub-group meetings as observers. The KAVS Team will email LLs about this in January each year. Only one person from each Lieutenancy may attend. They will be given priority if:

- they are on the waiting list from the previous year
- their Lieutenancy hasn't been before
- their county has historically low levels of awardees.

If a group from their Lieutenancy is discussed, the observer should keep the outcome strictly confidential until the announcement date on 14 November - especially since the outcome could change at the final committee meeting in May. Observers are asked not to interrupt Committee members' discussion and should keep any questions to the end of the session. These sessions are video meetings.

### Preparations for announcement

Once the final list of awardees has been agreed by HM The King, we will contact the leaders of successful groups in confidence (usually in early October) to let them know this and to check certain pieces of information for the announcement. We will also send a spreadsheet with both successful and unsuccessful groups to the relevant Lord-Lieutenants. Please note that:

- this information should be treated as **confidential until 14 November**.
- successful groups will be aware, but **unsuccessful groups will not be told until early November**.

If you see any errors (e.g. spelling mistakes) please let us know as soon as possible.

## 6. Engaging With Unsuccessful Groups

Groups that have been nominated and then recommended by the local Lord-Lieutenant will invariably be of a very high quality. However, not all of them will receive the Award because they will be up against the very best groups from across the UK. Unsuccessful groups will be notified by a posted letter signed by our Chair, Sir Martyn Lewis CBE, shortly before the Awards are announced. The letter is carefully phrased and very positive in tone. However, groups will nonetheless be disappointed and we realise that Lieutenancies are in the frontline in terms of managing this.

**If you are contacted by unsuccessful groups, please try to reassure them that this is no reflection on the group and the work that they do and that being nominated in itself is a fantastic achievement. We are keen to emphasise that all groups considered are undertaking great work in their communities and want to ensure that being unsuccessful in this year's award does not detract from their work or the volunteers effort and engagement.**

You may be asked to get detailed feedback about the National Committee's assessment. Please avoid getting drawn into this and bear in mind that, with several hundred groups in the process feedback will not be very detailed. We do try to make some notes about each decision so that we can provide these in confidence to Lieutenancies on request, mainly to help them understand the outcome.

### Further suggestions

Some Lord-Lieutenants choose to write an appropriate letter to unsuccessful groups in their area once the Awards are publicised. We very much support this.

Certain Lieutenancies also hold an event for all the nominated groups before the outcome of the assessment process is known. This presents a good opportunity for networking and sharing of ideas. It also re-enforces the point that all the nominated groups are worthy of local recognition, regardless of the outcome.

## 7. Presenting the Awards

If there is a successful group in your area, you will need to get in touch with them to arrange for the Lord-Lieutenant to present the Award on behalf of His Majesty The King.

### Format

There are certain protocols to be followed at the presentation stage, but the overall format of the event can be very relaxed. Possible options could include an informal drinks reception, afternoon tea, community picnic or a local civic event. Some Lieutenancies are able to arrange a special central event for several awardees; however, usually the presentation will take place at the group's own premises and it will be up to the group (in consultation with the Lieutenancy) to decide the best format. No central funding is available, so groups will normally wish to keep it fairly simple. The formal presentation will only take around 10 minutes, leaving plenty of opportunity for the group to showcase their work through presentations, tours, videos and interviews.

### Making the arrangements

You should aim to contact the group in mid-to-late November to congratulate them, explain how the award ceremony works and suggest some dates when the LL will be available. **NB: The ceremony should not be scheduled to take place before mid-December (see below).**

Normally the group will decide the format, venue, guests, refreshments and check the final date with the Lieutenancy. The Lieutenancy should give a steer on who else might be invited (e.g. DLs involved in the assessment, other civic dignitaries).

### Dispatch of crystals and certificates

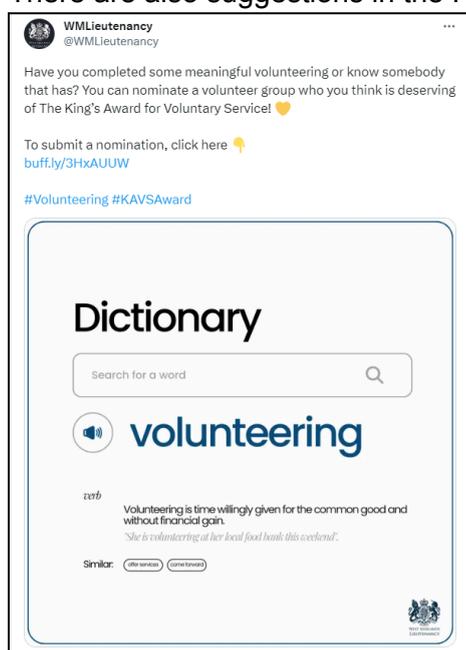
An engraved crystal and special certificate for each group will be delivered to the Lieutenancy during November. Do let the KAVS Team know in good time if you have any special requirements (e.g. delivered to LL home address). A commemorative edition of The Gazette will also be emailed to the Lieutenancy in November alongside the Media Pack, and we encourage you to distribute these to each group in their award ceremony. Depending on the number of Awards, deliveries might continue into early December, so **we recommend not organising the presentations until mid-December onwards**. If your ceremony is imminent and the materials have not arrived, please contact the KAVS Team.

In exceptional circumstances where the crystals or certificates arrive damaged, please contact the KAVS Team as soon as possible. Replacement crystals and certificates incur a cost; therefore, if a crystal/certificate is damaged whilst in the Lieutenancy's or awardee's care, the costs of the replacement should be covered by the party responsible for the damage.

Please see **Annex F** for further information and FAQs on KAVS crystals and certificates.

## Publicity

This is a wonderful chance to celebrate the work of the group and to bring volunteers, beneficiaries, supporters and other groups together. It also provides a good opportunity to promote the group and the Awards via the local press/social media and to complement the national publicity work carried out by DCMS via our website, Twitter and Facebook accounts. Do take the opportunity to promote the event through your own channels and remind the group to do the same. The KAVS Team will share any relevant social media posts and might feature the event in a blog on our website. Our media resource pack, available to awardees and Lieutenancies via the KAVS website, will provide ideas and resources including format for local press releases. We will update this in early October and send an email to remind you. There are also suggestions in the FAQs at **Annex F**.



## 8. Encouraging Future Nominations

As LLs and DLs you can play an important role in encouraging nominations. You could do this in the following ways:

- If you come across an outstanding volunteer group, encourage someone to nominate them. We prefer nominations to come from members of the public. If absolutely necessary, a DL can make a nomination, but they should not be involved in the subsequent local assessment or panel decision. (NB: LLs cannot submit a nomination).
  - Ask your contacts in local government or CVS groups whether they know of any good groups to nominate.
  - Take the opportunity to promote KAVS and ensure that people are aware of it. Social media can be a very effective way of encouraging nominations. It's helpful to create your own posts as shown below, or to share posts and tweets from the KAVS team social media accounts. You can find links to leaflets and our media resource pack
- FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY - KAVS Guidance for Lieutenancies (November 2024)

containing useful logos and templates by logging into the Lieutenancy area of our website. Remember the need to get consent if using people's photos (**Annex G**).

NB: Some Lieutenancies have asked us whether success in KAVS relies on them getting personally involved with making large numbers of nominations. This is **definitely not the case**. We are looking for high quality nominations rather than large numbers. Rather than encouraging very large numbers of nominations, please instead put the word out to people in your local community who might know of groups that are genuinely worthy of an MBE and have the level of volunteer leadership and exceptional impact expected for the Award.

## **9. Handling Complaints with Past Awardees and Nominated Groups**

Very occasionally we might receive a complaint or be made aware of an issue with a past QAVS/KAVS awardee. In these cases we will need to assess whether there is a serious cause for concern. If appropriate, we will ask the relevant Lieutenancy to help us look into this.

We are seeking to develop a more formal complaints, forfeiture and appeals process to ensure that any issue is correctly and fairly considered. We will update you in more detail once this is formalised.

The FAQ section at Annex F (pg. 49) provides more detail.

## 10. How the KAVS Team can help

We hope this guidance and the detailed annexes will help you carry out your role. In addition, the KAVS Team will be very happy to:

- Offer a video conference to brief LLs, DLs and staff in a particular region. This will depend on the time of year and the availability of the team.
- Offer training on the website for new LLs, DLs and staff who want to refresh their skills.
- Add your Lieutenancy to a list of observers at the National Assessment sub-group stage.
- Answer questions about all aspects of the process via email or phone.

The King's Award Team is currently organised as follows:

<b>Paul Harron - Head of Honours &amp; KAVS</b>	Strategic oversight (along with Honours) <a href="mailto:paul.harron@dcms.gov.uk">paul.harron@dcms.gov.uk</a>
<b>Abby Oshodi - Programme &amp; Policy Manager</b>	Responsibility for the KAVS programme and policy development (from mid-December 2024) <a href="mailto:abby.oshodi@dcms.gov.uk">abby.oshodi@dcms.gov.uk</a>
<b>Emmalaine Faurillo - Policy Advisor</b>	Responsibility for the KAVS delivery and policy implementation <a href="mailto:emmalaine.faurillo@dcms.gov.uk">emmalaine.faurillo@dcms.gov.uk</a>
<b>Grace Coulter-Duckett - KAVS Administrator</b>	Responsibility for KAVS administration and social media; interface with public <a href="mailto:grace.coulter-duckett@dcms.gov.uk">grace.coulter-duckett@dcms.gov.uk</a>

### Contact details

For day to day queries about nominations, procedures or the KAVS website, please email [kingsaward@dcms.gov.uk](mailto:kingsaward@dcms.gov.uk)

Please bear in mind that we are a small team and we will do our best to answer queries as quickly as we can but it may not always be possible to respond immediately.



@KingsAwardVS <https://twitter.com/KingsAwardVS>

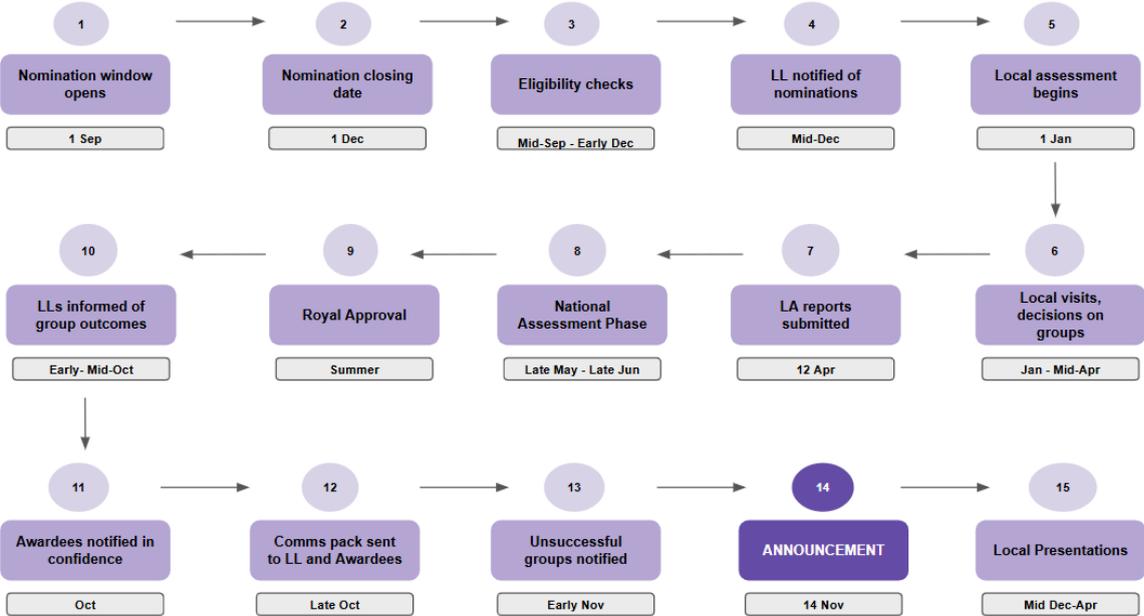


@KingsAwardVS <https://www.facebook.com/KingsAwardVS/>

**ANNEX A: DIAGRAM OF THE KAVS PROCESS FOR THE 2025 ROUND**

The King’s Award is announced on 14 November, HM The King’s birthday.

Below outlines the 2025 timeline, implementing the revisions made to the award round’s sequencing.



## ANNEX B ACCESSING AND USING THE KAVS WEBSITE

Website address: [www.kavs.dcms.gov.uk](http://www.kavs.dcms.gov.uk)

The website's 'back-end' is essential to the administration of KAVS. It is used for:

- receiving and storing nominations from the public
- sharing nomination details with the relevant Lieutenancy
- receiving and storing local assessment forms and citations
- making this information accessible to the national assessors
- submitting additional information to the KAVS Team (e.g. Royal Garden Party attendees)
- displaying guidance on the Award and its procedures

Anyone nominating, assessing or administering KAVS needs to be able to log in. See instructions below.

### **“Advanced Lieutenancy Users”**

Between 1 and 3 people at the Lieutenancy should be identified as 'advanced users' giving them additional powers to:

- change colleagues' logins to give them Lieutenancy access without having to go to the KAVS Team
- submit the final report and recommendation to the KAVS Team.

If you are not sure who has this status, do get in touch with us.

### **Step 1: Get access to the KAVS website**

The Lieutenancy clerk will be able to add you if you are not an existing user. Instructions are in the separate website guidance manual.

### **Step 2: Login with new password**

Click **Login** (top right hand corner), choose your user type (Lieutenancy), then enter your email address and password. If you have forgotten your password, you can reset it yourself by simply clicking on the '*forgotten password*' link on the sign-up page. Please note, password reset emails will go to the email address you used to sign in. If you do not receive the email, check your spam and junk mail.

### **Using the KAVS website to access and upload material**

The step by step guide in section 4 describes in detail how to do this. We have also sent a separate website manual to the Lieutenancy.

### **Asking for help**

We are planning improvements to the website, but in the meantime we have included some advice on common problems below. Please do not hesitate to contact the team at [kingsaward@dcms.gov.uk](mailto:kingsaward@dcms.gov.uk) if you are having difficulties.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

### 1. Need Lieutenancy access

You might have used your email address to nominate a group in the past. If you now want to use this email address for your Lieutenancy role, just get in touch with the Lieutenancy clerk and ask them to add you as a lieutenancy user.

### 2. Password is not strong enough

The password needs to come up as 'very strong' before it will be accepted. We suggest a long password for greater security. Consider using a phrase or a song lyric, adding numbers, symbols or more letters to make it stronger.

### 3. Forgotten password

If you have forgotten your password, you can reset your password by clicking [here](#) (This is the password reset button as found on our website). Please enter your email address, click 'Send me password instructions', and the website will send you an email with a link to reset your password. If you cannot see this email, please check your spam folder. If you are having problems, contact us at [kingsaward@dcms.gov.uk](mailto:kingsaward@dcms.gov.uk) and we can reset it for you.

### 4. Locked account

If your account is locked, you can 'unlock it' by clicking [here](#). (This is the unlock reset button as found on our website) Please enter your email address, and click 'Resend unlock instructions'. You will then receive an email with a link in it, which when clicked on will unlock your account. If you cannot see this email, please check your spam folder. If you are having problems contact the KAVS Team at [kingsaward@dcms.gov.uk](mailto:kingsaward@dcms.gov.uk) and we can unlock your account for you.

### 5. Can't find nominations for my Lieutenancy

There are several reasons for this:

- a. Nominations cannot currently be seen by Lieutenancies until after the 1st December (nomination window deadline). If you attempt to view your nominations before this, no nominations will show. We intend to address this for future rounds.
- b. Eligibility checks may not have been fully completed yet. We intend to complete all eligibility checks by mid October.
- c. Please double check that you have signed in as a Lieutenancy user, not a nominator.
- d. There may be no nominations for your county. Please contact us to see how we can work with you to promote KAVS in your area.

### 6. Browsers: Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome

If you are having problems with the KAVS website, try accessing it via an up-to-date version of the Google Chrome browser (rather than Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox). This often sorts the problem.

**Further troubleshooting advice is included in Annex F (FAQs)**

## ANNEX C TIPS FOR CARRYING OUT THE LOCAL ASSESSMENT

The guidance below explains the normal approach, but please tailor/amend to suit your local context.

### PREPARATION

1. Contact the group as early as possible in order to discuss suitable dates and possible formats for the meeting. You could email or call them along the following lines:

*Dear (Group Leader),*

*You may be aware that (group) has been nominated for The King's Award for Voluntary Service. Congratulations! This is an excellent achievement and we are thrilled that those in the local community think so highly of your group. I am contacting you on behalf of the (County / City) Lieutenancy, as we have responsibility for assessing any nominated groups in our area.*

*The next stage of the process will be for me and a colleague to visit your group to meet you and other representatives. Ideally we would want to see the group in action and discuss its work with representatives of the management committee, some volunteers, paid staff (if any) and some of the people who benefit from your activities. We will probably need around 2 – 3 hours.*

*At the meeting, we will be keen to see certain documents, so it would be helpful to have available:*

- *your public liability insurance*
- *a record of the DBS (or equivalent) checks of your volunteers if appropriate*
- *your annual report and accounts*
- *any surveys or evidence to show the impact of your group and the need for its work*
- *the latest volunteer and staff numbers (including hours worked, if possible)*
- *a list of the roles carried out by volunteers and staff.*
- *any promotion material such as leaflets.*

*Please could you reply to this email by (date) with suggestions for possible dates for the meeting? Alternatively, you could call me on ( ).*

*We very much look forward to meeting you and your group.*

**Ensure that the agreed arrangements will allow you to talk with** representatives of the group's governing committee, the volunteers, the beneficiaries, paid staff (if any).

NB: Sometimes a group will explain that this is not a good time for them to be considered (e.g. they have a large building project or there are health problems for the leader). **If that is the case do contact the KAVS team straight away, as we can withdraw them** and allow for renomination the following year. However, once the local assessment is properly underway, this is less straightforward.

**We have created a summary document to accompany this email (Annex I) which we have attached as a separate template and can be customised. (With thanks to the Leicestershire Lieutenancy with their help with putting this together)**

2. Prepare for your visit by
  - reading the nomination form
  - making yourself familiar with the Local Assessment Form
  - conducting any online due diligence in advance (**see Annex D**)
  - ensuring you have a clear understanding of the requirements of the local assessment process and the information required, so that you can develop appropriate questions.
  
3. When reading the nomination form ask yourself:
  - Is there evidence that would set the group **above and beyond** the normal type of activity that you might expect from a group of this type?
  - Are there any sections of the nomination form where you would like more detail or evidence about the group's activity and how it is outstanding?
  - What 'open' questions will you need to ask at the visit in order to get this?
  - Is there any information that needs clarifying e.g. volunteer hours worked, volunteer/staff ratios? (If you think the group may not meet eligibility requirements please check with us.)

## **THE VISIT**

4. When visiting the group, take with you:
  - A copy of the group's nomination form
  - The Local Assessment Form asking specific information about the group. The annotated version at **Annex D** suggests things to cover and additional questions to ask. Some of these suggestions are now included in the assessment form, but it's still worth looking at **Annex D** for more detail.
  - A list of your own additional questions
  - A copy of our [privacy policy](#) explaining how we will use and protect their personal data (alternatively email it to them).
  
5. Try to see the group in action first and talk to some of its clients/ beneficiaries. Then work through your questions with representatives of the management committee and the volunteers who deliver activities.
  
6. Don't try to fill in the assessment form during the discussion. Instead, make notes of the examples, evidence and information provided so that you can fill in the form later.
  
7. It's helpful to start by checking the basic details set out on the nomination form to make sure that local and national assessors have accurate information. In particular, we ask you to check that the following information is correct:
  - name of the group (important for any published announcement, if successful)
  - the group leader's name and contact details (so we can contact them in confidence, if successful)
  - The correct number of volunteers and their roles

8. We also ask you to help the group decide their short citation at this stage, as you will be well-placed to steer them on the appropriate style. Please explain that this is a short summary of their activity that will be used for the certificate and the published announcement, if they are successful. There are various guidelines for the length and style of the citation, set out below.

- *Aim for no more than 15 words (max. 100 characters). If the group name is long, the citation will need to be shorter, as the group name will take up space)*
- *The **group name should not be included**, as it will already be quoted*
- *Ensure that the citation accurately reflects the work of volunteers (as opposed to the wider organisation)*
- *The citation should not appear boastful e.g. "world-class volunteers".*

Do manage the group's expectations. There is no certainty that they will receive a KAVS, as the bar is very high. We are just getting the citation at an early stage to avoid a last minute rush and because DLs will be familiar with the citation style.

9. You can then move onto the key questions, asking about the group's activities, organisation, and the difference it makes. Try to ask a series of 'open questions' that encourage detailed answers, rather than "yes" or "no". **Annex D** suggests possible questions for you to use. **Key things to pull out are:**

- **Is this group really volunteer led? Are volunteers really driving it?**
- **Is its impact exceptional?**
- **In what way is it doing things better than other similar groups?**

10. Try to get examples and numbers to back up statements about the group (e.g. actual things that the volunteers have done, numbers helped). This will give the LL and national assessors a better feel for its work and impact.

## EXPLAINING NEXT STEPS

11. At the end of the visit, it is helpful to explain what will happen next and when the group will hear the outcome.

- *The next step is for us to write up a report.*
- *This report then goes to the National Assessment Committee, along with the nomination form, the letters of support and a citation from the Lord-Lieutenant.*
- *The National Committee considers all nominations via a series of sub-groups. It then decides which groups will be recommended to His Majesty The King.*
- *Your organisation will therefore be assessed at a UK level, alongside other groups doing similar types of work.*
- *The Awards will be announced on 14 Nov. You will be contacted shortly beforehand about the outcome.*
- *The National Assessment Committee receives several hundred nominations each year and only around 50% of nominated groups are granted the Award. The standard of nominations is always very high and there is no guarantee at this point that you will be successful in achieving a KAVS.*

12. Even if you think the group is outstanding, **please keep your comments as neutral as possible in order not to raise expectations.** The local assessment contributes to,

but does not determine, whether the group will receive a KAVS. You should take care not to create an expectation that an Award will definitely be granted.

## WRITING THE REPORT

13. After the visit, use your notes to make a first draft of your responses to the local assessment questions (the 'report') and consider whether you need to check details or seek further information from the group. You will need to complete all the fields, but do just use 'N/A' if the question is not relevant.
14. Remember that your report will be read by members of the KAVS National Assessment Committee, who will not have detailed knowledge of the group, nor the local context in which it works. Reports should explain context, impact and avoid local jargon.
15. Some Lieutenancies identify a central person to quality control/proof-read the draft report as a 'critical friend'. This can ensure that there is a consistent approach.

## LOCAL DECISION STAGE

16. It is helpful for the LL to be supported by a panel when considering nominated groups, particularly if there are several nominations. Some Lieutenancies find it helpful to include one or two external people with good knowledge of the voluntary sector. Any DLs involved in the decision should not themselves have nominated or visited a group. This guarantees impartiality.
17. The LL and panel are asked to consider the DLs' report and decide whether the group meets the high standard required for a KAVS at a UK level (equivalent to an MBE). We do ask you to take a rigorous approach. Unsuccessful groups will not be told the stage at which the decision was made and your reports will remain confidential. **Your decision will therefore not jeopardise your future relationship with the group.**

## LL CITATION AND FINAL SUBMISSION

18. Once the panel has made its decision, the LL will draft/agree a citation explaining the reasons for the decision. If the decision is 'not recommended', then the citation can be fairly basic. However, if the decision is to recommend, then take this opportunity to highlight the outstanding features of the group and their volunteers for the national assessors. They will read all the material, but this is the last comment they see and it's a good opportunity to convey the 'wow factor' for the group. See guidance in **Annex D**,
19. The final stage is to submit the assessment report and citation to the KAVS team via the website by the stated deadline (for the 2025 award round this is the 1st of December). Please try to do this in good time.

**ANNEX D: COMPLETING THE LOCAL ASSESSMENT FORM - DETAILED ADVICE**

The local assessment form below has been annotated with suggested questions and sample responses from previous rounds. **The advice is in purple text.**

**1.1. Assessors' details:**  
Full name of the 1st assessor  
Full name of the 2nd assessor (if applicable)

The point of these questions is to make sure that we have the correct details if the group is eventually successful, as we need to contact them in confidence and publish their name etc.

**1.2 Group name**  
Please check that the name provided by the nominator is correct.

**1.3 Name of the group leader or main contact in the group**  
Please check that the details provided by the nominator are correct.

**1.4 Position held in the group by the group leader or main contact**  
Please check that the details provided by the nominator are correct.

**1.5 Address of the group leader or main contact**  
Please check that the details provided by the nominator are correct.

**1.6 Email of the group leader or main contact**  
Please check that the details provided by the nominator are correct.

**1.7 Telephone of the group leader or main contact**  
Please check that the details provided by the nominator are correct.

**1.8 Confirm group details**  
The details above are still correct:  
Yes [ ]  
No [ ] (please email any amendments to kingsaward@dcms.gov.uk).

This extra question asks you to quickly confirm that the group meets the basic eligibility criteria. These are listed on the online form.

**1.9 Eligibility**  
I confirm that I have checked the group's eligibility for the award as per the criteria below. [ ]

**2.1 Number of volunteers** i.e. the total number of volunteers involved with the group

**2.2 Number of full time paid staff**

**2.3 Number of part time paid staff**

**2.4 Number of beneficiaries annually (can be approximate)**

## SHORT CITATION

**3.1 Provide a short citation summarising what the group does.**

The citation is required for the published announcement and certificate. Please help the group to decide a suitable citation sentence at this stage (noting the examples in the form). This will also act as a useful summary for the national assessors. Please discuss with the group and provide a short summary of the group's work in one sentence.

## WORK OF THE GROUP

**4.1 Describe the range of services and activities provided by the group**

If this is a project or a branch of a larger organisation, make sure this refers to the work of the project or the branch rather than the larger organisation. (suggest 100 words)

During your conversations with the group, please check that the nomination form correctly describes their activity and confirm this in your report. Do take this opportunity to add more detail about their activities in order to give a better feel for what they do.

### **Possible questions:**

- Does the nomination form give a complete picture of what you do?
- Are there aspects that need more emphasis? Other things that should be mentioned?

### **Sample answers:**

*(a) "[The group] is providing significantly more services than those described in the nomination form. In addition to the invaluable work done by its men's shed team, it has several other all-volunteer groups who undertake community projects ranging from litter-picking to landscaping/gardening, recycling and heritage work. The group's engagement with their local community in the improvement and maintenance of their local environment is extremely impressive with over 150 active volunteers from all age groups (including children). They are constantly looking for new community projects, the most recent being their heritage work in refurbishing areas of the harbour/seafront in [town]."*

*(b) "There are 3 key strands to the work they do: 1. providing mutual support and social events for local sufferers; 2. raising awareness of the hazards of smoking in particular to local schools and youth groups, and 3. campaigning and educating health professionals and politicians at a local and national level to provide better care and support for lung disease patients. The first strand is typical of other [similar] groups but the latter two are what characterises this group as exceptional."*

#### **4.2 Describe the need for the group's work and provide evidence.**

For example, gaps in local provision, lack of similar facilities.

##### **Possible questions:**

- How and when was the need for your group's work established?
- Do you actively review whether the need is still there, or whether it is changing?
- Are there any facts/figures about the local area/target group and the level of need?  
For example, any local surveys or community audits?

##### **Sample answers:**

*(a) "[The local area] has lost many services in recent years including post offices, police stations, greengrocers, butchers and many other shops. In May 2019, the bank in [village] closed. The nearest bank is now 9 miles away in [town]. The bus services to [town] have halved and undiscounted round trips cost £7. Complicated healthcare boundaries mean reaching specialist health services involve round trips of up to 56 miles. Against this background, the [group] makes two major contributions. It provides essential access to services – physically through transport, and virtually through the volunteers in the Hub itself – and it provides reasons for people who feel isolated to get out, get together, build friendships and enjoy new activities."*

*(b) "Statistics clearly show that young boys, where a father is absent and who have no appropriate male role model, will struggle as teenagers and are at a higher risk of low self-esteem, and /or dropping out of education, and everything that leads to, 76% of all men in prison in England and Wales had an absent father. This outstanding programme that has been developed and implemented by the volunteers has been very well evaluated and the results are very impressive. Working with cohorts of 8 boys, substantial improvements were seen in self-esteem, confidence, managing emotions, behaviour, relationships, motivation and school habits. At the beginning of the programme none of the boys had regular contact with their fathers and by the end 50% were in regular contact."*

#### **4.3 What difference does the group make in meeting the need described above?**

Please include direct benefits, but also any indirect benefits. For example, preserving heritage or environment, promoting community cohesion among volunteers, or contributing to crime reduction.

Provide evidence to support this, for example, number of people helped, visitor numbers.

#### **Possible questions:**

- How has your group made a difference to individual people and the local community?
- Have you done anything particularly different or innovative compared with similar groups? What stands out about your group's approach or impact?
- Do you have any evidence, data or examples to show the impact? (e.g. number of people helped, surveys)?

#### **Sample answer:**

*(a) "The group provides direct benefit to both individuals (in the Town Shed) and the wider community (through its other activities). A number of individuals were questioned at the Town Shed and all were unanimous in their praise for the work there; the impact on their lives and wellbeing was very obvious and clear to see. Their environmental (litter picks, recycling, gardens) and heritage work can be seen in a variety of locations across [the town] and is an excellent example of work which promotes community cohesion. Specific indirect benefits for the wider community are the improved public spaces with maintenance and improvement of gardens, seafront, harbour and the local railway station. e.g. the Litterpicks group have collected over 3,000 bags of rubbish from the beaches and in [the town] plus the Gardens Team have planted over 6,000 plants."*

#### **4.4. If the group is a branch of a wider organisation, how has the group made its work distinctive from that of other groups in the organisation?**

NB: This is specifically for branches of groups. If the group is not a branch, do still ask about distinctiveness and draw this out in your response to question 4.3.

#### **Possible questions:**

- How much control does your parent group have over the way you run your services? Do you have the freedom to make your local approach distinctive? If so, how have you done that?
- Are you aware of doing things better or differently from the other branches in your organisation? If so, please describe this.

**4.5 Describe whether the group operates all year round, or just at certain times of the year, and explain how that affects the work pattern of volunteers.** For example, the group may operate only during a festival or during school breaks (this is fine).

This helps us to understand the contribution and work patterns of volunteers.

**Possible questions:**

- What are the work patterns for the volunteers? Do some of them work all year round with additional volunteers giving their time nearer to the event? What is the typical time commitment made by volunteers at the busiest time?

**Sample answer:**

*“The core team of 15 volunteers average in excess of six hours each per week, equating to around 5,000 hours per annum. This fluctuates greatly throughout the year, with volunteers working full time in the period leading up to and during the Festival. In addition the surge in wider voluntary support (up to 500 more volunteers) during Festival time adds a further 2,000 hours to the total.”*

**4.6 Describe the local area the group serves and any challenges the area faces.**

Challenges may include deprivation, rural isolation, lack of community, unequal opportunities.

This is an important opportunity to describe the context in which the group operates and any implications this has for its work. It’s helpful to be specific. For example, if describing a rural setting, how far away is the nearest large town and what is its population size? Do volunteers have to travel large distances? Is it hard to muster volunteers for various reasons? If describing deprivation, you could use one of the online deprivation measures for a local postcode.

**Sample answers:**

*“[The group is in] a remote rural community, with declining local services, and poor access to towns and bigger facilities for the low-income household or less mobile residents. The challenges of remote rural communities such as this are so significant that the County Council has recently established a Commission to look into their future sustainability. [The village] and the surrounding area have a median age of 54 years old, thus a much more elderly population than the national average. There are nine daily bus services to [the town], the last one around 6.30pm – without a car, this is the only way to reach a supermarket, hospital, council offices, cinema or cultural activities. The village has a doctor’s surgery, pharmacy, various independent retailers (many of them economically marginal) and a post office, but the bank has now permanently closed.”*

*“[The city] was ranked the 30th most deprived area in England according to the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation, with five wards in the top 10% of the most deprived neighbourhoods in England. The latest census shows that [its] foreign-born population is 13.4%, 67% of whom have arrived since 2001. The vast majority of asylum seekers/refugees are to be found in the poorer areas of the city where deprivation levels and social isolation are worst, and community networks are weakest.”*

**4.7 Are the group's beneficiaries based abroad or in more than one part of the UK? Yes/No**

If the answer is 'no', please skip to section 5 - 'Role and status of volunteers'.  
If the answer is 'yes', please answer questions 4.8 and 4.9.

For most KAVS nominations the answer will be 'no'. The online form will then automatically skip the next questions.

**4.8 If its beneficiaries live elsewhere, is the group itself based entirely locally?**

KAVS is aimed at local groups of volunteers, so this question aims to confirm that point.

**4.9 In what ways does the group's existence benefit the local community as well as people elsewhere?**

Is this group benefiting the local community? For example, is it significantly improving community cohesiveness through organised events; providing educational opportunities through talks at schools etc; combating loneliness through volunteering opportunities; or developing people's skills?

**Sample answer:**

*[The group] provides benefit overseas but there clearly are some local benefits. These volunteers have their lives enhanced by their experience and it induces a feel good factor in their community and in the local press. There are some wider benefits in terms of awareness and satisfaction for other members of the community: local school children have direct learning opportunities when visited by returning volunteers. To judge from the response to occasional requests for donations of equipment, toys or clothing, members of the community love the opportunity to give to a good cause.*

## ROLE AND STATUS OF VOLUNTEERS

**5.1 What specific roles do the volunteers cover and what does this involve? Do any of these roles rely on the volunteers' input?**

It's probably easiest to ask the group to provide a list. You can then summarise the main points for your report. Their list could include:

- A list of the roles undertaken by volunteers (e.g. their role titles)
- Descriptions of what these roles involve (e.g. provision of food/meals; befriending; activity leader etc).

**5.2 Please give an idea of the volume of work put in by volunteers.**

If possible, provide metrics, for example, 'x' number of volunteering hours are provided by 'y' volunteers each week; or the number of volunteers expressed as full time equivalents (FTEs).

Any extra metrics would be helpful, as they create a more complete picture than just the overall number of volunteers.

**Sample answer:**

*“The group meets every Wednesday morning, 50 weeks a year, this provides a base figure of about 150 hours per volunteer and 4800 for the group. Each volunteer will work additional hours depending on the tasks that they are engaged in. The group’s officers, in particular the Chairman, work considerably over and above three hours a week.”*

**5.3 What roles are covered by paid staff and what is their relationship to the volunteers (for example, supervision, support)?**

As above. It’s helpful for national assessors to understand who does what within the group.

**5.4 In what ways do volunteers play a central role in the group’s leadership?**

We are looking for volunteer-led groups where volunteers have a key input in decision making at all levels. Please look for evidence that volunteers are leading the work, setting its direction and acting as an inspiration to the rest of the group; also that volunteers at all levels of the organisation have a voice. If there are paid staff, they should be supporting rather than directing the work.

*We look for volunteer-led groups, with volunteers having a key input in decision making at all levels. If relevant, please state what is the split between the volunteers and paid staff in terms of leadership.*

**Possible questions:**

- What are the official roles on the group’s governing committee (e.g. Chair, Treasurer, Secretary etc)?
- Is an AGM held annually and is it open?
- It’s useful to check the way strategic decisions are made when considering the extent of volunteer leadership.
  - Where there is a formal board with Trustees, ask about their relationship with the rest of the organisation. Are they very actively involved with the group, or do they focus on providing high level oversight? If it’s the latter, are paid staff effectively running things?
- Also ask whether there are mechanisms for volunteers at lower levels to influence decisions.
  - Who decides how things are done on a daily basis? Are paid staff being directed by volunteers? Or is it the other way round?
  - Are volunteers who directly provide the service represented on the governing body/ management committee?
  - Are there ways in which other volunteers can contribute their ideas / learning / opinions / suggestions about the running of the organisation?

**Sample answers:**

*(a) "The Group is completely managed by volunteers. The board comprises 9 volunteers. The part time manager does attend the board meetings in an advisory capacity...(their) role is to obtain & contract with the various organisations that will use the facilities... Everything else is done by the volunteers apart from a small amount of maintenance."*

*(b) "In addition to the trustees (also volunteering), all volunteers are invited to inform on strategy via an annual Consultation Survey. Volunteers are also invited to become [group] Members... who meet on a quarterly basis to inform on strategic direction. All volunteers meet quarterly to discuss relevant issues and ideas and suggestions are taken seriously..."*

**5.5 What are the procedures for electing and refreshing the governing body or leadership of the group?**

Sometimes the leadership of a group becomes a closed shop and isn't open to other people's ideas or involvement. A good group will be aware of this and will take steps to avoid it.

**EVIDENCE OF A WELL-RUN ORGANISATION**

Before your visit, it is helpful to check how the group is set up (for example, unconstituted group, registered charity, community interest company, charitable incorporated organisation) as the statutory requirements and published information about the group will be different in each case.

See **Annex E** of this guidance for specific advice on this. If the group is a registered body, then there will be various useful information sources online (e.g. annual report and accounts).

**6.1 Describe if and how the group is affiliated to any wider group**

KAVS is aimed at local groups who are setting their own direction. A group might be affiliated to an umbrella group or national group (e.g. NSPCC, MIND). Alternatively, it might be part of a larger organisation such as a hospital/hospice. All this is perfectly acceptable, but the group needs to demonstrate that it has a considerable degree of autonomy and is not just following a national template or taking instructions from the main institution.

**Possible questions:**

- What is the relationship between your group and the parent/partner body?
- Which aspects of your work are within your control?
- Please give examples of ways in which you have taken the initiative to develop your own approach.

**Sample answer:**

“It functions under the overall umbrella of SCAS, to whom the Group reverts for 6 monthly re-assessments and ongoing training.”

**6.2 Describe if there are any concerns about the group’s financial stability and ability to manage finances.**

**6.3 Where does the group get its funds from?**

You will not need to have a financial background to complete this aspect of the assessment. Just follow the guidance below.

**Information you need when evaluating a larger organisation**

- Annual accounts
- Management accounts - the latest annual accounts may be almost a year old. Management accounts will provide up-to-date financial figures.
- You may also consider reviewing cash flow forecasts and budgets.

**Information you need when evaluating a small group**

Up-to-date income and expenditure data. These could be in any form - for example, a manual entry book or spreadsheet. You could also ask to see the latest bank statements.

**(i) Evaluating financial stability**

When evaluating the financial stability of the group, the main consideration is whether the group can manage fluctuations in income. To do so, consider the following:

- Is the group balancing its income with expenditure?
- How reliable are the group's income sources? Are they over-reliant on a small number of income sources and are any of them at risk? If so, are there any plans to mitigate those risks?
- Does the group have an appropriate level of cash reserves to meet immediate financial commitments, including recurring expenditures, such as rent and payroll?
- Does the group have any debts or other fixed financial obligations? Can the group meet those obligations?

**(ii) Evaluating the group’s ability to effectively manage finances**

- Is the group maintaining proper accounting records that are appropriate for their size and circumstances?
- In the case of a formally registered or incorporated group, are they submitting their accounts in a timely manner to their official registering body, for example, Charity Commission or Companies House? Are their finances published and discussed at an Annual General Meeting?
- Are the funds used for the purposes for which they are intended?

You do not need to provide a large amount of detail in your report. A statement along the lines of the first example below will be fine, although the detail provided in the second example is also very helpful.

**Sample answers:**

*(a) "The group has had the enormous task of raising the necessary funds to restore and adapt this building. They have now cleared the final amounts that were due for the restoration & they can start to build up reserves for any emergency maintenance and use the income they generate to promote the various activities they undertake. As a result, although they do not have very much cash in the bank, they have cleared their debts & they seem to have excellent management and so we believe that their financial future is secure."*

*(b) "The group is a registered charity... The statutory accounts are audited and published in accordance with regulations... The group's main source of funds is grant income (approximately 70% of total income)... This is supported by [ ] subscriptions (8%), advertising revenue (2%) and fundraising (7%). Revenue is also provided through the trading subsidiary, [ ], which contributes around (3%). Various ad hoc financial support is given throughout the year. Unrestricted funds are maintained at a level equivalent to three month's expenditure. The trustees consider that reserves at this level ensure effective governance is maintained and allows for opportunities to consider ways in which additional funds may be raised."*

**6.4 Describe what safeguarding procedures are in place to ensure that children and adults at risk are well protected and whether these procedures are sufficient.** This may include criminal record checks, a child-protection policy, specialised training and insurance indemnity.

This is very important. Even if the group doesn't work directly with children and adults at risk, they might deal with them as visitors (e.g. museums), so they should have a clear policy setting out their approach.

**Possible questions:**

- Does your group work with children or adults at risk? If not directly, might the volunteers have contact with them without a responsible adult/carer present?
- Do you have a safeguarding policy - a document that outlines how they will keep children and/or adults at risk safe? Can I see it? How often do you review it to check that it is appropriate and being followed?
- What checks do you make if recruiting/assigning volunteers to roles working with children and adults at risk (for example, DBS checks)?
- What training is given on how to keep children or those at risk safe?

**6.5 Describe if the group has adequate insurance to cover volunteers and members of the public with whom they interact.**

Any volunteer group needs to make sure that all aspects of its work are covered. For example, are volunteer drivers covered in case of accidents, if the group manages a park, is there protection in the case of falling branches?

**Possible questions:**

- Which (if any) aspects of your work requires insurance? This may include public or employee liability insurance.
- What policies do you have in place?

**Sample answers:**

*(a) "[X] members of the group have DBS clearance, enabling some 'at risk' adults to work with members of the group. All children's groups are accompanied by teachers or organisation group leaders."*

*(b) "All volunteers are vetted by the Disclosure and Barring Service before any training is given. Thereafter, every individual's status is reviewed every 6 months, along with a biannual checking of driving licences and car insurance."*

*(c) "There is a comprehensive insurance policy in force... covering Employer's Liability of £10m, Public/Products Liability of £5m. There is also a seven page, formal Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures document in place covering the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk. We have seen the document. The Annual Charity Commission Report confirms that enhanced DBS checks on all Directors, employees and volunteers in eligible positions have been obtained. There is a strong safety culture with experienced H&S representation on the Board and standards set by Directors/Trustees could not be higher."*

**6.6 If relevant to the services delivered, has the group been accredited by a professional body or regulator?** For example, Ofsted, Care Quality Commission, HSE.

**6.7 Has the group achieved any quality mark? If so, please specify.** For example, from a national sports body or a national umbrella organisation.

**6.8 Has the group achieved any other recognition or gained any awards either nationally or locally?**

External recognition or accreditation can be a useful indicator of excellence, so do ask about this. It's all helpful evidence.

**Sample answer:**

*"ITV Meridian coverage, Kent Charity Awards finalist, Thanet Heart of Community Awards"*

**6.9 Describe if any local bodies have any involvement or support in the activities of the group.** This may include the local authority, police, health, faith or other community organisations.

**Possible questions:**

- What sort of relationship does the group have with the local council, local health trust, police, schools, other organisations, businesses in the area?

- Does it work in partnership with any of these organisations?
- Does it have local sponsors/funders (indicates positive reputation)?

**6.10 As far as you are aware, is there any adverse information that might affect the reputation of the group or its volunteers?** It is very important that you flag up any issues even if they now seem to be resolved, as we need to be aware of any potential criticism of the group, its leadership or its members that might bring the Award into disrepute.

**Possible questions:**

- Are the group or volunteers involved in any disputes or other complaint procedures? This could include vexatious complainants.
- Is there any negative publicity about them?

We recommend that you conduct an internet search, check local press sites and social media. You can then explore any issues with the group and check that they have taken appropriate action, including preventing an incident from happening again and distancing themselves from any individual whose behaviour is unacceptable. It is important to spot any potential reputational issues at an early stage.

**Sample answer:**

*“We are not aware of any adverse information. This group of volunteers works with and alongside, directly or individually, the Police, health, faith and many community organisations in providing its services to local, regional and international young people. It has been in existence since [date] with its present operation and remit. Website comment is positive and complimentary. The group has connections to the Local Authority and benefits from the patronage of a number of [organisations]. There has been considerable support from (the Local Authority) where the Mayor nominated [the group] as her charity of the year.”*

**INCLUSIVITY**

**7.1 How are volunteers recruited?**

**7.2 How does the group actively encourage a wide range of people to volunteer?**

This may include encouraging people from a range of ages, backgrounds, ethnicities and abilities who might be marginalised. For example, they may do so by placing leaflets in social centres or libraries, posting welcoming messages on social media or their website, or providing training opportunities for unemployed volunteers.

**Possible questions:**

- How do you recruit volunteers? How would people become volunteers?
- Do you take any steps to include a wide variety of people in the volunteer group and welcome people who might be marginalised?

**Sample answers:**

*(a)“The group makes clear that new volunteers are always welcome and invites people to show their interest via a link on their website.”*

*(b) “They run a special scheme giving training opportunities to ex-offenders and the long-term unemployed....”*

*(c) “Volunteers are aged 14-83 and all abilities are welcomed. The group has an excellent website and a monthly newsletter. They attend community events with their excellent notice boards depicting their activities. They advertise their services with leaflets in local pubs, the caravan site and the library. The local pub also displays their relationship with the group.... Last year, by sending over 100 Christmas cards depicting a local scene to homes nearby, there was an increase in goodwill and volunteers...One volunteer who has a real interest in red squirrels contributes to the group discussions, despite his poor communication skills.”*

*(d) “The disabled community – especially young people with disabilities – are represented in the volunteer groups and gain immeasurably from the inclusive welcome they receive and their integration into the volunteering team. This is an organisation built on inclusivity and they go out of their way to enable people with physical and non-physical disabilities to engage.”*

### **7.3 How does the group make its services accessible to the widest range of beneficiaries?**

For example, by improving physical access to buildings, adjusting opening hours or means of contact and providing materials in a second language or alternative format. Does it reach out to different communities, people with mental health conditions, disabled people, lonely or isolated people etc?

#### **Possible questions:**

- How does the group advertise their services and who would be likely to hear about them?
- Is there evidence that they try to reach potential beneficiaries who might face barriers to accessing the group’s services?
- Is there easy access to the premises – ramp/lift/wide doors/special facilities?
- Can it be accessed by public transport? What are the opening hours?
- Is there a charge for using the facilities / programmes?
- Does the group give equal treatment to people of different religions and cultural backgrounds, BAME, LGBTQ, people with disabilities, etc.

#### **Sample answers:**

*(a) “The group also advertises its services via leaflets in the library and GP surgeries.”*

*(b) “There is a bursary system to fund music workshops for two gifted children each year.”*

*(c) “In addition to broadcasting, the group trains a diverse range of people in the [area]. In November 2019 it began training projects with those who have long term mental health issues, out of work adults, women and older people at risk of isolation.”*

*(d) “The two resource centres are in central locations, open on weekdays, and where transport is an issue the charity seeks to visit or collect users as appropriate.”*

*(e) “There is no disabled access to the bottom of the Dene, though some visitors with electric wheelchairs do manage to use the fairly steep path. However, a wheelchair accessible*

*observation platform has been built for viewing the lower Dene and wildflower meadows planted on the Dene top. The area is accessible at all times, and well served by buses with a bus stop at the entrance to the Dene.”*

## EXCEPTIONAL QUALITIES

**8.1 Which, if any, of the features of the group and its volunteers described above would you describe as excellent?**

**Sample answer:**

*“The manner in which this small museum is so professionally run is quite remarkable given that similar organisations, even though they may be bigger, employ technicians, curators and historians. The attention to detail and restoration of equipment is an area of excellence in addition to the educational offer. The restoration of the loom and original Spinning Jenny has enabled volunteers to replicate the weaving process from wool through to yarn and thread and to weave a distinct and unique cloth that is now being bought by a local clothing company. They believe this to be the only case of its kind in the UK. The clog maker is one of only two in the UK, making these traditional shoes from the piece of wood through to the finished product. All of this expertise is available to school children and visitors to experience and learn about the old crafts. The site is recognised nationally as being of historic interest.”*

**8.2 Are any of these features exceptional?** In other words, are they likely to be among the best in the UK?

The bar is very high, as groups are up against the best in the UK. It's helpful to look at comparable awardees from previous years on our website. If you are unsure how to judge this, ask the group leader for their view.

**8.3 Would you recommend any individual for a national Honour? Yes/No**

Please note, recommending an individual for a national Honour doesn't affect the group's chances of receiving the KAVS in any way.

**8.4. Please give the name of the person you are recommending**

Answer this question if you selected 'Yes' in question 8.3.

**8.5. Explain in a short paragraph sentences why they might merit this**

Answer this question if you selected 'Yes' in question E8.3. Word limit: 50

The KAVS team will pass this information onto the DCMS Honours team. They might get in touch with you in due course to ask for further details. The Honours Team might get in touch with you in due course if they need your help to produce a citation (including personal details such as D.O.B., address, email and telephone number). Please do get in touch with the KAVS team if any of this is unclear.

**8.6. Assessor recommending an individual for a national Honour details** Answer this question if you selected 'Yes' in question 8.3.

Full name:

Email address:            Phone number (optional):

## LORD-LIEUTENANT CITATION

(to be entered at the end of the online local assessment report)

The purpose of the Lord-Lieutenant's citation is to summarise the local panel's opinion about the nominated group and to explain the decision to recommend or not recommend it. If the decision is to recommend, these opinions will be beneficial to the National Assessment Committee when making their judgements.

Please read the guidance about the citation below:

- The citation does not need to repeat the detail provided in the nomination and local assessment report, since the national assessors will have studied this material carefully.
- Instead, the citation should try to capture what is **exceptional about this particular group**. For example:
  - the impact it has made on local people, particularly if the local context is challenging;
  - how its work or approach is distinctive or different from other groups doing similar things;
  - anything outstanding about the way the group is run;
  - any exemplary qualities in the volunteers themselves.
- The citation should be around 400 to 600 words. It should not be longer than that, but don't make it too short either, as this is an opportunity to bring the group to life for the national assessors.

Word limit: 600

### Example:

*“[Group] is an extraordinary organisation in that it has raised over £1.6m to restore one of the UK's best Greek Revival buildings (Grade A listed) in [town]. In doing so not only has [the group] rescued a building – a Presbyterian Church that was only years from dereliction, but it has also provided a solution to the ongoing cost of maintenance by running it as an Arts and Heritage Centre - it is the largest independent Arts centre in [the nation] as well as in [the county].*

*With very strong leadership and over 128 volunteers delivering over 3000 hours of voluntary work a year, and with the help of two part time employees, [the group] provides a diverse program of events to a locality which suffers from the very highest levels of deprivation and rural isolation. Beneficiaries are not just those who attend events, but the whole town benefits as the building is a tourist attraction in its own right. It is estimated that [the group] contributes around £90,000 a year to the local economy, over and above the money it makes for itself.*

*[The group] supports an essential resource as [the town] is at the end of a 35 mile peninsula and so has suffered severely during recent downturns.*

*As a voluntary organisation, [the group] displays those rare strengths that has enabled it to deliver with ambition. Tenacity has been required: the acquisition of the building involved delicate conversations between the Presbyterian Authorities who were against the sale of the building to a body funded by the National Lottery, but with the skill of the volunteers and the flexibility of the local congregation, a solution was found that enabled the building to continue to be used as a church while at the same time allowing it to be run commercially going forward. Over 56 grant applications were written to deliver funding. Control has been strongly evidenced: the restoration, complicated by contractors going bust during the process, involved the delicate balancing of cash flows. Flexibility in its volunteer base also allows an enormous variation of contribution: from organ playing to weeding, from regular guiding to learning how to use a sound desk. The centre would just not operate without them.*

*Arts funding is probably at its lowest point in a decade. Therefore, the fact that the volunteers' work allows the largest independent Arts venue (it has over 300 seats) in [county] to operate is essential. [The group] has been a success because of its programme of activities: whether traditional music, a string quartet or a summer Rock School for children, the programmes are well designed to appeal to both locals as well as those travelling from further afield. In 2018 around 3,500 people attended 35 events, in 2020 they are aiming for 40 performances. Not only the attendees benefit: the Centre is a community hub that acts as a conduit for helping an area that suffers from rural isolation.*

*The vibrancy of [the group] can be seen in its very popular and talented 30 strong choir. Made up of volunteers it performs publicly at least three times a year.*

*As an almost entirely volunteer based organisation, [the group] has delivered on an extraordinary ambition and it still continues to do so. It is a shining beacon of what can be achieved when volunteers and the local community act together to benefit the whole. Its importance is immense, not only to the Arts in [nation] and to the Presbyterian congregation but to the whole community in [the town] and the [area]. I have no hesitation in recommending [the group] for The King's Award for Voluntary Service."*

## ANNEX E: ASSESSING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF GROUP

This annex aims to help you assess whether a nominated group is well run and meets key expectations for governance, finance and safeguarding. It has 4 sections:

1. Different types of voluntary organisations and their key characteristics
2. What to expect in terms of good governance (see **Annex D** for further tips) and where to find key information
3. Sources of advice on safeguarding
4. Additional information for groups providing care or education

### 1. Types of Voluntary Group

The table below aims to describe the main types of voluntary groups that might be nominated for KAVS. All of these could be eligible, as long as they are not national groups with branches and meet the other nomination criteria.

Type of Group	Description
<b>Unregistered group</b>	Smaller voluntary groups may choose to remain as an unincorporated charitable association or unregistered group. This is fine for KAVS. However, they should still have clear statements of purpose, policies appropriate to the arena in which they work and evidence of good financial management, as described below.
<b>Registered charity</b>	These are registered with the <a href="#">Charity Commission</a> (England and Wales), <a href="#">Charity Commission NI</a> or <a href="#">The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator</a> . Registered groups must be established and operated for a stated charitable purpose and cannot use their funds for any other purpose). There are certain key requirements, e.g. to have at least 3 unpaid trustees (best practice is 5) and to submit annual accounts to the registering body each year. In return, there are some tax advantages for the group. Registered charities vary widely in their size and function, so your expectations should vary accordingly.
<b>Community interest corporation (CIC)</b>	A CIC is a company working for the benefit of the community. It must be registered with <a href="#">Companies House</a> . Like a charity, it can accept donations and grants. However, it can also receive income from products and/or services sold as part of the company. Its assets must be used for the benefit of the community. A CIC's governing body is comprised of directors and non-executive directors, some of whom may be paid. It can also make dividend payments. There are no trustees. CICs have to publish an annual report describing their activities and the benefits provided to the community; the remuneration paid to directors; dividends paid; consultation with shareholders and more. There are fewer reporting and administrative requirements than for a registered charity, but no tax incentives. CICs are more common when the work involves public sector tendering or significant earned income activity.
<b>Charitable incorporated</b>	A CIO or SCIO is a group that operates commercially but aims to benefit the community rather than private shareholders. CIOs are

<b>organisation (CIO - England &amp; Wales or SCIO - Scotland)</b>	registered with the <a href="#">Charity Commission</a> (England and Wales) and SCIOs with <a href="#">The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator</a> , so you will be able to find relevant information about them there. The CIO/SCIO option is relatively new and was introduced to allow groups to become legal entities without having to be incorporated. There are no CIOs in Northern Ireland.
<b>The nomination for a named 'volunteer project' that is hosted by a larger (perhaps public sector) organisation</b>	If it is part of a larger organisation, the project may not have a separate legal status. We would expect the project to show a degree of independence and self-management which could be demonstrated within, for instance, a formal agreement or Terms of Reference for its work. The project should have significant control over its own budget and the finances should be reported separately within the host organisation's accounts. It helps if the project itself generates some of its finance. The good governance suggestions below need to be interpreted within that framework. It is not sufficient for the project to have a member sitting on the host organisation's governing body. Good management could be shown by the project volunteers adhering to the host organisation's policies.

## 2. Assessing Good Governance

As the table above shows, groups vary considerably and our expectations for a well-run group will need to take into account:

- whether they are an all-volunteer or 'staffed' group
- their size (in finance and personnel)
- the degree of regulation affecting the arena in which they work
- the reasonable expectations of their users/funders/partner organisations.

The table below lists some key indicators of good governance to look for during your assessment and how these might be evident in different types of organisation. Groups are not necessarily expected to meet all of them, but an exemplar larger group might be expected to have most of these.

<b>Good governance - what to look for</b>	
<b>Clearly written governing documents/constitution</b>	<p>Any group should have a clear statement describing its purpose, charitable aims and beneficiaries. This applies even to small unconstituted groups.</p> <p><u>Groups that adopt a legal status</u> should have a written form of constitution that determines how the trustees/directors operate. It will also state if the group is required to hold an Annual General Meeting open to the public.</p> <p><u>Unconstituted groups</u> do not need to have trustees or a board, but you would still expect a document that describes</p>

	<p>the leadership team (e.g. leader, treasurer etc) and procedures for meeting and making decisions.</p> <p>There might also be a vision and/or mission statement that sets out the aspiration of the organisation and what it is set up to do. Also, a description of the organisation's values that sets out how it carries out its work and the way it interacts with beneficiaries, staff and stakeholders. These could be evidence of high standards in the group.</p>
<p><b>Clear account of its activities, i.e. Annual Report</b></p>	<p><u>Registered groups</u> have to produce accounts each year, which ideally should be externally audited. Sometimes this may include an annual report describing key activity during the year, though this could often just be recorded as the 'Chair's Report' and 'Treasurer's Report' at an Annual General Meeting.</p> <p>The annual report can be a good indicator of the drive and vision of the group, as well as the impact of its work. A well governed group will include a "governance statement" in the annual accounts describing how the group is governed.</p> <p><u>Unconstituted all-volunteer groups</u> may not have publicly available information, but should be able to describe how they report on their activities and financial accounts to leaders, members, volunteers and users.</p>
<p><b>Clear information about the leadership and how they are appointed</b></p>	<p><u>Registered groups</u> should have a document describing the board's structure and ways of working e.g. length of tenure, rotation, re-election. Large organisations would normally aim to achieve diversity on their governing board, as well as the rest of the organisation.</p> <p><u>Any good group</u> (including unconstituted) will have clearly defined roles for its board and leadership team. It will also have procedures for refreshing the board and ensuring it's not a closed shop.</p>
<p><b>Evidence of effective and inclusive decision-making e.g. minutes, annual report</b></p>	<p><u>All types of group</u> should have proper records and minutes of meetings of their governing body. For KAVS, we would also expect to see decision-making procedures that involve staff and volunteers working on service delivery. We are looking for evidence that volunteers at all levels have some agency over their own activities, such as being regularly involved in consultations with the governing board/ leadership.</p> <p>NB: Annex D suggests things you might explore with the group when assessing whether volunteers at all levels are steering its work.</p>
<p><b>Well-managed finances</b></p>	<p><u>All groups</u> should have clearly presented accounts, even if they are not required to submit them. They may be posted on</p>

	<p>the group’s website or presented at an Annual Meeting open to the public and, for registered groups, must be sent to the registering body. Annex D suggests some things to check with the group. All groups should have insurance appropriate to the arena in which they work.</p> <p>For <u>larger groups</u>, it would be good practice to have a separate finance committee and clear financial policies (e.g. on monitoring of assets).</p> <p><u>Good groups</u> will also have evidence of a long-term strategy, e.g. a forward financial plan, particularly where the group has limited income but owns a significant asset such as a community hall. There should also be a sound approach to risk management.</p>
<b>Evidence of good policies and procedures</b>	<p>A good group will have written policies or procedures describing its approach to certain activities - particularly where these activities that affect other people, e.g. health and safety, safeguarding. Table 3 has more information.</p> <p>There should also be internal controls in place to monitor how well these are working (e.g. whistleblowing policy, regular reviews).</p>
<b>Other indicators of good governance</b>	<p>Good attention to risk management covering a variety of areas, e.g. financial, environmental, data protection, safeguarding.</p> <p>A governance code: If the group has also adopted a regulatory body’s suggested governance code, this can show an awareness of best practice, or at least that external guidelines have been followed.</p> <p>A quality award – sometimes awarded by a national umbrella body, but could also be Investors in People or a score from regulatory audit by, for instance, the Care Quality Commission or Ofsted.</p>

### Sources of information

NB: Information on small all-volunteer organisations is less likely to be found in the public domain and will need to be requested directly. However, for larger/registered groups the following online sources of information will be helpful:

- The group’s annual report and accounts (where these are submitted)
- The group’s website or social media
- [Charity Commission](#) for England and Wales, [Charity Commission NI](#) or [OSCR](#) for Scotland
- [Companies House](#) (for CICs)
- Third sector publications e.g. Third Sector, Civil Society News, charity section of national press etc.

### 3. Safeguarding

Whatever their status, groups need to have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures and adequate insurance to cover their activities in particular arenas. If groups work with young or people at risk, provide care or education, you should check that they are aware of the requirements for safeguard described in the table below and are adopting them.

Safeguarding children and adults at risk	
Expectations	<p>Protecting people and safeguarding responsibilities should be a governance priority for all voluntary groups. It is a fundamental part of operating as a charity for the public benefit. Groups who have contact with children and adults at risk will need to have a policy on this and, if appropriate, make background checks. See the links below for more information:</p> <p>England: <a href="#">Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018</a> <a href="#">SCIE guidance on safeguarding vulnerable adults</a>            Northern Ireland: <a href="#">Working with Children and Vulnerable Adults</a> <a href="#">Safeguarding Board Northern Ireland</a>            Scotland: <a href="#">Protection of Vulnerable Groups</a> <a href="#">National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland</a>            Wales: <a href="#">Wales Child Protection Procedures</a></p>

### 4. Groups Providing Care or Education

Groups that provide some form of education or training for adults and children of all ages normally need to undergo assessment and inspection by regulatory bodies. This includes registered childminders.

Registered care providers	
Inspectorate	<p>Groups that are registered care providers will be regulated and inspected by the organisations below. You should be able to find out information about the group (e.g. inspection reports) on the regulator’s website, in addition to the registering bodies mentioned in table 1.</p> <p>England: <a href="#">Care Quality Commission (CQC)</a>            Northern Ireland: <a href="#">The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA)</a>            Scotland: <a href="#">Care Inspectorate</a>            Wales: <a href="#">Care Inspectorate Wales (Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru)</a></p>
Providing education/training	
Inspectorate	<p>England: <a href="#">Ofsted</a> or <a href="#">Ofqual</a>            Northern Ireland: <a href="#">ETI</a>            Scotland: <a href="#">Education Scotland</a>            Wales: <a href="#">Estyn</a></p>

### **Further sources of information about voluntary group structures and the variations across the UK**

More information specific to each country is available from the [Charity Commission](#) for England and Wales, [Charity Commission NI](#) and The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator ([OSCR](#)).

### **Other sources of useful advice:**

England: [The National Council for Voluntary Organisations \(NCVO\)](#) [Volunteering Matters](#)  
Northern Ireland: [Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action \(NICVA\)](#) [Volunteer Now](#)  
Scotland: [Volunteer Scotland](#) [The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations \(SCVO\)](#)  
Wales: [Welsh Council for Voluntary Action \(WCVA\)](#) [Third Sector Support Wales \(TSSW\)](#)

## ANNEX F: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **ELIGIBILITY**

#### **Q: What if the group's activity is largely about fundraising?**

Groups involved in fundraising activities are only eligible for the Award in exceptional circumstances and if their work extends beyond fundraising (i.e. this is not the only thing they do). In particular, their fundraising activity should

- involve volunteers
- focus on creating or hosting a series of events or local activity, rather than simply asking for donations
- provide a clear wider benefit to (and impact in) the local community.

Organisations whose purpose is to make grants, rather than provide services themselves, are not considered eligible for KAVS (e.g. community foundations).

#### **Q: Are 'national' organisations eligible?**

The Award is for local volunteer groups, rather than national charities. However, we do recognise that a local branch of a national charity might develop a distinct identity and devise initiatives that go much further than the national model. In those circumstances, we would consider a nomination for the branch and, if successful, award it to the local group rather than the national charity.

#### **Q: Are animal charities eligible?**

Groups operating solely for the benefit of animals are not eligible. However, if the group's work also provides a social, economic or environmental service to the community, then they can be nominated, eg. therapy pets.

#### **Q: Are groups in a statutory setting (e.g. hospital, prison, court) eligible?**

Yes - although as with all nominations, they should highlight the specific role of volunteers as compared with paid staff. The volunteers should be operating independently of the organisation and doing more than boosting the normal operations of the statutory group.

#### **Q: What if the main work of the group is done by one person?**

It might be more appropriate to nominate them in confidence for a National Honour. You can do this by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/honours>.

#### **Q: What if there are paid staff?**

This is fine, but the Award is aimed at groups where volunteers make up at least half of the members and, importantly, are driving the group's work rather than just receiving instructions.

#### **Q: What about nominating a partnership of groups?**

Groups that work in partnerships (e.g. to help save buildings) are not eligible unless they have a distinct identity from their constituent groups. Key things to consider when thinking about nominating these groups are: a) Do they have an identity?, b) Who is leading it and are they separate from their constituent groups? c) If they were to be awarded, would this partnership have longevity?

#### **Q: Can I nominate a set of Trustees?**

KAVS is really about volunteers leading and undertaking direct work in the community. If an organisation is a registered, constituted group, the volunteer trustees cannot be nominated for

KAVS as a separate group as the outcome of their work relies on the overall organisation's work – it is the organisation that must be nominated.

An organisation that only comprises volunteer trustees with no paid staff would qualify for nomination, but it will be the trustees' volunteering role at all levels, including direct delivery of outcomes for beneficiaries that will be considered, rather than just their administration and decision making. Groups that are simply decision making bodies, for instance, those running an award scheme or a grant giving body, are unlikely to be considered.

**Q. Can I nominate a county-level board? (E.g. - County level Scouts Board)**

County-level boards can be nominated; however, they must show that they are involved in direct work and show how they differ from the national template. In addition, it must be clear that they are their own entity and so if the Award was to be given to a group of this type, it would not be awarded to all branches in that county. Lastly, evidence should be of concerning the board as opposed to all the individual branches collected.

**NOMINATIONS**

**Q: Can a LL or DL nominate a group?**

Ideally, a member of the public - especially a beneficiary - should make the nomination. If they have a close knowledge/experience of a group then a DL can nominate them, as long as they are not involved in the assessment visit or any subsequent panel discussions/decisions. Please note that LLs should not make nominations, as this will create a conflict of interest when they write the citation. If, however, this is the only option, please contact the team on [kingsaward@dcms.gov.uk](mailto:kingsaward@dcms.gov.uk)

**Q: Can a group be nominated again if they received a QAVS/KAVS in the past?**

KAVS is a national Honour awarded for the life of the group. It does not expire, so the group should not be re-nominated. Our systems do not currently allow us to spot this easily, so if you are aware that a nominated group already has a QAVS do let us know straight away. As part of our ongoing review of the Award, we are considering all options regarding this; however, if we have any concrete plans to alter this, we will let you know.

**ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

**Q: Can I see incoming nominations before the closing date?**

You should be able to see your nominations as they come in (N.B. - the KAVS team manually assign these so there may be a bit of a delay). All nominations for your lieutenancy will be visible by mid-October once all eligibility checks have been completed. **Please do not download the local assessment form before that time as we tend to update it each year and you might inadvertently use an old version.**

**Q: Can I have a copy of the assessment form?**

A Word version of the local assessment form can now be downloaded from the website. Instructions are in Annex B of this guidance.

**Q: What happens if there are multiple nominations for the same group?**

We will add all of them to your list so that you can read all the material. You should decide the strongest nomination form and use the local assessment form attached to that one for your report. Please let us know which one you have chosen and we will change the status of the others to 'duplicate for reference'. You can incorporate information from the other nomination

forms into your assessment and citation as necessary.

**Q: How much attention does the National Assessment Committee pay to the LL's citation and local report? Do they also see the nomination form?**

The National Assessors consider all the relevant information about each group, including the full nomination form and letters of support. They take the LL's citation and local assessment report very seriously, as they are a vital source of objective information about the group.

**Q: Who do the notification emails get sent to?**

- An acknowledgement email is sent to the nominator once the application is submitted.
- The email informing successful groups in confidence is sent out via the KAVS website and goes to the group leader email address provided to us by the nominator. This goes only to the group and DOES NOT get sent to the nominator.
- The letter informing unsuccessful groups is sent to the group leader. The nominator will be notified separately.

**Q: When are the groups informed?**

Successful groups will be informed in confidence in October. They will be given a link to a special part of the website where they can upload required details and find useful resources for the public announcement. Unsuccessful groups will be informed in early November.

**Q: How are LLs informed?**

When notifying successful groups in October, we also email LLs in confidence with the outcome.

**Q: What is the normal ratio of successful/ unsuccessful groups per county?**

The picture is very varied. Only a very few counties will have 100% successful nominations. Most will have a mixture of outcomes, with some getting none.

**UNSUCCESSFUL GROUPS**

**Q: Are LLs expected to contact unsuccessful groups once the results are known?**

There is no obligation to do so. We leave this to your discretion. Please bear in mind that unsuccessful groups are not notified until early November.

**Q: Can I have more detailed feedback on unsuccessful groups?**

The National Assessment Committee considers several hundred nominations and we do not have the capacity to record detailed feedback for each one. However, we do keep brief notes and can use these to provide very basic feedback to individual Lieutenancies on request. Feedback is not provided to the groups themselves, as this is not expected in the National Honours system. Please explain this to the groups if they are asking for information.

**CERTIFICATES, CRYSTALS AND PRESENTATIONS**

**Q: I have received the crystals but not the certificates**

The crystals and certificates are made by different suppliers and sent separately. As the certificates are bespoke to each group, they tend to take longer to arrive.

**Q: The crystals/certificates have arrived damaged, can I get a replacement?**

Should the crystals/certificates arrive damaged, please follow Royal Mail's dedicated process for claiming on damaged parcels. Royal Mail is the courier usually used by our suppliers. Royal Mail has a dedicated process for claiming on damaged parcels.

Royal Mail Claims Guidance and Policies:

[https://personal.help.royalmail.com/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/325/~/-/claims-centre](https://personal.help.royalmail.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/325/~/-/claims-centre)

**Q: What if the crystals/certificates were damaged whilst in the Lieutenancy's or awardee's care?**

We expect that if a crystal/certificate is damaged whilst in the Lieutenancy's or awardee's care, the costs of the replacement should be covered by the party responsible for the damage.

**Q: I am worried that the crystals and certificates will not arrive in time for the presentation event**

Please get in touch with the KAVS team as soon as possible to discuss. In general, we recommend not scheduling any presentations until mid-December onwards and until crystals have been received.

**Q: Who pays for and hosts the presentation?**

The group normally hosts the event at their premises. It does not need to be a grand or expensive affair. Tea and cake is a common format.

## **LEAFLETS AND PROMOTION**

**Q: Where can I download the emblems and their guidance from?**

You can download all our emblems in their different formats from the Lieutenancy dashboard area of the admin website (or use the link [here](#)).

**Q: Are there any flyers or leaflets you can send me?**

You can download editable versions of our leaflet from your Lieutenancy dashboard on the website.

**Q: Does KAVS have social media?**

We use social media extensively and would encourage you to follow us and share our posts

X: <https://x.com/KingsAwardVS>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KingsAwardVS>

**Q: How can I promote KAVS on social media?**

You can follow the KAVS posts on X and Facebook and share them. Please do use other social media handles available to you to promote KAVS. You could also create your own posts to tell people how to nominate, remind them to do this, publicise the closing deadline and, especially to celebrate local awardees and presentation ceremonies.

Tips:

- Tag us in your posts @KingsAwardVS
- Make sure you use the KAVS hashtags so that we can like, repost and comment
- Use the group's hashtags in your activity to raise awareness and celebrate success
- Encourage the groups to use social media and to use the KAVS hashtags

- Use the @DCMS hashtag along with regional larger organisations (Mayor, CVS, Councils etc.) to help spread the word
- Use photographs, video and images - the more colourful the better. But please ensure you have consent. See **Annex G**.

The Lieutenancy area of the dashboard has links to a media resource pack that contains useful graphics, templates and suggested content to help with this.

## **COMPLAINTS**

### **Q: What happens if there is a complaint or issue with an awarded group in my area?**

Occasionally the KAVS team might receive a complaint about the actions/services of the group or one of its members. We have a duty to look into any allegations, in case there are genuine issues that could cause reputational problems for KAVS, especially safeguarding issues. Our usual procedure is as follows:

- KAVS Team will conduct an initial investigation into the complaint, if it is identified as a substantial concern. The KAVS Team will then forward a redacted version of the complaint to the relevant Lieutenancy in confidence and ask them to make discreet investigations to establish whether there is a cause for concern. The KAVS Team will also provide a short summary of their findings and possible ways forward, the level of escalation required will ultimately be in the Lieutenancy's discretion; however, the KAVS Team will support you in this process if a definitive decision cannot be made. If the group has recently received a KAVS, the best person to explore this might be the DL who carried out the local assessment.
- Depending on the nature of the complaint, the Lieutenancy will approach the group and/or a local authority to establish the following:
  - What are the facts surrounding the complaint? Can the group's leadership explain it and give their side of the story?
  - Has the group's leadership been approached about the complaint/problem? If so, have they responded properly, taken it seriously and given it proper consideration using robust policies and procedures (even if the complainant is not satisfied)? Essentially, is this still a well-run group?
  - Has the group taken the appropriate action to prevent it happening again and/or distanced themselves from an individual?
  - Are the police or authorities involved? If so, do they have serious concerns?
  - Has there been press coverage? Is this ongoing?
  - Does the complaint reflect just one view, or is there widespread criticism locally from service users or the wider community (search for comments online).
- Based on the information provided by the Lieutenancy, the KAVS team will consider whether there are grounds for further investigation and/or possible grounds for award forfeiture. We will keep you closely informed at all stages.

We are developing a more formal complaints and forfeitures process in order to ensure clarity, robustness and fairness when dealing with issues. We will update you once we have developed this further.

## ANNEX G: Glossary of Terms and Best Language Practice

Term	Definition
Annual reports	A comprehensive document that records the charity/organisation's previous year. This report often includes the group's accomplishments, financial information and volunteer's impact. <sup>[1]</sup>
Beneficiaries	The people and/or groups who will be or could be helped by the charity's work. <sup>[2]</sup>
Charitable incorporated organisation	A legal framework only available to charities, that allows them to become incorporated without having to register as a company. <sup>[3]</sup>
Clients	Charities will sometimes refer to the individuals they provide services to as 'clients' rather than 'beneficiaries' in order to avoid the stigmatisation that their clients are 'helpless'.
Co-creation	Co-creation is a broader term that encompasses a range of collaborative activities aimed at creating value together with stakeholders.
Co-design	Co-design is a specific type of co-creation that focuses on the design aspect of product or service development.
Community foundations	A public charity which focuses on supporting their local area. They often do this by facilitating the collecting of donations and using them to fulfil the communities needs. <sup>[4]</sup>
Community Interest Company (CIC)	Companies set up with the objective of social enterprise. Rather than focusing on maximising profits for shareholders, they reinvest their capital into public good. <sup>[5]</sup>
Community Voluntary Services (CVS)	Organisations that provide support to local communities and organisations helping them to reach their objectives. <sup>[6]</sup>
Direct benefits	A direct benefit is the primary or intended advantage that comes as a result of a charity/volunteer's work. For example the intended beneficiary receiving aid or a service from a charity.
Disabled (people)	The Equality Act 2010 defines a person as disabled if they have: "a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to do normal daily activities." <sup>[7]</sup>
Formal Volunteering	An individual providing unpaid help as part of a group, organisation or club. This is supervised, arranged and supported by the group and is regularly undertaken.
Grant-giving	A grant is financial aid given to an individual or group by a charity or government for a specific purpose. Grants can come in the form of money, resources or services and do not need to be repaid. <sup>[8]</sup>
Impairment vs disability	Impairment: an injury, illness, or congenital condition that causes or is likely to cause a loss or difference of physiological or psychological function.

	Disability: the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in society on an equal level with others due to social and environmental barriers.
Indirect benefits	An indirect benefit is a positive outcome that comes as a result of an action but is not its primary aim. For example a charity's primary aim could be cleaning litter, however they may also provide a secondary, indirect benefit as their work fosters a sense of community amongst their volunteers.
Informal Volunteering	Volunteering not supervised or coordinated by the charity, organisation or club but is regularly undertaken.
Liability insurance	Liability insurance covers claims made against a charity often by a service user. These claims may come in the event of an alleged injury or property damage committed against the service user. This insurance will also cover the legal costs and damages generated by disputing this claim. <sup>[9]</sup>
Long-term health condition	A long-term health condition is an illness that cannot be cured but can be controlled by medication and therapies. Some examples of long-term health conditions are diabetes, arthritis, asthma, epilepsy, high blood pressure, and some mental health conditions.
Neurodiversity/ neurodiverse condition/neurodivergent	Many people now choose the term 'Neurodiverse condition' instead of 'learning difficulty' when referring to learning differences such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD and Autism. <sup>[10]</sup>
Person-centred	Seeing the person as an individual and working together to develop appropriate solutions. <sup>[11]</sup>
Registered charity	Groups who are registered with the Charity Commission and are legally recognised as Charities under the Charity Act 2011. <sup>[12]</sup>
Service Providers	In terms of voluntary work, service providers are defined as "groups who run activities designed to help people in some way." <sup>[13]</sup>
Statutory body	An independent organisation set up by the government with the authority to implement specific legislation. These bodies monitor charities, making sure they are keeping to regulations. <sup>[14]</sup>
Statutory requirements	The requirements a charity must fulfil in order to be legally considered a charity. For example, according to the Charity Act 2011, one of the statutory requirements for charities is that they must be established for charitable purposes <i>only</i> . <sup>[15]</sup>
Trustee	The Charity Commission states: "Trustees are the volunteers who lead charities and decide how they are run." They are sometimes referred to as board members. <sup>[16]</sup>
Umbrella Group	A group which coordinates and provides support to charities sharing a common interest, For example charities within the same sector or geographical location. <sup>[17]</sup>
Unconstituted group	Groups of individuals who come together to undertake shared activities due to a shared interest/concern (These groups do not need to be registered (constituted) with the Charity Commission unless they have an annual revenue exceeding £5,000). <sup>[18]</sup>

Volunteer-led	Simply defined as a group led by volunteers rather than paid employees. Volunteers are responsible for setting the vision, strategy, and objectives for the organisation. <sup>[19]</sup>
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Where references are not provided, definitions have been provided by our national committee.

### Best Language Practice

Language can often act as a barrier when it is negative and misrepresents individuals, creating stigmas and disempowering people. The terminology table below aims to help guide best language practice when describing work surrounding or involving individuals with disabilities, impairments or health conditions.

(Table taken from [Activity Alliance - Language Factsheet](#))

Do not use	Do use
The disabled, handicapped, crippled	Disabled person or people with impairments/ health conditions
Able-bodied person, normal person	Person or non-disabled person
Midget	Dwarf, person of short stature, person with a restricted growth condition
Sufferer	Person with a certain condition or impairment
Wheelchair or mobility-scooter bound or confined	Wheelchair or mobility-scooter user
Retarded, backwards, slow, mentally handicapped	Learning disability or person with an intellectual impairment
The deaf The blind	Deaf people/hearing impaired person, Blind people/visually impaired person
Brain damage	Brain injury
Afflicted by, suffers from, victim of [name of condition or impairment]	Has [name of condition or impairment]
Mental	Mental health problem/issue

## ANNEX H: CONFIDENTIALITY AND HANDLING PERSONAL DATA

As a KAVS local assessor, you will have access to the personal details of nominators and group leaders, the personal observations of other local assessors in your county and, possibly, advance knowledge of the KAVS awardees for your county. All of this information is sensitive and some of it will be personal. Please make sure you have read the expectations below.

### Confidentiality

Unlike with individual Honours, groups that have been nominated for KAVS will be aware of the fact. However, the same principles apply, in that the material and views used to make the final decision are always treated as confidential. This means that the content of the local assessment report, the LL citation and any advance information about the decision should not be shared with the group or anyone outside the local assessment process.

For the same reason, we do not provide feedback to unsuccessful groups about the decision, so please manage their expectations on that front. However, we will always try to give Lieutenancies an insight into the reasons for decisions, as described on page 14.

### Handling personal data

Everyone involved with assessing and administering KAVS will need to see and use people's personal data. This includes:

- Seeing and sometimes downloading contact details for group leaders and nominators.
- Using and sharing photographs of KAVS awardees

It is very important that you follow the correct handling and storage requirements for this sensitive material, in order to retain confidentiality and privacy and ensure that we follow data protection guidelines. Please follow these procedures in particular:

- Share our [privacy notice](#) with the group leader when you start the local assessment.
- Ensure that any printed copies of nomination/assessment material are stored and disposed of securely immediately after the assessment.
- Confidential material should not be opened or worked upon in public places (e.g. on train journeys).
- Personal data associated with the nominated groups should only be used for the purpose of assessment.
- Personal data associated with the nominated groups should not be shared with anyone else other than Lieutenancy colleagues or the KAVS team.
- Always ask for consent from people in a photograph before publishing it or sharing it with others (e.g. the KAVS team). If there are children involved, this needs an additional layer of consent from their parents. Make them aware that a photo or video is being taken and explain what it will be used for. Ask for their consent to share their image and record this on a written consent form. They will need a copy of the relevant Privacy Notice before consenting.