The Black Sash - in partnership with the Social Change Assistance Trust or SCAT - launched the national Community Monitoring and Advocacy Project or CMAP in 2010 in a bid to help improve government service delivery, with a particular focus on poor and vulnerable communities in South Africa.

“This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of the Black Sash and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.”
The Black Sash would hereby wish to thank the community monitors and their respective organisations who volunteered their time to monitor the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) services across South Africa.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Black Sash would hereby wish to thank the community monitors and their respective organisations who volunteered their time to monitor the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) services across South Africa.
In addition we also wish to thank the SASSA National Offices for their collaboration and openness to facilitate our monitors’ access to all service and pay points. The Black Sash wishes to thank the following organisation for their financial commitment to the Community Monitoring and Advocacy Project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tigane Advice Office</th>
<th>Thuso Advice Centre</th>
<th>Empowerment Centre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tlhabologang Aids Forum</td>
<td>Upington Advice and Development Centre</td>
<td>Paarl Advice Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tshwaraganang Home Based Care</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rural Association-Youth Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tswelelang Advice Office</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sandveld Local Development (SALDA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Theewaterskloof Agency for Social Transformation and Economic Development (TASTED)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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INTRODUCTION

The Black Sash, a human rights organisation active for the past 56 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. For more information see www.blacksash.org.za

The Social Change Assistance Trust (Scat) is a veteran independent fund-raising and grant-making development agency based in Cape Town. Scat was established in 1984 to channel resources to rural communities. Scat works in partnership to support local non-profit community-based-organisations in their human rights work. Scat’s focus is on capacity development, human rights, gender equity, HIV and AIDS awareness and local economic development. For more information see www.scat.org.za.

Our premise is that quality service is a critical 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.

It is in this context, that the Black Sash’s Community Monitoring and Advocacy Project (CMAP) was implemented, in collaboration with other civil society organisations and networks.

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; and
- To develop a system for civil society organisations and community members to hold government accountable for the principles of Batho Pele (People First) 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 civil society organisation (CSO)/community based organisation (CBO) networks;
- Co-ordinates the development of the monitoring instruments and the databases; collates and analyses the monitoring information; produces and distributes regular reports to our partners and the public;
- Presents reports to the appropriate government officials in order to affirm good practice and to work together to make improvements where required.

Monitors are selected by CSO/CBOs, CSO/CBO networks, civil society groups and faith-based organisations and then trained to monitor selected public services using the monitoring tools. Prior to monitoring, they are also asked to sign 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 and the assessed, the completed questionnaires are forward to the Black Sash for capturing and analysis. The reports developed as a result of this analysis are forwarded to the relevant government department for response within an agreed period, after which they are made 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, depends either on where the monitoring organisation is located or where the monitor resides. No scientific formulation is used to select the geographic spread; however, we do encourage organisations that have a diverse presence to participate in the project. However, the monitoring data analysed here is real, and a reflection and perspective of the beneficiaries interviewed at the service site on the particular date of the interview. We also try to ensure the data generated through CMAP does not reflect an urban bias.

**FINDINGS**

The efficiency and quality of the service provided by SASSA sites across South Africa has been monitored according to the following standardised entities, namely time, venue, security, transport, personnel, processing of grants, language and communication. The monitoring took place during the period of 3 May 2010 to 20 June 2012. Please note that the percentages provided here are rounded off to the first decimal.

The findings presented in this report takes into account the experiences and opinions of 3642 respondents across all 9 provinces of South Africa. These include 1449 responses (1158 service users, 291 officials) at service points and 2193 responses (1883 service users, 310 officials) at pay points.

Respondents were interviewed in all nine provinces, the largest group of monitoring being in Gauteng (24.6%). The province with the least number of respondents is the Free State, with only 0.9% of the total.
The majority of the respondents were South African citizens (91.8%) with permanent residents representing 2.4%, asylum seekers 0.2% and refugees 0.1% of respondents. In terms of age, the largest portion of respondents fell in the 60+ age category. There were more female respondents than male respondents.

1. Time:
We look at the opening and closing times of the service and pay points and the length of time beneficiaries spend waiting to be served from the perspective of the officials and then from beneficiaries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent: Officials</th>
<th>Pay Points</th>
<th>Service Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Earliest</td>
<td>Latest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usual Opening Time</td>
<td>05:00</td>
<td>13:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening Time day of monitoring</td>
<td>05:30</td>
<td>14:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time started attending clients</td>
<td>06:00</td>
<td>14:50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time stop attending clients</td>
<td>07:00</td>
<td>18:00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most of the pay points opened at 07:00, started attending to clients at 08:00 and stopped attending to clients at 15:00. At service points most opened at 07:30, started attending to clients immediately, closing at 14:00. The Amathuli pay point in KwaZulu-Natal usually opens at 05:00, but on the day of monitoring opened at 05:30. The Mathulini and Bhamshela pay points, also in KwaZulu-Natal, also opened at 05:30. All of these three pay points started attending to clients after 08:00. The 286 Long Market Street pay point, uMgungundlovu, KwaZulu-Natal, opened at 06:00, started attending to clients immediately and stopped attending to clients at 07:00. The Gugulethu 1 service point in the City of Cape Town, Western Cape had started attending to clients at 07:30 and only stopped at 19:30.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2: Respondents: Beneficiaries</th>
<th>Pay Points</th>
<th>Service Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time Arrived</td>
<td>Earliest/Latest</td>
<td>Earliest/Latest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01:00</td>
<td>01:30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:00</td>
<td>15:30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time waiting for seating</td>
<td>1 min</td>
<td>0 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300 min</td>
<td>360 min</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time waiting to be attended to</td>
<td>0 min</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>720 min</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most respondents arrived at both the pay and service points at approximately 08:00. A 60+ male respondent arrived at the Cradock Town Hall pay point in Chris Hani, Eastern Cape at 01:00 in the morning. Another respondent, a 38 year old female arrived at the Diepkloof Welfare Centre service point in the City of Johannesburg, Gauteng at 01:30. At the monitored pay points, 82.8% of the respondents stated that they had to wait in a queue. By comparison, 86.8% of respondents at service points had to wait in queues.

2. Venue:

The physical state of the venue, the availability of chairs, and whether or not the premises has adequate and clean toilet facilities is important to achieving efficient service.
In general the state of the facilities was rated quite well, with every area at both pay and service points receiving a rating over 60.0%.

In terms of special arrangements made for the elderly persons, disabled persons and pregnant women there were varying responses. The officials’ assessments at both service (71.5%) and pay (66.5%) points were higher than those of services users. Officials and beneficiaries at both pay and service points were asked what kind of special arrangements were made for the elderly, disabled or pregnant. Most of the arrangements are that these people are given priority. Other arrangements include having a separate queue for them and making wheelchairs and chairs available.

3. Security:
The availability of private security or police at the venue is important in ensuring the safety of both the officials and the beneficiaries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 3: SECURITY</th>
<th>Pay Points</th>
<th>Service Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondents: Officials</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel safe working at the pay/service point?</td>
<td>83.9%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a private security company or the police present?</td>
<td>88.7%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If YES, do you think they are adequately resourced to protect?</td>
<td>85.1%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you know of any loan sharks who operate on the pay/service point premises?</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
<td>51.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents: Beneficiaries
Do you feel safe at the pay point? | 74.1% | 25.1% | 0.8% | - | - | - |
Do you feel safe when you leave?  

|          | 65.7% | 33.1% | 1.2% | -   | -   | -   |

SASSA sites could become targets of criminals if not adequately protected. At service points only 67.7% of officials stated that they felt safe working there. At pay points 83.9% of the officials felt safe although. The officials at service point were asked if the point was fenced in and 75.9% said that this was indeed the case.

![Beneficiaries - Security presence at sites](image)

At the pay points, 50.5% of the beneficiaries monitored said that they know of loan sharks who operate in or close to the pay point. Most of the officials stated that they did know of loan sharks operating close by, with 51.6% answering no to this question at pay points and 72.9% at service points. The beneficiaries at pay and service points remain particularly vulnerable to loan sharks who charge exorbitant interest rates. Another consideration is the security of those individuals who arrive early at service and pay points. There were respondents arriving as early as 01:00 (see section on Time).

4. Transport:
This looks at how beneficiaries arrived at the site, how long it took them to travel and how much it costs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table: 4</th>
<th>Pay Points</th>
<th>Service Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondents: Beneficiaries</td>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>Maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>0.1 km</td>
<td>200 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of travel</td>
<td>R0.00</td>
<td>R750.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One respondent from the City of Tshwane, Gauteng had to travel 200 kilometres to reach the Chiawelo pay point. Another two respondents, from eThekwini in KwaZulu-Natal, had to travel 250 kilometres to reach their service point. Most of the respondents (over 50.0% at both service and pay points) walked to reach the respective pay or service points.

The average cost of transportation to the service and pay points are R22.00 and R31.50, respectively. However, many of the respondents walked and some did not answer this question.

5. Personnel

This section of the report looks at how many SASSA officials serve beneficiaries and the adherence to the principles of Batho Pele and customer care.

The officials at the pay and service points were asked to assess their adherence to the principles of Batho Pele. From their self-assessment it shows that officials at pay points thought that their strongest area was consultation. Whereas, for service point officials they thought that their strong points were openness and transparency. For pay point officials their weak point was increasing access and for service point officials the weak point was setting service standards.
Table 5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents: Officials</th>
<th>Pay Points</th>
<th>Service Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff members adequately trained?</td>
<td>92.3%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signs with customer care norms visibly displayed?</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officials identifiable? (Uniforms or name tags, etc.)</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 57.1% of the officials at pay points and 56.0% at service points said that there were signs with customer care norms visibly displayed. In terms of how the staff felt about their training, the staff at pay points felt that they were better equipped than staff at service points, but only marginally so. More staff members at pay points were identifiable (75.8%) than at service points (66.0%).

Table 6:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents: Officials</th>
<th>Pay Points</th>
<th>Service Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>Maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of staff members</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people served</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 41.7% of respondents at service points rated the service as good. Whereas 51.6% of the respondents at pay points rated the service as good. In addition to being asked to rate the service, the beneficiaries were also asked whether they thought officials were helpful and treated them with respect. At pay points 81.3% of beneficiaries felt that officials were helpful and respectful, compared to 76.8% at service points. The beneficiaries were also asked how they thought the services could be improved. At pay points the suggestions included adding paying machines, adding chairs and toilets, building shelter, and increasing the size of premises. They also suggested that SASSA employ more staff and security personnel. There was also the suggestion that different grants be facilitated in different lines. The respondents at service points made similar suggestions to improve the services. Additionally they suggested that they are provided with more information and having a sign with a code of conduct visibly displayed.
6. Processing of Grants:

The focus is on the type of grants being applied for/ reviewed, the number of times beneficiaries return for the same application/review, time lapse in processing, receipts and information on outcome of the application/review.

![Purpose of visit to service points](image)

At the service points most of the respondents were there for an application for a grant (56.4%), with 19.9% being there for a review, 7.2% an appeal and 0.8% to re-apply. The remainder of the respondents did not answer this question. At pay points the type of grant that was predominantly collected was a Grant for Older Persons (43.9%). At service points most respondents were there regarding a Child Support Grant (42.1%).

![Beneficiaries - Type of Grants](image)

Respondents at service points were asked how many times they had to return for the same application or review. It was the first visit for that particular application for 38.0% of the respondents, with 50.8% being there on a return visit. The number of return visits ranged from one to ten times.

Beneficiaries who were there regarding a disability grant were asked how long it would take from the time of the visit to the service point to be assessed by a doctor. The shortest period was minutes after the receipt of the application form. The longest period was one year post receipt of an application form to be assessed by a doctor. Respondents had to return between zero and eight times to see medical personnel.
Table 7: RECEIPTS AND INFORMATION ON APPLICATION/REVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents: Service Point Users</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Were you informed about the date of payment of your grant?</td>
<td>54.6%</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you receive a receipt detailing the reason for your visit today?</td>
<td>59.4%</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents: Pay Point Users</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did you receive a receipt?</td>
<td>96.2%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the amount the same as the receipt?</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>65.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

58.0% of the applicants were informed of the outcome of their application, with 41.2% of these being informed verbally and 56.8% in writing. Of the respondents who were not informed of the outcome, 26.6% were informed that they have to make an inquiry about the date of approval of their grant.

Respondents were asked if they were given an option to choose where they wanted to receive their grants, either through a bank, post office or pay point: 60.8% said yes, 10.7% were not sure and 16.6% said no, with 11.9% of the respondents not answering the question.

7. Language and Communication:

This looks at whether or not the official languages are spoken and if there are foreign language translators on site. There is also a focus on how much people know about the grants and the services of SASSA and where they received their information.

Table 8: Respondents: Officials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pay Points</th>
<th>Service Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are information materials available in required languages?</td>
<td>65.2%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are officials able to communicate with clients in the required languages?</td>
<td>88.4%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are translators present to assist local foreign nationals with the payment process if required?</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

46.5% of the officials interviewed at pay points and 33.3% of the officials interviewed at service points said that there were translators present to assist local foreign nationals with the payment process if required. Officials at pay points said that English, Shona, Afrikaans, Shangaan, Ndebele, Venda, Tsonga, Swazi, Sotho, Tswana, Zulu and Xhosa translators would be helpful. At service points the officials said that translator assistance in the following languages English, Afrikaans, Xhosa, siSwati; Ndebele, Venda, Tsonga, French, Pedi, Sotho, Shangaan, Zulu and Sign Language would be helpful.
Only 47.9% of the respondents at pay points and 36.4% at service points were aware that SASSA communicates information on the back of receipts. Of concern, is the fact that very few of the respondents were aware of the Social Relief of Distress grant that they could obtain if in immediate need. Only 29.9% of respondents at pay points, and 30.0% at service points were aware of this grant.

### 8. Use of Grants

This looks at what the beneficiaries use the grants for, how many people it supports and if there is any additional source of income besides the grant.

For 72.9% of the respondents the grant(s) was the only form of income. 21.3% of the respondents relied on other forms of income to supplement their grants. The grant is used to support five people on average. The maximum number of people supported by one grant is twenty and the minimum one.

Beneficiaries used the grant for:

- Food
- Clothing
- Funeral policy and insurance
- School fees
- Rent and services
- Doctors and medication
- Transport

This shows the importance of the grant system in maintaining entire families.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9: Respondents: Beneficiaries</th>
<th>Pay Points</th>
<th>Service Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiaries who knew what documents to bring for their visit</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
<td>85.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiaries who DID NOT KNOW that certain documents expire after a period of time</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiaries who were aware that SASSA communicates information on the back of receipts</td>
<td>47.9%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiaries who were aware they can receive money from grants at pay points as well as at a bank or at a post office</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiaries who were aware that all persons aged 60 can access the Older Persons Grant from 1 April 2010</td>
<td>76.4%</td>
<td>70.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiaries who were aware that the Child Support Grant has been extended to age 18 and that all eligible children born on or after 1 October 1994 can apply for the grant in 2010</td>
<td>71.6%</td>
<td>72.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiaries who were aware they could apply for Social Relief Distress (SRD) if in immediate need</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MONITORS’ OBSERVATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

Besides interviewing beneficiaries and monitoring service sites, the monitors recorded their own observations. Some of these are listed below.

At pay and service points monitors observed that there were long queues and a limited number of staff to service beneficiaries:

- “In this pay point, they have one staff member of SASSA and he failed to attend to more than 200 people a day. Our government must do something about this situation.” - Mariveni A 950637, Limpopo
- “Clients should be paid in two days and not just the one. The queues are long and committee members are paid first whereas the clients should be seen to first. Those who come early are seen to last which is very unfair.” – Ndengezi, KwaZulu-Natal
- “Payment starts late whereas clients come to the pay point early.” - Tjakastad / 830508, Mpumalanga
- “In my point of view the pay point pays a lot of people from different places, also the people from Ratlou came for cash at this pay point and the pay point is in Tsawaing sub-district. So I also wish the machines for the payment and staff members should be increased. By the way I’m sure nobody will go back home unpaid because others use transport money to come and get paid and to go back home.” - Delareyville Nett 1, North West
- “At the time I was arrived at the pay point I was so shocked to in that people have to stay in a queue for an hour before the pay point officials arrive. People have no shelter and seats because other people are disabled and too much and also there is no toilets and clean water. People are not secured as they have to travel long distances because there is a high rate of crime because of the high unemployment rate of youth. Even people are not aware about the service of SASSA as they don’t come down to these poor people. People are the victims of loan sharks at the pay point as SASSA did not make awareness on how to save money so that they can have a savings club.” - Thembeni Store Gengqe A/A, Eastern Cape
- “Some people are sleeping on a queue a day before.” - Rammalatsi Pay Point, Free State
- “All Pay must improve their machines to work faster. The queue is long. The machines got stuck along the way.” – Ratanda, Gauteng
- “If they can work faster or if they can employ more staff to assist.” – Chiawelo, Gauteng
- “According to my observation, everything is fine except for a long waiting of grannies and grandpas to get paid. They arrive early in the morning and you find that they will get paid after 4 to 5 hours of waiting.” – Mpophomeni, KwaZulu-Natal
- “In my observation, I think the place is not good at all. Only less than 10 people are allowed inside the pay point, others queue outside.” - Piet Next to Fashion Express, North West
- “Only one official is working and people need to wait in long queues.” - Port Nolloth Post Office, Northern Cape
- “Only one machine present today and the people are queuing up in the long rows. It takes a lot of time but the people are very patients which is very good cooperation between the officials and the community.” – Graafwater, Western Cape
- “People come early in the morning, some of them sleep outside the gate so that they can be attended to and the officials are too slow. When they are working, they take so much time to attend to. They are moving up and down and they are not working but people are waiting for them for help.” – Tonga, Mpumalanga

There was a lack of infrastructure and problems with facilities and equipment at certain sites:

- “There's only one cash machine which often breaks.” Naledi, Gauteng
“They started paying people at 9:00 and at 9:30 the machine broke. People have to wait in a very long queue to be paid and some clients pay R10.00 to committee members so that they can be paid first.” – Ndengezi, KwaZulu-Natal

“The government must build the office because the official working in their car and they only attend few people a day and must attend their staff.” - Khujwana 950633, Limpopo

“Now it's summer time. If there is no shelter, what are they going to do when it rains because there is no shelter, chairs? Some people are from Mbhejeka and it's far from their home place.” – Avontuur, Mpumalanga

“The centre is unsafe in terms of the roof that is moving up [and down] and makes a hell of a noise when it is windy. It’s so windy, the corrugated iron sheets of the waiting room is unsafe to clients as well as to officials.” – Osizweni, KwaZulu-Natal

“I observed that there should be more machines provided because 1 or 2 machines make things slow.” - Ezibeleni Community Hall, Eastern Cape

“Many people were waiting a long time before they can get help. There are no chairs for people to sit inside or out. No special arrangement for old people, disabled persons and pregnant women. The atm's are working on and off specially at the pay day. There are no shelters for the people who are standing in the queue when it is raining.” - Standard Bank, Joe Gqabi, Eastern Cape

“Add more machines.” - Naledi Pay Point, Gauteng

“During my visit, I noticed that people were standing and waiting for their money but the machine was broken, only one person got her money because she was first in the line. Community members complained a lot about the poor service at this pay point. They said they had to check their machines first before coming to them because sometimes they are forced to go back home without their grants.” - Howick Post Office, KwaZulu-Natal

“Two of the Cash Master Money machines were out of order. This causes the queue to take [a] long time. May[be] the CPS can have mechanics everywhere because when the machine is not working [since] they take very long to assist our parents.” - Dan Village 950635, Limpopo

“By the looks of things they need to have a shelter and chairs because really some people are old and sick and for the fact that the money is not enough and people had to wait for a long time and the money must come to Belfast or Watervalboven, it’s not really nice.” - Post Office, Nkangala, Mpumalanga

“Chairs, water and toilets must be available all the times, security/SAPS must also be visible during times of payments, paramedics should avail themselves for in case of emergency.” - Pampierstad Complex, Northern Cape

A number of the monitors commented that pay and service point users were compelled to buy food:

“I visited the shop where many people are getting their grants from the CPS machine that is in the shop. I observed that people using these machines have to buy from the shop they cannot simply get the money. I don’t whether the shop is reuting the shop for the machine, because if the shop owners are getting something from SASSA people were not supposed to be forced to buy before getting their money. People were more than 200.” - Ngcwanguba Store, Eastern Cape

“At this pay point a hamper is deducted. The price depends on how much money the person received and if they don’t take the hamper then they are not assisted. The hamper is not worth the money that is deducted.” - Cash Loans, Pixley ke Seme, Northern Cape

Concerns about security were also raised:

“I agree with his opinion (official’s) on this venue above it is not safe, and has nothing.” – Mqatsweni, KwaZulu-Natal
• “There must be enough security that will escort inside and outside. The vendors must at least keep a distance from the community pay point premises.” – Phatsima Community Hall, North West
• “People are safe because the security is available inside and outside. No long queue for people. Chairs available. Arrangements [are in place] for old people, the disabled people and pregnant women.” – All Pay, Joe Gqabi, Eastern Cape
• “People are standing for a long time in queues, there are no securities, police officers patrol during the day only but they are not safe because others come at 00:00 in the morning.” – ATM, Amatole, Eastern Cape
• “Can invite more police or security to see that people are safe outside the SASSA office when they are on the way to their transport.” – Chiawelo, Gauteng
• “The problem is with the security guards who accept bribes from the late comers who issue R10 to pass others who were there before them to pass others and special arrangements like being given wheelchairs even though they don’t need it which is an insult to others who got to the pay point before.” – Ratanda, Gauteng
• “Security is a problem, the hall has no doors or gates making pensioners vulnerable.” – Dindi, KwaZulu-Natal

Monitors suggested/observed the following:
• “I found out people complaining about their dates, they are of same dates for disability people and for social grants. They want the separate date for them.” – Indoor Sport Centre, Eastern Cape
• “The venue is kind of small because the demand is high in terms of pensioners to get seats especially the older and disabled pensioners. There must be a suggestion box or comments, there’s not enough information about the social distress grant.” – Ratanda, Gauteng
• “Some of the pensioners need basic education on how to sign for themselves and they don’t know if they are getting all of their money because they can’t count it themselves.” – Howick 1, KwaZulu-Natal
• “The client sometimes does not get all of her money at the pay point and when she asks the supervisor he informs her that they out of money and she must just make do with what she got. This is unacceptable.” – Mqatsheni, KwaZulu-Natal
• “Disability grants stop after two months, people complain about it. They renew their disability grants every now and then.” – Ga Mphela, Limpopo
• “SASSA staff should be trained on regular basis about client service and on communication skills.” – Floors Civic Centre, Northern Cape
• “The client is getting both DG and CSG grants and both grants have been stopped. She was not informed about renewing her application. They have neglected the fact that some people cannot read the payment receipts that says they need to renew the grants. Officials need to assist with this and help people read their slips.” – DSD Nquthu, KwaZulu-Natal
• “They wish to be given checklist of required documents that will avoid [having people] keep coming back now and again to the office, as it consume much time and money.” – Emaweleni, KwaZulu-Natal
• “People especially those applying for sick grant express feelings that their applications are processed very slow. Some even wait three to six months before it’s approved.” – Patensie Ramaphosa Village, Eastern Cape

There were suggestions that clients receive more information from SASSA:
• “Officials on site do not provide beneficiaries with information regarding the new payment system. Branding, marketing material of the new payment provider is nowhere in sight.” – Botrivier, Western Cape
• “The unavailability of flyers containing SASSA information is a challenge.” - Petanenge 950631, Limpopo
• “If SASSA can update people (community) with information with radio slots.” - Phatsima Community Hall, North West
• “SASSA department didn’t give them the necessary information about their rights. She doesn't know about the Social Relief and their toll free number to seek advice or information. Service provider’s service is very fast when they arrive at the service point but this time around they didn't come in time at this service point (Lower Didimana) and the clients are complaining about things.” - Lower Didimana, Eastern Cape
• “People are able to read information at the back of the slip, those that are illiterate cannot read the information.” – Mhontsasa, Eastern Cape
• “Everything is fine. I think SASSA must inform people about the changes they are making because some people don't know why they changed old cards.” - Ratanda 722001, Gauteng
• “People must be informed about the new changes at SASSA offices like social relief of distress other people know nothing about this.” – Chiawelo, Gauteng
• “If SASSA can broadcast through media all dates of review. Especially for the old age group. They can't read papers but they can listen to the radio.” - Tjakastad 830508, Mpumalanga
• “People are not aware of the dates of SASSA visits from the farming areas.” – Graafwater, Western Cape
• “Lack of information to our people about the document that is being needed.” - Pampierstad Shopping Complex, Northern Cape

There was also praise for the services received at SASSA:
• “Venue is secured and the police are patrolling. One member from SASSA was present to assist but he was not aware of what I'm doing and he was a little bit concerned about that. All pay staff were concern about their contract that expires with SASSA. Sassa did not communicate with them about changes they have especially with the bank system.” – Kwanomzamo, Eastern Cape
• “In my observation talking to the people, the service in this pay point is outstanding. The toilets are clean and really well looked after.” – Shardeville, Gauteng
• “He has been fair towards the clients, he also makes sure that everyone receives their money and that they are informed if they need to renew their Grant Application. He and his team are working very good.” - Mqatsheni, KwaZulu-Natal
• “Providing good work, these [people are] uplifting service delivery.” - Daggakraal No 2, Mpumalanga
• “The official is always co-operative and I usually have a special day to monitor him when the clients are not many, so that I don't disturb his work.” - Delareyville Nett 1, North West
• “At Tuesday the managers sent only two officials to come and assist more than sixty people. She worked hard to finish this people. She came in at 08h00 the morning and she started immediately.” – Stella, North West
• “All pay was helpful to the people. They have special arrangements for older people and pregnant women and people who cannot walk they provide them by wheel chairs. Secondly they did not wait in a queue.” – Kamastone, Eastern Cape
• “People came as early as 05h00 at this pay point. SASSA people came around 07h30 and the payment starts at 08h00. Pay point was safe. All Pay security was there and the police were there. Only people who have All Pay cards were all to enter the hall.” - Ilitha Community Hall, Eastern Cape
• “SASSA is trying to give information to the people. Also the community knows everything about social grants except SRD.” - Ratanda 722001, Gauteng
• “Service is outstanding.” – Sharpeville, Gauteng
• “SASSA officials are very helpful. Place is in good condition. There is nothing wrong with the place (pay point), nor the officials of SASSA and CPS.” - Luvuyo DIC, Northern Cape

There were also concerns about the **distance that recipients had to travel to reach the points and other relevant departments:**

• “They need home affairs because they travel a very long distance to get to the department so some people are very poor to reach there because of financial problems so they need DHA to be near and the SAPS to be near to get to the service.” – Leroro, Mpumalanga

• “For the people who like from the farm, traveling more than 12 km and higher a transport at about R80 from R250 driving nothing to support the need of child.” – 220905, Amathole, Eastern Cape

• “People walk long distances to the pay point so I think it should be moved closer to the people. At the pay point it is secured and people are treated with respect.” - Ennerdale Civic Centre, Gauteng

• “They travel a long distance to the pay point.” – Umqatsheni, KwaZulu-Natal

• “Disabled and Senior citizen have to hire transport to the venue regardless of distance.” – 940512, Vhembe, Limpopo

• “Pensioners are struggling to come and collect their money because they need to come from far and many of them do not have the money to get here. The people also need to wait in very long lines for up to 4 hours before they are assisted. Many people who come late complain that when they have gotten to the pay point then the SASSA people are gone or just refuse to assist the rest of the line.” - Seshego Zone 8, Limpopo

• “Most of the people are happy with the service at the Drop In Centre. The only complaint they have is about the distance that is too long that they must walk [far] to the pay point.” - Drop In Centre, Namakwa, Northern Cape

• “SASSA needs to expand their officers in the rural areas and urban areas; this will assist people in the travelling. The service is good.” – Tlhabologang, North West

• “I have observed that people visiting SASSA are encountering problems because of their office is outside the Town, people have to travel up and down for affidavits and they are exposed to tsotsis/robbers. I think since SASSA and social development offices should be within the Town for accessibility even by the disabled people and old people.” - Mqanduli SASSA office, Eastern Cape

There were monitors who had **problems accessing pay and service points** to do monitoring:

• “Difficulty accessing the site even with the permission letter. Security and officials were rude and answered questions with reluctance.” - Allenridge Civic Centre, Eastern Cape

• “There is no agreement between CPS or SASSA Offices with Black Sash.” - Sour A Tree, Limpopo

• “Officials refuse monitors entrance into the pay points saying there was no arrangements made by SCAT” - Pabalello Pay Point, Northern Cape

• “They refuse to comment any further, they say we need name tags with our pictures and ID numbers on.” – Petanenge, Limpopo

• “The officials don’t want to complete the officials form.” – Diazville, Western Cape

• “It’s painful when it is raining. No shelters. No chairs. Did not want to fill the form. They said I have no identifying apron or name tag.” – Tshatshu, Eastern Cape

• “She was not comfortable about being asked questions and said it’s for the first time and we should tell people through media so they will so they will be at ease to answer questions. Pay Points are very difficult to access because of no I.D kits for monitors.” - Naledi Hall, Gauteng

• “I was stopped by the security because he was not informed about the monitoring happening however the manager was aware and allowed me in.” – Dindi, KwaZulu- Natal
• “The SASSA personnel are not co-operative with our monitoring in this area.” - Nkomankoma Community Hall 950640, Limpopo

Monitors noted a lack of signage at certain sites:
• “Could not see and display of sign to alert the beneficiaries of service available.” – Phokaza, Gauteng
• “Problem that I saw is I didn’t see a sign for showing the people that they are moving to another room.” – Bojanala Platinum, North West
• “SASSA must write down the toll free numbers and put it on a wall so that everybody can see it.” – Chiawelo, Gauteng

The presence of loan shark is of some concern:
• “I observed that the service is good even though the officials are not happy in terms of their job. And they have a problem with loan sharks at the pay point and it seems like they (loan sharks) are working with the police of the area. So the police are not helping in anyway.” - Khutsong Pay Point, Gauteng
• “SASSA people are concerned about loan sharks, but they cannot do anything about those people. They are also concerned about the fact that here is no shelter or water for people.” - Seshego Zone 8, Limpopo
• “I want those loan sharks to stop coming to the pay point. They must be far away from the gate of the pay point. They must be 10km away because they disturb.” - Phatsima Community Hall, North West
• “According to my observation I noticed that people are not safe from sharks or money lenders, since their money is being taken from them in a violent manner. Thirdly the officials are alleged to be corrupt by taking monies of the service users.” - Ezibeleni Community Hall, Eastern Cape
• “People are sending their relative to the pay point to take the loan sharks. [This is] a problem because they are taking all the money.” - Multi Purpose Hall, Maluti a Phofung, Free State
• “People can’t talk about the loan sharks because they know them. Some of the loan sharks are very brutal towards people. So they can’t point them because they are always there at pay point.” - Ratanda 722001, Gauteng
• “The loan sharks are everywhere at this pay point.” – Dindi, KwaZulu-Natal
• “People are not happy when they come at the service point due to stress of debts that they have and that the loan sharks are accompanying them to the all pay point. When one gets home, the money is finish paying debts to the said loan sharks.” - Gugulethu one, Western Cape
• “There are many loan sharks at the pay point and they have the people’s documents. The toilets are not suitable for use either and I also feel that the security at the pay point take advantage of the people because if a client gives them money they can go in first. As a monitor I also don’t feel safe being here alone.” - Sweden Park, Northern Cape

Monitors observed issues with language and communication, which could be improved by the presence of translators:
• “Must get them somebody to translate.” – Makeketela, Limpopo
• “There must be a translator at the pay point for foreigners.” - Phatsima Community Hall, North West
• “Xhosa speaking people need to have an interpreter. People seem to know about service.” - Elands Bay, Western Cape
• “As it was reflecting from the questionnaire people complained also frequently on the language usage of officials. Always Afrikaans speaking whilst half of community members understand IsiXhosa only. Also the time officials arrive at service point.” - Patensie Ramaphosa Village, Eastern Cape
There were observations about tardiness of officials:

- “The SASSA Service Provider arrives about 1hr and 30 minutes after the Point opens.” - Batlokwa Ba Bogatsh Administration, North West
- “People are getting tired of standing and waiting for a long time in order for their payment to be processed. He came here at 10h00 but the service provider arrived at 12h45.” – Dipala, Eastern Cape
- “The Pay Master personnel do not respect time. The failure of Paymaster personnel to go to the pay points with enough money to pay the estimated beneficiaries courses always within the payment of process.” - Petanenge 950631, Limpopo
- “Sometimes SASSA officials are late and people are left to stand outside in the cold for long periods of time.” - Luvuyo Drop in Centre, Northern Cape

Monitors made observations regarding beneficiaries receiving their grants at pay points versus other means, such as banks:

- “I observed that most of the people use bank institutions to receive their grants.” - First National Bank, Chris Hani, Eastern Cape
- “I observed that there is still bad service in bank points. People wait in a queue for a long time. There are no seats, no special arrangements for old people, pregnant women and disabled persons.” – First National Bank, Chris Hani, Eastern Cape
- “I think SASSA failed to tell them all the information they needed because she doesn't know that she could receive her grant at the post office and I think this is the reason why there are many people who pay their grants at this service point. They lack knowledge. Security is provided and they are safe in and outside of the service point.” - Ezibeleni Community Hall, Eastern Cape
- “Payment move very fast because of small amount of people pay at this point, many pay at banks. No long queues at the hall. May be in August, there is more people paying at community Halls.” - Adelaide Town Hall, Eastern Cape
- “People who live on the farms get their pay at towns where they buy their goods. It is an advantage for them to get money at the post office or banks.” – 250903, Eastern Cape
- “Beneficiaries are not happy getting their money through the banks, prefer pay points.” – Elliotdale, Eastern Cape
- “The old lady changed her grant from Pay point to the bank, but for 2 months she hasn’t received her old age money because at the bank she is told that her money is not in the bank she must go back to SASSA.” - Allenridge (Civic Centre), Eastern Cape
- “As much as people say they know about the Post Office; they don’t understand it or trust it. They think they will not find all their money. There is a lack of knowledge about getting money or grants in the post office.” – Phiri, Gauteng
- “Due to the pensioners using banks crime is much reduced at pay point.” – Thukhutha, Limpopo
- “People come early in the morning but they queue to long because of slowly services especially because now people have Empilweni cards. They collect the money from the tills at the shops and those people are busy with customers. Some of them they go back home without the money.” – Naas, Mpumalanga

ADDITIONAL OFFICIALS/BENEFICIARIES’ COMMENTS TO CMAP MONITORS:

The officials at pay points raised the following concerns:

- **Additional staff** should be employed
  - “Additional staff from SASSA is required from time to time.”- Embekweni Store, Flagstaff, Eastern Cape
  - “Employing more staff and needs, more motivation from management.” – Rabasotho, Gauteng
“Train more staff so that the work will be more easy.” - 421 Pietermaritzburg Street, PM Burg, KwaZulu-Natal
“Shortage of staff.” - Nhlanzatshe No 2, Mpumalanga
“At Tuesdays the managers sent only 2 or 1 official to come and assist more than 100 people and they sit for a very long time without even standing up or drinking water.” – Stella, North West
“There must be training for staff, chairs for people to sit. There must be toilet and also water is needed.” - Pampierstad Shopping Complex, Northern Cape

- Receiving grants from banks versus SASSA sites
  “Clients prefer to access their funds through the pay point because the banks are too far away, 37km.” – Elliotdale, Eastern Cape
  “We used to open 8h00 to 3 pm. Now we close at 11h00. The problem is less hours we work it means less money we pay. And we encourage people to pay at the bank. Assist them at the site to fill in forms and open bank accounts. Once people pay at the bank we will lose our job. Sometimes there are security personnel deployed to safeguard us which I feel they are not good for the job that make me no feel safe at all.” – Jeffreys Bay, Eastern Cape
  “I suggest that the pensioner must get paid through the bank so that there must be stop order for about R300 for in case they can need it after 15 days. Reason being after 15 days they are so broke.” - Phatsima Hall, North West

- Lack of infrastructure and facilities
  “Lack of infrastructure such as shelter, toilets and water.” – Mtentu, Eastern Cape
  “Payment unit breakdown. The number of people is too many for the venue. Tent needs to be erected.” – Halalafalala, Gauteng
  “The place must be cleaned and more chairs and more space.” - Ratanda 722001, Gauteng
  “The place we use as a pay point is not good because we do the pay process outside. There is no shelter, water, toilets and the phones are not working, if we have problems we have to drive far to get signal, also there are no seats in this place.” – Umtatsheni, KwaZulu- Natal
  “Adequate shelter to be provided when it is raining and during hot days. Sanitation needs to be provided and water for beneficiaries. Chairs to be allocated to the pay point. They also need for the staff to be able to do first aid as there are people with different illnesses around the pay point.” - Seshego Zone 8, Limpopo
  “The lack of shelter is a main concern because during rainy season there will be serious problems.” - Tweefontein B2, Mpumalanga
  “Lack of venue, no seats, toilets, security guards, SAPS and also need of EMS for collapsing or any danger can be occurred in that time.” - Pampierstad Shopping Complex, Northern Cape
  “The only real problem that they have is with the machines when they jam and can’t release money and then they have to call G 4s to come change. All of this takes time and people have to wait longer.” – St. Francis Hall, Western Cape

- Communication between SASSA management and the officials
  “Our concern is a lack of communication from the management SASSA, CPS, and government. Like for instance police are escorting us and sometimes they are not.” – 184552510, Eastern Cape
  “Lack of information between All Pay and SASSA in terms of schedule and date of payment as it gives them problems in paying the applicant. A form of communication should be established.” - Alexandre - Saint Kopano, Gauteng

- Security
• “The pay point is unsafe. There is no shelter, it is surrounded by bushes and beneficiaries get their funds in the open. No information material. Vendors sell goods to eat that are kept open around where the pay-out happens.” – Mthontsasa, Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape

• “To ensure security at all time is available and enough for that particular pay point.” – Phokaza, Gauteng

• “This area is not safe, no fencing, no shelter and no toilets. No seats or tables organised.” – Mqatsheni, KwaZulu-Natal

• “Fear of being robbed because the place is just on the road and is not so secured. People’s lives will be in danger because the place is not fenced as just situated next to bottle stores.” – Piet next to fashion express store, North West

• “Security must be available particularly SAPS, chairs and water is very much vital to a person’s health. Paramedics are needed urgently for the unfit people.” – Pampierstad Complex, Northern Cape

• The presence of loan sharks
  • “Address issue of loan sharks. Electricity always goes off.” – Naledi, Gauteng
  • “Loan sharks and vendors must go away 500m.” – Phatsima Community Hall, North West

• Working at multiple pay points per day
  • “Working at too many pay points on the same day.” – Mqatsheni, KwaZulu-Natal

• Lack of information materials
  • “We request flyers with the information.” – Petanenge 950631, Limpopo
  • “If they can be provided with pamphlets.” – Phatsima Community Hall, North West
  • “Access information in understandable language. Set norms and standards to be adhered to.” – Pampierstad Shopping Complex, Northern Cape

• The distance that people have to travel to pay points
  • “It will be better if the old people can have free transport from home to the pay point.” – Daggakraal Hall, Mpumalanga
  • “Many complain according the distance they walk. The pay point must be in the community service centre at churches. Disabled people feel the government must help them with a building near to the community.” – Graafwater, Western Cape

• Other comments/concerns/suggestions/praises
  • “We serve people in good condition. We serve them within an hour. They are no more waiting for a long time.” – Tweefontein B2, Mpumalanga
  • “The service provider is getting better. Because what I see, is a beautiful yard than other days, or maybe tomorrow is votes. We wish if every day must be clean not for only one day.” – Reagle Community Hall, North West
  • “The debt collectors must not collect debt at the pay point. They must at least collect the debt at their houses.” – Phatsima Community Hall, North West

The officials at service points raised the following concerns:

• Additional staff should be employed
  • “Overwork. Work overtime. Lack of staff. Lack of resources. No accommodation to prevent rain from hot and rainy days.” – Engcobo, Eastern Cape
  • “Shortage of staff. Need new building. Managers need to communicate to local officers. Move to a new bigger building. Satellite offices needed. Challenge having x2 level 7’s and no team leader, need team leader as manager. Need 1031 to be decentralized (list, fax and then get consent).” – Hamanskraal Office (Themba), Gauteng
  • “Office is not accessible. Shortage of toilets. Place to assist clients is not good. Shortage of chairs. Shortage of staff. We need kiosk to buy food inside the premises.” – Thokozani Nhlengethwa, KwaZulu-Natal
  • “They need security officers. Additional staff and they computers are needed.” – Maja - Tribal Office, Limpopo
• Conditions of infrastructure and facilities
  o “The centre has no flyers of the information to be distributed to the service point users.” - Daggakraal No 2, Mpumalanga
  o “Materials and statements, office resources” - Kwa Thema, Gauteng
  o “We are really trying to help as many people as we can but at times our computers just crash or are offline and people will say we don't want to work. It breaks my heart to know people feel like that.” - 390 Pietermaritzburg Street, KwaZulu-Natal

• Security
  o “No space. No safety security. No shelter. We need SASSA to assist about their services. No employee to assist our clients from SASSA.” - Coghlan Garage, Eastern Cape
  o “Our offices are not enough for staff members. No toilets for our clients. There are no security guards. Some of our office doors are not lockable. Shortage of resources. No shelters and not enough chairs for our clients.” - Umzimkhulu Local Office, KwaZulu-Natal
  o “Security officers are needed. They need additional staff. Need more private spaces to see clients. Need computers.” - Maja Moshate, Limpopo

• Lack of information materials
  o “If our government can help us improve means of communication it will be better, because we don't know some of the things. So we are not able to give our clients all the information they need.” - Orange Farm Community Centre, Gauteng
  o “The centre has no flyers of the information to be distributed to the service point users regarding SASSA policy, kind of services offered and other information.” - Nkwankowa House 1009 Bankuna Street, Limpopo

• The distance that people have to travel to service points
- Office in Orlando West has been closed down since 30 June 2011 based on the conditions of the office. A new space was found at Dube next to the Khaya Centre NBS Building however since July nothing has happened and we are still waiting. I see no value for money for our clients as it takes them more money and time to come to Maponya Mall as they are spending double on transport. The office in Maponya is not adequate for disabled clients and old people, as there is only one entrance at the second floor and a lift needs to be used because the steps are currently not working. We have also had the lifts not working and officials have had to go down to attend to clients who can’t come upstairs to the office. This is time consuming for officials but also infringes on the dignity of our clients who need to sit/stand next to a lift for hours till we come fetch them.” - Maponya Mall, Gauteng
- “There should be home affairs and SAPS in the office so that people should not travel in order to get service. A ramp for the disabled should be built in the centre. There should be a waiting area for clients.” - Bourke’s Luck, Mpumalanga
- “I think the offices/SASSA should be well fenced and maybe with two (2) to three (3) police to assist with certifying other documents for our people because it is a bit far from SASSA to police station, other clients are sick, won’t be able to walk that distance.” - Tswaing/Delareyville, North West

- **Language issues and the lack of translators**
  - “It will be nice if we can be given enough information of social grants and be trained to speak different languages even if it means getting someone who will translate the languages for us it will be helpful. Our toilets are not enough for our clients and you sometimes find that we don’t have water around.” - Orange Farm Community Centre 982 Stredform, Gauteng
  - “SASSA has security and translation issues.” – Umbumbulu, KwaZulu-Natal
  - “We need to be trained in sign language where we cannot communicate with clients who talk with sign.” - Nkomazi (Schoemansdal), Mpumalanga
  - “It will be important if they can find somebody to help others, those who do not understand Twana. Here at Reagile there’s not many people who know Twana unless at SASSA’s office. If they want information of something or somewhere, but here at the pay point they still better about other languages because most of the people come here at Reagile location.” - Reagile Community Hall, North West
  - “The officials should be taught with other languages so that they can assist everyone with confidence and be sure that everything is comprehended between the two of them.” - Pampierstad Complex, Northern Cape

- **The presence of loan sharks**
  - “The only major issue that needs attention is the loan sharks that come into the service points; they take the people’s cards and IDs.” – Enhlalkahle, KwaZulu-Natal
  - “At this point, the client they should borrow the money first to the nearest loan shop before they get their money.” - Maquassie Hills, North West

- **Other comments/concerns/suggestions/praises**
  - “Our challenge is that we have some offices in very rural communities and we struggle to render a good service to them. Government needs to give these people their own offices in their own communities.” – Naledi, North West
  - “We thanking you for doing monitoring in our office because most of our people think that we don’t give them the good service that Government promise them. Our challenge is that if we have some offices at Rural areas we will render the good service to our people at rural areas and farm communities, so if government give us some offices at rural, we will help them (community at rural farms). We want to say keep up the good job you do to the community. We have been wanting to be monitored [so that others
could see] the bad and good services [we are receiving].” - Naledi Service Point, North West
  o “I think it would be better if it’s only one official to fill forms for the others just in case of not doing a uniform thing.” - Gugs 1, Western Cape

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BLACK SASH

General
• In this report, we have found that “The majority of the respondents were South African citizens (91.8%) with permanent residents representing 2.4%, asylum seekers 0.2% and refugees 0.1% of respondents”. This clearly indicates that either the refugees do not know, and/or SASSA is not educating them of their right to social assistance
• We recommend that SASSA engages in an education drive that alerts and create awareness of the fact that Refugees have the right to Disability, Foster Care and Care Dependency.

Recommendations: Time
• We recommend the release of an updated and relevant National Norms and Standards Policy that guides the implementation of the Agency and its service providers operations at all pay points and service points in all provinces.
• We further recommend the implementation of clear norms and standards which guides the operations and payment grants through mobile units and fixed pay points to ensure that beneficiaries do not wait longer than 30 minutes for their grant payment.
• We recommend that the implementation of the recommendations in all the categories below will reduce the time beneficiaries will spend at pay points and at service points.

Recommendations: Venue
It is critical to have an overall assessment of whether SASSA or service providers honour the 5 km radius of bringing the service to the people. It is critical for clients and civil society organizations to know how far away are these points are, whether there are adequate mobile services available, and how frequent these services occur.
• The Agency take appropriate measures to ensure that grants are paid to beneficiaries in a dignified manner and therefore must ensure that basic facilities shelter, seating, toilets, water, fencing are available at all times at all pay points and at service points.
• It is recommended that the Agency negotiate service level agreements with service providers that allow for review and standard application at all sites which will ensure that the beneficiary is maximally protected and provided for. We further recommend the contracts allow the Agency to monitor regularly and to act reasonably when a breach of contract occurs.
• The Agency must produce an assessment report on the banking and post office infrastructure that exists around fixed pay points and in areas where the current mobile pay points operate to measure where beneficiaries are situated in relation to this infrastructure.
• We recommend that the Agency negotiate with relevant banks for reduced rates and charges so that beneficiaries can access their grants through these institutions. However all charges should be borne by the Agency and not the beneficiary.
• We recommend that the Agency negotiate with post offices for beneficiaries to access their grants through these institutions.
• We recommend that the Agency embarks on an effective communication strategy to educate beneficiaries of the benefits of more convenient ways to receive grants. Beneficiaries must be able to select the payment method most convenient for beneficiaries.

Recommendations: Security
In order to minimise the need for beneficiaries, especially females, to wait outside in unprotected, unfenced and insecure areas for hours before opening of pay point sites, we recommend the following:

• SASSA should introduce a standard in the proposed Norms and Standards which ensures that beneficiaries will at all times feel safe from the time they arrive and leave a SASSA service and pay point.
• That SASSA implement the recommendations made in the section on “Time” to address the unacceptably long queues and pay special attention to this issue with regards to the waiting times at mobile service points;
• SASSA immediately prioritise and employ security guards at the sites where inadequate or no security exists.
• SASSA should arrange with the South African Police Service to monitor pay point and service sites regularly during the early mornings specifically and on the days the sites are open for business as an additional security measure. Furthermore, we recommend that SASSA arrange with the South African Police Service to monitor in the proximity of pay points regularly, as an additional security measure.
• We recommend that additional measures like patrol vehicles are deployed at pay points to patrol areas immediately outside the pay point and ensure the safety of beneficiaries when they leave the premises.

Recommendations: Transport
In order for beneficiaries to spend less money and time to reach the service points we recommend that;

• SASSA implements a norm as part of its proposed Norms and Standards which ensures that service points are within 5 km range of beneficiaries.
• We recommend that SASSA inform beneficiaries about their nearest service point through a public campaign. This is to prevent beneficiaries from spending money and time unnecessarily.
• SASSA must educate and communicate effectively with beneficiaries about what documents are needed for services like reviews and further to inform beneficiaries about what is required of them in order to reduce the visits to the service site for the same reason.
• We further recommend that SASSA prioritise and appropriately adjust its communication strategy to reach beneficiaries in the rural areas of all the districts in the Province.

Recommendations: Personnel
We must acknowledge that at least 76.8 percent of beneficiaries felt that SASSA officials were helpful and respectful. However, in our view, adequately trained staff will significantly decrease the waiting period spent by beneficiaries to access SASSA services. Further if beneficiaries and applicants have the correct information, it will ensure cost saving of an already financially vulnerable person therefore we recommend the following;

• SASSA immediately start to implements the above recommendations especially those made under heading ‘Time’.
• SASSA increases staff to ensure the average waiting time of the number of beneficiaries serviced is reduced to one hour at service points to administer the new changes in regulations as well as for the review process.
• SASSA appoints a floating official to reduce and manage queues at all sites all the time. Where no official at a service site is appointed in the interim we recommend that each official at the site play that role for at least half an hour of their time at the service point until a dedicated person is appointed.
• That all SASSA officials at all service points have identifiable name tags.
• That SASSA designs, displays and distributes its customer care norms at all service points.
• Those SASSA officials are made aware of legislative and regulatory change in order for the officials to communicate the right information to clients.
• That SASSA continues to employ officials who are able to communicate with their clients in the language of their choice.

Recommendations: Processing of grants
• We recommend that the application process be in line with the norms and standards of SASSA and take no more than 30 minutes to complete; and further that the verification takes place within same amount of time.
• We recommend that the same administrative support, personnel and technology infrastructures (including laptops equipped with SOCPEN and the relevant network connections) 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.
• That SASSA and service providers clients with the option of a receipt as a matter of course for any service that was offered.
• We recommend that at each pay point of SASSA (or service provider) ensures that beneficiaries are educated through information materials. It would then also be necessary to ensure that the receipt amount stated must be the same as the monies received in hand.
• We recommend that SASSA inform applicants of the outcome of the application in writing and not verbally. This is highly irregular and not in line with promotion of administrative justice and the constitutional requirement to be informed requires an administrative decision in writing.

Recommendations: Language and Communication
We recommend:
• That information material should be displayed at all pay points and service points 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 Agency’s toll free number and the review process.
• That SASSA make beneficiaries aware of legislative and regulatory changes through information materials suitable for the sites and rural areas, and in relevant languages. Photocopies of information sheets should be seriously considered if budget allocations are exhausted for printed materials and radio and other means be considered for rural areas.
• That SASSA continues to employ officials who are able to communicate with their clients in the language of their choice.
• That the pay point service providers employ translators to ensure they are able to communicate with beneficiaries in their language. This is a serious problem highlighted and can attribute to the fact that the amounts of money receive in hand differs from what is on the receipt.
• That all SASSA’s information materials are available in all relevant languages and are distributed at all service points.
• That an effort is made to ensure the availability of sign-language interpreters where they are needed.
Recommendations: Use of Grants

- We recommend the continued payment of grants to beneficiaries because it assists with the immediate needs of not just the direct beneficiaries but others in the household where grants are received.

- We recommend that the policy gaps that remain in the grants system be narrowed and the inclusion of more vulnerable into this safety net, such as the unemployed and the chronically ill. Specifically, we also recommend that orphaned children in the care of relatives also have access to foster care grant in the absence of any other form of grant for those children, other than CSG, as it currently is provided for.

- We understand that the Agency may not necessarily be able to implement all of these recommendations. However, these findings once again highlight the important role of the Agency as a delivery agent entrusted to effectively deliver the grants to beneficiaries with dignity, but requires massive intergovernmental support to address the range of determinants that impede and challenge access. Failing to do so not only affect the beneficiary, also the households receiving these grants. Therefore we must reiterate our recommendation that the Agency ensures that grants are paid in a dignified manner and on time.