**SW1 Female**

**Interviewer:** Good afternoon.

**Interviewee:** Good afternoon.

**Interviewer:** I hope you’re fine. My name is Yvonne Abena Appiah and we are undertaking research that is aimed to coproduce a set of checklists and a point of interest that could be used as a tool for social workers for assessing child maintenance cases in Ghana. I’d start with your demographics.

**Demographics**

**Age:** 39 years

**Educational background:** 1st degree in development studies and a masters in local government administration and organisation.

**Duration of being a social worker:** about 12 years

**Duration of working on non-maintenance cases:** about 10 years

**Interviewer:** can you describe the experience of using the case management SOP?

**Interviewee:** With the cases management SOP we saw it to be tedious at the initial stage. Currently, I’d say it’s okay but bulky and the questions on the forms covers little of the child in question. With the current SOP, it is a lengthy form which takes most of our time in filling with clients and it becomes a challenge as clients do not have the luxury of time to spend in the office due to work.

Also, with the complexity of the forms, we’re sometimes not able to ask all questions we need within the limited time clients have given us to work with. Hence, if we have less bulky forms, we’d be able to assess and communicate with clients quickly.

**Interviewer:** You earlier mentioned that the current SOP does not cover the child holistically hence what do you think of the need to create a checklist purposely for assessing child maintenance cases.

**Interviewee:** I think the checklist would be a good idea and serve as a quick response to some of the key things we’d use in assessing child non maintenance cases.

**Interviewer:** What are some the things you deem useful and must be included when creating a checklist?

**Interviewee:** some of the things that must be included are;

* The name of both complainant and respondent and the child as well.
* There should be a portion to determine whether the child and or the parent has any form of disability. This must be included because the current SOP does not give room to clearly explain the physical and mental health condition of the caregivers and most especially the respondents who are mostly the fathers.

This question will aid us social workers determine the condition of respondent’s especially fathers to fairly asses the case and if possible, provide various solutions to clients in generating income. As social workers we do not only focus on child non maintenance cases but also concentrate on the situation and condition of the caregivers in assessing the issue at hand.

**Interviewer:** Do you mean to say that if a caregiver has a disability this can also affect the maintenance/wellbeing of the child?

**Interviewee:** Yes, exactly hence I am of the idea of the existence of a checklist that includes all these information to enable us social workers effectively assess the cases presented.

**Interviewer:** How different would you like the Case management checklist to be from the current SOP?

**Interviewee:** I think the checklist must include the salient points needed like the occupation of both parents as compared to the current forms that only asks of the complainants’ occupation. It should also include their work designation as this will help us determine the employment status of caregivers and their earnings which will in turn inform social workers on parents’ ability to cater for the child.

In determining their occupation will likewise inform us on the responsibility each parent must perform. The existence of checklists will aid us social workers to make informed decisions in child maintenance case.

**Interviewer:** If I’m getting you right, are you saying because we don’t have the designation of both parents in the current SOP’s, it sometimes makes the sharing of responsibilities among both parties difficult?

**Interviewee:** Yes, and as a result, we apportion most of the responsibilities to the respondents (who are mostly fathers) and mothers (complainants) as well depending on their nature of work and income.

The current SOP does not include the caregivers’ other sources of income but only the main which impedes social workers to effectively assess and conclude on such cases.

**Interviewer:** Has there been instances where both the complainants and respondents say they’re both unemployed?

**Interviewee:** Yes, there has been especially with the fathers (respondents), since they know that coming to the social welfare office is as a result of their refusal to perform their roles to the child, they already come to the office prepared with the story of being unemployed hence their inability to perform their duties. Whereas such people have other sources of income, but the current SOPs limits us in probing further which in turns affects the social workers ability to judge fairly for both parties.

**Interviewer:** Per what you mentioned, do you suggest we include salary range in a checklist for a child?

**Interviewee:** Yes, I will because the salary range will determine the minimum a parent can contribute and I also suggest that if the other sources of income of caregivers is included in the checklist, we will be able to use this to provide fair judgement and an effective conclusion that both parties agree to for the maintenance of the child. Based on their sources of income respondents will be given the option to either pay a lump sum or make monthly and or weekly payments to the mothers depending on their type work.

**Interviewer:** In your submission you made mention of a lump sum to be given to the caregiver, how would this be done in terms of the duration?

**Interviewee:** Depending on the client’s nature of work, for instance, if the respondent is either a landlord or a farmer who earns their income in a lump sum either at the end of the year or every 6months, a percentage of the income would be apportioned to the caregiver (mother) to invest in an income generating activity to earn income to cater for their child’s needs.

**Interviewer:** What are some of the challenges you encountered as a social worker using the current case management SOPs?

**Interviewee:** Aside from the nature of the SOP forms being bulky, the clients we deal with do not have required identity documents to ascertain their date of birth. During their visit to the office they every now and then provide us with a birth date that does not correlate with their age, hence a challenge.

Another challenge is the non-existence of contact information to trace client for monitoring and also difficult to locate client’s homes due to the nature of the environment. Some of the clients do not have the accurate information needed to fill the form.

**Interviewer:** In relation to the SOP, what exactly does it cover about the child in question. **Interviewee:** With the current SOPs it covers;

* The child’s ability to mingle with their peers, name, age of the child and the number of times the child is fed in a day. We should also note that, these questions are not asked of the child but the complainant answers these questions. Hence, we can’t ascertain if the answers given are right or wrong since the child in question is not present during case assessment.
* The current SOPs asks whether the child have been enrolled in school and if they’ve have been immunised.

At the end of the day, we are not able to investigate if these answers given are right hence the information given is what we use in assessing the non- maintenance cases.

**Interviewer:** What are some of the information you think would help us work better if we are proposing for a checklist that targets child non maintenance cases?

**Interviewee:** Child maintenance has to deal with taking proper care of the child hence the proposed checklist should ask clients of their other sources of income.

The checklist should give us room to properly analyse the cause of the non-maintenance issue. It should aid us in determining whether the issue is due to the child’s physical or mental health, because the woman is not performing her duties as a wife or any other issues that brought about the occurrence of child non maintenance cases.

**Interviewer:** Would it be feasible if we consider a child’s mental health in the checklist?

**Interviewee:** Yes, it would be very feasible if included to the checklist since some caregivers abandon their children and are not given the proper care, they need due to their underlying conditions.

**Interviewer:** Would you also suggest that the checklist includes the background of both the complainant and respondent?

**Interviewee:** I think it is is a very good idea if both caregivers’ social background is given to determine how they were raised and to know if this has an effect on their current behaviour. Hence assisting social workers to the assess cases.

**Interviewer:** What do you think about environmental factors

**Interviewee:** I think that where one finds themselves plays a role on how they behave. For instance, when we take a good environment, most caregivers living there takes proper care of the children as compared to those living in slum commitment. Hence, I believe that if an irresponsible caregiver moves to live in an environment that has parents concentrating much on the needs of their child, then that said caregiver would be indirectly learn to be responsible.

**Interviewer:** To reiterate what you said, do you mean that if a non-responsible caregiver sees the behaviour of responsible parents to their children, they might be positively influenced to do so.

**Interviewee:** Exactly and due to this I agree that a checklist should include environmental background to know the causes of most caregivers’ behaviours which will also inform us on the right path to take.

**Interviewer:** Thank you for giving us this information, we hope that it would be beneficial for this research and our work as social workers to be able to deliver the best service in every environment we find ourselves in.

**Interviewee:** Thank you as well for having me.