

# POLICY : CARE OF THE AGED

Item H 10-2002  
MC 11.4.2002

PROPOSED POLICY ON THE CARE OF THE AGED IN EKURHULENI  
METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

## RESOLVED:

That the report in respect of the policy on care of the aged attached to the report as Annexure 'A' BE APPROVED.

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## ANNEXURE 'A'

### POLICY ON THE CARE OF THE AGED IN EKURHULENI METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

#### 1. PURPOSE

To provide guidelines on the care of the elderly at pay points as well as facilitating the elderly's applications for grants and pensions in the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality.

#### 2. PREAMBLE

The national as well as the provincial welfare departments have acts and policies in place which govern the processes of applications for grants and pensions for the elderly.

The high rate of illiteracy and the high bank charges make it very difficult for the aged to get their pension money paid through bank accounts. As a result of this we see our elderly people being paid at community halls, school halls, churches etc.

This exposes them to standing for long hours in queues, and sometimes in the sun. The queues, are also overcrowded with hawkers, accomplices as well as thugs.

When they first apply for the grants or pensions they meet with several problems at the application check points as well as at the doctors' (district surgeons) examination rooms.

The problems range from being pushed around by the officials to wrong birth dates reflected on their identification documents.

The Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality is fully aware that all these problems of the elderly mentioned above are a competency of the National and the Gauteng Provincial Welfare Departments. It is the feeling of the Health and Social Development Department of this metro that local government can still do something to alleviate these problems as stipulated by the constitution of the Republic of South Africa on co-operative governance.

It is on this premise that a policy on the care of the elderly at pay points as well as facilitating the smooth running of their applications for grants and pensions is formulated.

### 3. APPLICATION

The policy will apply throughout Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality.

### 4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- The Constitution - Act 108 of 1996.
  - The Bill of Rights - chapter 2 of the constitution.
- Bathopele Principles and Ubuntu
- The Patients' Rights Charter
- The Health Act 63 of 1977
- The Nursing Act 50 of 1978
- The Aged Persons' Act 1967
- The Aged Persons' Amendment Act 1998

### 5. DEFINITION OF TERMS

"By-law"	is a regulation made by a local authority.
"District surgeons"	is a medical doctor whose duties are mainly to ascertain whether an applicant deserves a grant or an old age pension depending on the clinical condition of the applicant. He is usually employed by the Provincial Health Department.
"Grant"	is money paid to an applicant on a monthly basis because of some disability which renders the applicant unemployable e.g. a young blind person.
"Old age pension"	is a monthly payment to the elderly. The elderly so classified should not be earning another income from somewhere e.g. past investments etc.

### 6. IMPLEMENTATION

#### 6.1 Application stage/Renewals

- All the officials should apply the humane principles of Bathopele as well as those of the Patients' Rights Charter in handling the elderly.
- The hearing of the elderly is usually impaired. Extreme patience should be exercised.
- Separate queues for pension applicants from the rest of the patients in the clinic.
- Those who on screening look frail should be seen first.
- Those who cannot read and write should be helped.
- Translators should be readily available should communication between the applicant and the district surgeon be difficult.
- Family members of bed-ridden applicants should be given a hearing and means made to process the application forms of those who are bedridden.
- While they are queuing to be examined by the district surgeon to assess them whether they qualify for the pension or grant, general health indicators should be measured e.g. Blood pressure, temperature, pulse, rate of respiration, weight etc.

## 6.2 At the pay points

- All the above should be done.
- Overcrowding at the queues should be minimised by having security monitoring the queues.
- By-law should be promulgated to prohibit hawkers and wanderers from being all over. They should be at least 100 metres away from the pensioners.
- Shelter should be provided as well as chairs because the elderly cannot stand for long periods.
- Ways of paying the bed-ridden elderly should be formulated e.g. allowing a grand child who is 18 years and over to collect payments for the elderly. Proof should be provided that the elderly is still alive and that the youngster is related to the elderly.
- Child grants are to be done on a separate day.
- Officials should wear name tags and they should wear something to identify them.
- The security should be present at all times to reduce the mugging of the elderly.
- The elderly may be given talks about council policy while they are sitted in the halls e.g. the 40% rebate on rates and taxes, indigent application forms and benefits thereof.
- The speaker to draw a roster for councillors to visit the pay points.
- Provincial officials at the pay point to work hand in hand with the council officials and security.
- Encourage the elderly to get their payments made directly into their accounts electronically.
- Dealings with banks to cut the bank charges should be pursued by the council.
- The wards are to encourage tea parties for the elderly.

## 7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- The councillors visiting the pay points should monitor the situation by asking questions from the elderly to see if there are any complaints or compliments.
- Help desk on the pay day should be available.
- Suggestion boxes at the application points (clinics) should be made available.