



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

**MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND GENDER  
STATE DEPARTMENT FOR PUBLIC SERVICE**

**DRAFT POLICY GUIDELINES ON RETURN TO WORK  
DURING AND POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC,  
ALTERNATIVE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS AND TELE-  
COUNSELLING TO ADDRESS MENTAL HEALTH IN THE  
PUBLIC SERVICE**

**DECEMBER, 2020**

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
CRMS	Customer Relationship Management System
CSG	Civil Service Grade
GHRIS	Government Human Resource Information System
GPCIS	Government Performance Contracting Information System
HoPS	Head of Public Service
HRD	Human Resource Development
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
KEBS	Kenya Bureau of Standards
KRA	Kenya Revenue Authority
KSG	Kenya School of Government
MDAs	Ministries/Departments and Agencies
MDACs	Ministries/Departments and Agencies and County Governments
MHRMAC	Ministerial Human Resource Management Advisory Committee
MoH	Ministry of Health
NDOC	National Disaster Operations Centre
NGO	Non -Governmental Organization
NRB	National Registration Bureau
OSHA	Occupational Health and Safety Act
PC	Performance Contracting
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PSC	Public Service Commission
PSPMMU	Public Service Performance Management and Monitoring Unit
SCAC	State Corporations Advisory Committee
SPAS	Staff Performance Appraisal System
WFH	Working from Home

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

- i. **COVID-19** - Coronavirus disease 2019 is an acute respiratory infection whose symptoms include mild common cold-like illness and severe viral pneumonia leading to acute respiratory distress syndrome that is potentially fatal.
- ii. **Disaster** - A condition or situation of significant destruction, disruption and/or distress to a community.
- iii. **Disaster Risk** - The potential disaster losses, in lives, health status, livelihoods, assets and services, which could occur to a particular community or a society over some specified future time period.
- iv. **Disaster Risk Reduction** - The concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyze and manage the causal factors of disasters, and improved preparedness for adverse events.
- v. **Disinfection** – The procedure whereby health measures are taken to control or kill infectious agents on a human or animal body surface or in or on baggage, containers, goods and postal parcels by direct exposure to chemical or physical agents.
- vi. **Emergency** - An event, actual or imminent, which endangers or threatens to endanger life, property or the environment, and which requires a significant and coordinated response.
- vii. **Essential Services** - Services which may endanger the life, health or safety of part or whole of the population if interrupted.
- viii. **Infection** - The entry and development or multiplication of an infectious agent in the body of humans and animals that may constitute a public health risk.
- ix. **Isolation** - The separation of ill or persons infected with an infectious agent from others to prevent the spread of infection or contamination.
- x. **Performance Management** - is a systematic process for getting better results from an organization, teams and individuals by managing performance within an agreed framework of planned goals, objectives and standards. The process includes clarifying goals and expectations, setting performance targets, performance monitoring & evaluation, providing feedback and reviewing results.
- xi. **Personal Protective Equipment** – Specialized clothing or equipment, worn by an employee for protection against infectious materials.
- xii. **Recruitment** - The process of sourcing and acquisition of candidates for employment.
- xiii. **Redundancy** – Reduction of workforce where jobs and/or positions are no longer needed.

- xiv. **Risk** - The possibility of something adverse happening.
- xv. **Selection** - The process of identifying suitable candidates for specific jobs.
- xvi. **Tele-Counseling** - The provision of psychological services using telecommunication technologies that allow for the preparation, transmission, communication and processing of personal counseling information by electronic means such as telephone, mobile devices, video conferencing, email, text, chat and internet-based services-social media.
- xvii. **Training** - A planned process of modifying attitude, knowledge or skills and behaviour through a learning experience to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities.
- xviii. **Quarantine** - the restriction of activities of/or the separation of persons who are not ill but who may have been exposed to an infectious agent. The objective is to monitor their symptoms and ensure early detection of cases

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# **CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1. Background**

COVID-19 has not only become a global public health pandemic but also a global social and economic crisis. The novel nature of the virus continues to impair effective forward planning for the Government and especially in the provision of public services to the citizenry.

The pandemic has challenged the Public Service's preparedness in responding to disasters while ensuring continuity in service delivery. Since the implementation of COVID-19 containment measures, the Public Service has witnessed a decline in the overall access to public services by the citizens in many sectors across the service.

Public servants have had to work in new ways and contexts and learn to use new technologies and tools 'on-the-go' alongside the established procedures and processes. Additionally, some of the containment measures such as the working from home concept have seen officers operate without a clear policy, performance management framework and supporting technological infrastructure.

Mental Health in the Public Service remains an area of concern calling for innovative ways to offer Psycho-social Support while still observing the COVID-19 mitigation and containment measure instituted by the Government. This has necessitated Tele-Counselling to ensure ongoing Psycho-social Support.

## **1.2. Rationale for the Guidelines**

The development of these Guidelines has been necessitated by the need to provide a policy framework for public service organizations during and post the COVID-19 pandemic.

These Guidelines are aimed at facilitating public service organizations to operate safely during and post the COVID-19 pandemic. They also aim to provide clear and consistent guidance to public service organizations as they address the changes in service delivery that have been occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic. The changed work environment also calls for tele-counseling services to public servants infected and/or affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **1.3. Objectives of the Guidelines**

The specific objectives of the Guidelines are to:

- (i) Identify and document key human resource related challenges occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic;
- (ii) Provide a framework for public organizations to facilitate continued delivery of public services during and post the COVID-19 pandemic, while observing the mitigating and containment measures put in place by the Government;
- (iii) Ensure a unified approach to the delivery of Government services in a changing environment;
- (iv) Identify and document the kind of support public officers require to respond to the challenges including the need for Tele-Counseling guidelines for the Public Service;
- (v) Define an implementation framework to ensure effective implementation of the Guidelines;
- (vi) Equip public officers to anticipate and respond appropriately to future emergency situations; and
- (vii) Provide a structure for monitoring, evaluation and reporting to facilitate evidence-based decision making.

### **1.4. Scope**

These Guidelines shall be applicable to all public service organizations both at the National and County Government levels.

### **1.5. Broad Areas Covered**

The Guidelines cover the following broad areas:

- (i) Recruitment and Selection in the Public Service
- (ii) Training and Development in the Public Service
- (iii) Performance Management in the Public Service
- (iv) Leave Administration During COVID-19
- (v) Management of Government Correspondence
- (vi) Security of Government Information
- (vii) Conduct of Meetings

- (viii) Safety and Welfare of Employees and Customers
- (ix) Safety and Welfare of Frontline Workers
- (x) High Traffic Services at the Workplace
- (xi) Government Transport Protocols
- (xii) Handling of Meals at the Workplace
- (xiii) Working from Home
- (xiv) Tele-Counselling to Address Mental Health in the Public Service
- (xv) Return to Work After Quarantine and Isolation During and Post COVID-19
- (xvi) Officers with Pre-existing Medical Conditions and/or Aged Fifty-Eight Years and Above
- (xvii) COVID-19 Testing at the Workplace
- (xviii) Upscaling of the Digitization and Automation of Public Service Delivery
- (xix) Systematic Re-engineering of Public Service Processes
- (xx) Scaling Down of Operations and Redundant Positions and Jobs Arising from Automation of Service Delivery
- (xxi) Managing the Public Service Under Emergency Situations
- (xxii) Technology Support

## **1.6. Structure of the Document**

These Guidelines are structured as follows:

**Chapter 1:** Background, Rationale, Objectives, Scope, The Broad Areas Covered and Structure of the Document.

**Chapter 2:** Situation Analysis

**Chapter 3:** Guidelines for Addressing Selected Broad Areas During and Post the COVID-19 Pandemic

**Chapter 4:** Institutional Framework for Implementation

**Chapter 5:** Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

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## CHAPTER 2 : SITUATION ANALYSIS

### 2.1 Context

This Chapter provides a synopsis of what is currently obtaining in the broad areas covered under these Guidelines, with regard to COVID-19 response.

As part of mitigating and containing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Health (MoH) instituted a raft of public health measures including social and physical distancing, wearing of face masks and regular washing and sanitizing of hands. The Government also imposed a curfew and partial closure of some sectors of the economy. These measures have impacted the way public organizations deliver services and resulted in re-engineered work processes and practices to ensure continuity in service delivery, while still adhering to the mitigation and containment measures issued by the Government.

The requirement for social and physical distancing, for instance, meant that most public organizations could not have all their employees working from the office and therefore employees had to work from home and/or in shifts through a rota system. In-person meetings, conferencing, training and counselling were also impacted by the social and physical distancing requirement leading to adoption of virtual meetings, online training and tele-counselling in public organizations.

There has also been an increased reliance on technology in service delivery including automation of the performance contracting process through the Government Performance Contracting Information System (GPCIS), the *Service by Appointment system* and *Track my Service* system by Huduma Kenya and e-filing and virtual court sessions by the Judiciary, among others.

The Head of the Public Service (HoPS) has issued several guidelines to facilitate the Public Service in operationalization of the mitigation and containment measures issued by the Government. The following are some of the policy guidelines issued by the HoPS:

- (i) **Government Business Continuity as Part of the Coronavirus Response Measures** providing guidance on social distancing, avoidance of crowded spaces, working from home and hand washing/sanitization, among other broader guidelines.
- (ii) **Return to Work for Public Officers after Quarantine and Isolation Upon Exposure and/or Infection with COVID-19 Pandemic** containing guidelines on return to work after quarantine and isolation during and post COVID-19.

(iii) **Compliance with Workplace Guidelines on COVID-19 Pandemic** covering guidelines issued earlier and including guidance on state and public officers with pre-existing medical conditions and/or aged fifty-eight years and above, workplace hygiene and safety and conduct of meetings.

In addition, Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) have developed sector specific guidelines to facilitate continued operation of their sectors during and after COVID-19.

## **2.2 Current Status on the Broad Area**

### **2.2.1 Recruitment and Selection in the Public Service**

There are no COVID-19 specific guidelines issued in the area of recruitment and selection in the Public Service.

### **2.2.2 Training and Development in the Public Service**

Currently no COVID-19 specific guidelines exist for training and development in the Public Service.

### **2.2.3 Performance Management in Public Service**

The Service has not issued any COVID-19 responsive guidelines for performance management in the Public Service.

However, the Public Service Performance Management and Monitoring Unit (PSPMMU) automated the performance contracting process effective the 2020/2021 financial year, through the GPCIS.

### **2.2.4 Leave Administration During COVID-19**

Administration of leave during the COVID-19 pandemic is provided for under the Circular on *Return to Work for Public Officers after Quarantine and Isolation Upon Exposure and/or Infection with COVID-19 Pandemic*, **issued** to the Service on 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2020.

### **2.2.5 Management of Government Correspondence**

Guidelines for managing Government correspondence are contained in the Circular on *Compliance with Workplace Guidelines on COVID-19 Pandemic* issued by HoPS on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

### **2.2.6 Security of Government Information**

No COVID-19 related guidelines have been issued for managing the security of Government information.

### **2.2.7 Conduct of Meetings**

Guidelines on the conduct of meetings, in response to the MoH COVID-19 mitigation and containment measures were issued by the HoPS on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020 under the Circular on *Compliance with Workplace Guidelines on COVID-19 Pandemic*.

### **2.2.8 Safety and Welfare of Employees and Customers**

The HoPS has issued COVID-19 related guidelines to cover workplace hygiene and safety. There are also initiatives that have been put in place to safeguard workers and the customers they interface with, such as the *Service by Appointment system and Track my Service* system launched by the Huduma Kenya Secretariat, e-filing and virtual courts by the Judiciary.

Additional safeguards include electronic capture of details for employees driving into the premises housing public organizations.

### **2.2.9 Safety and Welfare of Frontline Workers**

The Government has issued detailed guidelines for frontline workers. Additionally, a welfare and medical insurance package was provided for frontline healthcare workers.

### **2.2.10 High Traffic Services at the Workplace**

No COVID-19 related guidelines have been issued with regard to high traffic services at the workplace.

Some institutions like the Judiciary, Public Service Performance Management and Monitoring Unit and Huduma Kenya Secretariat have however re-engineered their process to manage customer traffic. The Judiciary has introduced e-filing and virtual court sessions. Public Service Performance Management and Monitoring Unit has automated the Performance Contracting process while Huduma Kenya introduced the *Service by Appointment* system and the *Track my Service* system

### **2.2.11 Government Transport Protocols**

No COVID-19 related guidelines have been issued with regard to the use of official/Government transport.

### **2.2.12 Handling of Meals at the Workplace**

No guidelines in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have been issued for handling meals at the workplace.

### **2.2.13 Working from Home**

Guidelines for working from home are provided in the various Circulars issued to the Service by the HoPS.

### **2.2.14 Tele-Counselling to Address Mental Health in the Public Service**

There are no guidelines on tele-counselling in the Public Service.

### **2.2.15 Return to Work After Quarantine and Isolation During and Post COVID-19**

The guidelines for employees returning to work after quarantine and isolation are covered under the Circular on *Return to Work for Public Officers After Quarantine and Isolation Upon Exposure and/or Infection with COVID-19 Pandemic*, issued to the Service on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

### **2.2.16 Officers with Pre-existing Medical Conditions and/or Aged Fifty-Eight Years and Above**

The Circular on *Compliance with Workplace Guidelines on COVID-19 Pandemic* issued on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2020 provided guidance on public officers with pre-existing medical conditions and/or aged fifty-eight (58) years and above.

### **2.2.17 COVID-19 Testing at the Workplace**

A number of public organizations have conducted COVID-19 testing at the workplace for all their employees. However, currently there exists no guidelines on COVID-19 testing at the workplace.

### **2.2.18 Upscaling of the Digitization and Automation of Public Service Delivery**

No COVID-19 related guidelines have been issued with regard to digitization and automation of public service delivery.

### **2.2.19 Systematic Re-engineering of Public Service Processes**

Various COVID-19 related circulars issued by the HoPS provide broad guidelines to public organizations on re-engineering their processes in order to comply with the COVID-19 protocols and regulations issued by the Government

#### **2.2.20 Scaling Down of Operations and Redundant Positions and Jobs Arising from Automation of Service Delivery**

No guidelines have been issued on responding to the implications of the scaled down operations in many public organizations, occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic and potential redundancies in positions and jobs arising from automation of service delivery.

#### **2.2.21 Managing the Public Service Under Emergency Situations**

Guidelines on how to manage the Public Service under national emergencies/disasters are contained in the National Emergency Response Plan & Standard Operating Procedures, 2014 and the National Disaster Management Unit's manual.

#### **2.2.22 Technology Support**

The Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs approved the use of WebEx and Zoom for conducting virtual meetings and conferences.

HoPS, through the Circular on *Compliance with Workplace Guidelines on COVID-19 Pandemic* issued on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2020, guided public organizations to encourage use of electronic mail and scanned documents in the place of paper correspondences.

## **CHAPTER 3 : GUIDELINES FOR ADDRESSING SELECTED BROAD AREAS DURING AND POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

This Chapter documents Guidelines meant to provide a framework for public organizations to facilitate continued delivery of public services during and post COVID-19, while observing the mitigation and containment measures put in place by the MoH and the Government.

These Guidelines should be read and applied in conjunction with the following documents:

- i. The Constitution of Kenya, 2010 – The Kenya Vision 2030
- ii. Applicable Presidential Directives on the COVID-19 Pandemic
- iii. Applicable Head of the Public Service Circulars on the COVID-19 Pandemic
- iv. Applicable MoH Guidelines on the COVID-19 Pandemic
- v. The Employment Act, 2007
- vi. Labour Relations Act, 2007;
- vii. Occupational Safety and Health Act, 2007;
- viii. Work Injury Benefit Act, 2007;
- ix. Fair Administration Action Act, 2015
- x. Public Service Commission Act, 2017 and Regulations 2020;
- xi. Public Service Values and Principles Act, 2015
- xii. The Human Resource Policies and Procedures Manual for the Public Service, May 2016

### **3.1 Recruitment and Selection in the Public Service**

The following protocols will govern Recruitment and Selection in the Public Service during and post COVID-19:

- i. Public service organizations will be required to develop the necessary online recruitment and selection tools, including the requisite guidelines for use;
- ii. Unless practically impossible the entire recruitment and selection process, from the advertisement level to job offers, will be undertaken online;
- iii. All recruitment details will be obtained from the public service organization's web site;
- iv. Shortlisted candidates will be notified through the public service organization's website and the print media;

- v. Persons with disabilities will be accorded the necessary support on matters of recruitment and selection based on the nature of the disability; and
- vi. Interviews should be conducted virtually. In exceptional circumstances where interviews are conducted at the workplace, Government protocols and regulations on the COVID-19 pandemic must be observed.

### **3.2 Training and Development in the Public Service**

Public service organizations should encourage the use of virtual training. The following guidelines will apply for training and development:

#### **3.2.1 Teleconferencing as a Training Mode**

- i. Employees should be equipped with the necessary skills and competencies to use teleconferencing;
- ii. MDAs and County Governments should create necessary meeting portals and infrastructure for use of teleconferencing for training;
- iii. Public service organizations should develop clear internal protocols and guidelines for such training;
- iv. Monitoring mechanisms, such as log-ins and continuous engagement during the session, to ensure maximum attendance should be institutionalized.
- v. Number of attendees to such training should not exceed twenty-five (25) for effective delivery and interaction, while observing the 1.5 metres physical distancing;
- vi. Attendance register of such trainings should be maintained and only those who meet eighty-five (85) percent active attendance of all the cumulative sessions should obtain a certificate; and
- vii. Where physical exams are required, arrangements for appropriate rooms while ensuring strict adherence to the MoH COVID-19 guidelines for such sessions should be ensured.

#### **3.2.2 On-line Training and Capacity Building**

- i. MDAs and County Governments should encourage public servants to adopt this mode of training particularly for programmes that do not require continuous practical engagement;
- ii. MDAs and County Governments should ensure that the online programmes selected have an inbuilt mechanism for tracking performance and attendance to ensure that

certificates are only issued to participants who meet a particular score and attendance threshold;

iii. The Guidelines under 3.2.1, except iv-vi, apply to online training and capacity building.

### **3.2.3 Classroom Based Training and Capacity Building**

Where classroom-based training is necessary, the following guidelines shall apply to the trainers, trainees and the local training institutions:

#### **3.2.3.1 Trainers and Trainees**

- i. Attendees to such programmes, both trainers and trainees, shall have a valid (not more than 72 hours) COVID-19 test certificate in line with regulations governing training;
- ii. Trainers and trainees shall observe MoH protocols on COVID-19 mitigation, including wearing recommended masks, observing social and physical distancing and hand washing; and
- iii. The classroom size should not exceed twenty (20) participants for standard size rooms, where a distance of 1.5 metres between participants is maintained.

#### **3.2.3.2 Local Training Institutions**

- i. Adherence to all the MoH operation guidelines for a learning institution;
- ii. The institution must ensure that its employees comply with MoH requirements on COVID-19 containment;
- iii. Provision of adequate training rooms with requisite spacing as required by MoH to ensure appropriate social and physical distancing;
- iv. Isolation rooms for any emergency should be provided;
- v. Appropriate means of transport should be available in the event that a delegate needs to be rushed to a health facility;
- vi. Alcohol-based sanitizers or adequate water and soap should be provided at strategic places in the institution for hand washing;
- vii. Where accommodation is provided, the institution should adhere to MoH protocols on accommodation and catering;
- viii. COVID-19 education and information materials should be displayed at strategic places;
- ix. Screening guidelines should be communicated ahead of time; and
- x. Temperatures of the students to be taken daily before they enter the facility.

### **3.2.4 Overseas Training Institutions**

The sending institution must confirm, beforehand, that the training institution the officer is going to meet meets all the relevant COVID-19 guidelines of the receiving country. The Government will liaise with development partners and overseas training institutions and providers to provide virtual training where possible.

### **3.3 Performance Management in Public Service**

The following Guidelines will apply to performance management in the Public Service:

#### **3.3.1 Performance Contracting**

- i. Performance Contracting (PC) will be undertaken through the on-line GPCIS. However, performance monitoring and evaluation will require physical confirmation of actual achievements, while observing the laid down COVID-19 protocols;
- ii. MDAs should make use of the approved virtual platforms to undertake pre-negotiation consultations, negotiations, vetting and review (quality control) of their respective Performance Contracts;
- iii. The Principal Secretary, State Department for Public Service, where the PSPMMU is domiciled will provide any assistance sought by MDAs and County Governments in complying with the PC guidelines while ensuring that the laid down measures to mitigate against COVID-19 are strictly adhered to; and
- iv. The Head, PSPMMU will ensure that during the development of PC guidelines, capacity building and technical support to MDAs and County Governments, support on vetting, review of vetted PCs to confirm compliance with the guidelines, custody of vetted PCs, quarterly performance monitoring, mid-year performance review and annual performance evaluation, including compiling the annual performance evaluation report, are all undertaken within a COVID-19 free environment that safeguards the safety and health of public officers.

#### **3.3.2 Individual Employee Performance**

- v. Staff Performance Appraisal will be undertaken through the online Staff Performance Appraisal System (SPAS) hosted under the Government Human Resource Information System (GHRIS);
- vi. Target setting should be cognizant of the prevailing realities to ensure that the targets set are realistic and achievable;
- vii. Individual work plans shall be the basis for individual employee performance target setting and appraisal;

- viii. The supervisor will appraise the employee virtually on an agreed day for those employees working from home/remotely;
- ix. Performance appraisal for employees infected by COVID-19 will be put on hold until the employee fully recovers and reports back for duty. This should be formally documented and a record of the same kept in the employee's file;
- x. Constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic should be taken into account when the employee and the supervisor are agreeing upon formal provisions and documentation of evidence of achievement;
- xi. The performance improvement strategies should continue as planned and employees shall be informed of any changes thereof arising from the exigencies of the COVID-19;
- xii. The appraisal process will involve a quarterly feedback mechanism on the performance of the employee for the purpose of the overall annual evaluation; and
- xiii. Notwithstanding the above, all other provisions of SPAS will prevail in order to ensure continuity of service delivery.

#### **3.4 Leave Administration During COVID -19 Pandemic.**

- i. Public Service employees will continue to utilize their leave days as provided in the Human Resource Policies and Procedures Manual for the Public Service, 2016;
- ii. The normal sick leave will apply for an employee who has tested positive for COVID-19;
- iii. An employee may utilize their sick leave days if not sick but has been placed under quarantine by an authorized medical personnel;
- iv. An employee who wishes to take care of nuclear family members who test positive for COVID-19 will utilize their annual leave entitlement;
- v. During a lock down, employees who cannot work remotely, may be asked to utilize their annual leave days; and
- vi. If an employee utilizes all the annual leave days during a lock down the employee shall be allowed to 'bring forward' annual leave days for the next leave year.

#### **3.5 Management of Government Correspondence**

All incoming mail and documents should be sanitized prior to opening. Use of electronic mail and scanned documents should be encouraged.

### **3.6 Safety and Security of Government Information**

MDAs and County Governments are required to implement and enforce the following interventions to ensure safety and security of Government information:

- i. Establish an authentication process of people joining virtual meetings;
- ii. Use strong credentials such as passwords, PIN, Passcode, multi-factor authentication and encryption, among others;
- iii. Deploy up to date security technologies such as firewalls, antivirus and intrusion detection systems, for safety and security of data;
- iv. Public wireless networks should not be used to access sensitive Government information;
- v. Maintain and monitor logs into Government systems;
- vi. Develop and enforce policies, standards, procedures and processes for safety and security of Government information in a virtual environment;
- vii. Conduct regular user awareness on safety and security of Government information;
- viii. Conduct periodic Information Security Risk Assessments and Security Audits;
- ix. Set up a disaster recovery plan and ensure regular back up of data; and
- x. Adhere to the provisions of the *Public Sector Information Security Policy*.

### **3.7 Conduct of Meetings**

#### **3.7.1 Non-physical Meetings**

These meetings will be governed by the following guidelines:

- i. All meetings of more than four (4) individuals will be conducted on-line via webinars and teleconference calls;
- ii. In exceptional circumstances, physical meetings of more than four (4) persons may be held subject to adherence to COVID-19 MoH protocols and approval by the Authorized Officer or his/her representative;
- iii. The on-line platforms should be approved by the Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs;
- iv. All participants shall login to the virtual meetings by their official names, designations and department names for prompt identification;

- v. Participants shall join online meetings at least ten minutes to the scheduled time to allow adequate time to settle;
- vi. Participants attending online meetings shall ensure that they have a strong and reliable internet connection that allows for participation in both video and audio modes in order to create the intimacy of an in-person meeting;
- vii. Participants should ensure that they attend online meetings in an environment with minimal interruptions and that does not compromise the safety, security and confidentiality of Government information;
- viii. Meetings that require safeguard of critical security and confidentiality of Government information shall be held virtually in the office environment and through Government approved mediums;
- ix. Participants shall ensure that they do not share the meeting access credentials with unauthorized personnel;
- x. MDAs and County Governments should make provision for availability of a strong and reliable internet for their officers attending online meetings;
- xi. Prior to a virtual meeting, all participants should test the technology and make sure they are familiar with the key features to circumvent undue interruptions;
- xii. To ensure an effective and short online meeting, the meeting invitation, agenda, background information and ground rules should be circulated beforehand; and
- xiii. At all times during an online meeting, participants will observe etiquette which includes, but is not limited, to personal integrity, dressing appropriately, being courteous to other participants, keeping body movements minimal and maintaining eye contact by looking into the camera and as much as possible, not eating or drinking.

### **3.7.2 In-Person Meetings**

Where in-person meetings are necessary, the following measures should be observed:

- i. Participants attending in-person meeting (s) should be seated at least 1.5 metres apart;
- ii. Windows and doors in the meeting(s) venue should be kept open as much as is practicable for adequate ventilation;
- iii. Participants in the in-person meeting should at all times sanitize or wash their hands, put on face masks and observe all the other relevant MoH COVID-19 guidelines to minimize infections and spread of the conctagion; and

- iv. Participants in a physical meeting(s) will be required to provide their contact details, including mobile telephone number, email address and physical address for easier follow-up mechanisms if and when necessary.

### **3.8 Safety and Welfare of Employees and Customers**

#### **3.8.1 Promotion of Social and Physical Distancing**

In order to promote social and physical distancing at the workplace, public organizations and public servants are required to: -

- i. Avoid any form of congregation except as provided in Government directives on COVID-19 pandemic from time to time;
- ii. Re-arrange work places to not less than 1.5 metres between employees sharing an office; and
- iii. Minimise walk-in visitors except by prior appointment, maintain the stipulated physical distance and record the details of such visitors.

#### **3.8.2 Workplace Hygiene**

The following precautionary measures should be adhered to strictly by all public service organizations to limit the spread of the corona virus:

- i. Provide face masks and PPE to employees;
- ii. Wear face masks properly to cover nose and mouth at all times while in public places;
- iii. Provide alcohol-based sanitizers and/or access to washing facilities with soap and clean water for employees and citizens accessing services and ensure that employees and clients wash/sanitize their hands before accessing the premises;
- iv. Carry out temperature checks for all employees, customers, and visitors entering public offices;
- v. Ensure work places are clean and hygienic by regularly wiping surfaces such as door handles, desks, tables, telephones and keyboards, among others, with disinfectant;
- vi. Undertake regular fumigation of office premises, vehicles, wash rooms and other pertinent areas in line with guidelines issued by the MoH from time to time;
- vii. Sanitize all incoming mail and documents prior to opening;
- viii. Encourage use of electronic mail and scanned documents;
- ix. Cover mouth and nose with tissue or flexed elbow when coughing and sneezing; and

- x. Avoid close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms.

### **3.8.3 Safety and Welfare of Customers**

Public organizations interfacing with customers must adhere to all the COVID-19 protocols and regulations issued by the Government to govern such interactions. These include, but are not limited to, provision of alcohol-based sanitizers or adequate water to facilitate hand washing, taking of temperature as customers access the premises, wearing of masks at all times, observance of the social and physical distancing and strategic display of COVID-19 related literature.

They shall also ensure that customers adhere to the Government guidelines and any other institution specific guidelines on COVID-19.

### **3.9 Safety and Welfare of Frontline Workers**

Public organizations shall observe all the COVID-19 mitigation and containment measures instituted by the Government with regard to frontline workers. The organizations should also ensure that frontline workers observe all the COVID-19 related guidelines issued by the Government

### **3.10 High Traffic Services at the Workplace**

- i. MDAs, County Governments and Huduma Kenya should deploy and use the *Service by Appointment* and *Track my Service* systems in the delivery of their services to manage the visit of customers to Government service points;
- ii. Within the Government premises (offices and service halls) Heads of MDAs and County Governments shall be responsible for enforcement and ensuring staff and customers abide by the health guidelines issued by the MoH; and
- iii. The Heads of MDAs and County Governments may appoint a COVID-19 emergency committee to assist in the implementation of the safety guidelines within the MDAC.

### **3.11 Government Transport Protocols**

The following Guidelines shall apply with regard to the use of Government transport:

#### **3.11.1 General Guidelines**

- i. Before a means of transport is cleared for use, the authority responsible shall ensure that it is equipped with clean water, soap, adequate number of face masks of the recommended standard and a disinfection agent;

- ii. Each means of transport must be equipped with a conspicuously displayed flyer that indicates COVID-19 prevention information and advice on how to access health services in case a passenger falls sick and needs medical care during the trip;
- iii. The driver should maintain a record and contact details of the passengers in the vehicle to facilitate follow up if the need arises;
- iv. The person to whom the means of transport is assigned shall ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces such as the door handles, mirrors, steering wheel, gear lever, seats, crank handles, arm rests, hand rails, seatbelts, head rests, window controls, trunk/boot lid, dashboard control buttons, handle bars switches and power buttons and safety belts.
- v. All users of Government transport shall follow health protocols such as temperature screening and hygiene before and after boarding the vehicle;
- vi. The vehicles should carry fifty percent (50%) of their normal passenger capacity;
- vii. Any passenger or driver who develops any symptoms related to COVID-19 shall immediately seek medical attention from the nearest health facility or surveillance team;
- viii. All means of transport used to transfer an infected person to a health facility shall, upon releasing the person to the facility, be disinfected and ventilated for a period lasting not less than three (3) hours before use by any other person;
- ix. Upon completion of a trip such as from home to work, from one workplace to another workplace or from work to home, the vehicle used must be disinfected;
- x. Employees must not travel if they are feeling unwell with symptoms of COVID-19, even if these symptoms are mild.

### **3.11.2 Fieldwork Transport Protocols**

- i. Employees shall minimize non-essential travel between the headquarter to county and county to county;
- ii. Where travel from the headquarter to the field, field to the headquarter or one county to the other is deemed necessary, Authorized Officers shall restrict the numbers of officers travelling to the irreducible minimum considering the nature of the task and the role of each officer in the assignment for which travel is essential;
- iii. Seating arrangements shall be made such that officers sharing/working in the same office will sit closer to others of the same office;
- iv. Throughout the journey, ventilation shall be increased by opening windows; and

v. All the other guidelines under 3.10.1 shall apply.

### **3.12 Handling of Meals**

The following guidelines shall apply when handling meals at the workplace:

#### **3.12.1 General Guidelines on Handling of Meals**

- i. MDAs and County Governments should stagger employee work and break times to reduce employee numbers interacting at any one time where meals are served;
- ii. MDAs and County Governments should organize constant sensitization and observe the stringent hygiene and sanitation measures such as proper wearing of face masks at all times and physical distancing where meals are served; and
- iii. MDAs and County Governments should ensure continued adherence to the set Guidelines and all other regulations relating to food handling.

#### **3.12.2 Meal Preparation Areas**

There should be a designated food and beverage preparation area that meets the following criteria:

- i. Sufficient space to allow personnel to maintain physical distance of at least 1.5 metres from one another;
- ii. A hand washing basin within reach, fully furnished with soap and paper towels;
- iii. A no-touch, closed-lid trash container; and
- iv. Notices with the pertinent information on mitigating and containing the spread of the coronavirus as provided by the MoH from time to time.

#### **3.12.3 Personnel Responsible for Food Preparation**

Personnel responsible for food preparation, including beverages, need to:

- i. Frequently clean and sanitize or disinfect all surfaces and the floor at the food preparation station using Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) approved disinfectants;
- ii. Thoroughly wash and sanitize dishware, utensils, knives, cutting boards, timers and all other kitchen items before and after use as per the manufacturer's instructions of cleaning the items;
- iii. Use KEBS approved disinfectant products that are safe and recommended for use in food establishments on surfaces that touch food, countertops, dishes and cooking utensils;

- iv. Wear requisite PPE such as masks and gloves, which are effective in reducing the spread of viruses and disease during the preparation and serving of meals. These should be provided by the employer;
- v. Leave cell phones and other personal effects in the personal area. If a cell phone must be used in the preparation area, then it should be disinfected and hands washed with soap and water after use; and
- vi. Observe all the other COVID-19 mitigation and containment measures as issued by the MoH from time to time.

#### **3.12.4 Take-Away Meals**

The following will be observed on meals sourced from outside to the workplace.

- i. All meals should be individually packed and packaged in individual bags that include the meal, all sauces and sides, and single-serve utensils;
- ii. All meals should be labeled clearly with the recipient's name at the top of the bag (if assigned to specific recipients) to minimize the need to sort through bags;
- iii. The meals should have the restaurant name and contact, for ease of follow up in case of any issues;
- iv. Meals should be packaged in paper or cardboard containers and bags as the virus is said to live longer on non-porous surfaces;
- v. Packaging bags should have flat bottoms and sit upright for ease of storage and handling;
- vi. Packaging bags or boxes should be disposable to avoid the need to be cleaned or disinfected;
- vii. The employees delivering food should wear face masks at all times and follow health and safety code requirements for food handling to prevent food-borne illnesses;
- viii. Meal deliveries should be done by one person, if possible, to limit risk of spreading the virus through multiple contacts;
- ix. Delivery personnel should be screened upon arrival or entry into the building for fever symptoms; and
- x. MDAs and County Governments should provide a platform, table, cart, or other raised surface (not floor) for bags or boxes of meals to be placed for pickup.

#### **3.12.5 Meals Brought from Home by Employees**

Employees can bring meals from home but they must maintain a clear desk policy devoid of their personal belongings to enable the cleaning employees to thoroughly clean and sanitize all desks.

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### **3.13 Working from Home**

#### **3.13.1 General Guidelines**

- i. Where the concept of Working from Home (WFH) has been successfully implemented, such arrangements should continue to apply with clear performance targets and deliverables for the officers, subject to approval by the Authorized Officer;
- ii. Supervisors should prepare a weekly duty rota covering minimum personnel numbers to ensure business continuity and indicating the officers who will be in-charge of operations; and
- iii. Where an officer is permitted in writing to work from home, there should be clear assignments and targets for the period designated and a clear reporting line to monitor and review work done.
- iv. The Guidelines shall apply to all employees in the Public Service with the exception of employees categorized and gazetted as providing critical or essential services.
- v. Working from home during COVID-19 will be governed by the guidelines issued by HoPS on the same.

#### **3.13.2 Jobs Suited for the Working from Home Approach**

Jobs suited for WFH are those that require minimum supervision or face-to-face contact and have defined measurable deliverables, or any other job approved by the Authorized Officer.

Employees will be allowed to work from home only if their duties permit it, and subject to approval by the Authorized Officer.

#### **3.13.3 Eligibility Criteria**

The following conditions and criteria should be satisfied for an employee to be considered to work from home:

- i. Be performing a job eligible for the WFH arrangement in accordance with the WFH Guidelines;
- ii. Be on permanent or contract terms of service;
- iii. Have served for a period of at least one (1) year;
- iv. Have demonstrated satisfactory performance, self-discipline, self-motivation, and requiring minimum supervision;

- v. Confirmation by the employee that his/her virtual workspace location is appropriate for the WFH arrangement i.e. reliable internet connectivity, laptop/desktop, suitable lighting, ventilation and furniture;
- vi. Successful completion of a WFH trial period of one (1) month;
- vii. Maintained satisfactory performance during the period of the WFH arrangement; and
- viii. Approval by the Authorized Officer.

#### **3.13.4 Role of the Supervisor**

The Supervisor shall:

- i. Ensure the employee is working in accordance with their WFH Agreement and adhering to the institution's policies and procedures;
- ii. Review and sign off on records of hours worked as required;
- iii. Monitor and review the WFH agreement on a regular basis as recorded in the WFH agreement; and
- iv. Define the methods of disseminating information to employees who are working from home and schedule feedback meetings.

#### **3.13.5 Role of the Employee**

- i. Ensure set performance targets are achieved within the agreed timelines;
- ii. Work in accordance with the provisions of the WFH policy and adhere to the prevailing public service policies and procedures;
- iii. Ensure availability in the event of face to face meeting with the Supervisor;
- iv. Ensure facilities for virtual communication are available and in good working condition;
- v. Designate space or desk as virtual office;
- vi. Stick to the agreed work schedule with regular breaks; and
- vii. Dress appropriately.

#### **3.13.6 General Provisions**

The following general provisions for work from home shall apply: -

##### **3.13.6.1 Approval Process**

Requests to work from home by a work unit or an employee will be approved by the Authorized Officer on recommendations of the Ministerial Human Resource Management Advisory Committee (MHRMAC).

### **3.13.6.2 Virtual Working Hours**

Employees are expected to work a total of eight (8) hours per day and be available for consultation during working hours (8 a.m. – 5 p.m.) An employee who wishes to deviate from the schedule must do so in writing and receive necessary approval.

### **3.13.6.3 Communications Channels**

Communications channels should be through phone calls, e-mail, WhatsApp and tele-conferencing.

### **3.13.6.4 Technology Support**

Public Service organizations shall put in place necessary infrastructure for the WFH arrangement. Employees working from home should be provided with a laptop, portable internet access and mobile airtime where applicable.

Employees using official equipment are responsible for any willful loss or damage of the equipment.

### **3.13.6.5 Security Standards**

Employees on the WFH arrangement are required to maintain safety and security of documents, information and equipment in accordance with the prevailing Government regulations.

### **3.13.6.6 Terms and Conditions of Service**

The WFH arrangement shall not in any way alter the employee's Terms and Conditions of Service.

### **3.13.6.7 Discontinuation of WFH Arrangements**

The WFH arrangement may be discontinued at any time at the discretion of the Authorized Officer.

## **3.14 Tele-Counselling to Address Mental Health in the Public Service**

The following Guidelines shall govern tele-counselling in the Public Service:

- i. Provision of relevant tele-counseling infrastructure such as a Counseling Application and general digitization of counseling services;

- ii. Ensuring that Counselors who provide the tele-counseling services are competent with both the technologies used and the potential impact of the technologies on clients, supervisees or other professionals;
- iii. Training the Counselors to enable them determine the technologies which best suit a client and his/her counselling needs to ensure good outcomes;
- iv. Ensuring that Counselors make reasonable effort to understand the manner in which cultural, linguistic, socio-economic and other individual characteristics may impact effective use of telecommunication technologies in service delivery;
- v. Counselors to provide all the pertinent details of the telecommunication technologies being used to the client, including any precautions needed on the part of the client and the kind of environment that will yield good outcomes;
- vi. Counselors to obtain and document informed consent that specifically addresses the unique concerns related to the tele-counseling services;
- vii. Counselors to either require the client to show their face or master the client's voice in the pre-session to avoid chances of disclosing information to unintended person(s);
- viii. Counselors to ensure that utmost confidentiality is maintained, including advising clients on the need for confidentiality to avoid any inadvertent disclosure of sensitive data and information;
- ix. Counselors to ensure procedural termination/discharge when services are no longer needed or for referral purposes; and
- x. Counselors to adhere to the provisions of the Public *Service Guidance and Counselling Policy, 2017*, existing code of ethics for Counselors and other best practices in counselling.

### **3.15 Return to Work After Quarantine and Isolation and During and Post COVID-19 Pandemic**

#### **3.15.1 Quarantine and Isolation**

##### **3.15.1.1 Notification**

- i. A Public Officer who has been placed in quarantine or isolation shall notify his/her immediate Supervisor of the occurrence, including the facility of quarantine or isolation within twenty-four (24) hours.
- ii. This provision shall also apply to Officers who are required to self-quarantine as per the guidelines provided by the MoH.
- iii. The Supervisor shall notify the Human Resource Unit which shall prepare a report for submission to the Authorized Officer.

##### **3.15.1.2 Progress Updates**

- i. The Supervisor shall arrange to check in regularly with the employee during the quarantine or isolation period.
- ii. To the extent practicable, the Public Officer shall also provide regular updates to the Supervisor.
- iii. While making enquiries on the status of the Public Officers, applicable confidentiality requirements governing such situations shall be observed.

##### **3.15.1.3 Return to Work Requirements**

At the end of the quarantine or isolation period, a Public Officer shall be required to satisfy the following conditions before returning to work:

- i. Obtain the requisite clearance from the quarantine or isolation facility certified by the designated persons indicating that the Public Officer is free and safe from the COVID-19. The officer will present these documents to his/her Supervisor at the point of returning to work. For home-based care, clearance should be obtained from the approved public health officer in the employee's location;
- ii. Stay away from the duty station for a period of seven (7) days after the date of medical certification;
- iii. Comply with the Government guidelines on prevention of COVID – 19 including wearing of masks, social distancing, maintaining of clean surfaces and wearing of other personal protective equipment; and
- iv. Officers on self-quarantine will be required to report to their duty station after the expiry of the fourteen (14) day requirement.

***No Public Officer will be allowed to return to work without fulfilling the above requirements.***

#### **3.15.1.4 Return to Work Support**

- i. Officers returning to work from COVID – 19 quarantine and/or isolation may experience, fear, loss of sense of belonging, physical and mental stress. They therefore require support from both colleagues and the employer for effective adjustment at the workplace.
- ii. Ministries/Departments/County Governments and Agencies are expected to set up pre-work resumption counseling programs that will instill positive behavior for the affected Officers and create a conducive working environment.
- iii. Public Officers shall have access to adequate Mental Health and Psychosocial Support being offered by the Government through the MoH in line with the Human Resource for Health (HRH) Protocol which include:
  - a. Online stress audit tests;
  - b. Virtual Psychological First Aid (PFA), psycho-education and group counseling; and
  - c. Individual tele-guidance/counseling provided by designated counselors and Public Service Mental Health Champions in Ministries/Departments, Agencies, and County Governments whose contacts shall be provided by the Head of the Counselling Unit of the Ministry of Public Service and Gender.
- iv. The employer shall also continue implementing employee welfare and wellness programs at the workplace as outlined in the Human Resource Policies and Procedures Manual for the Public Service, May 2016.
- v. In addition, Ministries/Departments/County Governments and Agencies are required to adhere to the health and safety standards and requirements specified in the OSHA, 2007 and other guidelines issued by the Government from time to time.
- vi. Co-workers should also be counselled to enable them fully support the returning Officers.

#### **3.15.1.5 Work Plans and Arrangements**

- i. An officer returning from quarantine and/or isolation shall within the first week of returning to work, discuss and agree with his/her Supervisor any changes in the work plan and work arrangement and make any necessary adjustments.

- ii. The Supervisor shall undertake to notify the relevant office of any such changes immediately they are agreed upon.
- iii. The revised work plan shall be the basis for work performance review for the Officer.
- iv. Taking cognizance of exigencies of duties, the returning Officer may be considered for shorter working schedules.
- v. Authorized Officers shall ensure that necessary arrangements are put in place to cover the work schedules for Officers in quarantine and/or isolation.

### **3.15.1.6 Stigma and Discrimination**

Officers returning to work from COVID – 19 quarantine and/or isolation shall not be discriminated or stigmatized.

### **3.15.1.7 Administrative Processes**

The period a Public Officer spends in quarantine or isolation due to COVID-19, shall be treated as Sick Leave and shall be subject to the provisions of the Human Resource Policies and Procedures Manual for the Public Service May, 2016.

### **3.16 Officers with Pre-existing Medical Conditions and those Aged Fifty-Eight Years and above**

- (i) All State and other Public Officers with pre-existing medical conditions and/or aged fifty- eight (58) years and above serving in CSG5 (Job Group 'S') and below or their equivalents should work from home. This arrangement shall be reviewed from time to time;
- (ii) This provision excludes personnel in the security sector and other critical and essential services as outlined in the Circular issued to the Service on 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2020;and
- (iii) All employees shall return to work with effect from the date the full opening and easing of COVID–19 containment measures are announced by the Government.

### **3.17 COVID-19 Testing at the Workplace**

The following guidance should be taken into account when considering testing of public servants for COVID–19 at the workplace:

- i. Public servant(s) who show COVID–19 symptoms should immediately be isolated from others to a health care facility and be tested for the coronavirus;
- ii. Any public servant who might have been infected by the employee(s) should also be sent home to quarantine for such periods as stipulated in MoH guidelines on the COVID-19 pandemic;
- iii. Public servants who have been exposed to a person with COVID–19, should be quarantined immediately and tested for the virus. Testing should be done at least fourteen (14) days after exposure as the virus might not be detected immediately on exposure. In this regard, the employee should remain quarantined until test results are received;
- iv. A mass testing approach may be adopted in work areas where there is high transmission and employees are in close contact with each other;
- v. Testing may also be conducted in order to evaluate protective measures or to detect COVID–19 transmission hot spots at the workplace. It is noted that such a surveillance program is more often a public health function, and employers should undertake it only if the results have a reasonable likelihood of benefiting the employer and the employees;
- vi. COVID-19 testing should be undertaken in consultation with the MoH;
- vii. Test results should be communicated to the employee tested for COVID–19 immediately they become available;
- viii. The cost of testing public servants for COVID-19 virus shall be borne by the Government if the test has been undertaken on the employer’s demand or as part of medical investigations in health care facilities to determine employee’s health status ; and
- ix. All public servants shall comply with COVID-19 testing requirement by the employer.

### **3.18 Upscaling of the Digitization and Automation of Public Service Delivery**

In order to ensure continuity of public service delivery and the access of the same by customers, MDAs and County Governments will be required to:

- i. Implement MDAs and County Governments’ specific Electronic Platforms that will avail end-to-end online Government Services;
- ii. Integrate MDAs and County Governments’ services to Huduma online platforms, such as Web, Mobile, USSD, Self-service kiosks and Huduma Contact Centre to facilitate

consolidation, integration and deployment of public services and a digital payment platform to a single point of service accessed by citizens through Huduma Kenya;

- iii. Adhere to the Ministry of ICT, Innovations and Youth Affairs guidance on the procurement of MDAs and County Governments' Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) infrastructure and systems in order to ensure compatibility and ease of Government integration;
- iv. Adhere to the National ICT Policy of November 2019 that requires infrastructure sharing and access;
- v. Deploy a Customer Relationship Management System (CRMS) to facilitate the recording, tracking and managing of citizen service requests, complaints, scheduling of appointments and reminding customers of service updates in order to give Government agencies a holistic view of its citizens;
- vi. Implement the Customer Service Excellence Standards; and
- vii. Roll out capacity building programmes to address skilling, reskilling and up skilling on ICT skills gaps, build a resource pool of skilled ICT workers and avail capacity to design the new automated, digitized and online service platforms aimed at enhancing public service delivery and access.

Government E-Service Systems should ensure that the systems are secure and designed to deter cyber-attacks and ensure security of citizen data, assets and information

### **3.19 Systematic Re-engineering of Public Service Processes**

In order to make service delivery effective, efficient and accessible round the clock, MDAs and County Governments will be required to:

- i. Identify and prioritize services to be digitized based on the key considerations of services and processes that are citizen facing, those aimed at delivering final outputs to citizens and those that will boost Government program delivery;
- ii. Implement data sharing methodologies that support integration to MDAs and County Governments' back-office systems and onboarding of their services to MDAs and County Governments' online platforms and the Huduma eServices Channels, as one of the ways that will ease the access to public services by customers;
- iii. Digitize their records and facilitate sharing of their acquired citizen data across Government in order to avoid citizens having multiple requests for similar documents by various MDAs and County Governments;

- iv. Link their services to existing digitized platforms that include National Registration Bureau (NRB) database, Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) database and Huduma Namba platforms for seamless service delivery.

### **3.20 Scaling Down of Operations and Potential Redundant Positions and Jobs Arising from Automation of Service Delivery**

The following guidelines should be followed by public organizations when addressing the implications of scaled down operations and potential redundancies as a result of automation:

- i. Review operations to establish the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- ii. Identify tasks that have been automated in response to the challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic;
- iii. Identify any additional tasks that would be better delivered through automation;
- iv. Determine the impact that the scaled down and/or automation has on the jobs at the MDAs and County Governments;
- xiii. Develop and implement an appropriate retraining, redeployment and/or discharge plan in conformity with the provisions of the Human Resource Policies and Procedures Manual for the Public Service, May 2016 and other relevant labour legislation.

### **3.21 Managing the Public Service Under Emergency Situations**

In collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, MDAs and County Governments are required to:

- i. Develop a disaster risk matrix for their institution;
- ii. Formulate and continually implement a disaster risk reduction plan;
- iii. Develop clear strategies and guidelines for operation during emergency situations;
- iv. Create suitable internal Emergency/Disaster Management Governance Structures, including identification and training of Emergency/Disaster Management Champions;
- v. Train all employees on basic emergency and disaster management protocols to enhance preparedness; and
- vi. Comply with the provisions of the National Emergency Response Plan & Standard Operating Procedures, 2014 and the National Disaster Management Unit Manual.

### 3.22 Technology Support

To leverage technology for continued and efficient public service delivery, the following guidelines will apply to all public organizations:

- i. Develop and implement a clear and robust Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) strategy;
- ii. Review the adequacy of the infrastructure to support online provision of public services, and upgrade accordingly to comply with the provisions of the *National ICT Policy* on “*Public Service Delivery*”;
- iii. Ensure availability of well-trained employees to support automation and digitization of public services;
- iv. Identify and automate critical and high traffic services to mitigate and contain the spread of COVID-19 and also enhance efficiencies in public service delivery;
- v. Develop protocols and guidelines for the use of Webex and Zoom and other technologies that the Ministry of ICT, Innovations and Youth Affairs may approve for use in the Public Service;
- vi. Provide the Government with a means of tracking the WFH arrangement, including a mechanism for assessing and reporting the effectiveness of the arrangement and areas for improvement;
- vii. Ensure safety and security of Government information exchanged electronically;
- viii. Continually research and advise the Service on the optimal technologies for service delivery, including for training and capacity building; and
- ix. Comply with the provisions of the *National ICT Policy*, and in particular those on “*Public Service Delivery*”;

## **CHAPTER 4 : INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

The successful implementation of these Guidelines will require the collaboration of several key stakeholders. This Chapter outlines the key stakeholders and their respective roles.

### **i. Office of the Head of Public Service**

- a) Issuing these Guidelines to the public service organizations;
- b) Reviewing these Guidelines as appropriate; and
- c) Receiving and reviewing quarterly reports on the implementation of these Guidelines submitted by MDAs and County Governments through the Ministry responsible for Public Service.

### **ii. Ministry Responsible for Public Service**

- a) Providing technical support and advice to MDAs and County Governments in the implementation of these Guidelines;
- b) Co-ordinating the implementation of the Guidelines in MDAs;
- c) Monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the implementation of the Guidelines in the MDAs; and
- d) Preparing and submitting quarterly reports on implementation of the Guidelines to the HoPS.

### **iii. Ministry Responsible for Health**

- a) Providing timely updates on COVID-19 status and other emerging health issues to facilitate issuance of up to date guidelines to the public service organizations; and
- b) Issuing overarching health guidelines and protocols to aid prompt response by public service organizations.

### **iv. Ministry Responsible for Labour**

- a) Conducting periodic workplace risk assessments in MDAs and County Governments;
- b) Providing appropriate advice and intervention measures for the identified workplace risks;
- c) Monitoring, evaluating and reporting to the HoPS on compliance with the risk intervention measures; and

- d) Enforcing compliance with workplace health and safety in line with the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OSHA), 2007.

v. **Ministry Responsible for ICT and Innovation**

- a) Providing technical support in the automation and digitization of public services, including remote working; and
- b) Providing appropriate ICT infrastructure for implementation of these Guidelines, in consultation with MDAs and County Governments.

vi. **Ministries/Departments and Agencies**

- a) Establishing appropriate ICT and physical infrastructure for implementing these Guidelines;
- b) Implementing the Guidelines; and
- c) Preparing and submitting periodic reports on implementation of the Guidelines to HoPS through the Ministry responsible for Public Service.

vii. **Council of Governors**

- a) Ensuring that County Governments establish appropriate ICT and physical infrastructure for implementing these Guidelines;
- b) Co-ordinating the implementation of these Guidelines in County Governments;
- c) Monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the implementation of the Guidelines in the County Governments; and
- d) Preparing and forwarding quarterly reports on implementation of the Guidelines to the HoPS.

## **CHAPTER 5 : MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING**

This Chapter outlines the monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanism on the implementation of these policy guidelines. It also provides the review of the policy from time to time.

### **1. Establishment of a Ministerial Committee on COVID-19 Pandemic**

- a) In order to ensure effective implementation of these Guidelines, a Ministerial Committee on COVID-19 pandemic will be established in each Ministry with a Principal Secretary/Accounting Officer as the Chairperson. Other members comprise:
  - i. The Head of Human Resource Management and Development;
  - ii. The Head of Administration;
  - iii. The Head of Counselling; and
  - iv. A representative of each Department in the Ministry
- b) The Committee will oversee administration of these Guidelines and ensure a common and coordinated approach in the Public Service.
- c) Notwithstanding the establishment of the Committee, the Principal Secretary/Accounting Officer will be responsible for the overall safety of public servants within the Ministry and its downstream institutions.

### **2. Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation**

- a) The Committee will meet at least once a quarter to monitor the effectiveness of the protocols, guidelines and measures put in place to enhance the efficacy of management of COVID-19 and mitigate against the pandemic;
- b) The quarterly monitoring will include establishing compliance with the laid down measures, status of non-compliance and redress mechanisms;
- c) The Committee will also undertake a comprehensive quarterly evaluation of the protocols and directives to ascertain their efficacy; and
- d) The Committee will prepare a quarterly Situation Report for submission to the HoPS, including recommendations for best practices and protocols and measures that are redundant and/or ineffective.

### **3. Policy Review**

In view of the dynamic nature of the COVID 19 Pandemic, these policy guidelines will be reviewed from time to time to reflect the emerging issues on the pandemic.

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