

Civil service's lack of action top grouse

By FAIRUZ MOHD SHAHAR - 4 January 2016 @ 2:59 PM



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PUTRAJAYA: Delays in taking action and failure in enforcement are the most frequent complaints made by the public against the civil service.

According to the Public Complaints Bureau (PCB), 36 per cent of complaints received as of November last year were on late or no action by government agencies and departments, and 13 per cent were on lack of enforcement.

Other complaints on government service filed with PCB included failure to adhere to procedures, unsatisfactory manpower quality, lack of public amenities, unfair action, inadequacies in policy implementation, abuse of power and staff misconduct.

PCB director-general Datuk Raihan Sharif said the bureau received an average of between 500 and 600 complaints every month.

"We have seen a significant decrease in the number of complaints lodged over the last four years.

"In 2011, we received 13,256 complaints. The number dropped to 12,546 the following year. A total of 9,379 complaints were filed in 2013 and 7,000 in 2014. As of November last year, 5,895 complaints were received.

"Topping the list of complaints were those on unresponsiveness and lack of enforcement.

"Since 2011, we have resolved more than 90 per cent of complaints filed annually. Up to November last year, 93.1 per cent of complaints were resolved," he told the New Straits Times.

He said the main factor in the reduction of complaints was improvements to the public complaints management system known as "Sispaa" (Sistem Pengurusan Aduan Awam).

Sispaa is an online system where people can register and file their complaints.

The complaints are then accessed by PCB, ministries, government agencies and state governments.

"Sispaa was developed in 2013 and became operational in 2014.

"Once a person files a complaint via Sispaa, it will be automatically saved in the system and can be viewed by ministries or agencies.

"We also alert ministries or agencies to remind them to address the complaint and take action.

“Previously, the system could be accessed only by PCB. This resulted in complaints taking longer to be addressed by the relevant departments or agencies,” said Raihan.

The bureau’s guidelines require that every complaint received be resolved within 15 days.

If the complaint is not resolved within the time frame stipulated under standard operating procedures, PCB will contact the agency in question to set up a meeting and demand an explanation.

However, this depends on the complexity of a case.

Raihan said complaints that were categorised as easy must be resolved immediately, while those categorised as medium had to be resolved within 15 days.

He said complicated complaints could take more than 15 days to be resolved.

“Such cases include those related to financial allocation or legal amendments. There have been complaints on illegals in Cameron Highlands, which is a difficult case. The agencies involved may be given up to a year to address complicated cases.

“The complainant will be informed of the progress and outcome of the case. We will also ask the complainant to fill out a feedback form on how the complaint was addressed.

“However, if certain issues cannot be resolved, we will notify the complainant and provide an explanation.”

He said there were several types of complaints that could not be channelled to PCB, such as those on government policies and court cases.

“For instance, there have been complaints filed by people who were unsatisfied with the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). However, we cannot address the issue as GST falls under government policy.

“There have also been complaints on 1Malaysia Development Bhd. That, too, is beyond our jurisdiction, as the case is handled by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission.”

Raihan added that if a complaint was on a matter of public interest, it would be brought to the Permanent Committee on Public Complaints, chaired by Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Dr Ali Hamsa.

He said some ministries and agencies had shown improvement in handling complaints, citing the Health Ministry, Road Transport Department, Land Public Transport Commission and Malacca government office as examples.

He said this was due to enhancement in manpower and efficiency of Sispaa.

He said PCB was upgrading the system to improve the quality of its services and ensure that complaints were addressed.

The system is subscribed to by 41 ministries, government departments and state governments.

“At the moment, not all ministries and agencies subscribe to Sispaa, as they have their own public complaints systems.

“They include the Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Ministry, and several local authorities, municipal councils and state governments.

“We have discussed the matter with them, and hope that all agencies will use Sispaa and their respective systems simultaneously by next year at the latest.

“We believe that such a move will boost the management of public complaints, as well as increase effectiveness in resolving issues.”

Those who wish to file complaints can visit the PCB website at www.pcb.gov.my and click on the Sispaa link or visit a ministry’s website and click on the Public Complaints and Feedback link.

After registering and filing the complaints, complainants will be given a case number.

PCB will send a letter to complainants to acknowledge that their complaints have been received, as well as a letter to the agencies involved to urge that action be taken.

Following this, an investigation will be carried out. All correspondence on a case will be made in duplicate copies, with a copy sent to the complainants to update them on the case’s progress.