



MANUAL ON THE PROCEDURE OF THE MEDICAL BOARD



OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL PERMANENT SECRETARY
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER



MANUAL ON THE
PROCEDURE OF THE MEDICAL BOARD

26th March 2021

Contents

1. THE MEDICAL BOARD
 - 1.1 Aim and Function of the Medical Board
 - 1.2 Board Members
2. REFERRALS TO THE MEDICAL BOARD
 - 2.1 Referral by Heads of Department/Directors
 - 2.2 Referral by People Support and Wellbeing Directorate
 - 2.3 Referral Procedure
3. MEDICAL BOARD REVIEWS
 - 3.1 Medical Board Appointments
 - 3.2 Recommendations by the Medical Board
 - 3.3 Follow-up appointments
 - 3.4 Failure to attend scheduled appointments
4. MEDICALLY BOARDED OUT
 - 4.1 Right of Appeal

01

Aim

These guidelines are designed to assist Directors and Heads of Department in the procedure to be followed when referring public officers for Medical Board reviews.

1. THE MEDICAL BOARD

1.1 Aim and Function of the Medical Board

The People & Standards Division (P&SD) values people and constantly seeks to provide support to employees with a view to safeguard employee wellbeing and ensure employee satisfaction and motivation. To this effect, the P&SD continues to reach out to employees through the service offered by the Medical Board.

The Medical Board, which falls under the remit of the P&SD, aims to encourage public employees to remain in employment and its primary role is to provide professional guidance and support to employees in terms of occupational health. The Medical Board is composed of a multidisciplinary team of professionals which provide recommendations on issues related to the impact of the employee's health issues on performance at work. Following a professional review of the case, the Medical Board will then make any necessary recommendations with a view to support the employee whilst at the same time assist management as necessary.

1.2 Board Members

The Board is appointed by the Permanent Secretary People & Standards Division and is composed of a multidisciplinary team to ensure a holistic approach in their recommendations, including an Employee Support Programme (ESP) representative as Chairperson, a Psychiatrist, a General Practitioner, an Occupational Therapist and a Coordinator to the Board. Other professionals may be appointed according to the exigencies which may arise.

02

2. REFERRALS TO THE MEDICAL BOARD

2.1 Referral by Heads of Department/Directors

Heads of Department/Directors, through their Director Corporate Services, may request a review by the medical board in the following cases:

- An officer's behaviour needs attention and is considered to be related to medical issues
- There is doubt about a medical report submitted by an employee
- The officer concerned is about to start their unpaid sick leave entitlement
- The officer has disclosed a health condition and professional advice is required

Public employees may be referred by their respective entity, and certain provisions apply.

2.2 Referral by People Support and Wellbeing (PSW) Directorate

In cases of repeated requests for Donation of Vacation Leave, the People Support and Wellbeing (PSW) Directorate, within the P&SD, may inform the respective Department to consider a referral to the medical board to evaluate such requests.

2.3 Referral Procedure

Referrals for medical board reviews are to be submitted through this [link](#). All applications shall be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

Employees who for health reasons are finding it difficult to cope with their current duties are requested to make a formal request to their Director, together with documentation to support their claim.

In line with the retention policy for Human Resource documents as required by the Data Protection Act, the medical board file is to be retained for ten (10) years from date of termination of employment.

Directors responsible for People Management are to inform PSW of any officers who have been referred to the medical board but have since terminated their employment.

03

3. MEDICAL BOARD REVIEWS

3.1 Medical Board Appointments

The Medical Board will issue an appointment for the first review within three (3) working days from the date that complete applications are received. Medical Board reviews are held at the People & Standards Division, 3, Castille Place, Valletta. Referred officers are expected to attend the review and may choose to be accompanied by an adult relative such as spouse, partner or family member. In cases of employees with a disability or decreased mobility, a side entrance of the People & Standards Division from St. Ursula Street is better suited and accessible.

On the day of the review, officers are requested to arrive ten (10) minutes before their scheduled appointment. During their first review, officers will be asked to read and sign the information and consent form of the Medical Board. This is not a medical assessment and officers will not have a medical examination. For each Medical Board appointment, officers will be asked to explain their current work situation and medical condition, backed with recent medical certificates and/or reports from their medical doctor or specialist. Public officers do not need to avail themselves of vacation leave or take time off in lieu to attend for a Medical Board review during their working hours, and upon request they will be issued a confirmation of their attendance.

3.2 Recommendations by the Medical Board

Following each appointment, the Medical Board will send a written report within five (5) working days to both the Head of Department/Director and the officer with the necessary recommendations, including any support required at work and other professional help until further reviews, if any, are made. In certain situations the written report will be issued within ten (10) working days due to any additional clarifications required on the case. Employees may be referred to the Employee Support Programme (ESP) for the necessary support.

Officers who are recommended to remain on sick leave by the Medical Board are not to be allowed to resume duty before they are reviewed by the Board and confirmed fit for duty.

In cases where the Medical Board recommends that the officer remains on sick leave resulting in the officer utilising their full pay and half-pay sick leave entitlement, the Board will recommend the respective department to consider applying for Donation of Vacation Leave until the case is processed.

3.3 Follow-up Appointments

An officer who is reviewed by the Medical Board may be given follow-up appointments. Timeframes between follow-ups vary depending on the individual's situation. Before a follow-up review, all relevant feedback is requested from all stakeholders involved and presented to the Board for the officer's review. The officer is then given a follow-up appointment to review their progress.

3.4 Failure to attend scheduled appointments

If for a justified reason, and on good cause being shown, the officer is unable to attend for the scheduled appointment, they are requested to inform the Medical Board prior to their appointment so they will be issued with another appointment.

Officers who do not turn up for two (2) consecutive appointments without any prior notice or medical certificate justifying their absence, are contacted and provided with a third and last appointment. If they also fail to attend the third appointment without justification, the case is referred back to their department for any necessary action from their end. Disciplinary action may be taken against officers who do not turn up for their appointments without providing documentary evidence justifying their absence.

In cases where employees are unable to attend for their Medical Board reviews due to being hospitalised, proof of such hospitalisation is required by the Board. Depending on the particular situation of the employee, the Medical Board may reach a decision based on the medical information presented in the absence of the officer.

04

4. MEDICALLY BOARDED OUT

After a thorough evaluation, the Medical Board may recommend that an officer is medically boarded out if there is sufficient medical evidence demonstrating that the officer is unfit to carry out their duties. Public officers are not to submit requests with the Department of Social Security for invalidity pension prior to being reviewed by the Medical Board within the People & Standards Division. Officers may wish to refer to Section 3.4 of the [Manual on Social Security Contributions, Benefits and Pensions](#) for more information.

In such cases, the Board forwards the recommendation to the respective department, the officer concerned and the Department of Social Security. The retirement shall be with effect from the date of the last Medical Board review.

Upon receiving the recommendation stating that the officer should be medically boarded out, the Directors responsible for People Management shall proceed with the termination of employment following which the officer can proceed with applying for any benefits they may be eligible for through the Department of Social Security. The Medical Board recommendations need to be sent, with all relevant termination documents, to the relevant authorities.

Officers who are found unfit for duty by the Medical Board, shall be asked to apply for permission to retire and are considered to have retired from the Service with effect from the date they are certified by the Medical Board to be unfit for further service. In cases where officers decline to apply for permission, PSW shall proceed to have the officers concerned retire from the Public Service on grounds of public interest in accordance with Regulation 32A of the Public Service Commission Appointments Regulations.

4.1 Right of Appeal

The report of the Medical Board prevails over that of the officer's medical practitioner. However, if an officer does not agree with the Medical Board's ruling, they need to submit their appeal in writing to the Director People Support and Wellbeing by sending an e-mail to psw.opm@gov.mt or by post to People Support and Wellbeing Directorate, 3, Castille Place, Valletta, attaching medical evidence, within ten (10) working days from receipt of notification that s/he is Medically Boarded Out. An independent medical review will then be initiated, which decision will be final.

For more information regarding the Medical Board, please phone 2200 1236 or email medicalboard.opm@gov.mt.



OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL PERMANENT SECRETARY
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER