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# Public protector probing 162 cases in E Cape government institutions

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The office of the public protector is investigating 162 cases involving Eastern Cape government departments, municipalities and universities.

Legislature spokesperson Lwandile Sicwetsha told the Daily Dispatch that the acting public protector, Kholeka Gcaleka, had visited the legislature, met the speaker and agreed to review the existing agreement between the two bodies to strengthen the work of public protector and oversight function of the legislature.

"The outcome of the agreement is a briefing of committee chairpersons on investigations conducted by the office," he said.

"The purpose of it is to share information with committee chairpersons so that they take it into account when departments appear before committees."

He said the collaboration was intended to strengthen the legislature's oversight function.

According to the presentation, the public protector was investigating nine complaints against the police, including allegations relating to their conduct in handling a case, assault, the framing of a suspect for murder, undue delay in rectifying a criminal record, failure to allow a complainant to open

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a criminal case, failure to appoint a reservist permanently, and undue delay in processing an application for expungement.

An investigation of the legislature was also under way in regard suspected irregular working conditions, while complaints against the Buffalo City TVET College involving the alleged abuse of state resources, victimisation of staff and misuse of public funds were also being looked into.

The public protector was also investigating one complaint against the University of Fort Hare, involving alleged maladministration relating to a student's thesis.

Thirteen complaints regarding the department of education were under investigation.

These included the alleged misuse of funds from the national lottery, failure to issue a progress report, undue delay in paying a salary and failure to repair a school roof.

Also included are failure to pay the salary of an examination assistant, failure to em-

ploy teachers and increase classrooms, nonpayment of overtime, undue delay in processing and paying leave gratuity and undue delay in issuing matric results.

Ten complaints involving the department of health were being investigated.

The allegations included nonpayment of pension benefits, failure to build a clinic and toilets despite an undertaking to build them in 2015/2016, medical negligence and lack of access to health facilities.

Allegations also included failure to pay money to the spouse of a late employee, unfair termination of contract of a service provider, irregular appointment and discrimination in the employment process, poor service at Sada clinic, nonpayment of an acting allowance and maladministration at Livingstone Hospital.

Health department spokesperson Mkhululi Ndamase said the department and the MEC welcomed any effort to ensure improved service delivery and accountability.

"We confirm that [the department] is committed to clean governance and also respects the rule of law that governs all investigation agencies," Ndamase said.

A complaint was being investigated against the co-operative governance department

regarding the alleged irregular sale of land by a chief.

In total, 17 complaints involving the Buffalo City Metro were being investigated.

These involved allegations of irregular billing, failure to finalise an investigation into the irregular deduction for rent, a health hazard caused by a neighbour, encroachment, failure to correct an error that resulted in the handing over of the complainant to debt collectors, suspension of whistleblowers and various service delivery issues.

Other cases under investigation involved the Coega Development Corporation (4), correctional services (5), the department of human settlements (11), public works (5), social development (5) and transport (5).

Also being investigated were cases involving Emalahleni municipality (1), Enoch Mgijima local municipality (2), Flagstaff local municipality (1), Dr Beyers Naude municipality (2), Dr Xuma local municipality (1), Inxuba Yethemba municipality (1), Nelson Mandela Bay Metro (1), Joe Gqabi local municipality (3), Kouga local municipality (6), Koukamma municipality (2), Makanda municipality (1), Mbhashe local municipality (2), Mquma local municipality (2), Ndlambe municipality (1) and OR Tambo district municipality (1).