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SERVICE EXCELLENCE

FOR PSA MEMBERS: **PUBLIC SERVICE COORDINATING BARGAINING COUNCIL (PSCBC)**

22-06-2023

Feedback: Special PSCBC meeting – 19 June 2023

Draft Minimum Service Level Agreement in Public Service: YOUR INPUTS ARE IMPORTANT!

What is a Minimum Service Level Agreement?

A Minimum Service Level Agreement is a collective agreement between an employer and employees associated with a trade union. The agreement outlines exactly which employees will be required to continue working in the event of industrial action, most notably in the health sector that is currently designated as an essential service. Should an agreement be concluded, it will stipulate particularly for departments that are engaged in essential services (e.g., Department of Health, Department of Correctional Services, etc.) which employees will be required to continue working to maintain services whilst the rest of these employees will be able to embark on industrial action.

In this respect, the employer tabled a draft Minimum Service Level Agreement at the special Council meeting on 19 June 2023. Section 72 of the *Labour Relations Act* provides for unions and the employer to negotiate and conclude a collective agreement that provides for the maintenance of a minimum service in designated essential services. In the tabled draft Agreement, the employer proposes that 80% of employees (warm bodies) may not participate in such industrial action and only 20% may actively participate. These proposed percentages will be converted into real numbers of warm bodies that may or may not participate in industrial action. The draft Agreement furthermore proposes that an essential service working group be established to monitor implementation of this agreement once it enjoys majority signature. Such working groups must be established at sectoral, district, and institutional levels, with clear terms of reference as per the draft Agreement.

Noting that the SA Police Service is excluded from this agreement, this will have to be addressed during the negotiation process.

Members are requested to study the *attached* document and provide inputs on which employees currently performing work in a sector designated as an essential service should be regarded as minimum service, making it crucial for them to continue working in the event of protected industrial action. Members should also provide inputs on whether employees who are currently prevented from embarking on industrial action owing to being deemed essential services, should be allowed to participate as service can continue without them.

Status report: Government Employees Housing Scheme (GEHS)

During the Council meeting, the General Secretary provided feedback, indicating that several issues related to the GEHS were discussed at the PSCBC Summit on Collective Bargaining from 28 to 31 March 2022. During the Summit, labour expressed concern with the slow implementation of the GEHS, which directly impacts the human dignity of public servants, and mandated the GEHS Committee to develop a GEHS roadmap and approach the Government Employees Pension Fund and the Public Investment Corporation (PIC) to conduct a feasibility study on a funding model for affordable, accessible housing products for public servants.

The GEHS Committee met on 23 May 2023 to consider the mandate from the Summit. A presentation was made by the employer, focusing on the housing allowance, the individual-linked savings facility, affordable housing, and the GEHS roadmap.

The GEPF reported that it conducted a benchmarking exercise to explore housing solutions by other pension funds in a similar situation. It also identified potentially viable solutions, which are still to be submitted to the Board for approval. It is expected to conclude all internal processes and provide feedback to the GEHS Committee in October 2023.

Numerous presentations were made to the GEHS Committee and feedback was provided to structures. Labour once again raised serious concerns about the slow progress and requested that the GEHS, amongst others, be prioritised as it is long overdue. Labour requested that GEHS issues be addressed at Council level as the GEHS task team did not yield the desired results. The employer, however, maintained that the task team is the best place to drive this process. The PSA will also table inputs on employees who resign from the service being able to access their savings and, more importantly, that the PIC used as vehicle for employees to access affordable home ownership and, in doing so, no single service provider should monopolise this service.

Members will be updated on developments.

GENERAL MANAGER