



Honours – How to Write a Nomination

Who deserves an honour?

Honours 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.

If you think your nominee demonstrates one or both of these accomplishments and that their contribution stands out from other people's, please consider nominating them for an honour.

How do I write a nomination?

The most important thing is to provide evidence of what they've done and how they've made things better for others.

Your nomination form doesn't need to be a work of art – it doesn't matter whether it's typed or handwritten or whether it has pictures. There isn't a right way or a wrong way to write a nomination and it doesn't need to be particularly formal. There's no "right length". Every nomination is different. But your nomination must tell the story of what your candidate has done.

Give examples of how they have demonstrated outstanding quality. Show how your candidate has:

- contributed in a distinctive way to improving the lot of those less able to help themselves;
- devoted themselves to sustained and selfless voluntary service;
- shown innovation or creativity in delivering lasting results.

A good nomination should also describe as vividly and precisely as possible the difference their contribution has made. Try to answer the following questions

- how were things before they began?
- how are they now?
- what makes your candidate different from others doing the same thing?

Give details to support these claims. Show how your candidate has:

- earned the respect of their peers and become a role model in their field;



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- produced, perhaps against the odds, sustained achievement which has required moral courage, vision, the ability to make tough choices or determined application and hard work.

As long as they are accurate, do not be afraid of using superlatives in citations. Honours exist specifically to recognise superlative achievement. But remember that superlatives without an explanation are just hot air. Take care always to support any assertions with hard evidence. Do not just say that an achievement has had a widespread effect: describe what that effect has been and show why it has been important.

For example:

“The hospital was notorious, with many cases of MRSA, dirty wards and an attitude that patients were a nuisance. She arrived and worked hard to improve standards over a two year period by instilling pride in her staff, and giving bonuses for those staff with clean wards where efficiency and a helpful attitude were the norm, not the exception. The rates of MRSA are now amongst the lowest in the country and staff turnover has been halved.”

It is achievements and effects of this kind and scale that deserve an honour and that will convince an honours committee to endorse your recommendation.

How do I find the right words?

Effective nominations often include nouns such as:

- | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| ➤ <i>determination</i> | <i>commitment</i> | <i>respect</i> |
| ➤ <i>drive</i> | <i>sustainability</i> | <i>recognition</i> |
| ➤ <i>innovation</i> | <i>creativity</i> | <i>selflessness</i> |
| ➤ <i>impact</i> | <i>zeal</i> | <i>performance</i> |
| ➤ <i>ambassador</i> | | |

adjectives such as:

- | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| ➤ <i>trusted</i> | <i>unstinting</i> | <i>conscientious</i> |
| ➤ <i>wise</i> | <i>inspirational</i> | <i>peerless</i> |
| ➤ <i>persuasive</i> | <i>passionate</i> | <i>exemplary</i> |
| ➤ <i>resourceful</i> | <i>enthusiastic</i> | <i>fair</i> |
| ➤ <i>tenacious</i> | <i>sympathetic</i> | <i>admired</i> |
| ➤ <i>unflustered</i> | <i>supportive</i> | <i>vibrant</i> |
| ➤ <i>dogged</i> | <i>articulate</i> | <i>diligent</i> |
| ➤ <i>dedicated</i> | | |

and phrases such as:

- *making a difference*
- *going the extra mile*



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- *role model*
- *overcoming obstacles*
- *head and shoulders above the rest*

What shouldn't I do?

As we've said, there's no wrong way to write a nomination. But remember that honours committees judge candidates' merits on the information provided to them. A good nomination is the foundation for that. Only the strongest nominations will result in an honour.

To write a good citation, there must be enough information in the nomination form to make a good case. So your nomination shouldn't be:

- an extended CV;
- a list of educational achievements;
- a list of appointments, awards or posts;
- a job description showing what the person is meant to do.

Because poor citations often list these things, a frequent complaint from committees is that the person recommended is "doing no more than their job" or "doing nothing that stands out".

Instead, your citation should describe what is special about your candidate's achievements and show memorably and persuasively how and where they have made a difference.

You should also ensure that letters written to support your nomination form are written by people who know the nominee personally. It doesn't matter who the supporters are, but they must be able to talk about the nominee from first-hand experience.

Where do I start?

We hope that you have found this guide useful. If you are now ready to make a nomination, please download the form from www.gov.uk/honours or ring 020 7276 2777.

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How to write nominations – some examples

Here are some disguised examples from persuasive citations:

“She has devoted most of her spare time to running a social club for elderly people with learning difficulties. She says such people are sadly neglected in society and, although she is in full-time employment in a Tesco store, she runs this club with two helpers, a small budget and a lot of hard graft. Over the past five years, more than 200 people have benefited from the facilities, as well as their carers who have been given valuable respite from their responsibilities.”

- This nominee is helping others voluntarily and in doing so has helped and made life better for many others. It’s very clear that she is the key person getting the club going and the nomination also makes clear the number of people who have benefited from her work.

“He lived on an estate with high numbers of single mothers and disaffected young people but, instead of moaning about the youth of today, he started to listen to them and, as a result, started a club with sporting activities and facilities for mothers and their children. This is now used by 500 local teenagers. He had to work hard to gain the support of police and other agencies but was determined to succeed. Now, a once crime-ridden, hugely unpopular estate, is thriving with a real sense of purpose and achievement and crime rates have plummeted.”

- This nominee has taken the initiative to do something to help his community. He has identified a need and started something from scratch to make things better for others. And he has been very successful: the figures in the nomination make clear the level of the impact he has had.

“She has transformed the agency from an organisation troubled by high profile technical operational challenges into a highly effective body with 96% of customers satisfied with the services her staff provide. The IT system is user friendly and a model of good practice.”

- This example demonstrates that the nominee has personally turned around a failing company and in doing so has made it an exemplar for others.

“He found that the charity was wasting over a £1m a year on time-consuming inefficient administration and had no effective PR. He altered procedures, reduced staff and adopted a ‘can do’ approach by putting the people the organisation was supposed to be helping at the top of his priority list, rather than at the bottom.”

- This is another example of a nominee who has fundamentally changed an organisation for the better and whose leadership has made sure that that charity focused on the right things.

“When she took over the company it was running at an annual loss of £4.2m and it took her five years to produce a healthy profit of £2.5m. She has maintained a



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steady increase in profits since 2001 with a £.7.2m profit in year ended March 2006. Employees have increased from 356 to 870 in her time, in an area of high unemployment following the closure of the local car plant”

- This nominee has made a sustained effort which has not just got the company but on track but actually made it more profitable. That success has given a boost to employment in an area which really needs it.

“For over 40 years he has been a prolific fundraiser in the community. Since 1970 he has stood outside the local supermarket every Saturday in all weathers rattling his tin for good causes. He has during this time raised around £40,000 for the local hospice and the Old Rectory Club for disabled people. On retirement in 1990 he began to organise bingo nights three times a week at three different village halls and also arranges a monthly dance. These activities have brought the community together and have helped to raise over £15,000 for several local charities.”

- This nominee has given his time and effort over decades and in doing so has both supported local causes and helped to support the community in his rural area.

“She is unusual because she is a black woman farmer in a rural county but she is keen to rid the world of stereotypes and uses her status to promote diversity and encourage women from non-British ethnic backgrounds to try different careers, particularly in male dominated industries like agriculture.”

- This nominee is a role model for others, achieving in her field of activity but also supporting other people.

“Although in full-time employment in local government, he gives up two evenings a week and all day Sunday to helping in the hospice. He has managed their very complex finances and is prepared to help behind the scenes or on the frontline, wherever he is most needed. He has contributed his services consistently for the last 32 years.”

- This nominee has made a sustained contribution over a long period, devoting much of his free time to others. He has offered unconditional support to the benefit of others.

“She has been the under-16s football team coach for 15 years. During the season she gives up every Tuesday evening for training and every Sunday for matches against other local teams. It is a testament to her success as a coach that there are now enough junior members for two boys’ and a girls’ team. She has undertaken all manner of tasks to support the club, from mowing the pitch to acting as club secretary. She organised several fundraising tournaments to raise £4,000 towards renovation of the football pitch and clubhouse, a facility now used by the whole community for village events.”



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- This nomination makes clear that the nominee has given up a lot of time to local children and that, by being willing to turn her hand to anything, she has been the driving force behind the club's success.