

SOUTH AFRICA YEARBOOK 2023/24

Social Development



Social Development

Social development ensures protection against vulnerability by creating an enabling environment for the provision of a comprehensive, integrated and sustainable social development service. The Department of Social Development (DSD) provides social development services and leads government's efforts to forge partnerships through which vulnerable individuals, groups and communities become capable and active participants in their own development as well as society's.

As part of the broader mix of government's social protection measures, the department provides social welfare services and social development programmes through local and regional services, and administers long-term social grants that benefit the elderly, people with disabilities, and children; and makes short-term cash transfers and in-kind support for households in distress or with insufficient means.

Over the medium term, the department will continue to provide social welfare services and income support to the poor and most vulnerable through various social grants; reform social security and prevent fraud in the administration of social grants; minimise the impact of social ills on society; and assist in building sustainable communities to alleviate poverty.

The department's total budget over the period ahead is R801.7 billion, of which transfers and subsidies account for 99.6% (R798.9 billion) over the medium term. Transfers to social assistance grants make up the bulk of the department's spending, R774.4 billion over the next three years, while the remainder is spent on transfers to entities. Cabinet has approved reductions to the department's budget amounting to R1.8 billion over the period ahead.

Of this, transfers to South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) will be reduced by R1.5 billion, while the department's spending on goods and services is expected to be reduced by R226.3 million. To mitigate the impact of these reductions on performance, the department plans to curtail spending on goods and services such as travel and subsistence, consultants, and venues and facilities. The SASSA plans to reduce spending on contract payments.

Providing social welfare services and income support

Social welfare services are provided through social service practitioners in partnership with community structures, including non-profit organisations (NPOs). Services include care and support for the elderly; child services, including the provision of places of safety, safe adoption and foster care services, and child and youth care centres; support services for people with disabilities; social behaviour change programmes; and psychosocial services, such as providing support for victims of gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF).

Through provincial social development departments, spending on social welfare services is estimated to be R68.4 billion over the period ahead. Social assistance grants are disbursed through the Social

Assistance programme, allocations to which are set to increase at an average annual rate of 1%, from R252.1 billion in 2023/24 to R259.8 billion in 2026/27.

This nominal increase is in line with inflation-related adjustments to grant values and only a slight increase in beneficiaries over the period. In 2025/26, the social assistance budget decreases to R248.4 billion due to the discontinuation of the COVID-19 social relief of distress grant. This termination is expected to see a reduction in the total number of grant beneficiaries, from an estimated 27.8 million in 2023/24 to 19.7 million in 2026/27.

To enable the administration of these grants through the SASSA, R23.4 billion is allocated over the MTEF period to the Social Grants Administration subprogramme in the Social Security Policy and Administration programme.

Reforming social security and preventing fraud

The department aims to complete an extensive review of social security policy. It plans to do this by ensuring that proposed reforms are able to be implemented given the department's constrained resources. Accordingly, a *White Paper on Social Security* is expected to be finalised over the MTEF period. In addition, after the decision to extend the COVID-19 social relief of distress grant until the end of 2024/25, the department will finalise policy options on the replacement of the grant, taking into consideration the need to strengthen employment pathways and means for sustainable livelihoods.

To carry out these activities, the Social Security Policy Development subprogramme in the Social Security Policy and Administration programme is allocated R204 million over the period ahead. The department has allocated R114.3 million over the next three years to the Appeals Adjudication subprogramme in the same programme.

These funds are intended to strengthen the department's systems, including its records management system, to enhance its responsiveness in addressing social assistance appeals through the Independent Tribunal for Social Assistance Appeals. Accordingly, the department aims to increase the percentage of appeals addressed within 90 days, from 80% in 2023/24 to 95% in 2026/27.

Fraud prevention is critical to ensuring the sustainable administration of social assistance. In seeking to address the debilitating effects of fraud in the administration of social grants, the department will continue to play a proactive role in helping the SASSA with its fraud prevention initiatives. For this purpose, R237 million is allocated over the medium term to the Social Grants Fraud Investigations subprogramme, which is also in the Social Security Policy and Administration programme.

Mitigating social ills

Over the MTEF period, the department will continue to monitor the implementation of the intersectoral protocol on the prevention and management of violence against children, child abuse, neglect

and exploitation; provide psychosocial services; and implement social and behaviour change programmes, including life skills and awareness programmes on HIV and AIDS, substance abuse, GBVF, teenage pregnancy, gangsterism, violence against children and other forms of social crime. These activities will be carried out through the Welfare Services Policy Development and Implementation Support programme, which is allocated R955.1 million over the next three years.

The high rate of substance abuse in South Africa remains a critical concern. Through the Substance Abuse subprogramme in the Welfare Services Policy Development and Implementation Support programme, the department will intensify education and awareness campaigns on substance abuse in collaboration with relevant stakeholders such as institutions of higher learning and civil-society organisations. The subprogramme is allocated R61.3 million over the medium term to carry out related activities.

The department is a key role player in the implementation of the National Strategic Plan (NSP) on GBVF, which is in place to combat GBVF. In carrying out its responsibilities as part of the strategy, over the medium term, the DSD intends to create capacity for stakeholders in identified hotspots to provide psychosocial services and implement an integrated sheltering policy.

The purpose of these activities is to identify the different approaches required to cater for various victims, including uneducated or unemployed young women who will need to be linked to skills programmes or economic activities. These activities will be carried out with allocations amounting to R245.9 million over the medium term in the Social Crime Prevention and Victim Empowerment subprogramme in the Welfare Services Policy Development and Implementation Support programme.

Building sustainable communities to alleviate poverty

NPOs are critical partners in the delivery of social and other services. They are regulated by the NPO Act of 1997, which promotes the effective and fair regulation of NPOs. Over the MTEF period, the department plans to enhance the registration and oversight processes of NPOs by developing a policy framework, improving the turnaround time for registrations, and improving compliance monitoring. For this purpose, R131.1 million is allocated over the period ahead in the Registration and Monitoring of NPOs subprogramme in the Social Policy and Integrated Service Delivery programme.

The Community Development subprogramme in the same programme supports the implementation of interventions that are geared towards empowering communities. This is done through strengthening capacity and creating structures that facilitate sustainable community development. Over the period ahead, the department plans to finalise a comprehensive policy for community development. As part of this, households and communities will be

assisted to identify challenges as well as measures that could be put in place to strengthen capacity, solidarity and social capital in communities.

Through the programme, the department also intends to link 2% of all grant recipients to sustainable livelihood opportunities. To fund the department's sustainable livelihoods projects, an amount of R26.6 million is allocated to the subprogramme over the medium term.

An amount of R654.5 million is allocated to the National Development Agency (NDA) through the Social Policy and Integrated Service Delivery programme over the medium term to contribute towards poverty eradication. The agency will support this by providing grants to civil society projects that focus on the development needs of the poor.

Social security

The DSD is at the heart of the South African Government's commitment to tackling the triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequality. It plays a key role in providing a safety net for the poor, marginalised and vulnerable members of society. During the 2023/24 financial year, more than 19 million beneficiaries, including 13.2 million children and four million older persons, benefitted from government's social safety net.

According to Statistics South Africa's (Stats SA) General Household Survey of 2023, the percentage of individuals that benefited from social grants steadily increased from 12,8% in 2003 to approximately 31% between 2017 and 2019 before increasing sharply to 39,4% in 2023. This growth was tracked closely by that of households that received at least one social grant.

The percentage of households that received at least one social grant increased relatively consistently from 30,8% in 2003 to 45,5% in 2019, before rising to 52,4% in 2020 due to the introduction of the SRD COVID-19 grants. The percentage of households that receive at least one grant has, since then, declined to 50,0% in 2023.

Grant beneficiaries were most common in Eastern Cape (52,9%) and Limpopo (50,4%), and least widespread in Western Cape (24,4%) and Gauteng (26,9%). Households that received at least one type of social grant were most common in Eastern Cape (64,9%) and Free State (63,9%), and least common in Gauteng (36,6%) and Western Cape (38,6%).

The Special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant of R350 per month was introduced in 2020 in an attempt to offset the impact of COVID-19. Since then, the percentage of individuals in the age group 18–59 years who received the grant has increased from 5,3% in 2020 to 12,4% in 2023.

About 27,8% of all individuals and 38,9% of all households in metropolitan areas received some kind of social grant (compared to 39,4% of individuals and 50,0% of households nationally). Individual grant receipt was highest in Mangaung (41,4%), Buffalo City (38,0%)

and Nelson Mandela Bay (37,0%) and lowest in Cape Town (21,7%), Tshwane (25,4%) and Ekurhuleni (26,4%).

A similar pattern is evident for households at metropolitan level. The receipt of one or more social grants was most common for households in Mangaung (59,4%) and Buffalo City (53,8%) and least common in Tshwane (33,6%), Johannesburg (35,4%), and Cape Town (36,2%).

Legislation and frameworks

Several pieces of legislation determine the mandate of the DSD:

- Children's Act of 2005, as amended, which gives effect to certain rights of children as contained in the Constitution, and sets out principles and processes relating to their care and protection;
- NPOs Act, 1997 (Act 71 of 1997), which establishes an administrative and regulatory framework within which NPOs can conduct their affairs, and provides for their registration by the DSD;
- Older Persons Act, 2006 (Act 13 of 2006), is aimed at maintaining and promoting the rights, status, wellbeing, safety and security of older people. It provides for older people to enjoy quality services while staying with their families and in their communities for as long as possible, and to live in residential care facilities;
- Prevention of and Treatment for Substance Abuse Act, 2008 (Act 70 of 2008) associated regulations provide a legal framework for the establishment, registration and monitoring of in-patient treatment centres and halfway houses;
- Social Assistance Act, 2004 (Act 13 of 2004), which provides a legislative framework for providing social assistance. The Act sets out the different types of grants payable, as well as their qualifying criteria;
- Social Service Professions Act, 1978 (Act 110 of 1978), which provides for the regulation of social service professionals;
- The 1997 *White Paper for Social Welfare* sets out the principles, guidelines, policies and programmes for developmental social welfare in South Africa;
- The 1998 *White Paper on Population Policy for South Africa* is aimed at promoting the sustainable development of all South Africans by integrating population issues with development planning in all spheres of government and all sectors of society;
- The *White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (WPRPD) focuses on putting in place measures to reduce the exclusion and inequality experienced by persons with disabilities. This includes contributing towards fighting poverty among people with disabilities and their families, and providing policy guidelines on building capacity in the public sector to deliver equitable and accessible services to them.

In July 2023, the DSD convened the Population Policy+25 Conference which focused on four themes: population dynamics, gender, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and migration and urbanisation, with a total of 22 papers presented across the thematic sessions. The

conference included a segment commemorating World Population Day, and a panel discussion about the original intention of the Population Policy, the current status and pointers for the future.

In September 2023, the department convened a BRICS Seminar on Population with the theme: "Dynamics of the Changing Population Age Structure of BRICS Countries: Opportunities and challenges, including climate change".

Entities

National Development Agency

The NDA is a schedule 3A public entity established in terms of the NDA Act of 1998. Its primary mandate is to contribute towards the eradication of poverty and its causes by granting funds to civil society organisations to implement development projects in poor communities. Over the period ahead, the agency plans to implement its turnaround strategy that was approved by its new board in July 2023.

The new approach envisaged in the turnaround strategy seeks to empower impoverished communities by supporting the establishment and funding of sustainable enterprises and cooperatives to reduce poverty and reliance on social grants. The agency planned to support and fund the establishment of 600 community-owned enterprises that will provide income to 6 000 community members over the MTEF period.

The agency has allocated R5 million per year over the MTEF period for this purpose. In line with its aim of reducing poverty and developing communities, over the next three years, the agency plans to partner with research and academic institutions to produce nine research publications and host 15 development policy dialogues to engage with relevant stakeholders. Spending on these activities is expected to amount to R31.8 million over the MTEF period.

Expenditure is expected to increase at an average annual rate of 1%, from R222.2 million in 2023/24 to R228.9 million in 2026/27. Spending on compensation of employees is the agency's main cost driver, accounting for 69.8% (R466 million) of its total budget over the medium term. The agency is set to derive almost all its revenue over the period ahead from departmental transfers, amounting to R654.5 million.

South African Social Security Agency

The SASSA Act of 2004 provides for the establishment of the SASSA, whose broad objectives are to ensure the effective and efficient administration, management and payment of social assistance to qualifying beneficiaries.

The agency provides social grants to eligible individuals who are unable to support themselves and their dependants. It also provides temporary assistance to people in crisis situations such as declared and undeclared disasters, and relief for household distress such as loss of a breadwinner.

Bank charges for the payment of social grants contribute to a significant portion of the agency's operational expenditure. For this purpose, R1.4 billion is set aside over the medium term in the benefits administration support programme. The agency continues to make progress in increasing social grant uptake to eligible beneficiaries.

The number of grants including grant-in-aid, excluding those receiving assistance from the COVID-19 social relief of distress grant, is expected to increase from 19.1 million in 2023/24 to 19.5 million by the end of 2024/25, representing a year-on-year increase of approximately 2%. By 2026/27, the number of social grant recipients are expected to increase at the same rate to 20.3 million, at an estimated cost of R259.8 billion.

Over the MTEF period, the agency plans to automate most of its business processes. This entails streamlining its operations to ensure, among other things, that the majority of applications for social grants are processed within five days from the current 10 days. The agency will continue to prioritise interventions such as improving its financial management system to address negative findings from internal and external audits; implementing measures to reduce the cost of administering social assistance; building management capacity to help fight fraud and corruption; and migrating to a web-based internal system. An estimated R26 million is allocated over the MTEF period for spending on these activities.

The upgrade of the beneficiary biometric identification solution will also be prioritised over the MTEF period at an estimated cost of R14 million. The planned upgrades will include facial recognition as an additional biometric identifier, and high-performance search and matching capabilities to efficiently scan beneficiary fingerprints in the database to identify potential duplicates and thereby reduce fraud.

Given the negative impact of load shedding on grant disbursement processes, the agency plans to acquire alternative energy solutions such as solar panels, inverters, batteries and generators over the period ahead. Accordingly, more than 200 local offices have been identified for improvements, including the installation of alternative power supply, at a total cost of R14 million.

Total expenditure is expected to amount to R23.7 billion, decreasing marginally by 0.4%, from R8.2 billion in 2023/24 to R8.1 billion in 2026/27, due to Cabinet-approved reductions of R461.8 million in 2024/25, R491.8 million in 2025/26 and R521.3 million in 2026/27.

The agency will be required to find efficiencies to absorb these reductions. The agency is set to derive 99.9% (R23.6 billion) of its revenue over the next three years through transfers from the department. Revenue is expected to increase at an average annual rate of 2.4%, from R7.6 billion in 2023/24 to R8.1 billion in 2026/27.

Programmes and projects

National Food and Nutrition Security (NF&NS) Plan

The DSD continues to implement the NF&NS Plan, which seeks to ensure implementation of food and nutrition security initiatives targeting vulnerable individuals and households. This is being accomplished through the coordination of the DSD food and nutrition interventions which include all centre-based feeding programmes providing nutritious food to the poor and vulnerable in partnership with civil society organisations, social partners and agencies.

Following the South African Human Rights Commission report into child hunger and malnutrition in the Eastern Cape, the Department immediately implemented the following initiatives, as a rapid response to the crisis:

- Facilitation of the NF&NS Plan Technical Working Group engagement with the provincial leadership on coordinating food and nutrition security in the Eastern Cape.
- Assistance to the province in the development of the Provincial Food and Nutrition Security Plan.
- Training and capacity-building of 229 officials in nutrition assessment counselling support for DSD feeding centres personnel, to enable early detection of malnutrition.

Furthermore, the department developed the improvement plan based on the evaluation of the Household Food and Nutrition Security Programme's design and implementation.

Expanded Public Works Programme

This year marked the last year of Phase IV of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and 20 years since the EPWP came into existence. In 2003/04, Cabinet gave the DSD a mandate to lead the EPWP's Social Sector, one of the four sectors targeted by the programme – the other sectors were Infrastructure, NonState and Environment and Culture.

The EPWP is a multi-sectoral, multi-departmental and nationwide initiative to alleviate poverty through the creation of temporary work opportunities targeting the most marginalised in society. By mid-2024, the EPWP Social Sector had created over 200 000 work opportunities.

Families and parenting

The DSD is tasked with implementing the National Family Policy, and provides training in family-preservation services, marriage preparation and enrichment, parenting/primary care-giving and families in crisis to service providers in the area of family services.

In November 2023, Cabinet approved the *White Paper on Families*, which provides guidelines and strategies for the twin goals of strengthening families and strengthening communities as support networks for families. It has risen out of the need to prevent the disintegration of families and to change the unfavourable conditions

affecting families and communities. Social service professionals in 17 districts received training in reunification services, which involve strengthening families to be able to care for and protect their family members through implementing a reunification care plan and permanency plan.

These reunification services seek to restore the well-being of families, enable them to regain self-reliance and optimal social functioning, and to facilitate the reintegration of people into family and community life after separation.

Victim Empowerment Programme

In line with its mandate to provide psychosocial support services and with Pillar 4 (Response, Healing Care and Support) of the NSP on GBVF, the DSD conducted capacity-building sessions for frontline workers from different stakeholders including government departments and civil-society organisations in 15 hotspot districts in all provinces.

The training, on the Policy on Psychosocial Support Services to victims of violence and crime, is essential for equipping frontline workers, so as to eliminate secondary abuse to victims of GBV. In addition, frontline workers received training on the Intersectoral Sheltering Service Policy, which is aimed at enabling the provision of a comprehensive spectrum of services to all those seeking shelter from crime and violence.

The department facilitated the establishment and operationalisation of shelters for victims of violence and crime in different provinces:

Services for victims of violence and crime

The DSD continues to provide comprehensive and integrated services to victims of GBVF through, among others, training frontline workers in 15 hotspot districts in all provinces on the Policy on Psychosocial Support Services to victims of violence and crime.

This training is in line with the department's mandate to provide psychosocial support services and with Pillar 4 (Response, Healing Care and Support) of the NSP on GBVF. In addition, frontline workers received training on the Intersectoral Sheltering Service Policy, which is aimed at enabling the provision of a comprehensive spectrum of services to all those seeking shelter from crime and violence.

The department facilitated the establishment and operationalisation of shelters for victims of violence and crime in three provinces:

- Free State (Xhariep District) in Koffiefontein.
- North West (Ngaka Modiri Molema District) has converted the Mafikeng Crisis Centre into a shelter.
- In KwaZulu-Natal, the King Cetshwayo District has partnered with Siyabonga, which has been operational since November 2023, thus closing the gap of non-availability of shelters in the district. The province has also identified the Ocean View Place of Safety as suitable for the establishment of a Khuseleka One Stop Centre. In Limpopo, potential buildings for use as shelters have been identified

in Mookgopong (Waterberg District), Groblersdal (Sekhukhune District), Phiphidi (Vhembe District) and Phalaborwa (Vhembe District).

In 2024, the department intensified the fight against alcohol and substance abuse, with the implementation of the universal treatment curriculum (UTC) in 12 treatment centres. Through the UTC, comprehensive substance use disorder treatment, care and support are provided, from screening, brief intervention, referral, treatment, care, support, rehabilitation, reintegration and aftercare services.

Sobriety Week incorporates International Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Day, which is observed internationally on 9 September every year to highlight the irreversible damage caused to unborn babies when their mothers consume alcohol during pregnancy. Government recognises challenges such as unemployment, which result in people using and abusing alcohol.

Children and youth

The Home Community-Based Care Programme is the centrepiece of government's interventions to build a protective and caring environment for vulnerable children. Most services to orphans and vulnerable children are rendered through home community-based care and include early identification of vulnerable children and their families, referrals, training of community caregivers and psychosocial support and material assistance.

This approach is geared towards keeping children within their families and communities. It is aimed at providing comprehensive care and support, which is complemented by proactive action at community level. This includes linking families with poverty alleviation projects and other services in the community, such as food security initiatives and ECD services.

Childline South Africa

Childline offers a 24-hour toll-free crisis line (116) to children and families across South Africa. It provides immediate assistance to children and families in crisis who need counselling and information. Childline is an NPO that works to protect children from all forms of violence and creates a culture of respect for children's rights. Programmes delivered through the provincial offices include:

- a crisis line,
- child rights and education,
- training and education of volunteers,
- training of other professionals who work with child protection services and children,
- therapy for abused and traumatised children and their families,
- court preparation of child witnesses,
- networking and coordination,
- lobbying and advocacy, and
- analysis of law and policy.

National Child Protection Week

The National Child Protection Week was commemorated from 29 May to 5 June 2024 to raise awareness of the rights of children as articulated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 and Children's Act (Act 38 of 2005).

The annual campaign is led by the DSD in partnership with key government departments and civil-society organisations rendering child protection services. Government aims to ensure that the most vulnerable in our society do not suffer abuse, and that it is in our hands to stop the cycle of neglect, abuse, violence and exploitation of children.

Children in South Africa live in a society with a Constitution that has the highest regard for their rights and for the equality and dignity of everyone. Protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse is not only a basic value but also an obligation clearly set out in Article 28 of the South African Constitution.

In 2024, the DSD capacitated 63% (4 687 of 7 395) of social services professionals across the provinces. The capacity-building covered areas that are in the chapters of Children's Act of 2005, including the webbased National Child Protection Register; the Alternative Care Development Assessment Tool and Guidelines for Independent Living, Adoption and International Social Services, and the Quality Assurance Framework.

During the 2023/24 financial year, 906 cases (773 national and 133 intercountry) were registered on the Adoption Register. The department continues to coordinate and provide support for cross-border coordination activities on unaccompanied and separated migrant children. It facilitated sessions with Lesotho and Zimbabwe, culminating in cross-border coordination forums.

These platforms enable government and nongovernmental organisations working with unaccompanied and separated migrant children from different countries to deliberate on child protection issues affecting children migrating across the borders.

The DSD has a 24-hour call centre dedicated to providing support and counselling to victims of GBV:

- The toll-free number to call is 0800 428 428 (0800 GBV GBV)
- to speak to a social worker for assistance and counselling.
- Callers can also request a social worker from the Command Centre to contact them by dialling *120*7867# (free) from any cell phone.
- Other numbers to call are Childline South Africa on 0800 055 555 and Child Welfare South Africa on 0861 4 CHILD (24453)/011 452-4110.

Role players

Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities

The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities is situated in The Presidency. The department derives its mandate from Section 9(3) of the Constitution. It is required to champion socio-

economic transformation and the empowerment and participation of women, youth and people with disabilities through mainstreaming, advocacy, and monitoring and evaluation. The NDP envisages economic participation, education and skills development for women and other vulnerable groups, and the elimination of violence against women and children.

The work of this department is directly aligned with these priorities through facilitating the planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, and auditing processes responsive to gender, youth and disability rights across the State.

Accordingly, over the medium term, the department intends to focus on reducing GBVF, and strengthening the national gender machinery; making interventions for economic empowerment; engaging in responsive government-wide planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation; ensuring compliance with international commitments; promoting the rights of people with disabilities, and supporting the development of young people.

People with disabilities

The DSD remains committed to improving the lives of persons with disabilities and by mid-2024, it was finalising the Policy on Social Development Services to Persons with Disabilities. Once finalised, the policy will ensure that the department focuses on the social development directives contained in the overarching WPRPD.

Blind SA

Blind SA is an organisation for the blind, and is governed by the blind. Situated in Johannesburg, it is aligned with other member organisations throughout South Africa. Blind SA's main focus is to improve the quality of life of all South Africa's visually impaired people by empowering them through education.

Its objectives are to protect and promote the interests of people with visual impairment and enable all visually impaired people to achieve their optimal potential through independence; and by providing development care for and protecting the rights of those who, owing to circumstances beyond their control, are unable to do so themselves.

Orientation, mobility and skills development to blind and newly blinded people is an important aspect of the work undertaken by Blind SA. The organisation provides, among other things, study bursaries for visually impaired students for further education, Braille publications in all South African official languages, Braille training that entails writing and reading, and orientation and mobility training.

The purpose of Blind SA is to end the cycle of poverty for blind South Africans, empowering them with knowledge and information through education, Braille and developmental services. It aims to break down barriers, provide opportunities and create answers that improve the quality of life for the blind community so that they can live the life they choose.

South African Braille Authority (SABA)

The SABA promotes and advocates for Braille and Braille-related matters in South Africa. Its purpose is to set and maintain standards for Braille in all 11 official languages of South Africa. These standards relate to the development and maintenance of Braille codes; production of quality Braille; the teaching of, access to and promotion of Braille; Braille examinations; and many other Braille-related matters.

Members of the SABA include schools for the blind, consumer organisations of the blind, student disability units, Braille producers and the South African Library for the Blind. Through the SABA, South Africa is a member of the International Council on English Braille. The membership enables the country to stay abreast of and participate in international Braille-related matters.

South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB)

The SANCB is the coordinating body for over 100-member organisations that span the full spectrum of services offered for and to blind and partially sighted people throughout the country. The SANCB comprises four core business areas, namely social development, the bureau for the prevention of blindness, education and fundraising and public relations. To combat as much as 80% of avoidable blindness, the council regularly undertakes tours with its mobile eye care clinics to rural areas for eye screening, referrals and to perform cataract removal operations.

The SANCB provides entrepreneurial training, adult basic education and training, and facilitates skills training such as computer literacy and call centre programmes through its Optima College. It is also affiliated to international organisations, including the African Union of the Blind and the World Blind Union.

Support for the deaf

South Africa's national organisation for the deaf is the Deaf Federation of South Africa (DeafSA). It acts as the national research, information and community action organisation on behalf of South Africans that are culturally and linguistically deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind. DeafSA, formerly known as the South African National Council for the Deaf (SANCD), was founded in 1929. In 1995, the SANCD was transformed to a new democratically elected organisation, the DeafSA. This resulted in a paradigm shift from an organisation for the deaf to one of the deaf.

The changes in the constitution and attitudes also meant that decisions about the services and affairs of deaf people were no longer taken by hearing people on behalf of deaf people – but by deaf people. The organisation has nine provincial chapters throughout South Africa. An estimated 500 000 to 600 000 South Africans use the South African Sign Language (SASL). As sign language has grown in South Africa – particularly baby sign language – an NPO, Sign Language Education and Development, has been formed to promote the language. Signing

with hearing babies and children is being promoted through the Signational Kids website. South Africa has a long-established deaf education system.

The Institute for the Deaf in Worcester operates Deaf College South Africa, which trains deaf people for jobs. In addition, the Bible College for the Deaf in Gauteng trains people to work in deaf ministry. The University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg has a Centre for Deaf Studies. The centre offers programmes in deaf education and focuses on teaching, research and community service. Among other services, the National Institute for the Deaf provides services for the multiple disabled deaf, runs two deaf churches and provides audiological and mental health services.

A Deaf Child Centre at the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health at the University of Cape Town, provides pre-school education and community services. This centre also focuses on deafness research. The Carel du Toit Centre, based in Cape Town, provides early childhood auditory-oral education. In addition, the centre engages in community outreaches, helping families with hearing-related needs and more practical needs, such as food.

A similar centre is the Eduplex in Pretoria. It provides auditory-oral pre-school and primary school educational services, teaching hearing and deaf children together and provides training to prospective teachers, audiologists and therapists. In 2018, sign language was administered as a new subject for the first time during the National Senior Certificate examinations.

Older people

The DSD promotes a holistic approach to active ageing and well-being among the country's senior citizens. A number of initiatives have been rolled out by the departments of Social Development, Health, Tourism, Sport, Arts and Culture, and other stakeholders to promote general health among older persons, especially through sports to promote general well-being. In 2008, government implemented a national active ageing programme in line with the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing of 2002. The Madrid Plan of Action offers a bold agenda for handling the issue of ageing in the 21st century. It focuses on three priority areas – older persons and development, advancing health and well-being into old age and ensuring enabling and supportive environments.

The Older Persons Act of 2006 aims to enhance the quality of life and improve the health of older persons by engaging them in programmes that promote social, physical, mental and emotional well-being, to prevent or delay the onset of ageing challenges and keep illnesses related to old age at bay.

The Older Persons' Parliament takes place annually in October. It gives elders the opportunity to engage with the executive on critical issues affecting their lives.

Training and skills development

Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers

The Unemployed Social Workers Database informs the DSD about the number of unemployed social workers who have studied outside the DSD scholarship programme. This aims to address the issue of qualified social workers who are unemployed.

Government has mandated the development of strategies to facilitate the recruitment and retention of such scarce skills. The DSD has been the main driver in the implementation of this social policy. In addition, the NDP indicates that 60 000 social workers will be needed by 2030 to serve the population.

Professionalising community development

The Council for Social Service Professions was established in terms of the Social Service Professions Act of 1978.

The key functions are:

- protecting and promoting the interests of the professions, in respect of which professional boards have been or are to be established, and to deal with any matter relating to such interests;
- advising the Minister of Social Development on matters affecting the professions in respect of which professional boards have been established; and
- controlling and exercising authority regarding all financial matters relating to the council and the professional boards; and assisting in the promotion of social services.