

## **Response from Western Cape Department of Social Development**

*“Please find our response below:*

Firstly, DSD Western Cape do not operate or own any residential facilities for older persons, albeit that we provide a subsidy to 117 facilities across the Province that is independent from government and managed by a Board.

All residential facilities for older persons needs to be registered in terms of the Older Persons Act and meet Minimum Norms and Standards as pertained in the said Act. The Department of Social Development monitors these norms and standards.

The COVID19 virus has indeed led to the fact that Old Age Homes have been following strict WHO hygiene protocols and their Management Boards developed their own contingency plans in order to be preventive. Social Development also provided the Management with various information and guidelines at the beginning of lockdown

However, this is not able to fully prevent the spread of the virus in communities and in residential facilities for older persons.

The Departments of Social Development and Health Western Cape therefor developed a **detailed** guideline to prevent and manage the coronavirus within Residential facilities such as Old Age Homes. This includes all measures of control to be preventative as well as managing a person who is infected. This guideline is for residence and staff and provides guidance on all hygienic aspects within a residential facility. These guidelines are in process of being distributed to all Homes in order to provide more informative and stricter guidelines and protocols.

On a practical level the two Departments have a referral protocol in place and any Old Age Home that reports an infection, will be assisted and supported. It can also be mentioned that the Department of Health Western Cape have been proactive by screening and testing Old Age Homes in specific hotspot areas - even if the Home did not request assistance.

Social Development also provided additional PPE to 110 Old Age Homes. The remaining 7 will receive their PPE by Thursday. The Department is in process to obtain more PPE for the Old Age Homes via donations of major private businesses. Any media exposure to generate more contributions from donors for PPE will be welcomed.

All Provinces do not receive the same funding from Treasury and allocations are based on populations size and other criteria determined by National Treasury. In the Western Cape we subsidize Old Age Homes R3500 per person per month that is **poor and frail**. Residence with a middle or high income pension and with medical aids are not subsidized by government.

With regards to Sencit Old Age Home and any other Home that has positive cases, the Department is not in a position to disclose any confidential information. It is the prerogative of the Family of the Older Person or the Older Person themselves or the Board of the Home to disclose if they have COVID positive cases. Staff at a Home is also at liberty to disclose their own status voluntary.

It can be mentioned that all staff and residence from Sencit Home have been screened and tested yesterday by the testing team from Health Department.”