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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 628**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 24 APRIL 2020**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NUMBER: 12 - 2020**

**628. Mrs D B Ngwenya (EFF) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

Whether the SA Social Security Agency has put measures in place to ensure that mothers of newborn babies who qualify for social grants are able to register? NW828E

**National Assembly written Reply: 628 of 2020**

**REPLY:**

Mothers with new born babies have been able to apply for the child support grant at SASSA local offices. The need for the care giver to register babies as soon after birth as possible has been emphasized in all communication, as research has shown that the positive benefits of the grant are significantly higher the earlier the grant is paid.

However, under Level 5 lockdown restrictions, SASSA local offices were closed. With the easing of restrictions under level 4, SASSA has progressively re-opened its local offices as from Monday 11 May 2020. The categories of clients who may be assisted under level 4 include mothers of new born babies.

The application service has continued under level 3 without any restriction on the age of the child, although mothers of new born babies are encouraged to apply as soon after the birth as possible.

In order to maintain social distancing and to limit the numbers of citizens who report to the local offices for a service, SASSA has designated specific days for specific grant types. Applications for grants for older persons are done on Mondays and Tuesdays, while applications for child support and foster child grants are attended to on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Fridays will be used to complete work which could not be attended to before the lockdown, as well as any overflow from the previous days in the week.

SASSA is also currently working on accepting on-line applications for the above grant types. This will make it easier for mothers with very small babies to lodge applications without having to go to the local offices to do so in person. This functionality should be available in the course of July 2020 and would just provide an additional channel for applications, in addition to the face to face applications at local offices.