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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 2092**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 27 MAY 2022**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NUMBER: 20 - 2022**

**2092. Dr M M Gondwe (DA) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

With reference to her reply to question 1278 on 1 April 2022, (a) on what date were the grants reinstated following their suspension on 10 September 2021, (b) what total number of the suspended grants were discovered to have been received by (i) interns and (ii) contract workers who may qualify to continue receiving the grants, (c) on what date were the affected employees sent notices informing them of the review of their grants following the reinstatement of the grants, (d) by what date will the review process for all the identified grants be completed and (e) what are the details of how the review process for all the identified grants is conducted? NW2497E

**REPLY:**

1. The suspended social grants referred to were reinstated on 28 October 2021.
2. At this stage, SASSA does not have precise information on the employment nature of the re-instated beneficiaries. It is important to note that entitlement to a grant is not reviewed based on employment, but on income, as defined in the regulations to the Social Assistance Act.
3. Notices were sent in January 2022 to the suspected government employees, indicating that their social grant will be reviewed, and that they had 3 months to report to SASSA to enable this process to be concluded. This period has ended in April 2022. In May 2022 letters were sent to all beneficiaries, who have not come forward for the review process, informing them that SASSA intends to suspend their grant at the end of July 2022.
4. Beneficiaries who do not present themselves before the end of July 2022; will be suspended at the end of the month. However, the beneficiary will then still have another 3 months to come forward and request SASSA to re-instate their grants. Failure to comply, will result in the grant being permanently cancelled and the beneficiary will need to reapply for the grant should they still require it. Thus, it is expected that the entire process until termination of the grant will be concluded by October 2022.
5. Through the review process, SASSA updates the personal, financial and medical information of a beneficiary. This is very similar to an application process, and all relevant information required to determine whether or not a beneficiary still requires a grant is reviewed. Personal information is also updated to ensure that the records of the beneficiary is accurate and current.

Types of reviews include Administrative/ Financial reviews, Medical reviews, Foster Child Grants reviews and Refugee reviews. In terms of the Regulations to the Social Assistance Act, the Agency may review a social grant at any time where it has a reason to believe that changes in the beneficiary's financial circumstances may have occurred; or on expiry of the validity of the identity document of a beneficiary, if the beneficiary is a refugee; or on the expiry of the foster care order.

The process firstly requires identification of beneficiaries due for review. This is then followed by notification letters where beneficiaries are informed to approach a local SASSA office with the required documentation for purposes of completing a review process. Beneficiaries are given 90 days’ notice to complete this process. Once the process is completed the beneficiary is provided with an outcome letter.

In the case where the beneficiary still qualifies for the grant after the review process, the process ends, and the beneficiary will continue to receive payment of the social grant. Where the beneficiary no longer qualifies, the social grant is terminated, and he/she has the right to appeal to the Independent Tribunal for Social Assistance Appeals.

In cases where overpayments were made to the beneficiary, an acknowledgment of debt is raised; and /or the matter is referred to the Fraud and Compliance Unit for further investigation.