

Feedback: MANLAB meeting – 21 July 2023

Progress: Tools of trade

The employer reported that 70% of ICT equipment has reached end of life as per the audit report. Each programme will put aside a certain portion of their budget to procure equipment. The Department now has approximately R3 million that has been set aside to buy laptops. Labour requested that the Department should procure laptops that are of good quality. Priority for tools of trade should be given to those who are deserving and those in disadvantaged areas (deep-rural areas). It was resolved that the employer will develop criteria as to who should be prioritised.

Acting with/without allowance

Labour sharply raised concern regarding the inequality and inconsistency regarding acting personnel where some are receiving an acting allowance whilst others are acting without any form of remuneration, which has the potential to create disharmony in the workplace. The policy is clear to whom and when an acting allowance is payable and labour urged the employer to fully implement the acting allowance policy and not treat employees unfairly or exploit them in the name of empowerment. Members who are acting without remuneration should send their names to queen.seema@psa.co.za by **4 August 2023**.

Requirements for appointment: Child and Youth Care Workers (CYCWs)

The employer reported that about ten CYCWs were not registered and do not have child and youth certificates, meaning that they do not have the necessary qualifications to do the job that they are employed to do, although they are practicing. The employer further reported that funding has been received from the HWSETA to train CYCWs. Training will be offered to those without the certificate. CYCWs who are without certificates are encouraged to apply for the opportunity to be trained.

Mandatory Council registration

Members are aware that Social Workers and CYCWs need to be registered with the Council for them to practice. Upon realising that not all of them were registered, the employer had individual engagement with affected employees where most, especially Social Workers, were restored. Unfortunately, some CYCWs could not be registered as the Council was adamant that no one will be registered without the necessary certificates and should not be used as CYCWs as it is against the policy framework. However, the Department cannot afford to move them from their current positions as they were hired as CYCWs. It was also picked up that the Council and Department reports were not talking to each other, and it was apparent that the Council information is not updated.

Review: Organisational Structure

Labour expressed dissatisfaction about the establishment of a task team that excluded labour pertaining to the review of the organisational structure. Labour demanded that the employer must do proper consultation with employees and allow labour to submit the names of representatives to be part of the task team to ensure inclusiveness of labour.

Status of Recruitment Plan: 2023/24

Provincial Treasury has allocated lesser budget to the Department than what the Department had costed, which excluded OSD benefits that create challenges for the Department. Subsequently, the Department addressed a letter to Treasury, alerting it of the inadequate budget - without success - as Treasury was adamant that there would be no additional budget and advised the Department to cut goods and services. This was not feasible, according to the Department. Treasury promised to provide the Department with some R35 million in October during budget adjustments, although it indicated that it would not fund filling of positions despite the high rate of vacancies in the Department. It is clear that the Department will suffer as it will not be able to render professional service without manpower.

Building and infrastructure

The employer reported that R5.5 million was allocated for refurbishment and upgrade of the infrastructure although there would not be erection of new buildings. It was noted that the amount was not enough, noting the high number of dilapidated buildings in the province.

2023/24 Annual Performance Plan (APP) and 2022/23 performance

The employer reported that the first-quarter report has demonstrated that programmes 2 to 4 have not done well and the employer is threatening consequence management. However, labour objected to the implementation of consequence management without proper investigation to determine the root cause of poor performance. Management agreed to conduct an investigation although it also indicated that all programmes, bar 5, have regressed although it went down in terms of percentage. The employer indicated that certain services will be discontinued, which will unfortunately affect members.

Members will be informed of developments.

Employees who wish to join the PSA can contact Lawrence Muvhango on 082 880 8995, Paulina Moloto on 082 880 8957 or the PSA Provincial Office on (015) 295 0500.

GENERAL MANAGER