**7. OVERSIGHT REPORT: THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION AS WELL AS MONITORING AND EVALUATION OVERSIGHT SITE VISITS TO THE FREE STATE PROVINCE FROM 26-30 JUNE 2017, DATED 18 OCTOBER 2017**

The Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration as well as Planning Monitoring and Evaluation (hereinafter referred as the Committee), having undertaken an oversight visit to the Office of Premier in Free State province to discuss the state of the province with regard to the Management Performance Assessment Tools (MPAT), Service Delivery Improvement Plans (SDIPs) and the Thusong Service Centres, the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) programmes and Frontline Service Delivery facilities (unannounced visits in hospitals and Home Affairs). The Public Service Commission enlightened the Committee on the state of the public service in the province, report as follows:

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Parliament derives its powers from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. In terms of the Constitution, Parliament is constitutionally responsible to exercise oversight over the Executive Authority. Section 42(3) bestows oversight of executive function to the National Assembly. One of the functions of oversight listed in the Oversight and Accountability model is to ensure that policies developed by government and authorised by Parliament are actually delivered. This function includes monitoring the achievement of goals set out by legislation and the government’s own programmes.

The Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration as well as Monitoring and Evaluation has a transversal role and responsibility to oversee the entire public administration and monitors the norms and standards set out in the public service. The Committee oversees core strategic departments responsible for the effective functioning of the public service which are the Department of Public Service and Administration, Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Statistics South Africa and Chapter 10 institutions, the Public Service Commission.

The theme for the oversight visit is “*Ensuring* *back to basics by entrenching a culture of Batho Pele principles and Professionalising the Public Service*”.

1. **OBJECTIVES OF THE OVERSIGHT**

The objectives of the oversight visit are as follows:

* To appraise the State of the public administration using the provincial Management Performance Assessment Tool and Service Delivery Improvement Plans;
* To determine the state of the Thusong Service Centres in the province. Assess range of services offered, success and challenges experienced. Ensure intergovernmental relations and collaborations in the centres;
* Assess working conditions of the Frontline service delivery officials and ensure compliance with regard to Batho Pele principles;
* Strengthen the quality of service delivery through monitoring the effectiveness of the queue management and waiting times, signage, safety, cleanliness, dignified treatment and complaints management;
* Monitor a range of services offered by the National Youth Development Agency branch offices to the youth in the province.

1. **COMPOSITION OF THE DELEGATION**

**The composition of the delegation was as follows:**

Dr MB Khoza (Chairperson) MP ANC

Ms RMM Lesoma (Whip) MP ANC

Mr MLD Ntombela MP ANC

Ms Z Jongbloed MP DA

Mr Y Cassim MP DA

Ms MP Mokause MP EFF

**Parliamentary Support Staff represented by:**

Mr M Zibeko Acting Committee Secretary

Mr F Bulawa Committee Assistant

Mr J Ngoepe Content Advisor

Mr M Biyela Researcher

Mr Malatswa Molepo Communication Officer

**Department of Public Service and Administration**

***DPSA team***: Ms Venonica Motalane: Service Delivery, Ms U Mongezi: ASD, Ms S Hlazo: Parliamentary Liaison Officer, Ms V Mafana: Parliamentary Liaison Officer, Mr M Seopela: Director: Frontline & Thusong Service Centre, Mr A Ngwandula: Deputy Director Service Delivery improvement, Mr B Morule: Director DPSA,

**Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation**

***DPME team*:** Neeta Behari, Tshekiso Sebati, Nosipho Mjekula, Khanyisile Cele

**Free State: Public Service Commission**

***PSC team*:** CommissionerMrBoshoff,Provincial DirectorMs Boitumelo Mogwe

**Free State Province representation:**

**FS Team**: Ms RS Malope: HOD Sport, Arts, Culture & Recreation, Mr M.H. Thabetha: HOD Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr G. Mahlatsi: HOD Provincial Treasury, Dr D Motau: HOD Provincial Dept. of Health, Dr J Sekolanyane: CFO Provincial Dept. of Education, Ms H. Kekana: DDG in the Premier Office, Mr T Moremi: HOD (DESTEA), Mr L Mekoa: DD (DSACR), Ms J. Matsau: Botshabelo Thusong Centre Manager, Ms M. Molaoa: Thusong Service Centre Assistant Director, Mr T. Tau: SARS - Customs, Ms N Motete: SARS – Customs, Mr T Kraai: OPS Manager, Ms L Shabangu: Control Immigration Officer, Col. K.J. Maleke: Provincial Commander, Mr PM Tshabalala: Acting Linit Commander, Mr T.J. Mosia: Ward Councillor, Mr D Jentu: Ward Councillor, Mr N Speelman: Executive Mayor, Mr JM Radebe: Bongani Regional Head of Nursing, Dr E. Radebe: Bongani Regional Clinical Manager, Mr E Selloane: Bongani Regional (P.S.A Union), Ms Ms SR Noge: Acting Chief Executive Officer.

1. **OVERVIEW AND INTERACTIONS OF THE OVERSIGHT VISIT**

**4.1 Meeting with the Office of the Premier: Bloemfontein**

The Director-General (Mr K Ralikontsane) in the Office of the Premier welcomed the delegation of the Portfolio Committee in the Free State Province. The Chairperson of the Committee (Dr Khoza) officially opened the meeting, noted remarks by the Head of Department in the Office of the Premier and welcomed all departments present.

The purpose of the oversight visit in Free State province was to allow the Office of the Premier to enlighten the Committee about the quality of the provincial Management Performance Assessment Tool, provide status of the SDIPs and the Thusong Service Centres. Further allowed the Public Service Commission to provide the state of the provincial Public Service in promoting the values and principles of the public administration, report on improvement plan of Section 100 of the Constitution and current administrative challenges impacting service delivery.

The Committee held its first meeting with the representatives from the following: Office of the Premier and Heads of provincial departments, Public Service Commission, the Department of Public Service and Administration and the Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation.

The Office of the Premier made three presentations on the Management Performance Assessment Tool, Service Delivery Improvements Plans (SDIPs) and Thusong Service Centres. The purpose of the presentations was to enlighten the Committee about the quality of the management in the provincial departments. Moreover provide the status quo of the SDIP’s and Thusong Service Centres in the province. The Chairperson of the Committee alluded that the remaining three days of the week, the Committee will be conducting an inspection in loco to selected service delivery centres to oversee the status of the facilities in changing the lives of the citizens.

**4.1.1** **Management Performance Assessment Tool**

The Management Performance Assessment Tool is a mechanism used to improve management practices to assist the government in addressing system deficiencies impact of poor service delivery. The MPAT process allows senior management of the departments to conduct a self-assessment against a range of management standards. It's important to note that the MPAT does not duplicate existing monitoring and oversight by other departments and in fact, it draws on secondary data from these entities to review the self-assessments of departments.

The MPAT does not include assessment of the results on policies and programmes, which is done through other mechanisms, including the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the delivery agreements for the priority outcomes. Management performance assessment involves assessing the quality of these management practices. In addition, contributes to improve government performance and service delivery by developing a culture of continuous improvement through moderated self-assessment and sharing of good practices.

The National Development Plan (NDP) identifies the need to build a professional public service and capable developmental state. The MPAT exercise should serve to promote the values and principles of public administration as enshrined in chapter 10 of the Constitution. Assessment results must continuously ensure public service is developmental-oriented, transparent and accountable. MPAT results should be correlated with service delivery in the respective departments.

The MPAT assesses key management practices which enable government institutions to deliver on their mandate across four performance areas which are Strategic Management, Governance and Accountability, Human Resource Management and Financial Management. The MPAT results illustrate trends in departmental performance over the years in terms of 31 standards in 17 management performance areas. Trend analysis provides a true reflection of the performance on the quality of management in every department.

Management Performance Assessment Tool is basically based on the theory of change that indicate that if departments adhere to basic legislation/frameworks/policies and continuously learn, this has a positive impact on management practices thereby creating an enabling environment for delivery of services. The MPAT was analysed using various relevant sources of information such as the Annual Reports, Annual Performance Plans and PERSAL. The province had twelve (12) provincial departments.

The Strategic Management key performance areas are essentially based on the current framework for strategic plans and annual performance plans. The standards herein assess the extent to which the strategic plans and annual performance plans are aligned to the Medium Term Strategic Framework. In terms of the overall findings of the MPAT results, the province is performing well and improved with regard to the strategic management. The MPAT results indicate that province achieved 92% in 2015/16 in terms of strategic management as compared to 83% in 2014/2015. Provincial departments are performing beyond compliance levels as per the MPAT scores.

Having achieved 92% of the strategic management, the provincial departments are performing well with regards to the annual performance plans (2016/17). The province achieved 58% beyond compliant and 17% fully compliant. The results demonstrate that more departments are taking due consideration of their strategic plans when compiling the annual performance plans. The percentage of the annual performance plans clearly indicate alignment with the strategic plans in the departments. This achievement shows and demonstrate that strategic plans are used as management tools and as a reflection to ensure departments remain on the right trajectory in the planning cycle.

The 2015/16 MPAT results indicate that 92% of the provincial departments are compliant in terms of utilising M&E information to inform performance improvement in strategic management. The province achieved 63% in integration of performance monitoring and strategic management. The departments which were performing below expected level was a Departments of Social Development and Police, Roads & Transport. Only 17% of all departments are in compliance with regard to capacity, organisation and implementation of evaluations that inform programme/policy/plans or system design. The remaining 83% of the provincial departments are experiencing compliance challenges in this area.

The majority of the provincial departments are not complying in terms of capacity, organisation and implementation of guidelines for the planning of implementation programmes. The Department of Agriculture is fully compliant with the standard. It was elaborated that non-performance on the standard was as a result of the fact that the planning of Implementation Programmes also formed part of the new standards included for pilot purposes under KPA 1 and contributed to the poor performance in the province.

The National Development Plan highlights the importance of a professional and accountable service culture. The MPAT Key Performance Area 2: Governance & Accountability assess ten areas which reinforces good governance, promote accountability and strengthening of internal controls in public administration. Weak accountability systems and poor consequence management in government underpin the challenges in service delivery whilst good governance and accountability lead to an improved delivery service. Building a capable and developmental public service requires a more responsible and accountable leadership which promotes operational efficiency and effectiveness whilst encouraging adherence to manage policies.

In terms of the Service Delivery Improvement Mechanisms, the provincial departments compliant at a 58% rate as compared to 42% rate of departments that do not adhere to the requirements and approved service delivery charters, standards and service delivery improvement plans to enhance public services. Non-compliance with Service Delivery Improvement Mechanisms is a cause of concern as service delivery is at the centre of the strategic agenda of the government. Office of Premier notes significant improvement in the compliance levels of the provincial departments from 8% compliance in 2012/13 to 58% in 2015/16 MPAT assessment cycles. In some instances, the SDIP’s were submitted very late and not compiled according to the DPSA format. The Committee noted that much was not reported on whether the Accounting Officers and Member of the Executive Council have signed or approved SDIP’s in their respective departments.

It is a regulatory requirement for the Provincial Departments to regularly consult both the internal and external clients on service standards during the development of SDIPs as the recipients of government services in order to ensure quality and delivery of the required services to the stakeholders. Among the challenges confronting the provincial department was insufficient evidence regarding the development of SDIP’s and only attendance registers were uploaded and not the agenda or proof of discussions relating to service delivery improvements. Lack of effective monitoring in ensuring compliance with legislative requirements was identified.

Some departments have not approved service charters, service standards or proof that consultations with service recipients are conducted. The lack of display of service charter at the service delivery points appeared to be one of the areas of concerns. Provincial department is doing exceptionally well with regard to the functioning and effectiveness of management structures. The provincial departments performed beyond compliance with regard to accountability mechanisms (Audit Committee).

In light of the compliance levels on policies and system to ensure professional ethics, the provincial departments are meeting the standards. There was a progressive improvement in the compliance levels in this area. However, Financial Management Disclosure forms were not submitted by all Senior Managers to the Public Service Commission before the end of 31 May annually. It was also revealed that there is a lack of engagement with and follow-ups from the departmental financial disclosure report by the Ethics Officers.

The Ethics Officers referred back financial disclosure forms to the concerned officials where there was disagreement regarding certain statements. Officials who are not complying with financial disclosure, government departments have to ensure necessary measures are taken against them. In certain instance, departments do not provide records on the disciplinary measures taken against the non-compliant with financial disclosure. The MPAT results showed discrepancies between the e-disclosure reports in relation to the department disclosure reports signed by the Member of the Executive Council.

With regard to the compliance levels in fraud prevention in the provincial departments, 67% performed beyond compliance in terms of the measures and the requisite capacity to prevent and combat fraud. The remaining provincial departments are partially compliant (16%) and 17% are complaining with basic legal/regulatory requirements. Reasons for non-compliance cited are lack of approved Fraud Risk Management policy to manage fraud activities, inadequate review of Fraud Prevention and Risk Assessment policies resulting in inconsistent application.

The provincial departments are compliant in terms of Risk Management arrangements. It has been noted that there is a progressive improvement in the compliance levels of the provincial departments in relation to the previous assessment cycle. Non-compliant departments were as a result of submission of irrelevant evidence in relation to risk management functions. The MPAT assessment results indicate 100% compliant with regard to the standards for Promotion to Access to Information (PAIA). Generally, out of 12 provincial departments, only one department (Education) was regressing in terms of governance and accountability key performance area. Overall the province performed above average in relations to governance and accountability, meaning there are sound internal control mechanism system.

Human Resource Management (HRM) is primarily concerned with how people are managed within organisations, focusing on the plans, policies and systems which maximise performance to achieve strategic objectives. The quality of HRM has a significant influence on the overall performance of an organisation and its ability to deliver services. A major portion of departmental budgets is spent on human resources and effective planning for workforce needs as well as aligning skills, roles and responsibilities to departmental objectives is essential to ensure value for the investment.

Compliance with respect to the Human Resource Management KPA is monitored through 11 standards clustered in four key areas: HR strategy and planning, HR resource practices and administration, performance management, and employee relations. These standards are strongly interrelated and one impacts on another. There are 11 standards in the HR KPA which are Human Resource Planning, Organisational Design and Implementation, Human Resource Development, Recruitment, Management of Diversity, Employee Health and Wellness, PSA and PSR Delegations, PMDS HOD and Management of Disciplinary cases.

Human Resource Management in most government departments across the public service remain the poorest key performance area. The provincial departments are in compliance with the Human Resource Planning requirements. However, some provincial departments submitted their MTEF HR Plans to the Department of Public Service and Administration after the due date. In terms of the Organisational Design and Implementation, the provincial departments are not compliant with these standards performing at a partial compliance and only 8% departments’ complaint with basic legal/regulatory requirement level.

Provincial departments need to ensure personnel are recruited according to their skills, knowledge and experience to ensure effective performance in the public service. all department need to have retention strategy especially on the scarce skills. A successful departments recruit the right people timeously, deploy them appropriately and value performance. In assessing compliance levels on application of Recruitment and Retention Practices, the provincial departments were in compliance in these areas. There are a number of challenges highlighted hindering compliance level, such as non-submission of complete exit interview templates, absence or inadequate analysis reports on exit interviews and insufficient evidence reflecting management discussions on the employee satisfaction report.

The Human Resource Management standard covers how Executive Authority (Member of the Executive Council) delegate decision making authority for their PSA powers to various levels in their departments. The standard requires that the delegated functions are clear, with conditions and be signed off on each assigned delegation to minimise the risks. Departments must have appropriate delegations in place so that they can operate efficiently and in compliance with the Public Service Act and Public Service Regulations. The DPSA issued a framework to guide departments in their delegations.

The provincial departments are fully in compliance with the delegations in terms of the PSA. Over 67% of the provincial departments experience compliance challenges in this area. The following highlights some of the key factors attributed to the compliance challenges in this standard which are among is delegation as developed by some departments are not according to the prescribed format. In some cases, not all pages of the delegation document are initialled and some delegation do not conform with the latest amendments to the PSA and Public Service Regulations (PSR).

Provincial departments are in compliance with the standards in terms of the implementation of the Performance Development Management Systems. A drastic decrease on the performance management compliance was noted as compared to the previous years. Factors contributed to the drastic decrease include inadequate or limited capturing of performance development plans for 2015/16 on the PERSAL system and the absence of evidence reflecting recognition of performance that exceeds expectations.

Discipline is one of the most critical aspects in labour relations. It is essential for effective service delivery to have a disciplined workforce. MPAT assesses whether departments manage disciplinary cases within the prescribed policies and ensure implementation of recommendations.

Of 12 provincial departments, 58% are performing beyond compliance level in respect to the Management of Disciplinary Cases. It was reported that some departments did not capture cases in the PERSAL system. The reality is that most departments do not have the capacity, the skills or the will to finalise cases in the stipulated 90 days. Cases are also not captured on PERSAL which also makes it difficult to monitor how departments handle disciplinary cases. The discipline also reckons with risk management. Good practice suggests that success is facilitated by analysing cases, identifying challenges and preventing transgressions.

The effective, efficient and economic use of public finances is essential for growth and development of the country. Financial Management deals with all aspects of resource mobilisation and expenditure management in government departments. Financial management processes involve the administration of funds used to deliver public services and includes the prioritisation of programmes, the budgetary process, efficient management of resources and exercising control.

The standard focuses on the requirements of Section 40 (4) of the PFMA for departments to submit cash flow projections to the National Treasury prior to the beginning of the financial year and reports of anticipated revenue and expenditure every month. Furthermore, it assesses whether departments have mechanisms in place to prevent under/over expenditure and spending spikes. In respect of the management of cash flow and expenditure vs budget, the province departments achieved overall 91% compliance level, whilst the remaining 9% of the departments are partially compliant.

Delays in the payment of suppliers have been a major source of concern for government, given the devastating impact on business, especially small and medium enterprises. Treasury instructions require departments to submit monthly exception reports on compliance with the 30-day requirement, and also require Accounting Officers to put in place the necessary processes to improve departmental compliance. The MPAT standard on the payment of suppliers refers to the timeous submission of exception reports and improvements in processing of invoices.

The MPAT results showed 33% of the provincial departments are in compliance with the payment of suppliers within the prescribed period of 30 days. Meaning the remaining 67% of the provincial departments are experiencing compliance challenges in this aspect. Factors hindering payment include non-submission of an invoice tracking system, late payment of suppliers and lack of action taken in cases where invoices were paid after 30 days. With regard to the compliance level of management of unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure, the provincial departments are at 92% in compliance with the standards. Only 8% of the provincial departments are non-compliant with the standards.

**4.1.2** **Service Delivery Improvement Plans**

The Office of the Premier was requested to present on the Service Delivery Improvement Plans in the province. The Public Service Regulations 2016, Chapter 3, Part Paragraph 38 states that “an Executive Authority shall establish and maintain a service delivery improvement plan aligned to the strategic plan”. The main intention of introducing the Service Delivery Improvement Plans (SDIPs) is to provide a mechanism for continuous, incremental improvement in service delivery. SDIPs provide the thrust for incremental improvement in service delivery within the broad context of Public Service transformation.

The SDIP aims to outline the key service(s) that the respective departments provide, identify current standards for the service (s), identify the service beneficiaries along with the key service (s) and identify two or three priority services for continuous improvement. The SDIPs are to be signed off by the Heads of Department (HOD) and Executive Authority (EA) and should be submitted to the Department of Public Service and Administration and hard copy in the prescribed SDIP format.

Provincial departments assess its performance annually to improve the quality of the SDIPs. The provincial departments are doing well in terms of submission rate as compared to the national departments. The provincial department achieved 92% of submission rate with regard to the SDIPs. However, the Department of Education had not submitted their SDIPs which prevented the province in achieving 100%. In terms of the adherence to the timeframes of the SDIPs, the provincial departments are improving as compared to the previous years.

The provincial departments have identified areas that need a serious intervention which are the following:

* The situational analysis that clearly identifies the critical service delivery areas that are linked up with the performance baseline and set quantity targets. Some identified areas are parachuted from nowhere and are not clearly linked up with the situation analysis.
* The M&E units are not effectively utilised to provide statistics throughout the diagnostic & the improvement process as both quality and quantity play a critical role in measuring improvement.
* It is also critical for departments to link the identified critical service areas with their applicable professional standards, legislation and Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) which are not aligned nor addressed in most cases.
* The extent to which departments comply with the applicable professional standards and legislation reduces the risk of uncertainty and increased litigations faced by government due to irregular practices that do not comply with the applicable legislation.
* It is also important for departments to integrate the SDIP process into the strategic planning process in order to avoid silo operations and separate planning. This approach will also help in developing integrated change management, communication, M&E and reporting plans.
* The location of this function in departments
* SDIPs were in some cases developed by one person. This compromises implementation, monitoring and reporting on SDIPs.
* The buy-in and support from top management on SDIP implementation, Monitoring and Reporting
* The membership of the Provincial SDIP forum remains a challenge. There is inconsistency in the officials representing various departments in this forum, which affects continuity.
* The submission of progress reports against the submitted SDIPs is still a challenge. This is attributed to insufficient resources allocations and lack of senior managers support towards SDIPs implementation, monitoring and reporting.

In addressing the challenges identified, there will be a review of the location of the SDIPs function both in the Office of the Premier and other provincial departments to ensure that it is placed in a strategic component that reports directly to the Heads of Department. Office of the Premier will facilitate the review of the composition of the provincial SDIPs forum. Heads of Department will be requested to nominate permanent members of the forum who must be on middle/senior management level. More workshop and training will be conducted during 2017 in collaboration with the DPSA to capacitate the provincial departments on SDIPs. Quality assurance sub-committee on the departmental SDIPs will be established to improve the quality of SDIPs and progress reports.

**4.1.3** **Thusong Service Centre**

The Constitution requires all spheres of government to provide effective, efficient, transparent, accountable and coherent government services to the citizens of South Africa to secure the well-being of the people and the progressive realisation of their constitutional rights. The Thusong Service Centre programme was initiated in 1999 to extend services of government, in an integrated manner, closer to outlying areas where people live. Primarily, the focus is on the rural and underserviced communities, with the aim of addressing the historical factors limiting citizens to access government services and information.

The first generation targeted one Thusong Service Centre in each district by December 2004. Whilst, the second generation targeted one Thusong Service Centre in each local municipality by 2014. The vision of the idea of the Thusong Service Centre is to provide every South Africa citizen with access to information and range of services within their place of residence and in one convenient location or cluster. The rationale behind TSC concept is to provide for one-stop integrated approach to service delivery in under serviced areas relevant to people’s needs and integrated use of government resources.

The Office of the Premier reported about the state of the Thusong Service Centre in the Free State Province. Thusong Service Centre Management Committees are not functioning optimally. The Office of the Premier will work with the DPSA and GCIS to provide the necessary capacity building for the TSCs structures including centre management committees. Centre Managers in the province are currently on salary level 7 (admin officer level) and they do not have the necessary management experience and skills to manage the centres and coordinate management meetings.

Office of the Premier had a meeting with the DPSA to request them to look into developing benchmark structures for the TSCs to review the salaries of the Centre Managers. The TSCs reports form part of the agenda of the Executive Council meetings and there is political buy-in and support for the programme. Thusong Service Centres make a crucial contribution to the expansion of infrastructure for access to information and services that citizens can use. Thusong Service Centres that are in operation in the Free State are as follows: Thaba Nchu and Botshabelo TSCs in Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality, Hertzogville in Tokologo Local Municipality, Namahadi in Maluti a Phofung Local Municipality, Trompsburg in Kopanong Local Municipality and Zastron inMohokare Local Municipality.

Office space is a common challenge facing most of the Thusong Service Centres across the country. Building maintenance remains a critical challenge, as most of the Thusong Service Centres do not have budget allocated to them directly. In some Thusong Service Centres such as Hetzogville, there are no telephone facilities and internet. Namahadi TSC had challenge of water provision which is the responsibility of the Maluti a Phofung Municipality. Branding of the TSCs is not visible and marketable to the citizens. Most of the centres in the province operate in leased private buildings and not fully functional with a few departments rendering services.

The following three Thusong Service Centres are no longer functional which are: Tseki in Qwaqwa, Frankfort and Winburg. Reason cited towards closure of these centres was lack of office space. During 2016, the Premier moved the function of the TSCs from Communications Unit to the Provincial Service Delivery Intervention Component which is under the Provincial Monitoring and Evaluation Branch. This was to ensure that programme focuses more on expanding and coordinating provision of government services and ensure the optimum provision of TSCs in the Free State. Furthermore, to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of the programme to ensure that objectives are met and the vision is achieved.

A number of issues were identified as being critical aspects to continue to be dealt in the second-generation roll-out and associated business plan. In response to these challenges, a number of recommendations were made and the key ones still not fully addressed which are as follows:

* Institutionalising the programme through legislation or policy
* Exploring innovative means to access funding and improve revenue related to Thusong Service Centres
* Developing the TSC financial model
* Improving design and infrastructure development to cater for service-provider and user needs in a more meaningful manner. Progress delayed mainly due to lack of funding
* Relocating government service-providers to Thusong Service Centres. This remains a challenge as there is no policy for the centres.

**4.1.4 Public Service Commission**

The Provincial Public Service Commission (PSC) was requested to brief the Committee on the state of the public service in monitoring the implementation of basic values and principles; and report on the service delivery inspection conducted in the province. The PSC derives its mandate from sections 195 and 196 of the Constitution, 1996, which sets out the values and principles governing public administration which should be promoted by the PSC.

The PSC is vested with custodial oversight responsibilities for the Public Service and must perform its functions in the interest of effective and efficient public administration and a high standard of professional ethics in the public service. The report provides an overview of the key trends and issues relating to public administration and service delivery that derive from the body of work of the PSC in the Free State Province.

The Grievance Rules, 2003, is one of the sets of prescripts that gives effect to the mandate of the PSC as provided in the Constitution, Section 196(4)(f)(ii), as well as the provisions of Section 35 of the Public Service Act, 1994. Both legislations provides the PSC with powers to investigate grievances of employees in the Public Service and make recommendations on appropriate remedies.

In 2016/17 a total of 460 grievances were lodged by employees in the Free State Province. This is a decrease from 527 grievances lodged in 2015/16. Only 14.35% of the grievances lodged in 2016/17 were finalised by Departments within the stipulated time-frame. The Department of Health reported the highest number of grievances with 221 (48%) grievances and only 7 (1.5%) grievances resolved. The most common nature of grievance reported related to salary problems (this includes S&T claims, upgrading, job evaluation, etc.), followed by grievances relating to alleged unfair treatment.

The PSC conducted a workshops for the Labour Relations officers regarding the PSC Rules in terms of the referrals and investigation of grievances of employees in the public service. A total of 36 cases were reported for 2016/17. The total amount of money involved in financial management cases in respect of the 2016/17 financial year was R1 390 507.93. Reports submitted by the Free State, provincial departments indicate that an amount of R144 852.71 was recovered from employees who were found guilty of financial misconduct and an amount of R514 313.42 (37%) was considered as no loss to the State, as the State did not suffer any loss.

Of the amount of money involved in financial misconduct cases, an amount of R731 341.80 (53%) was not recovered. Although employees were found guilty in 26 (72%) of the 36 cases reported, no criminal actions were instituted against any of the employees who were involved in financial misconduct. The financial misconduct cases are as follows:

The PSC may investigate complaints lodged with it and report to the Ministers and Members of the Executive Council. To give effect to this mandate, the PSC developed Rules for the lodging of complaints. In terms of the Rules, public servants and members of the public can lodge complaints by making use of a prescribed complaint form. In 2003, Cabinet decided to assign the PSC with the responsibility of establishing and managing the National Anti-Corruption Hotline (NACH).

The total number of complaints reported via the NACH during 2016/17 was 1855of which 58% of the complaints have been closed. Of the total number of NACH complainant,1.07% (20) of the total number of complaints lodged via the NACH emanated from the Free State Province. The most commonly reported types of complaints included social grant fraud, appointment irregularities, fraud and bribery, mismanagement of government funds and procurement irregularities.

The PSC seeks to promote a high standard of ethical conduct amongst public servants and to contribute to the prevention and combating of corruption in the Public Service. With regard to compliance with the Financial Disclosure Framework, the Free State Province achieved a submission rate of 100% by the due date of submission. In comparison to the previous reporting period of 2015/16, the province has maintained a submission rate of 100%. In the 2015/16 reporting period, 330 of the 364 SMS members in the province disclosed their financial interests via e-disclosure. The PSC has in partnership with the Office of the Premier conducted a workshop on Financial Disclosure for non-SMS members and a total of 1126 employees have been capacitated on the financial disclosures.

Concerning the service delivery inspections on the availability of learner, teacher support material, the PSC inspection team found that the allocated budget for the third and fourth quarters was not timeously released to schools in 2016 and 2017. According to the Free State Department of Education, by the date on which schools re-opened in January 2017, 905 of the ordered textbooks had been delivered to all schools in the province. The PSC found that the delivery of 10% of the ordered textbooks were still outstanding due to the delays on the publishers’ side. Physical infrastructure challenges were also identified in most of the inspected schools.

In view of the service delivery inspection conducted at the Health facilities, most of the inspected health facilities were found to have infrastructure challenges which included insufficient registry space for patient files, and insufficient consultation rooms. Dr JS Moroka Hospital had the most serious infrastructure challenges as it has old rundown buildings with cracked floors and leaking roofs. There was a general consensus amongst all interviewed persons that there was a shortage of staff especially medical doctors and professional nurses. The Department of Health indicated that due to financial constraints not all recommendations were going to be implementable in the year 2016/2017. The Department further indicated that the refurbishments at the Dr JS Moroka Hospital would be included in the final business plan for 2017/18 priorities.

**4.2** **Inspection in loco/Site Visits by the Committee**

**4.2.1** **Universitas Academic Hospital (Unannounced visit)**

The Universitas Academic Hospital was officially opened in February 1978. The hospital is situated in the northwest side of the Bloemfontein city in the Manguang Metropolitan Municipality. The hospital is adjacent to the newly established Universitas Private Hospital, which opened in 2003. Both hospitals have entered into the public-private health partnership of its kind in South Africa. There is existing Memoranda of Understanding between the two hospitals to assist in providing health care services to the people. All hospitals are in partnership with the University of Free State in terms of training of medical practitioners.

The Committee visited the Universitas Academic Hospital to assess efficiency in the frontline services, service standards and queue management in various units. Mr Mohatse Hlogo: Director: Corporate Service welcomed the delegation. The Committee team was led by Dr Khoza. The team included representatives of the Premier’s Office, Members from DPSA, and Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit.

Universitas Hospital is the only Central Hospital which provides services to the Free State community, inclusive of the Northern Cape and Lesotho. The institution provides specialized hospital services, which includes Cardiology, Oncology, Neonatal and Specialized ICU services. All the patients are referred to the level of care that needs specialized services for lower care (Regional Hospital). Patients who arrive without referral note, they are assessed and then referred back to the appropriate Regional Hospital or hospital within their homes. There is a Unit dealing with referrals at the frontline of the hospital.

The institution also receives patients from Lesotho and there was a challenge with payments by the Lesotho government to settle the outstanding payments from the previous years. Executive of the Free State Department of Health under the leadership of the HoD Dr. Motau, sent a delegation to Lesotho to address the matter. The hospital is more than 30 years old, and needs a major infrastructure revamp (the environment is cold as the institution needs repairs due to the steam leakages, some of the lifts need to be replaced).

There is a high staff vacancy rate in the hospital, especially in the specialized fields. Among the challenges encountered in filling specialist posts is time taken to appoint them, which takes longer than it is anticipated. The hospital management indicated that it takes three months to fill specialist post. Cuban’s specialists are also recruited as part of the strategy to counter the shortage of specialists in the country. Hospital need to enhance security and safety services in order to protect patients and employees. The Committee urged the provincial Department of Health and Hospital Management to invest more on their staff and provide conducive environment.

Aging infrastructure was a source for concern and needed to be replaced. Maintenance of the building has to be the main priority of the management and the provincial Department of Health. The Committee were concerned about repairing of air-conditioning system as patients cannot be treated in a cold environment in winter and extremely hot in summer. The Batho Pele principles and service standards were not visible to inform patients about the expected standard of services.

In interacting with recipients of services, patients highlighted that waiting times are from 1hour to 3hours on normal working days. During the day of the visit, Members were informed that queues are better than other days. This was as a result that most of the people did not come to the hospital on the day. Patients who were queuing at the Pharmacy Section requested the Members of the Committee to visit Pelonomi Regional Hospital as it was alleged to have more challenges as compared to the Universitas Hospital. The Committee unanimously took a decision to visit Pelonomi Tertiary Hospital, which was not part of its programme.

**4.2.2** **Pelonomi Regional Hospital**

The Pelonomi Regional Hospital is situated in Heidedal Bloemfontein under the Mangaung Municipality. Pelonomi is a specialist hospital providing training of health professionals. Access to the hospital is mostly by referral from other institutions, although there is a casualty providing the need for acute emergencies. The hospital was opened in 1965. On arrival at the Pelonomi Hospital, the Committee met with the management of the hospital. The Chairperson (Dr Khoza) alluded that the Committee visited the Pelonomi Regional Hospital as per the request of a patient at Universitas Hospital who cited bad experience. Patients had experienced bad health services received at this facility.

The hospital Chief Executive Officer welcomed the delegate and provide a brief background report. The hospital has a staff complement of 1365. The hospital has 720 beds, and only 588 beds were utilised during the time of the visit. The hospital has an existing clinic to assist patients who come to the hospital for the first time before been referred for admission. Maintenance of the infrastructure was a main challenge affecting effective and efficient health services in the hospital.

The Committee complained about the stench, as people are entering the K Block on the ground floor. The hospital acknowledged the stench, however, they indicated there that it is not permanent stench in the hospital. The stench was as a result of the piping system in the basement, the hospital design and rusted pipes in the roof. A company was currently busy repairing and replacing pipes. Hospital management were reluctant to accept the hospital had had problems of aging infrastructure for years. The matter is not well attended by the provincial Department of Health in conjunction with the provincial Department of Public Works. Aging infrastructure had a negative impact on the health service and can result into health departments encountering litigations. It was astonishing that hospital management are not involved in the maintenance projects but the provincial departments.

Hospital revitalisation started in 2002. Management of the Pelonomi Hospital indicated that it has been 10 years requesting financial aid for the maintenance of the hospital. Due to the financial constraints in the province, it was reported that the provincial department working with the Provincial Treasury are prioritising the hospital. The hospital has no control of the budget. Management anticipated to have input on the projects rather than Infrastructure Section deciding on their behalf. Dilapidated roofing and poor plumbing system have severe impact on the health of the patients and employees in general. Pipes in Trauma Service fell down the floor. Roofing and basement were reported as a major maintenance problem in the hospital. The Committee advised the management to focus on the root causes of challenges confronting the hospital.

Patients complianed about prolonged waiting time in Orthopaedics and casualty. Average waiting time period ranges from 2hours to 6hours in the hospital. This was as a result of shortage of the staff in the Pharmacy Unit. The hospital recently appointed five pharmacists at the Pharmacy Section to speed up services in medication collection. Mr F.S Salakufa (an old man) arrived the day before the visit at the hospital and have waited for his medication till midday. Another patient arrived at the hospital at 06H00 and be assisted at 12H15. Management had refuted that an average waiting time for the patient to wait in the queue is 3hours.

Cleanliness was another challenge identified by the Committee. The hospital had a shortage of cleaners. The management had confirmed that only three (3) cleaners are allocated per ward for cleaning. There has been a challenge to appoint cleaners. The hospital staff establishment has shrunk; some posts have disappeared whilst others are under moratorium. Funded cleaners’ posts have minimum impact on the health conditions of the patients and employees. During the day of the visit, the Committee noticed shortage of the cleaners. Management indicated that some cleaners were seconded from their posts to clear flooded wards in I-Block due to a burst pipe.

**4.2.3** **Bongani Regional Hospital**

The Committee was welcomed by the Welkom Local Municipality (Nkosinjani Wilson Speelman), Head of the Department (Dr D Motau) and Acting CEO (Ms SR Noge). Bongani Regional Hospital situated in Welkom under the Welkom Local Municipality. Bongani Regional Hospital provides a specialized secondary service and admits patients as referred by primary health care institutions from surrounding towns and District Hospitals. The hospital is a Level 2 referral for clinics from the following areas: Theunissen, Virginia, Ventersdorp, Winburg, Wesselsbron, Hoopstad, Dealesville, Bothaville, Allanridge and Odendaalsrus.

The Committee held a briefing meeting with the management of the hospital, including the Unions and leaders of the organised group. Shortage of staff in the hospital has been highlighted as a major stumbling block impeding on the efficiency of the health services. The hospital management report clearly cited shortage of the medical practitioners/doctors and other health specialist. Recruitment process in the hospital takes longer than anticipated. A huge number of employees are aging and due to pension. The hospital management has made submissions to appoint staff for those personnel who are going to retire.

Shortage of staff in all hospitals is common challenge from the cleaners to the specialists in the province. Time to fill vacancies takes longer. In terms of dealing with ill-disciplined employees, training was conducted to capacitate managers to implement management of ill-discipline. Disciplinary cases are actively managed. A submission has been written to appoint an institutional labour relation officer to support the management in expediting disciplinary cases. The hospital had lost accreditation status as a training institution for internship. The hospital is currently recruiting specialists and medical officers to address the non-compliance of accreditation. Shortage and distribution of the medication were cited as a major challenge affecting health care services.

The hospital is fast tracking the recruitment of doctors and specialists to ensure that clinics start work on time and casualty is covered all the time. The Head of Department assured the Committee to establish a functional and measurable waiting time system to capture the arrival of a client at a service point until the point of exit (card system). Benchmarking exercise to be undertaken by the CEO and other staff members in KZN at the end of July 2017. Ongoing training on customer care and waiting times is given to frontline personnel. A system of queue marshals has already been implemented and works with medical personnel. Customer care manager has been appointed to assist with complaints management.

Overtime payment is another matter which government needs to regulate particularly in the hospitals. It was discovered that the hospital is owing nurses and emergency personnel overtime money. Moreover, pay progression in terms of notch/grade increment after performance assessment as per the policy of the Performance Development Management System is not fully adhered to. The Committee cautions the provincial department on the aging infrastructure which affects the safety of staff and patients negatively such as leaking roofs, pipes and sinking holes underneath the hospital. The matter of revitalisation was escalated to infrastructure section and provincial Department of Health as well as the National Department of Health. Hospital management written to the provincial department to alert them of aging infrastructure. Provincial department had a shortage of budget in the last financial year. The process of appointing a contractor was at an advanced stage to deal with the maintenance backlog.

The availability of the medicines was a standing item in the weekly executive management meeting. A system was available (RX Solution) to monitor the availability of medicine. The availability of medicines was part of the non-negotiable items in the Free State Province. The Emergency Medical Services department had major challenges such as inadequate trained personnel. Most of the ambulance services have been outsourced. Ambulances take longer to collect patients. Community members raised their frustration and accuse emergency services of not doing their job. A number of cases as results of respond time of ambulances were shared with the Members of the Committee. Organised Community Group indicated that time taken to collect a patient is not acceptable. For example a patient in labour called for EMS and waited for over 3 hours, eventually gave birth at home.

A ward councillor (Mr J Moseua) raised his frustration about the condition at the hospital. Further appealed to the Committee to intervene in assisting the hospital to perform its core mandate to the citizen. The Councillor cited lack of ethos of the Batho Pele principles in the hospital. Shortage of the medication was cited at the clinics and even at the hospital. This might be as a result of late payment to the suppliers as government is regarded to pay service providers after 30 days. Community members complained about the negligence in operating patients, which lead to litigations, e.g. a patient was operated on in the institution and has since been a wheelchair bound. It was alleged that the quality of water provided to the patients in the hospital was not good for consumption. The hospital management refuted the allegations and indicated the water quality tests are done on a monthly basis as per standard (SANS 241).

**4.2.4** **Department of Home Affairs**

The delegation was welcomed by the Regional Manager of the Bloemfontein Department of Home Affairs. The Chairperson outlined the purpose of the oversight as was to oversee frontline services, service standards and queue management in various units. The Department of Home Affairs is located in Bloemfontein in Rocklands area. The facility is located in the township and 10 kilometres away from the city. The Committee was impressed of cleanliness of the building. Queue management was well managed during our visit. Bloemfontein Department of Home Affairs it’s a full branch service providing a number of services including Smart ID card. It takes 13 days to receive the Smart ID Card. Marriage certificates are printed with immediate effect.

Since the population is growing as a result of rapid urbanisation and density into the cities. Bloemfontein Department of Home Affairs is the only branch providing the entire city and its neighbouring township with home affairs services. Employees raised concerns of the cutting of the overtime by the National Department of Home Affairs Minister which impact on the delivery of services. Staff members complianed of seven hours working time during the week and remaining five hours over the weekend. Strict working hours deprive citizen quality services and pushes the employees to close offices, even when there are long queues. Cutting of the queues affects citizens who travel long distances from Thaba Nchu and Botshabelo to receive services. The Home Affairs Mobile Service is only rendered in the farm areas only. The Mobile Service only go out once a month.

**4.2.5** **Maseru Bridge Port of Entry**

Maseru Bridge Manager (Mr Moeti) welcomed the Committee. The Chairperson of the Committee highlighted the purpose of the oversight of the management of the Maseru Bridge Port of Entry. The manager presented the report to the Committee. Maseru Bridge is one of the four commercial Port of Entry (PoE) between Free State and Lesotho borders. A high volume of passengers and traffic is experienced during festive season and Easter holidays. The POE is situated 15km away from Ladybrand.

The border is one of the busiest Ports and deals with huge volume of travellers. It operates 24 hours daily. This PoE connects Ladybrand in Free State with the city of Maseru in Lesotho. Daily travellers, mainly consist of frequent travellers that pass through the border on a daily basis to and from work, school and shopping. Their various stakeholders who are stationed at the border besides the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) each with different roles and responsibilities. These include the Department of Health, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the South African Police Service (SAPS), the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and the South African Revenue Service (SARS).

Illegal crossing under the bridge and outside perimeter of the border were reported. Crossing the border at a place not designated as a port of entry or crossing without the required documentation was also reported. Holes in the fences at the bridge, low river water levels and inconsistent application of Lesotho Special Dispensation are contributing factors for illegal crossing. In controlling the queue, there was large volumes of travellers and pedestrians up to and within the controlled area can result in non-compliance with processes. Inadequate infrastructure was cited as a main reason exacerbates the time it takes to provide service to travellers both pedestrian, non-motorised and mobile transport. Expansion of the land space was proposed as a long term solution to ease long queues in the border.

Long queues were also contributed by the Lesotho control border as they do not use biometric technology to verify passports of travellers who cross the border. The passports in Lesotho are also different from the South African passports. As a result, the South Africa immigration officers indicated that they must first verify most passports of Lesotho travellers which may cause further delays.

Allegations of corruption is one of the major disciplinary issues identified. The Management of the Border notified the Committee that they are swiftly dealing with officials who are indulging in unethical conducts. On September 2016, the Hawks arrested 20 officials from the Department of Home Affairs for allegedly accepting bribes amounting to thousands of rands, for illegally issuing visas to Lesotho citizens who exceeded their allowed time to South Africa.

Shortage of staff was cited as another factor hindering the efficiency in most of the departments at the Port of Entry. For instance, 20 posts in the Department of Home Affairs were not yet filled either permanently or with contract position till the verdict on the perpetrators. The Department of Home Affairs had 58 funded posts (including 20 arrested by Hawks), SARS had 38 funded posts, SAPS had 81 funded posts, DAFF had 3 posts, DOH had 2 funded posts and RTMC had 16 posts. Information Technology infrastructure was found to be inadequate and often too slow affecting the long queues. There were instances when the system crashed due to work overload. Lack of integrated and coordinated approach between relevant departments was highlighted as another factor hindering efficient and effective services.

**4.2.6 National Youth Development Agency**

The Committee visited National Youth Development Agency Branch in Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality as part of the oversight visit in the province. Mr T Dithese, Branch Manager welcomed the delegation. The office is located in the hub of the Bloemfontein city centre. The office was established in 2008 as the only NYDA branch office serving the entire province with only 13 staff complement. The office is not visible and accessible for the majority of young people in the Free State Province. The area is confronted with youth unemployment rates, which has been consistently growing. The majority of youth migrate from rural areas to the urban cities in search of better socioeconomic opportunities.

The DPME had developed the National Youth Policy (NYP) 2015-2020 for all the young people in South Africa. The policy proposes a range of interventions to enable young people to actively participate and engage in the mainstream economy. Among interventions proposed in the policy is economic development and education. The main objective of the visit to the NYDA branch office was to monitor the provision of the grant funding, education and skills development programmes.

The Agency branch office is currently offering the following products and services: Entrepreneurial Developmental Programme, Voucher Programme, Grant Programme, Rural Development Programme, Mentorship Programme, Market Linkage Programme and Free Internet Service at the branch.

The distance travelled by young people across all the corners of the province to access services of the Agency concerned the Committee. In order to address challenges confronting the youth. The Agency has to spread its services and open more branches in the municipalities. The NYDA Branch Manager assured the Committee that there is no nepotism and favouritism when it comes to rendering of its services. Every young person receives service on merit and not because of the political connection. The management stressed the importance of building a culture of serving all young people irrespective of race and political affiliation.

With regard to the Grant Funding Programme, young people were not disqualified based on their blacklisted status. In awarding young people with grant funding, the Bloemfontein branch office strictly gives grants to businesses which aimed to create more than three job opportunities a priority before considering individual business without intention of creating employment. Accessibility of the office occupied is satisfactory. In 2016/17 financial year, the NYDA branch offices targeted to grant 53 young people grant funding. However, the target was exceeded with 73 young people awarded grant funding. There is a huge backlog of grant funding applications of approximately 1056 in the province. Young people in the province also benefit from other programs which are offered through our Head office such as Solomon Mahlangu Scholarship, Thusanong Fund and National Youth Service.

Challenges confronted are as follows:

* Due to the low budget the branch is unable to assist as many young people in the province.
* Accessibility will remain a challenge as the office is operating with only one branch in the province.
* Consideration of other branch will increase the footprint of NYDA in the Province.
* The Agency can only do as institution’s resources and allows the branch can even do more than it was expected.

The Agency’s main challenge is around resources allocated by government. With more resources being intensified, more can be achieved.

**4.2.7** **Botshabelo Thusong Service Centre**

Botshabelo Thusong Service Centre is situated Thaba Nchu Local Municipality. The centre operates from a rented building, but with only limited services which include SASSA and Social Development. The centre assists approximately 30-35 people on a daily basis. Applications for the old age grant were captured in two days. The Department of Home Affairs terminated its services and moved staff to Ratlou Complex Regional Government offices in Thaba Nchu because of the shortage of office space. It was reported that there is a post office within the cluster, but it has not formally integrated into the Thusong Service Centre.

The main challenge identified are inadequate office space, information technology connectivity, and poor maintenance. Rental building is under private property costing government less than ten thousand. Contractual lease is on a month to month period with the provincial Department of Public Works. Owner of the building indicated that there do not have the money for major renovations which might accommodate other services. The centre cannot accommodate all the anchor services. SAPS refuse to provide the services in the centre due to shortage of office space. Signage was not visible about the centre.

1. **OBSERVATIONS AND KEY FINDINGS**

Having conducted oversight, the Committee made the following observation and findings:

* 1. The Committee appreciated a warm welcome by the Office of the Premier and the presence of all Heads of the Department in the province. All the HODs participated during the first meeting about the MPAT, SDIPs, TSCs and report by the Provincial Public Service Commission.
  2. The Committee welcomed the provincial Management Performance Assessment Tool report and noted inconsistencies. Further indicated that the self-assessment tools seems to be subjective rather than be objective. The credibility of the information was therefore questioned. However, the province indicated that there are independent moderators of MPAT results.
  3. The Management Performance Assessment Tool highlights that the provincial departments are adhering to the strategic planning compliance. However, the Committee was concerned about certain departments who are partially compliant with the Annual Performance Plans. The Committee urged the Office of the Premier and the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation to assist the struggling government department to adhere to standards of Annual Performance Plan.
  4. The Committee emphasised the importance of the Office of the Premier in strengthening coherent planning, coordination and monitoring performance of the provincial departments in delivering services to the citizen.
  5. The Management Performance Assessment Tool highlighted an improvement with regard to the payment of suppliers within 30 days. Failure to pay service providers on time impact negatively on the service delivery. The Committee will validate the authenticity of the information provided with the Special Unit established in the DPME to deal with payment of suppliers within 30 days. The Committee requested detailed information on the 30 day payment per departments.
  6. Effective governance and accountability are necessary to ensure that adequate checks and balances are in place to minimise mismanagement and corruption. The provincial departments have systems in place to ensure that Audit Committees are established and play an oversight role of the internal controls, risk management and governance.
  7. With regard to the promotion of the professional ethics, the MPAT reveals that the province is still struggling to ensure 100% compliance with SMS financial disclosure submitted to the Public Service Commission. However, the Committee was concerned about the validity or contradictory information presented between the MPAT and the Public Service Commission which present different figures in terms of compliance. The PSC reported 100% compliance, whereas the MPAT indicate 75% compliance.
  8. The provincial departments are not performing well when it comes to the fraud prevention. The departments have to put in place mechanisms for preventing, detecting and resolving fraudulent activities. Fraudulent activities have a bearing on the service delivery, misuse of public resources and negatively impact on the reputation of the departments. The Department of Education is transgressing in most of the Key Performance Area as per the MPAT results.
  9. The provincial MPAT results reveal 83% compliance on the implementation of the performance management system for Heads of Department. Meaning majority of the Heads of Department signed performance agreements. The Committee noted the achievement, however it was concerned of 17% non-compliance and encouraged the Office of the Premier to ensure adherence to timeline of submission of the performance agreement and assessment.
  10. Discipline is one of the most critical aspects of labour relations. The Committee noted with discontent a huge number of the disciplinary cases without any strategy intending to finalise them within 90 days as required by legislative prescripts. It was discovered that the departments do not have disciplinary committees to expedite disciplinary resolutions. Departments are not capturing all disciplinary cases on the PERSAL, as required by the policy.
  11. Instability of the Heads of the Department in the province was a concern to the Committee. Political-Administrative interface is critical in any government, but it has to intend to improve performance and service delivery. The movement of Heads of Department from one another has a bearing on performance. The Committee encouraged the province to ensure stability, which is informed by a performance management development system in the Heads of the Department and senior management in the province.
  12. The Service Delivery Improvement Plans have to be integrated into the strategic plan and Annual Performance Plans in order to avoid silo planning in the departments. The Committee noted that departments are not prioritising the SDIPs as part of the business process to enhance service delivery. Officials deployed as champion of SDIPs work at junior levels without having authority to make decisions.
  13. Shortage of office space is a common challenge confronting most of the Thusong Service Centres in the country. There is a high demand of anchor departments interested in providing services in the centres. The Committee advised that having more departments in one stop Centre would be beneficial for the community and would add value in enhancing service delivery and improving quality of life.
  14. During the interaction with patients who were queuing at the frontline service of the hospitals, people indicated that they queue for up to 3 hours to 7 hours before acquiring health services. It was worse at the Pelonomi Regional Hospital where some patients queued for a whole day and slept in the hospital without being offered health services. Patients slept over at the reception. The Committee condemns such inefficiency in the hospital.
  15. Shortage of medication, specifically drugs, was highlighted as the cause of the long queues. Hospital management indicated that clinics are severely affected and opted to refer people to the hospital to get medication.
  16. Aging infrastructure in public hospital needs urgent attention by the National and Provincial Health Departments across the country. The Department of Public Works working with the Health Departments needs to establish a team to look into the state of infrastructure in the public hospitals.
  17. Shortage of staff in hospitals impact on the quality of the healthcare services in the province. Pelonomi and Bongani Regional Hospital have a shortage of cleaners and medical doctors.
  18. The Committee raised concerns pertaining to the presentation of the Free State Public Service Commission as compared to the information received in the past oversight visits to Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces. Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces PSC’s reporting format to the Committee was detailed and provided the Committee with a comprehensive outlook on the state of the provincial public administration.
  19. The Committee was concerned about report presented by the Public Service Commission indicating medical specialists are resigning from the Department of Health. Among factors cited for resignation is prohibition of public servants doing other remunerative work outside the public service.
  20. The Department of Home Affairs complianed about cutting of working hours and overtime. Officials are forced to close offices, even when there are long queues of people who travelled distances to acquire home affairs services. Issue of overtime has to be resolved and a long term strategy has to be achieved.
  21. The Committee experienced that the province had only one Home Affairs facility providing entire residents of Bloemfontein with its services. People from neighbouring towns come to the same facility to seek services.
  22. The Committee learned that illegal crossing by illegal facilitators still happened at the Maseru Border.

1. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee made the following recommendations:

* 1. The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Offices of the Premier and the National Public Service Commission, including Provincial Commission should collaborate in addressing the inconsistencies of the Management Performance Assessment Tool and the report on the state of the public service with regard to the monitoring of the implementation of the values and principles of public administration. The results presented to the legislators should be factual and validated to avoid misrepresentation of information about government departments. However, the Public Service Commission should not compromise its independence in these regard.
  2. The DPSA should consistently monitor and assess effective implementation of approved SDIPs to be in line with annual performance plans. The DPSA should intensify its efforts to address identified bottlenecks on the SDIPs and ensure resources are allocated to this activity. The DPSA should ensure all departments display the service charter in their buildings. The Department of Health should frequently monitor service delivery improvements and develop improvement plans.
  3. The Departments of Public Service and Administration and Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation and Offices of the Premier should ensure that Accounting Officers in government sign performance agreements and be evaluated. The DPSA should spearhead the process of assisting the Executive Authority as well as Members of the Executive Councils in drafting the Performance Agreements and ensure alignment with service delivery outcomes.
  4. The DPSA in collaboration with the Office of the Premier should speed the process of finalising the disciplinary cases within a reason period. The DPSA should utilise a pool of experts in labour relations have to be utilised efficiently in order to finalise the pending disciplinary cases in the province.
  5. The Department of Public Works should ensure that the maintenance of government buildings remains a priority and is carried out. More attention has to be given to aging infrastructure in the public hospitals. Effective maintenance can be achieved when hospitals are adequately funded.
  6. The DPSA together with other relevant departments should swiftly finalise the Thusong Service Centres model. Lease agreements and funding model affect effective functioning of the Thusong Service Centres. All key departments should be hosted in the Thusong Service Centres, including satellite South African Police Service stations. The Department should develop a legislation that will enforce departments to consider the Thusong Service Centres as institutions of bringing services closer to the people.
  7. The Department of Health should work with the Centre for Public Service Innovation in resolving queue management in most of the hospitals, particularly in Pelonomi and Bongani Regional Hospitals. Queue management strategy has to be developed to manage time taken by patients in the facilities. The strategy will benefit hospitals management to be able to monitor efficiency in this regard. The Department of Health should replicate and learn best practices for queue management from the Department of Home Affairs. The Provincial Department of Health to report to the Committee in November 2017 about the queue management strategy in all hospitals across the province.
  8. The Department of Health should develop a recruitment strategy to fill up funded critical vacancies in the hospitals. There is a huge shortage of nurses and medical practitioners in the hospitals. The Department of Health working with the Department of Public Service and Administration should reconsider reducing hours for overtime and consider employing health professionals. Health professionals working long hours also compromises quality and the health of patients.
  9. The Department of Health should properly manage the huge bill for overtime by health professionals and specialists, which impacts on accruals in the subsequent financial year.
  10. Water quality at the hospitals in the mining area must be improved as it compromises the health of patients and the community.
  11. A biometric system must be introduced at hospitals to capture the route of patients visiting the hospitals with a view to improving on efficiency of systems regarding time taken by the hospital to adequately process each patient.
  12. Post-operation stress at the hospitals visited was a huge challenge. The provincial and national Departments of Health must look into this challenge and come up with a viable and lasting solution in order to improve the quality of life of the patients.
  13. The National Department of Home Affairs should expedite in resolving working hours and overtime of the Home Affairs personnel. The Department of Public Service and Administration and the National Treasury should intervene in this matter. A long term solution for the overtime payment should be pursued across the entire public service.
  14. The Office of the Premier working together with the national and provincial Department of Home Affairs should open or expand more Home Affairs offices around Bloemfontein. The province has only one office, which is located outside the city and have a negative impact to people travelling to town to seek home affairs services.
  15. The departments should take disciplinary action against senior managers who failed to submit their financial disclosure forms. The Departments working with the Public Service Commission should ensure that employees not fully cooperative with financial disclosure framework get disciplined. The PSC should record the number of disciplinary actions when reporting on their reports.
  16. The Provincial Public Service Commission should furnish the Committee with detailed information on the status of the provincial public service in terms of the values and principles enshrined in section 195 of the Constitution. Section 196 (4) (a) mandate the PSC to promote the values and principles set out in section 195, throughout the public service.
  17. The National and Provincial Public Service Commission should on an annual basis publish and report to the legislatures on the state of the public service in terms of the values and principles of the public administration as enshrined in Section 195 and 196 of the Constitution.
  18. The Maseru Border Management, especially the South African component, should find a way of curbing illegal crossings and apprehending the facilitators of illegal movements at the port of entry.
  19. The Department of Home Affairs should expedite the process of building a proper holding facility at the Maseru Port of Entry.

Report to be considered