

PARLIAMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF THE WESTERN CAPE

ANNOUNCEMENTS, TABLINGS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

FRIDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2022

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Standing Committee on Social Development on the Annual Report of the Department of Social Development for the 2021/22 financial year

The Standing Committee on Social Development, having deliberated on the Annual Report of the Department of Social Development for the year ended 31 March 2022, reports as follows:

1. Introduction

The Standing Committee's Annual Report meeting was published in newspapers inviting stakeholders and members of the public to attend and participate in the discussions.

The Standing Committee on Social Development (the Committee) deliberated on the Annual Report of the Department of Social Development (the Department) on 18 October 2022, as part of its oversight function. The Minister and the Head of Department were allowed to make opening remarks.

The Department was examined on:

Part A: General Information;

Part B: Departmental Performance Information; and

Part D: Human Resources Management
of the Department's Annual Report.

Members of the public were also given an opportunity to pose questions and to make input during the discussions.

2. Overview

The Head of the Department of Social Development, Dr Macdonald provided an overview of the performance of the Department during the 2021/22 financial year.

Dr Macdonald reported that despite the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department remained focused on its strategic priorities which include child protection services; providing services to persons living with disabilities; addressing gender-based violence; strengthening families and supporting individuals and families with substance use disorders.

The outcomes of the Department for the period under review were guided by the Western Cape Recovery Plan and were aimed at addressing the plight of vulnerable families and individuals seeking social welfare services and support for women and children who have become victims of interpersonal violence, especially gender-based violence.

The economic impact of the COVID-19 disaster has seen substantial growth in demand for social development services, alongside budget cuts experienced by the Department, with a 0,4 percent reduction for DSD in the 2022/23 financial year, before taking inflation into account. The HOD reported that this has meant that the Department had to make extremely difficult trade-offs to maintain, and where necessary, expand the most critically needed areas of service delivery to the people of the Western Cape.

The HOD reported that slow economic growth has hampered households' recovery from the pandemic. Unemployment continued to grow, which has worsened food insecurity in the province. The Department ensured cooked meals and food parcels reached 270 802 people during the financial year under review. This included cooked meals at community kitchens, supported by the Department through food vouchers, dry goods, and food parcels, which reached 96 500 qualifying beneficiaries. Further efforts to assist vulnerable households during the period under review included the provision of temporary work opportunities to over 2 000 people through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). The Department allocated resources towards humanitarian relief to alleviate some of the pressure many of poorer households were facing due to the loss of income brought forth by job losses.

3. Key points from the discussion on the Annual Report of the Department

- 3.1. The Department reported that it remains committed to its statutory obligation to ensure the protection and care of vulnerable children. Through community-based child and youth care prevention and early intervention services, 8 834 children were provided access to developmental support during the 2021/22 financial year.
- 3.2. During the financial year under review, the Department strengthened diversion services in the province by facilitating the training of 26 probation officers in the areas of self-image, sexual education, personal violence, coping mechanisms, and life skills.
- 3.3. In addition, school-based crime prevention programmes were prioritised and reached 5 806 learners with behaviour conduct disorders.
- 3.4. During the period under review, a total of 35 616 foster care cases were loaded into the web-based Foster Care Management System. The capture of all remaining foster care cases is envisaged to be completed by the first quarter of 2022/23.
- 3.5. The Department continued to support the Early Childhood Development (ECD) sector while working through the year under review towards the full shift of the function to the Western Cape Education Department from 1 April 2022.
- 3.6. The Department has provided integrated family strengthening and reunification programmes that focused on building resilient families. These programmes include support for homeless adults, with the number of bed spaces in shelters for homeless adults increasing from 2 031 in 2020/21 to 2 208 by the end of the 2021/22 financial year.
- 3.7. It was reported that 37 shelters for homeless adults were funded across the province.
- 3.8. During the financial year under review, regular engagements and training sessions were held with the sector and funded non-profit organisations (NPOs) to enhance practitioner care and support to persons with disabilities and parental support structures in the province.

- 3.9. In addition, two specially adapted 16-seater vehicles for the transportation of children with intellectual disabilities were handed over to Nomaxabiso Day Care Centre and Beaufort West Association for the physically disabled, respectively, during the 2021/22 financial year.
- 3.10. Furthermore, a third vehicle was handed over to the Vrolike Vinkies in April of the 2022/23 financial year and the fourth vehicle will be handed over during the 2022/23 financial year.
- 3.11. During the term under review, six additional fully operational GBV shelters were opened in the province in response to an increase in gender-based violence (GBV) during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3.12. The Department has established a Western Cape Government Transversal Gender-based Violence Forum, which meets monthly and contributed to the Western Cape Government Gender-based Violence Implementation Plan, which was adopted by the Cabinet in September 2021.
- 3.13. The Department reported that the rights, safety and well-being of the older persons were supported through the provision of community-based support services.
- 3.14. The Department strived to improve access to services for persons with SUDs, which threaten the health, safety and well-being of communities in the province by expanding its community-based treatment services to rural areas in Beaufort-West, Stilbaai, Ceres and Villiersdorp.
- 3.15. During the financial year under review, 12 615 youth accessed skills development programmes at community-based organisations and Youth Cafés across the province.
- 3.16. The Department reported that over 999 000 packs of sanitary pads were distributed to 223 schools across the province to preserve the dignity, well-being and health of young girls and women in schools through the Sanitary Dignity Project.
- 3.17. The sustainability of the NPOs, continued to receive attention as many NPOs face diminishing revenue streams. Interventions focused on enhancing governance processes and practices for improved sustainability included 37 training sessions facilitated with 887 NPO leaders from 584 NPOs.
- 3.18. The Department reported that it will continue to prioritise community-based and residential care services to children and adults in conflict with the law.
- 3.19. In response to the increased food insecurity, the high demand for food relief and increased homelessness, the Department will continue to implement COVID-19 relief programmes aligned with the Western Cape Recovery Plan.
- 3.20. It was reported that youth in conflict with the law remains a concern for the province, specifically youth involved in violent crime.
- 3.21. The Department will continue to redress interventions in support of persons living with disabilities including mainstreaming, supporting, and promoting the rights, well-being and socio-economic empowerment of persons with disabilities, their families and caregivers so that they have an equal opportunity to participate in all spheres of life.
- 3.22. During the 2020/21 financial year, sexual offenses related to GBV counted for 6,9 percent, and 6 456 of these were contact crimes.
- 3.23. It was reported that violence against women and children was fuelled by substance abuse. The Department provided a range of Substance Use Disorder (SUD) services during the financial year under review, including prevention, early intervention, treatment and aftercare services to ensure the effective reintegration of clients into their communities of origin and the society at large.
- 3.24. The Department managed to fill various positions in the approved departmental organisational structure and has appointed 145 social work graduates, on contract, who were holders of the national Department of Social Development (NDSD) social work bursaries.
- 3.25. The Department allocated 52 staff bursaries in specialised fields, where a shortage of skills exists, namely, addiction care, child and family studies, clinical social work, probation services, and forensic social work. Furthermore, 18 addiction care bursaries were awarded to people who are nonemployees of the Department to increase the availability of qualified professionals in this area.

- 3.26. The Department reported that it will continue to engage and strengthen the relationship with the courts to improve referrals of children and adults in conflict with the law to appropriate diversion services and programme.
- 3.27. The Department also reported that there was no legislation that provides for residential facilities for people living with disabilities. People living with disabilities that need residential facilities end up in old age homes and the Older Persons Act, 2006 (Act 13 of 2006), prohibits any person younger than the age of 60 from being accommodated in an old-age home.
- 3.28. The Department further reported a growing number of unregistered treatment facilities for substances abuse in the province as a challenge. It was reported that no legislation guides and regulates the Department to close down the illegal treatment facilities. The Department can only ask the Municipalities to enforce their By-Laws.

4. Public input

The Committee proceeded to the public hearing on the Annual Report of the Department of Social Development. Ms Florence from Women to Women NGO and Ms Lisipho Daniels from Mayihambe NGO in Langa gave oral submissions. The Head of the Department and departmental officials duly responded to the input made by the members of the public.

5. Resolutions

The Committee RESOLVED to:

- 5.1. Invite the Department of Community Safety, the South African Police Service and the Department of Social Development to brief the Committee on the holistic approach or programmes in place to address the challenge of gang violence and gender-based violence in the province.
- 5.2. Conduct an oversight visit to the DSD service offices and funded NGOs in Langa and other Cape Flats communities.

6. Recommendations

The Committee recommended that:

- 6.1. The Department should consider allocating additional specially adapted 16-seater vehicles in Beaufort West and other rural areas for the transportation of children living with disabilities.
- 6.2. The Department should thoroughly investigate if there are any victims of sexual harassment within the Department.
- 6.3. The Department should develop a plan for the placement of social work graduates.

7. Information requested

The Committee requested the Department of Social Development to provide the following information by Wednesday 31 November 2022:

- 7.1. Detailed information on the number of children that were murdered in the province during the 2021/22 financial year.
- 7.2. Detailed information on the children and women who were abused and assisted by the Department during the financial year under review.
- 7.3. Detailed information on the total number of NPOs in the province that are registered, unregistered and funded. The information should include the geographic area and region.
- 7.4. A consolidated report on the service provided by the funded NPOs in the province.

8. Conclusion

The Chairperson thanked the Members of the Committee, the Head of the Department, departmental officials, and guests for their preparation, input, and responses to the questions posed by the Committee.