



Department for
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Dear Northumberland County Blind Association

I am delighted that Northumberland County Blind Association is receiving The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS) this year, with a special designation for providing impactful support during the early months of the pandemic. Congratulations on this well-deserved honour!

The impressive response of volunteers last year has reminded the whole nation of the key role they play in all parts of our society. We are so grateful for their fantastic contribution in helping local communities manage the extraordinary demands presented by Covid-19.

I am aware that many potential QAVS awardees were at the forefront of these efforts, and therefore decided to introduce a special designation of the Award to recognise impactful support. It has been truly inspiring to read all the examples of groups stepping up to manage a huge surge in demand, or finding new ways to provide essential support under difficult circumstances. Of course, some groups were not able to operate safely at all, but we are all so appreciative of what was achieved by those that could.

Please pass on my particular thanks to your fellow volunteers for their efforts during the pandemic, and congratulations to all for receiving this prestigious Award.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP
Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport