



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Honours – Frequently Asked Questions and Guidance for Stakeholders

Do I need to obtain consent from the individual before I nominate them?

- No. You do not need the consent of the individual.
- It is important that you do not tell the individual that you are nominating them. Throughout the process, it is important that all nominees remain unaware they are under consideration.
- The honours system is exempt from the usual requirement under the **General Data Protection Regulation** (GDPR) to inform someone that their personal data is held and being processed.

Who should complete the nomination form?

- The form should be completed by someone who knows the nominee well enough to provide the evidence needed for the citation. This may be their line manager or someone else. As nominator, you can combine contributions from several people to write the long citation.
- You may need different people to complete certain sections of the form (e.g. HR for the nominee's personal details). You can approach colleagues/stakeholders etc for assistance with completing the form. However, please ensure that they are aware of the confidential nature of the process and that the nominee is **not** to be made aware of the nomination

How do I structure the long citation?

- Please refer to the guidance notes in the nomination form for advice on what to cover in the long citation. Further guidance can be found in Annex A.
- The character count is a hard limit of 2,700 characters, *including* spaces. This is a Cabinet Office limit; exceeding it will result in information being cut off when the nomination is considered. The number of words within that limit will vary – the important thing to note is the *2,700 character count, including spaces*. Nominations over that limit will be edited/cut off. As the nominator, you are in the best position to know what the important information is that will add strength to the citation and the chances of success - so please include all relevant information, within the limit,

rather than leave it to us to decide what to cut.

- An annotated example of an MBE citation can be found in Annex A. Whilst the content/level of the example may not be directly relevant for your nomination, the advice in the comments should be useful in helping you structure the citation.
- More information on the honours system and guidance on how to write a nomination can be found on [this video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4xhmlrlfC4g) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4xhmlrlfC4g>)

Is there a deadline by which nominations should be submitted?

- The process is ongoing - honours are awarded twice a year, nominations are accepted at any time, and we receive them all through the year.
- We do have cut-off dates after which it would be too late to consider a nomination for the immediate round – the end of February for New Year Honours and the end of August for Birthday Honours. But there is no guarantee that a nomination received by those dates would automatically be considered for a specific round, especially if we receive high volumes.
- Note also that nominations are often considered over several rounds before a final decision is reached. We may sometimes need to come back to you to request an updated citation.
- **We advise that you submit your nomination(s) at your earliest convenience, once the form is completed.**
- Departments are also expected to develop pipelines of nominations. If you wish to propose a nominee for a future round, please state that when submitting the nomination. Again, we may need to come back to you later for an updated citation.

Do we need to include supporting letters?

- Nominations should ideally be signed-off by the Chair, President or Chief Executive of the organisation.
- You are welcome to submit letters of support. If a nomination refers to a broad range of work undertaken with multiple organisations letters of support (even if they are short) are very helpful in confirming that the nomination has wide support.

If we submit letters of support, what should they include?

- We don't have any specific templates for supporting letters. However, in general, the sort of things that a supporting letter might cover include:
 - Confirming that the person is doing what they are being nominated for and that they are known to the organisation(s) they are associated with.

- Confirming that an honour would be seen as well-deserved by the nominee's peers/community.
 - Including significant recent achievements of the nominee. (These should be from the last five years).
 - Describing the impact that the nominee has had on their organisation or community. One of the easiest ways to think about impact is to consider what wouldn't exist or have happened (or be happening) without the nominee's input.
- Supporting letters tend to be one to two pages long but, again, this isn't prescriptive.

The nomination form asks for the nominee's nationality. Does our nominee need to be British?

- We do need to know if the nominee is a foreign or dual national or someone who does not hold a British passport.
- Not being a British national does not exclude a nominee from the process. It just means that additional steps will be taken in processing the nomination.
- If your nominee's nationality is not known to you but you are able to provide an indication of what it is, please add this to the form along with a note that you aren't certain.

The person who I am nominating is terminally ill. Do I need to do anything differently?

- If you are nominating someone who is terminally ill, please include a note about this on the covering email.
- Honours cannot be given posthumously. However, if The King has given His informal approval to an honour and the nominee has accepted, the nominee's next-of-kin can receive the award if the nominee dies before publication of the relevant honours list.

My nominee is retiring soon. Do I need to let you know?

- Cases are generally strongest for those who are still actively contributing to their field.
- If a nominee has already retired, the nomination is less likely to be successful.
- If you are aware that the nominee will retire soon, please let us know in your cover email when you submit the nomination and also indicate this on the nomination form.

The person who I'm nominating already has an honour. Do I need to do anything differently?

- People who already have an honour can be considered for and receive an honour at a higher award level. For example, someone who already has

received an MBE could subsequently be successful in receiving an OBE or higher honour.

- The nomination will need to focus on demonstrating the nominee's impact since the award of the original honour.
- Generally, we advise leaving five years between the previous honour being awarded and a new nomination being made. You can let us know that the nominee already has an honour on the cover email.

Who do I send the completed form to?

- Completed forms should be returned to mb-honours@dhsc.gov.uk

What if I want to submit additional information after I have submitted the nomination?

- Additional information can be taken into account and is helpful in updating nominations under consideration. You can send additional information to mb-honours@dhsc.gov.uk

When will we know if our nomination is successful?

- Successful nominees will be informed by Cabinet Office before any announcement.
- We are not able to provide progress reports or feedback on individual nominees. Nominators will need to check published lists (in the London Gazette, national newspapers or on gov.uk) to see if their nominee has been successful.
- Nominations can take two years, or sometimes longer, to be fully considered. If you have not heard anything about your nomination after then, you may wish to consider sending us additional information about the nominee (see above).
- More information on what happens after a nominee has been successful can be found [here](#).

Is there a quota or limit on the number of nominations we can submit?

- There is no limit on the number of nominations you can submit to DHSC.
- A limited number of awards are made overall on each of the Honours Lists (New Year and King's Birthday Honours Lists).

Who should I contact if I have any questions?

- If you have any questions that are not answered above, you can email mb-honours@dhsc.gov.uk and one of the team will get back to you.

Guidance: Long Citation

This section of the form is the most important part of the nomination. It should be no longer than 2,700 characters, *including* spaces, and should persuade the reader of the strength of the case. Please include all the information that you would like to be considered to demonstrate the contribution the person has made. To do this most effectively, it is helpful to prepare the long citation statement to address the **four key points** below, and to set the evidence out in the order of these points.

A: Summary: This must outline the compelling reason why the person has been nominated. For example, it may show how the nominee:

- has made a particular breakthrough or is proponent of a particular change;
- has made an outstanding impact on patients or public;
- has improved patient safety by reducing risks or incidents;
- is a leader in their field;
- has taken on an innovative or challenging role and is regarded as a role model;
- has sustained outstanding achievements over a period/career; and/or
- has shown innovation or creativity in delivering longstanding results.

This section should also indicate whether the nominee's work is international, national or regional in scope. All nominees are likely to have had a great impact on those around them but may be working at a different scale.

B: Evidence: Give detailed examples of achievement(s) including any facts, figures, publication and/or evidence of outstanding impact. This section should include any support for the claim(s). It may show how the nominee:

- has earned the respect of their peers and became a role model in their field;
- has produced, perhaps against the odds, sustained achievement that has required moral courage, vision, the ability to make tough choices or determined application and hard work;
- has made things better for patients/the public (including if possible, information on how many people have benefitted from their work); and/or
- has raised or helped to raise money, for example for a charity or for research funding (including how much and how the money has been spent).

C: Contribution: This should illustrate what the nominee has done over and above their day job that makes them stand out. This should include information about the nominee's personal impact, including:

- where there has been a significant difference and/or improvement brought about through the nominee's contribution;

- the difference the nominee's contribution has made (explain how things were before they began and how they are now); and/or
- when the nominee carried out the activity and why it should be recognised now. It is helpful to use the final line to summarise, e.g. "her deep commitment and dedication have been instrumental in driving change".

D: Additional: Include here any information about a wider contribution including another area/field, voluntary or beyond work. (The 'voluntary and charitable services' section can be used for this, if applicable).

For reference, an overview of the different award levels can be found [here](#)

Example MBE Level nomination

The Saint Agatha's Hospital Home was established to support people with physical disabilities and has – through Jane's exceptional dedication, commitment and very specialist skills – developed into a nationally acknowledged Centre of Excellence for those suffering from particular physical conditions.

She has been the driving force behind Saint Agatha's transformation over the past 25 years into the leading centre for care and rehabilitation for those with physical disabilities. In 2024, she has also been hugely instrumental in helping Saint Agatha's attainment of Gold status for the Global Kitemark for Palliative Care - the only establishment in the region to have achieved this distinction.

After her appointment in the early 90s, she worked closely with the leadership team to develop a new wing of the Home. It was through her enthusiasm and research that the leadership team were convinced to focus their attention in a new specialist direction for certain physical conditions.

Through her leadership, clinical standards have been driven to new excellence and the Home has now been rated as outstanding twice by CQC. The number of applications for admissions for the Hospital Home have also increased by 60% and the Home now provides training for other clinicians in the field including two universities.

This is an extraordinary achievement as Hospital Homes of this kind typically do not perform well with CQC and it can be difficult to gain the trust of the target population. The transformation of the Hospital has provided a hub for national interest in specific physical conditions.

She has been instrumental in so many of the changes which have transformed Saint Agatha's and much of this was done on top of her role as Medical Director. It is through her determination and vision that Saint Agatha's Hospital Home will continue to lead the way in supporting those with physical disabilities.

She also works with several charities in her spare time. She has been a trustee of Scope for the past 10 years and has acted as an advisor to their national Extra Costs campaign. She also works as a Citizen's Advice Bureau advisor, this role requires her to speak with people in a high level of distress and requires a calm and sensitive approach.

Maximum character count (including spaces) - 2700

Commented [BE1]: The key difference for each award level will be the size of the reach and impact of the work undertaken – be that local, regional or national. The scope of the work should be clear from the citation.

Commented [BE2]: A citation should start with a sentence which provides a narrative and a strong sense of what exactly the nominee should be honoured for. In this case – the mark of their work can be seen in how the centre has developed. You would expect the citation to then go on to develop this central statement about the nominee's work.

Commented [BE3]: Honours citations should always be in the third person. And using their name once and then only pronouns will help reduce the character count.

Commented [BE4]: Honours can only be given to those who are currently active in the field – citations should focus on the nominee's recent achievements as much as possible although there may be useful supporting information from earlier in their career to highlight a sustained contribution.

Commented [BE5]: Adding one or two additional examples of the ways in which the nominee has contributed to your broad opening statement is also a helpful way to develop what impact the person has had.

Commented [BE6]: This sentence explores why/how the nominee's contribution was required – and suggests that it would not have happened without her. This provides a sense of how this individual was integral to the work.

Commented [BE7]: Providing concrete examples of the difference that can be seen from the nominee's work or how wide their reach is will help support a case. This would preferably take the form of relevant statistics but may also take the form of a clear description of how things have changed.

Commented [BE8]: By including something of this nature, you can set out why the nominee's achievements are significant. Where you have explained that a nominee contributed to something – or sat on a Board etc – you can then flesh out what about this role or contribution made it significant.

Citations should not read like a CV – if somebody has held a position, the citation must explain why it is relevant, what they achieved and the difference they made.

Commented [BE9]: Setting out how the person has gone above and beyond their day job.

Commented [BE10]: Voluntary contributions form an important part of any nomination and can help strengthen a case significantly. Many people leave this section blank but many nominees do undertake voluntary and community activity which can be captured here and will be considered by the committee.

Commented [BE11]: The character count is a hard limit – as the nominator, you're in the best position to know what the important information is – so don't leave it down to us to decide what to cut!