



# CMAP Report

## Monitoring of Western Cape SASSA Service Points Phase Two: March - April 2010

# Acknowledgements

The Black Sash wishes to thank all the community monitors and their respective organisations who contributed voluntarily to the success of this Phase 2 of the CMAP pilot in the Western Cape, including Black Sash Cape Town and Knysna Regional Offices who coordinated and lead the process. Special thanks also goes to all the interns and volunteers who have been a part of the Black Sash’s monitoring work to date.

- **Bonteheuwel Advice Office**
- **Athlone Advice Office**
- **New Lentegeur Youth Forum**
- **Heideveld Advice Office**
- **National Welfare Forum**
- **Township Development Agency (TDA)**
- **Mosselbay advice office - D'Almeida Advice**
- **George Advice Office**
- **Township Development Agency –**
- **Elsies River Advice Office**
- **Saldanha Community Workers**
- **Montagu Advice Office**
- **Overberg Development & Empowerment Centre (ODEC) - Caledon**
- **Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)**
- **Ubuntu Advice & Development centre**

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.

The Black Sash wishes to thank the following organisation for their financial commitment to the CMAP.



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## Background and Introduction

At the beginning of March 2010, the Black Sash Western Cape Provincial Office began implementing Phase 2 of the first in a series of national pilots for the Community Monitoring and Advocacy Project (CMAP). The implementation was a follow-up to the phase one intervention that ended in November 2009. The report resulting from phase 1 was engaged by SASSA Western Cape and a number of recommendations were made and follow-up suggestions were made. 19 Monitors selected from community based partner organisations, advice offices and networks, acknowledged earlier in this report, visited 22 SASSA service points (the point at which clients make their applications) in the Cape Town Metro, Southern Cape, Karoo, West Coast, Overberg 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 is currently piloted in two of four pilot 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. This second phase of the Western Cape Pilot ended as the Eastern Cape pilot began.

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.

It is important to note that monitors undertake the monitoring in the areas where they live or work and that the selection of sites to monitor, depend solely on where the monitoring organisation is situated or where the monitor resides. It is therefore clear that no scientific formulation is used to select the geographic spread; however we do encourage organisations with diverse geographical location to participate in the project. This is to ensure the data generated through CMAP does not reflect an urban bias.

This report reflects the findings and recommendations of Phase 1 of the Western Cape pilot.

## Data analysis

This section reflects the findings of the monitoring exercise implemented in March and April 2010.

### Scope, limits and assumptions

Monitoring was conducted by 19 monitors at 22 different SASSA contact points across the Cape Town Metro, Karoo, Overberg, Southern Cape and West Coast areas. There were a total of 291 respondents to the questionnaire of which 25 were SASSA officials and 266 service beneficiaries

In selecting a sample of respondents, monitors are advised during training to interview at least 10 beneficiaries at a service delivery point. For every 10 beneficiaries interviewed, one official should be interviewed. This should be noted as an encouraged practice as some monitors find it difficult to interview officials without interfering with the service within their 2-hour monitoring stint.

These findings are the reflections of the situation at the monitored sites on a particular day and are presented as a comparison across the regions monitored. Individual site reports will be available on request.

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.

It was established during phase 1 that SASSA does not have a set of updated and relevant national norms and standards, and that the Western Cape SASSA office worked with a number of acceptable norms and where relevant the outdated national norms were used.

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

### Key Findings

20% of staff interviewed in CT Metro and 50% in the Southern Cape stated that their respective points started serving beneficiaries after the time they were supposed to. Diazville Civic was of particular concern on the day of monitoring, as it started serving clients 2 hours after the stated time.

81% of respondents in the CT Metro, 97% in the Boland and 65% in the West Coast arrived before 8am at the service point. The earliest arrival time recorded was 1am in Bonteheuwel by a female aged 36 – 45.

Service points that operate longer hours with high numbers of staff are able to service more clients in a day. On 10/3/2010 the Bonteheuwel service point served 250 clients with a staggering 14 staff member complement during the 5 hours it operated.

Majority of the officials interviewed believe that their sites had sufficient seating on the day. Beneficiaries tend to disagree and monitors interviewed a beneficiary who waited 7 hours in Bonteheuwel, 2.5 hours in Caledon and 5 hours in Diazville to take a seat.

SASSA acknowledged that no private security or police presence was available at the Heideveld, Elsie River, Diazville and Mosselbay service points.

Not only do people arrive early in the morning without security present, they have to travel for long distances in some areas, wait for long hours to be serviced and have to return on average 2 or 3 times for the same purpose.

More staff + longer hours of operation = more clients serviced in a day, however these factors do not minimize the length of time clients spend waiting for the service nor does it decrease the number of time clients have to return for the same reason. This is as a result of the differences in the system SASSA uses at satellite service points and local office points. The fact that the regulation 10.1 of the Social Assistance Act compels clients to complete all application forms in the presence of an official, further contributes to the unnecessarily long queues.

Majority of respondents walk to the service points throughout the province, however the average time they spent doing so range from 19.5min in the CT Metro to an astounding 75min in the Overberg. It took a female aged 46 – 55 in Caledon, 300minutes (5hours) to walk to the service point for her 3<sup>rd</sup> visit for a disability grant application on the day we monitored.

SASSA ensures that all or at least 2 of the official languages of the Western Cape are spoken at the service points monitored however very few information materials are being distributed to keep clients informed.

Average number of times a beneficiary returned for the same purpose was thrice in the CT metro, Karoo and West Coast and twice in the Boland, Overberg and Southern Cape

At least five (5) beneficiaries reported that the reason for the recurring visits to the service point at Qabazi Church was due to them being turned away after sitting at the site from “early morning till 3:30pm (when the site closes).”

# Respondents

The profile of beneficiaries indicates that the majority of beneficiaries interviewed were females though the age profile differed considerably across regions, see Figures 1 and 2. It show there more female respondents overall mostly in the age group 36 – 45 who visited the service point for CSG and DG applications. In the CT Metro, the majority of the respondents were females whose visit to the site was linked to CSG applications; the Overberg reflects more males in the age group 36 – 45 who visited mostly for Disability Grants.

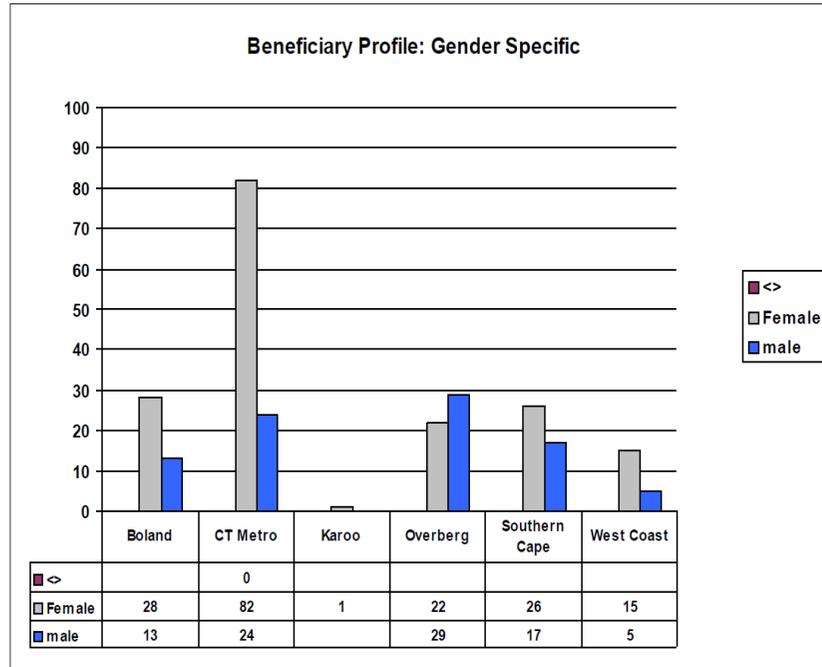


Figure1. Gender specific

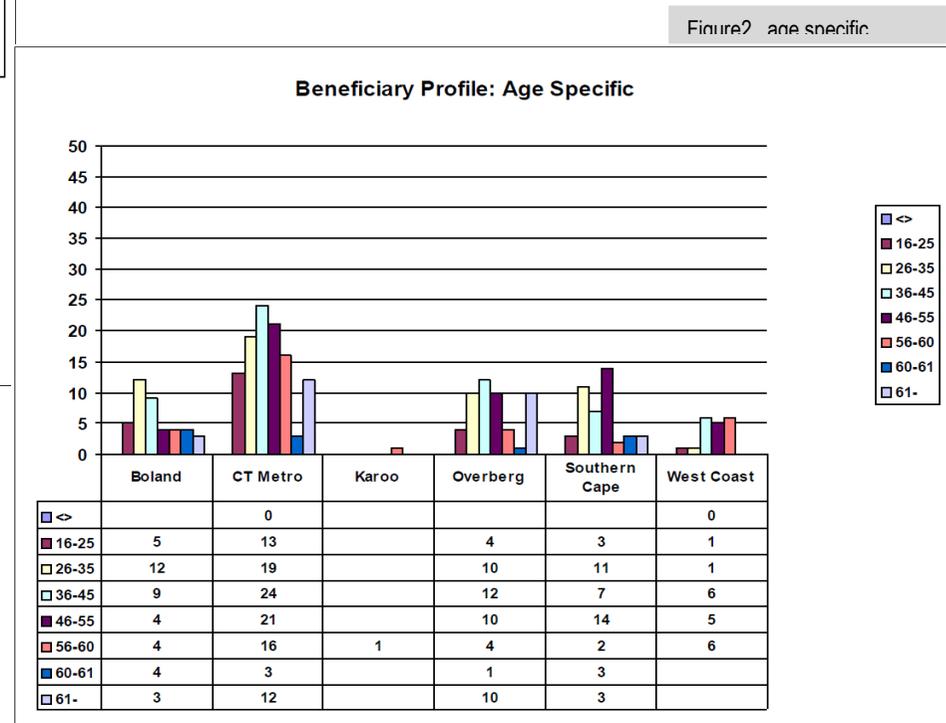


Figure 3 and 4 below indicates the purpose of the beneficiaries' visit in terms of the action needed to be taken and the grant under consideration.

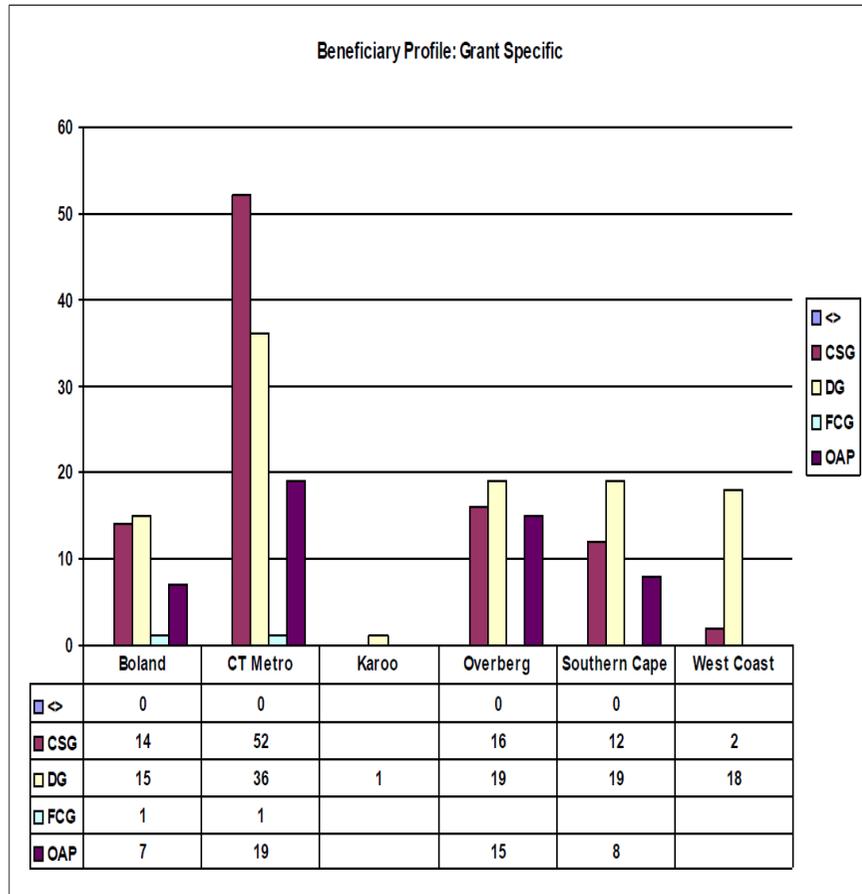


Figure4. grant specific

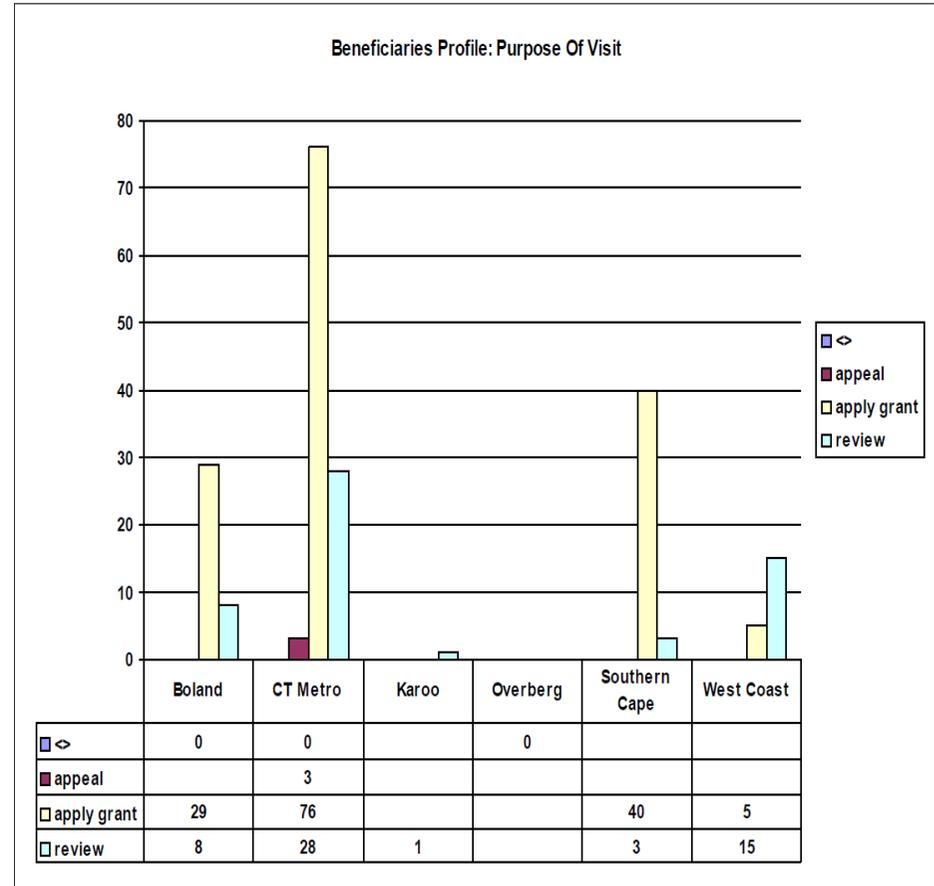


Figure3. purpose of visiting the service point

### **Table 1 – Sites Monitored**

Table 1, below illustrates a summary of the service points monitored in the Cape Town Metro, Southern Cape, Karoo, Overberg and West Coast and Boland in the Western Cape. It further reflects the number of officials and beneficiaries interviewed at each site.

Region	Service Point Monitored	Number Of Beneficiaries Interviewed	Number Of Officials Interviewed	Region	Service Point Monitored	Number Of Beneficiaries Interviewed	Number Of Officials Interviewed
Boland	Montagu Serv Hall	41	2	Karoo	Dysseldorp	2	
CT Metro	Athlone	14	1	Overberg	Caledon	51	1
CT Metro	Bonteheuwel	10	1	Southern Cape	Albertinia	9	1
CT Metro	Bridgetown	1		Southern Cape	Crags	11	
CT Metro	Elsies River	5	1	Southern Cape	Lentsdree	5	
CT Metro	Harare	25	1	Southern Cape	Mossel Bay	3	1
CT Metro	Heideveld	14	1	Southern Cape	Riversdale	15	
CT Metro	Izuko Lobomi	8	1	West Coast	Diazville	20	3
CT Metro	M/Plain Local Office	11	4				
CT Metro	Mamre	8	1				
CT Metro	Qabazi Church	7					
CT Metro	Zolani Centre	8					

## Findings

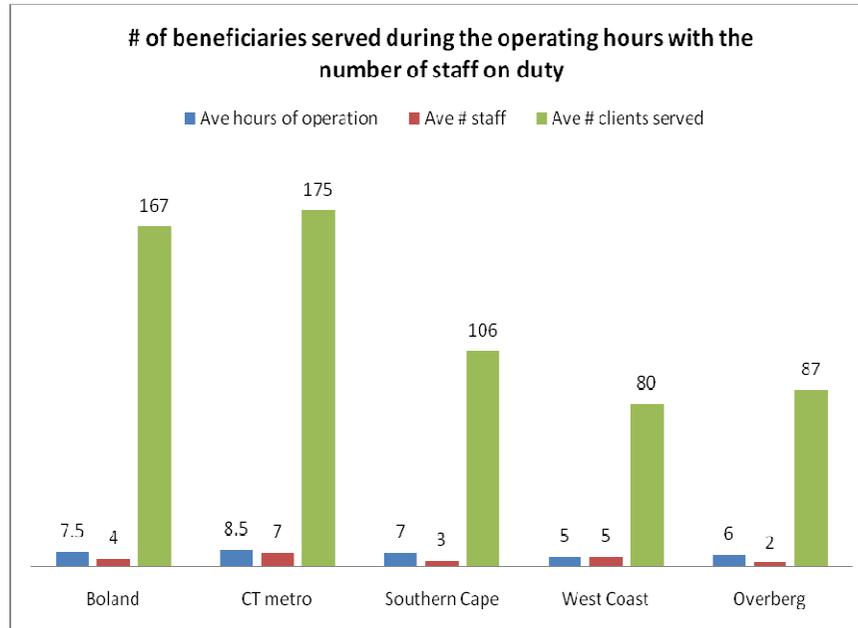
The findings of this intervention reflects the quality and efficiency of services provided by SASSA from the beneficiary's and on duty official's point view at the sites monitored on the day. These are measured in terms of:

- **Time**
  - assessed time in relation to safety, i.e. is security available where clients are arriving very early.
  - assessed when the sites are meant to open vs. when in fact they do open as well as when servicing should commence and when it does.
  - a key to assessment is the length of time the site is open for service in relation to the number of beneficiaries serviced
  - the length of time beneficiaries spend waiting to be served is an important observation
- **Venue**
  - the physical conditions of the venue, availability of the chairs, accessible and clean toilets and water are key observations here,
- **Security**
  - we have particular concern for sites where beneficiaries are known to arrive in the very early hours of the morning and assess whether security is present when they arrive
  - our interest is in the availability of private security or police at venue and how they are resourced,
- **Transport**
  - assessed the distance clients have to travel for the service and what it normally costs, i.e. the cost effectiveness of accessing the service
  - also assessed the average cost beneficiaries pay to access the service in relation to the average number of times beneficiaries have to return for the same reason.
  - as well as the mode of transport used in most cases in relation to the average length of time beneficiaries travel to the site

- **Personnel**
  - number of SASSA officials are on duty on the day to serve beneficiaries, presence of a helpdesk or floating official, official's adherence to Batho Pele and customer care and whether officials are uniformed and identifiable,
  - compare the number of personnel in relation to the number of beneficiaries served.
  - looked at whether beneficiaries are serviced quicker where a help desk official is present, receive the service quicker
- **Language & Communication**
  - assessed where beneficiaries return for the same reason as a result of lack of information
  - we also look at where beneficiaries receive information from
  - we assess whether the official languages are spoken and if information is available in these language, whether language translators are available at sites; how much people know about the grants and services SASSA offer and changes in regulations, etc.
- **Processing of Grants**
  - key in this section is the types of grants being applied for or reviewed, the number of times beneficiaries return for the same reason
  - also of importance here to assess if there are trends between the type of grant and number of time beneficiaries return for the same reason

## 1. Time

<b><u>Respondents: 25 officials, 266 beneficiaries</u></b>	<b>CT Metro</b>	<b>Boland</b>	<b>Southern Cape</b>	<b>West Coast</b>	<b>Overberg</b>
Service points that started attending to clients later than SASSA stated the service would start <b>Bonteheuwel, Diazville, Harare, Mamre, Mosselbay, Izuko Lobomi, Albertinia, Oudsthorn</b>	20%	0%	50%	0%	Incomplete
Service points opening after SASSA has stated the service should start: <b>Diazville, Mamre</b>					
Beneficiaries arriving before 8:00am <b>Earliest arrival time was: 1am in Bonteheuwel by a female aged 36 – 45, 3:15am in Caledon by a male aged 56-60, 4am in Worcester by a female aged 26 - 35</b>	81%	97%	21%	65%	17%
Average length of time waited in a queue by the beneficiaries at all service points	195min	59min	46min	138min	83min
	Athlone - 141min Bonteheuwel - 214min Bridgetown - 30min Elsiesriver - 408min Harare - 181min Heideveld – 221min Izuko Lobomi – 180min M/Plain loc off – 71min Mamre – 189min Qabazi Church – 291min Zolani Centre – 217min	Montagu Serv Hall - 59min	Albertinia – 20min Craggs – 29min Lentsdree – 73min Mosselbay – 75min Riversdale – 34min	Diazville – 138min	Caledon – 83min
Beneficiaries waiting in a queue longer than 2 hours <b>Longest waiting time was; 12 hours in Mamre by a male aged 36 – 45, 9 hours in Elsies by a female aged 60+, 7 hours by a male aged 36 – 45 in Diazville</b>	56%	5%	14%	50%	18%



In the absence of national norms and standards, the good practice standard applied by SASSA Western Cape relating to the times SASSA would start servicing clients at service delivery point are as follows:

- START: 08:00 = Urban areas and 08:30 Rural areas
- END 15:30 = Urban areas and 15:00 = Rural areas

It was acknowledged by 20% of staff interviewed in CT Metro and 50% in the Southern Cape that their respective points started serving beneficiaries after the time they were supposed to. **Diazville Civic** was of particular concern on the day of monitoring, as it started serving clients 2 hours after the stated time.

Equally important to mention is that the **Mitchell's Plain local office** started attending clients at 7am instead of 8am.

The Mosselbay service point opened its door at 5:00 so clients could wait inside the venue for the service that started 7:30 on the day of

monitoring.

The data collected that can be seen in the above graph, suggests clearly that service points that operate longer hours with high numbers of staff are able to service more clients in a day. **On 10/3/2010 the Bonteheuwel service point serviced 250 clients with a staggering 14 staff member during the 5 hours it operated.**

The data reflects that 81% of respondents in the CT Metro, 97% in the Boland and 65% in the West Coast arrive before 8am at the service point. The **earliest arrival time recorded was 1am in Bonteheuwel by a female aged 36 – 45**. 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.

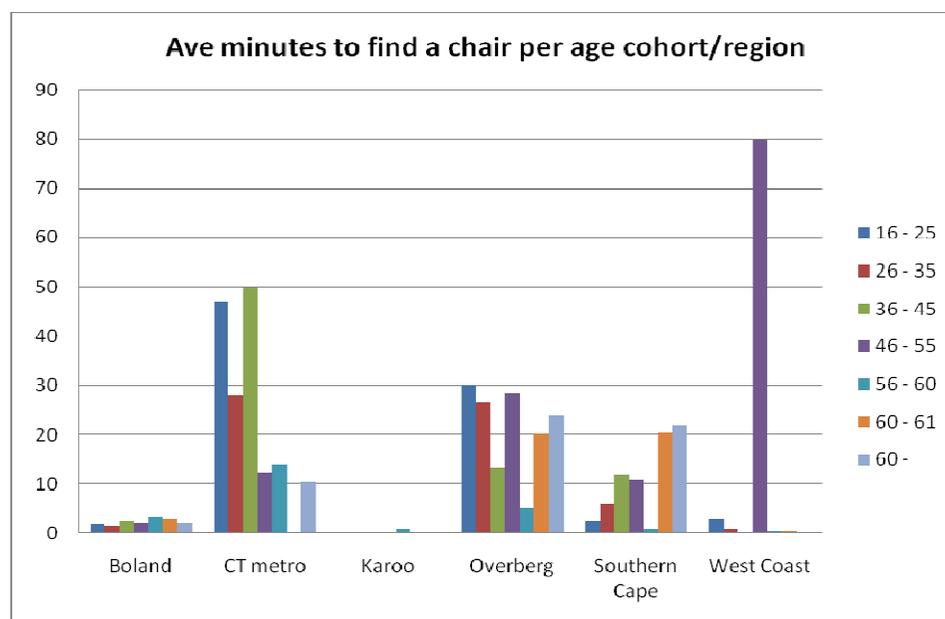
A pivotal finding that shows the violation of human rights and dignity of service beneficiaries are the extremely long waiting times in queues. 56% of respondents in CT Metro and 50% in the West Coast waited for longer than 2 hours to be served on the days we monitored the various sites. The longest wait occurred **was 12 hours in Mamre by a male aged 36 – 45 and 9 hours in Elsies River by a female aged 60+**. Diazville on the West Coast made the third place for the longest waiting time at **7 hours by a male aged 36 – 45**.

The average time beneficiaries spent waiting to be serviced was highest in the CT metro at 195min (more than 3 hours), while sites in the Southern Cape seem to service beneficiaries quicker at a time of 46 min. The service point that experienced the highest average time beneficiaries spent waiting in a queue, was Elsie's River at 408 minutes (almost 7 hours), whilst there were six staff members on duty on the day we monitored.

## 2. Venue

<b>Respondents: 25 officials, 266 beneficiaries</b>	<b>CT Metro</b>	<b>Boland</b>	<b>Southern Cape</b>	<b>West Coast</b>	<b>Overberg</b>
SASSA staff who felt that the service points have enough shelter	100%	100%	60%	100%	0%
SASSA officials who said there were special arrangements	34%	100%	63%	42%	20%
Service points with available toilets	90%	100%	100%	90%	incomplete
Well maintained service points	100%	100%	90%	100%	Incomplete
<b>The Oudtshoorn service point was of particular concern</b>					
Service points with enough chairs – Official's response	90%	100%	50%	100%	Incomplete
<b>Michell's Plain local office and Oudtshoorn service point did not have sufficient chairs for clients on the day</b>					
Beneficiaries who said there were no seats available	25%	0%	0%	29%	15%
<b>Longest waiting time for a seat was 7 hours in Bonteheuwel, 2.5 hours in Caledon, 5 hours in Diazville</b>					

Based on the data interviewees (SASSA officials), are generally satisfied that SASSA provides adequate and well maintained shelters.

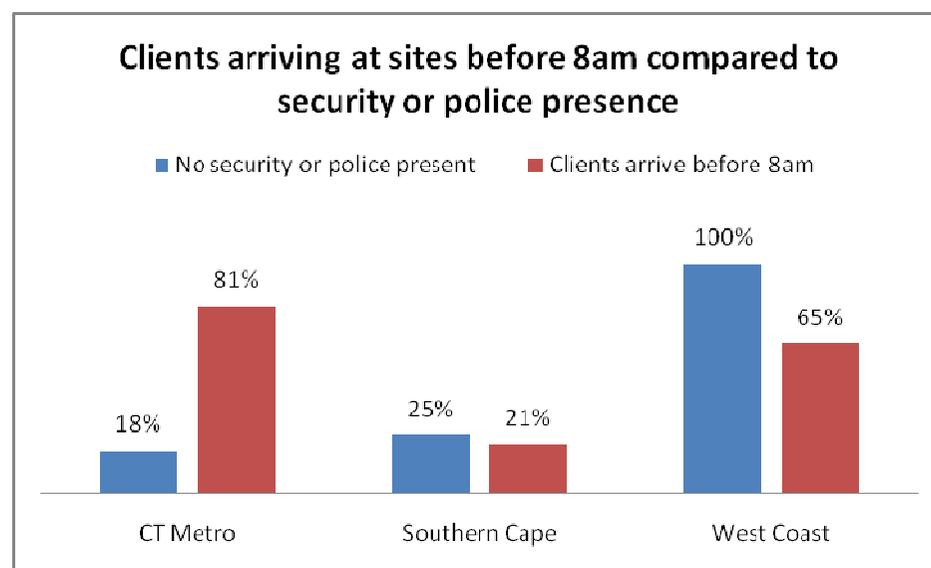


Whilst the majority of the officials interviewed believe that their sites had sufficient seating on the day, beneficiaries tend to disagree and monitors found that a beneficiary waited 7 hours in Bonteheuwel, 2.5 hours in Caledon and 5 hours in Diazville to take a seat. We found that these were the extremes as clients arriving after 8am, generally found seat within 20 min. Our data shows that whilst clients were seated relatively quickly in the Boland and Karoo, clients between the ages of 36 – 45 waited 50min for a seat in CT Metro, and those between the ages of 46 – 55 waited 80 min in the West Coast.

On the issue of special arrangements for persons with disabilities, old and frail persons and pregnant women, only 34% of SASSA officials interviewed in the CT Metro and 42% Southern Cape felt there were adequate special practices for these groupings. However the majority of beneficiaries interviewed felt these practices were only available in theory.

### 3. Security

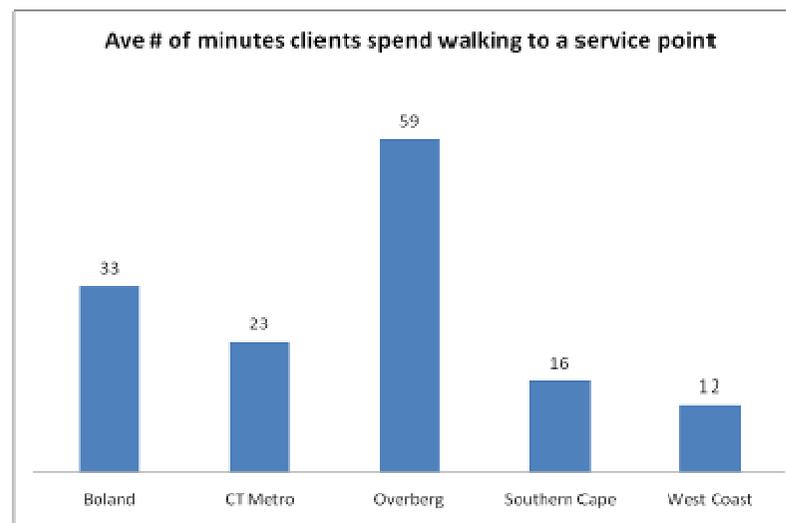
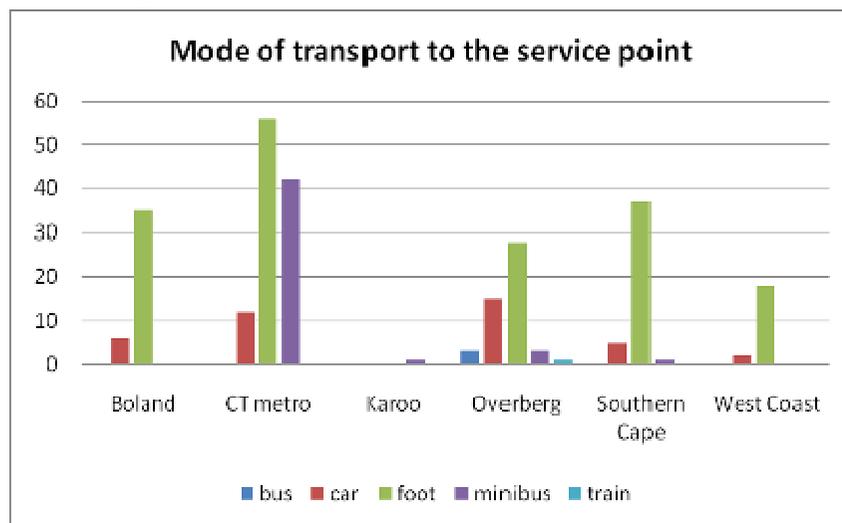
<b><i>Respondents: 25 officials, 266 beneficiaries</i></b>	<b>CT Metro</b>	<b>Boland</b>	<b>Southern Cape</b>	<b>West Coast</b>	<b>Overberg</b>	<b>Karoo</b>
<b>Service points without adequate or well equipped security : 6/22 sites monitored</b> <b><i>Diazville, Montegu Serv Hall, Harare, Elsie's River, Mosselbay, Heideveld</i></b>						
Service points with a fenced in area	82%	0%	17%	33%	incomplete	0%
Beneficiaries who said security was present upon arrival	50%	0%	14%	20%	91%	0%



There are no specific norms or standards guiding the availability and adequacy of security at the service points. The current 2002, Norms and Standards only consider security issues when SASSA provides services at paypoints. These do not take account the reality that 81% of beneficiaries in the CT Metro, 21% in Southern Cape and 65% in West Coast arrive in the earlier hours of the morning, and before eight o'clock when the service point opens. This leaves beneficiaries, 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 across the province were females

***SASSA officials further acknowledged that no private security or police presence was available at the Heideveld, Elsie's River, Diazville and Mosselbay service points.***

## 4. Transport



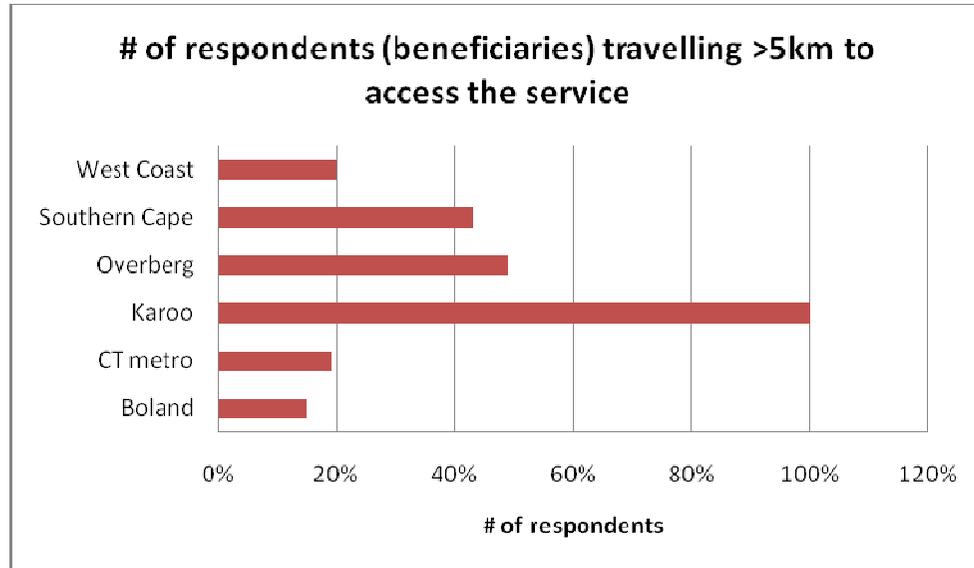
<b><u>Respondents: 266 beneficiaries</u></b>	<b>CT Metro</b>	<b>Boland</b>	<b>Southern Cape</b>	<b>Karoo</b>	<b>Overberg</b>
Average cost of travel <b><i>Largest amount paid was R100 in Caledon by a female aged 36-45 who came to the site by car</i></b>	R3.40	R7.07	R1.09	R24	R9.71
Average length of time (minutes) that beneficiaries spend travelling to the service point.	19.5 minutes	32.5	15.7	20	74.5

It is clear that SASSA's strategy to bring the service as close to the people as possible is working better for some areas than others. From the graph on the top left corner; we can see clearly that the majority of respondents walk to the service point throughout the province. The second most popular mode of transport among beneficiaries was the minibus. We further found that although clients walk to access the service, the average time they spend doing so ranged from 12min in the West Coast to an astounding 59min in the Overberg. ***It took a female aged 46 – 55 in Caledon, 300minutes (5hours) to walk to the service point for her 3<sup>rd</sup> visit for a disability grant application on the day we monitored. She arrived at the point around 11am.***

Further findings show that about 50% of respondents in the Overberg, more than 40% in the Southern Cape compared to less than 20% in the CT Metro travel more than 5km to access the service.

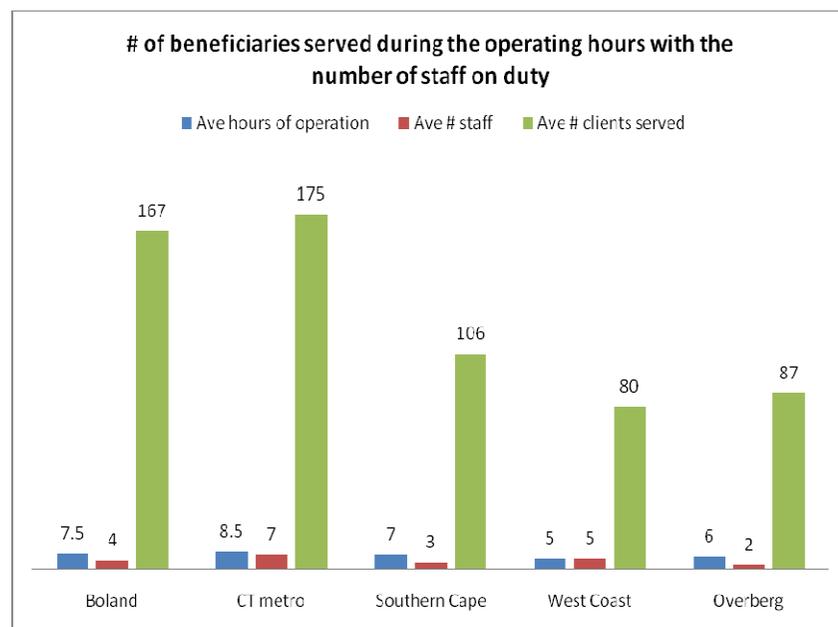
Because so many respondents walked to the service point, it made accessing the service financially possible across the province. However our monitors picked up that the average cost of travel across the regions was R9.06 and the highest amount paid was **R100 in Caledon by a female aged 46 - 45**. The average cost of travel for the Boland was R7.07, R24 in the Karoo and R9.71 in the Overberg.

Monitors observed, however, that the amount of time and money (in some areas) spent to access the service at service points, undermines SASSA's commitment to bring the service closer to the communities. This is of particular concern to us as the average number of times beneficiaries have to return for the same service is thrice in the CT metro, Karoo and West Coast and twice in the Boland, Overberg and Southern Cape as can be seen under the Grants Processing section.



## 5. Personnel

<b>Respondents: 25 Officials, 266 beneficiaries</b>	<b>CT Metro</b>	<b>Boland</b>	<b>Southern Cape</b>	<b>West Coast</b>
Service points that have a queue walker – <b>10/22 sites monitored</b>				
<b>Athlone, Guglethu, Heideveld, Nyanga, Elsies River, Bonteheuwel, Harare, Izuko Lobomi, George, Oudtshoorn</b>				
Service points where officials were wearing identifiable name tags/uniforms – <b>8/22 sites monitored</b>				
<b>Athlone, M/Plain Local Office, Harare, Mamre, George, Mosselbay, Oudtshoorn, Diazville</b>				
Service points where SASSA adhered to the Batho Pele principles	82%	100%	100%	100%
Service points where a sign with customer care norms displayed on the wall				
<b>Montagu Serv Hall, Athlone, Heideveld, M/Plain Local Office, Harare, Mamre, Izuko Lobomi, George, Mosselbay, Oudtshoorn, Diazville</b>				
Sites where beneficiaries were particularly unhappy with the service they had received from SASSA. – <b>6/22 sites monitored</b>				
<b>Bonteheuwel, Athlone, Harare, Zolani Centre, Diazville, Crags</b>				
Sites where beneficiaries felt the SASSA officials were not helpful or did not treat them with respect – <b>4/22 sites monitored</b>				
<b>Harare, Diazville, Crags, Zolani Centre</b>				



At 45% of the sites monitored, SASSA officials confirmed there was a queue walker present to help guide clients to the right place and inform those who need instant information. Only 36% of all sites monitored were staffed with officials wearing some form of uniform or name tags and the majority of officials interviewed felt they adhered to the 8 principles of Batho Pele while only 50% of the sites displayed the SASSA customer care principles visibly in the venue.

At 6 of the 22 sites monitored, beneficiaries felt particularly unsatisfied with the service provided while at only 4 sites were officials considered unhelpful.

It is clear from our findings that more staff + longer hours of operation = more clients serviced in a day, however these factors do not minimize the length of time clients spend waiting for the service nor does it decrease the number of time clients have to return for the same reason. This is as a result of the differences in the system SASSA uses at satellite service points and

local office points. The fact that the regulation 10.1 of the Social Assistance Act compels clients to complete all application forms in the presence of an official, further contributes to the unnecessarily long queues.

The data reflects clearly that the average number of people serviced in a day in the Boland area was 167 persons by an average number of 4 staff members during the 7.5 hours of operations. Similarly, 175 beneficiaries were serviced by 7 officials during 8.5 hours in the Metro compared to 87 clients by serviced by 2 staff members during 6 hours in the Overberg. The average client to staff ratio across the province was calculated as 1:29 during 6.8 hours of operation.

At 10 of the 22 sites monitored, officials claimed the presence of queue walkers; however the average length of time beneficiaries spent waiting to be serviced reflected a different state of affairs, i.e. longer than 2hours. **eg. Athlone - 141min, Bonteheuwel - 214min, Elsiesriver - 408min, Harare - 181min, Heideveld - 221min, Izuko Lobomi - 180min, Mamre - 189min, Qabazi Church - 291min, Zolani Centre - 217min, Mosselbay - 75min, Diazville - 138min**

## 6. Language & Communication

<b><i>Respondents: 25 officials</i></b>	<b>CT Metro</b>	<b>Boland</b>	<b>Southern Cape</b>	<b>West Coast</b>
Service Points that provided information in all three official languages <b><i>Bonteheuwel, Izuko Lobomi, M/Plain Local Office, Mamre, Heideveld, Athlone, Elsies River, Harare, Diazville, Montagu Serv Hall, Knysna, Mosselbay, Oudtshoorn, Albertinia</i></b>	44%	8%	20%	12%
Service points that did not provide translators <b><i>Mamre, Nyanga, Elsies River, M/Plain Local Office, Diazville, Knysna, Mosselbay, George, Bonteheuwel</i></b>				
<b><i>Respondents: 266 responses by beneficiaries</i></b>	<b>CT Metro</b>	<b>Boland</b>	<b>Southern Cape</b>	<b>West Coast</b>
Beneficiaries who knew what documents to bring for their visit	35%	14%	15%	5%
Beneficiaries who were aware that some documents expire after three months	26%	13%	14%	3%
Beneficiaries who were aware they can receive money from grants at pay points as well as at the bank	38%	15%	15%	7%
Beneficiaries who were aware that the Old Age Grant has changed for males to 60	27%	15%	14%	4%
Beneficiaries who were aware that payment of the CSG has increased to the age of 16	30%	15%	12%	5%
Beneficiaries who were aware they could apply for Social Relief of Distress if in immediate need	15%	2%	12%	2%
Beneficiaries who were aware that SASSA communicates information through all-pay receipts	25%	12%	11%	4%
Beneficiaries who were aware that if they had problems with grants they could contact a toll free no. for advice	21%	10%	12%	1%

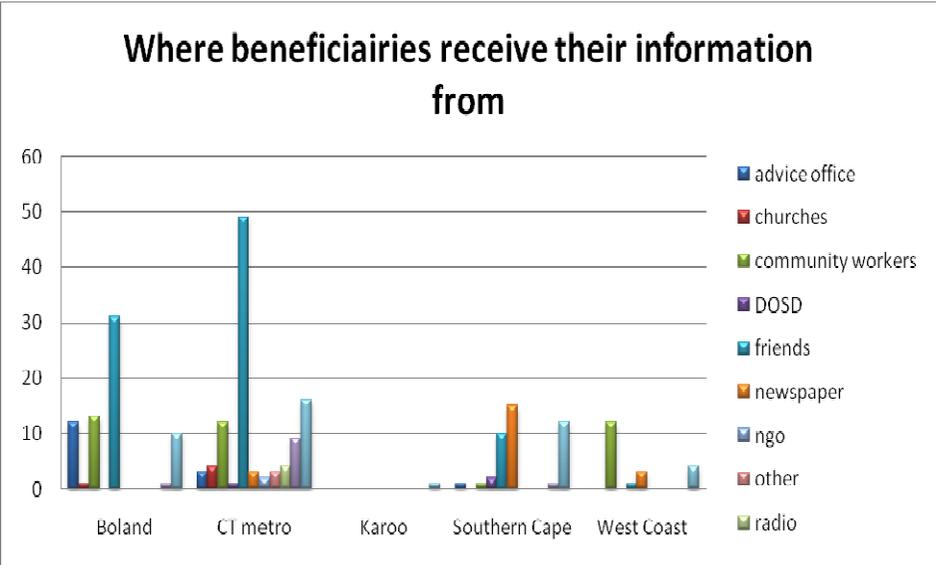
We commend SASSA for ensuring that all or at least 2 of the official languages of the Western Cape were spoken at the service points monitored.

Monitors observed that very few materials were distributed at the service points and that much of the information clients received at the point was verbal in various languages.

It appears from the data gathered that there was worryingly little knowledge about SASSA's services the various grants beneficiaries are entitled to as well as the relevant documents needed on a particular day. Only 26 % of the interviewees were aware that some crucial documents expire after three months, which could result in the application process unnecessarily being prolonged.

27% of beneficiaries were aware that the Old Age Grant has changed for males to 60 in the CT Metro, compared to the Boland and Southern Cape which stood at 14% and 14%. An average of 13% were aware that SASSA communicates information through all-pay receipts and lastly a worrying 11% 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.

The graph above shows clearly that the majority of beneficiaries learnt of SASSA services through friends and neighbours, and advice offices and community workers. It is interesting that the majority of respondents in the Southern Cape area receive their information from newspapers.



## 7. Processing of Grants

<u>Respondents: 266 beneficiaries</u>	CT Metro	Boland	Karoo	Southern Cape	Overberg	West Coast
Average # of times a beneficiary returned for the same purpose was thrice in the CT metro, Karoo and West Coast and twice in the Boland, Overberg and Southern Cape <b>Most times a beneficiary had to return was 8 in Diazville, 6 in Mamre and 5 in Heideveld</b>						
Beneficiaries who were not told on the day if they qualified for a grant	19%	-	1%	5%	9%	4%
If yes, beneficiaries who were informed verbally or written <b>19% of all respondents said they were advised of qualifying for their grant verbally while only 6 % felt they were advised in writing.</b>						

It is clear from the number of times beneficiaries had to return to the service point which was on average twice in the Boland, Overberg and Southern Cape and thrice in the CT Metro and Karoo, that the existing national norms 7.2.1 – 7.2.3 were not being implemented.

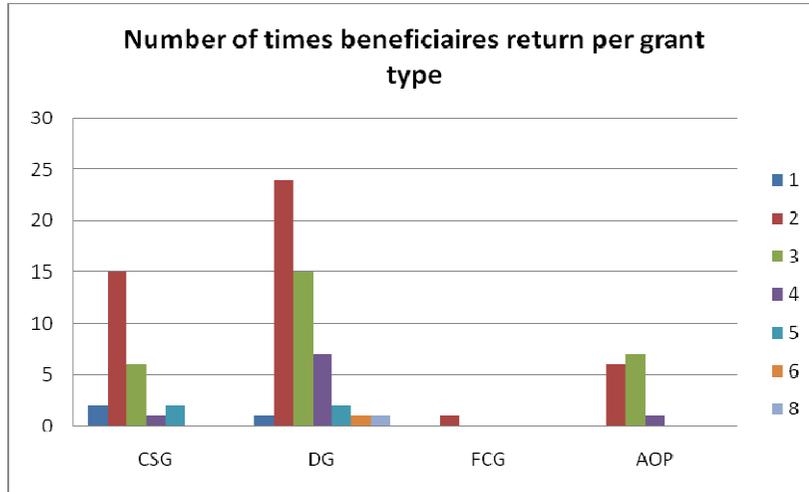
Some of the problems encountered by clients resulting in them having to return time after time were reflected as follows:

“

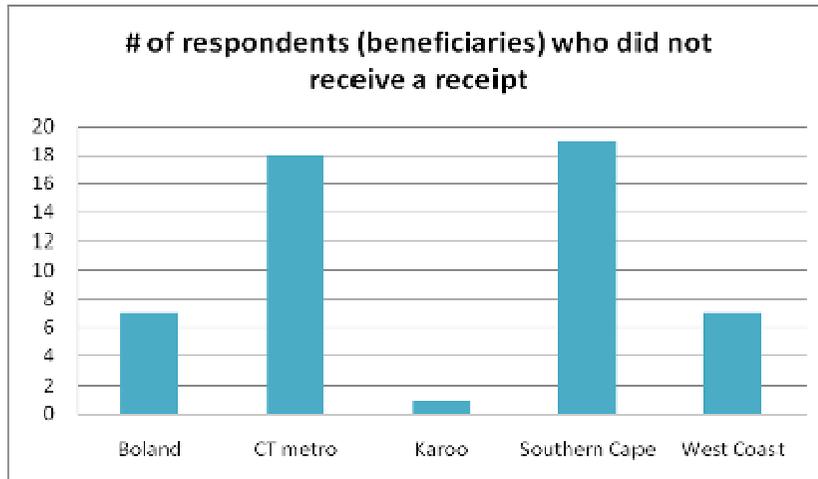
*docs needed the first time was not known, wants to know why money was stopped for no reason, waiting too long for CSG, waiting long to be seen have to come return again for service, turned away on previous visit waited till 4:00pm but too many people to be served, trouble getting documents that were up to date, the process is too slow, told to bring proof of school attendance, long wait for an answer – months, no letter, phone calls, no reply on previous application, no date on doctors certificate, document needs police stamp, must get an affidavit, medical report says I'm fit to go work, told to bring different docs each time, Incorrect paperwork, grant was stopped, distance to travel to far to come back every time, DG rejected, previous application was unsuccessful, after April 2010 he will be 60, affidavits incorrect and proof of occupancy*

”

**At least five (5) beneficiaries reported that the reason for the recurring visits to the service point at Qabazi Church was due to them being turned away after sitting at the site from “early morning till 3:30pm (when the site closes).”**



From the graph to the left, we can ascertain for which grants most clients have to return to the point on average twice or thrice. It is clear from our beneficiary profile that CSG and DG forms the most part of the clients' purpose for visiting the sites, however from this graph is also clear that the processing of these grants seem to take longer as a result of the return trips that clients have to make.



From the graph to the left we can see that of the 42 clients interviewed in the Boland, only 6 claimed to have received a receipt. The same can be said for the 18 of 110 in the CT Metro, 20 out of 43 in the Southern Cape and about 7 of 20 in the West Coast.

## Recommendations

### 1. **An updated and relevant National Norms and Standards Policy that guide the implementation of the agency's operations at all contact points in all provinces.**

We found it difficult to measure our findings against the existing policy as it is outdated, inconsistent and irrelevant to the local realities and current strategic plan. Our findings reflect a number of concerns stemming from a lack of clear norms and standards that are understood and practiced by SASSA officials. These ranged from sites opening later than they should, site operating in certain areas only once a week, once every two-weeks or once a month in some cases. The absence of queue walkers, short operating time and varying operating systems are amongst the concerns highlighted on the days we monitored. A pivotal finding that shows the violation of human rights and dignity of service beneficiaries are the extremely long waiting times in queues.

#### **We recommend that;**

- The Norms and Standards Policy of 2002 is updated aligned with the current realities and that is highlights practices that must be adhered to at ALL SASSA contact points where service users access SASSA services. eg. service points, pay points, local offices, satellite sites, etc
- This Norms and Standards Policy is fully operational by the end of 2010.
- The process of developing this policy includes consultation with civil society to ensure that proposed practices and local realities are aligned and the recommendations of Black Sash report are taken into account.
- That all key areas including Grants Processing and Procedures, Personnel/Human Resources, Customer Care, Security Measures, Venue layout and facilities, Operations at ALL contact points, Information, Communication and Help Desk assistance among others are included.
- The practices explicit in this policy must be aligned with the details of the SASSA's Strategic Plan.
- In absence of this policy SASSA take full responsibility for ensuring that human rights and dignity of all their service users are respected, protected, promoted and fulfilled. This immediately prompts SASSA to investigate and rectify the concerns highlighted by the findings of this report.

## 2. Spatial Development Framework for SASSA contact points.

We once again found it difficult to measure our findings related to the physical positioning of the service points to a policy describing The Agency's logic for the physical positioning as well as the frequency that certain areas are serviced by SASSA. Our findings highlight a number of concerns relating to the physical positioning of various sites and the frequency at which certain geographical areas are serviced. We particularly highlighted the fact that, although clients walk to the service points, they walk for very long distances. Secondly, a huge number of respondents were found to travel by taxi to the site, hence clients have to fork out funds they may not have.

### **In light of these concerns we recommend that;**

- SASSA furnishes the Black Sash with a copy of the Spatial Development Framework in which the Agency operates. If this framework does not exist, SASSA produce such a framework linked to SASSA strategic plan by December 2010. In the meanwhile that SASSA explain in detail the Agency's logic for their physical positioning and servicing frequency throughout the province.
- All contact points, including service points and pay points are positioned within a 5km radius of service beneficiaries where an efficient transport system is operational and even closer in areas problematic areas like Caledon where service beneficiaries walked for long distances to access the service.
- Additional sites are considered for areas like Caledon where clients walk or drive very far to access the service.
- The physical positioning of SASSA points forms a critical part of the Agency's communication with beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries.

### 3. Turnaround Strategy for this financial year.

Although we acknowledge that a number of the concerns we raise in this report and previous reports may not be dealt with immediately as a result of limited resources, we do however hold the view that SASSA Western Cape must have a strategy to work towards the realization of these concerns which are largely known to the Agency and the Department of Social Development. Understanding how the SASSA strategic plan is adopted for this province to turn around and improve the Agency's business process, reducing costs and process times and reorganizing its human resource component within this financial year, will create confidence among civil society and particularly service users about the quality of services rendered by the Agency.

#### **Hence we recommend that;**

- SASSA informs the Black Sash and service beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries on the detail of the Agency's plan in the Western Cape to reach some of its crucial outputs. In particular;
  - The details of the current and future implementation measures for the roll out of the Improved Grant Application Process (IGAP),
  - The status of the Integrated Community Registration Outreach Programme (ICROP) and this programme's impact on service delivery at application points.
  - The impact on service delivery at service points of the Integration and Standardization of business process which is a focus for the agency since 2006.
  - How the Agency particularly in the Western Cape plan to secure an improved financial situation which is required to introduce some of the much needed innovations that could contribute significantly to an improved grants admin process,
- This strategy prioritize issues of skills development among staff particularly on customer care norms and the Batho Pele Principles and to hold staff to account through performance management systems for the implementation of these norms and principles. These norms and principles should also be displayed at ALL SASSA contact points so service users know what type of service they are entitled to receive.
- This strategy recognizes the need to enhance the staff to client ratio to be able to service ALL clients who visit a service point on any day, and those who cannot be served on a day, that they are given priority during the next service session.
- All staff members including those at satellite points are furnished with name tags at minimum, and/or identifiable uniforms.
- Floating officials or queue walkers are appointed and trained to operate at all SASSA contacts points, in an attempt to minimize the long queues at contact points.
- ALL clients are furnished with a receipt when visiting a SASSA contact point.
- This strategy prioritizes different ways of communicating application and review outcomes and notices in an attempt to ensure the message is received and to reduce the number of times clients return to a service site to gather the information in person.

#### 4. Improved Communication Strategy

A lack of the correct or complete information about regulation changes and application requirements has been identified as a key determinant of beneficiaries having to return more than once and on average twice or three times for the same reason. It is clear that when clients have clear and correct information that are able to access the service more efficiently and our findings show that word of mouth remains the most powerful source of information.

**Hence we recommend that;**

- SASSA WC enhances its communication strategy to speak directly to the communities that it serves on a regular basis, to ensure that the right messages are reaching the right people at the right time and place. This will aid the Agency in implementing what it stands for.
- Updated and relevant information materials are available in relevant languages at ALL SASSA contact points. These materials we recommend are made available in the simple and low-cost formats.
- The Agency's helpline is publicized broadly, to ensure clients know where to call for information and to report and complain on issues.

#### 5. Improved implementation of the Disability Framework

Improving access to the services SASSA delivers goes beyond simply, having shorter queues and faster turnaround times. It refers to issues of dignity, safety and security and physical accessibility and very importantly attitudes among others.

**Hence we recommend that;**

- SASSA WC improves its application of the disability framework which was adopted by DSD. The details of this framework must be included in all skills development sessions undergone by the agency's staff and the implementation of accessibility standards are monitored through a performance management system.
- ALL service level agreements with landlords must clearly look at issues of maintenance of the shelter, physical accessibility of the building and toilets, sufficient shelter and seating arrangements.
- SASSA WC move towards using municipal buildings and the Thusong Centre (multi purpose centers) as venues to deliver their services.
- The preference service offered by SASSA become more of a practice than the theory it is recognised.

## Where to post pilot phase?

The process of piloting the monitoring of SASSA services was immensely insightful for the Black Sash and its monitoring partners. The acknowledgement of CMAP's value and the cooperation by the SASSA National and Western Cape Offices was a positive contribution to the success of the past two phases in the Western Cape. We commend the SASSA leadership for their openness to the scrutiny of this intervention. The past two Western Cape phases and other pilots gave us the space to learn about the usefulness of our tools, the importance of nurturing relationships, marketing the concept, securing information, simplifying data capturing and reporting.

However we are coming to the end of the pilot and whilst we have learnt a tremendous amount, we have to take that knowledge into a national rollout of CMAP; which will most like be an excitingly daunting task, however one that is accepted as the natural metamorphosis of CMAP.

We would like to take the lessons learnt and relationships nurtured beyond the pilot phase and we challenge SASSA to extend their openness to scrutiny by our volunteer monitors for at least the next two years and beyond.

Through CMAP we wish to create awareness about the right to quality service delivery among civil society and government departments and agencies at various levels.