

Newsletter January 2024

Local news and services

Call for Saltire Summit Nominations



The Orkney Youth Awards 2024 is set to take place on 21 March at the Pickaquoy Centre. Recognising the amazing contributions young people make to their community, the event will include the prestigious Saltire Summit Award which acknowledges extraordinary volunteering contributions.

Organisers are encouraging the community to nominate young individuals who have demonstrated outstanding commitment in volunteering.

Brain Cromarty, Youth Development Worker at VAO said:

"The Saltire Summit Award is a fantastic opportunity to spotlight and honour young individuals making a substantial difference through their volunteering efforts. It only takes a moment to nominate a deserving candidate whose contribution has truly stood out."

Candidates must:

- Be an Orkney resident.
- Fall within the age range of 12-25.
- Not have received a Summit Award previously.

A few notes on the nomination form:

- Disregard checkboxes regarding completed award levels; they're not mandatory.
- Elaborate on young individuals' activities, it will be very helpful for the panel.
- Nominations for volunteers not already participating in the Saltire Awards are also welcome.

The nomination form can be found on the Saltire Awards website using this link:

- [Summit Award nomination – Saltire Awards.](#)

The deadline is Friday 16 February. A Summit Panel, comprising young volunteers, will assess nominations.

16 years of the Young People's Befriending Project

The Young People's Befriending Project has just entered its 16th year. Julie was one of the first young people to be matched to her volunteer in 2008 when she was 7 years old and now, 16 years later, at the age of 23 she still has a deep and enduring friendship with her volunteer Befriender Phyllis, even though their match ended over a decade ago. In a recent interview with Julie, she reflected on their friendship over the years.

'I remember being really shy the first time I met her, but then quickly it became so comfortable. And the strongest memory I have from those days when I was younger is just that she was by best, best friend.'

The Project matches young people with caring and committed volunteers who act as Befrienders. The primary goal of these befriending matches is to foster meaningful friendships, offer a supportive presence, and create an environment where children and young people can thrive socially and emotionally.

'We did loads of things together, mostly creative stuff because that was my favourite. We went to the library a lot too and Phyllis really helped me with my reading, honestly, she helped me so much. I always knew how much she cared – she was always so genuine and patient with me, and we just had so much fun.'

Through genuine friendships, like Phyllis and Julie's, and by taking part in engaging activities, the Project aims to make a lasting impact on the lives of young people across Orkney. Since 2007, over 100 of Orkney's young people have already benefitted from the care of a volunteer Befriender. Each match is as unique as the two people who make it, and the kind of activities that they take part in varies match to match. The Project aims for each shared friendship to contribute to the personal growth, confidence, and sense of belonging felt by both the young person and the volunteer.

Julie experienced first-hand the difference that having a Befriender at a crucial time in childhood can make.

'Having a solid connection to someone who wasn't family definitely gave me a lot of comfort and support. Knowing that someone outside of the family was there for me gave me strength too. I was able to open up to her and show her my emotions, and she was able to give me more perspective. And that really helped with my social skills too. It made me more comfortable with other people, it really sparked my confidence, and I don't think I'd be who I am today without that support.'

Julie and Phyllis's match ran for over 4 years with the Project, though they remained in touch afterwards and are still firm friends to this day. Phyllis remained with the Project after her match with Julie ended and is now supporting her 4th young person. Julie now works as a nurse in Aberdeen but meets up with Phyllis every time that she's home in Orkney, and they keep up with each other over text and calls in between times.

'Our friendship is such a staple to my life, it's part of my childhood and it's part of my growing up too. I don't think I could imagine life without Phyllis being there. She's part of my story now. It's so nice having someone who knows you inside out and has seen you grow up. She's really like a best friend. I'm so thankful for Phyllis.'

If Julie and Phyllis's heartwarming story has inspired you to make a positive impact on a young person's life, the Young People's Befriending Project at Voluntary Action Orkney would love to hear from you. All you need is a few hours free each fortnight, a caring and patient attitude, a positive outlook and the desire to make a difference. Come and join the Project and be a part of building meaningful relationships within our community. For more information please visit the [Young People's Befriending Project page on the VAO website](#) or contact hannah.rendall@vaorkney.org.uk or charis.pottinger@vaorkney.org.uk on 872897.



Safer Orkney: New website for the Orkney Partnership for Action Against Gender Based Violence and Abuse

The Orkney Partnership for Action Against Gender Based Violence and Abuse has a new [website](#). The Partnership works at a local level as the key driver for multi-agency work to tackle

violence against women and girls and gender based violence. They work alongside Equally Safe guidelines and are responsible for bringing together all the key public sector and third sector organisations working to prevent and eradicate violence against individuals within Orkney. They ensure that an effective and strategic approach is taken to progress the priorities set out in Equally Safe.

Key members of the partnership include representatives from Women's Aid, ORSAS, Relationships Scotland Orkney, Police Scotland, NHS, Public Health, OHAC, Education, Right There, Housing, Criminal Justice, Victim Support, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal and other relevant organisations.

Importantly, the partnership offers a single point of contact for the breadth of work being taken to tackle gender based violence on all levels and to avoid duplication of effort and resource.

The Partnership have produced a Personal Safety Survey to gather perceptions of personal safety and experiences of harassment and sexual assault. If you would like to complete the survey please [complete this Google form](#)..

For more information, please contact jayne.smith-saville@womensaidorkney.org.uk

Free access to Canva Pro for charities



Are you looking to improve your social media content or promotional material? If so, then it's worth checking out Canva. Canva is an online graphic design package for creating social media content, leaflets, posters, presentations and more. The application has a free version and a pro version which includes access to millions of images and powerful design tools. Registered charities can access the pro

version for free. Simply visit the [Canva for non-profits webpage](#) to register and get access to all the premium features for free!

Orkney Money Matters



**Orkney
money
matters**

**Worrying
about
money?**

If you need urgent support, you can call Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau's crisis number: 01856 875 621

his phone number is staffed from 9:00am - 5:00pm • Monday to Friday.

You may also be eligible for a Scottish Welfare Crisis Grant. You can apply at: www.orkney.gov.uk/swf

If successful, you will receive a payment within two working days.

If you want help understanding the support available to you, Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau's Money Matters Links Workers can help.

They will make sure you are receiving any financial support you are entitled to. Also, they will connect you with other services who can help.

Email: LINKS@orkneycab.casonline.org.uk

Call: 01856 875 266

Supported



Community Events

South Ronaldsay Community Association Table Top Sale

3 March, 10.00-3.00
Hope Community School

For more information or to book a table, please contact morven.brooks@gmail.com

Funding & finance

Orkney Local Employability Partnership Innovation Fund (Parental Support) opens for applications

The innovation fund is available to third sector partners within Orkney that work with parents/families within the NOLB priority groups (Lone parent families, families with a child under one, families where a parent is under 25, households in which a parent or child has a disability, larger families (3 or more children), and minority ethnic families) and support them to develop confidence, skills, networks etc to make positive future steps.

Organisations can apply for up to £10,000 and the deadline for applications is Thursday 29th February 2024.



**Orkney
Local
Employability
Partnership**

For more information please visit the [VAO website](#).

VAO produces a monthly Training & Funding Update which contains useful information and links about current training and funding opportunities as well as enterprise and governance advice. To sign up, email: enquiries@vaorkney.org.uk and let us know you would like to be added to the mailing list. The latest update can be viewed on the [VAO website under help for groups](#).

Training

Free online training from the Scottish Drugs Forum

Cocaine and Psychostimulants
1 March 9.15-1.30

This interactive online training aims to increase awareness, knowledge and provides an opportunity to explore current and emerging trends with psychostimulants. Harm reduction and support strategies will be explored.



SDF
Scottish Drugs
Forum

For more information or to book your place, please visit the [Scottish Drugs Forum website](#).

Drug awareness

8th March 9.15 - 1.30

The training aims to increase workers' drug awareness knowledge and provide an opportunity to explore current and emerging trends with substance use.

For more information or to book your place, please visit the [Scottish Drugs Forum website](#).

Trauma and Substance Use

18 March 9.15-3.30

This introductory course will support trauma-informed practice when working with people who are affected by trauma and who use substances.

For more information or to book your place, please visit the [Scottish Drugs Forum website](#).

Everyone Has a Story: Children Affected by Parental Substance Use

4th & 5th April 2024 9:15 -1.30

This course will support practitioners in adult and children's services to respond to children affected by parental substance use.

For more information or to book your place, please visit the [Scottish Drugs Forum website](#).

Free Personal Safety Course for Women

1 and 2 May, 9.30-4.00

Kirkwall Town Hall

The [Scottish Centre for Personal Safety](#) will be running two one day courses in personal safety for women. The sessions will cover both theory and practical self-defence techniques.

For more information, please contact jayne.smith-saville@womensaidorkney.org.uk



Artificial Intelligence (AI): Unlocking the Future: Exploring AI in Community Learning and Development

Tuesday 13 February, 2.00-4.00

Online

The online session will delve into the fascinating world of Artificial Intelligence and its impact on Community Learning and Development in Orkney. Discover the possibilities AI brings, along with its positive and negative implications.

To book your place please complete the online [registration form](#).

Dyslexia and Dyscalculia Awareness Training

Friday 8th March, 1.30-3.30

Kirkwall Community Centre

This free training session aims to provide an improved awareness of what dyslexia and dyscalculia are, the impact on learners, how they are assessed in different contexts and how they can be supported within an inclusive learning environment.

To book your place, please email cld@orkney.gov.uk

Volunteering news

Need volunteers to help your organisation?

We can help match up volunteers to opportunities, so if your organisation, charity or community group has a volunteering opportunity, let us know. We can spread the word, promoting this on our website, social media and to volunteers we are meeting in person or at events. Just complete and return the [Volunteer Opportunity form](#) in the I need volunteers section of our website to get started.

Volunteering opportunities

If you're interested in doing some volunteering, you can check out all the latest [volunteering opportunities](#) and [complete a Volunteer Registration Form](#) in the Volunteering Opportunities section of our website. You can also contact Aimee Harvey our Volunteer Development Worker at aimee.harvey@vaorkney.org.uk who can help to find a role to suit you.

Opportunity of the month



Clan Shop volunteers – Clan are currently looking for volunteers to help support their Orkney shop, based in Kirkwall. Volunteers will be provided with relevant training and ongoing support for the role, with a minimum commitment of at least one 3-hour shift a week. If this sounds of interest, more information can be found on the [volunteering opportunities section of our website](#).

If you would like to promote your organisation, an activity or project or have an interesting story to share, please contact Cecily.cromby@vaorkney.org.uk