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**Voluntary & Community Action Sunderland**

**“Open Arms” Community Award 2023**

# Guidance Notes

## What are the VCAS “Open Arms” Awards?

The ”Open Arms” Awards is an event held in Sunderland that brings together individuals, organisations and agencies to recognise share and celebrate the Voluntary Sector in the City who work to improve the well-being of individuals and groups throughout the City of Sunderland.

## Why the Awards Ceremony?

Individuals and VCS groups play a significant and growing role in the City of Sunderland. Individuals and organisations contribute to the support of members of the community often without formal recognition. The” Open Arms” awards have been developed to allow the wider Sunderland community to recognise and celebrate the efforts and achievements of these efforts.

## The Awards

There is a change in this year’s awards. In 2023 you will be able to vote for both Large and Small Organisations in the categories indicated below. We have done this as many of the larger nominees have significant online followers and this made it difficult for Grass Roots organisations to be recognised.

For the purpose of the awards a Small Organisation can be defined as one that has:

* Under £50k a year income or
* Ten Volunteers or less
* No paid staff (Volunteer led)

**Community Group Award**

* The contribution of any constituted VCS Group, Charity of CIC that has, in the view of the nominee, provided excellent support and enhanced the lives of individuals the City of Sunderland.
* Your nomination should briefly evidence how the organisation has supported the Community giving evidence, written and photographic wherever possible, Your examples should demonstrate how that contributed has added value to the lives of individuals.
* Large or Small organisations – individuals can nominate both large and small organisations at the same time

Partnership Award-

* The contribution of any constituted VCS Group, Charity, CIC, Private or Public Sector organisation that has, in the view of the nominee, close, collaborative partnerships that have support and enhanced the delivery of services to the community and enriched the lives of individuals in the Community.
* Your nomination should briefly outline how the organisation has achieved this giving brief evidence, written and photographic wherever possible, examples that demonstrate how that contributed has added value to VCS provision in the Community.
* Large or Small organisations – individuals can nominate both large and small organisations at the same time.

Health and Wellbeing Award

* The contribution of any individual or organisation in encouraging and supporting the people in the City to address and improve personal Health and Wellbeing.
* Your nomination should briefly outline how the individual or organisation has achieved this giving evidence, written and photographic wherever possible, examples that demonstrate the impact their contributed has made to the lives of people in the Community.
* Large or Small organisations – individuals can nominate both Large and small organisations at the same time

Community Places & Spaces Award

* This award recognises the value inherent in locations and places that are used by VCS groups in the City. These spaces will have become a focal point of community or group life. Their visual appearance is not the key element of this award. rather the impact that it has on those that attend.
* Your nomination should briefly outline how the place/space has added value to the life’s of people attending giving evidence, written and photographic wherever possible, examples that demonstrate its impacy impact.
* Large or Small organisations – individuals can nominate both Large and small organisations at the same time

Influence and Collaboration Award

* This award recognises the commitment and impact of those individuals who, through their ability to engage with and enthuse others, have added significant and long lasting value to the VCS Community of Sunderland. This may include individuals from Voluntary, Public and Private sectors
* Your nomination should briefly outline how the nominee has added value to the life’s of people in the community giving evidence, written and photographic wherever possible, examples that demonstrate their impact.

Community, Culture and Arts Award

* As broad as the name suggests, this award recognises the impact of culture and the creative arts within the VCS Community. Your nominee could be, but is not limited to, a project, a piece of art, an artis or a group/groups whose creative activities have either been commenced or concluded in 2019 or 2020
* Your nomination should briefly outline the creative or artistic impact of the work, project or individual and how it has added value to the life’s of people in the community giving evidence, written and photographic wherever possible, examples that demonstrate its impact.
* Large or Small organisations – individuals can nominate both Large and small organisations at the same time.
* Sports Award
* This award recognises the commitment and impact of individuals or group who have engaged with people of all ages with sport being the key method of improving fitness and reducing isolation.
* Your nomination should briefly outline how the nominee has added value to the life’s of people in the community giving evidence, written and photographic wherever possible, examples that demonstrate the combined impact of improved Health and reduced Isolation will be favoured.
* Large or Small organisations – individuals can nominate both Large and small organisations at the same time
* Trustee of the Year Award
* This award recognises the commitment and impact of individuals who act as trustees for Charities based in Sunderland and delivering their support within the City.
* Your nomination should evidence the individuals contributed to the committee of the Charity they support and may also include examples of how their contribution has added to the sustainability of their charity.
* Young Volunteer Award
* This award recognises the commitment, commitment and impact of individuals, under the age of 21, as at the 1st January 2020, who act as volunteers within the City of Sunderland
* Your nomination should evidence the individuals contributed to the group or Charity they support may also include examples of how their contribution has added to the sustainability of their charity.
* Volunteer Award
* This award recognises the commitment, commitment and impact of individuals, over the age of 21 as at the 1st January 2020, who act as volunteers within the City of Sunderland
* Your nomination should evidence the individuals contributed to the group or Charity they support may also include examples of how their contribution has added to the sustainability of their charity.

**Sunderland “Open Arms” Award**

* Any individual in the City of Sunderland who has, by their actions consistently enhanced the lives, health and well-being of individuals or groups within the City of Sunderland
* The nominee should clearly consistently demonstrate the values of leadership and collaboration that adds significantly to the health and wellbeing to all within Sunderland. Your nomination should briefly outline how the organisation has achieved this giving brief evidence, written and photographic wherever possible.

In addition, the Open Arms Panel will make one donations – Lifelong Contribution – to an individual who they feel has made a significant long term contribution to the VCS communioty

## The Nomination process.

**Q. Who can be nominated?**

A. Voluntary and community sector (VCS organisations, social enterprises), private and public sector departments, teams or projects, and any individual from within the City of Sunderland.

**Q. Who can make a nomination?**

A. People who benefit from the group’s services or another organisation that has sound knowledge of the group, may make a nomination.

Nominations should have at least one other independent person that has agreed to second the nomination. This person should not be on the committee of your organisation or be a family member family or close friends.

You can nominate yourself or the organisation you run, work for or are involved with, but if you do, there must always be an independent person who has agreed to second your nomination.

**Q. When should I send in my nomination?**

A. You will need to have submitted your nomination form by **5pm on 20th October 2023**. A panel of independent judges from the VCS will be involved in selecting the winners. A roll-call of all accepted nominations will be made during the Awards Ceremony.

**Q. Can you give me any advice on completing the nomination form?**

Nominations can be made through an online link or, for those unable to access, a hard copy version will be made available which can be returned to [steve@vcas.org.uk](mailto:steve@vcas.org.uk).

Complete the form accurately and succinctly. Telll us why you wisjh to nominate the group or individuals in no more than 100 words..

Explain exactly what they are dog and how their work is impacting positively on the lives of people in the community they serve.

**Q. Can I tell a group or an individual that I have nominated them?**

A. Yes and we may contact the group, organisation or individual direct to clarify points that you have made on the nomination form. The more people know about your nomination the more chance the group/individuals will have of winning.

**Q. Will every individual/ group that is nominated receive an award?**

A. No, the award will not go to every group that is nominated. Please see above.

**Q. What proof of support must I provide?**

A. You do not need to attach any proof to the nomination.

**Q. What happens after I send in my nomination?**

A. All of the nominees will be recognised on VCAS Media outlets and as part of our regular newsletters.

**Q. Can an organisation or individual win the same award two years running?**

A. No, we have the “Ant & Dev factor”. A group or individual cannot win the same award two years running. Also, an individual cannot win more than one personal awards in the same year. If this occurs the individual will receive a ”highly commended award” in the category where they received the least votes.

## Criteria

**Q. Can you give examples of the types of groups, individuals or organisations that the award might go to?**

A. The types of activity that the awards will recognise are:

Groups or individuals that have brought the community together for the common good.

People who have given substantial time and resources to help others;

Groups or individuals that have been key to enabling new ways of delivering services within the City of Sunderland.

Or, Groups or individuals engaging the public and/or stakeholders in the shaping of public services.

Small groups can be defined as being small if they are:

**Q. Is the award for international activities?**

A. The group’s or individual’s work should be based within the City of Sunderland.

**Q. What will a successful individual, group or organisation receive?**

Each category will have a minimum of two awards given;

1. Highly Commended – Where the panel feel that the individual/organisation contribution has been worthy of recognition. In exceptional circumstances more than one may be nominated in each category.

2. Winners Award

The chosen nominees each receive:

* The winner and highly recommended individual or organisation will receive a signed certificate of recognition.
* A Plaque/Trophy recognising the winning individual or organisations name and the category of the award.

**Q. What is the judging process?**

A. There will be two steps to the judging process: -

* The nomination will be reviewed by an independent adjudicator to ensure it is correctly completed and fulfils the basic criteria.

Nominations that fulfil the basic criteria will then be judged with the panel having the final decision.

**Confidentiality and security**

Any information you provide will be held securely and in accordance with the GDPR requirements. Your personal details will not be disclosed to third parties without your express permission.