

Concerns over incomplete FS drug treatment centre

The Portfolio Committee on Social Development wants to have a meeting with the National Treasury and the Department of Public Works as to why a drug treatment centre in the Free State has not been completed.



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In a statement the committee said the facility has been under construction for three years without any progress. This was despite funds having been allocated and made available to the province annually, as a conditional grant.

“This delay impacts negatively on the agreement of having at least one drug treatment centre in every province,” committee chairperson, Zoleka Capa said.

The committee received a shocking report from the Central Drug Authority (CDA) on how the use of drugs is escalating in communities, something which leads to crime and violence in communities.

“This has increased the committee’s belief in the fact that these drug treatment facilities in all provinces should be prioritised in order to deal with this scourge. The committee will also engage the National Treasury on the shortage of social workers something that leads to inability to manage drug abuse and its effects,” said the committee.

There are other departments which require social services like inmates in prisons, police stations where minors require social workers for their cases to proceed to court, adoption processes that get delayed, foster care as well as trauma

therapy which requires social workers.

“The social ills in communities which affect most departments are as a result of the lack of social workers that are needed to assist communities in dealing with social problems. Having the necessary amount of social workers in communities, hospitals, prisons and in other facilities could help in alleviating the social problems that are increasing in communities. The committee has observed that all these departments do not have designated posts for social workers,” read the statement.

“The committee also wants to meet with the National Treasury to discuss the funds that were allocated to the State Information Technology Agency (Sita) for the cabling of the Department of Social Development offices. The committee is aware of the reasons that were given by Sita on why it has not done the cabling; however, the committee wants to discuss with National Treasury the status of the funds that were given to Sita by the department and the contract between Sita and the department.”

Meanwhile, the portfolio committee expressed condolences to the Sithole family in Flagstaff in the Eastern Cape where a seven-month-old child was brutally murdered and a 64-year old woman living with a severe disability was brutally injured by a member of the family who is alleged to be under the influence of drugs.

“The committee would also like to commend the police in that area for responding swiftly to the incident and arresting the perpetrator. These affected individuals are very important in the mandate of social development as this infant is protected by the Children’s Act and the woman is living with a severe disability,” the statement said.

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