**SW6**

**Interviewer**: Good morning, Madam.

**Interviewee**: Good morning.

**Interviewer** Okay, so we are conducting a research on the child maintenance checklists on co -producing the new child maintenance checklist as we’ve already explained to you. And so I just want to engage you in about a 40 minutes conversation to get your ideas, your inputs and your experiences basically with using the current SOP and other suggestions. So before we begin I would like to let you know that you can opt out anytime you want and I'll be recording this intake. Please is that okay?

**Interviewee**: All right.

**Demographic information**

**Gender:** Female

**Age:** 41

**Educational background:** A diploma in social work and a degree in guidance and counseling

**How long have you worked as a social worker:** with permanent employment, this is my 11th year. With youth employment before coming to the service, that was in 2009. It was 2012, I was employed, so I have worked for 11 years in the department.

**What about La Nkwartanang:** This is my 5th year of work.

**How long have you been working on child maintenance:** From the word go, 11 years. All my work I've been engaging child maintenance cases.

**Interviewer:** Thank you. Alright, so would I like us to get right into the interview. Can you describe your experience in using the case management SOP, the current SOP?

**Interviewee:** Oh, using it, is it using it for child maintenance cases?

**Interviewer:** Yes, using it for child maintenance and in general.

**Interviewee:** In general, when we talk about the child protection case management form, it's more concentrated on missing children and that of residential children, children at the residential homes. It's that those ones, you get a lot of information to work on it for the kids but when it's for child non-maintenance cases, like what we, the case arbitration, we do, it has a very little information. I think during their time of doing, bringing out this whole SOP, I think the focus was on children missing and then and those in residential, because most of the questions asked is based on them and not necessarily on child non-maintenance cases.

**Interviewer:** So would you say it's not a good experience when you're working on child maintenance using the SOP?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, you might either you, with us, with our office here, we have created our own form, that's the initial intake like information to kids. So it’s more or less like we get those because we realize that the child non -maintenance, the child in protection case management from having very little, it demands very little from cases of child non -maintenance. So we created our own, La -Nkwartanang created their own and that's what we use. When we are done with that, we still use, we've selected some pages of the child protection case management form and we added to what we have. Yeah, so that's how

**Interviewer:** So is it like directly in line with the SOP?

**Interviewee:** It is in line but we wouldn't get everything. The SOP, if it is for child non-maintenance, it's very scanty but if it is for missing children, as I said earlier and part of residential home for children, that one is perfect. We get a lot, a lot to it.

**Interviewer:** So prior to the SOP coming, what was being done, how were you recording child maintenance cases before the SOP was brought?

**Interviewee:** Okay so we were as I said earlier, we had our own way like we have an official sheet where we have the reporting date and hearing date and all that, complainants name, respondents name and then the private data. That's why I said La-Nkwartanang recently updated, we updated it so we had our own form and our own way we're doing it until we were, until 2020/2021 when we were asked to be using the child protection case management form to, I mean record that cases and before it goes on to SWIMS.

**Interviewer:** Comparing them to which would you prefer? I'm not talking about this new one that La-Nkwartanang has brought but looking at how you used to do it before where it was your own one and everyone got different information and the SOP, which one do you?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, so if it's about the child maintenance, we would, we, well, I wouldn't say we would prefer our old style because this is also more formal. It's universally used by all social workers, so I think if it can be improved rather for us to use this, it's better. If not, you might get to an MMDA and their style of the bio data will be different from back. Since we're all social workers, we should have a standard. So in that aspect, I feel if, we would prefer the recent one, the SOP that is being used, if it can be more concentrated on the cases we handle that’s the child non-maintenance cases.

**Interviewer:** Talking about how it can be different from one MMDA to another, how like can you talk about that?

**Interviewee:** Because every MMDA is unique. I ever worked at Dodowa for six years, before coming to work at La-Nkwartanang for five years and the way we do it there, that's not the same way we do. You know, we all have a style of work, that's why in an institution there should be a standard. It's different in the sense that someone might have gone to the University of Ghana, to read social work, some might also have gone to the School of Social Work. Me, I went to the School of Social Work at Kaajaano, we might all have different ideas. You know, everybody's own has been incorporated to make it work, so maybe my officer that I worked under at Dodowa, she was in the service for a very long time and they have their style of doing it. As to now, that things have advanced that we are trying to modernize it, so that brings out the difference. If there is a standard like the child protection, anywhere you get that’s what you’ll use, so you can say, this is my style that you’re bringing. Normally when you are working under an officer, you have to really take to her instruction or orders.

**Interviewer:** So your final words on your experience working with the SOP.

**Interviewee:** My final words, well, my experience, as I said, there were some challenges we were facing. Like, there were some of the information we would have loved it to be in, but it's not there. So those were the experiences we were getting, but in all, I think it's better. So my experience with it was good, at least the SOP, well, it has come to, I mean, it's an opener. Things that we weren't even thinking of has being incorporated in the SOP, which we think there should be more, if it is for child non-maintenance cases.

**Interviewer:** Thank you so much for that. Now, I want to know this. What do you think about the need to create a checklist that is dedicated to assessing child maintenance cases, what do you think about this?

**Interviewee:** I think it's good, it's perfect. If there is a checklist, maybe even a new employer is into the service, you wouldn't do your own thing, but you base on the checklists. You know that when you talk about the checklists, the name should come, blah, blah, blah, so it should be a guide. So I think the checklists will really shape us in handling cases of child non-maintenance.

**Interviewer:** Now let's talk about the checklist. What would you want to be there, what is not in the current SOP that you want to be on the checklist and what other things would you suggest to be on the checklist?

**Interviewee:** So, let me take a look at the Checklist please. Like, please can you ask your question again.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so what I asked was that, the checklist, what do you think should be added to the checklist, what things do you think are not on the SOP that should be part of the checklist?

**Interviewer:** Okay, so, well, the checklist will definitely have the name of the child, the date of birth, maybe the age of the child. Maybe like, I think with the, okay, so, yes, address is also here, just like how it would be in, just trying to scan through. So, there can be occupation of the parents of the child. I think which is not, it is not in there, occupation should be considered in a checklist for the parents, their occupation. Then maybe the number of children that the parents are having, maybe they might have children before they got married, individual, they might have a child before they go to marriage. And then also, I think, both of them to their religion too can come.

I think there is a religion aspect for the child. When you're taking the child information with the child protection given, there is a religion, but that of the parents too, there's no religion. So their religion, as to whether they are Muslims, as to whether they are Christians and then the marital status should also be in the checklist. Are they married? Are they cohabiting? Married, is it ordinance or customary marriage? Those things should also be part of the checklist.

Okay, then as to the relationship, maybe the child might call the woman, her mother, maybe that's not the biological mother. So relationship to child, is that the step-mom, is that the mom, maybe it's a guardian that is taking care of the child. Surely it should come and maybe if their card, the national card, the Ghana card, yes, for identification's sake. So if they can get their Ghana card, it will also help.

**Interviewer:** Please I want you to help me with the reason why you think that parents' occupation and their religion, why is important so for it?

**Interviewee:** You know, with occupation, the law, children's act, the new one, the 2016 Act 936, also stated emphatically that in determining who, I mean, in determining the payment of maintenance to the child, we should look at the income of the individual. So it may be that the mother might earn more than the father. So if the mother is earning more than the father, it means the father should pay less and the mother should pay more and it might also be that the father earns more than the mother. So the income, that one is very, very necessary. For all you know, maybe with the occupation, as you’re asking the income, maybe the father might not be working or the mother might not be working. So as a social worker or an institution where we are into NGOs, we might find maybe an organization, a Non- Governmental Organization, who is into training so that the mother or father, who is unemployed might be skilled, provide a skilled training for that individual, for her or him to be able to, I mean, be capable in taking care of his or her child. Because even if we should look for money or give her food, we can’t be doing it all the time, but when we empower that individual, it goes a long way to help him or her and the family.

**Interviewer:** What's about the religion, why is it so important for it to be on the checklist? **Interviewee:** Religion can create issues in the home, especially with Islam and the Christianity. Maybe me, I'm a Muslim, I'm the mother, and I'm a Muslim. I want my child to be with me in terms of religion and he might also take up to the father that he wants to be that of a Christian and so if I have the chunk of the income to support him, I won't do it because he's not going by my word. He's trying to follow his father, and he's dad has nothing. So with religion, if you are not going my way, then you should go to your dad. So if you are worshiping with your dad, then should be capable in helping you to grow and if they are not in that position, then it's me, I have the money and I want you to go by what I tell you. So I'm a Muslim, I want you to also be an Islam and you’re not ready to be an Islam, so then it will create an issue. So religion is important.

**Interviewer:** So, basically you explain that it's important to know the parents' occupation, to know even what to expect from each parent and if any parent needs assistance.

**Interviewee:** Yes, skills training can be provided by contacting Non-Governmental Organisations.

**Interviewer:** Okay, I also want to know what are some of the key issues you consider when you are assessing a child maintenance case?

**Interviewee:** Key issues. One, assessing a child maintenance case. We'll consider their occupation one. Consider their health in terms of whether they are fit in non-maintenance cases. So, if the father is not healthy, maybe the father might be an aged person, he or she might not be in the position to pay what you are telling him or her to pay. He is old and has a child, maybe just out of his old age. He might have gotten a side check and has impregnated that person and then he is not working yet you have given him an amount to pay. You know he can't pay so you will consider that. So, the occupation as I said earlier and then that of the health of the person and then also consider, is that client the biological child of the person? Because if the individual doubts the paternity of the child, he will not pay maintenance. He will be doubtful or you have the woman might have ever threatened, If you’ve not taking care of the child for like two years and you are now coming to claim the child, the child is not yours. Even if you take care of it, I will not give the child to you.

So those are some of the things you consider. Is the child for the man? If it is for the man and you are holding him, you hold him well. You can even process the case to either court, FIDA or wherever that also really deliberate on such issues for them to handle it. But if it is not the father and you are saying you should maintain the child, it will be off. He wouldn't even do it, but that's the child and that's the father, biologically “is the child yours, Madam he is not my child, that's why I don't feel like taking care of the child. If a paternity test can be conducted for me to know the paternity of the child”. Yes, so we consider these things.

At times too. the woman might have done something that might influence the father not to take care of the child. If we might consider that fact, please maybe after listening to the case, she might have been doing something particular. Like a case we had yesterday, the man is unable to get sex from the woman, so that alone, he would not maintain the child. So, we consider all these things and where we think we can come in to talk to the woman, we have to talk to the woman and address those issues.

**Interviewer:** So are there also issues relating to the child himself or himself that you consider?

**Interviewee:** Yes, may be the child is disrespectful towards the dad. Maybe the child is showing some deviant, he's having some deviant behaviours towards the child. “The doesn't respect me, he doesn't even see me as his dad. So, we have to talk to the child as well. So, at the time the children, they will come and we will interview them, counsel them. There will be the need for some sessions of counseling why not they have to go through it and maybe apologize to their dad or whoever is taking care of them.

**Interviewer:** Those are some key issues. Okay. Now, how different would you want a child maintenance assessment checklist to be from the case management SOP? I think you've mentioned it by if you can reiterate, how different would you want it to be?

**Interviewee:** How different? The checklist.

**Interviewer:** Maybe you don't want it to be this way, you believe it should be just anything everything

**Interviewee:** I feel the specific things that or the most important things, those essential questions should be in. Those things that will help us to arrive at a very good conclusion, a very good decision. I mean, it should be in.

**Interviewer:** For instance?

**Interviewee:** Oh, just like what I said, I mean, saying it like in terms of the checklist. Yeah, I talked about maybe the identity of the parent, the occupation should be in as to what they do, their religion should come in. What else?

**Interviewer:** What's about the formats, the length, the space?

**Interviewee:** The format, at least when the, you know, there are some questions that when you ask, there should be enough space for the officer to be able to

**Interviewer:** Can we be specific, for instance

**Interviewee:** With this, yes, we might, yes, there are some, like, maybe, when you take the child protection case management forms, page two, protection concerns, you know, provide additional details on the reason for referring the case. You see that the space there is not that much. Concerns for referring the case, maybe you might have gotten three concerns, that's why you are basing on that to refer the case. Maybe let's take a defilement case, the child has been defiled and the child has been taken to the police station, brought to our office here. We want to refer the child, we want to refer the case, so we are referring the case to court and we are referring the case in terms of the child for placement at the residential home. So maybe we have to talk a bit about the case, that's the reason why we are referring and it might not be one, it might not be two. So if it has a very, the gap is not that big for us to write. It means some of the things we might skip some and we need to really come out and write everything because you will not always be there. Officers can also come and take over whatever you’re are doing for him or her to understand it better to act on it. So I think an example is what I'm giving, so at least if they ask, there might be questions that will be asked that you should know that with those questions, at least the space should be a bit lengthy and a longer space will help us too.

**Interviewer:** So usually what do you do for instance if this space is short, usually what do you do?

**Interviewee:** We might attach A4 sheets, we might attach an A4 sheet and write it and add up, yes, that's what we do.

**Interviewer:** I think that’s in order. I get that. I want to know your challenges in using the case management SOP.

**Interviewee:** I don't really have a challenge. I think the only challenge is what I just talked about. The spaces are not that big, if they can create a bigger space for us to use when I'm filling the form.

**Interviewer:** What do you consider about the length or the bulkiness of it, is it too bulky or is it not even bulky enough?

**Interviewee:** It’s bulky, but every information asked here is very important, because when you're talking about a child that is missing, a child placed with a residential home, it's a continuous something. So, you will definitely be writing and there are a lot of information that you need to provide, that the child or the family need to provide, or yourself as a social worker need to fish out. So, with the bulkiness, I think that's, there’re a lot to write.

**Interviewer:** Okay, would you say the SOP encourages continuity, like even if you're not there, will someone be able to continue the case for you?

**Interviewee:** Yes, someone, the social workers, I think we don't work at a place for a very long time. So normally what happens is, as I'm here I've been posted out. Yeah, so when using the SOP, I should use it in a way that, though the next person, he’ll be able to continue from where I left. He should think of any point in your shoe. It's good for reference, it's very good.

**Interviewer:** So the information that you want to be added, you've mentioned occupation of the

**Interviewee:** Yeah, occupation of the parent is very, very necessary and I said their religion should also come. There should be a form of identification and relationship to the child. Is the person that the child is staying with the biological father, a step mom, a guardian, or a caregiver?

At least we should know all this … (**25:57)** So that is how it's supposed to be.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so if you are to draw a checklist by yourself or maybe using the one that we use now, can you talk a bit more about that one?

**Interviewee:** If I'm to draw a checklist?

**Interviewer:** Yes, the one you have here, can you talk a bit more about that one?

**Interviewee:** Okay, so the one we have here, we have the name of the child, age of the child, the name of the school of the child, type of ID card.

**Interviewer:** Is it the parents?

**Interviewee:** That's the child but the parent too is here, I’ll talk about it. In terms of taking information about the child, so the name of the child, the gender, age, date of birth, type of ID card, maybe the health insurance card of the child, name of school, and then the class of the child and then the disability. If the child has a disability, should be stated and then we come to the complainants, which can either be the mother or the father. So name, gender, age, date of birth, address, landmark. So, the landmark should be part of your own because with the residents, you should know the residents.

Oh I'm at Botwe, so can you give us a landmark to your house? So it should come and then their religion, nationality, the home town. So the home town too can be added to that of the checklist to know where their tribe is or something. Their marital status as I said, the number of children the individual was having, I think I said that. Then their telephone numbers should also be part, so with checklists for the children, their telephone number should come and then their type of disability should be part of the checklists for the children. If the child might even have a disability, the mother or the father might also have a disability. So these are what we normally do and then the caregiver, are you the one that the child is staying with? Yes, maybe. No, the child is staying with the respondents and then the type, the ID type, maybe you are using the Ghana card, voter ID card, your passport or license, any form of identity and then Ghana Health Insurance, maybe the parents have and then the child has a health insurance card, that should be because their health is also very important, so it's can be added. So, these are some of the things we have designed here.

**Interviewer:** And looking at yours there's no space for like an essay to describe the case.

**Interviewee:** The case we have. We have a place where you write about the complainant statement, it's behind. So the complainant statement, that's the complainant, the one making the report, like coming to make the report, his or her statement will be taken. So complainant statement, then the action that you took, so what action?

So. you call the client or you gave an invitation letter to issue, I mean to be issued to the client or him or her to come for an arbitration.

**Interviewer:** But I wanted to ask, do you also take information about the other parent? **Interviewee:** So both, so complainants and respondents. So you when the individual, the complainants come he or she will provide us with the respondents information. If she is unable to get all on the day of arbitration, we would talk to the respondents and ask of the things that we couldn’t get when the complainants came. In terms of his or her information, then we put it down.

**Interviewer:** Okay, then yours is not so different from the SOP except that you have the freedom to also ask other

**Interviewee:** Yes, some of the things, that's what I said that, so we were limited with the SOP so we had the opportunity to add some of the things. Because at times you will handle a case and you’ll need an information and we are unable to get it, so as and we were handling cases, that where we were able to get more information to add.

**Interviewer:** Okay, Thank you. Do you have any final words on co -producing this checklist?

**Interviewee:** Oh yeah, what I would say is the checklist for the children would help. It would help in the way that we wouldn't be doing it differently. It would be a standard form that we would all use and it would be a guide in handling cases of children so that’s my final word

**Interviewer:** Thank you so much. Please enjoy the rest of your day.

**Interviewee:** Same as well.