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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 1377**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 22 APRIL 2022**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NUMBER: 14 - 2022**

**1377. Ms L H Arries (EFF) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

With reference to the migration of Early Childhood Development to the Department of Basic Education, what measures have been put in place by her department to appoint the more than 9 000 qualified social workers who are unemployed? NW1667E

**REPLY:**

In the 2020/21 financial year, the sector employed 1 037 social work graduates. An additional 3 473 were employed in the same financial year which contributed significantly to the reduction of the number of unemployed social work graduates using the database of 9 000 unemployed social workers and social auxiliary workers that the Department developed in 2019.

In 2020/21-2021/2022 the department employed 3 388 unemployed social work graduates through the COVID-19 pandemic Presidential Stimulus Package.

As part of the long-term solution to address this issue, the Department has developed a draft sector strategy for the employment of social service professionals. The strategy addresses employment of social service professionals not only in the sector, but also in other departments/agencies, including at local government and the private sector where their professional services are required. This is an ongoing initiative within the context of the Inter-Departmental Forum. The forum resolved that all affected departments should submit a joint Funding Bid to the National Treasury in the current financial year for the permanent employment of social service professionals.