



## **The Queen pays tribute to the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead volunteering group with prestigious Award**

Family Friends from Windsor, Maidenhead and Ascot has been announced as one of 95 volunteering groups from across the UK winning this year's Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, recognising the outstanding contributions made to local communities by groups voluntarily devoting their time for the benefit of others.

The prestigious National Honour, which is equivalent to the MBE, sets the national benchmark for excellence in volunteering, and the activities of those awarded have been judged of the highest standard.

Family Friends has received the Award for its work supporting families with children (0-13 years) throughout the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead by providing practical and emotional support to families, through volunteer support, parenting support and support for children.

Winners of this year's Award were selected from 406 groups nominated by members of the public who have been helped personally or witnessed the benefits of a group's work in their community.

Family Friends will receive a certificate signed by the Queen and an exclusive commemorative crystal. These will be presented by Her Majesty's representative in Berkshire, The Hon. Mrs Bayliss JP, Lord-Lieutenant at a special ceremony arranged by the Lieutenancy office. Group representatives have also received an invitation to a Royal Garden Party event at Buckingham Palace in the summer.

Speaking of their success, Louise Mantle from Family Friends said: "WE ARE THRILLED TO HAVE RECEIVED THIS PRESTIGIOUS HONOUR FOR THE WORK WE DO WITH FAMILIES IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY. THIS AWARD PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE VERY HARD WORK AND DEDICATION OF ALL CONNECTED WITH FAMILY FRIENDS – VOLUNTEERS, STAFF, MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE."

The Award is overseen by the Office of the Third Sector, in the Cabinet Office. Kevin Brennan, Minister for the Third Sector, said,

“Volunteering binds communities together and builds a stronger and kinder society. Often these unsung heroes go about their work without much recognition, that’s why I’m particularly pleased to see their efforts recognised and rewarded by the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service.”

More than 700 groups around the UK have now won the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service, over the seven years since it was created by Her Majesty to mark the occasion of her Golden Jubilee in 2002.

For details of all this year’s Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service winners and information on how to nominate a group that really makes a difference, visit [www.queensawardvoluntary.gov.uk](http://www.queensawardvoluntary.gov.uk), where a nomination form can be downloaded.

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**For further information**

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**Note to editors**

**About the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service**

In 2002, in celebration of Her Majesty’s Golden Jubilee, the Queen’s Golden Jubilee Award for Voluntary Service by Groups in the Community was established. Its purpose is to recognise groups of individuals who are giving their time freely for the benefit of others. It is the highest honour that can be bestowed upon groups of this kind and is equivalent in status to the MBE. As such, the Queen’s Award not only serves to provide recognition of volunteer groups, but also demonstrates the high respect in which volunteering is held.

The Award is overseen by the Office of the Third Sector (OTS). As part of the Cabinet Office, the OTS leads work across government to support the environment for a thriving third sector (voluntary and community groups, social enterprises, charities, cooperatives and mutuals), enabling it to campaign for change, deliver public services, promote social enterprise and strengthen communities.

Groups must be nominated for the Award – self nomination is not permitted. A group (two or more people) can be nominated if it is based in the UK, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. The group has to have been volunteering for the benefit of people in the UK or overseas for at least three years and more than half its members must be volunteers who have the right of residence in the UK. Groups solely concerned with fundraising for charitable purposes are not eligible. Further details on entrance criteria and the nomination process are available from [www.queensawardvoluntary.gov.uk](http://www.queensawardvoluntary.gov.uk).