

Dept to slash substance abuse allocation

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THE DEPARTMENT of Social Development will cut allocations for the prevention of substance abuse and rehabilitation by 51 per cent for the 2018/19 financial year.

The department also indicated during its presentation of its annual performance plan yesterday that out of a population size of 1.2 million people in the Northern Cape, a total of 470 055 recipients were reliant on Sassa grants.

Spokesperson for the Office of the Speaker, Mpho Masina, stated that the portfolio committee on

Social Development was mindful that a pronouncement was made during the State of the Province address earlier this year that the first in-patient substance abuse rehabilitation centre was anticipated to be fully operational by July this year.

“The portfolio committee was concerned that the department would reduce funding for substance abuse, community mobilisation, community-based research and planning towards women development.”

She stated that the department intended to create 436 job opportunities through the Expanded Public Works Programme.

Masina said the department had committed to offer scholarships and bursaries to attract youths to the social services professions.

“The department has allocated R1 million towards youth programmes during the upcoming financial year. The department identified early childhood development (ECD) services to vulnerable groups and food security as priority areas.”

She indicated that a further R7.6 million would be allocated to address access to early childhood education in impoverished communities.

“A further R 10.8 million will go

towards ECD infrastructure.”

Masina added that the Department of Environment and Nature Conservation outlined waste management support plans for six municipalities during its presentation on Tuesday, namely Dikgatlong, Magareng, Thembelihle, Joe Morolong, Dawid Kruiper and the Karoo Hoogland local municipalities, for this financial year.

“The department plans to target 13 000 pupils through environmental awareness and education projects. The rehabilitation of the Port Nolloth Bird Park (wetlands) and cleaning open spaces to create awareness and promote recycling

in communities in six targeted towns is also on the cards for the 2018/19 financial year.”

She said the portfolio committee on Environment and Nature Conservation commended the department on the initiatives to involve and invest in the youth.

“The committee is, however, concerned about department’s plans to curb air pollution and recommends that the department appoint a specialist to address this challenge.

“The committee has also recommended that the department come up with tangible plans to avoid future drought in the Province.”