Official reply: 03 October 2017

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

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**2712. Mrs K Jooste (DA) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

(1) (a) How many foster care placement orders will lapse by 31 December 2017 due to the lapsing of court orders and (b) what is the total value of the foster care grants for the specified foster care placements that will no longer be paid as a result of the foster care orders lapsing;

(2) whether her department has taken any steps to prevent the specified crisis; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details of all steps (a) taken to date and (b) planned to avert the crisis? NW3019E

**Reply:**

(1)(a) The Department cannot preempt an actual number of orders that will lapse as the provinces are continually undertaking activities to ensure that foster care orders are extended. However, there is a projected number of 54 835 foster care orders that are due for extension between September and December 2017.

(b) It is anticipated that no grants will be unpaid as a result of the foster care court orders expiring, given the implementation of the North Gauteng High Court ruling, which allows SASSA to continue paying the foster child grants, even with expired orders, while the Department of Social Development works on updating the orders. There will thus not be any financial implications for unpaid foster child grants.

(2)(a) Nine provincial departments of Social Development put administrative mechanisms in place to manage the extension of foster care orders that include:

* National DSD and SASSA monitoring the implementation of provincial plans.
* Designation of teams from DSD and SASSA to monitor and track the provincial plans.
* Allocation of social workers to conduct investigations, compile reports with recommendations for extension of foster care orders.
* Social work reports to be considered by the:
  + Designated officials within the Department to issue administrative extension orders in terms of the North Gauteng High Court Order.
  + Presiding officers in the Children’s Courts before issuing an extension order.

(b) The 9 provincial departments of Social Development are continuing to implement the activities referred to in response (2)(a) and putting plans in place to strengthen their mechanisms to ensure that the foster care orders that require to be extended are processed before 1 November 2017.