

# Directive 8-1

## **Decision-Making Standards Related to HR Entitlements and Services offered by the Public Service to its Employees**

Issued on 6th April 2017 by the Principal Permanent Secretary in terms of the Public Administration Act.

### **1. Applicability**

1.1 This Directive repeals and re-issues with amendments the one originally issued on 16th October 2014. It applies to the Public Service, that is, all Ministries and, Departments of Government as defined by the Constitution or the Public Administration Act (Second Schedule).

1.2 The timeframes within which information, guidance and decisions in respect of the various entitlements and services are to be provided have been reviewed as outlined in Annex I.

1.3 This Directive sets up a new procedure to assist public officers in presenting representations for redress. The Grievance Redress Procedure is being outlined in Annex II.

1.4 Unless otherwise defined, the provisions of this Directive shall come into force on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2017.

### **2. Objectives**

2.1 Following on recent HR policy developments, including more delegation of HR processes, a simplified version of the PSMC and relative HR Manuals, Directive 8 was reviewed in order to reflect these changes. As evident in the nomenclature of the newly established People and Standards Division (P & SD) at OPM the importance of the need for continuous improvement in the quality of services provided by the Public Service to the general public as well as to its employees, cannot be emphasised enough. In this context, this Directive is complementary to the provisions of Directive 4-1 – Standards for Service of Excellence offered by the Public Administration to the Public and to Public Employees.

2.2 This Directive works to instil in all operators involved, the importance of sustaining a high level of commitment to quality standards in the delivery of entitlements and services by the Public Service to its internal clients that is the employees themselves. This Directive streamlines the business process workflow by setting maximum timeframes within which information, guidance and decisions on entitlements and services are to be provided; it defines the mechanisms and structures by which adherence to these standards is ensured; it upholds the principle of approval by default in cases where the expected timeframes have not

been respected, and describes the redress procedure for clients who seek a reconsideration of their request.

### **3. Implementation**

3.1 Requests submitted by Public Officers for information/guidance or applicable entitlements or services shall be regulated by the timeframes outlined at Annex I. When such requests for assistance are submitted in writing, it is the responsibility of the employee to include all details and relevant documents required for an informed and expeditious decision to be taken. In turn, it is the responsibility of the receiving office to ensure that such details and documents are included, and that the received application is compliant with the current rules of procedure. The timeframes applicable to the request are effective as of the date of receipt of a complete submission.

3.2 Each request for information or guidance is to be checked and acknowledged within twenty four (24) hours from the time it is received. Acknowledgements shall include the following details:

- i. What is being acknowledged as received and from whom;
- ii. The reference number of the correspondence;
- iii. The contact details to be used by the employee for possible follow-up purposes.

3.3 In the case of queries that require a response that goes beyond the timeframes stipulated at Annex I, an interim reply should be sent to the employee stating a date by which the employee will be given a definitive reply. This interim reply shall also include the following details:

- i. The reference number of the correspondence;
- ii. The relevant case details;
- iii. The reason/s why the timeframes cannot be met;
- iv. The contact details to be used by the employee for possible follow-up purposes;
- v. That the query/request is being prioritised with a view to an early conclusion.

## **4 Establishment of the Grievance Help Desk**

4.1 A Grievance Help Desk (GHD) shall be established within the People, Support and Wellbeing Directorate at the People and Standards Division (P & SD) at OPM in order to afford a readily accessible and effective port of call for aggrieved Public Officers. It replaces the Central Employee Relations Unit and the Ministry Employee Relations Officers as established by the original version of Directive 8. Public Officers who are not satisfied with a decision in response to their request for an entitlement or service, or allege non-compliance with this Directive, and seek the assistance of the Grievance Help Desk, will be afforded an independent review of their specific case, and provided with the necessary redress. Such Grievance Redress Procedure is outlined at Annex II of this Directive.

## **5. Effectiveness**

5.1 Permanent Secretaries, Directors General and Heads of Department shall bring this Directive to the attention of all staff.

5.2 Failure to abide by this Directive is to be regarded as grounds for disciplinary proceedings.

5.3 This Directive applies indefinitely unless specifically revoked or amended by the Office of the Principal Permanent Secretary.

Mario Cutajar

Principal Permanent Secretary

Attached

[Annex I: Standards of Procedure for Public Service Employees' Entitlements and Services.](#)

[Annex II: Grievance Redress Procedure.](#)