

FOR PSA MEMBERS: **SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL SECURITY AGENCY (SASSA) - WESTERN CAPE**

13-12-2023

Update: Regional Consultative Forum (RCF)

The following points were discussed with resolutions as follows:

Virtual meetings

The latest cost-containment measures issued by National Treasury have called on all parties to minimise expenses, where possible. Parties to the RCF agreed that all meetings will now be held virtually. Where necessary, an exception to the rule will apply, provided that the relevant party provides a motivation for consideration in support of its request.

Chief negotiator

Each party has the right to engage the Forum via its chief negotiator. Parties agreed that, for continuity in the flow of meetings, the alternative negotiator should always be a representative who has already been admitted as part of the Forum. The secretary must be provided with the names of these negotiators prior to any commencement of meetings.

Danger allowance

Parties agreed that we must be alive to the fact that incentivising staff to work in dangerous areas does not protect the team. Parties agreed to establish a task team, which comprises of one representative from each party. The purpose of the team will be to investigate: (a) whether there is there a need for a danger allowance in SASSA, (b) benchmarking SASSA against other organs of state in terms of policies and directives (see policies/directives), (c) what mechanisms those departments have put in place to protect staff in highly volatile areas, and (d) how it is quantified. The names of the representatives are to be submitted to the secretariat by 11 December 2023. Safety remains a priority.

Occupational health and safety (OHS)

The PSA tabled the non-compliance of SASSA contact points and requested measures to be put in place for the RCF to monitor compliance by offices, service points and pay points (SAPO Branches). The employer stated that SASSA has policy on 'Service Points (Counterpoints)', which are each linked to a local office. The employer agreed to provide labour with documents relating to the List of Service Points, Service Point Policy, Infrastructure Plan, and the Compliance Checklist. The concerns raised by the PSA will be addressed in detail by the OHS specialist at the next meeting.

Security

The employer deems the term security to speak to the issue of 'access-control'. It was agreed that where there is no security, service to the public cannot be rendered. The employer will provide labour with the *Standard Working Together Agreement* concluded with the relevant security company. A new security company is set to be contracted in 2024.

Filling of vacant posts

This issue of resignations *vis-à-vis* the filling of vacant and funded posts is not balancing. Recent cost-containment measures introduced by National Treasury have aggravated the matter further. The filling of critical posts as well as transfer applications are now to be decided by the CPC for approval before the CEO decides. The employer indicated that Service Points will have to be closed if vacant posts are not filled. The matter remains on the agenda and be closely monitored.

Acting in posts

The PSA requested clarity from the employer regarding the process followed to appoint staff to act in posts. The employer indicated that the Staffing Policy is applicable, and that staff cannot be appointed to act in a post unless it is vacant and funded, the employee has agreed to act in the post, and that it has been signed off by the relevant executive authority. Any deviation from the said policy or irregularities in the appointment process must be reported to the HCM: Provision and Maintenance for intervention. Members are encouraged to inform their shop stewards should they become aware of any irregularities.

Shop steward leave (*Oracle*)

The employer acknowledged its error of shop steward leave not being captured on the *Oracle* system. It requested labour to provide it with the list of shop stewards' names along with their period of appointment. These letters must urgently be submitted to HCM: Maintenance and Provision. The letter of appointment must stipulate the start and end date. If there is no fixed date stipulated on the appointment letter, the union must submit an appointment letter annually to the employer. However, if the fixed period is stipulated on the initial appointment letter, there is no need to submit an annual update. For future reference, all appointment letters must be submitted to both Labour Relations and the local office manager.

Pay progression 2022/23

Payments will run on 15 December 2023.

Remote working policy

HCM will do a presentation of the policy in the next meeting, after which all concerns raised by the PSA will be addressed.

Relocation of SASSA regional office

The employer informed labour that a tender had gone out. The employer will provide an update as the process unfolds.

The next meeting is scheduled to be held virtually on 28 March 2024.

Reuben Maleka

GENERAL MANAGER