



**Pay No Bribe**  
**Sierra Leone**



### **The first Pay No Bribe report on bribe taking in the public sector released by the ACC**

As the Pay No Bribe (PNB) online reporting platform concludes its fourth month of operation, the first report on bribe-taking by public sector officials, engagement with an honest official, and responses from ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) is being released by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Pay No Bribe, which is in its pilot phase, presently covers the health, education, water, electricity and law enforcement (police) sectors, and has district support mechanisms in Bo, Bombali, Kenema Districts and the Western Area. It asks members of the public to report when they have been asked to pay a bribe by a public official, whether or not they paid it, and when they met an honest official. Reporting is quick and anonymous, and can be done by calling free on 515, going to the website, or downloading the PNB app on a mobile device.

PNB captures data trends on corruption in the public sector, and the data is made public on a website [www.pnb.gov.sl](http://www.pnb.gov.sl). The ACC also shares detailed reports on monthly trends with the relevant GOSL MDAs. MDAs use this data to address corruption at source through administrative action or systems/policy reforms and have to report back on the actions they have taken on a quarterly basis.

The first PNB responses cover the last quarter of 2016. A total of 7027 reports were received from the public during this period. Of these, 79.7% (5602) reported paying a bribe; 12.5% (885) reported that they did not pay a bribe and 7.7% (540) reported meeting an honest official. Just under half (48.7%) of these reports concerned the Police Force, 23.2% health officials; 22% education sector officials; 4.6% electricity officials and 1.3% were about water sector officials.

PNB is led jointly by the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Office of the Chief of Staff, and is one of the President's Recovery Priorities under improving governance in the public sector. The platform is funded by GoSL and UK Aid.

Saidu Conton-Sesay, Chief of Staff, said: "Corruption remains a significant challenge to our country's development. It diverts resources that should go into health care, education and infrastructure and erodes trust in public institutions. The advantage of the Pay No Bribe

system is that it shines a spotlight on trends and patterns within MDAs so that they can direct their resources more efficiently towards developing robust responses against institutionalised corruption.”

The figures suggest that men are 10% more likely to pay a bribe than women. This figure disguises substantial disparities. For example, men are almost six times more likely than women to pay a bribe to the Police. In the health sector, women are four times more likely to pay a bribe than men. There is more parity in education, with girls (47%) reporting slightly less bribery than boys (53%).

In terms of public utilities, men are more likely to pay a bribe for electricity services and women for water.

Nabillahi Kamara, Anti-Corruption Commission’s Director of National Anti Corruption Strategy (NACS) and Programme Manager for the PNB, says that the general public’s initial response to using Pay No Bribe was encouraging, but added that for the system to become effective against corruption, more needed to be done to encourage the public to report public servants who asked for bribes. “PNB is intended to promote change within institutions. It does not target or prosecute the individuals who take bribes. Instead it captures trends, identifies hot spots and problem areas. It looks at the big picture so that MDAs can work on creating change from within - through training and education, as well as new systems and policies.”

The MDAs responses to November and December data from PNB show the Sierra Leone Police taking a growing stance against corruption within their ranks.

With traffic related bribes recording the most complaints, actions taken by the police include:

- A meeting of all crime officers and regional police commanders to formulate strategy on way forward.
- A crackdown on 21 illegal checkpoints between 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2016 and 12<sup>th</sup> January 2017
- Regional police commanders to take ownership of the Pay No Bribe campaign by monitoring traffic police and investigative departments.
- Stakeholder meetings on PNB.
- Local radio activity on PNB in piloted areas.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has alerted its District Education Offices to monitor schools more effectively and is continuing to use the support of Paramount Chiefs country-wide to serve as Chief Monitoring Officers for schools within their districts. Teachers and lecturers found guilty of corruption will have their services terminated.

A programme of public awareness raising through the media is also underway and the Ministry has plans to address the issue of integrity through an ongoing review of the Basic Education Curriculum.

The main complaints in relation to EDSA, Guma Valley Water Company and the Sierra Leone Water Company concerned meter replacements, new connections and illegal connections.

In response, these agencies are focusing on strategies to promote increased transparency with their customers, a media and information blitz, increasing visibility of service charters so that customers can distinguish between legitimate fees and bribes, and staff training on PNB. EDSA has set up a customer service hotline to enhance communication between the organisation and its customers.

In the health sector, antenatal care, child birth and under-five health – services which are provided for under the free health care initiative - have emerged as the areas where requests for bribes are most common. Actions being taken by the Ministry of Health and Sanitation include sharing reports with District Medical Officers and requesting them to investigate. Awareness raising on PNB among staff and publicising the MOHS service charter in all health facilities is also planned.

Patrick Sandi, ACC, Public Outreach Department explains that reports of bribery could be expected to rise as people become more confident with PNB: “As the general public gain confidence in the system and are reassured that it is really an anonymous way of reporting, we hope that they will make more regular use of the 515 Freephone number and online platforms to report corruption in the delivery of public services. We will only reduce public sector corruption when we work together – the public by reporting when they are asked to pay bribes and the MDAs by identifying and changing the policies and procedures which allow corruption within their ranks to flourish.”