



NHLS UPDATE BULLETIN – SIGNED WAGE AGREEMENT

MAY 2024

Introduction

Comrades, this bulletin serves as an update on the conclusion of the wage negotiations with a signed one year wage agreement between National Health Laboratory Service [NHLS] as an employer and the national union [NEHAWU].

The annual wage negotiations at NHLS concluded on 30 April 2024 and the wage agreement enjoyed majority signatures on the 07th May 2023.

This bulletin therefore presents the signed agreement of between NEHAWU and NHLS as follows:

Annual salary increase

Parties agreed that the salary increase for the financial year 2024/25 will be 7% across the board, for all employees in the bargaining unit.

Medical Aid Subsidy

Parties agreed that the Medical Aid subsidy will also increase by the same percentage increase of 7 %.

Living allowance

Parties agreed that the Living Allowance will also increase by the same percentage of 7 %.

Other allowances

Parties agreed that all other allowances affected by the percentage increase in this agreement will be effected simultaneously with the salary increase.

Tax on Bonus

Parties agreed to introduce a monthly tax on 13th cheque to relieve the lump sum tax upon payment of the 13th cheque. The employee will have a choice to structure their tax on bonus in order to diminish the impact of the lump sum.

The implementation is subject to oracle readiness.

The option will only be available once a year prior to the beginning of the new financial year.

Long Service Awards

Parties agreed that the long service awards will be adjusted and the revised amounts will not be increased with the same percentage as Cost of living Adjustment as it was done previously. The adjustment of leave days after 10 years of service remains the same. The Long Service awards will increase as follows:



10 years - R5 000
15 years - R 10 000
20 years - R 12 500
25 years - R 15 000
30 years - R 20 000
35 years - R 25 000
40 years - R 30 000

Bursary Scheme for Children of Employees

Parties agreed to explore the introduction of a bursary Scheme for children of NHLS employees. This process will be implemented through the BLRF by establishing a Technical Steering Committee (TSC) comprised of representatives from both NEHAWU and the employer with clear terms of reference. The TSC will engage with other stakeholders to solicit funding for the scheme and finalise the establishment of the scheme before the end of 2024/25 financial year.

Post-Retirement Medical Aid benefits

Parties agreed to defer the engagements related to the Post-retirement medical aid benefit to the BLRF. The BLRF will make an assessment on the best practices related to this benefit and finalize this work by 31 December 2024.

Insourcing of Courier Drivers

Parties agreed to conduct an investigation on the feasibility of potentially insourcing courier drivers. This investigation will be conducted by an external service provider with clear terms of reference agreed to by both parties and will be conducted between 01 April 2024 and 31 March 2025. The outcome of this investigation will be tabled at the BLRF to determine the feasibility of insourcing courier drivers.

Amendment of the Rural Allowance agreement to accommodate excluded rural areas.

Parties agreed to amend the Rural Allowance agreement to incorporate excluded rural areas. The list of rural areas will be aligned with the areas listed on the Department of Health agreement. This amendment process should be concluded before the end of May 2024 for implementation by end of June 2024 prospectively. The parties agreed that the payment of the allowance will be exclusively linked to the areas listed. Such payment will cease in the event of the areas being excluded from the list.

Criteria for Eligibility

All employees who were in service by 31 March 2024 and actively employed on the date of



implementing the agreement will qualify for the salary increase.

All other employees who were appointed after 01 April 2024 will receive salary increases on a pro rata basis.

Pay scale adjustment

Parties further agreed that the NHLS pay scale will be adjusted with the same percentage increase agreed above.

Grant funded positions

Employees occupying these positions will only be adjusted if the grantors have agreed and confirmed the availability of funds.

Previous settlement agreements

The agreement does not nullify previous substantive agreements, except where explicitly specified.

Dispute resolution

If there is a dispute about the interpretation or application of the agreement any party may refer the matter to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) after subjecting the dispute to the Bargaining and Labour Relations Forum (BLRF) for a dispute resolution meeting.

Implementation of this agreement

The implementation of the agreement shall come into effect once it enjoys respective signatures.

The implementation of the agreement shall be monitored by the BLRF.

END

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