

Giving young people the recognition they deserve

Operational Guidance for Approved Providers

Registering online as a validating organisation

Guidance Issued: 10 September 2009

This guidance can also be downloaded from the www.vinspired.com/awardsnetwork

Congratulations on becoming a **v**inspired awards Approved Provider. Welcome to the **v**inspired awards network.

vinspired awards (vfifty and vimpact) go online!

v believes that every young volunteer should be rewarded for their efforts and contributions and recognised for the important role that they play in transforming communities.

To make this possible for all young volunteers – regardless of where they are doing their volunteering – the **vinspired awards** (including the **vfifty** Award and the **vimpact** Award) are now available online through our website www.vinspired.com/awards.

This exciting development will enable young volunteers across England to log their hours, skills and community impact online, and work towards achieving their **vinspired awards**.

What does this mean for us?

This means that any organisation that works with young volunteers can now apply to become a 'Validating Organisation' as a **vinspired awards** Approved Provider, enabling staff to validate young people's awards online.

The following document provides guidance on how to begin your journey as a 'Validating Organisation.' Details about where to access further information, guidance and support is available at the end of this booklet. Good luck!

Validation – getting started

Please find below a description of key roles required to validate the **v**inspired awards online:

Organisation contract holders.

When completing the Approved Provider Application, the Main Contact nominated an **Organisation Administrator. v** will therefore set up this person as Administrator for your organisation. They will receive an email to confirm when this has been done and receive a Unique Reference. It is the Main Contact's responsibility to ensure that their organisation, the Administrator and the Validator(s) follow the procedures for **v**inspired awards online and abide by any terms that **v** applies to **v**inspired awards.

PLEASE NOTE Certificates should only be awarded to volunteers that have achieved the requirements of **v**inspired awards. Certificates should not be issued to other organisations. If other organisations would like to be able to issue **v**inspired awards, they should either apply to **v** as a **v**-funded organisation or they should apply to **v** through the Approved Provider schemes.

Organisation Administrators

Every organisation that runs the **v**inspired awards is required to identify one key member of staff to act as the 'Organisation Administrator'. The role of the Organisation Administrator is to set up and maintain a network of online Validators - staff within the organisation who can review **v**fifty and **v**impact applications for young volunteers (see below for more details).

Validators will have some access to young people's records, and will be able to contact them via emails generated through the online system. The Organisation Administrator therefore plays a vital role in **ensuring that all staff appointed as 'Validators' are CRB checked to enhanced level** – before they are added to the Validator list – in order to ensure appropriate safeguarding of young volunteers. If the Administrator is also going to be a Validator they also need to meet the CRB requirements.

Validators

Validators are staff within the organisation who are selected and registered by the Organisation Administrator. **All Validators should be CRB checked to enhanced level before they are added to the Validator list**, in order to ensure appropriate safeguarding of young volunteers.

Once registered, Validators will receive **v**fifty and **v**impact award validation requests from volunteers, which are generated automatically by the online system. Validators can go online to review the volunteer's application in order to make a decision about whether they have achieved the award.

They can also email the young volunteer (via the online system) to clarify points on the application form or to request additional information.

Ensuring the safety of young volunteers

Validators can only see information submitted on an application form, which does not include any personal information such as their address, their telephone number, etc.

However, Organisation Administrators and Validators can email young volunteers, via the online system, to provide feedback, ask questions or seek clarification on different aspects of their award application.

It is therefore vital that all staff who are registered to use the system have been CRB-checked to enhanced level. This is a standard condition of all **v** grants, and should apply to all project staff currently working with young volunteers.

The Organisation Administrator is responsible for ensuring that all staff who are given access to the system as 'Validators' have been CRB-checked to enhanced level.

How to register as a 'Validating Organisation'

In the Approved Provider Application, the Main Contact provided **v** with:

- The name of your organisation
- The name, job title, address and telephone number of a designated member of staff who will act as an Organisation Administrator. We would expect the nominated person to be a senior, permanent member of staff, who has already been CRB checked to enhanced level, and will be responsible for ensuring that a robust safeguarding process is followed internally for adding or removing Validators.
- The email address the Organisation Administrator will use. The email address would be either one that the Organisation Administrator is already currently using or they may have set up a new generic address such as organisation.administrator@yourorgname.com. This email address will only be used by the organisation administrator to login to the system and for communication between **v** and your Organisation Administrator relating to the completion and issuing of the **v**inspired awards.

v will e-mail login and password details to your official e-mail address, to enable your Organisation Administrator to access the system and begin adding Validators.

If you want to change the e-mail address the Main Contact can send this information to awardsprovider@vinspired.com

What happens when we register?

When you become an Approved Provider, your organisation's details will be uploaded to the system, and the Organisation Administrator will receive a password, providing access to the online system.

Your Organisation Administrator will be able to log on at <http://awards.vinspired.com> using the official e-mail address that was provided, together with the password **v** sends to your organisation.

The Organisation Administrator can then access a special area of the online system, which will enable them to set up a network of authorised Validators, who will validate **v**inspired awards online for your organisation. This area of the site enables them to set up, add and delete Validators and edit their contact details.

If they wish, Organisation Administrators may also set themselves up as authorised Validators in order to validate the **v**inspired awards. **Please note:** Organisation Administrators can set themselves up as an authorised Validator using the same e-mail address and password that they use to login to the Organisation Administration area.

Assessing and validating a young person's vinspired award

Your Organisation Administrator should identify and nominate key staff in your organisation to act as 'Validators.' The Organisation Administrator can then set up each Validator with a username (which will be an email address - most usually one the validator is already using) and the system will then automatically send an e-mail to the Validator containing a password so they can access the 'Validation' area of the online system

On first logging onto the validation area, Validators will be able to view the home page which displays a list of all pending awards submitted by young people to their organisation for validation. They will also be able to view any messages from young volunteers which may, for example, include requested references, or provide additional information or clarification about an existing application.

By selecting the 'Validations' option at the top of this screen, Validation staff will be able to view a list of all awards submitted by young people to the organisation for validation. This will include all awards that;

- Are new and awaiting validation,
- Are in the process of being validated (Validators do not have to complete the process in one go but can return to complete the validation of an award at a later date.)
- Have been successfully completed and awarded.
- Have been declined.
- Are being moderated by the **v** central team (see later in this document)

Validators are required to click on the volunteer's name to either begin to or continue to validate their application.

Having selected a young volunteer's application, Validators are also able to view all previous correspondence with that young volunteer or opt to send a new message to a volunteer.

Assessing and validating the vffifty Award

Once logged onto the validation area, a Validator will be able to view a list of all awards submitted by young people to the organisation for validation

Validators can validate an individual's vffifty application by clicking on the young volunteer's name.

Once a volunteer's application has been selected, the Validator will be shown a list of the projects the young person has volunteered with whilst undertaking their vffifty Award. (This may be one project or several – young volunteers can participate in a number of volunteering projects whilst undertaking the vffifty award.)

Each of these projects must be validated in turn (in the 'my hours' section of the project) and a Validator is only able to validate the overall award once they have validated all the projects in the volunteer's application.

Validating a project

Validators are required to click on the project to view the volunteers experience on that project.

Before validating volunteering hours, Validators should undertake a review of the application to satisfy themselves that the young person:

- Has completed fifty hours of volunteering in a 12 month period.
- Has demonstrated some reflection on the skills they have gained.
- Has demonstrated some reflection on the impact of their volunteering on the community.

Validators should also:

- Have a face to face or telephone meeting with the young person to talk through their application
- Contact at least one referee to talk through the information the young person has provided on the application.

Approving the application

If each project outlined in the application meets the criteria outlined above, the Validator can select to validate the experience by using the 'validate experience' button.

Once all projects have been successfully validated, the Validator will have the option to approve the award.

This will either

- Alert our Central Validation Team that validation has been completed and request that they **moderate** the young person's application so that the award can be issued.
- If your organisation has already been **moderated** by the Central Validation Team, the Validator can simply approve the award. The young volunteer will automatically be sent a message confirming this.

Further information on the moderation process can be found later in this document.

The Validator should then contact the young volunteer to arrange the best way to issue their certificate. This can be done by using the 'messages' tab (which is accessible once a young person's application has been selected from either the home page or the validations page).

Once awarded Validators should record the number of the certificate issued to the young person, using the online system. This can be done by viewing the award on the 'validations' page and clicking on the prompt in the 'status' column.

Declining the application.

Having reviewed a young person's application, a Validator may feel that a young person has limited evidence of their involvement in a volunteering activity or has not demonstrated one of the four points above. If this is the case;

They may decide to contact the young person via the 'messages' tab to discuss certain parts of the application or request further information. Any communication from the Validator should support the young person to identify gaps in their application, and what actions need to be taken in order to be eligible for the award. The young volunteer can then provide any further information by email. The online system enables Validators to record any notes relating to a specific young person's application.

The Validator may also decide to contact one or more of the Project Co-ordinators or Referees listed in the young volunteer's application to confirm that the young person volunteered at their project, or to seek further information on any of their records. This will enable the Validator to determine whether to award or decline the application.

The Validator may decide to decline the award, but this should generally be considered as a 'last resort'. The online system has been designed to enable the Validator to support the young volunteer in addressing any gaps in their application, so that they can work towards achieving the award. However, in some circumstances, a Validator may feel that declining the application is the most appropriate route (e.g. the activities outlined in the young person's application form cannot be considered as 'volunteering'). When choosing to decline an award, the Validator will be prompted to send a message to the young person. In this message, the Validators should clearly identify the reasons the award has been declined. The young person is still able to amend their application and resubmit it at a later date if they wish.

Issuing certificates

Please see the process as detailed under **v**impact awards.

Assessing and validating the vimpact** award**

Once logged onto the validation area, a Validator will be able to view a list of all pending **v**impact awards submitted by young people to the organisation for validation.

Validators can validate an individual's **v**impact application by clicking on the young volunteer's name.

Once selected, the Validator will be able to access a document containing the volunteer's application. This word document contains all the information entered by the young person, and will enable the Validator to determine if a young person has successfully achieved their **v**impact.

To achieve **v**impact a young person is required to progress through a 4-stage process which is designed to help them; plan, record, review and tell others about different aspects of their volunteering.

Each of these 4 sections must be validated in turn and a Validator is only able to validate the overall award once they have validated all the sections of the volunteer's application.

Validating the Word application

The Validator is required to click on the document to view the volunteer's application.

Having reviewed the details of the Word document, the Validators can begin to validate the application by using the 'checklist' tab. This page includes a series of questions and comment boxes which Validators must complete in order to validate the award.

These questions should enable the Validator to determine if the young person:

1. Has successfully completed the 'Plan it' section for the **v**impact award.
2. Has successfully completed the 'Review it' section of the **v**impact award
3. Has successfully completed the 'Do It' section of the **v**impact award
4. Has successfully completed the 'My story' section of the **v**impact award.

Approving the application

In order to approve the award the Validator must have answered 'yes' to all questions in the checklist tab. Having done this, the system will allow the Validator to either; Alert our Central Validation Team that validation has been completed and request that they moderate the young person's application so that the award can be issued. If your organisation has already been moderated by the Central Validation Team, the Validator can simply approve the award. The young volunteer will automatically be sent a message confirming this.

Further information on the moderation process can be found later in this document.

The Validator should contact the young volunteer to arrange the best way to issue their certificate. This can be done by using the 'messages' tab (which is accessible once a young person's application has been selected from either the home page or the validations page).

Declining the application

Having reviewed a young person's application, a Validator may have answered 'no' or 'partly' to one or more of the questions listed in the 'checklist' tab. The Validator should record any comments relating to this on the 'checklist page'.

In this case, Validators may decide to contact the young person via e-mail to discuss certain parts of the application or request further information. This can be done by using the 'messages' tab (which is accessible once a young person's application has been selected from either the home page or the validations page). Any communication from the Validator should support the young person to identify gaps in their application, and what actions need to be taken in order to be eligible for the award. A Validator should use the comments they have recorded on the 'checklist page' to support the young person to identify what actions need to be taken or, what additional information is required in order to complete the vimpact Award.

This message may contain one or more of the following:

Highlight any incomplete sections:

The Validator should advise the young person of any blank or incomplete sections that appeared in their application.

Highlight that more volunteering hours need to be completed

The young person may not have completed the correct number of hours within the set time frame (100 hours within a 12 month period). They may need to volunteer for additional hours to address this.

Identify any answers within the vimpact Award application that were particularly strong

Identifying answers that were strong or that Validators particularly enjoyed reading will help the young volunteer to identify a strong answer and also encourage them to realise that although they still have some work to do, some areas of their booklet were great.

Identify specific steps where the young volunteer needs to provide more information

By focusing the volunteer on particular areas, the task of resubmitting will hopefully seem less daunting. Where possible, Validators should provide advice on specific areas that need amending and ways in which they might improve their written comments.

Following this feedback, the young volunteer can provide any further information by email. The online system enables the Validator to record any notes relating to a specific young person's application and any email communication related to the application.

The Validator may also decide to contact one or more of the Project coordinators or Referees listed in the young volunteer's application (specifically those recorded for the plan it and review it stages) to confirm that the young person volunteered at their project, or to seek further information on any of their records. This will enable the Validator to determine whether to award or decline the application.

The Validator may decide to decline the award, but this should generally be considered as a 'last resort'. The online system has been designed to enable the Validator to support the young volunteer in addressing any gaps in their application, so that they can work towards achieving the award. However, in some circumstances, a Validator may feel that declining the application is the most appropriate route (e.g. the activities outlined in the young person's application form cannot be considered as 'volunteering'). When choosing to decline an award, the Validator will be prompted to send a message to the young person. In this message, the Validators should clearly identify the reasons the award has been declined. The young person is still able to amend their application and resubmit it at a later date if they wish.

Moderation of organisations validating the vInspired awards

To ensure consistency amongst all organisations delivering the vImpact award, all organisations will be required to successfully submit five vFifty and vImpact Awards to the Central Validation Team for moderation. This central team is responsible for ensuring that organisations are validating the vImpact award correctly, helping to guarantee the quality and consistency of the award.

The process

If a Validator wishes to approve a vImpact award, the Validator must first have answered 'yes' to all questions in the checklist tab. Having done this, the Validator will then be able to either;

- Alert the Central Validation Team that validation has been completed and request that they moderate the young person application so that the award can be issued.
- If the Validator's organisation has already successfully submitted ten vImpact Awards for moderation, then they can approve the award directly. The young volunteer will automatically be sent a message confirming this.

Each organisation is required to have five vImpact award applications successfully moderated by the Central Validation Team. If the award being validated is one of these ten then the option to 'Send for moderation' will appear and the Validator will be able to follow the first of these options.

An electronic message will automatically be generated and sent to the Central Validation Team who will be alerted to the application awaiting moderation.

The Central Validation Team will then be able to log on and access the Validator area to view the young person's application and the Validator's completed checklist, including any notes or correspondence relating the application between the young person and the Validator.

The Central Validation team will also be able to communicate with the Validator through the system to clarify any aspects of the volunteer's application.

The Central Validation Team will then review this information and determine if vimpact can be awarded.

Moderation - next steps

If the vimpact applications submitted by your organisation pass the moderation process successfully, the Central Validation Team will contact your organisation at the official email address to:

- Confirm that the young person was successful in gaining the vimpact Award and advise you to let the young person know;
- Let you know how many more successful moderations are required before you can issue certificates independently.

If your vimpact Awards do not pass the moderation process successfully, (i.e. where the Central team's validation does not result in a decision to award the vimpact) they will contact the Administrator at the official email address to:

- Advise you that this is the case;
- Advise on areas where differences in validation occurred; *(by identifying the areas they feel require more comment or clarity from the young person and give an indication of what needs to be added in order to make the young volunteer eligible to receive a vimpact Award).*
- Advise next steps.

Once your organisation has had five vimpact awards successfully moderated, Validators in your organisation will then have the option to 'approve the award' directly.

The Validator should then contact the young volunteer to arrange issuing them with their certificate. This can be done by using the 'messages' tab (which is accessible once a young person's application has been selected from either the home page or the validations page).

We hope you find the awards a useful resource to help celebrate youth volunteering achievements.

Ordering certificates.

You will be issued with an initial batch of **v**fifty and **v**impact certificates, not exceeding 25% of the annual total expected to be used respectively (as outlined in your application form).

All subsequent orders for **v**inspired award certificates should be made to awardsprovider@vinspired.com

Please note the following points:

- The certificates are issued by calendar year
- Approved Providers will only be able to re-order certificates when 80% of the original allocation has been awarded to volunteers.

Initial Allocation of Certificates

1. **v** will make an initial order of **v**fifty and **v**impact certificates for each Approved Provider. The number ordered will be based on the number of young people you anticipate will achieve **v**inspired awards as written in your approved provider application form.
2. **v** will email you to confirm the number of certificates that have been ordered for you and the date by which you should receive them.
3. The certificates will be sent to the address of the Organisation Main Contact.
4. If you need to order more, please follow the process below.

Re-ordering Certificates

1. Your **v**inspired awards Organisation Administrator or Organisation Main Contact should contact awardsprovider@vinspired.com quoting your Unique Reference, the number of certificates your organisation has awarded to date against the number of certificates your organisation has received.
2. The number of certificates that have been issued to date will be checked against the number you anticipated (as stated in your application).
3. The number of certificates that the organisation is able to order will be confirmed or clarified.
4. Once your order is confirmed, the certificates will be ordered on your behalf.
5. Orders will be dispatched the next working day. Once an order has been placed, allow two days for delivery.

Other support for v funded organisations completing the vInspired awards online

Technical help

Whilst completing the vInspired awards online, Validators can access live online help. This will help the Validator to resolve any technical problems with the functioning of the online system. This can be done by clicking on the 'live online help' button.

Technical help may also be obtained by calling 020 7025 0545 (between 9.00 AM and 6.00 PM) and by e-mail to awardssupport@vinspired.com.

Non-technical help

If organisations have questions relating to the completion of the vInspired awards or the validation and moderation process, further information and guidance is available by contacting the Central Validation Team.

Telephone number: 0800 089 9000

E-mail awardsprovider@vinspired.com

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why has v established the vinspired awards Approved Provider scheme?

v believes that every young volunteer should be rewarded for their efforts and contributions and recognised for the important role they play in transforming communities. To make this possible for **all** young volunteers, regardless of where they do their volunteering, the vinspired awards are now available online through our website – www.vinspired.com.

As a result, v has taken the decision to enable non-funded organisations to deliver and validate the vinspired awards with their young volunteers directly. In order to facilitate this, v has introduced a Approved Provider process. This process requires organisations to register with v to deliver the vinspired awards, and entitles them to a number of benefits not available to non-approved organisations. v will send you more information about this in due course.

Q. Why is it necessary for v to ask for the information requested in the Approved Provider Application Form?

As part of the application process for v funding, organisations had to prove that they had the proper processes and procedures in place for working with young people. Therefore, in the interest of ensuring the same level of quality provision for all v's activities, the appropriate checks need to be made to ensure Approved Providers are suitable to validate the awards for young people.

Q. What do I do if I receive an application from young volunteer I don't know or haven't met?

Validators that receive validation requests from young people unknown to them are able to send the application to the Central Validation Team to be processed. Validators can do this by firstly selecting the young volunteer's application from the home page and then opting to 'Change organisation'. Validators should select the Central Validation Team appear as an option in the drop down list. Validators are also able to send emails to that young person by selecting the 'messages' tab. Using this area they can inform the young person that their application has been forwarded.

Q. Who will incur the cost of printing/photocopying downloadable versions of the awards for young volunteers to complete off-line?

v expects the vast majority of young volunteers to access the awards online. v cannot cover the costs of printing hard copy versions of the awards materials.

Q. How do project co-ordinators sign off and agree hours for young volunteers undertaking the vinspired awards?

There is no fixed requirement for organisations to sign off hours online. Volunteers who want to apply for an award are asked to provide supporting evidence, which may be an online reference, but may also be achieved by uploading pictures, videos, scanned copies of hard copy references etc.

Q. What is v doing to ensure equal access to all young people including young people with additional support needs?

As with any award scheme, some young volunteers may require additional support from project staff or peers in order to apply for their award. The website has been designed to be fully accessible to all young people, and it also complies with guidance set out under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

v has also invested in comprehensive help to complete the awards, including online live help and telephone support. Where projects or teams feel appropriate, they can still print hard copy versions of the resources which can be used by young volunteers.

Q. Are organisations able to record the details of certificates online?

Yes. Once an award has been approved on line, the Validator can record the issue number of the certificate online. By selecting the 'validations page,' organisations are able to add this information in the final column which displays the status.

Q. What information about the young person will Organisation Administrators, Validators and the central team have access to?

Organisation administrators, Validators and the central validation team will only have access to information that has been provided by the young person via their vifty or vimpact application form or additional information that they have provided in emails directly to the Validator or central team. They will not have access to volunteers' information as they are collating it/completing their hours. Organisation Administrators, Validators, the central team and v will only have access to the information for validation and not any personal data about young people.

Q. As an Approved Provider will I have to offer v-inspired awards to my young volunteers?

No. The v-inspired awards do not replace any accreditation / recognition scheme that organisations may be undertaking with young volunteers (e.g. Youth Achievement Awards, Duke of Edinburgh Award, OCN etc). However, the v-inspired awards are designed to be complementary and can be completed as either stand alone awards, or alongside other types of accreditation. This means young people can achieve both the v-inspired awards and any other accreditation / recognition your organisation is offering.