Official reply: 21 April 2016

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION 594/2016**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

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**594. Ms C N Majeke (UDM) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

(1) Whether, with reference to the SA Social Security Agency (SASSA) which ran out of grant cards during the first two weeks of January 2016, affecting areas of East London, Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth, the problem of the availability of grant cards has been resolved in the specified areas; if not, (a) why not and (b) when will it be resolved; if so, when;

(2) whether her department has a programme intended to monitor and improve the quality of a caring service given to frail aged citizens; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;

(3) whether SASSA does not have an arrangement to attend to citizens who may have arrived early, but could not be served at the time of office closure at 16h30, resulting in the elderly having to return the next day at additional cost to them; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? NW700E

**Reply:**

(1) SASSA was informed on 6 January 2016 that a number of areas had run short of SASSA cards, as a shipment ordered by the service provider had been delayed. However, this matter was resolved and by 11 January 2016, additional cards had been sent to Eastern Cape and were available for distribution. It is our serious concern that some of the cards are left with the loan sharks and reported as lost.

(2) SASSA has a monitoring programme which assesses all aspects of service delivery at local offices. Based on the findings, corrective actions are implemented. In addition, there is a commitment for all citizens over the age of 75 years to receive grant application and review services at their homes, if this is requested. For social grant payments, frail or otherwise incapacitated beneficiaries are advised to appoint a procurator who will be responsible for collecting their social grant, using the SASSA grant card.

(3) At all local offices, SASSA endeavours to ensure that the number of applicants / beneficiaries who report for services are attended to within the day they arrive. However, where it is clear that the number exceeds the capacity of the office to finalise, then those who are last in the queue are advised that they are not likely to be attended to and advised to return on another day. Should citizens be affected by this, they are given a number, so that they are indeed attended on the day they return, without having to queue again.

 In addition to the above, there is a system in place to serve citizens in accordance with their level of vulnerability. This means that the local office manager will identify and prioritise people with disabilities, older persons waiting in the queue and bring them to the front of the queue. Where this is implemented, it should be made public, so that all the other citizens waiting for a service understand why certain people do not have to queue.

 In an effort to prevent people having to travel long distances and incur significant transport expenses to access the services, SASSA provides mobile services in various communities, according to a pre-set schedule. This is done in an effort to improve service delivery. We would also welcome information from Members of Parliament about paypoints that need to be reviewed because our work is about human rights and dignity of our citizens.