**Guidance notes**

Please read these notes before completing the nomination form.

The annual Age-friendly Belfast Older Volunteer Awards celebrate the considerable impact made by volunteers aged 60 and over to communities, neighbourhoods and people across the city.

Who is eligible for nomination?

* Any volunteer who is aged 60 or over at the close of the nomination period (18 October 2019); and
* Anyone who falls within the NI Volunteering Strategy definition of volunteering

“the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society and the community, the environment, or individuals outside (or in addition to) one’s immediate family. It is unpaid and undertaken freely and by choice’.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Please note: we are unable to accept nominations for volunteers who are also employees of the organisation nominating them.

Who can nominate?

We accept nominations from members of the public, as well as, groups and organisations who wish to nominate someone who makes a difference to their community informally or as a formal volunteer.

Nominations should come from the group or organisation the nominee currently volunteers with. This group or organisation should be formally constituted.

The nominating group or organisation should provide services within the Belfast City Council area and should involve volunteers in its work.

Award categories

We recognise volunteers under five categories:

1. **The Older Volunteer of the Year Award**: recognises an individual volunteer who you feel has made a real impact on or difference to your group or organisation’s work over the last year, October 2018 to September 2019.
2. **Marie Mathews Participation Award**: recognises a volunteer who embodies the true spirit of volunteering. This may be someone who volunteers across a number of roles or groups, or whose length of service deserves to be recognised.
3. **Contribution to City Life Award:** recognises a volunteer whose contribution has made an impact on life in Belfast. This can be through their involvement with the arts and culture, health & well-being, environmental projects, community development, befriending or any other charitable activity with a benefit to the community or the individuals within it.
4. **Good Neighbour Award:**  recognises someone, not necessarily connected with a group or organisation, who makes a practical difference to others in the neighbourhood or area, improving the quality of people’s lives. Someone who gets the title ‘unsung hero’ because of the things they do, big or small to make life better for people beyond their own immediate family.
5. **Team or group Award:** celebrates 2 or more volunteers who are involved in the same project, programme or service within an organisation. Through working together this team or group has made a positive on your group or organisation, service users or other volunteers or staff. All members of the team you’re nominating should be 60 or over by 18 October 2019.

**Completing the nomination form**

1. Please read the application form before beginning to write. This will give you the opportunity to see what information we’re looking for.
2. If you wish to nominate your volunteer or group of volunteers in more than one category please complete additional nomination forms.
3. Please make sure that you spell your nominees’ names correctly. Each eligible nominee or team will receive a certificate to recognise their nomination.
4. The award panel can only make a decision based on the information you provide on the nomination form, so please use your 650 word limit to its best effect.
5. We encourage you to give specific, factual examples to show why this volunteer or team of volunteers should win the category they are nominated in.
6. Remember you know your volunteer/s best. Please remember what you write needs to be appreciated by someone with no knowledge of your group, community or the volunteer /s so make sure you tell us why you think this individual or team is a worthy winner.

What happens once the nomination form is submitted?

Once you’ve submitted your nomination form you will receive a confirmation letter/e mail.

Following the close of the nomination period all the eligible nominations received will be considered by the awards panel. One overall winner will be chosen in each category.

The awards presentation event will take place in Belfast City Hall on Tuesday 10 December 2019.

Closing date for nominations

The deadline for nomination forms is 4.30 pm on Friday 18 October 2019.You can submit your nominations by e mail, post or by hand. Please ensure you request a delivery receipt if submitting your nomination by e mail or telephone to confirm it has been received.

Late nominations WILL NOT be accepted.

Please note:

1. Nominees agree to allow information contained in the nomination form to be used for publicity purposes.
2. The decisions made by Belfast City Council’s Age-friendly Older Volunteer Awards Panel are final. No correspondence will be entered into in respect of the decisions made.

For further information

If you have any queries or need additional information please contact:

Tracy Mawhinney

Community Services

Belfast City Council

Cecil Ward Building

4-10 Linenhall Street

Belfast

BT2 8BP

**Telephone**: 9032 0202 ext 3775

**Email**  : mawhinneyt@belfastcity.gov.uk

1. Join In, Get Involved: Build a Better Future. The Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan for Northern Ireland”, Department for Social Development, March 2012 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)