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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 1179**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 25 MARCH 2022**

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**1179. Ms L H Arries (EFF) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

Whether she has been informed that Grey Village in Kagisano-Molopo, North West, is without a SA Social Security Agency pay point, and that currently the community withdraw their money at local Shazam shops that cost R10 per R100 and/or must drive approximately 220 km to Vryburg to withdraw their grant money; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what steps has she taken to resolve the problem? NW1439E

**REPLY:**

There is currently no cash pay point serviced by the South African Post Office (SAPO) in the area in question as it was decommissioned during the 2017/2018 financial year as the area had two merchants, namely Net 1 and a Bray Shop named Solomon shop (operated by Shazam) which were offering cash back services.

The number of beneficiaries receiving their grants in Bray reduced over time to less than 50 clients which led to Net 1 withdrawing its services in the area as it became too expensive. Solomon shop was then left as the sole merchant servicing the area. The current number of social grant beneficiaries is very low, which makes it uneconomical to maintain a fully-fledged cash pay point services in the area.

The Morokweng SASSA local office conducts monthly monitoring oversight visits on the merchant, and has so far not detected any untoward behaviour. However, investigations will be conducted to ascertain if the Merchant (Solomon Shop) is charging beneficiaries a fee to withdraw money,. SASSA will also conduct consumer education to empower beneficiaries, and engage its banking stakeholders to offer mobile banking services in the area. Monitoring processes, in Bray, will be intensified henceforth.

The nearest Post Office to Bray is at Tosca which is about 54 kilometres, which, although still far, is nearer than the Vryburg that is 220km away.