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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 1480**

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**1480. Ms L H Arries (EFF) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

What are the reasons that her department has been telling persons who apply for the disability grant to rather apply for the R350 social relief of distress grant? NW1851E

**REPLY:**

During the lockdown levels 4 and 5 restrictions imposed to prevent the spread of the corona virus, SASSA offices were initially closed, and when they were opened under level 4 restrictions, only limited services were offered. As a result, no applications for disability grants could be dealt with, as the assessments, which are done at health facilities, could not take place. The medical assessment is a prerequisite for any disability grant application.

When level 4 regulations were announced, it was unknown how long the restrictions would remain in force. This resulted in some staff members advising potential applicants for disability grants to apply for the special relief grant of R350, in an effort to ensure that they would at least receive some income for the period until the disability related services could commence once again.

However, under level 3 restrictions, SASSA has started reintroducing disability related services, and accepting applications once again according to an approved strategy. This means disability services will be limited where there is a dependency on health facilities.

In order to facilitate access to assessment services, SASSA has engaged with the Provincial Departments of Health to identify facilities where assessments can be done by the SASSA contracted doctors. Where this is not possible, SASSA has identified spaces within the local offices for assessments to be undertaken. Despite these measures, services cannot yet be offered at full capacity. This will be progressively increased, in line with available resources.