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INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

TO	THE HONOURABLE MEC
FROM	THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
DATE	22 MAY 2026
SUBJECT	WRITTEN RESPONSES TO IQP 14 DATED 11 MAY 2026 OF THE 7 TH LEGISLATURE

Dear Honourable MEC,

May the Honourable MEC kindly receive the Department's responses to the IQP 14 Written 1st Session of the 7th Legislature, for MEC's favorable attention.

453. Ms M Ewers to ask the MEC responsible for Social Development:

With regard to the financial crisis at Nerinahof Old Age Home in Dordrecht, including an electricity debt of about R1.7 million owed to the Emahlaleni Local Municipality:

- (1) What is the current subsidy paid by her Department per resident at Nerinahof Old Age Home;

Response

The current subsidy per resident is R2 142.00 per month over 12 months, which totals R25 704.00 per resident per year.

- (2) Whether this subsidy has been increased in any of the past three financial years; if so, what was the increase in each year.

Response

There has been no increase in the subsidy for the past three years due stagnant budget allocation.

- (3) How many residents are currently accommodated at Nerinahof Old Age Home;

Response

Nerinahof Old Age Home currently accommodates 35 residents.

- (4) What total amount has her Department paid to Nerinahof Old Age Home in each of the past three financial years;

Response

The Department has been paying Nerinahof Old Age Home the same amount of R1, 079,568.00 for the past three years.

- (5) Whether she has been informed that Nerinahof Old Age Home has reportedly been billed on an industrial electricity tariff; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, when was she informed of this;

Response

The Department was informed that Nerinahof Old Age Home was reportedly being billed on an industrial electricity tariff by the Emalahleni Municipality. This was reported to the Department on the 27 March 2026.

- (6) What steps has her Department taken towards verifying whether Nerinahof Old Age Home is being billed on the correct tariff by the Emahlaleni Local Municipality;

Response

The Department has not yet verified this matter with the municipality. There has been ongoing engagements between the facility and the municipality regarding the correct billing of the organisation. The report of the 27 March 2026 indicates that the municipality agreed to correct and effect changes in the billing of Nerinahof Old Age, and that has not yet been effected. The Department will, however, make a follow-up with the municipality regarding the commitment made in correcting this anomaly on the billing of this institution.

- (7) Whether her Department has engaged the municipality regarding the reported increase in electricity charges from about R20 000 per month in 2021 to about R60 000 per month over the past three years; if not, why; if so, what was the outcome;

Response

The Department has not yet engaged the Emahlaleni Local Municipality regarding this matter. The engagements will be made to follow up on the rectification of this matter and establish factors that may have contributed to this situation.

- (8) Whether her Department has assessed the impact of the electricity debt on the sustainability of services at Nerinahof Old Age Home; if so, what are the findings of that assessment;

Response

The Department has considered the reported electricity-related financial pressures at Nerinahof Old Age Home and acknowledges that escalating electricity costs may have a significant impact on the facility's operational sustainability and service continuity.

While no formal standalone sustainability impact assessment has yet been finalised, preliminary assessment indicates that the increased monthly electricity expenditure places considerable strain on the institution's budget, potentially affecting its ability to maintain adequate service delivery levels, including care provision, staffing, and basic operational needs.

- (9) What support, whether financial or otherwise, has her Department provided or considered providing to assist Nerinahof Old Age Home to remain operational;

Response

The Department has provided and continues to consider a range of support measures to assist Nerinahof Old Age Home in maintaining operational stability and ensuring continuity of services to residents.

To date, support has primarily included ongoing monitoring and oversight of service delivery, technical guidance on compliance and financial management matters, as well as engagement with relevant stakeholders to address cost pressures affecting the facility, including municipal service charges.

In addition, the Department has considered further supportive interventions, which may include targeted administrative assistance, facilitation of engagements with the Emahlaleni Local Municipality regarding tariff-related disputes, and exploration of possible short-term remedial support mechanisms within available departmental resources and regulatory frameworks.

The Department remains committed to ensuring the continued sustainability of the facility and the uninterrupted provision of services to its residents.

- (10) Whether her Department has engaged with the Provincial Treasury, The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) or the Emahlaleni Local Municipality with a view to resolving the debt dispute and prevent any disruption of services to residents; if not, why; if so, what are the details of such engagements;

Response

The Department is in the process of initiating the engagements with the Emahlaleni Local Municipality, with the objective of addressing the reported billing dispute and preventing any disruption of services at Nerinahof Old Age Home.

- (11) What oversight has her Department exercised over the financial condition of subsidised old age homes in the province, including Nerinahof, to identify service delivery risks before they become crises;

Response

The Department conducts ongoing oversight through established monitoring, evaluation, and compliance mechanisms. This includes periodic financial and operational reporting requirements, routine compliance inspections, and assessment of governance and service delivery standards to identify emerging risks at an early stage. Where risks are identified, including indicators of financial distress, the Department initiates engagement with facility management and relevant stakeholders to implement corrective measures aimed at preventing escalation into service delivery crises.

- (12) Whether any residents at Nerinahof Old Age Home are at risk of reduced care, displacement or harm as a result of the current financial pressures; if so, what contingency plans has her Department put in place in this regard;

Response

Currently, there is no confirmed indication that residents of Nerinahof Old Age Home are at the immediate risk of reduced care, displacement, or harm as a direct result of the current financial pressures. Ongoing engagement with the management of the organisation and relevant stakeholders are undertaken continuously to ensure smooth operations and early identification of any deterioration in service standards.

- (13) What assurance can her Department give that elderly residents at Nerinahof Old Age Home will not suffer because of municipal billing failures, weak intergovernmental coordination and inadequate departmental support?

Response

The Department upholds its commitment to the protection, dignity, and continuous care of all Older Persons residing at Nerinahof Old Age Home. The Department will continue to engage the Emahlaleni Local Municipality and other relevant stakeholders to address the underlying billing and tariff concerns, while simultaneously strengthening oversight and support mechanisms is provided.

Furthermore, monitoring systems remain in place to ensure that any emerging risks to service delivery are identified early and addressed promptly, with the primary objective of safeguarding uninterrupted care and protecting the well-being of residents.

454. Ms M Ewers to ask the MEC responsible for Social Development:

- (1) What plans has her Department put in place towards strengthening social services for vulnerable children and youth during youth month:

Response

The Department will strengthen accessibility of social services during the 2026/27 Youth Month through the implementation of Community Mobilization and ICROP interventions in identified vulnerable communities across the Province and ensuring that young people are targeted to improve access.

Six (6) ICROP events will be implemented to provide a range of social services, namely ID Applications (DHA), Grant applications (SASSA), Health Screening and Reproductive Health services (DOH), funding and skills development (DSD), and Employment Opportunities (DOL). Details of these events are as follows:

- i) 8th June 2026 in Motherwell, Gqeberha, Nelson Mandela Metro
- ii) 10th June 2026 in Ward 19, Zigudu village, Intsika Yethu Municipality, Chris Hani District
- iii) 11th June 2026 in Ward 2, Sdakeni village, Umzimvubu Local Municipality, Alfred Nzo.
- iv) 12th June 2026 in Ward 6, Storms River, Koukamma Municipality, Sarah Baartman.
- v) 19th June 2026 in Ward 32, Tsholomnqa, Buffalo City Metro
- vi) 19th June 2026 in Ward 50, Xaba Hall, Nelson Mandela Metro.

The Department is implementing an integrated 365 Days Programme for ending Violence Against Children, as well as programmes focusing on the care and protection of children. These interventions are aligned with the Annual Performance Plan (APP) indicators relating to childcare and protection services.

To strengthen social services for vulnerable children during youth month, the Department is working closely with key stakeholders in the child protection sector to ensure coordinated and integrated service delivery. The Department and Designated Child Protection Organisations (DCPOs) continue to implement awareness campaigns, prevention and early intervention programmes, psychosocial support services, and community outreach initiatives aimed at promoting the safety, wellbeing, and protection of children.

Furthermore, the Department is continuing with the recruitment and marketing of temporary safe care parents (Indlezane) to assess and ensure their suitability to care for children found to be in need of care and protection, particularly children removed from unsafe family environments. The Department will also intensify the marketing of adoption services to



encourage suitable individuals and families to come forward for screening and possible placement of children through adoption as part of permanency planning.

The department is also delivering Core Package of services which is implemented in RISIHA Programme. This is a service delivery strategy consisting of seven interrelated area or domains aimed at holistically addressing the needs of vulnerable children stemming from high level of poverty, inequality and social exclusion in the country. The purpose of the Core Package of Services is to lead children from vulnerability to resilience, minimising the risks, whilst addressing the underlying causes and build a protective environment.

The seven Domains of Core Package of services are as follows:

1. Food and Nutrition: Provide a safety net for children within their communities, offering access to meals when nutrition within the family is uncertain, or where there are risks of stunting and malnutrition.
2. Psychosocial support: Care, support and protection activities aimed at promoting the social, emotional, emotional and psychological well-being of individuals, families and communities.
3. Educational support: improve school access and attendance by nurturing the child's educational performance and helping them overcome barriers such as uniforms, transport, and poor parental support for education.
4. Child Care and protection: this is a critical element in safeguarding the developmental potential of children. It creates an enabling environment within the home, community and accessible services that will support parents to look after their children well.
5. Health Promotion: Empower children and adolescents to access health care services consistently.
6. HIV/Aids: Provision of behavioural-change interventions and services to mitigate the risk of HIV and Aids.
7. Economic Strengthening: Supporting and increasing the economic foundation of households by facilitating access to social security grants, entrepreneurial resources, and other activities that improve their financial well-being.

- (2) how many cases of child and teenage pregnancy have been recorded by her Department in the 2025/26 financial year to date;

Response

District	2025-26 reported cases of child and teenage pregnancy
Alfred Nzo	25
Amathole	7
Buffalo City	2
Chris Hani	7



Joe Gqabi	1
OR Tambo	9
Nelson Mandela Metro	8
Sarah Baartman	0
Total	59

- (3) what prevention, awareness and support programmes is her Department implementing during youth month to address child and teenage pregnancy;

Response

The Department implements a range of awareness and prevention interventions in partnership with the UNFPA, Department of Health and Department of Education to address child and teenage pregnancies across the Province. The interventions include:

- Training on Reproductive Health issues targeting girls and boys.
- Menstrual Health awareness and training targeting teenage girls and adolescents.
- Practicing and negotiating safe sex targeting mainly teenage girls and adolescents.

The White Paper on Families as revised (2023) encourages the development of manuals, programmes, frameworks and guidelines that seek to empower, strengthen and preserve families in order to perform their primary function of supporting its family members. The development of a manual on Family Programme for Teenage Parents seek to encourage and empower children to be responsible family members.

The Department provides Programme for Teenage Parents as a support to teenage girls who fall pregnant and to boys who caused pregnancy to girls. The programme is rendered by DSD officials, NGO's and NPO's in the eight (8) districts. What is entailed on the Programme for Teenage Parents is reported as follows:

- Equip teenage parents (**both a girl and a boy**) with parenting skills in order to be **responsible and effective parents**
- **Encouragement of teenage parents to complete schooling**
- Equip teenage parents with coping skills and balance being a parent as well as a teenager
- **Involving teenage parents in support groups according to their age**
- **Linking teenage parents with other services e.g. medical services**



- Promote **child-centered approach** – focus on needs and rights of children
- To boost teenage parents' **confidence and self – esteem**
- **Involving families on programmes for teenage parents as support system, guiding and monitoring (inter – dependency)**
- Render **family preservation services – range of services (counselling, mediation, family group conferencing, etc.)**

The Department of Social Development continues to implement prevention, awareness, and support programmes aimed at addressing child and teenage pregnancy, as well as promoting the care, protection, and wellbeing of children. These interventions are aligned with the 365 Days Programme for ending Violence Against Children and the APP indicators relating to child care and protection services.

In collaboration with key stakeholders in the child protection sector, the Department conducts awareness campaigns and community outreach programmes focusing on the prevention of child and teenage pregnancy, sexual abuse, gender-based violence, and other social challenges affecting children. Prevention and early intervention programmes are also implemented in schools and communities to educate children on life skills, responsible decision-making, child protection, and the importance of remaining in school.

Furthermore, psychosocial support services, counselling, family strengthening programmes, and referral services are provided to vulnerable children, and their families to ensure access to the necessary care, protection, and support interventions.

- (4) how many children have been identified as malnourished in the aforementioned financial year to date, with a breakdown per district;

Response

Statistics detaining the extent and spread of malnourishment among children is detected and managed by the Department of Health. The latest number of children affected by malnutrition in the province during 2026/27 and per district is outlined in Table 1 below.

Number of children affected by malnutrition in the Eastern Cape per district, 2026/27 is attached hereto **as an Annexure.**

- (5) what food relief, nutrition support or early intervention services are currently provided to children suffering from malnourishment;

Response

The Department of Social Development provides the following food relief interventions to households with children affected by malnutrition:



- **Social Relief of Distress (SRD)** food packages that benefits the household and is a means tested intervention provided by social workers for three (3) months.
- **Breakfast Packs** that is a food supplement benefiting children identified through community-based MUAC assessments. Duration of this intervention six (6) months. This intervention is supported by the private sector.
- **Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP)** which benefits mothers who are caregivers of malnourished children by providing with work opportunities and access to monthly income that assists in augmenting the income of the household access to basic food items. Mothers and/or care-givers are also provided with skills training on food preparation, preservation and handling to ensure that they prepare quality meals.
- **Community Nutrition and Development Centres** which benefit food insecure households by providing regular nutritious meals to adults daily. While this intervention does not benefit children directly, it supports parents and care-givers by reducing the burden of people to dependent on their meagre income thereby enabling them to re-direct their inadequate resources towards feeding children.

(6) how many cases of child neglect and abuse were reported to her Department in the above-mentioned financial year to date, with a breakdown of sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect;

Response

District	Sexual abuse	Physical abuse	Neglect
Alfred Nzo	366	73	351
Amathole	39	10	60
Buffalo City	21	19	105
Chris Hani	137	27	192
Joe Gqabi	61	6	59
OR Tambo	353	34	85
Nelson Mandela Metro	278	76	272
Sarah Baartman	68	29	30
Total	1323	274	1154



- (7) how many Social Workers are currently assigned to child protection services in each district;

Response

District	Total number of Social Worker Supervisors assigned for child protection services	Total number of Social Workers assigned for child protection services	Total number of Social Auxiliary Workers assigned for child protection services
Alfred Nzo	11	92	6
Amathole	9	76	9
Buffalo City	8	100	8
Chris Hani	11	42	22
Joe Gqabi	13	67	15
OR Tambo	6	84	8
Nelson Mandela Metro	17	83	16
Sarah Baartman	18	58	21
Total	93	602	105

- (8) how many homeless children have been identified by her Department in the aforementioned financial year to date, with a breakdown per district;

Response

None

- (9) what shelter, reunification or alternative care services are available for homeless children;

Response

The Department has no current recorded cases of children formally classified as homeless. However, when a case of a homeless child is reported, the department provides childcare and protection services, alternative care services, reunification and after care services for homeless children to ensure their safety, care, and long-term wellbeing.

In terms of shelter services, homeless children are placed in temporary safe care or Child and Youth Care Centres where they receive immediate protection, basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter, as well as psychosocial support and access to social work services.



Regarding reunification services, the department implements family tracing, assessment, and mediation processes aimed at safely reintegrating children with their families where possible. This is supported by counselling and ongoing monitoring to ensure that the home environment is safe and stable for the child's return.

Where reunification is not immediately possible or not in the best interest of the child, alternative care services are provided. These include placement in foster care, temporary safe care parents, or Child and Youth Care Centres. The Department also ensures that permanency planning is prioritised through adoption services where appropriate, to secure stable and long-term care for children in need.

- (10) how many child-headed households are currently known to her department, with a breakdown per district;

Response

There are currently no recorded or reported child headed households with the departments system.

- (11) what support does her Department provide to child-headed households in respect of food, school attendance, psychosocial services and access to grants;

Response

The Department currently has no recorded or reported child-headed households within its system. However, in terms of the Children's Act, any child found living in a child-headed household or in circumstances where they are without adequate parental care is regarded as a child in need of care and protection and is entitled to appropriate statutory services.

Where such cases are identified, the Department provides comprehensive support services which include access to basic needs such as food parcels or referral to social relief of distress services, as well as linkage to appropriate care arrangements to ensure safety and stability. In relation to education, social workers facilitate school attendance by assisting with school placement, monitoring attendance, and addressing barriers that may prevent regular schooling.

The Department also provides psychosocial support services, including counselling, emotional support, and ongoing social work interventions to promote the child's wellbeing. Where applicable, children are linked to social assistance programmes such as the Child Support Grant or other relevant grants, depending on eligibility and caregiver arrangements.

All interventions are guided by the Children's Act, which prioritises the best interests of the child and ensures access to care, protection, and developmental support services.

- (12) whether her Department has sufficient funded posts, budget and partner organisations to respond to the current level of need among vulnerable children and youth;

Response

The Department is currently funding R35,757,395.00 for 233 Social Service Practitioners (comprising of 20 Social Work Supervisors, 136 Social Workers and 77 Social Auxiliary Workers) in funded Designated Child Protection Organizations as well as R65,972,000.00 for 41 Social Workers and 219 Child and Youth Care Workers in Child and Youth Care Centres.

However, this cannot be regarded as sufficient but is within the available budget. The Department operates in a constrained budget environment even though the reality of escalating levels of child abuse requires the Department to strengthen its prevention and response services to vulnerable children.

- (13) what additional interventions will her Department implement during youth month to improve service delivery, protect vulnerable children and create pathways away from abuse, neglect and long-term dependency?

Response

The Department and Designated Child Protection Organisations implement care and services to children in need of care and protection in line with the Intersectoral Protocol Framework. It also implements prevention and early intervention services aimed at strengthening the protection and wellbeing of vulnerable children.

During Youth Month, additional interventions to improve service delivery, protect vulnerable children, and create long-term pathways out of abuse, neglect, and exploitation include intensified multi-sectoral collaboration and coordinated case management through the Intersectoral Protocol Framework. This ensures that children receive integrated and timely services from relevant stakeholders in the child protection sector.

The Department also ensures adherence to the implementation of the 365 Days Programme activities as outlined in the plan, in collaboration with key stakeholders, including government departments, law enforcement, education sector partners, and community-based organisations. This integrated approach strengthens coordination, accountability, and collective action in addressing child protection concerns.

Furthermore, the Department strengthens prevention and early intervention programmes through community awareness campaigns, school-based interventions, and targeted outreach to high-risk areas. These interventions aim to identify risks early and provide timely support to prevent escalation of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.



In addition, the Department prioritises capacity building of stakeholders working in the child protection sector. This includes training and skills development for social workers, law enforcement officials, educators, and community-based organisations on matters such as child exploitation, trafficking, and relevant legislative provisions, including Section 110(1) of the Children's Act where applicable. This capacity building ensures improved identification, reporting, referral, and management of child protection cases.

Kindly be advised that the due diligence has been executed by the relevant Programme to ensure that quality responses is submitted.

Yours in good governance.


Mr M Machemba
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

22/05/2026
DATE