

10 PROVINCIAL BATHO PELE PRINCIPLES

The Batho Pele White Paper is the national governments' White Paper for Transforming Public Service Delivery. It is all about giving good customer service to the users of government services.

All public servants are required to practice Batho Pele.

There are 8 principles or guidelines for Batho Pele in the White Paper. They are:

1. Consultation
2. Service Standards
3. Courtesy
4. Access
5. Information
6. Openness and Transparency
7. Dealing with complaints
8. Giving Best Value

In KwaZulu-Natal we have another two principles.

They are:

9. Encouraging Innovation and Rewarding Excellence
10. Customer Impact

Batho Pele - "People First" was conceived with the intention of transforming service delivery in the public sector. Good service delivery leads to happy customers and employee satisfaction for a job well done.

Batho Pele was founded on 8 principles, but since the inception of the Good Governance Awards, two more principles have been added.

Consultation

This is about asking our customers what they want and finding out how we can best meet their needs. This may be done by questionnaires, or by talking to customers. It's important to consult as many of our customers as we can and to use the information we receive to help improve our service to them. It's important to report back to customers so they know what to expect, and to our staff so they know what is expected from us.

Service Standards

While we should continually try to improve the service we give, it's also about how well we promise to deliver our service at any time. If we already know what is important to our customers then we can set service standards which must be realistic depending on the resources we have. We should also be able to measure these standards so that everyone can see if they are being met.

Access

Access applies especially to the previously disadvantaged sectors of the community and to people with special needs. These needs may include access to our department for the physically disabled, or having services which are too far away for people to

visit. Good staff attitudes and addressing customers in their own language makes access easier.

Courtesy

Courtesy is not only being polite to customers, but being friendly, helpful and treating everyone with dignity and respect. We should write down a code of conduct and we should train and assess our staff in customer care. Our managers should monitor the relationship between front line staff and customers and help staff to give a warm and friendly service to everyone.

Information

Information is about reaching all our customers to make sure they are well informed about the services our department provides. This may be done in a number of ways- for example through newspapers, radio, posters and leaflets. It's important to remember that different customers have different needs and they do not all speak the same language. We should disseminate a Service Commitment Charter to inform customers about the services we offer.

Openness and Transparency

This Batho Pele principle encourages our departments to be open and honest about every aspect of our work. We should publish an annual report to tell citizens how our resources were used, how much everything cost, including costs for staff, equipment delivery, services and so on. It should also include how well our department performed-did we keep our promises-deliver on time and so on. If we did not meet our standards, we should list the reasons and find ways to improve our service. We should hold "open days," and invite members of the public to show them how we run our business.

Redress

Redress is making it easy for people to tell us they are unhappy with our service. We should train staff to deal with complaints in a friendly, helpful manner. We should apologise and put the problem right as quickly as possible. We should tell Customers how and where to complain and we should keep a record of all complaints and how we dealt with them. We should understand that complaints can help us to improve our service as they tell us what our customers want.

Best Value

This principle includes giving our customers the best service we can using all our resources. It also means eliminating waste, fraud and corruption and finding new ways of improving services at little or no cost. This might include us forming partnerships with other service providers and the community. If we work efficiently and maximise our skills we will add value and produce service excellence to give our customers the best value for their money.

Innovation and Reward

This Batho Pele principle was an addition to the original list as a result of many of the participating departments innovative and creative ways of "doing things better." Innovation can be new ways of providing better service, cutting costs, improving conditions, streamlining and generally making changes which tie in with the spirit of Batho Pele. It is also about rewarding the staff who "go the extra mile" in making it all happen.

Customer Impact

This is a new principle which has been added in for 2002. It focuses on the changes and consequences that result from our implementing Batho Pele in our work. It was noticed that some departments had concentrated more on some of the principles and had forgotten others. Impact means looking at the benefits which we have provided for our customers both internal and external -it's how the nine principles link together to show how we have improved our overall service delivery.