

Feedback: Departmental Bargaining Chamber meeting - 3 December 2021

Move from Civitas building to Dr AB Xuma

The employer tabled a report, which reflects that employees reported for work at the Dr AB Xuma offices on 4 October 2021. It further stated that the then-existing Relocation Task Team (RTT) had not convened any meetings post the return of employees to work and all issues relating to challenges regarding the new offices will be handled by the OHS Committee. Labour noted the report and confirmed that the above-mentioned meetings did not sit. Parties agreed to remove the item from the agenda with the provision that all issues relating to the relocation will be henceforth handled by the OHS Committee.

Transport Allowance: Office move from Civitas to Dr AB Xuma

Members will recall that parties have been discussing this issue since a decision was taken by the Department to relocate to Dr AB Xuma. Several proposals were discussed on how to compensate employees for their additional transport costs. After engagement, the employer stated that the Directive issued by Treasury on the distance which employees would qualify for such compensation is clear and currently no employee qualifies according to the criteria. The employer, instead, offered employees a bus service, which ferries them to and from Civitas to Dr AB Xuma. Such services will, however, only be until 31 December 2021 in line with the employer's position.

Labour noted the response and requested that the employer continues offering employees the bus service until the end of the financial year, which will be 31 March 2022, based on the current economic climate. The employer noted labour's submission and requested an opportunity to obtain a mandate. The outcome thereof will be communicated to labour prior to the expiry of the bus services agreement. Parties agreed that the item will remain on the agenda.

Update: New organisational structure - National Social Development

The employer reported that the structure was not yet signed off by the Minister and that the current, approved structure continues to present challenges on efficiencies. Challenges include unclear reporting lines, duplicate functions, and both over- and underutilisation of staff in some instances. It was also raised that EXCO of NDSD need to take a decision post the conclusion of the ongoing discussions between NDSD and the Presidency regarding the transfer of some branches and or functions between NDSD, the Department of Women, Children and People Living with Disabilities, and Basic Education.

Labour noted the report and proposed that once EXCO has finalised the above discussions, a DTT must be considered to deal with administrative processes. Parties agreed that the item will remain on the agenda and the DTT will submit a report to the DBC.

Bereavement Policy

Members will recall that labour was to submit inputs to the employer on the draft policy, which was circulated to members for comments and inputs. Labour requested an extension of the submission date to 31 December 2021, given that it was difficult to obtain inputs from members as not all employees had access to tools of trade prior to their return to work. The employer noted labour's request and parties agreed that the item will remain on the agenda.

Payment: Annual Registration Fees for Health and Social Development Professionals

A report was received from the employer but unfortunately not written according to the correct template as agreed to in the Council. The employer was requested to rework the report according to the correct template. The corrected report will be submitted by 20 December 2021 to allow the DBC Secretariat to submit it to the Council meeting. Parties agreed to keep the item on the agenda, pending submission and further discussion at the next DBC.

Continuous Professional Development of EMS Personnel: NDoH

Labour submitted a report after consultation with members, in which it confirmed that NDoH does not have EMS personnel on its structure. Parties agreed to remove the item from the agenda.

Provision of tools of trade for officials: National DSD

Labour submitted a report after confirming with members that the employer did indeed give officials who could work from home the required tools of trade. It was noted that there were a few isolated cases where affected employees were encouraged to report challenges to the employer. The item was removed from the agenda.

Review: Recruitment and Selection policy - NDSD

The employer previously submitted a proposed amendments to the said policy. It was the intention to have its expert present the proposed changes to the Chamber for consultation but opted to make such a presentation first at the DTT. A report on the outcome of the discussions will be tabled at the Chamber for further engagement and finalisation.

Monitoring: Psychosocial support for affected employees and family members

The Council was requested to give more advice on how the above will be implemented as currently there is no policy that caters or can be extended to family members. Parties agreed that the item will remain on the agenda, pending report back on the matter from the Council.

Draft policy: Office space

Members will recall that labour received several complaints regarding the allocation of office space at the Dr AB Xuma building. A draft will be submitted to the employer for consideration. Labour requested time to finalise the draft and submit for the employer's comments within 14 days to which the employer agreed. The item will remain on the agenda.

GENERAL MANAGER