

## Feedback: PHSDSBC

### Token of appreciation

Labour registered its frustration and disappointment with the employer for failing to provide a token of appreciation to frontline health workers. Labour felt that the employer did not take the plight of these workers seriously. The efforts of these workers deserved a token of appreciation such as tax relief or danger allowance, *etc.* The employer promised at the last Council meeting to finalise the matter and implement accordingly. The employer at that stage indicated that the consultation process with relevant stakeholders was at the final phase and that it would provide concrete feedback at the next Council meeting scheduled for 28 October 2021.

Unfortunately, the employer again failed to conclude on its mandate and labour proposed that the matter be subjected to a three day negotiation session, which will be utilised to try and resolve the matter amicably and possibly conclude a collective agreement.

### Amendment of Clause 4.1.1 and 4.2.2 of PHSDSBC Resolution 2/2017 (Framework Agreement on Payment of Rural Allowance and Amendment of Occupational-Specific Dispensation (OSD) for Social Service professionals and Occupations)

During the last Council meeting, a presentation was made on the topic. It was agreed that Social Development will provide a response to the presentation and it has subsequently done so. Clause 4.1.1 of the agreement stipulates that, within ten days from the date of this agreement, the employer will table a proposed model on the Rural Allowance at the Council, for eligible Social Service professionals and occupations for negotiations. Clause 4.2.2: *"Parties agree in principle to amend the OSD for social service professionals and occupations."*

A Task Team meeting was held on 12 October 2021, in which the task team concluded that the primary focus should be on the equalisation for employees who are covered by the PHSDSBC Resolution 2/2004 and the inclusion of additional categories which were not covered by the Resolution. The Task Team report was adopted at Council and constructive engagements will commence to conclude a substantive agreement. This matter will also form part of the 3 day marathon session of negotiations which is proposed to be schedule during the week of 22 – 25 November 2021.

### Review: Uniform Allowance - Nurses

Members will recall that a draft agreement was circulated for mandating purposes, to engage on a framework agreement, which will regulate a process to review the Uniform Allowance agreement for Nurses. The objective of the agreement is as follows:

- Abolish provision of Uniform Allowance
- To bring uniformity in a true sense of the word uniform
- To restore the dignity of Health professionals
- Uniform provision to all Health professionals instead of paying an allowance to some.

The Uniform Task Team has resolved and subsequently tabled a preliminary report to Council which resolved as follows:

- The emblem of the nurses uniform should be the nursing lamp, underlined by the words Department of Health.
- The employer is to utilise the available information to prepare a specification and source quotes for the uniform.
- The lifespan of the Task Team must be extended to finalise the outstanding issues such as the number of sets of uniforms.
- Ideally the number of uniforms should be seven over a period of two years and the accessories would be brown shoes, a jersey and a jacket.

Council resolves that the lifespan of the Task Team will be extended for a month to conclude on outstanding issues which amongst others include an implementation date.

### **PHSDSBC Resolution 4/2017: Agreement on Payment of Special Allowance and Danger Allowance for Forensic Pathology Officers (FPO)**

A collective agreement was entered into between parties at Council and enjoyed majority signature on 29 June 2017. The agreement's Clause 4.5.2 provides for the following: *"Parties agree to negotiate and conclude a sustainable model to allow the FPO to register with a statutory body as professionals, to have career pathing and job evaluation within six months after this agreement attains the majority signature."*

Parties were supposed to conclude on this sustainable model on 29 January 2018, which unfortunately as per the evidence led by labour and the subsequent confirmation from the employer, did not materialise. After the conclusion and favourable outcome of an arbitration process, the employer tabled a draft Sustainable Model. The PSA distributed the draft for inputs and subsequent inputs were discussed with the employer. A special Council meeting was scheduled for 17 November 2020 to constructively engage on the matter, and the most contentious issue is the fact that Gauteng FPOs are not covered in this Model, as they do not fall within the ambit of the OSD agreement. The PSA raised serious challenges with the draft Model which, amongst others, raised more questions than answers, especially on the recognition of experience, stagnation, and subsequent requirements in relation to Facility Managers' salary levels, to mention a few.

Parties agreed that the employer would prepare a response on or before 30 November 2020. Labour would consider the response and parties subsequently agreed to a marathon session of engagements. The first round of engagement commenced on 8 March 2021. Unfortunately, the employer indicated that it did not have a mandate to engage on the collective agreement and will revert to Council. The PSA, together with all the other unions, declared a dispute .

A certificate of non-resolution was issued and the Arbitration is set to be heard on 15 November 2021.

### **Averaging of working hours: EMRS**

As previously reported, a draft agreement on the averaging of working hours was circulated for a mandate. Unfortunately, no mandate was received from constituencies, which poses a significant risk to Emergency Medical and Rescue Services personnel. The PSA did subsequently indicate that it does not have a mandate on the draft agreement and is still in a process to solicit a mandate. Labour subsequently indicated that it has a fundamental problem with Clauses 4.1 and 4.2 which amongst others stipulated that the agreement will be averaged over a period of 42 hours per compressed week and average over a period of three months.

Parties in Council agree that this matter will also be subjected to the three day marathon session which is scheduled for 22 – 25 November 2021.

GENERAL MANAGER