



Wes-Kaapse Provinsiale Parlement
Western Cape Provincial Parliament
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COMMITTEEE REPORT

Report of the Standing Committee on Social Development on its oversight visit to the Awendrus Old Age Home in Worcester on 7 June 2022

The Standing Committee on Social Development having conducted an oversight visit to the Awendrus Old Age Home in Worcester on 7 June 2022, reports as follows:

The delegation

The delegation of the Standing Committee on Social Development included the following Members:

Democratic Alliance

Plato, D (Chairperson)

Kaizer-Philander, WF

Mackenzie, RD

African National Congress

BakuBaku-Vos, NG (ANC)

AL JAMAH

Brinkhuis, G

Additional Member

Windvogel, R (ANC)

1. Background

The Standing Committee on Social Development conducted an oversight visit to the Awendrus Old Age Home in Worcester on Tuesday, 7 June 2022, as part of its oversight function.

The visit to the Awendrus Old Age Home followed a complaint received by the Committee in 2021, regarding the allegations of mismanagement at the Awendrus Old Age Home. The Committee also resolved to visit the NGO to assess the programmes offered and the safety protocols that were in place at the Old Age Home. Furthermore, the Committee visited the Old Age Home to inspect how it was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and to assess the quality of services offered to the elderly persons in Worcester and the surrounding areas post the pandemic.

2. Salient points that emanated from the visit to the Awendrus Old Age Home

Mr. Grey, the Director for Finance, Ms. Sauls, the Director for Residence, Mr. Petersen, the Executive Director, Mr. Philander, the Health and Safety Chairperson and Ms. Van Wyk, the Clerk, welcomed the Committee and proceeded to brief the Committee on the services and safety protocols of the Old Age Home. Mr. Grey reported that the Awendrus Old Age was a residential facility for older persons catering for clients around Worcester and the surrounding areas. It was reported that the Awendrus Old Age Home was registered as a Non-Profit Organisation and in 2018 the facility transitioned from being an NPO to registering as a Non-Profit Company (NPC). He reported that the capacity for the old age home was 102, and there were 94 old age persons during the visit of which 45 persons were reported to be suffering from dementia.

The Committee was informed that the old age home was receiving monthly grant of R360 000 from the Department of Social Development. The funding pays for staff salaries and electricity. It was reported that the clients pay 90% of their government pension grant to the Home as a contribution towards their boarding and lodging.

The Awendrus Old Age had 58 staff members that consists of one Sister, four Nurses, one Staff Nurse, 20 Carers for day and night shifts, and other general workers. It was reported that the doctor visits the facility every Thursday in a week. The Old Age Home had one male nurse for the day shift and there was no male nurse for the night shift, this was highlighted as a challenge. It was reported that the shortage of male nurses at the Awendrus Old Age makes it difficult for the female nurses to carry the male patients. Some of the challenges that were highlighted at the facility include lack of lifting equipment for sick clients, budget constraints, inadequate security within the home, and staff shortage, especially male nurses. The Committee was informed that there were cameras and alarm system within the facility that are used as a safety measure in the absence of the security personnel.

The Committee was informed that there had been reported cases of injury on duty at the facility. The mandate of the Old Age Home is to care for the Old Persons, however, it was reported that the Department of Social Development dropped paraplegic clients temporarily at the Awendrus Old Age which has become a permanent arrangement. The Department has accepted people who are less than 60 years old and this has become a challenge for the female nurses to lift the paraplegic clients. The facility does not have lifting equipment. It was also reported that three of the clients in the facility do not have Identity Documents and were not getting the social grants.

It was reported that there were the old persons within the facility who were not receiving visitors, their families have neglected them however the majority of the family members were involved and were visiting the elderly persons regularly.

The facility has managed to build partnerships with stakeholders such as Dischem, the Department of Correctional Services, Boland Collage, the Western Cape Government Nursing College, and the South African Police Service from Worcester Police Station. The Committee was informed that Dischem sponsored the Older Persons with goody bags, the Department of Correctional Services visits the facility twice a year and pamper the elderly persons, and the Boland College and the Nursing College send their nursing students to the Home for the nursing internship programme. The facility indicated that it appreciates these partnerships immensely as they contribute to the care of elderly persons within the facility.

3. Input from the trade union representatives

The Committee gave an opportunity to Mr. Horn and Mr. Abdul from LAWU Trade Union in Worcester to raise their grievances. Mr. Abdul indicated that he was the General Secretary for the LAWU Trade Union in Worcester. He informed the Committee that they started interacting with the management of the facility in 2021 due to the problems raised by their members who are working for the Awendrus Old Age Home. He highlighted the following as their major problems with the facility:

3.1 The management of the Awendrus Old Age Home

Mr. Abdul alleged that the facility was mismanaged. He reported that the facility was registered as an NPO and was changed to an NPC, he indicated that this change was illegal because an NPO cannot be changed to an NPC. According to Mr. Abdul, they engaged the Department of Social Development on this matter and the forensic investigation by the Department was underway. The Union needs clarity on the legal process of this change.

The Union reported that the administration of the Awendrus Old Age in Worcester was a problem. The Union indicated that it has been alleged that the Older Persons at the Awendrus Old Age were not getting the necessary care such as healthy food, toiletries, etc.

3.3 The appointment of the Board Members for the Old Age Home

The Union alleged that the appointment of board members at the Awendrus Old Age Home was a challenge because relevant stakeholders and the members of the community were not involved.

3.4 Poor relationship between the Union and the management of the Awendrus Old Age Home

The Union alleged that the employer or the organisation refused the Union the right to represent their members that are working at the Awendrus Old Age Home. It was reported that the management of the Old Age Home refused to cooperate with the union and community members.

Mr. Petersen, the Executive Director at the Awendrus Old Age Home indicated that the Union was not welcomed within the premises of the NGO due to a strained relationship between the management of the Old Age Home and the Union representatives.

The Chairperson, encouraged cooperation between the Union, management of the Awendrus Old Age Home and the community at large. He emphasised that their partnership was vital to benefit the older persons at the Awendrus Old Age Home. He encouraged the Union, Board Members, and management of the facility to meet and found each other and take the old age home forward.

Mr. Horn, a Union representative indicated that as a Union if the management of the facility allows them to engage and discuss matters, the Union can make a difference at the Awendrus Old Age Home, unfortunately, the management of the Home was not willing to engage them. He further recommended that workers at the Home need to be trained in Occupational Health and Safety, the training will assist the facility to handle the injury on duty cases better. Mr. Horn stressed that the Union does not want to fight with the management but rather work with them.

The Committee conducted a walkabout of the facility. The Members noticed that the home was clean, and the most of the older persons were seating in the sun as the building was cold inside.

6. Recommendation

The Committee recommended that the old age home should come up with ways or activities to keep elderly persons busy during the day.

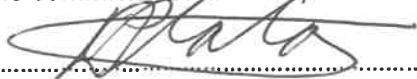
7. Resolution

The Committee resolved to schedule an oversight visit to another old age home in Elsies Rivier.

8. Information Requested

The Committee requested that the LAWU Union Representative should submit their grievances to the Committee in writing including the details of the alleged investigation by the Department of Social Development on or before Thursday, 30 June 2022.

The Committee successfully concluded its visit.



MR D PLATO, MPP

**CHAIRPERSON: STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT**