



THE PRESIDENCY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT: PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Presidential Hotline Update ***01 March 2013***

Update - April 2013

Presidential Hotline

Presidential Hotline Update provides stakeholders with information on the Presidential Hotline. This is the first in the series, which will be produced on a quarterly basis.

Background to the Presidential Hotline

In his State of the Nation address on 3 June 2009, President Jacob Zuma stressed the importance of a government that is responsive, interactive and effective. The Presidential Hotline was set up to provide a mechanism to support this, by enabling citizens to report unresolved service delivery problems. The principle that guides the Presidential Hotline is that every caller should be listened to and their issue should be recorded and resolved if possible. In addition to the primary function of resolving problems, the Presidential Hotline provides valuable monitoring data and insights into the concerns of citizens and the information collected is used to improve service delivery. Improvement in citizen satisfaction is an output in the Outcome 12 delivery agreement and improving the Presidential Hotline case resolution rate is a priority initiative in the Forum for South African Directors General plan for improving the way government works.

How does it work?

The Presidential Hotline – which is housed within the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) in The Presidency – receives a wide range of complaints and queries from citizens. Citizens use the toll-free **17737** number to reach the call centre, and can also communicate through letters (The Presidency, Private Bag x 1000, Pretoria, 0001), emails (President@po.gov.za) and fax (096 681 0987). It is open for use as a mechanism of last resort by ordinary citizens and entities that have received poor service from the public service.

There are 15 call agents taking calls between 06h00 and 22h00 (Mondays to Fridays) and callers have the option of speaking to a call agent in a language of their choice. All calls are logged on an automated information system, a reference number is assigned to each case and each case is assigned to a specific government department or agency to investigate and resolve. Every department and province is expected to review its hotline cases daily and to record the outcome of the investigation against each case.

The DPME in the Presidency has a directorate dedicated to managing the Presidential Hotline. This team also receives correspondence-based cases from citizens (faxes, letters, emails) and ensures that these cases are also recorded and assigned for investigation. This team works closely with all departments and provinces to ensure that they are following up on the cases assigned to them. Where required, the Presidency team facilitates the creation of task teams from different departments to address complex cases. Regular analysis is done of the types of complaints received and the responsiveness of departments in solving the complaints. These issues are reported to Cabinet at least twice a year.

Citizens get feedback on their complaints, either directly from the departments to whom the case was assigned, or through contacting the call centre. Since October 2012, satisfaction surveys have been conducted to assess the level of satisfaction with the service callers have

Performance from 2012 to 2013

For the 154 549 cases logged as of 31 January 2013, the overall case resolution rate increased from 79.89% to 88.78% between January 2012 and January 2013. This is encouraging given that the Presidential Hotline started with a case resolution rate of 39% in November 2009. Although an overall resolution rate of 88.78% is relatively good, the majority of the 17 338 unresolved cases are with provinces and a few national departments and efforts will have to be intensified to improve the case resolution rate further.

Of the 40 428 cases referred to national departments, the Departments of Home Affairs, Human Settlements, Labour, Justice, South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and Social Development can be singled out as departments that receive high volumes of queries, but have consistently been performing well in terms of responsiveness. Departments dealing with high numbers of cases and have shown significant improvements in the period 31 January 2012 to 31 January 2013 are: Rural Development (improved from 56.92% to 83.02%), South African Police Service (SAPS) (improved from 47.25% to 80.74%), Correctional Services (improved from 41.25% to 98.68%), and Public Enterprises (improved from 65.02% to 99.01%).

All provinces improved their case resolution rate between January 2012 and January 2013, with an average increase of 21.17%. However, this improvement is from a very low performance base of 44.9% in January 2012 to 66.07% as of 31 January 2013. The provinces of Limpopo, Free State, Western Cape and Northern Cape have above 80% resolution rates. KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and North-West receive high volumes of cases and have low resolution rates. KwaZulu-Natal has 4 823 unresolved cases, Gauteng has 2 623 unresolved cases, Eastern Cape has 2 815 unresolved cases, Mpumalanga has 1 433 unresolved cases and North West has 1 250 unresolved cases. It must be noted though that the resolution rates of these provinces is improving month-on-month, although not at the rate required to substantially address the backlog in cases.

During October to December 2012, 9 598 citizens were called to survey their level of satisfaction – many were not contactable on the contact numbers they provided, but 3 211 citizens participated in the survey. The results are that 54% rated their satisfaction as high, 10% as average and 34% as poor. These surveys will now be on-going.

The table on the following page sets out details of performance of the Presidential Hotline from inception in 14 September 2009 to 31 January 2013:

Assigned to	No of Open Calls	No of Resolved Calls	Total Calls	% Resolved 31 Jan 2013
Call Centre and Presidency	36	74 883	74 919	99.95%
National Departments	4 001	36 427	40 428	90.10%
Provinces	13 301	25 901	39 202	66.07%
Total	17 338	137 211	154 549	88.78%

Issues that can be resolved immediately by the call agents

These are mainly requests for information. Some citizens call the Presidential Hotline seeking information on government services, e.g. acquiring an identity document, applying for a grant, or information on available services in a given area. These cases are resolved immediately or within a day by the call agents themselves.

Issues assigned to departments and provinces for investigation

In cases that require resolution by specific departments, or where detailed information is required the call is allocated to the responsible department. Examples include:

Land issues: These typically include complaints about rights to land occupation, complaints about illegal occupation of private land or disputes between different community groups who were beneficiaries of the land reform process. These types of cases are often complex, may already have been the subject of legal proceedings and therefore takes time to investigate and address. **Housing issues:** These include complaints about unfair application processes, wrongful occupation of houses, poor quality of houses and in some cases, even conflicts between family members where the Presidential Hotline is asked to intervene. **Alleged corruption and labour-related cases:** These often prove to be complicated to resolve and callers are not always satisfied with the action taken.

Issues that require special attention by the Presidential Hotline team in DPME

The DPME hotline team provides facilitation and coordination support where issues involve more than one department. The team also assists in resolving special cases that require urgent attention.

Cases that cannot be resolved by the Presidential Hotline

There are certain instances where the Presidential Hotline is not able to resolve issues.

These include calls regarding unhappiness with the outcomes of legal proceedings - in the courts as well as the outcomes of disciplinary and dismissal proceeding. In these cases it is not possible to satisfy the callers as the Presidency cannot overrule the decisions of the courts. Other instances where the Presidential Hotline has not been able to assist callers include UIF (Unemployment Insurance Fund) payments to unemployed miners, for whom

UIF deductions were not taken, thus disqualifying them from the benefit; as well as requests for financial assistance; prisoners requesting presidential pardons and evictions by banks from bonded houses.

Examples of actual intervention

Mr K. of Eastern Cape called to seek for assistance from the Presidential Hotline after trying unsuccessfully to apply for a foster care grant for his nephew. The matter was referred by the Hotline to the Office of the Premier in Eastern Cape for investigation. Social workers made an assessment and assisted Mr K and in January 2013 the grant was approved and the child is now attending a local pre-school.

Mr M. from the North West reported that he could not register his new marriage since his divorce application was not processed by the Rustenburg Magistrate Court. Through an intervention of the Presidential Hotline his case was resolved on 21 January 2013.

Mr D. called reporting that in 2010 and 2011 he received NSFAS financial aid but in 2012 fees were not paid despite funding confirmation from NSFAS. With help from the Department of Higher Education and Training the student was able to be funded through the DHET Discretionary Fund to cover his registration fees, textbooks and accommodation for 2013.

Ms M. called the Presidential Hotline on 25 January 2013, reporting that she had applied for her child's unabridged birth certificate on 18 April 2012 but had still not received it. The Births Unit finalized the unabridged birth certificate on 28 January 2013.

- *All provinces and national departments are encouraged to ensure that appropriate case resolution systems and processes are in place so that the responsiveness of the Presidential Hotline to citizens is improved.*
- *Hotline information should be regularly analysed by departments, provinces, and municipalities to influence service delivery planning and implementation.*
- *Departments and provinces are encouraged to use the electronic case management system not only to report on progress with solving cases, but also as valuable data to determine what the trends are for concerns of citizens, both in terms of what people are concerned about and which locations these concerns emanate from.*
- *Monthly surveys are now conducted to assess the level of citizen satisfaction with case resolution. Departments are encouraged to pay attention to the quality of responses and not compromise on quality in the pursuit of good responsiveness figures.*
- *Regular performance reports per department and province to Cabinet and PCC will continue.*