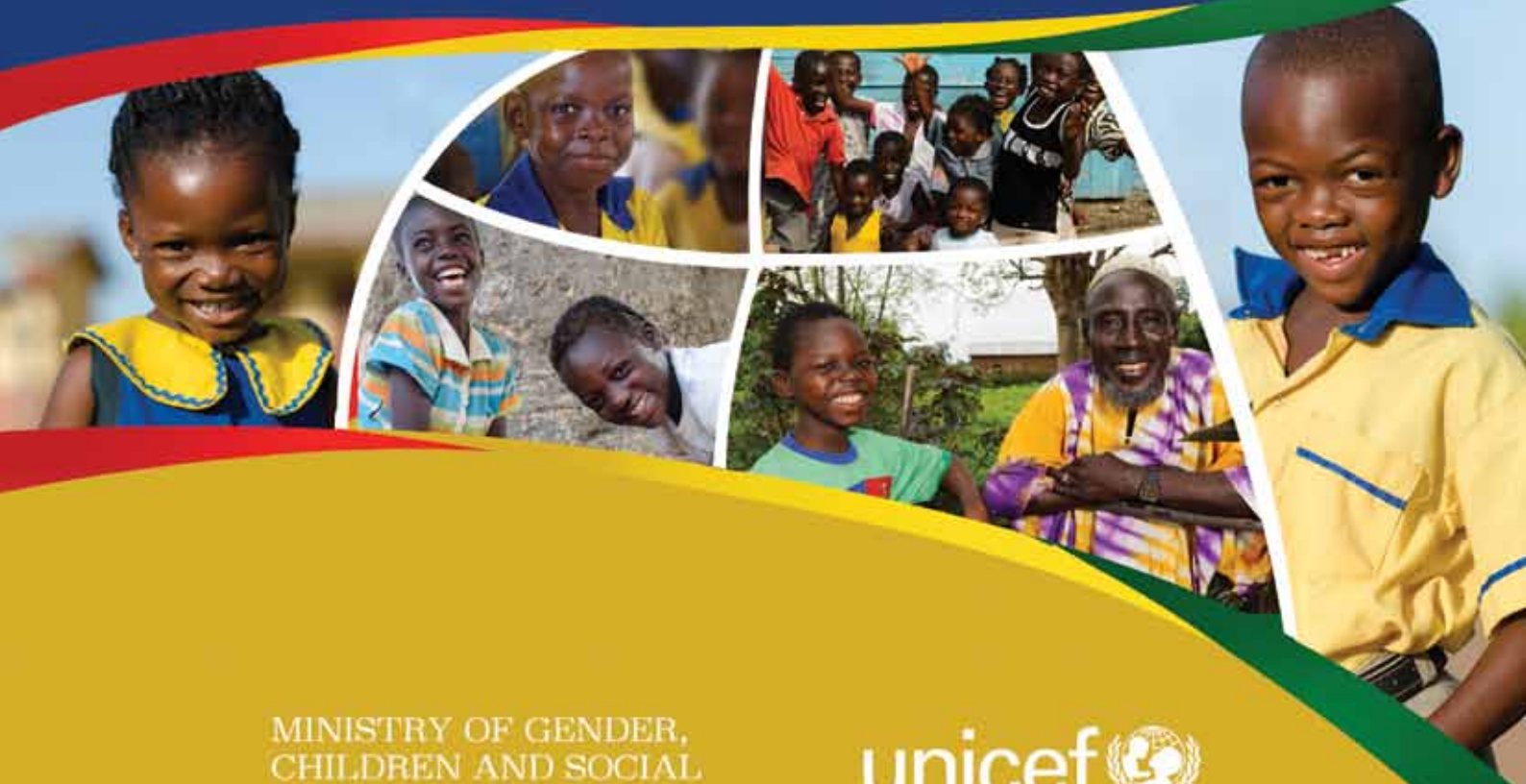




REPUBLIC OF GHANA

CHILD AND FAMILY WELFARE POLICY



MINISTRY OF GENDER,
CHILDREN AND SOCIAL
PROTECTION

unicef 

This Policy was developed by the Government of Ghana – Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, supported by UNICEF and other local and international organisations and civil society.

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Government of Ghana, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
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Child and Family Welfare Policy

FEBRUARY 2015

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Foreword

Ghana's Child Protection system was fashioned along Anglo-Saxon traditions and models. With time, the system has become uncoordinated and ineffective owing to its colonial features and approaches which are not well suited to current needs of Ghanaians. Every Child Protection system should reflect the different traditions, cultures, values and resources of beneficiaries if it is to work.

Opinions have been expressed by many Ghanaians across the length and breadth of this country to institute a Child Protection System that is Fit for Ghana. The drafting of the Child and Family Welfare Policy is in response to the justified calls made by all key stakeholders in the area of Child Protection. This Policy taps into the positive traditional values, principles and protective practices and mechanisms of an effective system that resonates with Ghanaians and service providers. Since 2010, key actors in the area of Child Protection have collaborated to work towards establishing and strengthening a Child Protection system in the country that sets standards for addressing issues in a holistic manner.

As we re-think of an appropriate system for children and families, there is the need to lean on positive community structures to initiate and sustain dynamic dialogue towards change and improvement of our beliefs, practices and outcomes for the welfare of children, families and communities.

The processes involved in developing this policy has been guided by a high-level Advisory Committee made up of stakeholders from Government, Non-Governmental Organizations, Development Partners, Civil Society Organizations, Religious Organizations, Traditional Leaders and Children. A Technical Committee was also formed to further provide quality assurance.

By the tireless efforts of all these actors, I am proud to say that we have a policy that bears the traits, values, aspirations, ideals and principles of Ghanaians. It is a great pleasure to present this policy to all stakeholders in the Child Protection arena as I call on all to renew our commitments towards the promotion of the welfare of children.



HON. NANA OYE LITHUR

MINISTER FOR GENDER, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Definitions and Concepts

Child: This Policy recognises a child as a person below the age of 18. In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the 1992 Fourth Republic Constitution of Ghana (article 28) and the Children’s Act 1998, (Act 560) (section 1). This policy also takes into account how a child is defined in the Ghanaian context in relation to the family and concept of childhood. Thus, a child is one who is still largely dependent on an adult for the necessities of life

Childhood: Childhood is a social construct. It is a period when a person is under the authority, control and care of some persons considered as adults in society. Childhood may include one or several of the following characteristics: the period before puberty rites or rites of passage; when a person is not married; a period in school, particularly if fees are being paid by an adult; a period of learning a trade; a period when decisions are made for a young person; a period when a young person is living under the same roof as their parents.

The characteristics cited are not exhaustive; they present some considerations related to the concept of childhood. These are not stand-alone characteristics but should be considered as a combination of two or more.

Child and Family Welfare System: Child and Family Welfare System comprise of laws and policies, programmes, services, practices and structures designed to promote the well-being of children by ensuring safety and protection from harm; achieving permanency and strengthening families to care for their children successfully. This Policy understands that a child is an integral part of the family, as such, a child’s welfare cannot be separated from that of the family.

This Policy is concerned with both the ‘formal’ component of Child and Family Welfare system (i.e. those governed by laws, policies and regulations and delivered by state institutions) and the ‘informal’ (i.e. those that are based on community and traditional processes and resources).

Child Protection: Child Protection seeks to guarantee the right of all children to a life free from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. The many actors engaged in child protection include children and youth, families, communities, government, civil society and private organisations.

Child Protection System Strengthening: System strengthening occurs when efforts are made to improve the functioning of all elements in a coordinated and systematic manner. Effective child protection depends on the following elements: (i) appropriate policies, legislation and regulations; (ii) well-defined structures and functions, and adequate capacities; (iii) supportive social norms; (iv) effective promotion, prevention and response actions; (v) high quality evidence and data for decision-making; and (vi) efficient fiscal management and sufficient resource allocation.

Community: Community is primarily a basic social structure that groups families and households in different contexts within urban or rural settings for their common interests.

Community structures: This Policy refers to family and social structures especially in rural settings that recognise traditional authorities such as family heads, chiefs, queen mothers, and elders.

Rural community structures may also include committees, teams and networks with interest in child protection.

In the urban settings, community structures include District Assemblies and other formal state institutions, to which children and families have recourse.

Definitions and Concepts (cont'd)

Family: Family is defined as a group of people related by blood, marriage, law (in the case of adoption), common identity as well as lineage and ethnic group.

- o **Nuclear family:** is typically defined as a family group that consist of only mother, father and children.
- o **Extended family:** is typically defined as a family that includes near relatives in addition to the nuclear family.

For the purpose of this Policy, the definition of family is guided by traditional and cultural norms which often go beyond the concept of nuclear family.

Harm: Harm is the result of the exploitation, violence, abuse and neglect of children and can take many forms, including impacts on children's physical, emotional and behavioural development, their general health, their family and social relationships, their self-esteem, their educational attainment and their aspirations.

Social Protection: Social protection is a national system of policies and programmes that aim to prevent, reduce and mitigate vulnerability and persistent poverty. Such a system is commonly made up of social transfers, social insurance, and programmes that promote access to social services. Investments in social protection globally have shown to have sustainable impacts on poverty reduction as poor people become productive. If implemented well, social protection also prevents and responds to protection risks faced by children and young people.

Welfare: The Policy defines welfare as guaranteeing the availability of the basic necessities of life as well as minimising the levels of violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. The welfare of a person is safeguarded when certain human and financial resources as well as psychological and material conditions to provide a reasonably comfortable, healthy, safe and secure living are assured.

Well-being: Well-being is a general term for the condition of an individual or group, for example, their social, economic, psychological, spiritual, mental or physical state. It relates to the state of being happy, healthy or prosperous.

Young People: Young people is defined as those as persons between the ages of 15 and 24.

Acronyms

CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CCPC	Community Child Protection Committee
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CHRAJ	Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRI	Care Reform Initiative
CRVS	Civil Registry and Vital Statistics
DCD	Department of Community Development
DOC	Department of Children
DOVVSU	Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
GES	Ghana Education Service
GHS	Ghana Cedis
GHS	Ghana Health Service
GLSS	Ghana Living Standard Survey
GoG	Government of Ghana
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organisation
LEAP	Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty
MDA	Ministries Departments, Agencies
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MMDA	Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoELR	Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations
MoFEP	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MoGCSP	Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection
MoH	Ministry of Health
MOWAC	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs
MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NDPF	National Development Policy Framework
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSC	National Steering Committee
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Executive Summary

Children in Ghana often live in closely-connected families where members of the extended family participate in their care and protection. However, child maltreatment is assuming worrying heights, according to reports. Corporal punishment, domestic violence, sexual abuse, sexual violence and exploitation are prevalent. Other challenges are children living and/or working on the streets, early marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting and the *trokosi* system of ritual enslavement persist in certain regions of the country.

To address these issues, a relatively comprehensive legal framework for child protection, guided by the Constitution and the Children's Act 1998 (Act 560) has been established. The policy framework is also characterised by a series of issue-specific national plans of actions. However the legal and policy frameworks are often disjointed and work in an uncoordinated manner. The child protection system in general is also reactive with few effective preventive measures. The system is characterised by weak information management systems and ineffective coordination between the key actors.

For children and families, the main entry points into the existing Child and Family Welfare System are the police and social welfare agencies; but these institutions are hampered by a general lack of financial and human resources to effectively deliver services. Community structures – mostly led by family heads, religious leaders, chiefs, queen-mothers and assembly members - often emphasise compensation, reconciliation and restoring harmony in the family and community over the needs of the child who has been harmed.

This Child and Family Welfare Policy therefore seeks to establish a well-structured and coordinated Child and Family Welfare system that promotes the wellbeing of children, prevents abuse and protect children from harm. The overall goal of the Policy is to help formulate child and family welfare programmes and activities to more effectively prevent and protect children from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The main objectives of the Policy are: i] to design child and family welfare programmes and activities to more effectively prevent and protect children from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation; ii] to ensure effective coordination of the child and family welfare system at all levels; iii] to empower children and families to better understand abusive situations and make choices to prevent and respond to situations of risk; iv] to build capacity of institutions and service providers to ensure quality of services for children and families in urban and rural areas; v] to reform existing laws and policies to conform to the Child and Family Welfare system; and vi] to ensure provision of adequate human, technical and financial resources required for the functioning of the Child and Family Welfare system at all levels

The Policy is guided by national and internationally-recognized principles, as well as values, beliefs and practices specific to Ghana, ensuring that the Child and Family Welfare System will be 'fit' for the context of Ghana. The Policy also prioritises three areas of concern, namely:

Child Protection issues stemming out of family-related challenges; Child maltreatment; and other protection issues concerning children, especially older children, that are not brought about by a third party but as a result of the child's risk-taking behaviour.

Executive Summary (cont'd)

To achieve the objectives of the Policy, ten (10) strategies have been identified as follows: i) strengthening community structures; ii) early intervention through social protection; iii) improved child and family welfare services; iv) provision of alternative care; v) improved coordination, and data and information management; vi) empowering children and young people to protect themselves from harm; vii) empowering families in their role as primary care-givers; viii) ensuring adequate resources and building capacity of social welfare services providers; ix) partnerships with civil society organizations; and x) legal reform.

The Policy provides guidance to the role of specialised services, especially the expectations on the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development at district level to more closely interact with families and communities and help facilitate solutions when problems arise with emphasis on promoting welfare and restoring the well-being of the child, the family and the community. It also gives greater flexibility and discretion to social workers at local level.

The Policy also stresses the importance of implementation, monitoring, evaluation, research and advocacy and highlights the need for improving the overall child protection information management system for better data and evidence of impact of the expected system reform.

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection will lead and coordinate implementation of the Policy while other key line ministries, departments and agencies have been identified to perform various roles and responsibilities as critical contributors to successfully reform the Child and Family Welfare system.

1.1 Country context

Ghanaian children grow up in closely connected extended family networks, with strong cultural traditions governing their birth, socialisation and upbringing. In many communities, particularly in rural areas, members of the wider extended family have an influential role and are expected to participate in the upbringing of children. Their involvement is seen as essential to ensure that children grow up into responsible and respectful individuals. Informal fostering, whereby a child is sent to live with another relative, typically an aunt or an uncle, is also common. According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (2011), an estimated 17 per cent of children are living with neither biological parent. Informal foster care has typically been used as a 'safety net' for children from poor families who live with and receive support from relatively wealthier family members as much as a protection mechanism for children at risk of deprivation or who have experienced maltreatment primarily within the home.

Although the extended family network remains intact in much of the country, poverty, rapid rural–urban migration patterns and family breakdown are resulting in the break-up of extended family support networks and undermining the commitment to care for children by lineage groups. Similarly, informal fostering takes on abusive dimensions when it means little more than food and shelter in exchange for labour, with no provision made for attending school. However informal, foster care continues to be the primary strategy used to ensure that care, support and protection for children remains fundamental to their socialisation and upbringing and should be recognised for the value it brings in the majority of cases.

Only a small number of children enter the formal care system. According to the Department of Social Welfare (DSW), a total of 4,457 children in 2012 lived in formal care, representing 0.0004 per cent of the child population. Nearly all of them (99 per cent) were placed in institutional care, despite efforts to deinstitutionalise children.

Whether within families, communities or in schools, cases of maltreatment are evident. Although the number of cases officially reported to the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service remains relatively small, surveys suggest that the actual prevalence of violence is significantly higher than formally reported. Corporal punishment is widely used in homes and schools throughout the country as a commonly accepted method of discipline. In 2009, 41 per cent of the children sampled had been caned or whipped at home, 83 per cent had been caned by a teacher and 34 per cent by a head teacher.

Physical and sexual abuse is of a particular concern; the number of cases officially reported to the DOVVSU of the Ghana Police Service increased from 1,128 in 2002 to more than 1,600 in 2009. Surveys, however, suggest that the actual prevalence of violence is significantly higher than formally reported. A 2009 study conducted in selected schools found that 14 per cent of school children surveyed had been sexually abused, with 53 per cent of sexual abuse occurring in school and 47 per cent happening at home.

Domestic violence appears to be pervasive, with 29.5 per cent of all cases reported to the DOVVSU in 2012 being wife battery/assault. Nearly 60 per cent of women surveyed across the country believed that their husband or partner is justified in beating or hitting them for at least one reason or the other.

It is estimated that there are approximately 33,000 children living and/or working on the streets. The majority are girls and they remain particularly vulnerable to sexual violence and sexual exploitation.

Introduction (cont'd)

The traditional practice of engaging children in work alongside their parents to teach them necessary skills has at times taken on exploitive dimensions. Preliminary findings from the Ghana Living Standard Survey (GLSS) in 2013 found that 23.4 per cent of children aged 5–14 years were engaged in some form of economic activity. Those children were mainly involved in the services industry, mining and quarrying, apprenticeships and household help.

Ghana has been identified as a “source, transit and destination” country for human trafficking. Children’s vulnerability to trafficking has arisen largely due to poverty and lack of opportunities in rural areas.

For the most part, children are trafficked from the poorer regions of the country to urban centres, forced into exploitive labour in fishing, agriculture, mining, portering, street vending and domestic service.

Although prohibited, early marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting and the *trokosi* system of ritual enslavement persist. Nationally, the incidence of female genital mutilation/cutting is relatively low, at 3.8 per cent; however, the incidence in the Upper East and Upper West regions is significantly higher than the rest of the country, at 27.8 per cent and 41.1 per cent, respectively. The *trokosi* system is practised, though less openly, in districts of the Volta region, with an estimated 2,500 girl victims. Regarding early marriage, the MICS (2011) estimated that 27 per cent of women aged 20–49 were first married before the age of 18.

Birth registration – an important pre-requisite for the protection of children both in terms of welfare services and in cases of justice – is still not reaching all children. Registration rates of children below the age of 5 has increased in recent years from 17 percent in 2002 to about 65 percent in 2013. The last few years, however, there has not been an increase in the coverage and there are pockets in the country where only about 25 percent of children are registered.

1.2 Legal and Policy framework

Ghana was the first country to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) and has signed or ratified most major international instruments relating to child protection. Ghana has also ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (2005).

The 1992 Fourth Republican Constitution establishes the rights of the child and provided the framework for the enactment of appropriate legislation to protect the rights of children

The Children’s Act, 1998 (Act 560) provides for the rights of the child and covers issues of parental duties and responsibilities, maintenance, adoption and fosterage; it protects children from exploitative labour and child marriage and stipulates responsibilities for care and protection of children. The Juvenile Justice Act 2003 (Act 653) also deals with the child in conflict with the law.

Other national laws on children include); Criminal and other Offences Act, 1960 (Act 29); Intestate Succession Act, 1985 (PNDCL111); the Human Trafficking Act, 2005 (Act 694); the Domestic Violence Act, 2007 (Act 732)

Child related policies and plans of action include the National Plan of Action (NPA) on Child Labour and the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 2009-2015; the National Plan of Action (NPA) on Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), 2010-2015; the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy, 2004; the National Domestic Violence Policy and the Plan of Action, Hazardous Child Labour Framework; Gender and Children’s Policy Standards have been developed for some child and family welfare services, such as residential homes for children. Regulations are underway for adoption and foster care.

Introduction (cont'd)

While the legal, policy and regulatory framework is comprehensive, there is a disconnect between law and practice, and between the laws and community approaches to dealing with child and family welfare issues.

There is no overarching, national policy for the delivery of comprehensive child and family welfare services. The policies that have been articulated are mainly issue-specific rather than providing an integrated approach aimed at strengthening core child and family welfare services across issues. As a result, the services tend to overlap and duplicate, both in terms of target group and types of initiatives.

Existing guidelines, protocols and procedures for social welfare officers and probation officers are not adequate to carry out their mandates and responsibilities.

1.3 Formal Child and Family Welfare Services

The Children's Act assigns responsibilities of care and protection of children to the District Assembly while investigations into contraventions of children's rights are assigned to Department of Social Welfare and Community Development.

The Districts are also expected to establish child panels to mediate matters on the rights of the child as mandated by the Children's Act

The approach to child and family welfare services is responsive and legalistic - often coming after a violation has occurred - with a focus on the rescue and removal of children. The focus has been on shelter-based rather than family-based solutions, despite efforts by the Care Reform Initiative (CRI) being implemented by the Department of Social Welfare to promote family-based alternative care.

Child and family welfare services are generally informed by a narrow interpretation of children's best interests, which tend to consider a child as an individual and distinct from the family. Although some counselling and parenting education is available, formal family strengthening strategies are limited.

Several social protection initiatives have been formulated with consideration of the challenges that children and families experience, such as the National Health Insurance Scheme, the capitation grant for public schools, free school uniforms, free bus rides for school children and the school-feeding programme. The Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme is the flagship among these initiatives.

Two of the main formal entry points for children and families to access child and family welfare services are the police, in particular DOVVSU, and social welfare officers. Protection cases that are dealt with by the police tend to be for children who have already experienced serious maltreatment (such as criminal forms of maltreatment). The focus of the police is primarily on investigating the perpetrator and support services for child victims are quite limited. In addition, NGOs/CSOs serve as entry points for the provision of child and family services. In some cases they are the first point of call for child protection incidents. In some stances, formal agencies rely on NGOs/CSOs for support services to victim of abuse.

The case load of social welfare officers is dominated by child custody and maintenance disputes, consuming most of their time (49 percent of the close to 10,000 cases dealt with in 2009 by the child rights promotion and protection programme of DSW related to child maintenance cases). The DOVVSU caseload is equally dominated by child maintenance cases (67 percent of all children's cases in 2009). Maintenance and custody disputes also constitute the bulk of children's

Introduction (cont'd)

cases referred to the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ).

Section 17 of the Children's Act makes it mandatory for any case of suspected child abuse, neglect, exploitation or abandonment to be reported to and investigated by the Department of Social Welfare. This does not happen in practice. There are inadequate standard protocols or procedures that require police, teachers, health care professionals and child care providers to report suspected cases of abuse to social welfare authorities. There are also no formal referral links between district welfare officers and teachers, school counsellors or health care professionals.

Prevention services, whether initiated by formal state agencies or by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), are mostly limited to advocacy and awareness-raising, often promoted through community-based and school-based awareness programmes. In addition, the geographic coverage of services tends to be limited, with a much larger presence around urban centres and southern regions.

1.4 Community processes to protect children in urban areas and rural settings

Families and community structures play an important role in providing a child's identity within that community, in socialisation and in addressing child protection. Community structures, especially in rural areas, often provide a support system for the family. Child maltreatment cases are often handled between families. If a resolution is not achieved, then the case is taken to Chiefs for mediation or reported to other, informal or formal structures at local level.

Service providers and structures that could respond to child protection concerns at local level include faith based organizations; teachers; health sector workers; assembly members; child panels; family tribunals; District Assemblies and other community structures. NGOs/CSOs, health and police services are choices for more formal support.

Others include specialised services such as DOVVSU, safe houses, shelters children's homes and specialised Community Based Organizations (CBOs) although many of these services are those which are also the least available, especially in rural areas.

When a case is referred to informal community structures, the emphasis is often on compensation, reconciliation and restoring harmony in the family and community. The primary consideration is to confront the perpetrator with the desire to prevent recurrence of the abuse. Concern for the child, including getting medical help, asking what happened, treating or comforting the child is considered of less immediate importance.

Community structures, including family elders, chiefs, queen mothers and other service providers at local levels (community health workers, teachers) and community groups have thus important roles in addressing child and family welfare issues.

1.5 Human, financial and technical resources

The Department of Social Welfare and Community Development represents a core component of the system with presence in every district, with over 1,000 professional personnel. The distribution of welfare officers is uneven, particularly in the northern regions. Many districts have only one professional staff member to perform all departmental functions. Social welfare officers generally lack transportation and other technical and logistical resources for effective service delivery.

The Department of Children (DOC) has human resources at the regional level only. Technical

units related to children under the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, such as the Domestic Violence Management Secretariat and the Human Trafficking Secretariat do not have any presence at sub-national level.

The National Legal Aid Scheme is expected to provide free legal services for vulnerable persons including children; however, they are also faced with inadequate human and logistical resource at the regional and district levels.

CHRAJ investigates cases of child rights violations, particularly matters related to custody and maintenance. It has a presence in each regional capital, two sub-regional capitals and in 99 districts.

DOVVSU is functioning in all regional capitals and 75 districts. The anti-trafficking Unit of the Police has 4 regional offices apart from its headquarters in Accra.

The Judicial Service has taken steps to promote child justice specialisation at District Court level through the appointment of Family Tribunal and Juvenile Courts. In Accra, a separate full-time Family and Juvenile Court has been established with its own facilities.

The Judicial Service has also started a court connected Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) programme to which some child related cases are referred to.

Government budget is mostly for recurrent costs, not programs, and this affect the implementation of child related programmes. Allocations to several key Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) with mandate and responsibility for child and family welfare are largely inadequate. For example, the 2014 allocation to the Child Rights Promotion and Protection Programme of the DSW was GHS 971,272 or 1.53 percent of the total allocation to the Ministry. About 74 percent of that budget was allocated for compensation of employees leaving only GHS 255,780 for programmes, goods and services. In 2013, the Department of Children received as little as GHS 97,000 for programmes.

The funds provided for child related programmes are inadequate.

1.6 Challenges in the child protection area

Disconnect between law and practice: Though a comprehensive legal framework for the protection of the child has been established, there is a disconnect between law and practice and between the law and community approaches dealing with child welfare and protection issues.

Lack of a coordinated cohesive system: Coordination among MDAs remains a challenge, particularly as there is no overarching policy framework that outlines a coherent approach to child and family welfare.

Inadequate focus on prevention: Current services and programmes for child and family welfare tend to respond to children in crisis - after abuse has occurred - with limited focus on preventing child maltreatment although this would be more cost-effective.

Focus on the individual child rather than the family as a whole: The approach of current services and programmes is focused on the individual child - not on the family as a whole. As a result, underlying factors contributing to the problem within the family structure are not effectively addressed.

Inadequate capacity and quality of services: The formal child and family welfare services do not have required capacity and reach to fulfil its mandate and expectations. Formal services

are largely inaccessible, especially in rural areas.

Inadequate resources: With the serious financial constraints faced by child protection service providers, there is very limited support and care for children and families who experience difficulties and for those who have experienced forms of maltreatment.

Inadequate integration between informal processes and formal services: The preference is often to first seek to resolve cases of child protection at local levels through community structures. These informal processes have not been sufficiently recognised and integrated with formal services by state institutions.

Lack of coordinated approach to data management: Child and family welfare information management systems are weak, and there are no mechanisms for consistent, on-going information sharing and data analysis between agencies involved in child and family welfare.

1.7 Policy development process

The Government established a multi-sectorial Child Protection Advisory Committee to guide the process of developing a Child and Family Welfare Policy. A baseline study was commissioned to ensure evidence for the Policy, its direction and approaches. The Policy drafting process involved extensive consultations with a broad range of stakeholders at all levels (national, regional, district and communal) to reflect national priorities and aspirations.

Numerous studies and reports, multiple meetings with the Advisory Committee became the basis on which this Policy has been developed. A core team of technical experts also reviewed the draft Policy.

2.1. Policy statement and rationale

Policy Statement

This Policy seeks to establish a well-structured and coordinated Child and Family Welfare system that promotes the wellbeing of children, prevents abuse and protect children from harm.

The Policy statement is guided by national and internationally recognised principles, as well as values, beliefs and practices specific to the country, ensuring that the Child and Family Welfare System will be 'fit' for the context of Ghana.

Rationale

The rationale of this Child and Family Welfare Policy is to provide guidance to the reform of child and family welfare programmes and activities and establish a coherent system.

The Policy is applicable to each sector and is expected to provide guidance for legislation, strategic plans, actions plans and intervention-specific standards and protocols concerning the protection of children.

2.2. Policy goal and objectives

The overall goal of this Child and Family Welfare Policy is to establish an effective child and family welfare system.

The main objectives of the Policy are:

1. to design child and family welfare programmes and activities to more effectively prevent and protect children from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation
2. to ensure effective coordination of the child and family welfare system at all levels
3. to empower children and families to better understand abusive situations and make choices to prevent and respond to situations of risk
4. to build capacity of institutions and service providers to ensure quality of services for children and families in urban and rural areas
5. to promote reform of existing laws and policies to conform with the Child and Family Welfare system
6. to ensure provision of adequate human, technical and financial resources required for the functioning of the Child and Family Welfare system at all levels
7. to design an effective monitoring and evaluation system for the implementation of the policy

2.3 Guiding principles

The Policy is aligned with relevant, existing national legal and policy frameworks as well as with international conventions, treaties and protocols ratified and signed by the Government of Ghana.

Specifically, the Policy is guided by the key principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the 1992 Constitution and the Children's Act, 1998 (Act 560) as follows:

2.3.1 Non-discrimination

No person shall be treated differently or discriminated against on the grounds of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, socio-economic status or his or her geographic location.

Policy Framework (cont'd)

The Policy provisions are thus applicable to every child and family and all efforts should be made to ensure the equitable distribution of support and services across the nation.

2.3.2 Best interests of the child

The best interests principle is guiding the Policy and should be considered in conjunction with the other principles, values and beliefs stated. In order to determine the best interests of the child, it is critical that adults consult, understand and consider children's perspectives in decisions affecting them.

2.3.3 Right to survival and development

The principle of survival and development is guiding the Policy to ensure not only the survival of the child but also his/her holistic development throughout the life-cycle.

This means that all efforts must be undertaken to prevent child protection violations that otherwise risk the very life of the child and his/her social, emotional, cognitive and spiritual development.

2.3.4 Right to be heard (participation)

The Policy recognises children as actors in their own development and protection. The principle of participation involves children's right to freedom to express opinions and to have a say in matters affecting their social, economic, religious, cultural and political life. Engaging these rights as they mature helps children bring about the realization of all their rights and prepares them for an active role in society.

2.4. Beliefs, values and practices to guide policy implementation

In fulfilling the Policy goal and objectives, the following beliefs, values and practices will be key:

2.4.1 Family and community cohesion and harmony

The Policy respects the importance of community cohesion and harmony. At the heart of all decisions, is the importance to maintain family and community cohesion and harmony.

Decisions should be taken to preserve honour and dignity of members of the family and community.

Individual interest should be considered in conjunction with the collective interest, in that individuals, particularly children, exist within the family network – they cannot be disassociated. This does not, however, exclude the notion of the best interests of a child.

2.4.2 Sense of belonging to family and community

The family is considered a central unit of society and is deemed irreplaceable. The Policy recognises the importance of belonging to a family and community; the basis for commonality and solidarity.

2.4.3 Common responsibility of families and communities

The Policy recognises the shared family and community responsibility for children's welfare. Equally, a child's responsibility towards the family and community is implicitly understood. Maintaining the connection between children and their families and communities is thus critical for a functioning Child and Family Welfare System.

2.4.4 Reciprocity

The Policy acknowledges the value of reciprocity, which works to guarantee the rights and obligations of each and every community member through mutual understanding and respect for one another.

The Child and Family Welfare System

3.1 Introduction to the System

The Child and Family Welfare System referred to as the System will focus on the prevention of violence, abuse and exploitation of children. In addition, the system will also protect and respond to children and their families when needed and provide support to mitigate risks for vulnerable families.

It shall be a system that more effectively integrates the formal service provision with informal, community-based processes and, in doing so, unifies families, communities and state institutions to work together as a cohesive national system for the wellbeing of children.

The System is further expected to have improved coordination between all actors contributing to more effective use of resources, improved data and information management.

3.2 Priority areas

The System will have the capacity to prevent and response to all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children. Yet, three areas of particular concern have been identified as priorities: These are:

1. Child Protection issues stemming out of family-related challenges, including parental responsibility, domestic violence, and children deprived of adequate family care. Parental responsibility includes maintenance, custody and parentage issues while children deprived of adequate family care includes orphans, children in child care institutions and children living and/or working on the street.
2. Child maltreatment including all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of girls and boys, within the family, as well as in schools, in workplaces, in institutions caring for children, and in the wider community.
3. Other protection issues concerning children, especially older children, that are not brought about by a third party but result from individual risk-taking behaviour. These include but are not limited to: unwanted pregnancy, illegal abortion, unsupervised and/or risky use of the Internet, drug trafficking and substance abuse, and gambling. A priority is also children in conflict with the law.

A variety of strategies shall be adopted to achieve the objectives of the Child and Family Welfare Policy.

Objective 1:

To design child and family welfare programmes and activities to more effectively prevent and protect children from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The strategies for achieving this objective are:

- 1.1. Strengthening Community Structures
- 1.2. Early Interventions
- 1.3. Improved Child and Family Welfare Services
- 1.4. Alternative care – when the child's family is not an option

Strategies for Implementation

Objective 2:

To ensure effective coordination of the Child and Family Welfare System at all levels.

The strategy for achieving this objective is:

- 2.1. Regular coordination and improved information and data management

Objective 3:

To empower children and their families to better understand abusive situations and make choices to prevent and respond to situations of risk.

The strategies for achieving these objectives are:

- 3.1. Empower Children and Young People
- 3.2. Empower Families through Social dialogue and change

Objective 4:

To build capacity of institutions and service providers to ensure quality of services for children and families in urban and rural areas

The strategies for achieving these objectives are:

- 4.1. Social Welfare Resources and Capacity Building
- 4.2. Building alliances with civil society organizations

Objective 5:

To reform existing laws and policies to conform with the Child and Family Welfare System

The strategy for the achieving this objective is:

- 5.1. Legal and Policy Reform

Objective 6:

To ensure provision of adequate human, technical and financial resources required for the functioning of the Child and Family Welfare System at all levels

The strategy for achieving this objective is:

- 6.1. Analysis of and Advocacy for Adequate Financial, Technical and Human Resources

The strategies are each explained in detail in the following sections.

Strategies for Implementation

Objective 1

Strategy 1.1: Strengthening Community Structures

The Policy recognises, reinforces and supports the roles and responsibilities of the family and community in protecting children from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The Policy advocates that traditional leaders, Chiefs and Queen mothers shall be responsible for facilitating dialogue and engagement through organised community forums and debate on child and family welfare issues in order to help increase the common understanding of issues and discuss different solutions and resources available.

Chiefs and queen mothers should ensure that families are faring well and mobilise support when challenges arise. In areas where there are no chiefs or queen mothers, other community leaders and elders should assume this responsibility.

The Policy encourages community leaders to work in collaboration with social workers and assembly authorities when needed in matters relating to child and family welfare.

Leaders of faith-based organizations are encouraged to use their platforms and leadership positions to advocate for the protection of children; and to assist in matters relating to child and family welfare.

Due to their influence on people's belief systems and personal behaviors, faith-based organizations should:

- support positive family values and non-violent behavior through communication and education initiatives;
- provide direct help to vulnerable families and serve as their advocates;
- provide care and support services to families, children and adolescents;
- participate in national co-ordination activities to minimize duplication and enhance the establishment of complementary programmes, projects and activities

Efforts should be undertaken to increase the understanding and capacity of community structures and religious leaders to be able to play the expected role in the child and family welfare system.

Strategy 1.2: Early intervention through social protection

The objective of social protection interventions is primarily to reduce poverty amongst the extreme poor. There are direct links between social protection and reduced child protection risks (unnecessary separation from family; child marriage; and child labour). The Department of Social Welfare shall be responsible for maximizing use of social protection interventions to address child and family welfare concerns.

Direct family support services that should be made available to address some of the child protection and welfare challenges that families might experience include:

- Economic empowerment through improved links to social protection programmes, such as LEAP, capitation grants, the National Health Insurance Scheme and free maternal care, school uniforms or school feeding programmes;
- Identification and supporting appropriate community day-care options for children to ensure they are cared for in a safe environment while family members are engaged in other activities.

Strategies for Implementation

Research shall be undertaken to better understand the impact of existing social protection interventions and their possible effect on violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children.

Strategy 1.3: Improved Child and Family Welfare Services

The Government has an obligation to provide specialised services to children, families and communities when community structures fail.

State institutions must respond to child protection cases that are reported to them, and in situations considered to be an emergency. The Child and Family Welfare system would not depend solely on court processes for family engagement but would make use of courts in criminal and some specific cases. The essence is to provide greater flexibility and discretion to the social welfare officers to work with family and community members when a child protection case is brought to their attention.

The emphasis of the System is on promoting welfare and restoring the well-being of victims. Welfare cases should be addressed from a welfare perspective rather than from a legal perspective. It is the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General and law enforcement agencies to prosecute perpetrators.

A child protection case reported to the police must be referred to the Social Welfare and Community Development Department; the police cannot decide on the removal and placement of children unless it is for immediate safety. In such situations, the placement of a child in an emergency situation must be decided by the Social Welfare and Community Development Department.

The Department of Social Welfare and of Social Welfare and Community Development Department at the district level are responsible for social welfare service delivery at regional and district level.

When problems arise that go beyond the competence of a district, for example, emergencies on a large scale or issues affecting more than one district (trafficking of children for example), then national-level direct service delivery is provided, still involving all relevant social welfare officers and community leaders.

The Social Welfare and Community Development Department at district level has the responsibility to:

- Support and engage with traditional processes and community structures at the local level;
- Provide prevention and response services
- Identify community members to mentor and provide assistance to children and families;
- Create linkages between social welfare and social protection programmes.
- Lead an initial inquiry into a child protection case, draw up an agreed plan of action, and ensure action plan implementation.
- Lead follow-up on child protection cases and monitor prevention and response service delivery.
- Collect and analyse data generated through service provision and share with regional level.

In support of the functions of the Social Welfare and Community Development, the Metropolitan,

Strategies for Implementation (cont'd)

Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) shall:

- Ensure adequate staffing for child and family welfare in relation to the population and the services to be provided as outlined in this Policy;
- Ensure that resources are available;
- Facilitate dialogue takes place with traditional leaders, community representatives, civil society and faith based organisations about service delivery;
- Facilitate direct dialogue with families in their communities about how best to improve services;
- Facilitate strong connections exist with other relevant social service providers (health, education, social protection) to ensure consistency between and integration of services.

Strategy 1.4: Alternative Care – when the child’s family is not an option

The Policy seeks to ensure the child is maintained within his or her family as much as possible and only suggests removal of a child in case of immediate danger or if a negotiated solution among all concerned parties cannot be agreed.

If families, communities and social workers do not find a solution to a given child protection case, coercive action mandated by a court, such as a care order to remove a child from their home, shall be considered to ensure the child’s immediate and long-term well-being. This shall be considered as a measure of last resort.

Some exceptional cases may make it difficult to place a child in a typical family network or a previously determined family option. These may include children accused of witchcraft and children who have been abandoned, particularly linked to an HIV or AIDS situation. Some children with severe disabilities may require access to specialised services not available in their community.

In an emergency situation in which a child’s immediate safety is considered to be at risk, the child could be removed prior to a care order being issued, but this must be issued subsequently by a court within a 72-hour period.

As soon as a care order is issued, a costed care plan with steps to find long-term family-based care (family reunification, foster care or adoption) must be established. Services shall be made available to strengthen and rehabilitate the family and the child, with the intent of reuniting them as soon as possible.

The placement of a child shall be sought within his or her family, within the same community or a local placement as best as possible. A pool of pre-determined persons, who are appropriate options, shall be established in all communities, rural and urban, by the Social Welfare and Community Development Department social workers, in collaboration with chiefs and elders.

Residential homes for children may be considered as a temporary solution if no immediate placement in the community is found while a longer-term family-based alternative is sought.

Objective 2

Strategy 2.1: Regular coordination and improved information and data management

Each Ministry, Department and Agency implementing the Policy shall monitor its performance,

Strategies for Implementation (cont'd)

analyse shortcomings and address these to contribute to the Policy objectives.

Policy implementation shall be monitored and coordinated at national level by the Department of Children.

A time-bound, costed Action Plan for the implementation of the Policy shall be developed by the Department of Children in consultation with key state institutions and other actors. Implementation of the Action Plan shall be monitored at least every 6 months, based on inputs and up-dates from all stakeholders.

A comprehensive information management system for child protection shall be established for purpose of monitoring, analysis and planning, based on improved processes for information and routine data collection and analysis at local level and of specialized services.

Objective 3

Strategy 3.1: Empower Children and Young People

The Policy recognises children and young people as agents of change in their own capacity. The active engagement of children and young people in addressing child protection issues is strongly encouraged. Specifically, the Policy encourages:

- Efforts that make it possible for children to feel safe to discuss issues of violence and abuse;
- Children's associations and support groups, including for vulnerable groups such as children living on the street, survivors of child abuse, and children with disability;
- Children's participation in decision making processes at family and community level;
- Inclusion of children's voices in research, monitoring and assessments of child protection issues.

Strategy 3.2: Empower Families through Social dialogue and change

In line with the Children's Act, parents, care-givers and families shall retain primary responsibility for the welfare of their children and for the provision of basic needs (food, clothing, shelter, health care and education), support in times of distress or sickness, support for the child's socialisation and identity development.

Families are particularly responsible for providing a safe environment for children, based on love, security and protection from all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect.

Under this Policy, community discussions, forums and debates shall be promoted to empower families to prevent and take action against child protection concerns through an open, frank, balanced and respectful dialogue.

The Social Welfare and Community Development Department at district level and supported by civil society actors, shall lead these exchanges. The discussions will raise awareness about community concerns and challenges related to child and family welfare, determining common solutions and resources.

Community dialogue and engagement shall include sharing information on relevant aspects of parenting and understanding of children's physical, social, cognitive, moral and spiritual development.

Strategies for Implementation (cont'd)

Objective 4

Strategy 4.1: Social Welfare Resources and Capacity Building

The Policy considers capacity development of human resources as central. New capacities and competencies will be required to interpret and deliver on the Policy, especially in terms of community development, mediation, family and youth work.

An assessment of current human resources of key institutions shall be undertaken, identifying human resource gaps and capacity building needs. Strategic human resources planning to support Policy implementation shall also be developed. Such plan should consider the distribution of human resources according to criteria such as population density, incidence of problems, levels of poverty and catchment areas for services.

Curriculum reform in partnership with tertiary level educational institutions is important for long-term capacity strengthening of the work force. In-service training and orientation; development of detailed guidance and procedures shall also contribute to capacity-building.

Strategy 4.2: Building Alliances with Civil Society Organizations

Women, youth organizations, CBOs, NGOs, INGOs, volunteers, would be encouraged to formulate and implement appropriate programmes within the scope and approach of this Policy at national and sub-national level. They would implement these programmes with community leaders, youth groups, religious groups, professional bodies and traders associations at each level of society.

While maintaining their independence as civil society organisations, these organisations shall operate in conjunction and in collaboration with other child and family welfare actors and work within this Policy framework, adopting its strategic direction and approaches.

In particular, CBOs, NGOs, INGOs shall:

- Contribute to the development of research, monitoring and evaluation initiatives;
- Advocate for the improvement of services through increased collaboration;
- Participate in national co-ordination and sub-national activities to minimize duplication and enhance the complementary of programmes;
- Facilitate information sharing through formal or informal networks.

The Government is responsible for determining the standards of work of civil society organization and determining appropriate areas of interventions and support. It is the Government that has the responsibility to negotiate agreements with civil society organizations providing services or supporting interventions under this Policy.

Objective 5

Strategy 5.1: Legal and Policy Reform

The Policy requires the legal framework to be reformed for successful implementation.

Amendments to the Children's Act 1998 (Act 560) will be required. Amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act (2003) may also be warranted. Existing action plans, policies and guidelines on specific child protection issues would be reviewed and amended in light of the provisions of this Policy. The MGCSP will lead the legal and policy reform process in partnership with relevant ministries.

Objective 6

Strategy 6.1: Analysis of and Advocacy for Adequate Financial, Technical and Human Resources

The Government shall make resources available for the implementation of the Policy.

A costed operational plan will be accompanying the Policy roll-out, identifying budgets, timelines and roles and responsibility for programmes and activities.

The Child and Family Welfare system outlined in the Policy creates a cost-effective and efficient system in that it is drawing on locally available resources and capacities of community-structures as a way to ensure sustainability and greater efficiencies.

Government funded services will not replace community actions, but complement them. Efforts will be made to ensure the appropriateness and sustainability of community initiatives.

Budget analysis and public expenditure reviews in the area of Child and Family Welfare issues.

Institutional Arrangements

5.1 Introduction

The implementation of the Child and Family Welfare Policy requires a well-defined institutional framework to translate the goals and objectives into actual programmes at national, regional, district and community levels. It requires political leadership and commitment to sustain and support the reform of the Child and Family Welfare System.

Key line ministries have been identified as critical to successfully reform the Child and Family Welfare system and are therefore expected to incorporate the Strategies outlined in this Policy into their core business.

Generally, MDAs should:

- plan for and allocate resources for the implementation of strategies outlined in this Policy;
- orient its staff at different levels on the content of the Policy;
- develop internal child safe-guarding standards, including Codes of Conducts, referral and internal reporting procedures for cases of child maltreatment. This is especially important for those MDAs that have a direct relationship with children

5.2 Role of Key Ministries and other public institutions

5.2.1 The Ministries

1. Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP)

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection will lead and coordinate implementation of the Policy as the “technical lead ministry” for the Child and Family Welfare system and will be expected to:

- provide leadership in the legal reform process expected pursuant to the Policy;
- ensure prevention and response service delivery;
- mainstream the Policy into sector plans and policies
- coordinate Policy implementation with other relevant sectors and partners

2. Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD)

The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) should:

- contribute to the realization of the Policy in collaboration with the MoGCSP
- provide resources for the Department of Community Development to implement behavior and social change
- spearhead the implementation of the policy at the MMDA
- facilitate the mainstreaming of child protection issues into Medium Term Development Plans of MMDAs, Functional Organization Assessment Tool (FOAT) assessment
- facilitate the mobilization of resources through budget allocations for child protection at the local levels
- supervise and monitor the Social Welfare, Community Development Departments and

Institutional Arrangements

other Partners in the implementation of the Policy

- create awareness among MMDA's sub-structures and communities on child protection and related interventions
- build capacity (institutional and staff) of the Departments of Social Welfare and Community Development to effectively implement activities in the Action Plan of the Policy
- facilitate the documentation and dissemination of best practices and or key activities of child protection in the country from all MMDAs and
- ensure provision of relevant staff to the MMDAs to facilitate effective implementation of the Policy

The Policy expects that MMDAs should;

- collaborate with MLGRD, MoGCSP and other Partners to ensure ownership of the Policy and issues affecting Children;
- ensure the mainstreaming of child protection issues in the Sector Medium Term Development Plan
- ensure that the Departments of Social Welfare and Community Development effectively collaborate to address child protection issues – facilitate linkages between social welfare and protection interventions
- facilitate the involvement of traditional authorities and processes at community level in child protection issues
- develop and implement MMDA-specific Action Plan to implement the Policy
- ensure awareness of interventions available to the benefit of community members through relevant forums and channels

3. Ministry of Health (MoH)

The Ministry of Health (MoH) and Ghana Health Service (GHS) should:

- provide preventative and responsive medical and forensic services in cases of child maltreatment
- ensure that internal policies and standards are adapted and aligned with the Policy
- ensure regular collection and analysis of data and trends relating to cases of child maltreatment handled by health sector professionals
- support victims of violence and link with other relevant service providers
- ensure free medical care and services for victims of child maltreatment, neglect and exploitation

4. Ministry of Education (MoE)

The Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ghana Education Services (GES) should:

- promote universal, quality primary education, especially for vulnerable children
- reform curriculum to reflect child protection issues

Institutional Arrangements (cont'd)

- build capacity of teachers and promote guidance and counselling in all educational institutions
- put measures in place to identify, prevent and address child protection issues in educational institutions

5. Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations (MoELR)

The Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations (MoELR) should:

- ensure that programmes, strategies and approaches addressing child labour are aligned with this Policy

6. Ministry of the Interior

The Ministry of the Interior through the Ghana's Police Service, the Immigration Service and Ghana's Prison Service should:

- develop and implement strategies that align with the Policy
- build capacity of the relevant security agencies through curriculum reform and specialist training
- collect and analyse data on crimes committed involving children
- collaborate with other relevant service providers ensure consistency of approaches and strong coordination of services

The Justice for Children Policy provides further guidance on expected role of Ministry of the Interior and Ghana Police Service with regards to justice for children.

7. Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MoFEP)

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MoFEP) should:

- ensure adequate budget allocation for the implementation of the Policy
- ensure timely release of the government's financial commitment towards the implementation of the Policy

8. Ministry of Chieftaincy and Traditional Affairs

Ministry of Chieftaincy and Traditional Affairs should:

- coordinate, monitor and adequately resource the National House of Chiefs in their role of supporting the implementation of the Policy
- support Queen Mother's Associations and other traditional authorities in promoting child and family welfare

9. Ministry of Justice and Attorney General

The Ministry of Justice and Attorney General and its agencies should:

- provide assistance for the drafting, review and reform of legislation related to child and family welfare
- enhance the capacity of the Legal Aid Board to provide legal service for children

Institutional Arrangements (cont'd)

5.2.2 The Parliament

The Parliament should:

- provide overall legislative and political support to facilitate implementation of the Policy, including by passing laws that supports the Policy, developing legislation in new areas, and reforming existing laws
- ensure adequate budgetary support for the implementation of the Policy;
- mobilise support for child and family welfare related laws and initiatives, both within Parliament and at the constituency level

5.2.3 Other key Public Institutions

1. The National Development Planning Commission (NDPC)

The National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) should:

- ensure the Policy is reflected in the National Development Policy Framework (NDPF)

2. The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ)

The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) should:

- investigate complaints of child rights violations
- embark on public education and help share information of the Policy at all levels, particularly at sub-national level

3. National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE)

The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) should:

- integrate child protection issues into their public campaigns and programmes.

5.3 Role of key non-governmental organizations

5.3.1 INGOs, NGOs and CSOs

In particular, INGOs, NGOs, CBOs should:

- complement the efforts of government by providing preventive and responses services at all levels within the policy framework
- contribute to the development of research, monitoring and evaluation initiatives
- lobby and advocate for the improvement of services through increased collaboration
- participate in national co-ordination and sub-national activities to minimize duplication and enhance the complementarity of programmes
- facilitate information sharing through formal or informal networks
- assist in resource mobilization for child protection initiatives at all levels
- collaborate with other relevant service providers to avoid duplication of resources

Institutional Arrangements (cont'd)

5.3.2 Traditional Authorities

The Policy advocates that Chiefs and Queen mothers and traditional leaders, should have the responsible to;

- facilitate dialogue and engagement through organised community forums and debate on child and family welfare issues in order to help increase the common understanding of issues and discuss different solutions and resources available
- ensure that families are faring well and mobilise solidarity and support when challenges arise

5.3.3 Community Leaders

Community leaders should;

- community leaders are to work in collaboration with social workers and assembly authorities when needed in matters relating to child and family welfare
- provide direct help to vulnerable families and serve as their advocates

5.3.4 Faith-Based Organizations

Faith-based organizations should

- provide communication and education initiatives that promote positive family values
- provide direct help to vulnerable families and serve as their advocates
- provide care and support services to families, children and adolescents
- participate in national co-ordination activities to minimize duplication and enhance the establishment of complementary programmes, projects and activities

6.1 Research and Advocacy

The Policy shall recognise the need for continued research to fill existing knowledge, information and data gap on child protection.

The Department of Children will be responsible for the development of the national research agenda on child and family welfare. The Department, in collaboration with the Research Directorate (under MoGCSP), will ensure that research specific to child protection issues is carried out directly, or through strategic partnerships, including academic and research institutions.

The Department of Children will use evidence generated for advocacy, and make such data and information available to inform national policy development, programmes and interventions.

The Department of Children will be responsible for reporting on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on Rights and Welfare, drawing on the information generated through data analysis and research processes.

6.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation [M&E] shall be an essential policy strategy in the implementation of the Child and Family Welfare Policy. Results frameworks on each policy objective detailing impact, outcomes, outputs and key actions shall be developed to facilitate annual child and family welfare policy performance review.

The Monitoring and Evaluation strategy shall be developed to fit the implementation cycle of the Strategic Implementation Plan. The operational M&E strategy shall involve:

- o Quarterly / monthly updates (from all institution or organisations identified and playing specific roles)
- o Six monthly monitoring and Quality Assurance visits from the MoGCSP
- o Annual Performance Reviews and Learning sessions including;
 - Annual policy review
 - Annual Institutional Capability Assessments.



Child and Family Welfare Policy