

For discussion on
22 December 2017

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE

The Civil Service Outstanding Service Award and Other Commendation Schemes for Civil Servants

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme and other commendation schemes for civil servants.

Background

2. The Government is committed to upholding high standards of performance and conduct in the civil service. Maintaining a clean, effective and dedicated civil service is essential to ensuring the continued stability and prosperity of Hong Kong. To maintain an environment in which civil servants are motivated to deliver quality service to meet the rising expectations of the general public, we need a fair commendation system that would help motivate and sustain exemplary performance of civil servants.

3. There are various commendation schemes for civil servants. A brief description of each of the schemes are given in the ensuing paragraphs.

(I) The Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme

4. Since 1999, the Civil Service Bureau (“CSB”) has been operating the Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme (“the Award Scheme”) on a biennial basis. It 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.

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

- the Inter-departmental Partnership Award for quality services provided to the public through collaboration among departments;
- the Departmental Awards, comprising the Service Enhancement Award for departments' continuous efforts and exceptional achievements in service enhancement, and the Best Public Image Award; and
- the Team Awards, comprising the General Public Service Award, the Specialised Service Award, the Regulatory/Enforcement Service Award, the Crisis/Incident Support Service Award, and the Internal Service Award.

6. The 2017 Award Scheme attracted a positive response with 138 entries from 35 Bureaux/Departments ("B/Ds"), most of them providing direct services to the public. There were Gold, Silver and Bronze prizes and a Meritorious Award for each award category (except the Best Public Image Award). The team awards also featured Special Citations to give due recognition to those with outstanding achievements in innovation, responsiveness to customer needs and integrity management. Thirty-nine entries from 19 B/Ds won awards and the list of winners is at Annex.

Public Engagement

7. The 2017 Award Scheme greatly emphasised participation of the private sector, the public and the community leaders in the adjudication process.

8. We engaged the Hong Kong Management Association to co-organise the 2017 Award Scheme to enhance interaction between the public and private sectors. More than 30 seasoned managers from various service industries, including retail, telecommunications, banking and insurance, hospitality, property management, transportation, public bodies and utilities were invited to serve on the boards of examiners. These examiners conducted the first stage of assessment, comprising interviews with participating departments and teams, and screening of written submissions. The involvement of private sector practitioners enhanced the objectivity of the assessment process and facilitated benchmarking with the private sector. It also helped promote exchanges between the public and private sectors on quality customer service and related

standards. At the first stage of assessment, the boards of examiners selected 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.

9. Four Members of the Legislative Council¹ were invited to serve as Chairpersons of four Final Adjudication Panels. The Panels also comprised Chairmen of District Councils, representatives from professional organisations², staff side members of the Central Consultative Councils³ and senior officials from CSB. The shortlisted departments and teams were required to give a presentation and to answer questions from the Panels. Based on the merits of the entries, the Panels decided on the winners of the Gold, Silver and Bronze prizes.

10. For the Best Public Image Award, a random sample of more than 2 400 members of the public and all Members of the Legislative Council and District Councils were invited to vote in an anonymous survey to select the winners. The top three departments were awarded with the Gold, Silver and Bronze prizes of the Best Public Image Award. The survey was administered by the Consumer Search Hong Kong Limited, an independent professional research company.

11. The winning departments received trophies/plaques and prize money to be used for staff welfare purposes, and the winning teams received gift coupons to be shared by team members. In addition, we issued letters of appreciation to members of the winning teams and recorded in their personal files their contribution in the winning teams.

¹ The four Legislative Council Members were the Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, Hon KWOK Wai-keung, Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho and Hon IP Kin-yuen.

² The professional organisations which participated in the final adjudication are the Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management, the Hong Kong Management Association and the Hong Kong Association of Customer Service Excellence.

³ The Consultative Councils which participated in the final adjudication are the Senior Civil Service Council, the Disciplined Services Consultative Council and the Model Scale 1 Staff Consultative Council.

Publicity and Learning

12. In order to underline the importance of quality service, to give recognition to outstanding achievements by the winning departments and teams, and to inform the public of such achievements, a prize presentation ceremony was held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre on 7 September 2017. The ceremony, officiated by the Chief Executive, was attended by more than 600 guests and civil servants. To further recognise the commendable efforts and exemplary performance of all award winners, a one-hour TV documentary produced by the Radio Television Hong Kong (“RTHK”) was broadcast on TVB Jade, i-Cable Live News Channel, ViuTV 99 and RTHK TV 31 in September 2017. The event and the award winning services were widely publicised in the media and this helped further enhance the community’s understanding of the work of civil servants.

13. To enable the young generation to better understand the exemplary services provided by the Government, CSB is collaborating with the Education Bureau in organising a School Promotion Programme. More than 90 school talks/visits to government facilities have been planned for around 20 000 students from about 100 primary and secondary schools in the 2017/18 School Year.

14. Moreover, a video series capturing the lesser-known, behind-the-scene efforts and commitment of civil servants going the extra mile in serving the public is being produced. These videos will be broadcast in over 300 government venues and various community organisations. The public can also view the videos through different online channels, including the CSB Facebook Page, YouTube channel “Public Service Excellence@Gov”, the thematic website on service excellence, GovHK, Youth Portal and Hong Kong Education City website. This helps us reach a wide spectrum of online audience.

15. To inspire other departments and civil servants to emulate good practices of the award winners, we will provide a learning platform by organising seminars for the winners to share with colleagues their experience and insights in providing quality public services.

Review

16. A review of the Award Scheme was conducted in October 2017 through a questionnaire survey. Questionnaires were sent to all participating B/Ds, and the feedback received was very positive. The respondents generally considered that the Award Scheme had helped raise staff morale, enhanced team spirit, gained public recognition for their outstanding achievements and encouraged continuous improvement in the delivery of public services. B/Ds were particularly appreciative of the award presentation ceremony and highly welcomed the use of multiple channels for promoting their services. They strongly supported the continuation of the Award Scheme.

17. CSB plans to organise the Award Scheme again in 2019. We will build on the experience accumulated over the years and continue to involve the Legislative Council, District Councils, business sector and community in the adjudication process.

(II) HKSAR Honours and Awards System

18. 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 2017, a total of 104 civil servants were awarded under this system. Amongst them, 52 received various Disciplined Services Awards and 19 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 guests invited by them at a ceremony held at the Government House each year.

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

19. Through this civil service-specific scheme, each year the Secretary for the Civil Service ("SCS"), on behalf of the Government, gives recognition to selected civil servants on a service-wide basis for their consistently exemplary performance. To qualify for an award under the scheme, a civil servant should have had outstanding performance for at least five consecutive years.

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. Competition for the awards has been very keen. To enhance the scheme, the target number of recipients per annum has been increased from 80 to 100 commencing from 2016-17.

20. 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 an accountable and one-off travel allowance⁴. If the award recipient is married, his/her spouse will also be granted the same travel allowance, provided that he/she travels with the award recipient. A record of the award granted will be made in the personal files of the recipients to show appreciation of their exemplary performance. In 2017, there are a total of 100 recipients from 37 B/Ds.

21. We invite the media to cover the ceremony and to interview some of the award recipients. In addition, we publicise the achievements of the award recipients through various channels, such as the Civil Service Newsletter and departmental newsletters. We also produce videos featuring the outstanding services of some of the award recipients and upload them to the website and Facebook page of CSB for public viewing.

(IV) The Commendation Letter Scheme

22. 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

⁴ The rate of the travel allowance and the mechanism for revising the rate are the same as those of the Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award mentioned in paragraph 23 of this paper.

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 2016, 3 095 commendation letters were issued by B/Ds.

(V) Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme

23. 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 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 2017-18 is \$24,440. If the selected officer is married and will be travelling with his/her spouse, the same travel allowance will be provided to the spouse.

24. The number of awards for each year is determined based on a quota ratio. Since 2014-15, the quota ratio has been improved from one award for every 30 officers meeting the service requirement (1:30) to 1:27. In 2017-18, there are a total of about 2 510 awards.

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

25. 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.

26. We will also continue to provide training to civil servants 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 own counselling services to their staff.

27. 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 visits 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 are 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.

28. Members are invited to note the contents of this paper.

Civil Service Bureau
December 2017

List of Winners in the 2017 Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme

(I) Inter-departmental Partnership Award

Gold Prize	Electrical and Mechanical Services Department*, Buildings Department, Hong Kong Fire Services Department, Highways Department, Hong Kong Police Force and Transport Department [Safeguard Our New Railway Lines]
Silver Prize	Hong Kong Fire Services Department*, Architectural Services Department and Electrical and Mechanical Services Department [Team up for the Cradle of Elites]
Bronze Prize	Planning Department* and Civil Engineering and Development Department [Hung Shui Kiu New Development Area Planning and Engineering Study]
Meritorious Award	Drainage Services Department* and Leisure and Cultural Services Department [Unfettered Collaboration—The Encounter in Happy Valley]

**Coordinating department*

(II) Departmental Awards

(A) Departmental Service Enhancement Award

	Large Department Category	Small Department Category
Gold Prize	Hong Kong Fire Services Department	Hong Kong Observatory
Silver Prize	Environmental Protection Department	Companies Registry
Bronze Prize	Correctional Services Department	--
Meritorious Award	Customs and Excise Department	--

(B) Best Public Image Award

Gold Prize	Hong Kong Fire Services Department
Silver Prize	Hong Kong Police Force
Bronze Prize	Hong Kong Observatory

(III) Team Awards

	General Public Service	Regulatory/Enforcement Service
Gold Prize	Environmental Protection Department [T ▪ PARK Environmental Education Centre Team]	Hong Kong Police Force [Sham Shui Po Hawkers' Charter Team]
Silver Prize	Leisure and Cultural Services Department [Museum of Art on Wheels]	Hong Kong Police Force [Guarding-Eyes Project]
Bronze Prize	Immigration Department [“Admission Scheme for the Second Generation of Chinese Hong Kong Permanent Residents and Enhancement Measures on Admission Schemes for Talent” Project Team]	Companies Registry [Money Lenders Unit]
Meritorious Award	Hong Kong Police Force [Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau – Project “Cyber Defender”]	Hong Kong Police Force [Inshore Patrol Sub-Unit, Marine North Division – Vessel Searching Platform]
Special Citation (Responsiveness to Customer Needs)	Hong Kong Police Force [Social Media Communication]	Hong Kong Police Force [Family Conflict and Sexual Violence Unit]
Special Citation (Innovation)	Environmental Protection Department [T ▪ PARK Environmental Education Centre Team]	Hong Kong Police Force [Inshore Patrol Sub-Unit, Marine North Division – Vessel Searching Platform]
Special Citation (Integrity Management)	Immigration Department [“Admission Scheme for the Second Generation of Chinese Hong Kong Permanent Residents and Enhancement Measures on Admission Schemes for Talent” Project Team]	Companies Registry [Money Lenders Unit]

	Specialised Service	Internal Service	Crisis/Incident Support Service
Gold Prize	Drainage Services Department [Drops • Livability] Hong Kong Fire Services Department [Getting in Gear for Deep and Shallow Waters]	Hong Kong Observatory [Big Data Analysis and Decision Support]	Social Welfare Department [Licensing Office of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly and Kwun Tong District Social Welfare Office – “From Dusk till Dawn: We Serve with Warmth and Devotion”]
Silver Prize	--	Leisure and Cultural Services Department [Muse Fest HK]	Immigration Department [Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit]
Bronze Prize	Hong Kong Observatory [MUSE (Media Unit for Service Enhancement) Team]	Water Supplies Department [Floating Solar Power System]	Hong Kong Fire Services Department [I Am No Superhero]
Meritorious Award	Correctional Services Department [Rehabilitation Pioneer Project – The Reflective Path]	Water Supplies Department [Sodium Hypochlorite Dosing System]	Buildings Department [Task Force on CityU Incident]
Special Citation (Responsiveness to Customer Needs)	Hong Kong Fire Services Department [A Life-saving Shot]	Hong Kong Fire Services Department [Caring at the Forefront]	Social Welfare Department [Licensing Office of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly and Kwun Tong District Social Welfare Office – “From Dusk till Dawn: We Serve with Warmth and Devotion”]
Special Citation (Innovation)	Electrical and Mechanical Services Department [Cremation Engineering Team]	Water Supplies Department [Floating Solar Power System]	Hong Kong Police Force [Marine Situational Awareness System]