

# TEACHERS SERVICE COMMISSION



## WORK PLACE COUNSELLING POLICY FOR TSC EMPLOYEES

JUNE, 2008

## **PREFACE**

The core business of the Teachers Service Commission is provision of service to the teaching force in Kenya. A secretariat staff of 2,400 serves the 239,000 teachers. For the Commission to achieve its Vision and Mission, the well being and health of its employees is paramount.

The development of this policy has been necessitated by the need to address the psychosocial challenges that affect the Commission employees which in turn impact negatively on service delivery, and is in tandem with the ongoing reform initiatives. Guidance and Counselling services have become a strategic tool in addressing the Psychological needs of employees by use of specific skills and techniques in order to help employees become more competent, contented and creative.

The policy has taken cognizance of the key issues that may affect employees and hamper service delivery. It provides a framework for the implementation structures and programmes that will form a road map in providing counselling services to all the Commission employees.

In response, to the issues raised above, it has been found necessary to formulate a policy that provides guidelines and is responsive to the needs and expectation of the Commission employees.

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## **FOREWORD**

The development of this policy is in response to the psychosocial challenges often faced by the Commission employees. This includes physical, mental, social, financial, emotional and spiritual issues that adversely impact on their performance.

The importance of this policy in the management of Human Resource cannot be overemphasized. The policy gives direction, addresses current and emerging challenges and provides the necessary structures for the implementation of workplace Counselling.

Workplace counselling will empower and improve employees' self esteem, positively influence attitude towards work, increase awareness about psychological needs, facilitate assessment of needs for capacity building, provide feedback to improve work systems and prepare workers for entry and exit among others. This shall increase productivity, which in turn will enhance service delivery.

It is expected that the mainstreaming of counselling services into the core functions of the Commission's strategic plan and implementation of this policy will provide an enabling environment for the Commission employees leading to improved service delivery and have an impact towards the realization of the Commission's Vision and Mission.

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## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS**

<b>Advocacy</b>	Verbal/set actions geared towards supporting or influencing a particular cause
<b>Client</b>	A person seeking Counselling services
<b>Clinical Psychologist</b>	A professional who administers, interprets psychological assessment and testing, and conducts psychological treatment
<b>Commission</b>	Refers to the Teachers Service Commission
<b>Confidentiality</b>	The assurance that information shared during Counselling will not be revealed without the consent of the client
<b>Counsellor</b>	A professional who assists people to resolve their issues and/or cope with diverse situations
<b>Counselling</b>	Counselling is a helping relationship in which a counselor assists client(s) to resolve their issues and/or cope with diverse situations
<b>Counselling Professional Ethics</b>	These are principles, standards and guidelines that regulate the Counselling practice
<b>Counselling Session</b>	Time spent with a client in a formal Counselling setting
<b>Counsellor supervisor</b>	A certified professional counsellor who provides counselors with care and support and ensures Counseling standards and ethical practices are upheld
<b>Crisis</b>	A prevailing situation/problem whose

intensity is so great that it demands an immediate intervention

**Disaster**

An event, which causes great damage to environment and suffering to the people

**Guidance**

A process that helps an individual to recognize and unlock their potential, set goals and work towards achieving them in a healthy manner

**Psychology**

The scientific study of human behavior and mental processes

**Psychologist**

A specialist in one or more branches of psychology

**Psychotherapy**

The process of working with people with deep-rooted emotional and/or behavioral issues with a view to providing relief

**Psychiatrist**

A medical doctor who specialises in diagnosing and treating mental disorders

**Psychiatry**

A field of medicine concerned with understanding, prevention, assessment and treatment of mental disorders

**Psychosocial support Group**

People with common needs/issues /interests who meet from time to time to achieve desired goals

**Referral**

Recommendation of a client to another professional or agency for appropriate care and services

**Social worker**

A professional who works with a patient/client/family and community in need of social support

**Termination**

Refers to the final phase of a Counseling process

**TSC Units**

Refers to the Commissions Offices at the Provincial, City/Municipal/District Level

**Workplace**

Occupational settings, stations and places where workers are engaged for gainful employment

## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ACU</b>	AIDS Control Unit
<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
<b>CMIR</b>	Counseling Minimum Internal Requirement
<b>CS</b>	Commission Secretary
<b>GBV</b>	Gender Based Violence
<b>GCC</b>	Guidance and Counselling Coordinator
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>IEC</b>	Information, Education and Communication
<b>M &amp; E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MIR</b>	Minimum Internal Requirements
<b>TSC</b>	Teachers Service Commission
<b>VCT</b>	Voluntary Counseling and Testing



## **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Counselling is an essential service for effective management of individual and workplace challenges. In the traditional society counselors were approached as wise persons who had the ability to understand people's distress and offer relief. They counselled both the young and the old offering services aimed at ensuring that people grow up as responsible and productive members of society.

Since the advent of industrial revolution, there has been a breakdown of family values and community structures that provided a framework for psychosocial support. In addition, the effects of globalization, technology, urbanization, westernization and the mass media have continued to influence the evolution of moral values and this has had a tremendous impact on organizational behavior.

The Commission employees have been faced with many challenges including multicultural dynamics, age differences, family issues which spill into the work place, work related separation of families and couples, inter personal conflicts, substance abuse, HIV and AIDS, increased stress and burnout, poor morale, poor financial and time management among others. In some instances lack of a clear framework to address these issues has contributed to discipline cases amongst employees.

These challenges have had a negative impact on service delivery hampering the Commissions' efforts in achieving its Vision and Mission. In line with the ongoing reform initiatives aimed at improving service delivery to the public, there is need for the Commission to develop the necessary structures and mainstream counselling services in its core functions in order to enhance service delivery.

### **1.2 Background**

The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) was established by an Act of Parliament, Cap 212 of the Laws of Kenya in 1967. It was mandated to register, recruit, remunerate, deploy, promote, discipline teachers and maintain teaching standards in public educational institutions.

The government through various Education Commissions, Government Reports and Policy Documents has formalized and integrated Guidance and Counselling services in the Kenyan education system. These initiatives have focused more on students while putting less emphasis on

the employee's psychosocial needs. Kenya has experienced various tragedies including terrorist bomb attacks, fires and more recently the post election violence, which have affected not only the students but also the Commission's employees.

The public sector workplace policy on HIV and AIDS (2005) recommended the provision of counseling services at the workplace for all government ministries and public institutions. Subsequently, the commission developed the TSC sub-sector workplace policy on HIV and AIDS (2006) which recommended counselling at the Aids Control Unit (ACU). In addition the policy has encouraged formation and strengthening of psychosocial support groups among employees. However, these measures have not adequately addressed the psychosocial needs of all Commission employees due to lack of a structured operational framework. It is against this background that the commission has developed this workplace counselling policy.

### **1.3 Rationale**

Employees of Teachers Service Commission like others are often faced with physical, mental, social, financial, emotional and spiritual issues that may adversely impact on their performance. Compounded by several challenges at the workplace which include government restructuring programmes, HIV and AIDS, group dynamics among others, there is need to provide counseling services.

Although some counseling has been taking place in the ACU, in most cases such services have been provided in an ad hoc manner. This policy is expected to give direction on the mainstreaming of counselling services in the Commission workplaces, respond to emerging challenges faced by a large and diverse workforce and develop intervention programmes for enhanced performance and productivity.

## **2.0 POLICY STATEMENT**

The Commission shall endeavor to provide Guidance and Counselling services to all its employees. This policy provides Guiding principles and core elements that will improve employees' emotional wellness, attitudes and it seeks to create a functional Guidance and Counselling system responsive to the needs and expectations of its employees at the work place. It serves as a framework for the provision of the necessary structures and programmes for Counselling services at the workplaces.

To achieve this, the Commission shall establish the Counselling Minimum Internal Requirements (CMIR) for effective implementation of this policy.

### **3.0 AUTHORITY**

The policy derives its authority from:

- Education Act
- TSC Act Cap 212 (1967) of the laws of Kenya
- TSC Code of Regulations for Teachers (Revised 2005)
- TSC Code of Regulations for Secretariat Staff (Revised 2006)
- TSC Code of Conduct and Ethics, 2003
- Sub-sector workplace policy on HIV and AIDS, 2006
- The Service Commissions Act Cap 185
- The Sexual Offences Act 3 of 2006
- The HIV and AIDS Prevention and Control Act 14 of 2006
- Gender Policy in Education, 2007
- The Mental Health Act Cap 248
- ILO Convention - Vocational
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention 1983

### **4.0 OBJECTIVES**

This policy provides guidelines on provision of counselling services to all employees of the Commission. The **broad objective** of the policy is to provide effective and meaningful Counselling services to Commission Employees .

The **specific objectives** are to:

- Provide a framework for development of workplace counselling for Commission employees;
- Provide a framework for allocation of adequate human and material resources for effective provision of counselling services in the Commissions' workplace;
- Establish institutional and operational structures for implementation of the guidance and counselling programmes;
- Establish Monitoring and Evaluation of guidance and counselling programmes and activities; and
- Set Minimum Internal Requirements (MIR) for conducting counselling services at the workplace.

## **5.0 SCOPE**

This policy sets standards for mainstreaming Guidance and Counselling programmes in the Commission's workplaces (TSC Headquarter, TSC Field Units, Teacher Advisory Centre and Schools) for all employees.

## **6.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The policy shall be guided by the principles and core elements that regulate the Counselling practice.

### **6.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN COUNSELLING**

#### **6.1.1 Confidentiality**

Is a cardinal principle in counseling which entails the following:

- Clients will be accorded privacy during the counselling process;
- The counsellor will communicate clearly the extent of confidentiality offered to the client. The issues presented in the counseling session will be treated with confidentiality unless they pose a life threat to the client(s)/other person(s) or if a client commits any action that contravenes the law;
- Counselling records will be maintained in a confidential manner; and
- Access to Counselling records shall be bound by the rules of confidentiality.

#### **6.1.2 Autonomy**

Counselling will empower the client to make appropriate decisions, choose their own direction, and take necessary actions in a therapeutic relationship. Thus, counselling will endeavor to enable the client(s) to resolve their issues and cope with their situation.

#### **6.1.3 Beneficence**

Counseling will respect the dignity and promote the welfare of clients. The counsellor will ensure that what takes place within the counselling session is entirely for the clients' well being.

#### **6.1.4 Non-Malficience**

Counselling will not harm the client. The counselor will refrain from actions that risk hurting clients including physical or emotional among others.

### **6.1.5 Fidelity**

The counsellor will honour their commitment to the client(s) to enhance the trust placed in them.

### **6.1.6 Justice**

The counsellor will be fair and impartial to all clients in the provision of counseling services.

### **6.1.7 Dual/Multiple Relationships**

The counselor will refrain from engaging in the counselling of clients with whom they have other relationships that may interfere with counselor objectivity.

### **6.1.8 Informed Consent**

The client has a right to be informed about the counselling procedure, goals and benefits of counselling so as to make an informed decision on whether or not to seek therapy.

### **6.1.9 Evaluation, assessment and interpretation of clients results**

Counsellors will use assessment instruments as one component of the counselling process, taking into account the clients' personal and socio-cultural context. They will only utilize those testing and assessment services for which they are competent and take reasonable measures to ensure their proper use.

## **6.2 THE CORE ELEMENTS**

### **6.2.1 Guidance and counselling programmes**

The programmes will include but not limited to:

- Psycho-social Support;
- Advocacy;
- Employment separation (Retirement, redundancy, transfers, demotions, promotions etc);
- Loss, grief and bereavement;
- Stress Management;
- HIV and AIDS Prevention and Management;
- Trauma counselling;
- Disaster Response and Management;
- Peer Education and counseling;

- Conflict Management;
- Career and Vocational Guidance;
- Substance dependence and addiction;
- Group dynamics;
- Gender Based Violence (GBV); and
- Induction for new staff.

### **6.2.2 Counsellor Competence**

Counselling will be conducted by:-

Professionals who are holders of at least a Bachelors Degree in Guidance and Counselling or Counselling Psychology or Post Graduate Diploma in Counseling, Masters Degree in either Counselling Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, Clinical Psychology or the equivalent from a recognized institution and be a members of professional bodies that monitor and facilitate their personal and professional development. The person must be in a continuous Counsellor Supervision programme conducted by a certified counsellor supervisor.

### **6.2.3 Gender Responsiveness**

Counselling services will be responsive to the unique needs of both males and females due to their biological, socio-cultural and economic differences.

### **6.2.4 Multiculturalism**

Counselling services will be responsive to the cultural diversities of their clients.

### **6.2.5 Disclosure**

Disciplinary action consistent with the existing legislation/regulations will be taken against any counsellor for unauthorised disclosure of clients' Counselling information. However, if any information is to be disclosed to the employer or any other party by the counsellor it must be in consultation with the client(s) and in line with the professional counselling Code of Ethics.

### **6.2.6 Counsellor Supervision**

For effective service delivery the counsellor shall engage in on-going supervision in order to promote personal wellness and competence. Such supervision shall be done by a certified supervisor and shall

comprise both group and individual sessions offered at least once a month.

## **7.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

This policy shall be implemented by the Commission Secretary in collaboration with the counselling section and counsellors in the TSC Units whose respective roles and responsibilities shall be as follows: -

### **7.1 Commission Secretary /Chief Executive**

- Allocate resources for Guidance and Counselling services on programme based budgeting;
- Mobilize the required resources for facilitation of Counselling services;
- Facilitate response to disaster/crisis and liaise with National Disaster Management Committee as appropriate;

### **7.2 Head of Counselling Section**

- Provide and ensure quality Counsellor supervision services to the Commission counsellors for competence and professional integrity;
- Ensure that Guidance and Counselling is mainstreamed into the core functions of the commission's strategic plan;
- Provide and advocate for Counseling services to Commission employees at all levels;
- Co-ordinate the implementation of the Workplace Counselling Policy in the Commission workplaces;
- Review policy, strategy and guidelines on Counselling services;
- Provide information necessary for planning and budgeting for Guidance and Counselling programmes;
- Co-ordinate the development of Guidance and Counselling Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials;
- Identify counselling needs and develop appropriate intervention programmes for the Commission Employees;
- Identify training needs and facilitate capacity building for employees in the commission workplaces in liaison with other organizations;
- Network with relevant professional bodies, organizations and individuals to enhance Counselling services;
- Develop mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of counselling services;

- Liaise with departments/divisions/sections/TSC units for the purpose of Psychological evaluation, intervention, rehabilitation and restoration of employees faced with work related challenges;
- Create awareness among the Commission employees on the role of counselling;
- Implement and review the Workplace Counselling Policy; and
- Promote partnership with Counselling Service providers across Ministries, development partners and stakeholders.

### **7.3 Counsellors in the TSC Units in collaboration with the counselling section shall: -**

- Identify counselling needs and provide necessary information for planning and budgeting for Guidance and Counselling programmes;
- Provide Guidance and Counselling services to Commission employees;
- Prepare confidential reports as deemed necessary for informed decision-making;
- Respond to disasters and crisis through psychosocial interventions. In addition, co-ordinate disaster or crisis response;
- Create awareness among the Commission employees on the role of counseling;
- Make referrals of clients when necessary;
- Conduct monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of counselling services; and
- Network with professional Counselling bodies and organizations to enhance provision of counselling services.

## **8.0 POLICY GUIDELINES**

The following general guidelines shall apply to the workplace counselling policy for the commission employees.

### **8.1 Client obligations**

The responsibility of client(s) will be to:

- Seek Guidance and Counselling services;
- Take proactive measures in enhancing therapeutic process; and
- Attend Counselling sessions when referred.

### **8.2 Counselling setting**



For effective counselling, there shall be a room provided that is private, comfortable and located in a quiet place.

### **8.3 Counselling Sessions**

For effective counselling, a counsellor shall conduct at most 5 (Five) sessions per day and each session shall run from 45 minutes to 1 (one) hour.

### **8.4 Clients Records**

Due to the confidential nature and ethical obligations of the counselling profession, appropriate clients' records shall be developed, maintained, stored and utilized in a manner that ensures their privacy and safety.

### **8.5 Referral System**

The Counselling section shall identify relevant partners for purposes of establishing an appropriate referral system.

These partners will include:

- Institutions (Rehabilitation centers, support groups, hospitals among others);
- Other professionals like Psychiatrists, Medical Doctors, Clinical Psychologists, Counselling Psychologists, Social workers; and Peers.

### **8.6 Conditions for Referral**

Referral is made when: -

- The case/issue is beyond the counsellor's competence;
- Client requests for referral;
- An emotional entanglement between a client and counsellor occurs;
- A client is no longer benefiting from therapeutic relationship;
- Dual/Multiple relationships exist between a counselor and the client; and
- Either the counsellor or client is transferred or deployed.

In all referral cases confidentiality shall be upheld in line with Counselling Professional Ethics.

### **8.7 Counselling Termination**

Both the client and counsellor have an obligation to proceed with the counselling process until termination phase when mutually agreed upon goals are achieved. However, there are other instances when termination may be necessary. This includes when:-

- A client ceases to benefit from counselling sessions;

- Instances of conflict of interest arise during counselling process;
- The case requires referral to another practitioner; and
- Either the client or counsellor relocates.

## **9.0 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK - (Refer to Annex 1)**

A successful counselling policy requires cooperation, willingness and trust amongst the employer and employees. The Commission will use the existing administrative structures to implement this policy. The overall implementation will be the responsibility of the Commission Secretary in liaison with the Head of Counselling section at the TSC Headquarters and the Heads of counselling at the TSC Units.

## **10.0 RESEARCH, MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

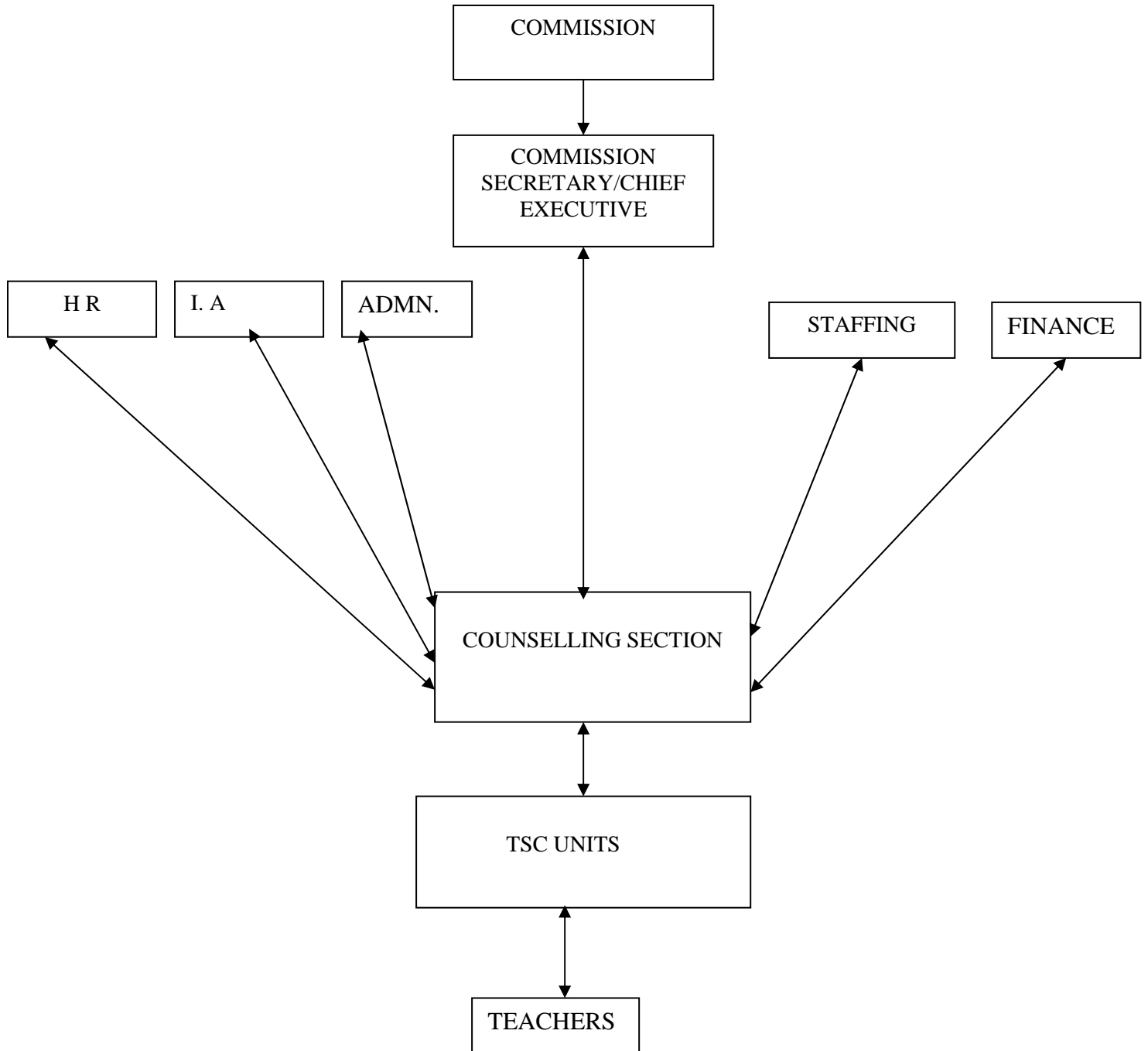
This policy provides for continuous research, monitoring and evaluation for effective and efficient service delivery. This shall generate information necessary for assessing the impact of Guidance and Counselling services among the Commission employees working in harmony with existing structures. This will be used to formulate intervention programmes that will address appropriate counselling needs for the employees.

## **12.0 REVIEW OF POLICY**

This Policy will be reviewed from time to time to ensure that it remains relevant to the counselling needs of the Commission employees.

**ANNEX I**

**THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK**



**Key:**  
ADMN. - Administration  
I. A - Internal Audit  
HR - Human Resource

## **ANNEX II**

### **COUNSELLING MINIMUM INTERNAL REQUIREMENTS**

The Commission will be required to meet the following Counselling Minimum Internal Requirements (CMIR) for effective implementation of this policy. It will:

- Introduce and intensify appropriate education and awareness on Counselling programmes and services in the workplace;
- Integrate Counselling programmes with those that promote the health and well being of employees;
- Create an enabling environment that will encourage employees to seek counselling services;
- Designate an officer(s) with adequate skills, seniority and support to implement provisions of this policy and ensure that the officer(s) so designated is/are held accountable by means of performance indicators in the implementation of the policy;
- Liaise with other departments, organizations and individuals and other service providers to enhance counseling services;
- Mainstream counseling into the Commissions overall strategic plan and performance targets;
- Allocate adequate human and financial resources to implement the policy and establish a sector budget line for Counselling programmes and activities; and
- Establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of workplace Counselling intervention programmes.

**ANNEX III  
REFERRAL FORM (A)**

Name: .....

Client Code Number.....

Tick against reason(s) for referral:

Chronic Absenteeism	
Suicidal tendencies	
Family issues	
Poor performance	
Depression	
Anxiety	
Poor interpersonal relationships	
Drug abuse/Dependency	
Alcoholism	
Loss, grief and bereavement	
Physical health issues	
Relocation	
Any other issues (specify)	

**ANNEX IV**

**REFERRAL FORM (B)**

Name: .....

Client Code Number: .....

Reason(s) for referral:

Counsellor's Name .....

Designation.....

Name .....

Designation .....