



CLUB SUPPORT FACTSHEET

REWARDING AND RECOGNISING VOLUNTEERS

This factsheet highlights the importance of acknowledging the contribution of volunteers.

What is reward and recognition?

Reward and recognition is a way of showing gratitude for somebody's achievements and contribution. Within an athletics and running setting, this is a great way to say thank you to volunteers and highlight their personal involvement, service, and achievements.

Why should clubs think about reward and recognition?

Volunteers are the heartbeat of athletics and running clubs. Each club requires multiple volunteers with different skills to provide their members with a fantastic experience. As well as considering an athlete's experience, it is important we also consider the experience of volunteers and look after them.

At times, we know clubs struggle to cope with limited numbers of volunteers and those involved often do multiple roles and contribute countless hours to their club.

We can all play a role in looking after volunteers, thanking, and appreciating them. Promoting reward and recognition initiatives for volunteers can also have a huge impact on the culture within a club and helping volunteers to feel valued.

Whose responsibility is it?

Every club member, parent, participant, or volunteer has a role to play in developing a positive culture within a club. Everybody can show gratitude to volunteers by thanking them and appreciating their efforts.

This could be in person, via the club's social media pages or by making the committee aware of their efforts. More formal recognition should be led by the club committee.

Embedding volunteer recognition into monthly agenda items is a good way to make this a regular conversation. A plan for rewarding volunteers could include having dedicated resource, budget, and an approach to thanking volunteers.



Have you thought about setting up a thank you email account at your club? This is a great way for members to thank volunteers for their contribution. It can be powerful for volunteers to read and see first-hand how valued they are.



What are the benefits of rewarding and recognising volunteers?

Some of the benefits include:

- Feeling valued
- Sustain/improve motivation levels (this can help retain volunteers for longer)
- Raise the profile of volunteering
- Create a culture of being kind, thankful and respectful
- Educate club members on the importance of volunteers

For more digital club support, visit the [England Athletics Club Hub](#)



Developing a culture of reward & recognition:

Where should a club start with this?

One of the most important things is to get to know your volunteers. After a volunteer has been deployed, it is important to make sure that their volunteering experience is positive. Encourage committee members to regularly check in with volunteers and get their feedback. You can also feedback to the committee about the great job they are doing as well! If you can understand the points below, you may well get to understand what your volunteers do for your club and be in a better place to consider how to recognise their contribution:

- What – do they do for the club?
- When – did they start regularly volunteering at your club?
- Why – do they do it?
- How – does their contribution make a difference?
- Who – would be impacted if they didn't volunteer at your club?

If a club wants to develop a formal scheme or simply thank volunteers, what should they consider?

These 5 points below can help with giving committees direction on how to think about rewarding volunteers:

- Criteria – develop a criterion for awarding volunteers. This will give you and the club members a clear understanding of why someone is being recognised.
- Budget – identify what financial resources are available for rewarding club volunteers?
- Scale – how many volunteers are you looking to recognise?
- Type – what would be an appropriate way to say thank you?
- Individual differences – how would the recipient want to be rewarded?



- ✓ Really consider how somebody would like to be rewarded or recognised. For example, if somebody is very private and introverted, doing a huge presentation in front of lots of people and asking them to do a speech is unlikely to feel like a reward!
- ✓ Knowing your volunteers and understanding what is important to them and their preferences can make a huge difference in rewarding them appropriately

For more digital club support, visit the [England Athletics Club Hub](#)



For more digital club support, visit the [England Athletics Club Hub](#)

Examples:

DEFINITIONS: Typically, a **reward** is something that somebody is physically given – for example a trophy, voucher, or piece of club kit. **Recognition** is acknowledging someone's efforts, and this is often without a direct cost. For example, this could be thanking them publicly at the club AGM, highlighting their contribution to the club on the website or naming a club race after them in their memory.

Examples of rewards:

Informal:	Formal:
Small gift – for example a box of chocolates etc.	Dedicated awards for volunteers at annual club presentation evening
Incentives such as reduced training fees as a thank you for volunteering	Monthly volunteer of the month awards
Club kit for officials, coaches, and volunteers	Trophies, certificates, medals etc.
Coffee and cake vouchers for marshals supporting a club event	Social event for volunteers to thank them for their support (For example – going as a club to watch the British Athletics Championships or a club meal for volunteers, funded by the club)

Examples of recognition:

Informal:	Formal:
Regularly say thank you	Write a letter to them thanking them for their contribution
Shout-outs and round of applause at training sessions	Nominate in EA regional volunteer awards or alternative local schemes
Highlight their contribution on club social media channels or at local events	Article in club E-newsletter
Making key stakeholders aware of their efforts and asking them to thank them	Advise the local MP of an individual's achievements and ask them to be acknowledged
Email them or pass on nice comments from parents	Name a club event after them