

Feedback: Council meeting – 28 January 2021

A normal Council meeting was held on 28 January 2021. The following agenda items were discussed:

Standardisation: Remuneration and absorption of Community Healthcare Workers (CHWs) in Department of Health

It was previously reported that a task team was formed to deal with the standardisation of remuneration and absorption of CHWs into the Department of Health. A draft collective agreement was developed, and the employer requested to seek mandate from its principals. The employer failed to provide feedback on time and the agreement was extended to June 2021. The employer subsequently reported at the last meeting that its internal consultation process was at an advanced stage. Feedback would be provided at the next Council meeting. The employer further reported that the consultation process was now at the National Health Council. Feedback would be provided as soon as the process is concluded. Labour noted the report but was not impressed with the feedback. Labour in its caucus meeting undertook to explore other avenues to remedy the situation.

Sustainable model: Forensic Pathology Services

It was previously agreed that the matter would be referred to a task team to develop a model. A series of meetings would be convened over a period of four days, however, owing to the introduction adjusted alert level 3, the contact meetings could not be held. Council agreed to convene virtual meetings to finalise the matter. The dates would be communicated to parties in due course.

Provision of PPE for frontline workers

The employer reported that the PPE report would be submitted to parties through Council on 5 February 2021.

Data collection: Health workers who contracted virus

The employer reported that the statistical report would be submitted to parties through Council on 5 February 2021.

Token of appreciation: All frontline employees period

During the previous special Council meeting, the employer undertook to seek concurrence with the DPSA about the provision of a token of appreciation to Healthcare workers. It, however, indicated that the matter

was now tabled at the PSCBC for discussion with labour. Therefore, it does not have a mandate to pursue the matter further.

Amendments: Revised non-pensionable recruitment allowance (referred to as Rural Allowance)

At the previous meeting, the employer was tasked to convene a meeting with the representative of the Department of Land Reform and Rural Development to consolidate a report that was supposed to be presented to the task team formed by Council. The employer did not carry out the task allocated. The office of the General Secretary (GS) was tasked to intervene and engage with the representative of DARRLD for a presentation to be made at the next task team meeting.

Review: Uniform allowance - Health Sector

The office of the GS was requested to request various service providers of uniform to make a presentation to the task team on the patterns and uniform for winter and summer. The service providers could not come for the presentation owing to adjusted alert level 3. Parties will wait until the lockdown restrictions are reduced so that a physical meeting can be convened with service providers. The lifespan of the uniform allowance task team was extended to June 2021 to complete the task.

Health and safety in hospitals and Emergency Medical and Rescue Services (EMRS) and appointment of OHS committees in Department of Health

It was previously reported that Health workers, especially in emergency services, were constantly attacked and robbed. Both the employer and labour were expected to submit the list of incidents reported but indicated that they were still consolidating the report and would submit at the next meeting.

Professionalisation: Community Development Practitioners

The employer reported that the matter was still at the Bill stage in parliament and the *status quo* remained.

Resolution 3/2019

It was previously reported that that Nurses experienced challenges with their registration at the Nursing Council. It was further reported that emergency services employees were disciplined for not making payments for registration. The employer indicated it has intervened and issued a letter to the Nursing Council to stop with the deductions and review registration processes.

Provision of transport for Health workers

Labour previously argued that owing to the high rates of infections with the virus, the employer was requested to provide transport to Healthcare workers. A draft collective agreement was re-submitted to the employer for consideration. The employer undertook to consult and seek mandate with its principals, however, it decided not to pursue the process. The employer maintained that there was no need in this period to provide transport to Health workers and indicated that they should proceed to use their own transport. It will provide GG vehicles when necessary.

Trauma counselling services: Health workers

It was reported at the previous meeting that Health workers are experiencing anxiety and depression in the line of duty owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of them experienced trauma as they witness death of patients and colleagues on daily basis. It was proposed that the employer should provide health

and wellness services in the form of trauma counselling to all Health workers to enable them to cope with the ordeal in the workplace. A task team was established to monitor the process of counselling services in the Health Sector during the pandemic period and report back to Council.

COVID-19 vaccination roll-out

The employer requested that the Council should identify a date for a presentation to be made on the vaccination roll-out programme. The date will be confirmed later.

The PSA wants to take this opportunity to wish all employees who are affected or infected by COVID-19 a safe and speedy recovery and submit heartfelt condolences for those employees who passed.

GENERAL MANAGER