

My name is Alan Clark and I joined the volunteer centre in Aberdeen in December 2015. Part of my role is to administer the Saltire Awards in Aberdeen.

So what are the Saltire Awards?

The Saltire Awards are a national initiative, supported by the Scottish Government, which acknowledge, celebrate and reward the commitment and contribution of volunteers aged 12-25. You are able to develop and follow your volunteering journey through the 4 Saltire Award levels, details of which can be found on the website - <https://saltireawards.org.uk/>.

What is volunteering?

Although some voluntary work is very obvious in its nature, other activities that people get involved in can often be overlooked and these misconceptions can result in people not coming forward to claim their awards. For example, if you are at university and are a sports captain or part of a committee, that is voluntary work and would be eligible for a Saltire Award as recognition. Or if you are at school, and are taking part in a voluntary activity in your lunch hour or after school, you could also be eligible. If you are in any doubt at all, please feel free to get in touch with me and I can point you in the right direction and provide you with some guidance.

I bet it is really difficult to claim the certificates?

Not at all! It is really very simple. All you have to do is register on the website to set up an account (which will take about 2 minutes). Then you log back in to record your hours once they are completed (which takes about another 2 minutes). Once we have contacted your supervisor to confirm the hours, we will process the relevant certificate (10 hour award, 25 hour award, 50 hour award, 100 hour award, 200 hour award, 500 hour award) and send it out to you. It really is that straightforward.

Why should I register?

Youth volunteering is on the increase and it is fantastic that so many young people are using their spare time to volunteer. This is a government backed initiative to recognise the valuable contribution made by youth volunteers and is an opportunity to enhance your CV and gain recognition for the voluntary work you have done. In an increasingly competitive jobs market, it is important that you try to showcase the range of skills you possess, over and above academic qualifications, and the Saltire Awards are a great opportunity to do this. To give you an example, in a previous job, I was involved in graduate recruitment for multi-national oil and gas companies where we could receive 250-300 applications for 1 graduate job. With such competition for jobs, it is important that you do what you can to make your CV stand out, and the Saltire Awards can provide an opportunity to do this.

What should I do next?

If you are interested in signing up for the Saltire Awards, please visit the website or feel free to get in touch with me at alan.clark@acvo.org.uk. You can speak to someone at your school, university, college, youth club etc who may be able to provide some support as well in terms of the types of volunteering opportunities that are available. You can also visit www.volunteeraberdeen.org.uk to search for local volunteering opportunities. So what are you waiting for.....get involved!!