



ANALYSIS OF THE ETHICS SURVEY: OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

2018

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1. Purpose

In compliance with the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), 1999, the Treasury Regulations, and the Public Service Regulations (PSR), 2016 the Office of the Public Service Commission (OPSC) has developed an Anti-Corruption Fraud Prevention Plan. The Plan was adopted by the Audit Committee and Accounting Officer in March 2017.

PSR Chapter 2, Part 1, paragraph 22 provides that a head of department shall, amongst others analyse ethics and corruption risks as part of the department's system of risk management. In addition, the Minimum Anti-Corruption Capacity Requirements requires the Office to conduct an ethics and corruption risk survey.

In line with these requirements, the Office conducted an Ethics and Corruption Risk survey. Through this survey, the Office measured employees' perceptions of ethics, conduct of employees and risk areas in order to identify areas for improvement.

Where possible, data from the previous surveys will be used in the analysis for triangulation purposes.

2. The questionnaire

The survey questionnaire consisted of 24 questions. It was placed on the PSC Intranet for electronic completion by 30 November 2018. All employees were invited via e-mail to participate in the survey. A follow up email was sent as a reminder to all employees to participate in the survey.

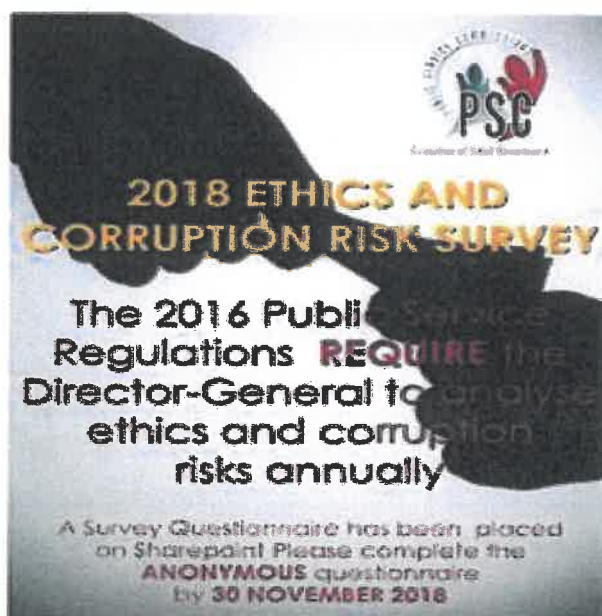


Figure 1: Link to Survey on Intranet

The survey was anonymous and employees were not required to provide their name or any identifying details. The purpose of the survey is also not to identify perpetrators, but to identify ethics and corruption risks. Employees were requested to provide comments at the end of the survey, so as to enable the Office to elicit further information.

3. Respondent profile

A total of 48 (18.9%) out of 254 employees participated in the survey. This represents a decrease of 29% in responses compared to the 2017 survey. Figure 2 reflects the percentage of participation nationally and across the provinces. The majority of the respondents were from the national office with both Mpumalanga and Northern Cape not having participated in the survey.

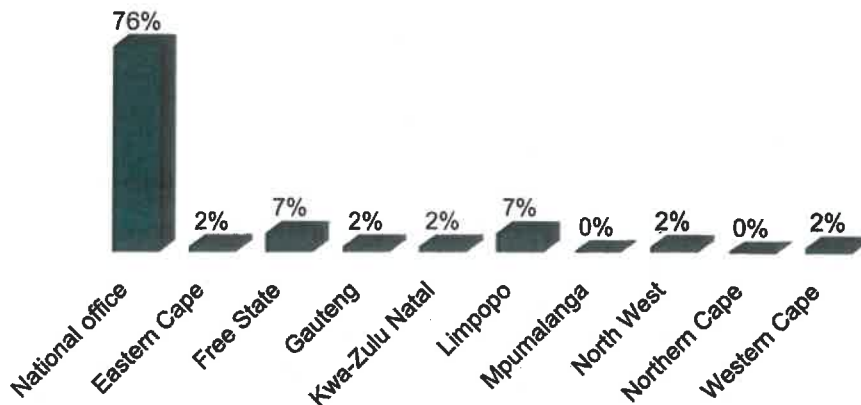


Figure 2: Respondents that completed the survey

4. Analysis

4.1 Questions were posed on the following topics:

4.1.1 General Ethical Conduct

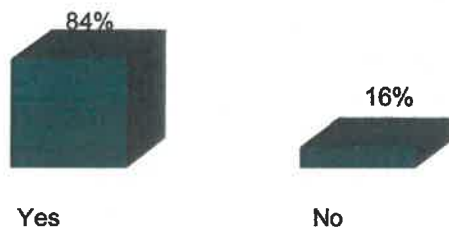


Figure 3: Responses to Awareness of the Code of Conduct, Disciplinary Code and Grievance Procedure

In respect of awareness, all respondents indicated that they are aware of the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Code and Grievance Procedure, with 84% indicating that they are fully aware and 16% stating that they are somewhat aware. In terms of knowledge of the Public Service Regulations 2016, 89% of respondents indicated that they have read and have an understanding of it, whilst 11% have not read it the Regulations.

Although 84% of respondents have indicated that the PSC has sufficient ethics awareness campaigns such as the Code of Conduct and CVP workshops, a total of 70% of respondents were of the view that the OPSC should do more to promote ethical conduct in the workplace. A positive finding is that all the respondents to the survey indicated that they know exactly what is expected of them in terms of ethical behaviour. However, 77% of respondents indicated that they are not comfortable in approaching superiors with ethical matters/concerns. In respect of ethics training, 55% of staff were of the view that new

employees actually receive ethics training, whilst 45% were not in agreement that training is conducted. 78% of respondents were aware that the OPSC has an Ethics and Risk Management Committee.

4.1.2Management

In terms of management, 68% agreed that OPSC leaders set a good example of honest and responsible behaviour and 54% felt that “From the top down, the OPSC is run with honesty, integrity and respect for others”.

4.1.3Recruitment and Vetting of staff

76% of respondents are of the view that the PSC ensures that proper recruitment processes are followed while 24% disagreed. 25% of staff indicated that they are aware of nepotism or favouritism in appointments at the OPSC.

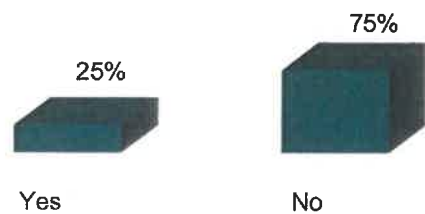


Figure 4: Responses to Nepotism and Favoritism

4.1.4Protected Disclosures

83% of staff indicated that vetting of employees should take place at random.

4.1.5Conflict of Interest

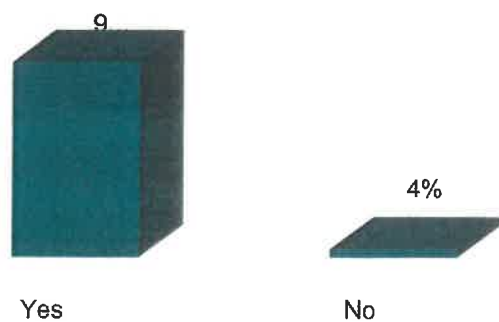


Figure 5: Responses on Conflict of Interest

In respect of conflict of interest, 96% of employees have indicated that they do declare a conflict of interest and 4% have indicated that they do not declare a conflict of interest.

4.1.6Gifts and Entertainment

78% of respondents agreed that if an OPSC service provider had invited them to a fancy lunch, and that if they accepted the invitation without informing anyone of this, that this would constitute a conflict of

interest. 91% of respondents are aware of the Gift Register and the threshold for receiving gifts, with 9% not being aware.

4.1.7 Harassment and Discrimination

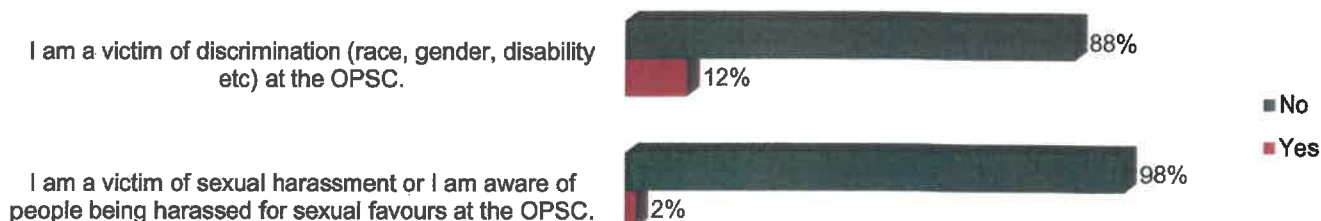


Figure 6: Responses on Harassment and Discrimination

A disconcerting finding is that 2% of employees have indicated that they either are a victim of sexual harassment or were aware of people being harassed for sexual favours at the OPSC. Furthermore, 12% of respondents claimed to be a victim of discrimination (race, gender, disability etc) at the OPSC. 0% employees indicated a response of "I don't know".

5. Additional remarks

Some of the employees have opted to include the following additional comments which require the attention of management:

- 5.1 OPSC is nowhere near upholding the constitutional values and principles and it's going to be interesting as to who will actually evaluate the OPSC to check if it is upholding the values and principles. The "rule by fear" is the order of the day and this results in a compliant driven workforce and not an effective, impact driven workforce.
- 5.2 The Code of Conduct is just but a document to be workshopped just for MPAT compliance not to actually implement it. The Grievance Rules are not complied with but expectations to assist employees from outside the OPSC is very high. Access to information is a non-existent situation, which means contravening the rules, and unethical conduct.
- 5.3 There is a huge need to improve, and for the organisation to do an introspection as far as CVPs are concerned and find ways to let the organisation be also evaluated. It would be interesting to get the report on the responses provided for the High Standard of Professional Ethics indicators. Charity must begin at home.
- 5.4 The OPSC is the Champion of professional ethics. It is expected of staff to carry such a mandate but it is not happening. Confidentiality is not maintained. Confidential information always leaks.
- 5.5 I see some senior employees spending hours at a time not working, but talking behind closed doors. I see many employees not adhering to official working hours, as in arriving late and leaving early. Employees shout and talk loudly as though they are in a park. Certain employees are ill-disciplined and get away with this behaviour because either their supervisor neglects to discipline them, or the perception is created that they are protected. There is definitely subtle biasness observed.

6. Conclusion

There has been a limited response to the survey, with the majority of respondents being from the National Office. Provinces appear to have an indifferent view to providing responses which makes it difficult to glean the temperament. The general level of indifference at both the national and provincial level is a cause for concern and may itself be an indicator of how employees feel about the organisation's efforts and seriousness towards ethical behaviour in the workplace.

A further area of concern is that some employees indicated that they were either aware or experienced some form of discrimination at the workplace. This is a matter must be taken very seriously and should be urgently addressed especially given that 77% of the respondents indicated that they did not feel comfortable in approaching superiors about ethical matters/concerns.

However, the responses have shown that employees are aware of the various measures in place to educate, train and create awareness as well as the available platforms for the reporting of any incidents.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 The D: HRMD should conduct refresher training on Human Resource policies and practices on an annual basis and provide practical examples to ensure an understanding of the same.
- 7.2 The D: HRMD should facilitate a workshop on sexual harassment and discrimination on the basis of race, gender and disability, with emphasis on the safety of the whistleblowing mechanisms to ensure trust by employees.
- 7.3 Branch Heads should facilitate workshops on the 2016 Public Service Regulations by no later than 30 April 2019.
- 7.4 Branch Heads should put mechanisms in place to monitor compliance with the official hours of attendance.
- 7.5 Allegations of a breach of confidentiality should be reported through the Whistleblowing Guidelines to ensure that appropriate action is taken.