

FOR PSA MEMBERS: **SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL SECURITY AGENCY (SASSA) - WESTERN CAPE**

04-12-2024

## SASSA Western Cape Regional Consultative Forum – Special meeting - 2 December 2024

The following items were discussed:

### Long-service recognition

Members will recall that parties were set to meet on 30 October 2024 for a bilateral to address this issue. This meeting, however, did not transpire owing to the employer's unavailability. The employer then issued *Circular 7 of 2024* on 12 November 2024, which speaks to some of the concerns raised by the PSA. In it, the employer indicated that the acquisition of certificates remains a challenge owing to budgetary constraints. At the special meeting, the employer indicated that the matter has been escalated to REMANCO at which a business case was recommended to the HCM. The PSA noted the position and is set to seek an alternative means to expedite the resolution to this ongoing provincial challenge.

### Recruitment

Members will recall that the PSA submitted a position paper to the employer regarding its non-compliance with HCM *Circular 2 of 2016* – Practice note for trade unions sitting as observers during shortlisting and interviewing processes for posts on salary level 1-12. Clause 1.4 specifically states that: '*Union representatives will be invited to shortlisting two days prior to the shortlist date and four days prior to the interview date*'. The case in point specifically related to an issue that arose at the Oudtshoorn local office where a concerned official failed to meet the standard. The employer informed the PSA that the misconduct has been addressed and that SASSA acknowledges its oversight in the process. The PSA noted the feedback and deemed the matter as resolved.

### Grade progression

SASSA's HCM Circular 8 of 2022 speaks to grade progression. This must be read in conjunction with PSCBC Resolution 3/2009, which entitles an employee to progress to one salary level higher than which the post is graded on. The employer informed the PSA that 28 officials as per the HCM audit qualified for grade progression. The PSA will be provided with the list of workplaces at which employees qualified. Members are advised to check-in with their immediate management first should they be of the view that they should have qualified for grade progression, after which, if the matter remains unresolved, it should be escalated to the PSA via their shop steward.

## **Occupational health and safety (OHS)**

The employer provided the PSA with the OHS documentation that was requested in terms of its position paper. Members can obtain the information from their shop stewards to ensure that the relevant persons are contacted, and due processes are followed as OHS matters arise. Parties agreed that the employer will be accessible should the need arise for further clarity or action.

## **Danger allowance**

Certain occupational categories in SASSA are at safety risk during the execution of their duties. For this reason, the RCF agreed to establish a Western Cape Task Team to investigate the feasibility of supplementing this risk with a danger allowance. The findings will be escalated to the National Bargaining Forum for consideration. The establishment of this team has unfortunately not materialised to date. Parties agreed that this matter should receive serious attention. It was agreed that the first task team meeting be set to take place prior to the first RCF meeting in 2025. Members will be informed of the date in the new year.

## **ICT batteries**

At the previous RCF, the PSA again submitted a position paper regarding this matter, in which it was agreed that the employer would engage ICT and revert to the PSA by 1 November 2024. The employer dismally failed to meet the agreement. The PSA voiced disappointment with the handling of this matter. Parties agreed to meet with the ICT component as a way forward on this matter.

## **Financial misconduct policy**

The PSA called for a workshop on this policy in which it must be clarified what amendments have been made, the interpretation and application of the policy and, more specifically, how prescription law is applied. In the workshop, the PSA intends to address the employer's current practice of procedural unfairness in terms of its debt-recovery process. The employer welcomed the proposal and will engage the custodians of the policy accordingly. It is envisaged to have the workshop either before or on the day of the next RCF meeting.

## **Acting in higher positions**

In response to the position paper submitted by the PSA, the employer informed the PSA that acting in positions is regulated by paragraph 8.2 of the SASSA Staffing Practice Policy. Acting positions for staff on salary levels 1 to 12 are approved by the General Manager, salary levels 13 to 14 are approved by the Regional Executive Manager, and salary level 15 are approved by the Chief Executive Officer. The line manager determines the acting period and makes the recommendation for an official to act in a post, but the final decision lies with the delegated authority. There are currently two officials acting in vacant and funded posts in the Western Cape, namely the acting Regional Executive Manager and the Vredenburg Local Office Manager. There are currently five officials acting without remuneration in GM Corporate Services, GM Grants Administration, Disability unit, and Operations. Members are reminded that acting in a post is not a right and should only be for a period until the post can be filled in a permanent capacity. The person nominated to act in the post must meet the minimum criteria in terms of qualifications and experience as set for that post. All acting appointments for a period exceeding six consecutive weeks must be routed to the HCM for verification before approval can be granted.

Members are encouraged to notify their PSA Shop Stewards at the various SASSA offices should issues arise. All collective matters are to be forwarded to the PSA Western Cape Chairperson [melanie.driver@sassa.gov.za](mailto:melanie.driver@sassa.gov.za) for further handling. The PSA Chief Negotiator for SASSA in the Western Cape is [angelo.fisher@psa.co.za](mailto:angelo.fisher@psa.co.za).

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