



Volunteer Grant Assessor

Information for applicants

2026

Welcome

We are Variety, the Children's Charity. In the UK, there are more than 600,000 disabled children living in poverty. Variety exists to improve their lives. We believe every child has a right to live their best life and reach their full potential, whoever they are. We fund and deliver life-changing programmes that enhance their quality of life and give children and young people across the UK a better future.

This extraordinary charity, with 75 years of history in the UK and global prominence, has granted close to £1.6 billion globally to positively impact the lives of children in need. From its humble beginnings inspired by the adoption of an abandoned baby, Catherine Variety Sheridan, to its current status as one of the most trusted children's charities globally, Variety has consistently raised funds and provided support to make a real and immediate difference in the lives of young beneficiaries.

Over the past 75 years, we have supported over one million children by funding almost 6,000 Sunshine Coaches, almost the same number of wheelchairs, and giving thousands of grants to individual children, schools, youth clubs and other organisations for specialist equipment. Variety is also involved with a number of capital projects which transform the facilities of hospitals and SEN schools. In addition, each year tens of thousands of children take part in day trips, special events and educational activities as part of our Variety Great Days Out programme and every single day we are improving more young lives. We do it with practical, tangible help. Help that makes a real and immediate difference.

In 2025, we celebrated Variety's 75th anniversary, one made all the more special by the announcement that His Majesty, King Charles III has chosen Variety for Royal Patronage. Going forward, this offers an amazing opportunity to bring Variety's work to the attention of even more communities across the UK.

We are seeking exceptional volunteers who can help us transform the lives of some of the most vulnerable children in the UK. With your support across our grant programmes, we will be able to deliver on our ambition to double the number of children who benefit from Variety's support over the next three years and beyond.

We hope that you will share our passionate commitment to improving the lives of disabled and disadvantaged children across the UK. This is an extraordinary opportunity to shape the future of our renowned charity as we enter our next chapter with the honour of Royal Patronage from His Majesty King Charles III.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to meeting you.

With best wishes,

Laurence Guinness
Chief Executive Officer

Introduction to Variety's Programmes

Variety supports children and young people through five key programmes:

- **Wheelchair Grants Programme:** We provide awards for manual, sport, all-terrain, powered and specialist wheelchairs to help children become more independent.
- **Specialist Equipment Programme:** We also deliver life-enhancing equipment including specialised educational and adaptive play equipment, hoists, walkers, beds, furniture and specialist car seats.
- **Sunshine Coaches:** We provide adapted minibuses for SEND schools and non-profit organisations. Our Sunshine Coaches are valuable community assets, opening up a world of opportunities and enabling tens of thousands of children to access enriching experiences.
- **Variety Great Days Out:** We provide unforgettable, exciting, educational, and fun experiences for disadvantaged children.
- **Access Interns:** Our internship programme partners with companies big and small to empower young people with disabilities to kickstart their careers.

In 2024, Variety reached over 160,399 children and young people in the UK including:

- 130 children received wheelchairs and equipment
- 79,300 children were supported through our Sunshine Coaches programme
- 7,956 children attended Variety Great Days Out across 132 towns and cities
- 73,000 children and young people were supported at the Variety Children's Hospital

Variety can only work at scale through the support of our valued volunteers who give their time freely to assist the operations of the charity. Our volunteers span across the UK and have a wealth of experience across various industries, with many supporting Variety for over 40 years.

Role Description

Department:	Programmes
Role Title:	Variety Volunteer Grant Assessor
Role Type:	Volunteer, remote-first (with occasional online and in-person meetings/events)
Location:	UK-wide online/Hybrid
Reports to:	Aligning Grant Programme Manager
Safeguarding:	DBS required
Time Commitment:	5 – 10 hours a month (approx.)

Purpose of the role

In this important role, you will be responsible for assessing the eligibility of applicants for our grants and services, in adherence with Variety's structured grant management approach (guided interviews, weighted scoring and panel review) to maximise impact for disabled and disadvantaged children and young people.

You will be required to handle grant applications and supporting information with the utmost confidentiality, following organisational policies to ensure the privacy and security of all sensitive and personal information.

Using our defined eligibility criteria and assessment tools, you will evaluate applications and conduct fair and consistent assessments, making award recommendations to support the decision-making process. You will bring an independent voice, playing a key role in ensuring that decisions are made fairly, equitably and transparently and will be required to support your recommendations with evidence of sound analysis and reasoning.

Key Responsibilities

- Review applications and supporting evidence prepared by the case management team.
- Clarify points with applicants when required (within agreed boundaries).
- Conduct structured, remote assessments (by telephone/video call) to understand need, urgency and likely impact on the child, their family life and communities.
- Establish the baseline for monitoring and evaluation by articulating the impact of the intervention.
- Where applicable, use the weighted assessment tool (base on the eligibility criteria and the Theory of Change) consistently and document clear, impartial rationales to prioritise need.
- Prepare concise, written recommendations aligned to policy, criteria and evidence.
- Attend quarterly Assessor Network meetings, which are a forum for sharing good practice, peer support, news sharing, undertaking essential training and reward and recognition.

Optional, Additional Responsibilities

- Where applicable, support the Impact Monitoring and Evaluation team to undertake post-award follow-up interviews to measure the impact made over time.
- Where applicable and available, represent Variety at events, presentations of awards and through online content.

Adherence to Policy and Quality

- Act as a beacon of good practice in fair grant assessment.
- Uphold safeguarding, confidentiality, GDPR, equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and anti-bias standards throughout the assessment process.
- Escalate concerns (quality, safeguarding, unusual risk, conflicts of interest) in line with policy.
- Follow process controls and segregation of roles, supporting a robust, auditable trail.
- Participate in induction, refresher training, and calibration sessions to ensure consistency and continuous improvement.
- Adhere to Variety's Code of Conduct.

Time Commitment

- Assessments: the time commitment for these varies and is flexible but we expect you will be spending 4 – 8 hours per month on these, dependent on demand and pool of assessors.
- Assessor Network: hybrid meetings that will last 1.5 – 2 hours and will be held quarterly.
- Training: short modular induction plus periodic refreshers usually rolled into Assessor Network meetings.

Support & Supervision

- Induction & training: policy, criteria, assessment skills, impact tools, safeguarding, data protection.
- Ongoing support through Programme Manager, Programmes Support Officer and Head of Programmes.
- Expenses: out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed in line with Variety's Expenses Policy.

Impact Measures (Volunteer-Appropriate)

- Timely completion of assigned assessments; adherence to guidance and safeguarding.
- Quality of written rationales; consistency of weighted scoring.
- Constructive contribution to committee discussion and calibration.
- Positive feedback from applicants (tone/respect) gathered via staff.
- Case study preparation

Person Specification

We welcome people from many walks of life. If you feel that you are the right person for this role but are unsure whether you “tick every box,” please still consider applying; training and support are provided.

What you'll bring (essential)

- **Fair assessment mindset:** you can weigh information against clear criteria and explain your reasoning.
- **Analysis skills:** comfortable reviewing forms/evidence and using a simple scoring tool. Able to summarise and analyse complex information to extract relevant data, paying attention to detail.
- **Communication:** great written and spoken English (we have templates to help).
- **Lived experience or insight:** personal, professional or volunteer experience that helps you understand the challenges faced by disabled or disadvantaged children and young people (or you can demonstrate thoughtful knowledge of these issues).
- **Friendly and approachable:** comfortable conducting sensitive conversations by telephone/video call with empathy and professionalism.
- **Reliability and care:** you follow guidance, meet agreed timeframes where you can, and ask for help if something isn't clear.
- **Values & conduct:** commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion; willing to complete safeguarding training and a DBS check.

Helpful extras (nice to have, but not essential)

- Comfort using basic digital tools (email, online forms, video calls) – we can show you the rest.
- Experience in any of the following is desirable:
 - Grant-making
 - Community/children's services
 - Health/education/SEND
 - Occupational Therapy
 - Social care
 - Structured interviewing
 - Teaching

Further Information

- Variety is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. To help us assess the reach of our recruitment practices, we would be grateful if you would complete the equal opportunities form (the final section of the application form). We welcome and encourage applications from diverse talent pools.
- This role will be mostly home based, with the option to work from our London office. Some travel to London may be required for meetings/training.
- Variety is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. All successful candidates will be required to have an up-to-date DBS check and will be provided with relevant safeguarding training.
- All other necessary training will also be provided upon induction to the role.
- We are looking to recruit a maximum of 12 volunteer assessors.

How to Apply

- Please complete our online application form, which you can access [here](#).
- Applications will close on Sunday 15th March 23:59pm.
- Successful applicants will be invited to an informal interview, expected to take place week commencing Monday 23rd March 2026. We will share the questions you will be asked in advance but these will be based around the person specification and will not require preparation. We may also require second stage interviews, but we will confirm this after the initial interview.
- If you have any questions about this role or the application process, please email: alice.taylor@variety.org.uk
- We regret that we do not have the resources to provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates.

Thank you for your interest and good luck!