

## Feedback: COVID-19 Steering Committee meeting – 18 February 2022

### Return to work

The employer reported that DPSA *Circular 5/2022* was implemented and most units are all back to office, however, the infrastructure has proven not to be ready for such mass return. The weak or overburden network causes poor connectivity, which results in slow transmission of emails, thus affecting productivity. Most employees without 3G could not meet their performance targets. There was also a problem with elevators.

### Work from home

The Committee proposed that working from home must continue until the issues of office connectivity, electricity, and elevators are resolved. Those employees who were accorded some Persal rights to continue having these rights so that it does not place extra strain on the already poor network system in the offices. Some staff members are even using their own network capabilities. The Employee Health and Wellness (EHW) Unit is facing a challenge of processing applications from employees with co-morbidities applications without approved criteria. Subsequently, employees are getting agitated owing to prolonged delays. The committee was requested to assist with the criteria to process the applications of three employees.

### Upgrading: Network and data lines

The Information, Communication and Technology Unit (ICT) confirmed that current networks and data lines are inadequate to cater for the existing staff complement, including the relocated employees from Regent Building. The process to upgrade data lines is underway although finance will only be available in the new financial year. Cellphone and 3Gs have been procured to address network challenges and SITA was consulted to provide technical support.

### Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) unit: Long-term strategy

The employer reported that the ICT Committee has endorsed the draft strategy proposal, which will be presented to the Executive Management Team in March 2022. The document will be shared with Steering Committee members on or before 25 February 2022.

### Steering Committee representatives appointment

Potential Steering Committee members are still waiting to be appointed by the Director-General. The PSA, however, proposed that members attend whilst waiting their official appointments. Parties supported the proposal.

### **COVID-19 statistics report**

The employer reported decline in the number of reported cases during January, compared with November/December 2021. A total of 102 cases were reported in December, with 17 confirmed cases and 85 reported cases with one confirmed case as of 1 February 2022. The Department reported that contract worker positions for Compliance Officers would not be renewed as registers have been discontinued and temperature scanning is administered by Security Officers.

### **Budget**

Budget is still available for COVID-19 essentials and requests can be submitted to Security Units. National Archives were advised that requests can be submitted to Supply Chain Management. Failure to make any submission will result in all purchases being made in the next financial year.

The PSA applauds frontline workers who, to date, are combatting the pandemic. Members are encouraged to get vaccinated as the battle against the pandemic continues.

GENERAL MANAGER