

Feedback: *Interim* Bargaining Forum Meeting – 10 November 2023

BMA contract of employment

The PSA enquired about the long-outstanding contract of employment for BMA employees. It is almost seven months since employees did not sign the contract of employment after the section 197 transfer process. The employer reported that the contract of employment was delayed by challenges related to administration of the payroll system. The employer envisages to finalise the contract of employment in the next three months. It further indicated that it was still waiting approval of the organisational structure by Treasury. Employees are currently placed according to the structure of their former departments.

Ranking of officials

The employer indicated that employees are currently ranked according to DPSA-salary scales, whilst waiting to finalise the transitional process by 1 March 2024. The employer is committed to investigating the various corporate colours to differentiate various ranking profiles of employees. Occupations such as Scientists, and Environmental Practitioners will be ranked and categorised differently. The employer will provide a progress report in the *interim* Bargaining Forum meeting scheduled on 7 and 8 December 2023.

Subsidised Vehicles for officials from Port Health

Labour raised concerns about whether BMA will continue with the subsidised vehicle scheme for employees transferred to BMA. The scheme paid for various benefits such as insurance and tyres through *Wesbank*. The employer confirmed that affected employees will still be entitled to the benefits of the scheme. Employees who belonged to the scheme are requested to submit their details to the Senior Manager, Mr Themba Dubazana, to process their claims accordingly. The employer further committed to contact *Wesbank* to ensure that affected employees do not forfeit the benefit.

Third-party claims

The PSA sharply raised ongoing concerns about the non-payment of third-party claims after members brought these to the attention of BMA management. The problem persisted to continue. The PSA submitted a list of affected members and did not receive feedback. The employer committed to submit a detailed response to the PSA by 17 November 2023. The employer indicated that monthly meetings are held with the new service provider, *Q-link* to resolve the matter urgently.

Issuing of combat uniform to employees

Labour raised concerns that some employees were not provided with the full set of uniforms and were forced to wear combat uniforms. The PSA urged the employer to allow affected employees to wear their former department uniform whilst waiting for the full set. The employer committed to issuing a BMA overall to specified employees and confirmed that combat uniforms will be issued by the end of November 2023. Reflectors with BMA logos will be issued to all employees across different ports of entry. In the meantime, affected employees will be allowed to wear their former department's uniform as a temporary measure. A uniform task team will be formed, and labour was requested to submit two names each. Terms of reference will be developed by the task team.

Allowances payment

The PSA raised concern about the delay in payments such as overtime and nightshift allowances. Parties agreed that employees will be paid overtime on time going forward. Overtime will be approved based on operational requirements. The employer will request all Port Commanders to ensure that all documents related to allowance payments are processed on time.

Application forms for new positions at BMA

The PSA raised concern regarding a requirement on job-application forms where prospective employees were expected to disclose if they knew anyone currently employed by the BMA. The employer confirmed that such a disclosure should not be required from prospective job seekers as it has an element of bias to prospective job seekers. The employer committed to removing the requirement from the application forms and apologised to labour for such an inclusion. There was confirmation that no employee would be penalised for not disclosing.

OHS and accommodation matters

Labour raised concerns about the conditions which its members are working and staying under, as well as the lack of proper tools of trade for employees at borders. An OHS report was provided to the BMA before the transfer of employees. Parties agreed to convene a meeting to deal with all OHS challenges at ports of entry. Parties will later endeavour to visit all affected ports of entry.

Constitution of National Bargaining Forum

The employer circulated a draft constitution for inputs. The parties committed to provide feedback by the 27 November 2023, so that the matter could be discussed in the bargaining forum meeting scheduled on the 7-8 December 2023.

Revised BMA allowance form

Parties discussed amended BMA allowance forms. A decision was taken that members will be expected to use the revised form when claiming allowances going forward. The revised form will be circulated to all employees in due course.

PMDS assessments: 2023/24

The employer reported that employees are still expected to submit their performance agreements in line with agreements undertaken with former departments for the 2023/24-performance circle. Employees will sign new performance agreements with effect from 1 April 2024.

Draft security-vetting document

The employer did not circulate the draft document before the meeting on 9 November 2023. Parties agreed to defer the agenda item to the scheduled meeting of 7 and 8 December 2023.

Financial disclosure form

The item was deferred to the meeting of 7 and 8 December 2023.

BMA Policies

Parties agreed to form a policy task team to consult on the new BMA draft policies. The terms of reference of the task team will be developed. Names of representatives in the task team will be submitted by 17 November 2023.

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