



South Africa Yearbook 2018/19

Social Development

The work of the Department of Social Development (DSD) gives effect to Outcome 13 (an inclusive and responsive social protection system) of government's 2014 – 2019 Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTEF). The department has endorsed a new mandate, which is to "provide social protection services and lead government efforts to forge partnerships through which vulnerable individuals, groups and communities become capable and self-reliant participants in their own development". This mandate will be articulated in the Social Development Bill, which is being developed. The department is also the custodian of international human rights treaties that the country has ratified, focusing on protecting the rights of children, people with disabilities and older people.

The department's focus over the MTEF period will be on improving the social development sector through:

- increasing access to social assistance
- investing in and increasing access to quality early childhood development (ECD) services
- reforming and standardising the social welfare system
- expanding social development services
- improving household access to food and nutrition
- strengthening community participation in service delivery.

The strategic goals for the DSD are to:

- review and reform social welfare services and financing
- improve and expand ECD provision
- deepen social assistance and extend the scope of the contributory social security system
- enhance the capabilities of communities to achieve sustainable livelihoods and household food security
- strengthen coordination, integration, planning, monitoring and evaluation of services.

South Africa has made good progress in building social cohesion and promoting a new single national identity. The biggest barrier to increasing social cohesion is the remaining inequality in society, which needs to be attended to.

More than half of all households in South Africa benefit from government's social assistance programme.

Comprehensive social security alleviates and reduces poverty, vulnerability, social exclusion and inequality through a comprehensive social protection system.

Empowering young and old people, those with disabilities as well as women in particular, helps rebuild families and communities.

Welfare services create and provide social protection to the most vulnerable of society through the delivery of social welfare services via provincial government and non-profit organisation (NPO) structures.

Legislation and frameworks

Several pieces of legislation determine the department's mandate, including the 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. It also makes provision for the establishment of the inspectorate for social assistance.

The DSD furthermore derives its mandate from the following legislation:

- The Non-profit Organisations (NPOs) Act, 1997 (Act 71 of 1997) establishes an administrative and regulatory framework within which NPOs can conduct their affairs, and provides for their registration by the department.
- The Older Persons Act, 2006 (Act 13 of 2006) establishes a framework for empowering and protecting older people, and promoting and maintaining their status, rights, wellbeing, safety and security. It provides for older people to enjoy good quality services while staying with their families, in their communities, for as long as possible. It also makes provision for older people to live in residential care facilities
- The Children's Act, 2005 (Act 38 of 2005) sets out principles relating to the care and protection of children, and defines parental responsibilities and rights. It deals with ECD drop-in centres and early intervention, children in alternative care such as foster care, child and youth care centres, and the adoption of children
- The Prevention of and Treatment for Substance Abuse Act, 2008 (Act 70 of 2008) regulates substance abuse services and facilities.
- The Social Service Professions Act, 1978 (Act 110 of 1978) provides for the regulation of social service professionals.

- 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 2015 *White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* focuses on putting in place measures to reduce the exclusion and inequality experienced by people 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.
 - The 1997 *White Paper for Social Welfare* sets out the principles, guidelines, policies and programmes for developmental social welfare in South Africa. It provides the foundation for social welfare in the post-1994 era.
 - The Victim Empowerment Support Services Bill is aimed at regulating victim support services and empowering victims. The Advisory Board on Social Development Act, 2001 (Act 3 of 2001).
 - The Children's Amendment Act, 2007 (Act 41 of 2007).
 - The Fund-Raising Act, 1978 (Act 107 of 1978)
 - The Mental Healthcare Act, 2002 (Act 17 of 2002).
 - The National Welfare Act, 1978 (Act 100 of 1978).
 - The National Development Agency (NDA) Act, 1998 (Act 108 of 1998).
 - The Prevention and Treatment of Drug Dependency Act, 1992 (Act 20 of 1992).
 - The Probation Services Act, 1991 (Act 116 of 1991).
 - The South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) Act, 2004 (Act 9 of 2004).
 - The Social Assistance Amendment Act, 2008 (Act 6 of 2008).
 - In terms of the Social Assistance Amendment Act, 2010 (Act 5 of 2010), beneficiaries and other applicants may now ask SASSA to reconsider the relevant decision before appealing to the tribunal. All applications for appeal must now show that they have gone through the reconsideration process at SASSA.
- According to the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, South Africa needs to pay careful attention to the design of

policies between now and 2030 to ensure that vulnerable groups and citizens are protected from the worst effects of poverty.

These social protection measures proposed seek to support those most in need, including children, people with disabilities and the elderly; and promote active participation in the economy and society for those who are unemployed and underemployed through labour market activation measures, employment services, income support programmes and other services to sustain and improve quality of life.

The plan acknowledges that the country has built an advanced and comprehensive social protection system with wide reach and coverage, but the system is still fragmented, plagued by administrative bottlenecks and implementation inefficiencies.

As a result, the various elements of the social protection system are not operating seamlessly. The priority should be improving efficiency in the delivery of services, addressing exclusions by identifying and reaching those who are entitled to the existing benefits of social protection, reducing the administrative bottlenecks that prevent people accessing benefits.

Over the medium term, the DSD intends to focus on deepening social assistance and extending the scope of social security; reforming the social welfare sector and its services to deliver better results; increasing access to ECD; and strengthening community development interventions.

National Family Policy

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

The *White Paper on Families* emphasises the need for all to build strong families that protect the most vulnerable members of society.

The purpose of the White Paper is to provide a platform for all South Africans to engage and exchange views on how to build stable families.

It also addresses some of the challenges faced by individuals in families, including the abuse of women and children, the elderly as well as people with disabilities.

Childcare legislation

The Children's Act of 2005 sets out principles relating to the care and protection of children; defines parental responsibilities and rights; and provides for matters such as children's courts, adoption, child abduction and surrogate motherhood.

The Act also:

- gives effect to certain rights of children as contained in the Constitution
- provides for the issuing of contribution orders
- provides for intercountry adoption
- gives effect to the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption
- prohibits child abduction and gives effect to the Hague Convention on International Child Abduction
- recognises new offences relating to children
- provides for matters relating to the trafficking of children and the implementation of the relevant protocol.

The Children's Act of 2005 provides for the establishment of the National Child Protection Register that records all people found unsuitable to work with children.

In terms of this law, childcare facilities, including welfare organisations offering foster care and adoption, are able to check prospective employees, foster parents and adoptive parents against the register.

The register is not open to the public and all requests for information must be directed to the DSD.

The Children's Amendment Act of 2007 provides for:

- the partial care of children
- ECD
- protection of children
- prevention and early intervention services
- children in alternative care
- foster care
- child and youth care centres, shelters and drop-in centres
- new offences relating to children
- the plight of child-headed households
- respect for parental rights by providing that no person may take or send a South African child out of the country without the consent of the parents or guardian
- the discipline of children.

The national guidelines to protect and care for children

include the Constitution, the Child Care Act, 1983 (Act 74 of 1983), as amended, the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) and the Children's Act of 2005, as amended.

Section 137 of the Children's Act of 2005 proposes new protection measures for child-headed households.

This section defines children from child-headed households, provides for appointing an adult to supervise a child-headed household and allows children in child-headed households to access social grants and other material assistance.

Budget

The department's budget allocation for the 2018/19 financial year was R172.8 billion. Over the medium term, the DSD will continue to provide social grants to the elderly, children, war veterans and people with disabilities.

These grants boost the incomes of poor households, which bear the brunt of persistent unemployment, poverty and inequality in South Africa.

Grants take up 94.2% of the department's total budget allocation over the MTEF period, and the department projects paying social assistance grants to about 18.1 million beneficiaries by the end of 2018/19.

Expenditure on grants is expected to increase at an average annual rate of 8.5% over the medium term, reaching R165 billion in 2018/19, mostly due to inflationary adjustments to the value of the grants and growth in the number of beneficiaries.

The elderly population, that is people older than 60, is growing by 3% per year, and there is continued growth in child beneficiaries.

An additional allocation of R11.5 billion over the MTEF period is for inflationary adjustments to the value of the grants and growth in the number of beneficiaries.

The number of appeals cases to be adjudicated will increase over the medium term as a result of proposed amendments to the Social Assistance Act of 2004. The Act currently prescribes that applicants who have been declined a social grant first lodge an application for reconsideration with the SASSA before they can take it to the appeals tribunal.

The amendments to the Act remove the application for reconsideration function from the agency, and require that

the tribunal adjudicates all appeals. The resulting increase in adjudications of appeals is reflected in increased expenditure in the Appeals Adjudication subprogramme in the Social Security Policy and Administration programme over the MTEF period.

Reforming the social welfare sector and its services to deliver better results

A key component of outcome 13 of government's 2014 – 2019 MTSF involves reforming and standardising the social welfare system. To enable this, the department has concluded a review of the *1997 White Paper for Social Welfare*. The development of a new white paper began in 2017/18. This process will inform the development and enactment of a social development act, which will provide measures and a uniform system for the promotion and provision of social development services across all sectors.

The Social Service Practitioners Bill is expected to replace the Social Service Professions Act of 1978 in 2020/21. The bill is aimed at extending the scope of regulation to include emerging social service occupations such as community development practitioners, ECD practitioners, and child and youth care workers. These and other policy and legislative reforms are funded through an allocation of R105.2 million over the MTEF.

Conditional grant allocations are temporary, and are to ensure that priority programmes are implemented as they were intended. Due to the successful implementation of the social worker employment grant at national level, the conditional allocation for this grant has been discontinued. As a result, R678.9 million over the MTEF period in the Welfare Services Policy Development and Implementation Support programme will be shifted from the department's baseline to the provincial equitable share from 2019/20. This will make provinces fully responsible for the employment of social workers. Funding through this allocation has enabled the employment of 632 social work graduates who have emerged from the department's social worker scholarship programme, and their delivery of social services to those who need them most.

Similarly, due to the successful operationalisation of 4 new substance abuse treatment centres to provide inpatient treatment in Eastern Cape, North West, Free State and

Northern Cape, the conditional allocation to the substance abuse treatment grant has been discontinued. As a result, R237 million over the MTEF period in the Welfare Services Policy Development and Implementation Support programme will be shifted to the provincial equitable share from 2019/20 to give provinces full responsibility for the running of these centres. Their establishment underscores the department's commitment to preventing and treating drug abuse through the implementation of the comprehensive national anti-substance abuse programme of action.

In addition, Cabinet has approved, in principle, an extended child support grant for orphans who have lost both parents but are in the care of extended family members. The grant brings the income protection afforded to these orphans closer to parity with that provided to orphans in foster care.

Deepening social assistance and extending the scope of social security

To alleviate the high rate of poverty in South Africa, government has institutionalised a comprehensive social protection system. This includes unconditional cash transfers, most of which are aimed at supporting poor individuals from vulnerable demographic groups, such as children, older people and people with disabilities. In 2018/19, 17.6 million beneficiaries received monthly grants, and it is estimated that 18.7 million beneficiaries will receive social grants in 2021/22. The bulk of these are allocated to the child support grant, which currently benefits 12.5 million poor children, and the old age grant, which benefits 3.5 million people older than 60. The national prevalence of disability is 7.5%, and, as such, the disability grant, of R1 700 per month in 2018/19, is provided to more than one million people.

Providing these grants to the elderly, war veterans, people with disabilities and children constitutes 94.8% (R567.3 billion) of the department's budget allocation over the medium term in the Social Assistance programme. Expenditure on social grants is set to increase at an average annual rate of 7.6%, from R162.9 billion in 2018/19 to R202.9 billion in 2021/22. Due to delays in finalising legislative provisions for an extended child support grant for double orphans, Cabinet has approved a reduction in social grants of R500 million per year for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

The Social Assistance Amendment Bill, which caters for these provisions, is expected to be tabled in Parliament for approval over the MTEF period.

To provide for administration and distribution costs related to the payment of social grants, transfers to the SASSA account for 98.3% (R24.4 billion) of allocations to the Social Security Policy and Administration programme over the medium term. Administration costs are set to decrease from 5.1% (R7.8 billion) of the budget for social grants in 2018/19 to 4.3% (R8.6 billion) in 2021/22 as increases in social grant values and beneficiaries outpace increases in the cost of administration. This proportional decrease is due to the rationalisation of cash paypoints for the disbursement of grants to beneficiaries given effect by an arrangement between the South African Post Office and the SASSA. This arrangement is expected to lead to greater operational efficiencies.

The number of social grant appeals is expected to increase from 2 000 in 2018/19 to 8 000 in 2021/22, pending Parliament's approval of amendments to the Social Assistance Amendment Bill to allow social grant applicants to directly lodge an appeal with the department's appeals tribunal as opposed to first having to lodge an appeal with the SASSA. As a result, the turnaround time for adjudicating appeals is expected to be reduced from 180 days to 90 days, and the percentage of appeals adjudicated within 90 days is expected to increase from 70% in 2018/19 to 90% in 2021/22. In line with this, expenditure for the handling of appeals is set to increase at an average annual rate of 8.2%, from R37.3 million in 2018/19 to R47.2 million in 2021/22, in the Appeals Adjudication subprogramme in the Social Security Policy and Administration programme.

By the end of 2019/20, the department plans to have operationalised an inspectorate tasked with maintaining the integrity of the social assistance framework and systems through detecting and investigating fraud. The introduction of the inspectorate is expected to result in a decrease in the number of these fraud and corruption cases referred to law enforcement agencies, from 101 cases. The budget for the inspectorate is R127.1 million over the MTEF period in the Social Security Policy Development subprogramme in the Social Security Policy and Administration programme.

Expanding social development services

To support the DSD's ongoing work to expand social development services, over the medium term the department will focus on managing the command centre (a 24-hour call centre for victims of GBV), drafting legislation on victim support services, and enhancing the implementation and monitoring of social crime prevention and GBV programmes (such as programmes that provide shelter). Spending on these activities is in the Social Crime Prevention and Victim Empowerment subprogramme of the Welfare Services Policy Development and Implementation Support programme.

Substance abuse is a key social challenge in many South African communities, and the Prevention of and Treatment for Substance Abuse Act of 2008 prescribes that each province must have at least one public treatment centre.

Increasing access to ECD

The DSD has developed a government-wide ECD policy and programme. The objectives of the policy are to:

- ensure that comprehensive, quality ECD services are in close proximity and equitably accessible to all children and their caregivers
- enable parents to lead and participate in the development of their young children through the use of these services
- and to ensure alignment and harmonisation across the different sectors responsible for ECD services.

The ECD programme is intended to address inequality and human development challenges. The country's integrated ECD policy aims to ensure deliberate and coordinated efforts to help improve children's chances of having a better life. Research indicates that the first few years in a child's life are the most important for development. An estimated 83% of children aged from three to five who form part of the richest 20% of households are accessing preschool programmes, compared to only 58% of the children of the same age group who form part of the poorest 20% of households. Addressing this imbalance requires increasing access to quality ECD services by improving and maintaining infrastructure, and subsidising centres that offer ECD services to children from poor households.

It is anticipated that 120 000 children over the medium term

will be subsidised by this grant at a projected cost of R1.4 billion, in addition to those subsidised by provinces through equitable share funding. As part of the facility maintenance component of this grant, it is expected that between 600 and 800 ECD centres will be upgraded over the MTEF period at a cost of R265.4 million.

The Children's Act of 2005 requires the DSD to establish and manage a national child protection register as part of the overall child protection system. The aim of the register is to have a record of all reports of abuse and all convictions, and to use the information to protect children from unsuitable persons. All persons working with children are meant to be screened against the register. Organisations providing services to children, such as ECD centres, cannot complete their registration process unless they have screened all employees.

Over the MTEF period, R1.1 billion is allocated to ensure an estimated 113 889 additional children receive the subsidy.

Many ECD facilities find it difficult to meet the minimum infrastructure requirements to become fully registered in terms of the Children's Act of 2005. Over the MTEF period, R230.6 million is allocated for minor upgrades to facilities that are conditionally registered to allow them to comply with norms and standards, and improve the quality of their services. Approximately 1 993 facilities will be targeted for minor upgrades by 2019/20.

Strengthening community development interventions

The NDA, an entity of the department, implements sustainable, community-driven projects that serve poor and vulnerable communities, partly through training and support of NPOs. Transfers to the agency, of an estimated R673.78 million over the medium term, account for the bulk of expenditure in the Social Policy and Integrated Service Delivery programme.

Spending on HIV and AIDS-related support, prevention and mitigation programmes also forms a large part of transfers to NPOs, and the South African National AIDS Council has partnered with the department in the selection of NPOs to undertake HIV and AIDS prevention and psychosocial support programmes. To give effect to these interventions, the HIV and AIDS subprogramme in the Welfare Services Policy

Development and Implementation Support programme has a budget of R404.9 million over the medium term.

To promote transparency and accountability within the NPO sector without placing onerous requirements on organisations, the department is also facilitating amendments to the Non-profit Organisations Act of 1997. The current universal approach is no longer appropriate for the diverse nature of the sector in South Africa; a risk-based approach that manages compliance requirements for organisations without compromising the required standards of governance for NPOs would be better suited. Spending on these activities forms part of the Registration and Monitoring of NPOs subprogramme, which has a budget of R128.4 million over the medium term, in the Social Policy and Integrated Service Delivery programme.

Role players

Department of Women

The Department of Women is situated in The Presidency. The mandate of the department is to champion the advancement of women's socio-economic empowerment and the promotion of gender equality.

Its mission is to accelerate socio-economic transformation for women empowerment and the advancement of gender equality.

Chapter 15 of the NDP envisages the broad economic participation of, and education and skills development for, women and other vulnerable groups, and the elimination of violence against women and children. Accordingly, over the medium term, the department will focus on: initiatives in support of gender responsive planning, budgeting, and monitoring and evaluation; mainstreaming women's socioeconomic empowerment; international engagements on gender equality; and stakeholder relations to raise awareness and advance gender equality and women's rights.

Of the department's total budget over the medium term, spending on compensation of employees accounts for a projected 37.6% (R294.4 million); transfers and subsidies to the Commission for Gender Equality account for 34.8% (R270.2 million); and spending on goods and services, mainly for property payments and travel and subsistence, accounts for 26.2% (R204.2 million).

Gender responsive planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation

In 2019/20, the department plans to develop guidelines to improve the gender responsiveness of government's planning and budgeting. These guidelines will help relevant stakeholders in government collect and analyse data that is gender disaggregated (data presented separately for the different genders). The department plans to monitor government departments' implementation of these guidelines from 2020/21. This work will be carried out in the Monitoring and Evaluation subprogramme, which is allocated R28.6 million over the medium term in the Policy, Stakeholder Coordination and Knowledge Management programme.

In 2018/19, the department conducted a performance review for the period 2014 – 2019 to assess the country's progress in advancing the quality of life for women. This review will inform recommendations on gender policy priorities for the next five-year period (2019 – 2024), which will be reviewed and updated by the department annually.

Mainstreaming women's socioeconomic empowerment

Over the medium term, the department plans to ensure that disadvantaged women, particularly but not limited to those in low-income segments of society, are empowered through inclusive economic development. This entails continual engagement with other departments in the economic sectors and employment cluster, and the infrastructure development cluster to encourage the development of interventions to improve the economic inclusion of women. Accordingly, four progress reports on the implementation of a framework to ensure the inclusion of women in the mainstream economy will be produced in each year over the medium term. This work is to be carried out in the Economic Empowerment and Participation subprogramme in the Social Transformation and Economic Empowerment programme, which is allocated a total budget of R13 million over the medium term.

The department will aim to revitalise and strengthen interventions that focus on gender issues, and facilitate the implementation of a strategic framework by relevant

stakeholders in government, the private sector and civil society to combat GBV. To ensure a wide reach, accountability and sustainability, the implementation of the framework will include four national dialogues in each year over the medium term on violence against women and children. This work is to be carried out in the Governance Transformation, Justice and Security subprogramme, which is allocated a total budget of R20.8 million in the Social Transformation and Economic Empowerment programme over the medium term.

The department leads a task team of officials from the DSD, the Department of Basic Education, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Department of Health and the Department of Small Business Development, among others, to develop a framework for the provision of free sanitary products to indigent girls and women. The framework on sanitary dignity will be finalised in 2018/19 for implementation in quintiles 1-3 schools across South Africa from 2019/20. The department will work closely with provincial governments, the private sector, civil society and development partners to create an enabling environment for the implementation of the programme, and monitor its implementation. This work will be carried out in the Social Empowerment and Transformation subprogramme, which is allocated a total budget of R20.6 million in the Social Transformation and Economic Empowerment programme over the medium term.

International engagements on gender equality

The department plays a key role in global, continental and regional forums that drive the global agenda on gender equality, and women's rights and empowerment. It is mandated to ensure that agreements arising from these forums are mainstreamed in government policies and legislation, and are effectively and efficiently implemented at the national level. The department is required to participate in international engagements to present South Africa's progress reports on the implementation of treaty obligations, share best practices and exchange knowledge. This work involves annual participation in ministerial meetings, high-level panels, and specialised technical committees such as those of the United Nations, the African Union, the Southern African Development Community, the Brazil-Russia-India-

China-South Africa group of countries and the Commonwealth, where member states are expected to account for progress in relation to the advancement of women's welfare.

In an effort to strengthen international relations and ensure South Africa's compliance with international agreements on issues affecting women and girls, the department plans to develop an international relations strategy on gender equality and women's empowerment. The department also plans to produce four reports per year over the period ahead on the implementation of government's commitments on international instruments. To carry out all activities related to international engagements, R40.1 million is allocated to the International Relations subprogramme in the Policy, Stakeholder Coordination and Knowledge Management programme.

Building stakeholder relations and raising awareness

Over the medium term, the department will continue to conduct campaigns and outreach initiatives on the socio-economic empowerment of women and young women, gender equality, women's rights, violence against women and children, and GBV. As such, the department plans to conduct 10 public participation initiatives in each year over the medium term. These activities will be carried out at an estimated cost of R49.1 million, allocated in the Stakeholder Coordination and Outreach subprogramme in the Policy, Stakeholder Coordination and Knowledge Management programme.

National Development Agency

The NDA is a public entity, listed under Schedule 3A of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999).

Its mandates are to:

- contribute towards the eradication of poverty and its causes by granting funds to civil-society organisations (CSOs)
- implement development projects in poor communities
- strengthen the institutional capacity of CSOs that provide services to poor communities
- promote consultation, dialogue and sharing of development experience between CSOs and relevant organs of the State
- debate development policy

- undertake research and publication aimed at providing the basis for development policy.

The NDA supports the work of civil society in key areas of concern.

It is an important partner in the DSD's efforts to promote ECD by using its grants to strengthen the capacities of ECD community-service organisations, which support the department's efforts to reduce violence against women and children by providing key support to the GBV sector.

NDA programmes include grant funding, capacity-building and research, policy dialogue and impact assessment.

Capacity-building interventions are geared towards ensuring that recipients of grant funding are not only given money to start and run their projects, but that they are empowered with the necessary skills to ensure sustainability.

The NDA has established the Programme Management Unit, which is responsible for offering project management services to private and public-sector stakeholders who wish to fund poverty-eradication projects.

Particular emphasis is placed on those in the NDA's primary areas of focus, namely food security, ECD, enterprise development and income-generation programmes.

South African Social Security Agency

The SASSA Act of 2004 provides for the establishment of the SASSA, the objectives of which are to ensure the effective and efficient administration, management, and payment of social assistance grants. The agency's core business is to administer and pay social assistance transfers. It has a large network of centres where citizens can apply for social grants, and manages a large payment system of more than 17 million monthly social grants.

Social assistance protects against inequality and poverty, and promotes the social and financial inclusion of the economically inactive population. Over the medium term, the agency intends to continue focusing on improving its services to ensure they reach all those entitled to social assistance. It aims to do this by putting systems in place to better manage the payment of social assistance; reduce administrative bottlenecks in the grant application process to improve the turnaround time for grant

approval; and increase access to social assistance by educating beneficiaries on qualifying criteria for social grants, and targeting groups with traditionally low coverage for enrolment as beneficiaries, such as newborn babies and children up to the age of 2.

Until the agency's contract with Cash Paymaster Services came to an end in September 2018, it spent an estimated average of R2.1 billion per year contracting the full payment function to the service provider. In its efforts to make the disbursement of grants to beneficiaries more efficient, the agency has entered into an arrangement with the South African Post Office (SAPO). As a result, spending on contractors is expected to decrease to R1.8 billion by 2021/22. It is anticipated that this arrangement will lead to greater efficiencies in the disbursement of grants through the rationalisation of cash payouts.

To improve the turnaround time for grant approval, address administrative bottlenecks and improve cost efficiencies, the agency is set to complete the process of reviewing the grant payment value chain and the capacity of personnel to administer grants by March 2019. It is expected that the findings of the review will result in an increase in the number of personnel by 490 in 2019/20 at a cost of R250 million. This is subject to the availability of funds after the final payment to the SAPO. Grant administration services are chiefly driven by face-to-face contact with beneficiaries, which requires a larger workforce.

To ensure that social grants reach qualifying beneficiaries, especially in poor communities, the integrated community registration outreach programme is designed to improve access to the agency's services and ensure that government is responsive to the immediate socioeconomic challenges faced by poor households and communities. As such, the agency plans to conduct 1 600 community outreach programmes through this programme over the medium term at a projected cost of R300 million. This initiative will introduce beneficiaries to the new dispensation for the payment of grants, and will allow for proper communication on the options available to recipients for accessing grants.

A number of projects have been prioritised in to modernise service delivery models for social assistance over the MTEF period. These projects include the automation of social grant

registries, which involves scanning millions of beneficiary files into an electronic system, at a projected cost of R7 million in 2019/20; and the implementation of a biometric authentication system aimed at reducing fraud and improving compliance with applicable legislation, at an estimated cost of R33 million in 2019/20.

The agency derives the bulk of its revenue through transfers from the department. These are expected to increase at an average annual rate of 3.6%, from R7.8 billion in 2018/19 to R8.6 billion in 2021/22.

Advisory Board on Social Development

The Advisory Board on Social Development's key functions include:

- advising the Minister on all matters related to social development
- identifying, promoting, monitoring and evaluating policy, legislation and programmes regarding social development
- facilitating dialogue with and the participation of civil society.

South African Council of Social Service Professions (SACSSP)

The SACSSP is a statutory body with the primary focus of developing and protecting the integrity of the social service professions and the interest of the public at large.

The SACSSP is established in terms of Section 2 of the Social Service Professions Act of 1978.

All professionals who practice any of the social service professions incorporated in the scope of the SACSSP are obliged by the Social Service Professions Act of 1978 to register with the SACSSP. Failure to do so constitutes a criminal offence.

The council guides and regulates the Social Services Professions in the country in aspects pertaining to registration by:

- ensuring compliance by practitioners in order for the sector to be serviced by registered persons, education and training
- ensuring continuing professional development and compliance by training institutions and professional conduct
- ensuring compliance by all registered practitioners in terms of professional and ethical services to communities and individuals.

The council has two professional boards under its auspices:

- The Professional Board for Social Workers.
- The Professional Board for Child and Youth Care.

National Action Committee for Children Affected by HIV and AIDS

The National Committee for Children Affected by HIV and AIDS is a multisectoral structure made up of government departments, CSOs, development agencies and donor organisations.

It is a formal structure used for collaborative planning and decision-making concerning issues pertaining to orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS.

It has a steering committee initiated through consultations between government departments, civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and is currently composed of representatives of government and civil society.

The committee is chaired by the DSD, and co-chaired by a nominated member from civil society.

Relief boards

Four relief fund boards were established in terms of Section 16 of the Fund-Raising Act of 1978.

- Board of the Disaster Relief Fund: The key functions of the board are to assist people, organisations and bodies that suffer damage or loss as a result of a disaster.
- Board of the Refugee Relief Fund: The key functions are to assist refugees as the board may deem fair and reasonable.
- Board of the State President's Fund: This board's functions are to assist victims of any act of terrorism in respect of their medical treatment and rehabilitation, and assist such victims and their dependants during any financial hardship or financial distress caused directly or indirectly by any act of terrorism.
- Board of the Social Relief Fund: The key functions of the board are to make funds available to organisations capable of assisting people with psychosocial challenges, and rendering such social distress relief to victims of violence.

Non-profit organisations

The NPO Directorate of the DSD administers the Register of NPOs in South Africa.

It is a voluntary registration facility that enhances the credibility of the registered NPO as it reports to a public office. Registration promotes effective, efficient and accountable management within the sector.

To strengthen the capacity of NPOs, the DSD will continue to build their capacity and monitor their compliance to legislation.

One of the functions of the department is to monitor all registered NPOs in terms of their compliance with the NPO Act of 1997.

Plans to strengthen the sector include:

- increasing the number of staff in the department who deal with registrations
- increasing the number of road shows to provide information and listen to challenges faced by the sector.

NPOs registered with the DSD are required in terms of the NPO Act of 1997 to submit their annual reports (narrative and financial reports) to the department. This applies to all NPOs registered under the NPO Act of 1997, whether funded or unfunded.

Programmes and projects **16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children**

The 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children is an annual awareness campaign observed globally. It addresses policy and legal issues and calls for the elimination of all forms of GBV.

The campaign runs from 25 November, which was officially recognised by the UN in 1999 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

South Africa has added children to the campaign, as there is growing concern about the increasing violence against children.

The campaign ends on 10 December – International Human Rights Day.

Other important days commemorated annually during this 16-day period include World AIDS Day on 1 December and the International Day for Persons with Disabilities on 3 December.

Project Mikondzo

Project Mikondzo (which means “footprint” in Xitsonga) compels office-bound officials from the department, the NDA and the

SASSA to join frontline officials to interact with communities in a bid to tackle social problems such as poverty, malnutrition, violence against women and child-headed households.

The project includes an audit of ECD centres and the setting up of a command centre with a toll-free hotline open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It also includes a substance abuse awareness campaign targeting sports and music events, the targeting of GBV and the strengthening of NPOs.

The project helps government reach the about two million children who qualify for CSGs but who have not registered with SASSA to receive grants.

The DSD began training caregivers to improve assistance to child and youth-headed households.

The department audited 92 000 child-headed households that are in the Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) database to ensure compliance with the Children's Act of 2005 definition of a child-headed household.

Government continues to implement the service-delivery initiatives, Project Mikondzo and the Integrated Community Registration Outreach Programme (ICROP) to improve the sector's services and to increase access to social assistance for the impoverished communities.

Anti-Substance Abuse Programme of Action

Alcohol advertising is regulated by the Liquor Act, 2003 (Act 59 of 2003) which outlines the guidelines for liquor advertising. The alcohol industry is self-regulated by the Code of Commercial Communication of Alcohol Beverages, something to which most companies and advertisers adhere.

The Central Drug Authority Board developed regulations for the Prevention of and Treatment for Substance Abuse Act of 2008.

The Act complements both the National Drug Master Plan (NDMP) (2013 – 2017) and the Anti-Substance Abuse Programme.

The Act provides for a comprehensive national response for combating substance abuse in South Africa through:

- mechanisms aimed at reducing demand and harm in relation to substance abuse through prevention, early intervention, treatment and reintegration programmes

- registration and establishment of treatment centres and halfway houses
- the committal of persons to and from treatment centres and for their treatment.

The Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) on Combating Alcohol and Substance Abuse, is to coordinate government's collective national efforts, including prevention, community mobilisation, treatment and law enforcement, among others.

Progressive policy decisions have emanated from the IMC plan of action, such as the removal of liquor outlets from residential areas and near places of worship and schools, restrictions on operating times and on the location and content of advertising related to alcohol, and a reduction of the current legal alcohol limit for drivers.

In its efforts to reduce incidents of GBV which are often caused by abuse of alcohol and drugs, the DSD has launched GBV Command Centre (GBVCC) – a 24-hour call centre.

The GBVCC provides support and counselling to victims of GBV. Victims of GBV are encouraged to contact 0800 428 428 (0800 GBV GBV), a toll free number 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 cellphone. A Skype line for members of the deaf community also exists. To utilise the facility, victims should add 'Helpme GBV' to their Skype contacts. An SMS-based line for people with disability also exists. Users are required to SMS 'help' to 31531.

The DSD had commissioned a review of the Ke Moja Drug Awareness Campaign to ascertain its effectiveness and strengthen dissemination of information tools.

One of the common drugs, Tik, is sold as a combination of amphetamines and talcum powder, baking powder, starch, glucose or quinine. The drug changes users' behaviour and some symptoms associated with usage of its usage and addiction range from loss of appetite, weight loss, aggression, anxiety, headaches as well as change in dress code.

Health professionals are also concerned about the devastating effects of this drug on the user which among its many effects induces psychotic symptoms, such as seeing or hearing things that are not there, and violence, making it a

far more dangerous drug than most other drugs available in South Africa.

Government departments are collaborating with other sectors of society to implement the NDMP to respond to the scourge of drugs and substance abuse.

The Central Drug Authority is charged with the responsibility to develop and implement a coordinated approach encompassing supply control and demand reduction progress.

Provincial substance abuse forums have been established as well as local drug action committees which consists of social workers, teachers, justice and committee representatives.

The UN General Assembly, in its resolutions 42/112 of December 1987, declared 26 June as the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP)

The EPWP is a nationwide programme under the auspices of government and state-owned enterprises.

The programme provides an important avenue for labour absorption and income transfers to poor households in the short to medium term. It is also a deliberate attempt by public sector bodies to use expenditure on goods and services to create job opportunities for the unemployed.

EPWP projects employ workers on a temporary or ongoing basis either by government, by contractors, or by NGOs under the Ministerial Conditions of Employment for the EPWP or learnership employment conditions.

The EPWP Phase 3 was expected to create six million work opportunities; out of this overall targeted figure the projected work opportunities to be created by the EPWP social sector is 1 037 000 work opportunities by 2019.

The Vuk'uphile Learnership Programme is an EPWP Contractor Development Programme. It is a subprogramme of the EPWP Infrastructure Sector which is aimed at training and developing emerging contractors within the construction industry.

The programme develops the administrative, technical, contractual, managerial and entrepreneurial skills of the learners within a learner-contracting entity. The Vuk'uphile Learnership Programme uses labour-intensive methods of construction and

the opportunities that are created through the programme feeds to the six million EPWP work opportunities to be created by 2019.

The EPWP Knowledge Management Committee is composed of various national government departments such as Social Development, Environmental Affairs, Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, with the Department of Public Works leading the committee.

The Knowledge Management is a process of creating, acquiring, capturing and using knowledge wherever it resides to enable learning and performance in an organisation.

War on Poverty Campaign

The Co-Operative Shop Project is aimed at combating poverty by linking social grant beneficiaries (particularly the caregivers of children receiving CSGs and other vulnerable groups to meaningful socio-economic opportunities. The DSD and its entities will identify co-operatives that need support, with the intention of developing the skills of the members of the co-operative to ensure they are able to produce goods of quality.

The project is in line with the developmental agenda of government and could be seen as an addition to the grants that are provided. The primary intention is not to take people out of the grant system but to provide opportunities for grant beneficiaries to supplement their income.

Food for All Programme

The DSD is tasked with facilitating and monitoring the implementation of the Food for All Programme.

To this end, distressed households were being provided with food through the department and Food Bank South Africa programme.

While this provides short-term relief for poor households, government recognises that longer-term solutions are needed.

Government is committed to improving its efforts at ensuring food security for all in the country, starting with vulnerable households and communities.

To this end, households have been assisted in establishing food gardens to produce their own food, thus participating in their own development.

Social security and assistance

The programme's aim is to ensure the provision of social assistance to eligible beneficiaries whose income and assets fall below the set thresholds by providing income support, by 2021/22, to: 3 934 552 older people; 1 049 707 people living with disabilities; 13 100 407 children; 161 612 children requiring care and support services; and 318 134 foster children. The subprogrammes include:

- Old Age: provides income support to people aged 60 and older who earn annual incomes of less than R82 440 (single) and R164 880 (married), and whose assets do not exceed R1 174 800 (single) and R2 349 600 (married).
- War Veterans: provides income support to those who fought in World War II or the Korean War who earn an annual income of less than R82 440 (single) and R164 880 (married), and whose assets do not exceed R1 174 800 (single) and R2 349 600 (married).
- Disability: provides income support to people with permanent or temporary disabilities who earn an annual income of less than R82 440 (single) and R164 880 (married), and whose assets do not exceed R1 174 800 (single) and R2 349 600 (married).
- Foster Care: provides grants for foster parents to assist children in their care.
- Care Dependency: provides income support to parents and caregivers of children who have physical or mental disabilities, and require regular care and support. Parents or caregivers must earn an annual income of less than R213 600 (single) and R427 200 (married).
- Child Support: provides income support to parents and caregivers of children younger than 18 who earn an annual income of less than R50 400 (single) and R100 800 (married).
- Grant-in-Aid: is an additional grant to recipients of the old age, disability or war veterans grants who require regular care from another person because of their physical or mental condition.
- Social Relief of Distress: provides temporary income support, food parcels and other forms of relief to people experiencing undue hardship.

National minimum wage

The National Minimum Wage (NMW) came into effect on 1 January 2019. The minimum wage, which is currently set at R20 an hour, is an achievement for young democracy like South Africa which is striving to overcome a legacy of poverty and severe inequality. It is part of a broader engagement among social partners on how to reduce wage inequality and promote labour stability in South Africa.

The minimum wages for domestic and farm workers will initially be set at R15 and R18 an hour respectively. This will be adjusted to reach the NMW within two years of implementation.

Job creation and poverty alleviation

South Africa, like most countries, is grappling with the challenge of youth unemployment. Government has recognised the problem of poor economic participation of young people and has put in place numerous policy interventions geared towards bringing youth into the mainstream of the economy to enhance social inclusion and cohesion.

Through the National Treasury and Department of Labour, the DSD introduced youth unemployment policy options for South Africa with the aim of incentivising entities to employ young people.

The National Youth Development Agency has provided the Integrated Youth Development Strategy with the key mandate of implementing interventions geared towards the economic participation of young people, namely, youth work, national youth services, and education and skills relevant to economic empowerment.

Government strives to provide an opportunity to raise the share of youth-owned businesses and to support youth to engage in cooperatives in the country.

The NDP is clear about the need for skills development in promoting economic growth and reaching related goals and the country has done well to ensure that practically children who should be in primary school are there.

Food banks

FoodBank SA is now known as FoodForward SA.

It collects edible surplus food from manufacturers,

wholesalers and retailers, and redistributes it to verified NPOs that collectively feed thousands of hungry people daily.

FoodForward SA works with over 600 member beneficiary organisations that in turn feed over 175 000 people daily. At least 85% of the beneficiary organisations undertake skills development, education, or remedial activities.

HIV and AIDS Youth Programme

Isibindi is a programme which deploys child and youth care workers in communities to assist children in vulnerable homes. Isibindi has a special focus on Grade 12 learners.

The assistance by Isibindi child and youth care workers ensures that children remain in school and attend classes. The child and youth care workers support these children and make sure that they are relieved from household responsibilities, including being parents to their siblings while they are trying to pass Grade 12.

While the project has over the course of a five-year period, that concluded in March 2018, been unable to establish the required 400 sites, it has been able to reach 373 sites and has also employed 6 577 people as care workers.

HIV and AIDS advocacy, awareness and outreach programme

Achieving a meaningful and clear understanding of the scientific facts about HIV and AIDS will lead to individual self-management regarding the risk of HIV infection.

The awareness programme has the following main pillars:

- disclosure
- communication
- rights
- facilitation.

The programme also deals with the physical and emotional consequences of HIV and AIDS. It addresses the following challenges:

- the lack of accurate and current information on HIV and AIDS
- the lack of access to care, support, treatment and new healthcare developments
- discrimination against the infected and affected.

The programme aims to involve people living with HIV and

AIDS in initiatives that directly help affected and infected people to alleviate stigmatisation.

Victim Empowerment Programme (VEP)

South Africa's Victim Empowerment Policy is based upon the concept of restorative justice.

Victim empowerment is a means of facilitating access to a range of services for all people who have individually or collectively suffered harm, trauma and/or material loss through violence, crime, natural disaster, human accident and/or through socio-economic conditions.

It is the process of promoting the resourcefulness of victims of crime and violence by providing opportunities to access services available to them, as well as to use and build their own capacity and support networks and to act on their own choices.

National Directory on Services for Victims of Violence and Crime

The National Directory on Services for Victims of Violence and Crime is updated annually in collaboration with the provincial VEP managers or coordinators and their provincial counterparts.

Prevention and treatment of substance and drug abuse

Sobriety Week, is a national campaign aimed at creating awareness among the general South African public, particularly the youth, women and pregnant women about the adverse effects of liquor abuse.

Sobriety Week incorporates the 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 (HCBC) 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 the HCBC programme 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.

Child Labour Programme of Action (CLPA)

The CLPA is a national partnership initiated by government, civil-society partners comprising organised business, organised labour and NGOs. The lead department is the Department of Labour.

It is South Africa's roadmap towards the prevention, reduction and eventual elimination of child labour.

The CLPA was first adopted in 2003 after extensive consultation within Government, with a wide range of organisations outside government and with groups of teenage children involved in different forms of child labour. The programme sets out specific actions to be taken and assigned responsibility for these actions.

Childline South Africa

Childline offers a 24-hour toll-free crisis line (08000 55 555) 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 create 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 and children

- therapy for abused and traumatised children and their families
- court preparation of child witnesses
- networking and coordination
 - lobbying and advocacy
 - analysis of law and policy.

People with disabilities

In 2016, the DSD published the *White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, which was approved by the Cabinet in December 2015, for public information.

The White Paper takes its cue from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and a number of international instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, and the sustainable development goals, which reaffirm the human rights of people with disabilities.

The White Paper is a crucial step along the journey of improving the lives of people with disabilities and moves us closer to a fully inclusive society.

It is intended to accelerate transformation and redress with regard to full inclusion, integration and equality for people with disabilities. South Africa had to collectively contribute to the empowerment of people with disabilities through accessible disability information services, inclusive ECD opportunities and accessible rehabilitation services.

This would enable people with disabilities to take up the opportunities created in much larger numbers, improving performance in achieving equity targets.

People with disabilities represent the voice of the sector in institutions such as the South African Human Rights Commission, the Commission on Gender Equality, the Board of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, National Youth Development Agency and many transformation and developmental entities.

The South African experience has also helped to shape the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Continental Plan for the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities. South Africa has been celebrating the International Day for People with Disabilities annually since 1997.

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 of South Africa's official languages, Braille training that entails writing and reading, and orientation and mobility training.

South African Braille Authority (SABA)

SABA's 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 SABA include schools for the blind (approximately half the members), consumer organisations of the blind, student disability units, Braille producers and the South African Library for the Blind.

Through SABA, South Africa is a member country of the International Council on English Braille (ICEB).

ICEB membership enables South Africa 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 lastly fund-raising 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.

Support for the deaf

South Africa's national organisation for the deaf is the Deaf Federation of South Africa (DeafSA).

DeafSA has nine provincial chapters throughout South Africa.

Two other national organisations for the deaf are Deafblind South Africa and SHHH South Africa, the South African organisation for the hard of hearing.

An estimated 500 000 to 600 000 South Africans use South African Sign Language. As sign language has grown in South Africa – particularly baby sign language – an NPO, Sign Language Education and Development, has been formed to promote sign language.

Signing with hearing babies and children is being promoted through the Signsational Kids website.

South Africa has a long-established deaf education system. Statistics indicate that there are more than 40 schools for the deaf in South Africa. They include:

- De la Bat School (run by the Institute for the Deaf)
- Fulton School for the Deaf
- Kutlwanong School for the Deaf (Rustenburg)
- Kwa Thintwa School for Hearing Impaired
- St Vincent's School for the Deaf (Johannesburg)
- Vuleka School for the Blind and Deaf.

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 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 and recreation South Africa and other stakeholders to promote general health among older persons, especially through sports to promote general well-being.

Since 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 new 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 old-age grant means test would be phased out by 2016, accompanied by offsetting revisions to the secondary and tertiary rebates.

All citizens over a designated age will be eligible for the grant, which will simplify its administration and address the disincentive to save that arises from the present means test.

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 department about the number of unemployed social workers who have studied outside the DSD scholarship programme.

This is in response to the issue raised by communities and the media that there are qualified social workers who are unemployed.

Government 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 on matters affecting the professions in respect of which professional boards have been established
- controlling and exercising authority regarding all financial matters relating to the council and the professional boards
- assisting in the promotion of social services.