

Feedback: Chamber meeting - 12 February 2021

OHS compliance in relation to COVID-19 guidelines

The Director of the DPSA issued a circular on the regulations that were issued during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. To date, DPSA had eight COVID-19 positive cases, of which all employees recovered fully and are back at work. One employee is in quarantine and will be expected back at work after the ten days self-isolation period. No fatalities were reported during the period under review.

The employer reported that the contract term of Nurses who were utilised to do screening of employees and visitors expired last year. It is currently making use of Security personnel whilst finalising supply-chain processes to appoint another service provider. Labour was unhappy in that the employer knew long before the contract expired and should have been proactive looking at the current scourge of the virus. The employer stated that it is in the final stages and will be appointing a service provider within the next week.

Update: Recruitment plan into new organisational structure

The employer gave a report that indicates that there are 480 posts on the new structure. It was noted that 363 are filled and appointment letters were issued and accepted by employees. A total of 117 of the remaining posts are still vacant where nine are at SMS level and 12 at lower posts. The employer also indicated that it has a challenge with the budget after Treasury reduced the DPSA budget by R41 million. The compensation budget commencing 1 April 2021 is said to be R76 million. The Department will therefore be expected to re-prioritise and identify which vacancies will be funded from the limited budget.

There were 4 appeals received by the Objections Committee of which three were resolved as these emanated from misunderstandings. Letters were subsequently issued and signed by aggrieved employees. There is one outstanding objection and it is hoped that it will be finalised as soon as the employee is available after she requested extension.

Space allocation

Several complaints were received after the employer appointed a service provider tasked to assist with the allocation of space. A decision was taken that all branches will be afforded a meeting with the service provider to see how they can be accommodated with issues raised. Labour will also be invited to the meeting, which is scheduled for 17 February 2021. A follow-up report will be shared at the next DBC on how the issue of space allocation will be dealt with. After the space allocation, office furniture will be

procured. It is anticipated that the move can only happen between April and May 2021.

Merging of Food Aid and Cleaning

During the last meeting, parties agreed to form a Task Team to conduct a benchmarking exercise of the salaries of Cleaners with other Departments. The first meeting of the Task Team took place where it adopted its Terms of Reference, a project plan and also identified Departments that will be visited to conduct the benchmarking exercise. This process is ongoing at Task Team level and the next meeting is set for 4 March 2021.

Recruitment policy

The employer requested a multi-lateral with labour where it indicated that it would like to propose an amendment on two issues around inhouse screening of prospective employees as well as to allow virtual interviews. Other proposed changes were also made to the policy after the PSA already obtained a mandate from members to accept the policy, as amended. Discussions on the policy could not be finalised at the meeting owing to the impasse reached on some of the proposals from other parties. The matter will therefore be finalised at a special DBC, scheduled for 18 February 2021.

GENERAL MANAGER