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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 1626**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 28 MAY 2021**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NUMBER: 15 - 2021**

**1626. Mr M N Nxumalo (IFP) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

(1) Whether her department has any special plans for the homeless as winter has arrived in the Republic; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details;

(2) whether her department has a budget in place to (a) allow for social distancing and quarantining of the homeless should the need arise and (b) extend the care given to the homeless to include the observation of COVID-19 protocols; if not, what is the position in each case; if so what are the relevant details in each case? NW1832E

**REPLY: (1)** The department is currently engaging with different government departments who has the responsibility to provide services to the homeless. The department will continue to provide psychosocial support and reunification services to the homeless within the shelters as per its mandate. The following reflects the status in each provinces:

1. **Eastern Cape:**  Currently there are no shelters for the homeless that are operational. The beneficiaries that were accommodated during lockdown have since been reunified with their families.

1. **Free State:** The Department is engaging as a primary stakeholder with COGTA and relevant Departments on appropriate interventions for the homeless. The matter of homeless shelters is a standing item on the agenda of the provincial Corona Virus Command Centre.

1. **Gauteng:** The Department currently has 41homeless shelters that are still open for those who need accommodation and other services. Furthermore, the Department provided funding for park homes for three (3) NPOs in 2020/21, financial year, 4th quarter, whereby homeless people were housed in tents for protection during the winter season.
2. **KwaZulu-Natal:** There are 7(seven) shelters for homeless shelters functional in 04 (four) districts as follows
* Metro – 04
* King Cetshwayo – 01
* UThukela – 01
* UMgungundlovu – 01
1. **Limpopo:** The Department has no shelters for the homeless at the present moment and only rely on the support from municipality as they have many facilities that are not utilised. During level 5 restriction, municipalities played an important role by providing accommodation for beneficiaries.
2. **Mpumalanga:** The Department does not have any plans for the homeless people. All shelters for homeless people were closed after the homeless were reintegrated with their families. Those that were not reintegrated opted to leave the shelter and go back to the streets.
3. **North West:** The Department is currently utilising 3 facilities in 3 Districts to provide services for persons who are homeless. These facilities are in Ngaka Modiri Molema, Dr Kenneth Kaunda and Bojanala Districts. The Department is in a process to establish one in Ngaka Modiri Molema district.
4. **Northern Cape:** There are no shelters for homeless persons in the province. Homeless people have been reunified with their families. The circumstances of those found in the street are assessed and intervention implemented according to the merit.
5. **Western Cape:** An additional 1000 bed spaces for the homeless in NGO run shelters will be funded by DSD over and above a baseline of 1 500 bed spaces already funded, all shelters also prepare for an overflow of homeless people during the winter times and have therefore already created extra sleeping spaces just for winter within the shelters. This excludes the extra 1000 bed spaces.

**REPLY:** (2)Nationally there is no budget allocated to provide shelter for homeless. The following depicts unique budgetary circumstances in provinces and compliance to COVID 19 protocols:

1. **Eastern Cape:** 2 The Department has no budget to set aside for homeless (a) to allow for social distancing and quarantining of the homeless nor (b) any budget to extend the care given to the homeless to include the observation of COVID-19 protocols.
2. **Free State: (**2) There is no budget allocated for homeless shelters. The shelters therefore remain an unfunded mandate and therefore (b) there is no budget for social distancing and quarantining of the homeless should the need arise and nor (b) any budget to extend the care given to the homeless to include the observation of COVID-19 protocols;
3. **Gauteng:** 2(a) There is no budget earmarked for social distancing and quarantining but homeless shelters are monitored regularly to ensure compliance to Covid-19 protocols and in the case of Covid-19 homeless people, provision is made within the available facilities for quarantine. (b) The department also funded some of the NPOs in need of PPEs at the end of the 2021/22 financial year to extend the care given to the homeless to which includes the observation of the Covid19 protocols.
4. **KZN:** 2(a)The current available homeless shelters are community halls and therefore cater for social distancing. Quarantine is however a challenge as there is no budet allocated for this mandate (b) DOH is part of the multi-disciplinary team that is rendering services in homeless shelters. Covid-19 protocols are observed.
5. **Limpopo:** 2(a) There is no budget allocated for sheltersfor homeless, however if a need arises, the Department will liaise with relevant stakeholders to ensure that beneficiaries are catered for as according to Disaster Management Act of 2002 and Covid-19 protocols are followed. (b) Should the Department opt to utilise the same facilities as in the first lockdown, compliance with Covid-19 won’t be a challenge as all facilities were allowing social distancing and have isolation rooms.
6. **Mpumalanga:** 2(a) & (b) There is no budget in place for the homeless people as there are no homeless shelters operating in the province.
7. **North West:** The Department have notbeen allocated funds specifically for services to homeless persons. (a) However the department with its pressures reprioritises within the existing allocations to make provision for social distancing, quarantine and compliance to all Covid-19 related needs; and (b) nor there is no budget to extend the care given to the homeless to include the observation of COVID-19 protocols.
8. **Northern Cape:** 2(a) & (b)There are no shelters that are operational and no budget has been allocated in this regard.
9. **Western Cape:** 2(a) & (b)The department has assisted the homeless shelters in the province with guidelines and protocols for Covid 19 safety and quarantine and isolation sites are available for all who need them, including the homeless.