

BLACKSASH MAKING HUMAN RIGHTS REAL

Community Monitoring and Advocacy Project - *CMAP*



Report

Monitoring of Western Cape SASSA Service Points

Phase One: October - November 2009

Acknowledgements

The Black Sash wishes to thank all the community monitors and their respective organisations who contributed to the success of this Phase 1 of the CMAP in the Western Cape, including Black Sash Cape Town and Knysna Regional Offices who coordinated and lead the entire process.

- **New Lentegeur Youth Development & Education,**
- **Western Cape National Welfare Forum,**
- **Elsies River Advice Office,**
- **Gugulethu Advice Office,**
- **Heideveld Advice Office,**
- **Masincedisane (Du Noon),**
- **Laingsburg Advice Office**
- **Township Development Agency – Khayelitsha (TDA),**
- **Ithemba Support Group,**
- **Paarl Advice Office,**
- **Athlone Advice Office,**
- **Bonteheuwel Advice Office,**
- **N2 George Advice Office,**
- **Mossel Bay Advice Office**

In addition we also wish to thank the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) Western Cape Regional Office and the National Office for their collaboration and openness to facilitate our monitors' access to the service points.

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Contents

Acknowledgements	pg 2
Background and Introduction	pg 4
Why this project?	p4
The Project	p5
Pilots and Methodology	p6
Data Analysis	pg 7
Scope, limits and assumptions	p7
Respondents	p7
Findings	pg11
Time	p12
Venue	p15
Security	p17
Transport	p18
Personnel	p20
Language	p22
Processing of grants	p25
Recommendations	p28

Background and Introduction

On October 12, 2009 the Black Sash Cape Town Regional Office began the implementation of Phase 1 of the first in a series of national pilots for the Community Monitoring and Advocacy Project. The implementation came after months of rigorous planning and consultation with project partners and intense negotiations with relevant government departments. 27 Monitors selected from community based partner organisations and networks, acknowledged earlier in this report, visited 30 SASSA service points in 14 districts in the Cape Town Metro, Knysna and Boland areas. The findings of this intervention are presented in this report and are accompanied by recommendations made by service beneficiaries and the Black Sash.

Why this project

The Black Sash, a human rights organisation active for the past 55 years in South Africa, works to alleviate poverty and inequality; and is committed to building a culture of rights-with-responsibilities in South Africa. We focus specifically on the socio-economic rights guaranteed by our constitution to all living in South Africa.

Despite the principles of Batho Pele (People First) which have officially governed the civil service for more than ten years, we are deeply conscious that unaccountable, corrupt and inefficient service delivery ranks high amongst the many factors that prevent the full realisation of these rights. We are concerned that poor service delivery denies millions of people a dignified life, undermines the impact of government spending on other social protection programmes, as well as any advances that have been made to create employment and currently leads to growing anger and frustration which inevitably results in often violent protest. These protests bring with them the accompanying risks to the economy of the destruction of infrastructure, loss of work days and human insecurity.

Similarly, we acknowledge that the South African Government is under increasing pressure to improve access to, as well as the quality and cost effectiveness of, service delivery. Service delivery is a key public determinant of the effectiveness of the state's use of limited resources; a particularly important factor during the current global financial crisis. A high standard of service delivery is a fundamental part of the social compact between the government and the population and in today's more transparent world of accountability, the standard of service delivery underpins the credibility of the government.

It is in this context, that the Black Sash Community Monitoring and Advocacy Project is being piloted, in collaboration with other civil society organisations and networks.

The Project

Our premise is that quality service delivery is one factor that our society should be able to tackle even at a time of economic recession and that we, as civil society, should hold our government responsible for delivering - affordably, appropriately, effectively and with dignity as is promised in public speeches, ruling party manifestos and service delivery norms and standards.

We argue that only active community-based civil society will be able to monitor service delivery *as it is experienced by beneficiaries* and constructively engage with government at all levels to improve these services. We believe that it is only aware, informed and active communities that will insist that government deliver on the promises made in national, provincial and local elections, and account to their constituencies for policies and practices that affect their quality of life.

The objectives of the project are two-fold:

- To assess and report on the quality of service delivery in specified government departments and municipalities across South Africa as experienced by beneficiaries
- To develop a system for civil society organisations and community members to hold government accountable for the principles of Batho Pele as well as specific norms and standards that govern service delivery and promise excellence.

Working closely with our partners, the Black Sash

- ensures widespread, visible, standardised and regular monitoring of service delivery points by Community Monitors that are selected by CSO networks;
- co-ordinates the development of the monitoring instruments and data bases; collate and analyse the monitoring information; produce and distribute regular reports to our partners and the public;
- present reports to the appropriate government officials in order to affirm good practice and to work together to make improvements where required

This initiative starts by assessing the most basic of services that allow persons their proof of citizenship or immigration status as well as those services satisfying social protection rights of the people living in South Africa. This Community MAP aims to empower communities to access their rights to social protection, civic and immigration services. It seeks to encourage service beneficiaries to appraise the quality of services they receive

and, through monitors drawn from independent and credible community organisation networks, will provide the opportunity for such beneficiaries to express their concerns and appreciation.

This project is built on the tenet that citizens are not passive users of public services but active holders of fundamental rights. The Project will gather and analyse information from the service users' point of view to provide a strong body of evidence to take back to government and, where necessary, into the public domain, to better the delivery of services where needed and to acknowledge good service where it is provided.

Pilots and Methodology

The Project will be piloted in four provinces during this initial phase, this is to assess the level of data that will be received, the relevance of the monitoring tools and instruments and the usefulness of data received and hence review and amend tools as required. The first pilot which commenced in October this year and is reported on here, saw SASSA service points being monitored in the Western Cape. Phase 2 of this pilot in the Western Cape will commence in late February 2010.

The methodology includes a selection of monitors by monitoring partners (CBOs and CBO networks), who are trained to monitor, orientated to the monitoring tool and committed by way of a code of conduct. Each monitor identifies the day(s), within a specified timeframe, that they will monitor selected sites in the communities where they live or work. Once the site has been visited by the monitor and assessment has been done using the monitoring tool, the completed questionnaires are forwarded to the Black Sash Regional Offices for capturing and analysis. The reports developed as a result of this analysis is forwarded to the relevant government department for response within an agreed period, where after it will be available to the public.

This report reflects the findings and recommendations of Phase 1 of the Western Cape pilot, where we worked closely with civil society organisations (CSOs) and CSO Networks, which include community advice offices, HIV and Aids support groups, women's groups, and welfare organisations. A list of our partners in this phase of the Western Cape Pilot can be found in the acknowledgment section of this report.

Data analysis

This section reflects the findings of the monitoring exercise implemented in October and November 2009,

Scope, limits and assumptions

Monitoring was conducted by 27 monitors at 30 different SASSA service points across 14 districts. Of the 30 service points, 5 were local/district offices and the remaining 25 were satellite service points in the Cape Town Metro, Boland and Knysna areas. There were a total of 377 respondents to the questionnaire of which 38 were SASSA officials and 339 service beneficiaries

The findings are presented on the basis of issues raised in the monitoring tool (i.e. time, venue, security, grant processing and communication) most of which are related to the National Norms and Standards Policy for Social Assistance Service Delivery, produced and published by the Department Of Social Development, February, 2002.

No specific norms or standards exist for the operation and structure of satellite service points (service points that operate in the communities once a week/ fortnight). However, as they are seen as an extension of the 5 local/district offices, we have assumed that the same norms and standards guide the delivery of services at these sites. For the sake of data analysis in this report, the existing norms and standards will therefore be used as benchmarks.

Please note the questions that were not completed by the monitors have not been taken into account in calculating any of the percentages.

Respondents

The profile of beneficiaries indicates that the majority of beneficiaries interviewed were South African citizens with 1% being asylum seekers or refugees. Figures 1 and 2 further show that the majority of our respondents were female, though the age profile differed considerably across regions.

In the Metro 73% of the respondents were female, and were pretty evenly spread across age cohorts; in the Boland our respondents were 67% female, with the majority falling into the age category 56 – 61; while in Knysna 71% of our respondents were female, with over a third falling in the 26 – 35 age group.

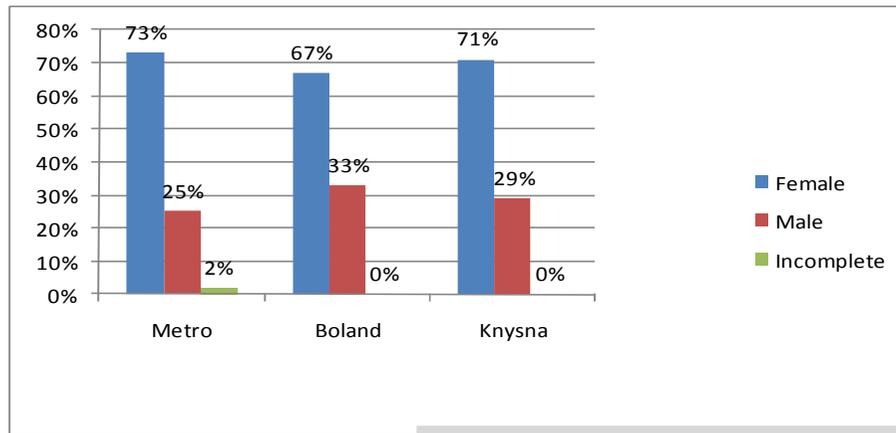


Figure1. Beneficiary profile: gender specific

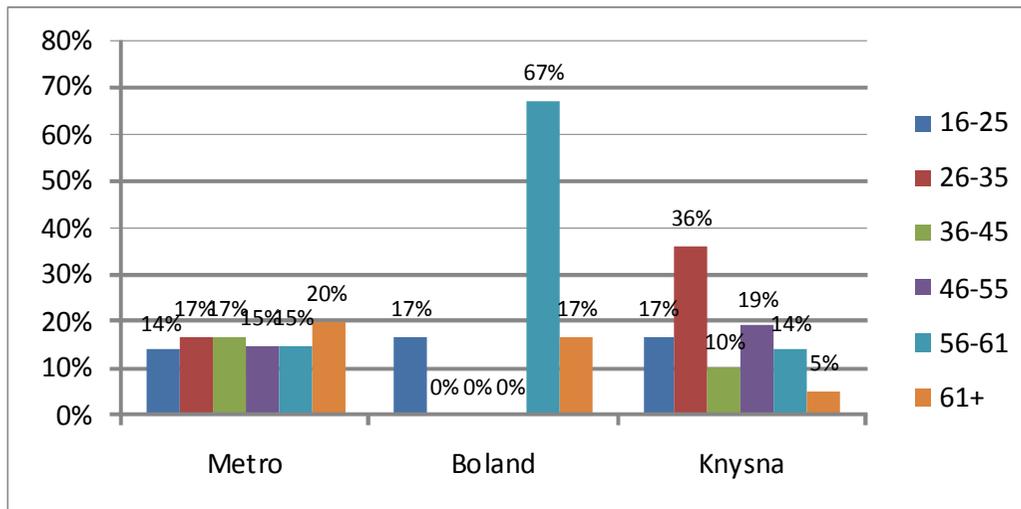


Figure2. Beneficiary profile: age specific

Figure 3 and 4 below indicates the purpose of the beneficiaries' visit in terms of the action needed to be taken and the grant under consideration.

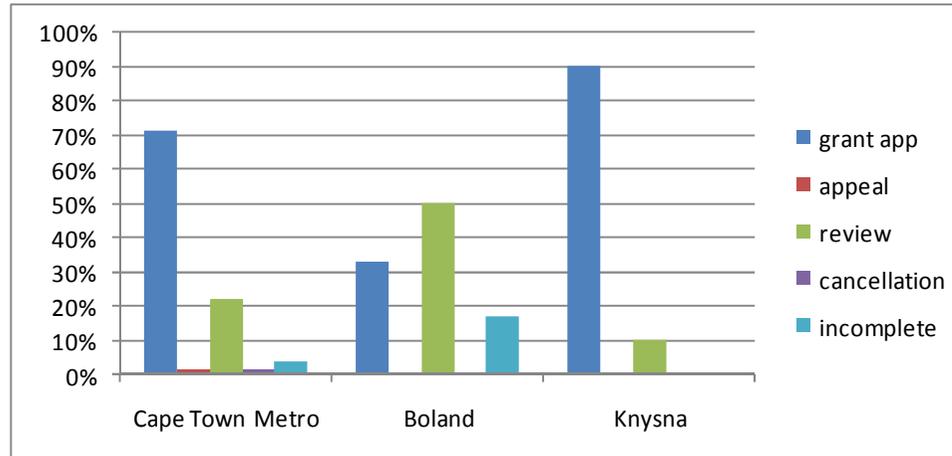


Figure3. Beneficiary profile: purpose of visiting service point.

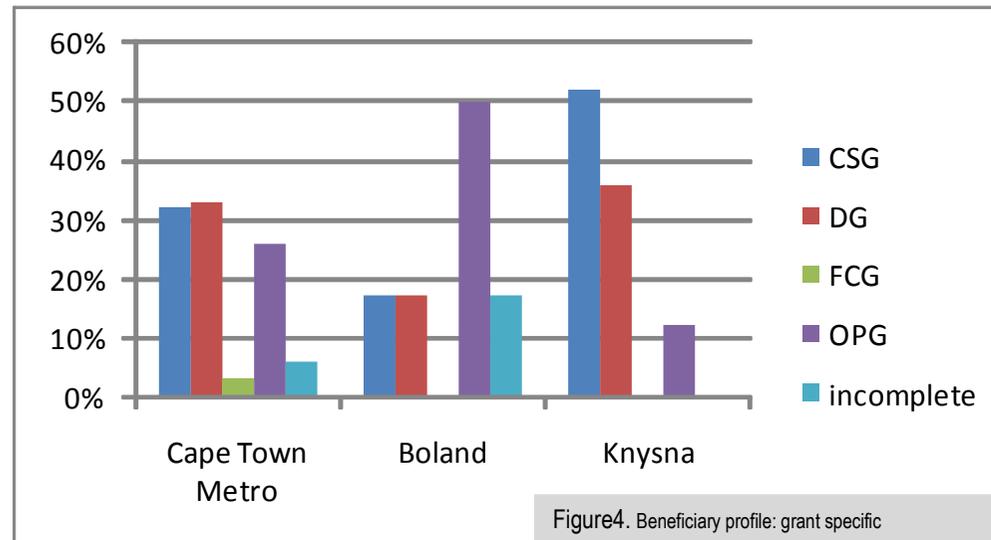


Figure4. Beneficiary profile: grant specific

Table 1, below illustrates a summary of the service points monitored in 14 districts (8 of which are in the Cape Town Metro, 5 in Knysna and one in the Boland) in the Western Cape. It further reflects the number of officials and beneficiaries interviewed.

Table 1 – Sites Visited

Region	Area	Local Office	Service Point	No. of Officials Interviewed	No. of Beneficiaries Interviewed	Local Office	Service Point	No. of Officials Interviewed	No. of Beneficiaries Interviewed
Western Cape	Metro	Athlone		7	50	Cape Town		4	38
Western Cape	Metro	Athlone	Athlone	2	22	Cape Town	Brooklyn	1	14
Western Cape	Metro	Athlone	Hanover Park	1	15	Cape Town	Cape Town	1	9
Western Cape	Metro	Athlone	Heideveld	2	13	Cape Town	Du Noon	1	4
Western Cape	Metro	Athlone	Nyanga	2	27	Cape Town	Joe Slovo	1	11
Western Cape	Metro	Bellville		7	83	Wynberg	Masiphumelele	1	21
Western Cape	Metro	Bellville	Belhar	2	17	Eerste River		4	29
Western Cape	Metro	Bellville	Bonteheuwel MPC	2	19	Eerste River	Bloekombos Com Cntr	1	8
Western Cape	Metro	Bellville	Elsies River	2	33	Eerste River	Eerste River	1	10
Western Cape	Metro	Bellville	Fisante Kraal	1	14	Eerste River	Northdene Hall	1	5
Western Cape	Metro	Khayelitsha		3	5	Eerste River	Wallacedene Com Hall	1	6
Western Cape	Metro	Khayelitsha	Harare	1	2	Guguletu		4	29
Western Cape	Metro	Khayelitsha	Resource Cntr	1	1	Guguletu	Guguletu	2	2
Western Cape	Metro	Khayelitsha	Site C	1	2				
Western Cape	Metro	Mitchells Plain		2	36				
Western Cape	Metro	Mitchells Plain	M/P Local Office	1	25				
Western Cape	Metro	Mitchells Plain	Rocklands	1	11				
Western Cape	Boland	Drakenstein	Paarl	2	6	Lainsburg	Lainsburg	1	7
Western Cape	Knysna	Eden	Thembaletu	1	7	Mosselbay	Dalmeida Civic	1	7
Western Cape	Knysna	Knysna	Knysna TH	1	13	Plettenberg Bay	Kwanokuthula	1	8

Findings

This section will assess the efficiency and quality of the service provided by SASSA;

The issues raised in this section relate to:

- Time (opening and closing times of the service point and the length of time beneficiaries spend waiting to be served),
- Venue (physical state of the venue, availability of the chairs, toilets and clean water),
- Security (availability of private security or police at venue),
- Transport (how beneficiaries arrived at the site, how long it took for them to travel and how much it cost),
- Personnel (how many SASSA officials serve beneficiaries, helpdesk or no helpdesk, adherence to Batho Pele and customer care),
- Language & Communication (official languages spoken and foreign language translators at sites; how much people know about the grants and services of SASSA and where they received their information)
- Processing of Grants (types of grants being applied for/ reviewed, number of times beneficiaries return for the same application/review, time lapse in processing, receipts and information on outcome of the application/review),

Time

<i>Time – 38 responses by officials, 339 responses by beneficiaries</i>	CT Metro	Boland	Knysna
Service points that did not start attending to people when SASSA stated the service would start <i>Belhar, Fisante Kraal, Harare, Heideveld, Joe Slovo</i>	20%	0%	0%
Service points opening after SASSA has stated the service should start <i>Belhar, Harare, Joe Slovo</i>	12%	0%	0%
Beneficiaries arriving before 8:00am <i>Earliest arrival time was 1:15am in Belhar by a female aged 56-60 Earliest arrival time was 3:00am in Paarl by a male aged 56-61 Earliest arrival time was 5:15am in George by a female aged 46-55</i>	64%	100%	19%
Average length of time waited in a queue by the beneficiaries at all service points <i>On average Bellville, Eersterivier and Wynberg had the longest waiting times in the queue at 347, 324 and 219 minutes respectively On average the service point with the longest waiting time was Mosselbay at 45 minutes On average Mitchell's Plain, Guguletu and Athlone had the shortest waiting times in the queue at 93, 150 and 157 minutes respectively On average the service point with the shortest waiting time was Knysna at 1 minute</i>	208 minutes	220 minutes	27 minutes
Beneficiaries waiting in a queue longer than 2 hours <i>Longest waiting time was 13 hours in Belhar by a male aged 61+ Longest waiting time was 6 hours in Paarl by a male aged 56-61 Longest waiting time was 2 hours in Mosselbay by a female aged 26-35</i>	61%	83%	0%

There is no specific norm/standard that guides the opening and closing hours of the service points, however the general observations at the sites monitored show that SASSA officials arrive at the satellite service point between 08:30 and 09:00 and close the point between 15:30 – 16:00.

It was observed that 20% percent of respondents felt that the service did not start on time whereas 72% of respondents felt that service started at the time indicated by SASSA officials on the day. However we found that three service points (**Belhar, Harare and Joe Slovo**) opened to the public after SASSA stated the service should start.

It is also clear that the majority of the respondents in the Metro (64%) and in the Boland (100%) arrive before 8am at the service point, while none of our respondents in Knysna arrived before 8. The **earliest arrival time was 1:15am in Belhar by a female aged 56-60**. Our monitors were informed that beneficiaries arrive early to ensure they have a place in the front of the queue and can therefore be guaranteed the service on a particular day.

61% of respondents waited for longer than 2hours to be serviced on the days we monitored the various sites. The longest wait occurred at the Belhar service point and was 13 hours, experienced by a man, aged 61+ at the Belhar service point. The longest waiting period in Paarl and Mosselbay was 6 hours and 2 hours respectively.

For the Cape Town Metro the average length of time waited in a queue by the beneficiaries were 3 hours and 28 minutes with Bellville, Eersterivier and Wynberg having the longest waiting times in the queue at 5 hours and 47 minutes, 5 hours and 24 minutes and 3 hours and 39 minutes respectively and on average Mitchell's Plain, Guguletu and Athlone had the shortest waiting times in the queue at 1 hour and 33 minutes, 2 hours and 30 minutes and 2 hours and 37 minutes respectively.

Clearly these long waits inconvenience applicants considerably. A further serious implication of the long queues relates to security at the service sites. A general observation by monitors was that the majority of service points open their doors to the public from 7:30am (at least an hour prior to SASSA officials arrive), leaving all beneficiaries who arrive before this time to stand outside the fenced premises. This makes applicants vulnerable because there is no security available at all. The below recommendations will reduce the likelihood that applicants have to arrive before the offices open. (Please also refer to the recommendations for security below)

Recommendations

1. That National Norms and Standards Policy for Social Assistance Service Delivery should be amended to clearly state
 - That they are applicable to satellite sites to avoid any ambiguity.
 - The opening and closing hours of the service points.
2. That SASSA puts in place mechanisms to ensure that the service points at **Belhar, Harare and Joe Slovo** begin their service at the stated starting time.
3. That SASSA investigate the particular causes of the unacceptably long waiting periods at sites and provide Black Sash with a report and a proposal to reduce the average waiting period to a maximum of 2 hours by the end of 2010.
4. That SASSA consider instituting the following administrative systems at sites (with local civil society input)
 - An appointment system
 - A floating official to manage the queues. In the absence of staff being appointed for this financial year we recommend that each official play that role for at least half an hour of their time at the service point until a dedicated person is appointed. This is to eliminate applicants waiting in a queue for forms. Monitors observed at most sites that applicants who need forms are not directed to these.
5. That SASSA increases its visits to service sites to at least twice a week.

Venue

<i>Venue -24 responses by officials, 291 responses by beneficiaries</i>	CT Metro	Boland	Knysna
Service points with shelter	96%	100%	100%
Service points with special arrangements	96%	0%	80%
Beneficiaries who said there were no special arrangements	42%	67%	42%
Service points with available toilets	100%	100%	100%
Well maintained service points	83%	100%	60%
<i>Nyanga was not</i>			
Service points with enough chairs – Official's response	75%	100%	100%
<i>Du Noon, Eersterivier, Heideveld, Hanover Park, Joe Slovo, Resource Centre did not have enough to cater for all clients on the day</i>			
Beneficiaries who said there were no seats available	13%	33%	2%
<i>Average waiting time was 12 minutes (CT Metro)</i>			
<i>Average waiting time was 6 minutes (Knysna)</i>			
<i>0 minutes (Boland)</i>			
<i>Longest waiting time for a seat was 1 hour in Bridgetown and Westridge by 2 males aged 61+ (CT Metro)</i>			
<i>Longest waiting time for a seat was 30 minutes, in Laingsburg by a male aged 26-35 (Knysna)</i>			

Based on the data interviewees are generally satisfied that SASSA provides adequate and well maintained shelters, located within at least 5km radius from the communities being served. This is confirmed by the percentage (65%) of interviewees who walk to the site on the day.

A whopping 25% of SASSA officials confirmed that their sites had inadequate seating available. The average time it took for clients to find seating was 12 minutes with the ***longest waiting time for a seat being 1 hour in Bridgetown and Westridge by 2 males aged 61+ who arrived at the arrived at the service points between 9-10am.***

On the issue of special arrangements for persons with disabilities, old and frail persons and pregnant women, the SASSA officials felt there were adequate special practices for these groupings. However 42% of beneficiaries interviewed felt these practices were only available in theory.

Recommendations

1. That SASSA continues to provide the service close to the people in the Cape Town Metro but takes measures to assess the physical conditions and improve shelters at the service sites in the Boland and Knysna.
2. That SASSA treat the Bridgetown and Westridge service points (where the longest waiting time was experienced) as priority sites to be equipped with sufficient chairs to comply with the average time waiting for a chair.
3. That SASSA monitor the service points at Du Noon, Eersterivier, Heideveld, Hanover Park, Joe Slovo, Resource Centre as these sites did not have enough to cater for all clients on the day monitoring was done.
4. That SASSA takes particularly care with regards to special arrangements for persons with disabilities, old and frail persons and pregnant women. We suggest that SASSA
 - compares and, where necessary, adjusts its sites against the Disability framework adopted by DSD.
 - immediately arrange for temporary disability-accessible toilets at the sites, based on the flow of beneficiaries, and plan to build permanent toilets or source a new site which has accessible toilets for persons with disabilities. We recommend that this be implemented at the Boland service points as a matter of urgency by the end of 2010.
 - organises visits to people's homes within a 5 km radius to provide services to people who are older and too frail to wait in queues, as provided for in the 2008 Regulations to the Social Assistance Act

Security

Security – 38 responses by officials, 339 responses by beneficiaries	CT Metro	Boland	Knysna
Service points without private security or police presence Fisante Kraal, Heideveld, Masiphumelele, Rocklands	17%	100%	80%
Service points without adequate or well equipped security Belhar, Bloekombos, Brooklyn, Northdene Hall	22%	100%	80%
Service points with a fenced in area Masiphumelele, Wellington, Knysna Town Hall, Dalmeida Civic	78%	50%	40%
Beneficiaries who said security was not present upon arrival	42%	50%	33%

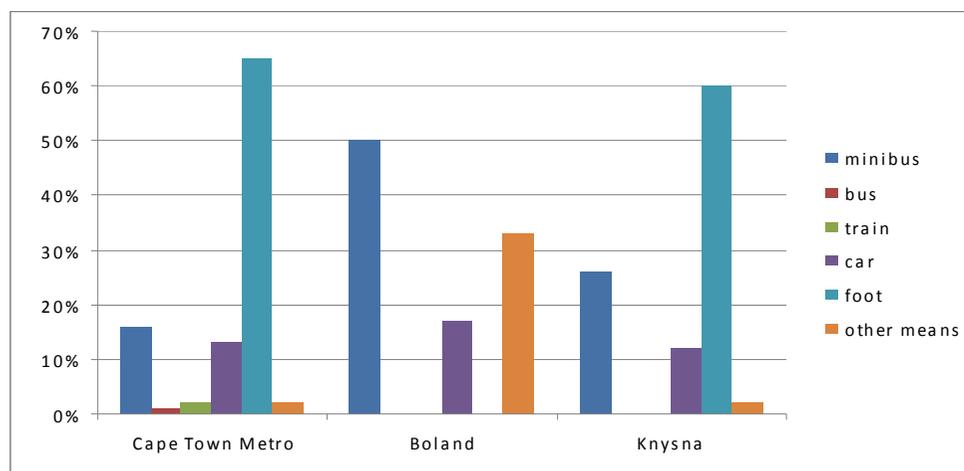
The 2002, Norms and Standards only consider security issues when SASSA provides services at paypoints. These do not take account of the reality that applicants (on average six out of ten people) arrive in the earlier hours of the morning, and before eight o'clock when the service point opens. This leaves applicants, particularly women, vulnerable to crime because no security is available at the site before it opens. The profile of beneficiaries shows that the majority of beneficiaries in the Metro were females of which 73% are between the ages of 26 – 45.

Recommendations:

1. That SASSA implement the recommendations made in the section on "Time" to address the unacceptably long queues urgently in order to minimise the need for beneficiaries to wait outside in unprotected and insecure areas; and that as an interim measure, SASSA employ security guards at service sites.
2. That SASSA arrange with the South African Police Service to monitor service sites regularly in the early mornings and on the days the sites are open for business.

Transport

<i>Transport – 339 responses by beneficiaries</i>	CT Metro	Boland	Knysna
Beneficiaries who said the service point was more than 5km away			
Average length of travel was 19 minutes (CT Metro)			
Average length of travel was 21 minutes (Boland)			
Average length of travel was 26 minutes (Knysna)			
Longest travel time was 120 minutes in Phillipi by a male aged 46-55 (CT Metro)			
Longest travel time was 60 minutes in Paarl by a female aged 16-25 (Boland)			
Longest travel time was 300 minutes in White Location by a female aged 16-25 (Knysna)			
Average cost of travel was R1.85 (CT Metro), R3.30(Boland), R4.85(Knysna)			
Largest amount paid was R30 in Kraaifontein by a female aged 46-55 (CT Metro)			
Largest amount paid was R7 in Paarl by a female aged 56-61 (Boland)			
Largest amount paid was R50 in Laingsburg by a male aged 56-61 (Knysna)			
	19%	17%	62%



It is clear that SASSA's strategy to bring the service as close to the people as possible is working for most beneficiaries in the Cape Metro, Boland and Knysna. We found that 65% of respondents felt comfortable walking to service points as they were 'close' to their homes or at least within 5kms from where they were coming from on the day. Because so many respondents walked to the service point, it made accessing the service financially possible.

In the Cape Metro the average length of travel was 19 minutes, while the longest travel time was 120 minutes in Phillipi by a male aged 46-55 and the shortest travel time was 2 minutes in Belhar. The average cost of travel was R1.85 and the highest amount paid was R30 in Kraaifontein by a female aged 46-55. In the Boland area the average length of travel was 21 minutes and in Knysna it was 26 minutes. The average cost of travel for the Boland was R3.30 and R4.85 in Knysna.

Monitors observed, however, that the amount of time spent to access the service at the satellite service points, undermines SASSA's commitment to bring the service closer to the communities.

Recommendations

We recommend that these sites continue to be demographically placed in communities that need the service.

Personnel

<i>Personnel Part 1 – 38 responses by officials, 339 responses by beneficiaries</i>	CT Metro	Boland	Knysna
Average number of people served in a day	160 people	-	-
Average number of people served in a day at a satellite service point	90 people	80	48
Average number of staff members working in a day	7 staff	-	-
Average number of staff members working in a day at a satellite service point	3 staff	2	2
Service points that did not service anyone that day	8%	50%	0%
<i>Site C, Bontehuwel, Paarl</i>			
Service points that did not have a help desk or floating official	38%	100%	40%
<i>Nyanga, Belhar, Masiphumelele, Cape Town, Brooklyn, Bloekombos Com, Northdene Hall, Wallacedene Com Hall, Joe Slovo, Plettenbergbay</i>			
Service points where officials were not wearing identifiable name tags/uniforms	46%	100%	60%
<i>Belhar, Nyanga, Masiphumelele, Resource Centre, Bloekombos Com, Wallacedene Com Hall, Hanover Park, Fisante Kraal, Harare, Site C, Heideveld, Lainsburg</i>			
Service points where SASSA adhered to the Batho Pele principles	100%	100%	60%
Service points without a sign with customer care norms displayed on the wall	67%	100%	60%
<i>Belhar, Nyanga, Masiphumelele, Brooklyn, Resource Centre, Bloekombos Com, Northdene Hall, Wallacedene Com, Rocklands, Fisante Kraal, Eersterivier, Site C, Harare, Heideveld, Joe Slovo, Lainsburg</i>			
Beneficiaries who thought SASSA did not provide good service	11%	50%	7%
Beneficiaries who found the SASSA officials were not helpful or did not treat them with respect	9%	50%	5%

The data collected reflects that the average number of people serviced in a day at the 5 local offices and 25 service points is 160 persons and the average number of staff members working at these sites was 7. However the average number of people served at a satellite point was 90 persons and the average number of staff members was 3.

There was no help desk or 'floating' official according to 38% and 40% respondents in the CT Metro and Knysna respectively, and we observed no floating official's presence in the Boland. While the majority of the officials interviewed felt that they sufficiently adhered to Batho Pele principles, 50% of the beneficiaries interviewed in the Boland felt that SASSA did not provide a good service (compared to 11% and 7% in the CT Metro and Knysna areas). **"SASSA provides a necessary service but not necessarily a good service"** was the sentiment of one of the service users at the Brooklyn service point. Monitors commented that although interviewees felt that the officials working at their site were providing a good service by being friendly and helpful, SASSA's administrative and personnel infrastructure and systems did not in general support the intention of officials on the ground to provide an effective and efficient service.

It is evident that SASSA, particularly at the satellite service points do not display any signs depicting their customer care principles and an average of 68% of officials interviewed were not in possession of name tags and/or uniforms.

Recommendations:

1. That the same administrative support, personnel, technology infrastructure are extended to the satellite service points (on the assumption that the satellite service points are seen as an extension of the local/district offices), and that immediate efforts are made
 - to increase the number of staff (formal or informal/volunteer) to enable an efficient service.
 - to provide SASSA officials with appropriate technology (including laptops equipped with SOCPEN and the relevant network connections for it to operate effectively)
 - to implement the same administrative system used in local offices at satellite offices.
2. That a 'floating' official should be deployed to manage the queues. In the absence of staff being appointed for this financial year we recommend that each official play that role for at least half an hour of their time at the service point until a dedicated person is appointed. This is to eliminate applicants waiting in a queue for forms. Monitors observed at most sites that applicants who need forms are not directed to these.
3. That all SASSA officials at all service points have identifiable name tags.
4. That SASSA continues to instil Batho Pele principles in their training of staff.
5. That SASSA displays and distributes its customer care norms at all service points.

Language & Communication

<u>Language – 25 responses by officials</u>	CT Metro	Boland	Knysna
Service Points that provided information in all three official languages	71%	100%	40%
Service points that did not provide translators	42%	-	100%
<u>Communication – 339 responses by beneficiaries</u>	CT Metro	Boland	Knysna
Beneficiaries who did not know what documents to bring for their visit	15%	67%	5%
Beneficiaries who were not aware that some documents expire after three months	40%	50%	45%
Beneficiaries who were not aware they can receive money from grants at pay points as well as at the bank	6%	67%	2%
Beneficiaries who were not aware that the Old Age Grant has changed for males to 61	38%	17%	12%
Beneficiaries who were not aware that payment of the CSG has increased to the age of 15	25%	33%	14%
Beneficiaries who were not aware they could apply for Social Relief of Distress if in immediate need	44%	50%	48%
Beneficiaries who were not aware that SASSA communicates information through all-pay receipts	34%	33%	31%
Beneficiaries who were not aware that if they had problems with grants they could contact a toll free no. for advice	41%	50%	36%

7.3.1 Norms: Marketing messages will be send out 3 times a month using three communication vehicles

Standards: Use various mediums for communication, ensure regular market research, and identify target eligible population. Policy research capacity in the department, cascading from national to district levels, strong communication and marketing unit established.

7.3.2 Norms: Communication messages shall ensure that 70% of targeted audience are reached

Standards: Use variable and innovative communication tools to broaden reach, Implement the provincial language policy, communicate with people in their own language. Market research capability, familiarity with local people's needs and customs¹

We commend SASSA for ensuring that all or at least 2 of the official languages of the Western Cape is spoken at the service points monitored.

It appears from the data gathered that there were mixed reactions to the communication by SASSA about its services and the various grants beneficiaries are entitled to as well as the relevant documents needed on a particular day. 40 % of the interviewees were unaware that some crucial documents expire after three months, which could result in the application process unnecessarily being prolonged.

¹ National norms and standards policy for social assistance service delivery - (key performance indicators for the reengineering of social security service delivery), Department of Social Development, February, 2002

38% of beneficiaries were unaware that the Old Age Grant has changed for males to 61 in the CT Metro, compared to the Boland and Knysna which stood at 17% and 12%. An average of 33% were unaware that SASSA communicates information through all-pay receipts and lastly a worrying 42% average of beneficiaries interviewed were not aware that if they had problems with grants or general queries relating to grants they could contact a toll free no. for advice.

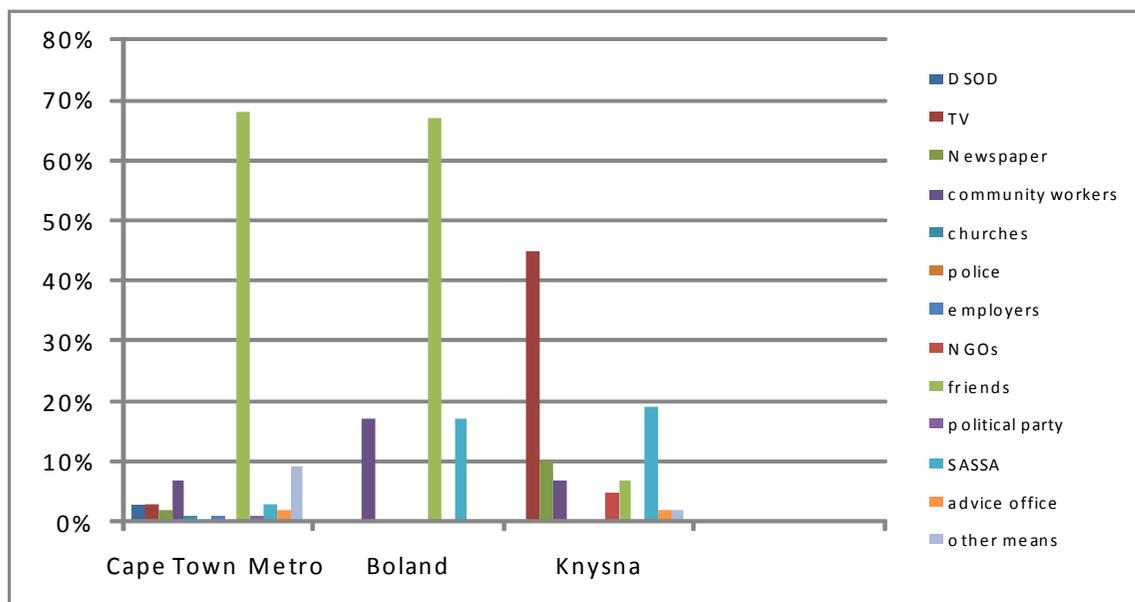


Figure5. Where clients obtain their information

The majority (more than 60% of the interviewees in Cape Town Metro and Boland) knew of the SASSA services through friends and neighbours, making word of mouth and possibly door-to-door campaign the most effective means of communication. It is interesting that almost 40% said they get their information from the TV in Knysna.

Recommendations

1. That SASSA officials are made aware of legislative and regulatory change in order for the officials to communicate this with clients.
2. That SASSA make beneficiaries aware of legislative and regulatory changes through information materials suitable for the sites, and in relevant languages. Photocopies of information sheets should be seriously considered if budget allocations are exhausted for printed materials.
3. That information materials should be displayed at all SASSA service sites to address standing issues such as: the validity of documentation, relevant time periods, required documentation, right to apply for Social Relief of Distress and the SASSA toll free number.
4. That SASSA continue information drives beyond the service points using various communication vehicles.
5. That SASSA continues to commission officials who are able to communicate with their clients in the language of their choice.
6. That SASSA pay particular attention to the Knysna area where language access is weakest.
7. That all SASSA's information materials are available in all three languages and are distributed at all service points.
8. That an effort is made to ensure the availability of sign-language interpreters where they are need.

Processing of Grants

Grant Processing – 339 responses by beneficiaries	CT Metro	Boland	Knysna
Beneficiaries who said it was not their first visit in regards to this application Average times a beneficiary has had to come back is 1 (CT metro), 2(Boland & Knysna), Most times a beneficiary has come back is 9 in Mannenberg by a female aged 61+, 3 in Wellington by a female aged 56-61 and 3 in Plett by a female aged 26-61	47%	33%	33%
Beneficiaries who had problems with their application	21%	0%	17%
Beneficiaries who were not told on the day if they qualified for a grant	27%	17%	43%
If yes, beneficiaries who were informed verbally	58%	50%	29%
If yes, beneficiaries who were informed in writing	42%	50%	29%
If no, beneficiaries who were informed about making an inquiry as to the date of approval of the grant	36%	100%	48%
Beneficiaries who were not informed about date of payment of grant	23%	33%	62%
Beneficiaries who did not receive a receipt for placing an application	13%	83%	45%
Beneficiaries who have applied for grants before	24%	33%	26%
Beneficiaries who said it took longer than 48 hrs to process that grant Longest waiting time was more than 6 months (CT Metro, Boland & Knysna)	19%	33%	29%

7.2.1 Norm: An application process must not take more than 45 minutes to complete and approve

Standards: Advise citizen of qualifying requirements, determine grant eligibility, request documentary proof, take fingerprints, capture application and provide receipt. Well-trained and competent service officers, pro-active marketing, multiple access channels, automated real time verification and application must be traceable and decentralised without compromising controls

7.2.2 Norm: Verification will be achieved within the 45 minutes

Standards: Verify application online, without delay and automate performance of means-test
Simplify the ACT and regulations, trained staff, introduce file tracking system and introduce case management in the process

7.2.3 Norm: Approval will take 3 minutes to effect, including filing that should take 25 minutes.

Standards: Make final decision and activate / deactivate payment Legislation must be available for perusal for all to understand the means test and access to the main data base or the grant administration, secure filing rooms must be available at all offices where personal and confidential files are kept²

²National norms and standards policy for social assistance service delivery - (key performance indicators for the reengineering of social security service delivery), DSD, February, 2002

It is clear from the number of times beneficiaries had to return to the service point (on average once), that norms 7.2.1 – 7.2.3 above were not being implemented, particularly at satellite service points. The system used by SASSA at the satellite service points was observed as follows;

1. The beneficiary registers his/her name in the morning at the service point,
2. There is an interview process which screens the client and the client receives a number of forms,
3. A week/two later (depending on the frequency of the satellite point's presence) the client returns with the completed forms, which are checked by the officials
4. If the forms are completed correctly, the client receives verbal notice that they should return to the site within at least two weeks to check for a letter confirming the outcome of the application/review.

Throughout this process all details were handwritten by the SASSA officials – a process that takes up much time. Upon interviews with officials, the majority of the officials indicated that the use of technology (computers linked to the same online system used at the local/district office) at the satellite service points would shorten the application process and feedback time.

An average of 12% % of beneficiaries interviewed experienced problems with their application/review or appeal. Some of the problems cited include; “had to have proof of separation certificate”, “not given all relevant forms at once”, “not informed of all relevant documents to bring”, “turned away because too many clients”. One male aged 26 -35 was reported to have said he had been waiting since 18/05/09 for an outcome on his application for a disability grant. An average of 47% of the beneficiaries interviewed claimed not to have received receipts as proof of them entering the application process. ***“It would be nice to get a receipt of a note that I can take to my boss to prove that I was at the SASSA office for the whole day. Because I will not get paid for the day that I did not work unless I have a certificate showing that I was at the doctor or maybe here”*** was a recommendation made by a women who applied for a CSG at the Belhar service point.

Recommendations

1. That the application process be in line with the norms and standards of SASSA and take no more than 45 minutes to complete; and further that the verification takes place within same amount of time.
2. That the same administrative support, personnel, technology infrastructure are extended to the satellite service points (on the assumption that the satellite service points are seen as an extension of the local/district offices), and that immediate efforts are made
 - to increase the number of staff (formal or informal/volunteer) to enable an efficient service.
 - to provide SASSA officials with appropriate technology (including laptops equipped with SOCPEN and the relevant network connections for it to operate effectively)
 - to implement the same administrative system used in local offices at satellite offices.
3. That SASSA provide clients with the option of a receipt as a matter of course for any service that was offered as the majority of interviewees indicated that they do not receive a receipt and monitors observed that this would generally be of assistance to the interviewees.

Recommendations

Time

1. That National Norms and Standards Policy for Social Assistance Service Delivery should be amended to clearly state
 - That they are applicable to satellite sites to avoid any ambiguity.
 - The opening and closing hours of the service points.
2. That SASSA puts in place mechanisms to ensure that the service points at Belhar, Harare and Joe Slovo begin their service at the stated starting time.
3. That SASSA investigate the particular causes of the unacceptably long waiting periods at sites and provide Black Sash with a report and a proposal to reduce the average waiting period to a maximum of 2 hours by the end of 2010.
4. That SASSA consider instituting the following administrative systems at sites (with local civil society input)
 - An appointment system
 - A floating official to manage the queues. In the absence of staff being appointed for this financial year we recommend that each official play that role for at least half an hour of their time at the service point until a dedicated person is appointed. This is to eliminate applicants waiting in a queue for forms. Monitors observed at most sites that applicants who need forms are not directed to these.
6. That SASSA increases its visits to service sites to at least twice a week.

Venue

1. That SASSA continues to provide the service close to the people in the Cape Town Metro but takes measures to assess the physical conditions and improve shelters at the service sites in the Boland and Knysna.
2. That SASSA treat the Bridgetown and Westridge service points (where the longest waiting time was experienced) as priority sites to be equipped with sufficient chairs to comply with the average time waiting for a chair.
3. That SASSA monitor the service points at Du Noon, Eersterivier, Heideveld, Hanover Park, Joe Slovo, Resource Centre as these sites did not have enough to cater for all clients on the day monitoring was done.
4. That SASSA takes particularly care with regards to special arrangements for persons with disabilities, old and frail persons and pregnant women. We suggest that SASSA

- compares and, where necessary, adjusts its sites against the Disability framework adopted by DSD.
- immediately arrange for temporary disability-accessible toilets at the sites, based on the flow of beneficiaries, and plan to build permanent toilets or source a new site which has accessible toilets for persons with disabilities. We recommend that this be implemented at the Boland service points as a matter of urgency by the end of 2010.
- organises visits to people's homes within a 5 km radius to provide services to people who are older and too frail to wait in queues, as provided for in the 2008 Regulations to the Social Assistance Act

Security

1. That SASSA implement the recommendations made in the section on "Time" to address the unacceptably long queues urgently in order to minimise the need for beneficiaries to wait outside in unprotected and insecure areas; and that as an interim measure, SASSA employ security guards at service sites.
2. That SASSA arrange with the South African Police Service to monitor service sites regularly in the early mornings and on the days the sites are open for business.

Transport

1. We recommend that these sites continue to be demographically placed in communities that need the service.

Personnel

1. That the same administrative support, personnel, technology infrastructure are extended to the satellite service points (on the assumption that the satellite service points are seen as an extension of the local/district offices), and that immediate efforts are made
 - to increase the number of staff (formal or informal/volunteer) to enable an efficient service.
 - to provide SASSA officials with appropriate technology (including laptops equipped with SOCPEN and the relevant network connections for it to operate effectively)
 - to implement the same administrative system used in local offices at satellite offices.
2. That a 'floating' official should be deployed to manage the queues. In the absence of staff being appointed for this financial year we recommend that each official play that role for at least half an hour of their time at the service point until a dedicated person is appointed. This is to eliminate applicants waiting in a queue for forms. Monitors observed at most sites that applicants who need forms are not directed to these.

3. That all SASSA officials at all service points have identifiable name tags.
4. That SASSA continues to instil Batho Pele principles in their training of staff.
5. That SASSA displays and distributes its customer care norms at all service points.

Language & Communication

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Processing of grants

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