**SW3**

**Interviewer:** Okay, so good afternoon, I’m happy to be in the Ashanti region to conduct this project. It's also research and the title of the research is for co-producing a child maintenance assessment checklist for the Department of social welfare. This research project is being led by Dr Ebenezer Cudjoe, who is a lecturer in the department of psychosocial and psychoanalytic studies at the University of Essex in the UK, but it's in partnership with the Department of Social Welfare which is under the office of head of Local Government service. Yes, so before we start it's important for you to understand that it is just research and at any point in time, any of the of the questions if you’re are not comfortable or you don't feel like answering you can let us know or you can even stop but basically, we just want to get your understanding in terms of using the case management forms in the area of child maintenance. There is the need or it’s just co-producing a child maintenance checklist for officers to use so you people are the best people because you the people using the case management standard operating procedure. It will take maximum 50 minutes.

**Demographic Information**

**Name:** SW3

**Gender:** Female

**Age:** 35 years

**Educational background:** A degree holder.

**Position:** Assistant Social Development Officer

**Duration of working in the department of social welfare and community development office:** 4 years

**Duration of working on child maintenance cases:** 4 years

**Interviewer:** Okay so on the issue of child maintenance cases how long have you been working on?

**Interviewee:** For the past 4 years. With this work normally most of the cases are maintenance cases.

**Interviewer:** Okay so you’ve been working for the past 4 years?

**Interviewee:** Yes please.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so I would want to ask the first question is for you to describe your experience in using the case management standard operating procedure, this case management standard operating procedure

**Interviewee:** So far it has really helped the department to know more details about the clients. For example, it goes far to ask of the clients age and even where the client is staying, things that are closer the landmark to where the client is staying, so that in case of anything, we’ll be able to trace where the client is. Initially when you want to refer a case, you have to write a whole lot of pages, especially when you want to refer to other department like DOVSSU, but here is the case we have a form here, we just fill. It's specific, we just fill and then we give it to the client, the client will go and give it to for example if it’s DOVSSU, the client will go and after that there’s a feedback form that the DOVSSU people will fill and give it to the client and all the information, whatever that went on at DOVSSU, they’ll bring it and we’ll handle it and also witnesses. When we talk of social inquiry report, in fact we’re writing a lot but with this form, once you start with the identification details, whatever that you write, sometimes it even appears at the social enquiry report, the dates, the age of the person and other personal information do go there. So all that you need is to get some few things that you observe when we went to the field to pick the enquiry report. So I think it’s really helping just that sometimes it’s time wasting for the clients, not for us but for the clients because we have to go a bit personal and before then you just ask of the telephone number, where the person is staying, if there’s a child involved, the name of the child.

**Interviewer:** So if you say a bit personal, personal like how?

**Interviewee:** Personal like your age, the age of that boyfriend or husband,it can be divorced husband. Sometimes you know, in our society here, when we marry or we’re even going into relationships, sometimes they only know the nicknames of the man, they don’t know the full names. Sometimes you ask them what is the name of your boyfriend or your separated spouse. They say I only know Kofi Papa, sometime they don’t even know the family members of this suppose respondents of the case. So, I think it’s really helping.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so you are saying personal information like nicknames and age of your clients, these standard operating procedure on case management even probes to ask all these details.

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so if I want to recap what you have said, you’re saying that per your experience in using the case management standard operating procedure, you have been able to gather additional information like the age, their, address, their Landmark. So these additional details to you is really helping and then you say now you're also able to have a template that you are able to use to refer unlike at first you said your referral, you were writing so much pages now there’s a template that is easier for you to go straight to the point so you’re also able to refer your cases. You’re even saying that, your referral comes with a referral response like a feedback so whoever you’re referring to also gives you a response

**Interviewee:** Yes

**Interviewer:** Okay, then you also mentioned the social enquiry report that, with the help of this document now there's a template on how you can write the social enquiry report and you said it even fix information from your individual details like the you registering them and it fit in So the only thing you add is your recommendation.

**Interviewee:** Yes

**Interviewer:** So far any other experience in using?

**Interviewee:** So far, apart from as I said earlier on, being tedious for the clients is the best for us, the department.

**Interviewer:** So it been tedious too, you’re saying it’s still the best case management SOP for the department?

**Interviewee:** Yes

**Interviewer:** Okay, so If you don't have any other, we can move on.

**Interviewee:** Yes please.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so the next question, would want to find out, what do you think about the need to create a checklist dedicated solely to assessing child maintenance cases. So, what do you think about the need to create a checklist dedicated solely to assessing child maintenance cases?

So, I'm sure you handle a number of cases, some of them includes child maintenance and other cases but I just want you to zone your mind solely to child maintenance cases. What do you think about the need to create a checklist dedicated to child maintenance cases?

**Interviewee:** There’s the need for us to have checklist specifically for child maintenance because the one we are having is too generic, too open to other information so when we have a checklist, it can give us more details about the child whereabout, whether the child is even staying with the mother, the school that the child is attending, and then we can trace, we can do visitation and other things. So, I think we need a specific checklist for child maintenance since this one is too open.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so what else, you’ve mentioned that the one you’re using is too generic to other protection concerns like what or to other issues. So, you think it’s generic in what way to other protection or other child protection issues.

**Interviewee:** For like paternity, child custody, family welfare and other things but normally this our district we get more of child maintenance case. So, for example, there's a checklist that ask of, is the child going to stay with the parent or is going to be with any orphanage home and if yes, what are the care arrangements that is going on.

But some of the maintenance case that we get is not more or less like care arrangements aspects, normally it’s the man maintaining the woman. Sometimes some of these women, they will come and they’re even pregnancy and we don't know the name of the child yet, so

**Interviewer:** Yes, please carry on. So, you mentioned that in the event that some cases is about child maintenance, but the child has yet not being born, the woman is pregnant but yet the one that impregnated the woman still needs to further. So what’s next?

**Interviewee:** There should be a column on the checklist that should give us a space to write that the child is not yet born and there should be a maintenance fee that the man should give to the woman so as the woman would be comfortable.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so if I understand you clearly, you are saying there's a need for a checklist solely on assessing child maintenance cases because the case management standard operating procedure you have specifically the form is to generic to other child protection issues and so you are not able to gather information on.

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So, in this case, I think it will be a follow-up question which I would ask you key issues you need to consider in a child maintenance checklist, but I'm even surprised so yes of course child maintenance cases, you are supposed to document the names of the children, so in your case sometimes you even get cases that these children are not yet born. So even in the checklist then it means that should be considered. It's very refreshing to note. But what else do you think is the need for us to create a checklist specifically, do have any other, additional reason why you want us to create a checklist specifically for a child maintenance case?

**Interviewee:** Okay as I said earlier most of the child maintenance cases that come here is as a result of separation. So, for example if you allow the child to be with the mother for the time being, there have to be, you know, normally the child cannot be with the mother throughout till the child is 18years sometime we grant, not sometimes it’s a lot that we have to grant access for the father as the child is with the mum, but it gets to sometime the dad too wants to have custody of the child. So, if you have a space on the checklist that states specific age that the child can also be with the father it will be okay for us to know so that when it gets to that period, we’d be able to arrange and normally when the child is, we have a problem when the child is a girl normally, we don’t want to give custody to the man because of sexual, defilement cases that we’ve been having in the days. So at least if I can have a space on the checklist that can give us some clue about how to handle such cases. If it’s a boy and we’re giving custody to the dad it’s very easy but when we have this checklist and then we have this guidelines there, it will help us the department so that we know how to handle such cases.

**Interviewer:** Thank you and I think earlier on too you mentioned the real reason as that the case management standard operating procedure, in terms of the individual details, you getting confused as to whether you are, the care arrangement, writing whether they’re living with, you mentioned something I know whether you can clarify it for me?

**Interviewee:** Yes. I said normally when they come, they’re living with one person either the mom or the dad most of the maintenance cases that we get but this operation gives us more details of care arrangement like right now where will the child be, should the child be with a different home, should it be with, sometimes there’s a space that even want the child to stay with an officer

**Interviewer:** So, you’re trying to say that, the generalised case management standard operating procedure even asks question that to you is not relevant to the child maintenance cases especially, because child will already be living with one of the parent but yet it’s asking you questions on thecare arrangement, who the child should be living with?

**Interviewee:** Yes

**Interviewer:** Thank you. So, the third question is, I want to find out what are the key issues you consider, you the caseworker you consider here when assessing a child maintenance case, what are some of the key issues? Okay. So, this time around just the key issues you consider when addressing child maintenance case, so please let’s go.

**Interviewee:** Okay, normally the complainants, I get the details of her, if it’s the mother, the name and like when you’re identifying the individual details, the normal procedure that we use.

**Interviewee:** So, what are the normal procedure?

**Interviewee:** The name of the complainant, the age, the landmark where he or she is staying

**Interviewer:** So, her address and her landmark, again?

**Interviewee:** And then the name of the child because normally most of the maintenance cases, if only the woman is not pregnant, if the woman is having the child with then I ask of the name of the child and normally this question I ask, the respondent that you’re coming to report, did he accept the pregnancy, were there any naming ceremony not necessarily a festival but did the man give a name to the child, I normally ask that question and the school that the child is attending. Basically, normally it depends on the age of the child, if it’s a baby I’d not ask of the school because I know the baby will still be with the mom.

Then the health, in case the child is sick, who takes care of the child, does the father always bring money to support the healthcare of the child. Then depending on the answer that she’d give me about the naming of the child, the I’d continue to ask how far. Sometimes they can tell you, when I gave birth, he was even doubting whether the child is for him. So, when the respondents comes or the day that I’d schedule them, normally some of the questions I also ask the respondents, sometimes I don’t even ask he’ll be like madam I’ve been taking care of this child bit I have some doubts, I want us to do a DNA, I want to know the paternity. Then if so quickly, we’ll arrange for a paternity test based on that.

**Interviewer:** So how do you arrange for the paternity test, is it through you or through the court?

**Interviewee:** When there’s issue of paternity, what we do is that we refer the case to the court and then they take it from there. Normally, with the respondent and the complainant, we probe further to find out the work that they’re doing. Sometimes I don’t know, I have a problem when it comes to maintenance, it’s more or less like we’re attacking the men too much. Normally, I ask, you the woman, what work are you doing? You need to work to support the man. It shouldn’t be the man alone who have to go get work and then always take care of the child. Normally, I ask of the work of the woman who is normally the complainant and then the work of the man. Sometimes the man always complains that the work is not good, that’s why the money that he’s supposed to be paying the child is normally small. Maintenance sometimes is not like nil, they’re maintaining them, but the money is small, so that’s why I always advise the woman to also find something to do to support.

**Interviewer:** Okay, So has always your maintenance been money money or some people attach provisions or food crops?

**Interviewee:** We do advise the men to especially when it’s getting to Christmas and normally when there’s this maintenance, the child is staying with their mum and the man have to get access to the child so when it comes around holidays/weekends, the man should buy provisions and other things and give it to the woman to also support.

**Interviewer:** So what are other things you think are there for us to, what are some of the things you want to be considered when we are managing aside what you have mentioned for now that we need take the complainants details, we need to take that of the respondents, the father as well. For example, if it is the other party, their details of what occupation of both mother and father, the children’s details, the school they’re attending and all of that and then you also raised the point that you said you want to ask whether the man has been able to name the child. So has there been a naming ceremony?

**Interviewee:** Yes

**Interviewer:** Okay, so do you also ask about whether they are married or not?

**Interviewee:** Yes, we ask, normally we ask and it will be like the woman, if both are not married then we try, not doing a marriage ceremony, but what we do is, we advise them if they love each other, for the sake of the child they should come together and then take care of the child. If one is married then we leave it how it is and ask the man to maintain the child.

**Interviewer:** So, it means you even go further, trying to reunite or let people get married

**Interviewee:** Yes, and it works. We will not be part of the marriage ceremony but we advise. It’s just advise we give to the person for the sake of the child. Sometimes they are very young, vibrant and since we don’t have anybody, why not, for the sake of the child, if you come together and take care of them.

**Interviewer:** Okay, what other issue do you consider? So you are saying you consider the marital status and if they’re all single but not married, you advise for them to even get married. Okay what other issue do you consider?

**Interviewee:** Okay where the child is staying, we look at the safety aspect of the child. Normally that’s what they do say. The permits us that the child should be with the mum especially when she’s young but sometimes when you consider where the woman is staying if the safety, the threat there, is unbearable, I think, we advise that she should be with the father because you can go to a place or better still, the man or the respondent should get a place for them, a secure place for them.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so you are saying you need, you consider where the child is living. So if the child is living with the mother but the situation, the environment that they are living in is not in the best position, you advise that the father should get a place. What other thing do you also consider?

**Interviewee:** Okay, normally what happen is that, when the complainant come, we serve him or her letter to give to the respondents and then when they come around and they start talking about their issues we write everything down and whatever decision that we take we normally take interest of the child.

**Interviewer:** The best interest of the child. What does it mean?

**Interviewee:** We don’t look at the misunderstanding of the parent but we focus on what will help the child and his growth development. So that he will come up, grow up to be a good person in the society. That is what we consider and not necessary the misunderstanding between the parents.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so any other thing you consider in managing the cases?

**Interviewee:** Okay so normally, when we conclude on the maintenance fee, we write it down and we make sure that whatever that they said they will comply with it and then they sign against their name.

**Interviewer:** Any other?

**Interviewee:** Okay normally we don’t decide for them. We ask of the strength of the respondent especially, because he’d be maintaining the child and the mother. So, we ask of the work, the type of work that he’s doing. If he accepts a specific amount and we think he can take care of the child, we agree and then we read the undertakings to them, whatever that they agree on, they write and then we read to them.

**Interviewer:** So what is an undertaking?

**Interviewee:** It’s more or less like a commitment that both parties have agreed in order to help with the growth and development of the child. So normally the father will accept that, I’ll pay the school fees and any health issues I will do it, not support, I’ll do it and I’ll find a school for the child, pay the school fees, make sure that other important things the child needs for growth and development, he would provide. Then the mum aspect, she will take care of the domestic things that will help the child in his growth and development

**Interviewer:** Domestic like what?

**Interviewee:** Like washing of the cloth, bathing the child, brushing the teeth because normally the children, they cannot do this by themselves and then cooking food for them some of those domestic things and when they accept and we read it to them, they sign against whatever that they’ve committed themselves to but normally we don’t do this with just the two. Sometimes we want witnesses so we invite some of the family members to come around and witness that their children or their relative have committed themselves with this undertaking.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so there’s also a portion that you consider extended families also coming on board to serve as witnesses. Okay any other or we should move on.

**Interviewee:** Yes. Move on.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So, the fourth question is asking, how different would you want a child maintenance assessment checklist to be from the case management standard operating procedure. So now you remember we’ve mentioned the issues, now we are asking you, looking at this your child protection case management forms or standard operating procedure you have in your office how different would you want the child maintenance assessment form to be from this one that I'm seeing in your office?

**Interviewer:** Okay as usual we have the details of the respondents, details of the complainants but we don’t have the details of the third, party which I think should be considered.

**Interviewer:** So you said for third party you don’t have?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So third party like who?

**Interviewer:** Okay, you know normally the child most of the time with the caregivers, for example teachers, if the child is a school going child, they spend most of the time with the teachers and for us to be able to know how the child is faring, there should be a column for the caregivers.

**Interviewer:** So, caregivers is only teachers or anybody caring for the child

**Interviewer:** No not only teachers anybody caring. If the child is not a school going age child maybe because of the nature of the work of the parents sometimes they leave the child with the auntie, the nanny, whoever, any relative can be the caregiver. So we need a space or a column for such people too so that we’ll be able to monitor the progress of the child.

The pregnancy you know, when there is maintenance, it’s all about thr child that is why it’s called child maintenance.

**Interviewer:** So, ifI get what you're saying, you're saying that aside the details of the respondents and complainants, you also want us to gather what details on what?

**Interviewee:** Third parties like teachers, nannies, relatives, non -relatives and there be a column that. You know that is why it’s called child maintenance but when the child is not born, how do we call it? That is a question, so there should be a column that when the woman is still pregnant, we should be able to fill them. The man is supposed to maintain the woman throughout the pregnancy. Perhaps if the woman give birth and the man insists that’s not the child, then you can refer to court and then continue with their paternity case but as far as the woman will come and complain of maintenance and she’s still pregnant, it’s the duty of the man to take care of her. So, there should be a column for that.

**Interviewer:** Thank you. What else?

**Interviewee:** The column should be more, you know when you want to take the statement of the respondent and the complainant, they talk a lot, even though we summarise it but the columns that we have for the checklist for this one that we’re already using, it’s very small. It doesn’t allow us to write much about the statement of both parties. So I wish if they'd do a checklist for us the column or the space should be wider.

**Interviewer:** Okay thank you what else? We want more or details

**Interviewee:** Okay, so don’t have a column or space that asks us whether the man has name the child. In out society we call it “Naming ceremony”, not any big festival but there should be a name that should be submitted to the family of the woman so that they use it to name the child. So the should be a space for us to indicate whether there has been such a ceremony for the child.

**Interviewer:**  Okay, what else?

**Interviewee:** There should also be a column for the undertaking. You know when the come after they talk, they have to commit themselves that ill be taking care of my child, I’ll pay this specific amount, the woman too will support in this way. So if we get a column or a space for that, for us to write on the checklist, I think it would be very good for the department.

**Interviewer:** Okay, any other, in terms of the man’s work what else should we look out for, woman do you have any additional details we should ask? How different should it be with the one we have?

**Interviewee:** Normally the form ask of the occupation of both which they write maybe I’m a farmer, a teacher, I’m this and that but the checklist of the child maintenance should give us another column that will allow us to know other side jobs that both parties do that fetch income for them in support of the well being of the child. So if you’re able to get apart from the occupation, then you write teacher whatever, if there should be another column that will be created to help us to know there are other side jobs that bring income to the family, we’d be glad.

**Interviewer:** Okay so what else?

**Interviewee:** The checklist should also give us a space that will allow us to know the number of dependents of both parties. You know normally child maintenance case when they come, it could be that the man is also married with another children maybe 4 or 5 children aside the one that they are having. The two children, let’s assume the two children that they’re having, that the woman want them to maintain so it should give us a column that will allow us to know the number of dependents of each party. Maybe the woman too have married and then having another children so even though there’s a column of occupation for us to know the other side jobs, if we’re able to know the dependent, then it will help the department to decide on the amount of money that the man should bring to maintain the child.

**Interviewer:**  So as you’re saying the man, is it always the men that maintain the children?

**Intervieweee:** Not necessarily, but most of the cases but the woman too should support. Yes It’s a must that they should support but most of the cases. I’m talking based on the cases that I do. Yes most of the cases the maintenance which is of the men.

**Interviewer:** Thank you very much. Do have any other thing you want to add?

**Interviewee:** There should a space on the checklist that state medical history of the child since birth till now that they’re reporting of the maintenance. For example if there’s any disability, it should be able to document them.

**Interviewer:** Okay so if I get you rightly, you said we should also take note of the dependents that both spouses have, both the mother and father

**Interviewee:** Yes I mentioned that and then the medical example disability

**Interviewer:** Okay the medical history of the children whether they have any form of disability

**Interviewee:** Yes

**Interviewer:** Any other or we can move on to the next?

**Interviewee:** We can move on to the next.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So the next question we want to find out what are the challenges you encounter in using the cases management standard operating procedure? The forms, share all your challenges if any with us and as you share, you can also come up with solutions but basically we just want to take your challenges.

**Interviewee:** Some of the challenges that we do face is that we waste the clients time. Eventhough it’s good for us, it enable us to know more information about the client but it more or less time consuming. Details more personal information about the client, where do you stay, your age, the age of the respondents and the landmark some of them they don’t even know where they’re staying, they’ve not even studied that there’s a church there. So when you ask them about the landmark, they get confused and the age some can even tell you they were born during the cocoa season or they were born during Kwame Nkrumah there. So these are some of the challenges that we do face.

When the internet is not stable, it means you can’t use it. You have to wait for another day depending when there’s lights out

**Interviewer:** So, in this case we are talking about lights before using case management, so I guess you are referring to the social welfare information management system, the SWIMS but at least we have your paper one here so in documenting the case management Form itself. Any other? Aside it being, you think it’s waste of time. It’s not waste, it’s time consuming, the word is time consuming since you ask or probe too much, asking details concerning your clients. What of you yourself is it time consuming as a case worker or social worker?

**Interviewee:** Yes, because you need to fill it step by step, you need to fill the individual details, then you move to this, you move to that

**Interviewer:** Which one is the this?

**Interviewee:**

**Interviewer:** So you mean you have the what, please come again

**Interviewee:** We have the referral part, we have the initial explaining, we have the concerns, we have the caregiving, care arrangements, we have the social enquiry, if any. So it’s time consuming

**Interviewer:** Okay. So those are the forms you feel they are time consuming in filling it. Any other challenge?

**Interviewee:** And also as I mentioned earlier, it is centred on child neglect, child abuse, child trafficking. Child maintenance is out but as we said we’ve brought up our points that needs to be considered when we’re preparing our child maintenance checklist. Im think they should consider more of the child maintenance cases in the checklist because most of the cases that we do get here is child maintenance.

**Interviewer:** Okay, then what else should we consider?

**Interviewee:**

**Interviewer:** Okay please any other challenge?

**Interviewee:** Okay, it’s too bulky, so we need it to be specific and when they’re preparing the next maintenance case checklist, it should be specific. Some of the things, I think it’s not necessary.

**Interviewer:** So what things are not necessary. So why is it not?

**Interviewee:** Okay for instance comprehensive assessment, I don’t see it being so important associated with child maintenance.

**Interviewer:** So do you have any other challenges or we should move?

**Interviewee:** We should move on.

**Interviewer:** So the last question what are the information you would want included in the checklist to assess child maintenance?

So the information you need to come up with the things, name, this that I know remember earlier on you were mentioning some of them so you'd have to give them. Finally, then again repeating, what are the information you would want included in the checklist to assess the child maintenance case?

**Interviewee:** Okay, with the checklist of the child maintenance case it would be very appropriate if they include details of the complainants, details of the respondents which comprises of the age, where the respondents or complainants are staying, that’s the landscape and those things and the marital status of both, whether they are married to different people or they’re still together and the medical history of the child is very important. Whether the child is having some disability then, naming ceremony. You know before you can name the child, there should be a ceremony, not necessarily any big thing but the man is supposed to give a name to the child that he has given birth to, but there’re some culture they don’t allow you to name the child if you’ve not performed the marriage ceremony. So sometimes some of the cases, what happens is one says, I’ll not take care of the child because, it’s the girl’s father that name the child, so I'm not going to take care of it. So it’s very important, there should be a column for us to know who the child was named after.

With the naming ceremony as I said we want to know who the child was named after, so it’s very important a column on the checklist is being provided.

**Interviewer:** Okay who the child was named after?

**Interviewer:** Yes it’s very important. Then the environment where the child is staying. When he’s staying with the mom which is the complainant, we have to take into measures the safety precaution at that place, whether it will help in the development of the child. The religion is very important so it should be part on the checklist for child maintenance. The number of dependents of both parties, that we should know if the woman is married with another man, the number of children that she’s having apart from the one that she’s having with the respondent it’s very necessary, vice-versa. So these are some of the things that I think they should be on the checklist for child maintenance.

**Interviewer:** Thank you so much for your time. We are about 42 minutes gone. Wow, and we appreciate you. Thank you.