

## **GUIDELINES ON THE SPECIAL BONUS SCHEME**

### **1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

1.1 The agreed operation of the Special Bonus Scheme for all staff in the NICS is set out in CSC's 19/89 and 7/91. These circulars make provision for Departments to present awards to staff who have demonstrated exceptional performance outside normal duties, in particularly demanding tasks or difficult situations. Copies of these circulars are available on the DEL Intranet.

1.2 This paper explains the way in which the NICS Special Bonus Scheme applies specifically to this Department. It provides information on eligibility criteria, the nomination process and the presentation of awards. These guidelines are effective immediately.

### **2. CRITERIA**

Scope for consideration of an award under the Special Bonus Scheme extends to all Departmental staff up to and including Grade 6. Awards may be presented to both individuals and teams.

The NICS Special Bonus Scheme has been tailored to reflect the aims and culture of this Department. Examples of performance which will be considered for the award of a bonus include:

- excellent customer service;

- exceptional examples of teamworking (either individual team members or whole teams);
- outstanding creativity or innovation;
- commitment to quality or continuous improvement;
- innovative means of reducing stress and absenteeism in the workplace;
- practical measures to address health issues / facilitate the return to work.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of examples which would merit the presentation of an award. All cases will be considered individually and on their own merits.

### **3. EXCLUSIONS**

It is particularly important that, in the case of individual nominations, special bonuses are not recommended for performance which is recognised and rewarded within the performance appraisal system. It is essential to distinguish between exceptional performance over the whole of the reporting period (which is awarded under the appraisal system), and an outstanding achievement on a particularly demanding task.

The Departmental Special Bonus Scheme is not intended to serve as a replacement for the NICS Staff Suggestion Scheme.

### **4. NOMINATION PROCESS**

4.1 Any member of staff may submit a nomination for the Special Bonus Scheme at any time. Members of staff cannot self-nominate.

4.2 Nominations for awards under the scheme must be recorded on the attached pro-forma. Nominating officers must give details of the reason for the proposed award

and must demonstrate the way in which the above criteria have been met. Supporting evidence should also be included where possible.

4.3 It is not normal practice for an individual/team to be notified in advance of their nomination for a bonus as there is no guarantee that an award will be made.

4.4 Nominations must be authorised at Grade 7 level or above. Nominations relating to Grade 7 or 6 officers must be approved at Grade 5 level or above. Before approving the recommendation, the authorising officer should ensure that the nomination meets the above criteria and cannot be awarded under the performance appraisal system. Authorised forms should be forwarded to Personnel (Services) Branch for submission to the Awards Panel. In the event that a nomination is not approved by the authorising officer, the form should still be forwarded to Personnel (Services) Branch who will notify the nominating officer of the decision.

4.5 All nominations and awards which are approved at the appropriate level are considered by the Awards Panel which meets on a regular basis. The panel comprises of the Head of Personnel and two Grade 7s from separate Divisions rotated on a regular basis. Nominations at Grade 7 or above will be considered by a specially convened panel chaired by senior management.

4.6 The function of the Awards Panel is to:

- consider nominations for payments under the Scheme and approve an award amount/type;
- monitor equality of nominations and levels of awards;

The Awards Panel may seek further information from the nominating officer/line manager before making a final recommendation. A copy of the pro-forma used by the Awards Panel is attached for information.

4.7 Personnel (Services) Branch will issue a letter to the nominating officer to communicate the approval or rejection of a proposed award. This also applies to awards which are rejected at the authorisation stage. Recipients will be advised, through their line management, of the reason for their bonus and payment will be made as soon as possible after an award has been approved by the panel. A list of recipients, bonus amounts and the reason for the award will be published on the DEL Intranet at regular intervals. Confidentiality will be granted in exceptional circumstances.

## **5. AWARD AMOUNT**

5.1 There is no restriction on the number of nominations or payments which can be made under the Special Bonus Scheme, but costs must not exceed a total of approximately £60,000 per year. Personnel (Services) Branch is responsible for monitoring expenditure in this area and will ensure that the Awards Panel is kept informed of budget considerations. In the event that the total budget is exhausted, the Special Bonus Scheme will be suspended for the remainder of the year.

5.2 In line with CSC 7/91, the level of recommended award should normally fall inside the range of £50 to £500 and should not exceed £1,000. Cash bonuses will take the form of a taxable, non-pensionable lump sum payment made in the normal salary run.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

7.1 Personnel (Services) Branch will carry out a co-ordinating role to ensure equitable application of the Special Bonus Scheme. There is no separate appeal process but staff will have access to the normal grievance procedure.

7.2 Further information on these guidelines may be obtained from Norman McCracken, 902(57861), Maureen Doonan 902(57866), or Deirdre Walker 902(57433), Personnel(Services)Branch.

**Department for Employment and Learning**  
**SPECIAL BONUS SCHEME – NOMINATION FORM**  
Page 1 of 2

FORMS MUST BE AUTHORISED AT GRADE 7 LEVEL OR ABOVE AND FORWARDED TO PERSONNEL (SERVICES) BRANCH FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE AWARDS PANEL. NOMINATIONS AT GRADE 7 LEVEL OR ABOVE MUST BE APPROVED BY GRADE 5 OR HIGHER.

PLEASE READ THE DEPARTMENTAL GUIDELINES ON THE SPECIAL BONUS SCHEME PRIOR TO COMPLETING THIS FORM.

**1. Nominee(s) Details.** *Nominations are accepted for both individuals and teams. For team nominations, please attach a list of all members*

NAME/NAME OF BRANCH \_\_\_\_\_

DIVISION \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Reason for nomination.**

NOMINATION SUBMITTED BY \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

*Please use the box below to explain the reasons for the nomination(s). You should indicate how the candidate(s) meets the criteria set out in paragraph 2 of the Departmental guidelines. Please ensure that the nomination does not fall within the remit of the performance appraisal system. Please provide as much information as possible and attach supporting evidence where appropriate.*

**Department for Employment and Learning  
SPECIAL BONUS SCHEME – NOMINATION FORM**

Page 2 of 2

NOMINATIONS WHICH ARE REJECTED AT THE AUTHORISATION STAGE SHOULD ALSO BE FORWARDED TO PERSONNEL (SERVICES) BRANCH. THE NOMINATING OFFICER WILL BE NOTIFIED OF THE DECISION BY PERSONNEL (SERVICES) BRANCH.

**3. Authorisation of Nomination.**

*Please delete as appropriate:*

**I RECOMMEND/DO NOT RECOMMEND AN AWARD TO BE PRESENTED TO THE ABOVE NOMINEE(S).**

*Please indicate reasons for your decision. You should also indicate the category into which the award falls- further information on the criteria is set out on page 2 of the Departmental guidelines.*

**SIGNED** \_\_\_\_\_ **GRADE** \_\_\_\_\_

**PRINT NAME** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORMS TO: SPECIAL BONUS SCHEME, PERSONNEL (SERVICES) BRANCH, ROOM 703, ADELAIDE HOUSE. ADELAIDE STREET, BELFAST, BT2 8FD. ALTERNATIVELY, THE FORM CAN BE FAXED TO 028 902(57888). IF YOU REQUIRE ANY ASSISTANCE, CONTACT 028 902(57939).

# Department for Employment and Learning SPECIAL BONUS SCHEME – PANEL DECISION

WHEN CONSIDERING THE RECOMMENDATION, PLEASE REFER TO THE ORIGINAL NOMINATION FORM. PRIOR TO MAKING A FINAL DECISION, THE PANEL CAN REQUEST FURTHER INFORMATION FROM THE NOMINATING OFFICER.

PERSONNEL (SERVICES) BRANCH MONITORS THE BUDGET FOR THE SPECIAL BONUS SCHEME AND WILL PROVIDE AN UPDATE TO THE PANEL IN ADVANCE OF MEETINGS. BEFORE DECIDING THE LEVEL OF THE AWARD, THE PANEL SHOULD ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE AND THAT THE AMOUNT IS CONSISTENT WITH PREVIOUS AWARDS.

## 1. Nominee(s) Details.

NAME/NAME OF BRANCH \_\_\_\_\_

RECOMMENDED AWARD \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Approval of Nomination. *Please delete as appropriate.*

A) NOMINATION APPROVED/NOT APPROVED

B) IF NOT APPROVED, PLEASE INDICATE REASONS FOR DECISION

## 3. Award Amount.

C) AMOUNT OF RECOMMENDED AWARD \_\_\_\_\_

D) PLEASE INDICATE REASONS FOR DECISION

## 4. Panel Authorisation. *To be signed by all panel members.*

A) SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_

PRINT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

B) SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_

PRINT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

C) SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_

PRINT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORMS TO: SPECIAL BONUS SCHEME, PERSONNEL (SERVICES) BRANCH, ROOM 703, ADELAIDE HOUSE, ADELAIDE STREET, BELFAST, BT2 8FD. ALTERNATIVELY, THE FORM CAN BE FAXED TO 028 902(57888). IF YOU REQUIRE ANY ASSISTANCE, CONTACT 028 902(57939).