

For discussion on
4 May 2020

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE

Commendation Schemes for Civil Servants

Purpose

This paper reports to Members the implementation of various commendation schemes for civil servants.

Background

2. There are various commendation schemes for civil servants. These schemes aim to motivate civil servants to provide quality public service and sustain their exemplary performance. The commendation schemes include the Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Honours and Awards System, the Secretary for the Civil Service's Commendation Award Scheme, the Commendation Letter Scheme, and the Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme.

Details

(I) The Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme

3. The Civil Service Bureau ("CSB") organises the Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme ("the Award Scheme") on a biennial basis. The Award Scheme aims to recognise the exceptional achievements of departments and teams in providing quality service, to promote a customer-focused culture in the civil service, to inspire innovation, and to share experience in pioneering public service improvement.

4. Awards under the Award Scheme are presented at three levels, namely –

- (i) the **Inter-departmental Partnership Award** for quality services provided to the public through collaboration among departments;

- (ii) the **Departmental Awards**, comprising the Departmental Service Enhancement Award (Large Department Category) and the Departmental Service Enhancement Award (Small Department Category), for departments' exceptional achievements in continuous service enhancement; and
- (iii) the **Team Awards**, comprising five categories, namely General Service, Specialised Service, Crisis Support, Regulatory Service and Internal Support.

5. There were a total of 37 bureaux/departments ("B/Ds") participating in the 2019 Award Scheme with 132 entries submitted. Participating departments and teams with outstanding performances in "Application of Innovation and Technology", "Interactive Communication with the Public" or "Workplace Safety and Wellness" would be awarded Special Citations. Thirty-three entries from 22 B/Ds were awarded Gold, Silver and Bronze prizes and Meritorious Award. Together with 27 special citations, 60 prizes in total were given in the 2019 Award Scheme. The winning departments and teams received trophies. In addition, we issued letters of appreciation to members of the winning teams for recording in their personal files. The list of winners is at Annex.

6. The Hong Kong Management Association was engaged to co-organise the 2019 Award Scheme so as to enhance understanding between the public and private sectors. All awards adopted a rigorous two-stage adjudication process, with the first stage of assessment conducted by seasoned managers from various service industries, including technology, retail, telecommunications, banking and insurance, property management, transportation, public bodies and utilities. Members of the boards of examiners screened the written submissions and interviewed representatives from participating departments and teams to select the winners of Meritorious Awards and Special Citations. They also shortlisted finalists under each award category to compete for the Gold, Silver and Bronze prizes in the final adjudication. We invited Members of the Legislative Council to serve as Chairpersons of the Final Adjudication Panels which comprise District Council members, representatives from professional organisations, staff side members of the Central Consultative Councils and officials from CSB. After the shortlisted departments and teams gave a presentation and answered questions, the Panels decided on the winners for the Gold, Silver and Bronze prizes.

7. To publicise the exemplary service provided by winning departments, a TV documentary was produced by the Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) and broadcast on TVB Jade, ViuTV 99 and RTHK TV 31. Moreover, a video series capturing civil servants' efforts to provide quality public services at the

frontline and behind the scene was also produced. The videos will be available through different channels, including the CSB Facebook Page, YouTube channel, the thematic website on Service Excellence, Hong Kong Education City website and some government venues.

8. We will organise seminars for the winners to share with colleagues their experience and insights in providing quality public services. We also collaborate with the Education Bureau in organising a School Promotion Programme to introduce the exemplary government services to primary and secondary school students by arranging various talks and visits to participating departments.

(II) HKSAR Honours and Awards System

9. This is a community-wide honours recognition system. Civil servants who make great contribution to the civil service can also be nominated for awards under the system. Over the years, many civil servants have been recipients of the Bauhinia Awards, Bravery Awards, Disciplined Services and ICAC Awards, Medals of Honour and Chief Executive's Commendations. In 2019, a total of 135 civil servants were awarded under this system. Amongst them, 95 received various awards and 40 received the Chief Executive's Commendation for Government/Public Service. A full list of recipients is published every year. The Chief Executive presents awards to recipients in the presence of relatives and friends invited by them as guests at a ceremony held at the Government House each year.

(III) The Secretary for the Civil Service's Commendation Award Scheme

10. The Secretary for the Civil Service ("SCS") gives recognition to selected civil servants on a service-wide basis for their consistently exemplary performance through this civil service-specific scheme each year. To qualify for an award under the scheme, a civil servant should have had outstanding performance for at least five consecutive years. The target number of recipients per annum is 100. Nominations are made by Permanent Secretaries or Heads of Departments/Grades. Recipients of awards are selected by SCS on the recommendation of an Award Committee comprising representatives of CSB and other bureaux/grades.

11. The awards are presented by SCS at a ceremony held annually, in the presence of guests invited by the recipients and representatives from their B/Ds. Each award recipient receives a certificate of recognition and a gold pin. For

those award recipients who have 20 or more years of service and have not enjoyed government sponsored travel outside Hong Kong before, they will receive a travel award as well. The award is granted on a one-off basis and in the form of an accountable travel allowance¹. A record of the award granted will be made in the personal files of the recipients to show appreciation of their exemplary performance. In 2019, there are a total of 100 recipients from 39 B/Ds.

12. We publicise the achievements of the award recipients through various channels, including featured articles in newspapers, the Civil Service Newsletter and departmental newsletters. We also produce videos featuring the outstanding services of some of the award recipients and upload these videos to the website and Facebook page of CSB for public viewing.

(IV) The Commendation Letter Scheme

13. This scheme is administered at the bureau/departmental level. Under the scheme, Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Departments may issue commendation letters to civil servants who have provided consistently outstanding service for at least three consecutive years; or have made significant contribution towards enhancing the efficiency or the image of their B/Ds; or have performed a meritorious or brave act warranting special recognition. Nominations may be made all year round and they are considered by a commendation committee set up by individual B/Ds under the chairmanship of a directorate officer. Same as the practice of the SCS's Commendation Award Scheme, a record of the commendation letter issued will be made in the personal files of the recipients. In 2019, about 2 700 commendation letters were issued by B/Ds.

(V) Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme

14. The Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme aims at recognising long and meritorious service of serving civil servants. All local non-directorate officers with a continuous service of 20 years or more, and who have a track record of consistently very good performance and have not received any government travel award before, are eligible for consideration for the grant of an award. The award is granted on a one-off basis and in the form of an accountable travel allowance. The rate of the travel allowance is revised on

¹ The rate of the travel allowance, the mechanism for revising the rate and the way in which the travel allowance is granted to the recipient are the same as those of the Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award mentioned in paragraphs 14 and 15 of this paper.

1 April each year with reference to the rate of change in package tour charges in the Consumer Price Index (C) in the past 12-month period ending February. The rate of the allowance in 2020-21 is \$27,470 per person. The number of awards for each year is determined on the basis of one award for every 27 officers meeting the service requirement (quota ratio of 1:27). In 2020-21, there are about 2 400 awards.

15. Under the previous arrangement, married awardees were only allowed to bring along their spouses and receive the travel allowance. Awardees who were single or whose spouses could not travel with them were unable to benefit from the scheme. As such, from 2019-20 onwards, we have enhanced the award scheme by relaxing the restriction on travelling with spouse only. Awardees can flexibly nominate a travelling companion to receive the same travel allowance. Among the awardees who have used their travel award in 2019-20, 99% of them enjoyed the travel allowance with a travelling companion, which compares favourably with an average of only about 80% of the awardees travelling with their spouses to enjoy the travel allowance in the past. The awardees in general welcome the enhancement.

(VI) Other Supporting Measures to Boost Morale of Civil Servants

16. Due to rising public expectation, civil servants are subject to a great deal of pressure when carrying out their daily duties. We fully acknowledge our obligation to render support to colleagues to help them perform their work and cope with stress. To this end, we will continue to make full use of the award schemes to give recognition to good performance for boosting staff morale, and publicise the exemplary performance of civil servants with a view to driving home the message to the public that civil servants are serving the community with commitment and professionalism and hence deserve respect.

17. We will also continue to provide civil servants with training on customer service, building resilience and managing emotional wellness to help enhance their skills, knowledge and mindset for serving the public. CSB has commissioned professional bodies to provide hotline counselling service on stress management to help staff cope with stress arising from work and other personal problems. The service, available to staff from some 60 B/Ds, includes telephone and face-to-face counselling and referral services. Separately, about 10 departments provide their staff with their own counselling services.

18. Since a progressive and motivated workforce is pivotal to effective service delivery, we attach great importance to fostering partnership between the

management and staff at all levels. We will continue to promote candid exchanges between the management and staff sides at both the central and departmental levels with a view to establishing closer working relationship and fostering mutual trust and respect. SCS will visit individual departments frequently to keep abreast of their latest achievements and emerging challenges faced by them as well as to exchange views directly with frontline staff on issues of concern, and appropriate follow-up actions will be taken to address their concerns. Departmental management has also been encouraged to engage staff, particularly frontline staff, in the formulation and execution of policies so as to promote partnership between the two sides and foster a sense of belonging among staff.

Civil Service Bureau
April 2020

List of Winners in the 2019 Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme

Inter-departmental Partnership Award

Winning Departments/ Teams	Winning Entries
<u>Gold Prize:</u> Hong Kong Fire Services Department, Buildings Department, Water Supplies Department	Three Impossible Missions
<u>Silver Prize:</u> Architectural Services Department, Leisure and Cultural Services Department	The Pilot Project on Inclusive Playground at Tuen Mun Park
<u>Bronze Prize:</u> Highways Department, Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, Customs and Excise Department, Department of Health, Hong Kong Fire Services Department, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Hong Kong Police Force, Immigration Department	Together We Thrive - A Vibrant New Era of High Speed Rail
<u>Meritorious Award:</u> Correctional Services Department, Electrical and Mechanical Services Department	Smart Prison

Departmental Service Enhancement Award

Large Department Category	Small Department Category
Gold Prize: Hong Kong Fire Services Department	Gold Prize: Hong Kong Observatory
Silver Prize: Drainage Services Department	Silver Prize: Land Registry
Bronze Prize: Immigration Department	Bronze Prize: Legal Aid Department
Meritorious Award: Hong Kong Police Force	Meritorious Award: Companies Registry

Team Award

Winning Departments/Teams	Winning Entries
<u>General Service</u>	
Gold Prize: Immigration Department	Territory-wide Identity Card Replacement Exercise (2018-2022)
Silver Prize: Transport Department	Smart Traffic Control System at Tai Tam Road (Dam Section)
Bronze Prize: Leisure and Cultural Services Department	“Eternal Life – Exploring the Ancient Egypt” Exhibition
Meritorious Award: Hong Kong Fire Services Department	Anyone
<u>Specialised Service</u>	
Gold Prize: Drainage Services Department	Community Building with a Harmonised “Hui”
Silver Prize: Immigration Department	Territory-wide Identity Card Replacement Exercise – On-site Identity Card Replacement Service
Bronze Prize: Hong Kong Observatory	MyFlightWx
Meritorious Award: Correctional Services Department	Rehabilitation Pioneer Project
Meritorious Award: Immigration Department	Smart Departure
<u>Crisis Support</u>	
Gold Prize: Hong Kong Fire Services Department	Swift Actions to Help Restore the Community
Silver Prize: Hongkong Post	Back to the Campus – Handling Mail Items of UK Student Visas
Bronze Prize: Hong Kong Fire Services Department	To Equip Firefighters with Water Rescue Skills
Meritorious Award: Hong Kong Observatory	Support Team for Mangkhut

Winning Departments/Teams	Winning Entries
<p><u>Regulatory Service</u></p> <p>Gold Prize: Hong Kong Police Force</p> <p>Silver Prize: Hong Kong Police Force</p> <p>Silver Prize: Immigration Department</p> <p>Meritorious Award: Hong Kong Fire Services Department</p> <p><u>Internal Support</u></p> <p>Gold Prize: Electrical and Mechanical Services Department</p> <p>Silver Prize: Correctional Services Department</p> <p>Bronze Prize: Housing Department</p> <p>Meritorious Award: Electrical and Mechanical Services Department</p>	<p>Tai Po District Traffic Enforcement Team</p> <p>Kowloon City District - Road Safety Protocol on Receiving Tourists</p> <p>Handling of Non-refoulement Claims</p> <p>Acceptance Inspection Made Easy</p> <p>Training Beyond Innovation</p> <p>Development and Production of Modernised Government Office Furniture</p> <p>Promoting Community Planting in Existing Public Rental Housing Estates</p> <p>Customer Centric e-Platform</p>