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March 16, 2009

CDC bonuses explained

By **Jessica Lim**



Mr Lim said that reward system motivate people to perform, because if a person does badly, he will not get the same high bonus. -- ST PHOTO: STEPHANIE YEOW

COMMUNITY development councils (CDCs) need the flexibility to pay deserving staff bigger bonuses, People's Association (PA) deputy chairman Lim Boon Heng said on Monday.

Responding to questions about the online buzz generated after some staff at the Northwest CDC were reportedly paid up to eight months' bonus last year, Mr Lim said such payouts 'vary according to performance'.

VIDEO



Minister defends flexibility in rewarding staff

staff
(1:18)

He did not touch on exactly how much the CDC's staff were paid, but said bonuses 'help to motivate people to perform, because if a person does badly, he will not get the same high bonus. So this ensures that the reward system is fair and responsive to the needs of the organisation'.

Mr Lim, who is also Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, added: 'In good times and in bad, there are good performers. And I think that particularly in bad times, we need people who give of their best and show example to the rest about what they can do to help the organisation.'

Pointing out that only a select few get high payouts, he said: 'I think we should not begrudge the few people who get very high bonuses.'

Several blog posts and threads dedicated to the issue of Northwest CDC's payouts have sprung up recently.

Many question the justification for such payouts, especially in light of the recession. Others say they are absurd in a time of growing retrenchments.

However, most ignored the fact that the bonuses were paid last year,

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when the economy was humming along right up till the last quarter.

When contacted, the PA, which decides bonuses and salaries of CDC staff, said its payments are in line with the National Wages Council's guidelines, and that it moved to performance-based pay in order to reward and incentivise staff fairly and responsively.

The PA added that only staff at the lower end of the salary range receive high performance bonuses. Such payments, it said, also help the organisation retain outstanding performers.

Read the full report in Tuesday's edition of The Straits Times.

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