**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 3306**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 23 SEPTEMBER 2022**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NUMBER: 36 - 2022**

**3306. Ms B S Masango (DA) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

(1) By what date will the SA Social Security Agency (Sassa) home visit ban, which was instituted at the start of the COVID-19 lockdown, be lifted;

(2) whether Sassa has done an assessment of their offices countrywide to assess personnel needs; if not, why not; if so, what total number of vacancies does Sassa have in each office in each province;

(3) what are Sassa’s plans to capacitate its offices in order to address the (a) endless queues and (b) staff shortages? NW4106E

**REPLY:**

1. SASSA has returned to providing full services, within its capacity, since the lifting of the State of Disaster. There is no “ban” in place with regards to home visits.
2. As from 2021/2022; SASSA has done the assessment in terms of critical posts required to ensure that its operation and service delivery are not compromised; It must also be recorded that SASSA is undergoing transformation process whereby its businesses are reviewed for organizational effectiveness, responding to 4th Industrial technology requirements and to be in line with the current Strategic Plan 2020/2021 to 2024/2025. As a result of the above mentioned project, SASSA has established the Critical Post Committee which is responsible to ensure that critical posts are identified and funded. The identified critical posts would be presented to the Executive Committee for consideration and approval at the beginning of each financial year. In 2021/2022 there were 251 critical posts filled 2022/2023 financial there are 118 critical posts approved for filing, and in case the post becomes vacant within a financial year it would be replaced if it meets the description/criteria of being critical.

In view of the above mentioned processes, SASSA is able to manage the risks of ensuring that on one hand, service delivery is not compromised, and on the other hand, the filling of posts is based on needs until the Business Process Re-Engineering and organizational structure are in place with minimal or no labour challenges/disputes. Lastly, SASSA has the total of 7 642 filled posts as at 31August 2022.

1. (a) At present SASSA is experiencing slightly higher than normal applications in some of their offices, which may be as a result of the lower uptake during the COVID pandemic. Load shedding, which affects both network connectivity and other system availability also negatively impacts on the speed at which a client can be assisted.

As mentioned, front line staff are considered as critical posts and are prioritised for filling, however this is subject to available resources.

SASSA has also implemented an online application portal which aims to relieve some of the pressure on the queues in local offices.

(b) With regard to shortages of capacity, please note that critical posts are filled, and SASSA has not implemented a moratorium in filling posts. In the event an official vacates a posts; replacement is sourced with immediate effect, subject to recruitment processes. However, as with all other government departments, and the overall attempts by government to manage the public sector wage bill, the compensation of employees budget of SASSA are also subject to these reviews and has been cut significantly over the past few years. As mentioned, SASSA has prioritised front line staff over other posts in an attempt to continue to provide optimal services.