



# CHILD PROTECTION BUDGET BRIEF

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## Introduction

All women and children have the right to protection from violence. Violence in its different forms has adverse effects on the self-worth and overall development of women and children. Violence in Ghana is a daily reality for most children. According to MICS 2017/18, 94% of children in Ghana experience violent discipline in both public and private settings: at home, on the street, at school and in their communities, with 87% of children exposed to psychological violence<sup>1</sup>.

The health and developmental costs of violence are extremely high for Ghana. Early exposure to violence can have an impact on the architecture of the developing and maturing brain. In the case of prolonged violence, disruption of the nervous and immune systems can lead to social, emotional, and cognitive impairments, as well as long term health implications<sup>2</sup>. The annual cost of child abuse in Ghana is \$223 million to \$347 million, equivalent to 0.8 to 1.4 per cent of Ghana's Gross Domestic Product<sup>3</sup>.

Child development is the foundation for community and economic development, and disrupting this will affect children's capabilities to contribute to national development. This economic burden will then ultimately and cyclically affect the development of children in Ghana to achieve their full potential.

Child protection is the prevention of, and response to, exploitation, abuse, neglect, harmful practices, and violence against children. It includes universal access to birth registration and to justice; the prevention of and

response to child marriage, adolescent pregnancies, child labour, child trafficking and bullying, among other forms of child maltreatment. Due to the cross-sectoral nature of child protection, the responsibility for providing relevant child protection services cuts across multiple ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs), and between different regional and local governments, with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) being the lead MDA to coordinate all child protection interventions.

## Trends in MoGCSP Budget Allocation

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) is responsible for policy development, sectoral coordination, oversight, and Regulation for the delivery of child protection services at the national and sub-national levels. To effectively discharge these responsibilities, an adequate amount budget allocation is required for the effective operationalisation and implementation of all planned programmes and activities. Though allocations to goods and services (which is important for service delivery)<sup>4</sup> are higher for 2023 than both 2019 and 2020, since 2021, their share of the MoGCSP budget (excluding social protection) has declined. So, too, has the budget for capital expenditures, which has reduced from 27% in 2019 to 2% in 2023. This has resulted in a lower budget for the operations of the ministry, which then affects service delivery for child protection.

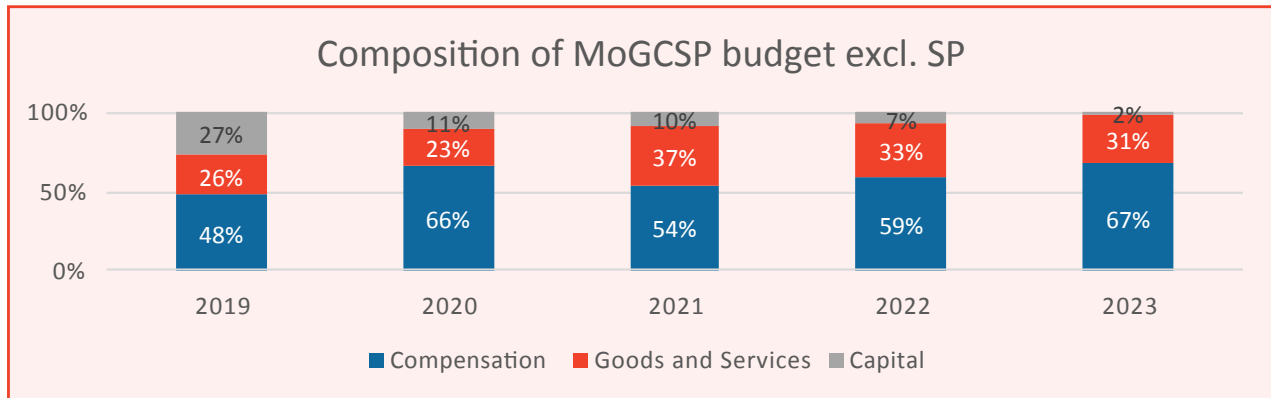
1 MICS 2021/18

2 Excessive Stress Disrupts the Architecture of the Developing Brain, Harvard, Centre for Child development

3 MOGCSP and UNICEF, 2015. 'Investing in Children: Report on Investment, Budgeting and Economic Burden of Child Protection Violations in Ghana'

4 Goods & Services budget is the operational budget for MDAs used for day-to-day activities of the MDA

Figure 1: Breakdown of MoGCSP's Budget per Economic Classification



Source: 2023 Annual Budget Statements, MOF

It is worth noting that the majority of the MoGCSP's budget is allocated to the social protection programmes Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) and Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP). Excluding these programmes gives an indication of the funding available for child protection at the national level, which remains well under what is required. In 2022, LEAP and GSFP

allocation was 94.3% of the total MoGCSP budget, though this decreased slightly to 91.8% in 2023. In the last years, allocations to the Human Trafficking Fund and the Domestic Violence Fund have decreased by 50%, from GHS 2 million in 2022 to GHS 1 million in 2023. This seriously impedes the delivery of child protection services, especially for children at risk or exposed to violence and/or trafficking.

Table 1: Breakdown of MoGCSP's Budget Allocations

	2022 (GHS)	%	2023 (GHS)	%
<b>MoGCSP</b>	<b>1,143,421,000</b>		<b>1,486,528,696</b>	
MoGCSP (HQ)	60,886,000	5.3%	120,458,696	8.1%
LEAP	197,535,000	17.3%	395,070,000	26.6%
GSFP	881,000,000	77.0%	969,000,000	65.2%
HT	2,000,000	0.2%	1,000,000	0.1%
DV	2,000,000	0.2%	1,000,000	0.1%

Source: MoF Budget Statements

### MoGCSP's Budget Performance, 2018-2022

To improve the delivery of child protection services, it is important that the executed budget tracks the approved budget, allowing for a maximum deviation of 5-10% above or below the approved budget for budget credibility. The 2018 Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) report indicates notably higher deviations. For example, in compensation, the government exceeded its budget by 14.1%, while for

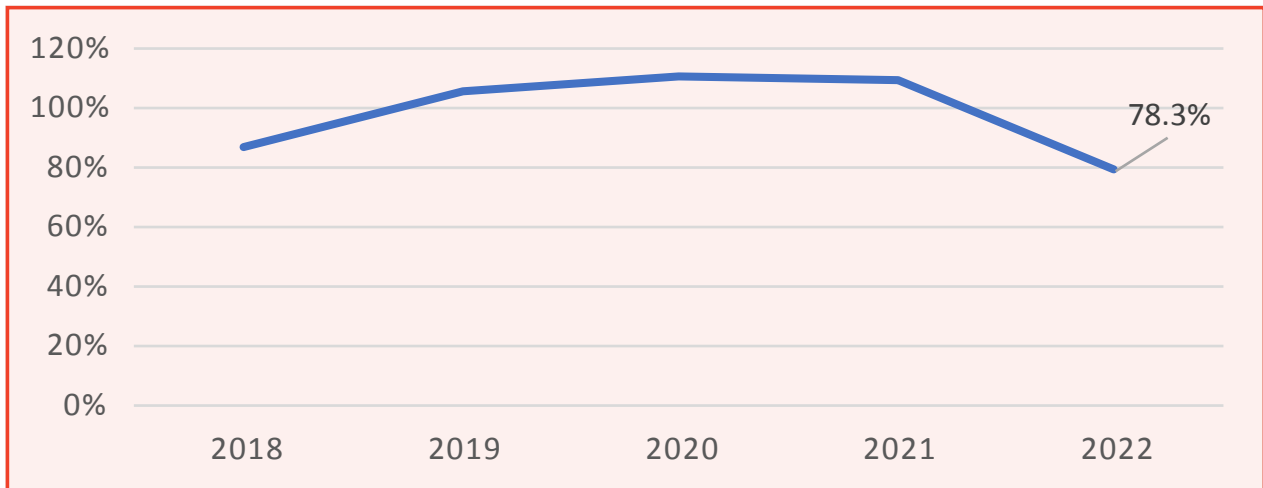
subsidies, there was 100% underspending. This over or underspending remains high for some budget items in respective MDAs. Planning and budgeting should be evidence-based and well-integrated to enhance the efficient use of scarce resources and to improve implementation. The 2022 MOF Annual Budget Performance Report indicates that only 78.3% of the MOGCSP's overall budget was spent. Only 15% of the already reduced Human Trafficking Fund and Domestic Violence Fund was executed.



**The 2022 MOF Annual Budget Performance Report indicates that only 78.3% of the MOGCSP's overall budget was spent.**



Figure 2: MoGCSP Budget execution from 2018 to 2022



Source: Auditor General Reports 2018-2020, CAGD Annual Report 2021, MOF Annual Budget Performance Report 2022.

Since 2018, the MoGCSP’s budget allocation, excluding Social Protection, has declined in both nominal and real (i.e., adjusted for inflation) terms. On a per-child basis, this funding has declined by more than half in real terms, when adjusted for inflation.

## Priority Actions



**District Departments of Social Welfare and Community Development (DSWCDs) do not receive adequate or timely budget allocations**

The responsibility for child protection services and other social welfare services is divided between national and sub-national levels. Significant funding for child protection and other social services at the sub-national level comes from the budget allocated to the district Departments of Social Welfare and Community Development (DSWCDs) and the Regional Coordinating Councils’ (RCCs) Departments of Social Welfare and Community Development.

However, any funding available for the department to use to effectively deliver on its mandate was seriously limited by inadequate budget allocations and unpredictable budget execution. Without adequate funding it is difficult to effectively plan and implement activities in the fight against violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children. The average DSWCD budget is GHS 13,069 per year for Goods and Services. In 2023,

an average of between GHS 10,000 to GHS 12,000 was allocated to DSWCDs to execute their mandate for the whole fiscal year. This is an inadequate budget to provide the child protection services required, when considering the high rate of child abuse in Ghana, especially in the poor and deprived districts. These low budget allocations to the department also suffer delays when it comes to releases and disbursement, compounding their already complicated situation. This ultimately results in higher incidences of child abuse. However, limited availability of data makes it difficult to estimate these totals over time, though analysis for 2023 (which is possible) indicates that only GHS 7 is budgeted per child for child protection and other social services across all three levels of government (national, regional, and district).

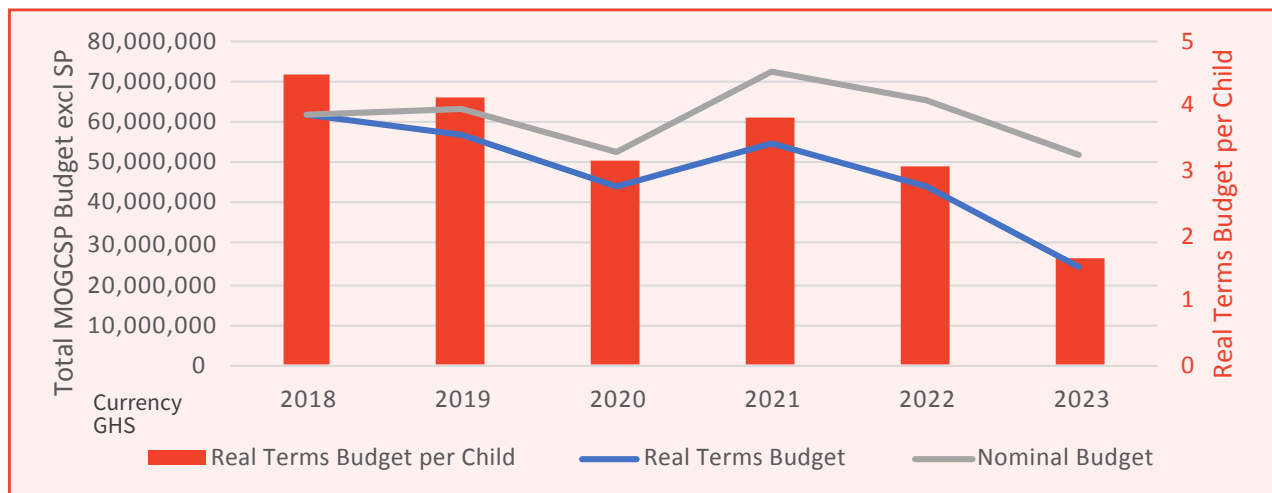
### KEY FACT



**GHS 7 per child**

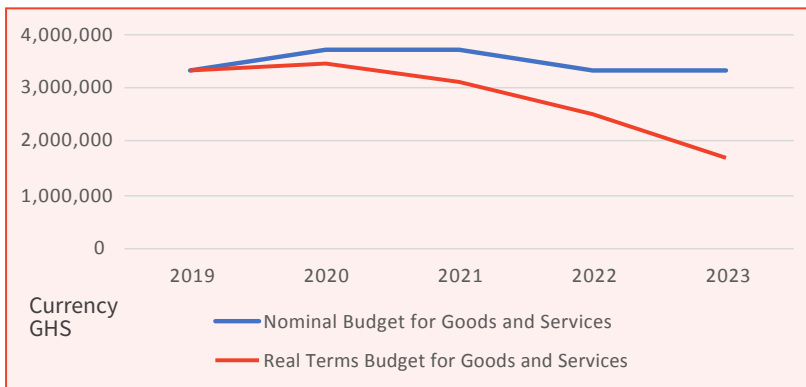
For 2023, the total budget allocated to Child Protection across all levels of government was equivalent to **GHS 7 per child**

Figure 3: MoGCSP, excluding SP, showing its nominal budget vs. Real budget per child



Sources: Nominal budget - MOF, Real terms and per child calculated using data from IMF and UN WPP

Figure 4: DSWCD Goods and Services Budget (Nominal vs. Real)

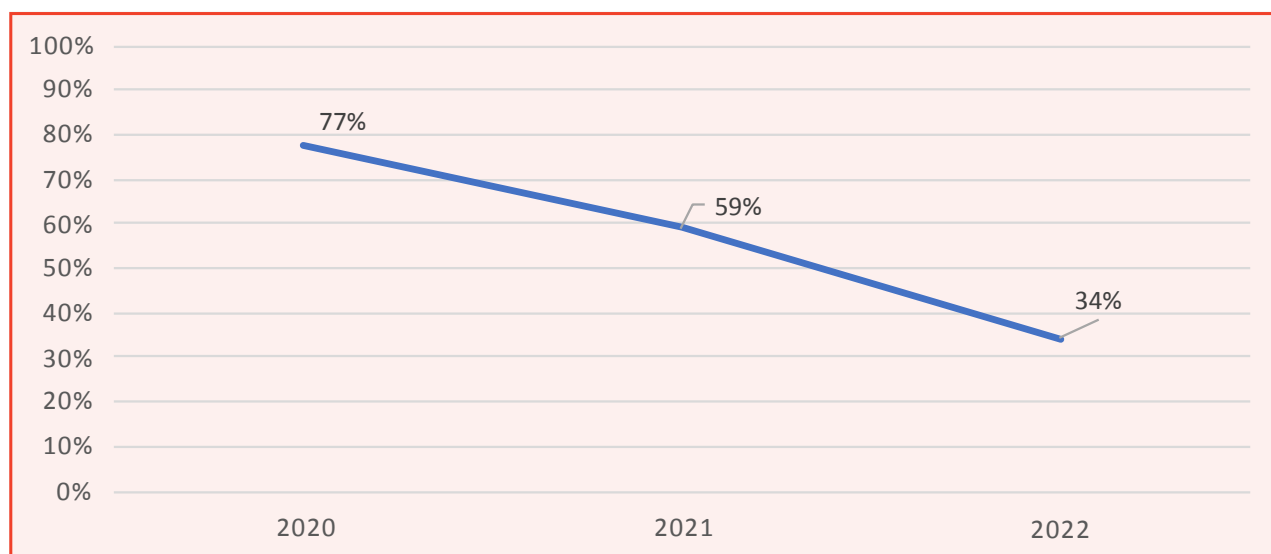


Source: MoF Budget Statements

DSWCDs, which are responsible for child protection service delivery at the district level, have experienced challenges in accessing budgeted funds in recent years. The graph above, figure 4, shows downward trends in real terms values for goods and services affecting the procurement of Goods and Services to support child protection services.



Figure 5: Budget execution and the MMDA level for goods and services



Source: OHLGS Administrative Data

The budget execution for DSWCDs goods and services has shown a downward trend, from 77% in 2020 to 34% in 2022. This will have a negative effect on the service delivery of social services, considering that the allocated budgets to DSWCDs are already inadequate. The full and timely release of budget allocations to ensure improved, efficient, and effective child protection interventions is necessary to achieve the child protection SDGs by 2030.

## 2

### The Social Welfare workforce at the sub-national level is significantly inadequate

There is a need to pay particular attention to addressing staff shortages at the DSWCD level, with only a minority having the required staff available. The provision of social services is labour intensive, and not having the minimum required staff at the sub-national level will negatively affect the delivery of child protection and social welfare services, and urgently needs to be addressed<sup>5</sup>. The Government of Ghana's support for prevention and response activities has been hindered by inadequate funding allocations to hire and pay the minimum required staff at the MMDAs level, in the fight for, and response to, violence, abuse, neglect, harmful practices and the exploitation of children.

It is estimated that the government would require at least GHS 56 million (salaries and auxiliary cost) to meet the cost of hiring new staff for the DSWCDs at the 257 MMDAs who fall short of the minimum requirement. This allocation will allow the 257 MMDAs to meet the minimum staffing norm / requirement for the effective running of the department to deliver proper child protection services. The staff employed by these departments constitute the core social welfare workforce. An analysis of the nationwide staff data for the DSWCD reveals that only 41% of the minimum number of staff positions have been filled with the current number of available staff. Only 3 regions (Upper West, Upper East and Greater Accra Regions) have filled more than 50% of the minimum number of staff positions. Only 4 MMDAs have met the minimum staffing requirement, 3 of which have more than the maximum staffing requirement<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, recruitment and retention of new staff is required rather than redeployment of the existing workforce.

#### KEY FACT



### 41%

Only 41% of the minimum number of staff positions have been filled with the current number of available staff.

5 MOGCSP, 2020. 'Social Welfare Service Workforce Capacity Assessment'

6 <https://www.unicef.org/ghana/media/3321/file/Inter-Sectoral%20SOPs%20for%20Child%20Protection.pdf>

The consequences of violence against children (VAC), including sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against women and children, are devastating for survivors and their families, but also entail high social and economic costs. It is estimated that Ghana lost US\$19 million (GHS 108.6 million) in economic costs of violence against women and girls in 2019<sup>7</sup>.

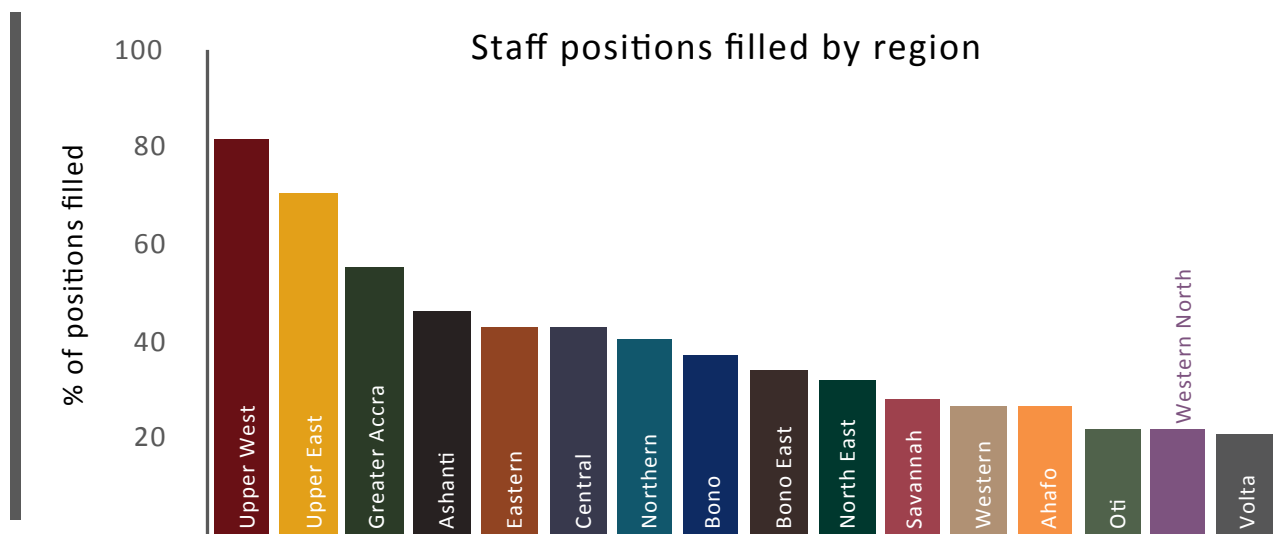
To ensure that the DSWCDs have the capacity to deliver on their mandate, the Local Government Service has developed staffing norms to “ensure that staff are effectively utilized taking into account the workload; ensure that all levels have the requisite personnel with the right mix and skills; distribute the available staff equitably between urban and rural areas and enhance the human resource (HR) Management & Development”. The minimum staffing levels specified also align with global norms for minimum staffing in low and middle-income countries<sup>8</sup>. The graph reflects the percentage of positions filled compared to these staffing norms.

Table 2: Gaps in Minimum Staffing

Gaps in Min Staffing					
Year	# DSWCD	Min. Staff	Gap (Min)	Min Gap %	
2020	2458	5732	3274	57%	
2023	2510	6078	3568	59%	

Source: SWDCD Workforce, OHLGS 2019, UN WPP population data to calculate 2023

Figure 6: Aggregated SWCD Staff Positions filled at the Regional level



Source: OHLGS Administrative Data

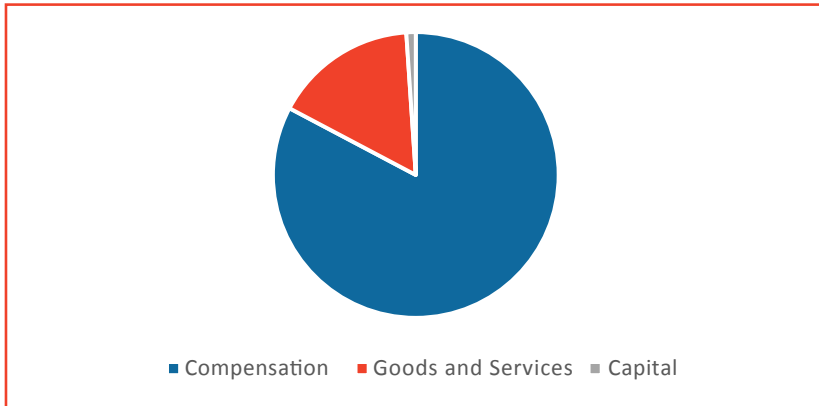
The 2023 budget allocated an estimated GHS 33.6 million to cover the compensation of the 2,510 DSWCD staff, as well as Goods & Services and capital expenditure for the social welfare and community development related programmes. This number of personnel is distributed to all the 261 MMDAs, but there is still considerable regional variation in the allocation of the budget and the staffing requirements. It is estimated that at least a further GHS 56 million is required to bring the staffing levels of all DSWCDs up to the minimum prescribed norms. To address the training, transport, and other programmatic needs (capital and Goods & Services) of the staff of the DSWCDs, an additional GHS 50 million is required each year, above the amounts currently allocated to MMDAs for these purposes. The allocation for DSWCDs within MMDAs should increase from GHS 36.9 million to at least GHS 143.9 million to improve access to responsive, decentralized social services for vulnerable children.

<sup>7</sup> ISSER, Ipsos MORI, International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) and NUI Galway. 2019. 'Economic and Social Costs of Violence Against Women in Ghana: Summary Report'. Galway: NUI Galway

<sup>8</sup> Global Social Service Workforce Alliance and UNICEF, 2022. 'Proposed Guidance on Developing Minimum Social Service Workforce Ratios'

This aggregate budget is predominantly made up of staff compensation, with limited resources allocated to Goods and Services, as shown in figure 7 below:

Figure 7: Breakdown of DSWCD's Budget by Economic Classification



Source: Estimated from MoF Budget Statement 2023 and OHLGS Administrative Data

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