

Honours

An information leaflet for those wishing to nominate someone for an honour

Who deserves an honour?

Honours exist to recognise and celebrate outstanding achievements. There are always fewer honours than people who deserve them and because they are rare, they should be reserved for people:

- who have changed things – especially by solid, practical achievement
- whose work has brought distinction to British life or enhanced the UK's reputation in their area or activity

Candidates need to have shown one or both of these characteristics to be eligible for an honour.

Honours are open to all and are given to people from all walks of life and sections of society who have made a difference to their community.

Nominations are particularly welcomed for 'local heroes' who are well respected by local people and who have made a difference in their neighbourhood. Over half of all awards go to people who are putting something extra into the community on a voluntary basis.

All nominations for honours are treated in the strictest confidence. The person to be nominated should not be informed as it would not be fair to raise expectations in case they are not met; only 1,250 honours awarded on each occasion, twice a year, and there are many thousands of nominations received.

How is someone nominated?

- by an individual
- or a public/private sector organisation familiar with the work of the candidate
- or submission by a government department that has identified a candidate doing good work within its sphere of interest

How does an individual nominate someone?

By completing a nomination form obtained from the Cabinet Office website <http://www.honours.gov.uk>. This gives full details of the honours system and is comprehensive and user friendly. You can also write for information and a form to: Cabinet Office, Honours and Appointments Secretariat, Ground Floor, Admiralty Arch, London, SW1A 2WH. Telephone number: (020) 7276 2766. Email: ceremonial@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

Are letters of support required?

Yes. No more than six letters of support are expected and should be from others who have first hand knowledge of the person nominated and who can endorse their contribution.

Is any advice available to help in completing the form?

The Guidance Notes that accompany the application forms are comprehensive and helpful. An extremely helpful document 'Honours - How to Write Citations' can be obtained from the Cabinet Office (via the website or on request in writing). This helps to clarify the way in which the person's achievements should be described.

There is an excellent site on You Tube: 'The UK Honours System, how to nominate' <http://www.youtube.com>. This has video clips showing several community recipients.

A good leaflet, 'It's an honour – Nominate your local hero' is obtainable from the Cabinet Office and on their website.

When do nominations have to be sent in?

There are no deadlines for the receipt of nomination forms, but their consideration is likely to take at least 12 to 18 months. Nominations should be made while the person nominated is still active and, if possible, at least 12 months before he or she is expected to retire or stand down, if that is applicable.

What happens then?

Nominations are assessed by one of eight specialist sub-committees, which are all independently chaired. Local experts are sometimes asked to help as well. These evaluations are then passed to the main honours committee, which is chaired by the Secretary of the Cabinet. Names are then put forward to The Queen.

When do we hear whether the nomination has been successful?

Honours Lists are published in the New Year and on the occasion of The Sovereign's Birthday. You can check published Lists (in the national newsletters, the London Gazette or the honours website) to see if the candidate has been successful.

What if the nomination is unsuccessful?

If, after two years, you have heard nothing, you can assume that the nomination has been unsuccessful and has lapsed. It is open for you to re-nominate, but this is not likely to be successful unless the person you have nominated has had additional achievements.

Why not consider nominating your candidate for one of the local honours available in Nottinghamshire? These include:

Reach Out Awards: a partnership between BBC Radio Nottingham, the Nottingham Evening Post and Nottinghamshire County Council. Awards in ten categories are given annually to recognise local people. Visit the Nottinghamshire County Council website for more information about the awards and a nomination form: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk.

Nottingham's Proud of You Awards: Nottingham City Council in association with Trent FM and Boots. There are seven categories, awarded to Nottingham City residents who are considered a star in their local community. Information and application forms are available from Nottingham City Council, Guildhall, Burton Street, Nottingham NG1 1BR, website www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk.

You may also like to consider the following award for voluntary organisations:

Queens Award for Voluntary Service: this annual award recognises and rewards outstanding achievement by groups in the community. Further information and a nomination form can be obtained at www.queensawardvoluntary.gov.uk or by calling 0845 000 2002.