

**Cash award guidance for Schools**

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact your Line Manager.

Date

April 2025

# Introduction

Regular conversations remain at the heart of our approach to performance management. This supports a culture of ongoing recognition of personal contributions and achievement throughout the year.

As an organisation, we're committed to recognising additional effort where staff deliver over and above the standards required from their role (repeatedly ‘going the extra mile’). This can make a significant difference to levels of motivation, engagement and how valued and appreciated staff feel at work. This ultimately impacts on the effective delivery of quality services to the residents of Kent.

There are several ways to recognise exceptional performance:

* A simple ‘thank you’
* Publicly praising peers
* Cash awards

Cash Awards

These awards acknowledge the contributions of individuals or teams as an immediate recognition of the extra effort displayed. Managers have the discretion to give cash awards on a regular basis in the moment, and as and when there has been exceptional performance.

Situations when these should be used include:

* to reward specific performance over and above what is normally expected.  Simply meeting performance objectives as set out in the performance action plan would not attract an award
* upon completion of a special task or project requiring exceptional performance by a team or individual over and above normal expectations. The team award would only be applicable for a project team that is temporary in nature, being formed to complete a specific task. The team award would need to be endorsed by a Senior Manager who is not part of the team.
* to recognise effective handling of short-term additional duties which have not been recognised by other means, such as through overtime payments, under an 'acting up' or other arrangement.

The same piece of work should not be rewarded twice, i.e. an employee should not receive both a team award and an individual cash award in respect of the same performance.

It is important to consider budgetary implications when making the cash award

The maximum value should be no more than £500 per award. An employee may receive more than one award but the combined total cannot exceed £1,000 in an 12-month period. Exceptionally, any amount above this must be proposed to a Senior Manager, as per School governance arrangements.

Process to give a cash award

Cash awards should be as close to the time of achievement as possible to recognise effort in a timely manner.

Cash awards are payable via payroll. They are pensionable and are subject to normal payroll deductions such as tax and National Insurance.

Managers need to provide a business case for approval in line with the Schools governance arrangements, setting out why the award is being made and who it is for. In the case of a team award, all the members to share in the award should be clearly listed and the method for dividing up the payment stated.

Employees should only be advised of the award after the appropriate level of approval has been obtained. A copy of the business case should be retained on the individual’s personal file.

Manager considerations

This scheme is applicable to employees at Kent County Council on Kent Scheme. It does not apply for those on Teachers terms and conditions.

* Equity of application

Managers are responsible for making sure that cash awards are applied in a fair and considered way, in the same way managers should when setting performance objectives and making a performance assessment. They must consider an individuals’ performance in relation to their personal circumstances e.g. if their ability to perform has been constrained by their personal circumstances. Particularly emphasis should be put on recognising exceptional performance by lower paid, part time and front line employees.

* When not to use recognition awards

Overtime payments and 'acting up' arrangements are both outside the scheme and are detailed separately within the [Kent Scheme terms and conditions - Section B: Rewards and benefits](https://kentcountycouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/KCCKNet/Kent%20Documents/Kent%20Scheme%20terms%20and%20conditions.pdf)

Individuals whose performance is being reviewed under the relevant performance and capability procedure are not eligible to receive a cash award.

Monitoring

Cash awards must be monitored on a regular basis to ensure equity of application and consistency in the distribution of awards for some groups of staff across the organisation, and remedial action taken as required.