

THE SOCIAL CASE RECORD
AS AN INSTRUMENT OF SOCIAL RESEARCH,
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE RECORDING PRACTICES
OF A NUMBER OF SOCIAL WELFARE ORGANISATIONS
IN CAPE TOWN.

A THESIS

PRESENTED FOR THE DEGREE

OF

MASTER OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

BY

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University of Cape Town

Chapter I.

INTRODUCTION.

"And practical work does not satisfy me; it seems like walking on shifting sand with the forlorn hope that the impress of one's steps will be lasting, and guide others across the desert." (1)

Since Mrs. Webb wrote these words over sixty years ago we have seen the development of a more constructive approach to practical social work. But there is still an element of truth in what she says. In a sense, her remarks present a challenge to social workers to-day, in that it is for them to show that practical work is not "like walking on shifting sand", but that with the aid - amongst other things - of reliable social case records it can "guide others across the desert".

Social case records are of special importance in that they represent in a collected and classified form the accumulated experience of the social worker who, through his clients, is in direct contact with a multitude of social questions and social problems. This experience, in turn, can be of great assistance to social planners, legislators, and administrators. At the same time, it is the social worker who is often best qualified to assess the value of certain measures proposed or introduced by legislative bodies. For instance, to mention only a few points of contact between practical social work and social planning, legislation and administration: Family Case Work and Social

(1) Beatrice Webb, "My Apprenticeship", Peng. Ed. Vol. II, p.324.

Security Schemes; Child Welfare and the provision of Maintenance Grants; Prisoners' Aid and the introduction of Penal Reform; the Probation Service and the cause and prevention of Juvenile Delinquency, and so forth. Mary Richmond, speaking particularly of Family Case Work, goes further than that by saying: "No better advice could be given to Family Case workers, I believe, than to study and develop their work at its point of intersection with social research, with group activities, and with social reform or mass betterment. This does not mean that they should drop their work or slight it in order to make special studies or to engage in legislative campaigns, but it does mean that they should be more scientifically productive than they now are, they should be making social discoveries as a by-product of successful case work, (to borrow a phrase from Mrs. Sheffield's), and they should be bearing faithful witness to the need of social reforms wherever their daily work reveals the need. They should supply the pertinent details necessary during the preliminary period of public education, and help later to make any new legislative measures workable by applying them in their case work." (2)

However, in order to be entitled to a hearing in matters of social planning and legislation, social work must be recognised as a scientifically based profession. This not only implies the use of scientific methods in social work procedure and the employment of scientifically trained personnel; social workers, when called upon to give their views, must be able to substantiate their

(2) Mary Richmond, "What is Social Case Work", Chapt. X, p.225/6.

statements and arguments with reliable data produced from their case records. An haphazard and unco-ordinated system of case recording would make this more difficult, and the views expressed would not command the respect necessary for closer co-operation between social work on the one hand, and scientific and legislative bodies on the other. The importance of such co-operation cannot be overemphasized. As long as it does not exist, practical work must remain "patchwork", or, as Professor McIver so aptly puts it, "we will be stretcher bearers and nurses in an eternal war, we treat the casualties but the war goes on." (3)

This study pays special attention to the co-operation between social research and practical social work. In many other fields the research worker may rely for a particular piece of research on the material collected by the practical worker over a period of time. For social research it would be those engaged in social case work who could in many instances supply information to the research worker; and it is from case records that this information would have to come. On the other hand, the social worker can obviously not be expected to write up his records solely for the benefit of the research worker and other interested persons. The primary purpose of keeping case records is to assist the worker in giving adequate service to the client; but my thesis is that social case records could, nevertheless, be used as instruments of social research. Their usefulness in this respect depends, however, to some extent at least, on the methods and techniques employed in recording case work material. Discipline in case recording, that is to say,

(3) R.M. McIver, "The Contribution of Sociology to Social Work", Chapt. I, p.6.

system and method and a certain amount of standardization of recording devices, would not only benefit case work generally but would at the same time facilitate co-operation between practical work and research. A.E. Sheffield, in her book "The Social Case History, its construction and content", maintains that different Agencies should standardize their devices and use them consistently, and goes so far as to say: "As social research workers come increasingly to extend their researches through the records of many Agencies, they have a claim to be relieved from the waste of energy that is involved in mastering a fresh code with each Agency they consult." (4)

377 It must be remembered, however, that the perfection of case recording methods and techniques is not an end in itself. It is only one of the means to more highly skilled case work. Case records are in a sense "tools" in the hands of the professional social worker who must not only know how to use them in the best interests of his clients, but also how to "construct" them.

It is with the "construction" of case records that this study is mainly concerned.

If one may be permitted, for the purpose of this discussion, to distinguish between "form" and "content", the importance of a professional record lies no doubt in its contents. But the "form", or "construction", is important in so far as it links up with the scientific presentation of data and material. "It is not the facts themselves which make science, but the method by which they are dealt with" (5) Material presented in an

(4) A.E. Sheffield, "The Social Case History, its construction and content", Chapt. IV, p.123.

(5) Quoted by F. Stuart Chapin in "Field Work and Social Research", Chapt. I, p.4.

organised and well-integrated fashion is easier to assimilate, interpret, and analyse than material haphazardly put together, whatever its intrinsic value. Moreover, it helps the social worker to clarify his own thinking about the problems involved in a case which, in turn, facilitates diagnosis and planning of treatment. This is most important where the record is used by a team of professional workers as, for instance, in Child Guidance Clinics and Health Centres, or in psychiatric and medical social work.

This study is not meant to lay down hard and fast rules about case recording. Nor is it possible to say what constitutes an "ideal" record. In fact, from the point of view of "content" Gordon Hamilton is probably right in saying that "There is no such thing as a model record; there are no routines which will make the case inevitably clear, accessible, and understandable. Records should be written to suit the case, not the case geared to a theoretical pattern." (6) But from the point of view of "form", a good record needs two essential qualities: simplicity and unity. Too much repetition, particularly of irrelevant data, overlapping of information, and elaborately printed sheets with too many headings, all add to make a record cumbersome and unnecessarily complicated. A "unified" record is one which forms a well-integrated whole. To achieve this the various recording sheets may be arranged in some order which will give meaning and continuity to the recorded material, and bring out clearly the main factors in each case. Naturally, consideration of style and the arrangement of the subject matter on each sheet play an equally important part.

(6) Gordon Hamilton, "Principles of Social Case Recording",
Chapt. I, p.5.

Furthermore, it is perhaps in the unity of a record that the interdependence of good form and good content is shown most markedly. "Although good practice is not necessarily reflected by good recording, there is a natural interplay between knowing what one is doing and reporting well what one has been doing." (7) In other words, a well-integrated record is seldom a "bad" record, unless those who keep it lack skill and understanding in their work. Even the best tools are of little use in the hands of an unskilled worker. Conversely, the skilled craftsman will do better work with good tools than with bad ones.

Translating this into terms of social work and social case records, the skilled social worker will always prefer method and system to chaos in case recording. He realises that it will assist him in the better performance of his own work, as well as raise the standard of practice generally, which is indispensable if social work is to attain the professional status to which it aspires.

The use of social case records outside the field of actual practice may not be the social worker's primary concern. But, strictly speaking, if he is true to the aims and objects of his profession, he is under an ethical obligation to give an account of what he is doing in such a way that it is communicable to others who work with the same aims and objects in view. If it is accepted that these aims are to render service to the community with the object of social amelioration, it becomes clear that practical social work cannot always carry on in isolation "treating casualties while the war goes on."

(7) Gordon Hamilton, "Principles of Social Case Recording", Chapt. I, p.4.

Perhaps the contribution which practical social work can make to the improvement of social conditions, over and above the treatment of individual cases, is not always directly discernible, nor is it perhaps always fully recognised. The keeping of reliable and well-coordinated social case records is one of the steps the social worker can take towards a wider recognition of his services to the community. One of the aspects of keeping such records is to pay some attention to recording methods and techniques.

As has already been pointed out, this study is concerned with the "form" or "construction" of records and with the devices used to record case work material. This may only be one small factor in the sum total of factors that make up a valuable professional record. But its importance will not be underestimated when it is remembered that social case records are the only means the practical social worker has to make the "impression of his steps lasting", to "guide others across the desert."

Chapter II.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE USED IN COLLECTING DATA.

A. Procedure in contacting Organisations.

In order to obtain the names and addresses of Social Welfare Organisations in Cape Town, the writer consulted the membership list of the Cape Co-ordinating Council of Social Welfare Organisations, as well as Professor O.J.V. Wagner's book "Social Work in Cape Town", Part II. In drawing up a preliminary list of Organisations, the following four categories were excluded:

- (1) Organisations whose sole function is fund-raising;
- (2) Organisations providing accommodation and/or meals only;
- (3) Boys' and Girls' Clubs providing sports and recreational facilities only;
- (4) Organisations whose members render personal service to other Organisations.

The criteria for including an Organisation's case recording system in this study were firstly, the keeping of separate files for each individual case; secondly, the inclusion of social data in the record; or, in other words, information concerning the social situation and environment of the client or family. Thus, an Organisation recording only medical or administrative data, for instance, was not considered to keep "social" case records.

A list of 71 Organisations was finally compiled. Individually typed letters were addressed to the Heads of these Organisations, briefly explaining the purpose of the study and asking for an interview. The letters were more or less identical, except that a distinction was

made between Organisations known to keep records, and those where this had to be ascertained. A further slight change in working was necessary to distinguish between Agencies (giving "out-door" service), and Institutions (giving "in-door" service). (1) This distinction has been maintained throughout the study, the term "Organisations" referring to both "Agencies" and "Institutions".

The response to these letters was most satisfactory. Within a relatively short time 63 replies had been received. Of the remaining 8 Organisations 5 were contacted by telephone, and in the case of 3 an interview was arranged. The other two Organisations advised the investigator that no individual records were kept. One Organisation was found to be a branch of another whose Head Office had already been contacted. Two Organisations could not be reached by telephone. As the investigator subsequently ascertained that they do not keep records, nothing further was done in their case.

Out of the 63 Organisations who replied to the circular letter 12 wrote to say that they do not keep individual records. No further action was taken except to thank them for their replies. In the case of one Organisation the circular letter had been passed on to Headquarters in Johannesburg. A reply was received explaining their recording system, but no interview was granted by the local branch.

(1) See Annexure 1 for specimen letter.

Interviews were arranged with the Heads of the remaining 50 Organisations, in addition to those mentioned above with whom an appointment had been made by telephone. Of these 53 Organisations it was found that a further 17 had to be excluded on the following grounds:

- (a) Records kept contain medical data only; (4)⁽²⁾
- (b) The Welfare Section of the Organisation was closed down and records are no longer kept; (1)
- (c) Only records of an administrative nature are kept; (1)
- (d) Records consist only of single sheets (mainly Application Forms) filed together in one file, or single pages in a ledger-type book; (8)
- (e) Recording system and Forms in process of being worked out; (3)

One new Organisation which had not originally been circularized was subsequently included in the investigation.

The information obtained from 37 Organisations was then tabulated and analysed.

(2) Numbers in brackets denote the number of Organisations falling into that category.

B. The Interviews.

One of the most encouraging aspects of the interviews was the interest shown in this type of study. Apparently some Organisations would like to improve their recording system, but complained that lack of time, staff, or funds prevented them from keeping their records as well as they would wish to do. Others seemed to find their systems perfectly satisfactory for their own purposes, although to the investigator they often seemed unnecessarily involved. In some instances the investigator felt that a simplified system would meet the requirements of the particular Organisations equally well without detracting from the value of the records, and that this would save time and expense in the long run.

The information obtained was recorded on Interview Cards, which were completed immediately after each interview. (3) The investigator preferred taking as few notes as possible whilst interviewing so as to create a more informal atmosphere and first give interviewees an opportunity of explaining their system of case recording in their own words. This informal method also helped the investigator to form an impression about the general attitude towards the use of case records in social research. It was interesting to note that few of those interviewed had thought of that possibility, and after the writer had explained her ideas on the subject many were sceptical as to its practicability.

(3) See Annexure 2 for specimen Interview Card.

Apart from information connected with the number and type of recording sheets used, and the method of keeping and writing up records, the Interview Cards record answers to the following specific questions on the use of records for research purposes:

- (e) Are statistics taken from records?
- (f) Have records been used for research purposes?
- (g) Is space provided for stating briefly main problem or service required?
- (h) Can records be used for research purposes?

The last question was added mainly as a matter of interest, to find out what the interviewee's opinion was with regard to his own records, and to compare this with the investigator's opinion.

These four questions and the answers to them will be further discussed in Chapter IV.

The cards were filled in by putting symbols for 'yes' or 'no' into the space left open next to each heading. A column for remarks on the use of recording sheets was included. The reverse side of the Card was left free for additional remarks, notes on impressions gained, and general comments made by the interviewees.

Other data recorded were the time taken for the interview, the degree of co-operation obtained, and whether or not further contacts would be necessary. Interviews lasted from 25 minutes to 2½ hours, with an average of 60 minutes. Co-operation was very good throughout, and only two Organisations had to be visited a second time. Blank specimen of all relevant forms, cards and recording sheets were collected and discussed during interviews.

A letter of thanks concluded all contacts.

Chapter III.

AN EXAMINATION OF PRESENT PRACTICES OF CASE RECORDING.

A. The use of Recording Sheets.

The general practice to-day is to use forms, cards, or sheets to record case work material. Some of these recording sheets are blank, others have a number of printed headings. The sheets are kept in a folder which is either filed alphabetically or numerically, consecutive numbers being given to new files as they are opened.

The number of sheets in each file, and their purpose, depends on the type of case dealt with, and their arrangement would depend partly on subject matter and partly on considerations of making the record as a whole readable and intelligible.

Apart from highly specialized information which some Organisations may have to record on separate forms introduced for that purpose only, there are a number of recording sheets which are used, or could be used by the majority of Organisations included in this study, with due regard to those not applicable in Institutions. There are 10 such sheets which were tabulated, and which are used in the following order of frequency by the number of Organisations appearing in brackets, out of a total of 37:

Face Sheets	(28)
History Sheets	(26)
Medical Sheets	(24)
Diary Sheets	(12)
Educational Sheets	(10)
Summary Sheets	(6)
Budget Sheets	(4)
Housing Sheets	(4)
Analysis Sheets	(3)
Employment Sheets	(2)

In the subsequent sections of this chapter each type of recording sheet will be discussed in detail, with some reference to its standardization.

Tables I, III, and V show the various recording sheets used by the 37 Organisations and, separately, by 20 Agencies and 17 Institutions respectively. Table II shows how many Organisations use each type of sheet, and Tables IV and VI show the same for Agencies and Institutions separately.

TABLE I

USE OF RECORDING SHEETS OR SECTIONS BY 37 ORGANISATIONS

ORGANI - SATIONS	RECORDING SHEETS OR SECTIONS										
	Face	History	Medical	Diary	Educt.	Summ.	Budget	Housing	Analysis	Employm	Total
1	█	█	█		█	█	█	█	█		8
2	█	█	█	█				█			5
3	█		█				█	█		█	5
4	█	█				█	█		█		5
5	█	█	█	█	█						5
6	█	█	█		█	█					5
7	█		█				█	█		█	5
8	█	█		█		█					4
9	█			█		█			█		4
10	█	█	█	█							4
11	█	█	█	█							4
12	█	█	█		█						4
13	█	█	█		█						4
14	█	█	█		█						4
15	█	█	█		█						4
16	█			█		█					3
17	█		█	█							3
18	█		█	█							3
19	█	█	█								3
20		█	█		█						3
21		█	█		█						3
22	█	█	█								2
23	█	█	█								2
24	█			█							2
25	█	█	█								2
26	█	█	█								2
27		█	█	█							2
28		█	█	█							2
29		█	█		█						2
30		█	█	█							2
31		█	█	█							2
32	█		█	█							2
33		█	█	█							2
34	█		█	█							2
35	█			█							2
36	█	█									2
37				█							1


- N.B. a) RECORDING SHEETS OR SECTIONS IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY
- b) ORGANISATIONS IN ORDER OF NUMBER OF SHEETS USED
- c)  MEANS ORGANISATIONS USE COMBINED FACE HISTORY SHEETS
- d) (N) MEANS INSTITUTION

TABLE II

NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS USING RECORDING SHEETS

Recording Sheets	O	R	G	A	N	I	S	A	T	I	O	N	S	Total
Face													1	28
History													2	26
Medical													3	24
Diary													4	12
Education													5	10
Summary													6	6
Budget													7	4
Housing													8	4
Analysis													9	3
Employment													10	2

N. B. a) RECORDING SHEETS IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY.

b) ONE SQUARE REPRESENTS ONE ORGANISATION.


TABLE III

USE OF RECORDING SHEETS OR SECTIONS BY 20 AGENCIES

AGENCIES	RECORDING SHEETS OR SECTIONS										
	Face	History	Medical	Diary	Summ.	Budget	Housing	Educt.	Analysis	Employm.	Total
1	█	█	█		█	█	█	█	█		8
2	█	█	█	█			█				5
3	█		█			█	█			█	5
4	█	█			█	█			█		5
5	█	█	█	█				█			5
6	█	█	█		█			█			5
8	█	█		█	█						4
9	█			█	█				█		4
10	█	█	█	█							4
11	█	█	█	█							4
16	█			█	█						3
17	█		█	█							3
18	█		█	█							3
19	█	█	█								3
23	█	█									2
24	█			█							2
25	█	█									2
26	█	█									2
27		█	█								2
28		█	█								2

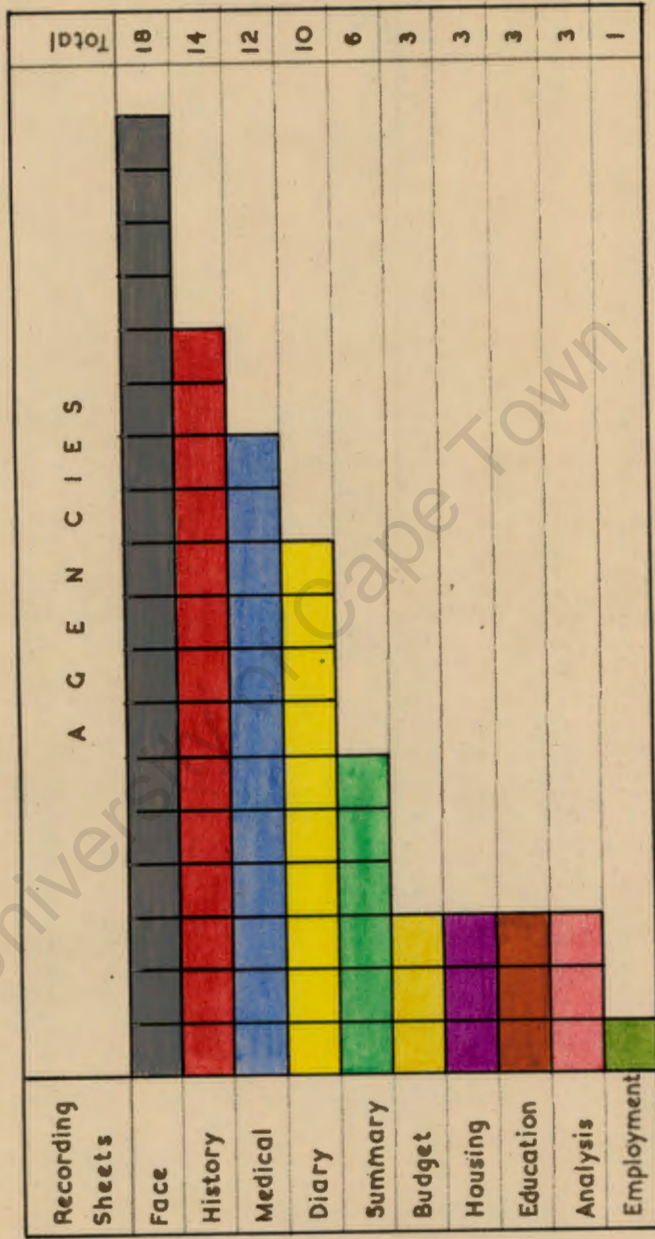
N. B. a) RECORDING SHEETS OR SECTIONS IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY

b) AGENCIES IN ORDER OF NUMBER OF SHEETS USED

c)  MEANS AGENCIES USE COMBINED FACE-HISTORY SHEETS

T A B L E I V

NUMBER OF AGENCIES USING RECORDING SHEETS



N.B. ○ RECORDING SHEETS IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY

○ ONE SQUARE REPRESENTS ONE AGENCY

TABLE V

USE OF RECORDING SHEETS OR SECTIONS BY 17 INSTITUTIONS.

INSTITUTIONS	RECORDING SHEETS OR SECTIONS										Total
	History	Medical	Face	Educat.	Diary	Heusing	Budget	Employm	Summ.	Analysis	
7		■	■			■	■	■			5
12	■	■	■	■							4
13	■	■	■	■							4
14	■	■	■	■							4
15	■	■	■	■							4
20	■	■		■							3
21	■	■		■							3
22	■		■								2
29	■			■							2
30	■	■									2
31	■	■									2
32		■	■								2
33	■	■									2
34		■	■								2
35			■		■						2
36	■		■								2
37					■						1

N.B. a) RECORDING SHEETS IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY.

b) INSTITUTIONS IN ORDER OF SHEETS USED.


c)  MEANS INSTITUTION USES COMBINED FACE - HISTORY SHEETS.

TABLE VI

NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS USING RECORDING SHEETS

Recording Sheets	I N S T I T U T I O N S	Total
History	12 squares (red)	12
Medical	12 squares (blue)	12
Face	10 squares (grey)	10
Education	7 squares (orange)	7
Diary	2 squares (yellow)	2
Housing	1 square (purple)	1
Budget	1 square (yellow)	1
Employment	1 square (green)	1
Summary	0 squares	0
Analysis	0 squares	0

- N. B. a) RECORDING SHEETS IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY
 b) ONE SQUARE REPRESENTS ONE INSTITUTION

1. The Face Sheet.

General Remarks.

A Face Sheet may be defined as a form with blanks to be filled up mainly with the identifying data of a case.

In its simplest form a Face Sheet would record the date of first contact or admission, the Reference Number of a case, the name(s), address(es), birthdate(s), marital status', and occupation(s) of the persons with whom an Organisation is, in any particular case, primarily concerned. This information would also be the minimum necessary for clearance through a Central Case Register.⁽¹⁾ Depending on administrative policy, or the particular locality in which an Organisation functions information on race, nationality and religion may also be required on the Face Sheet, under separate headings.

The majority of Organisations would find it necessary, however, to record more than the minimum information on their Face Sheets. Moreover, certain data recorded will vary according to the type of work in which an Organisation specializes. Keeping the main object in view, namely to make readily accessible concise and up-to-date information of an identifying nature, every Organisation will devise a Face Sheet to suit its own purpose.

Only within limits, therefore, is it possible to have Face Sheets follow a standardized pattern.

(1) See for comparison a specimen of the forms used by the Cape Town Central Register, Annexure 3.

Within these limits, however, a certain amount of uniformity is possible. (2)

The Face Sheet is generally placed in a prominent position in the Case Record. On opening a File it is usually the first sheet, thus enabling the social worker to see at a glance any important datum which may be needed for reference purposes. Data on Face Sheets may also be used for administrative purposes of classification. A Face Sheet is not meant to record diagnostic, prognostic, planning or treatment information, and is not designed to summarize the social situation.

Details of Face Sheets used by Organisations included in this study.

Of the 37 Organisations included in this study 28 keep Face Sheets. Of these 18 are Agencies and 10 Institutions, out of a total of 20 and 17 respectively.

In most instances these sheets are not actually headed 'Face Sheets', but judging from their purpose and function in the case record they would fall under that definition. In Institutions, the 'Application Form' usually takes the place of the Face Sheet; in Health or Community Centres it is headed 'Family Census Card'. It was found to be a widespread practice to use printed File Covers, e.g. part of the data required on a Face Sheet are recorded on the File Cover. In some cases this means duplication of entry, since several headings appear both on the File Cover and the Face Sheet.

(2) Gordon Hamilton in "Principles of Social Case Recording", Chapt. II, p.13, Footnote, mentions that standard Face Sheets are used by a number of national or Federal Agencies in the U.S.A.

In the majority of instances, however, the only information repeated on the File Cover is the name and Reference Number of the case which is indispensable for filing purposes. In a few instances the File Cover alone carries Face Sheet information.

It was also found that a number of Organisations use what may be termed here 'Combined Face-History' sheets. That is to say, in addition to Face Sheet data information on the past and present history of the client(s) is recorded on these sheets. As can be seen on Table I 5 Organisations use such combined sheets. But whilst in the case of 3 the combined sheet replaces two separate sheets, two Organisations use combined Face-History Sheets in addition to History Sheets. This is bound to involve a certain amount of duplication.

In examining the Face Sheets of the 28 Organisations in detail, the investigator found that a total of 32 possible headings could be tabulated. This was done for Agencies and Institutions separately, as well as for both combined as Organisations. (See Tables VII, IX, XI) The Organisations are listed in order of the number of headings used, and the headings in order of frequency. The maximum number of headings on a Face Sheet of any one Organisation was 22, and the minimum number 6. Tables VIII, X, XII, show the headings again listed in order of frequency, but in relation to the number of times each is used by Agencies (Table X), Institutions (Table XII), and Organisations (Table VIII). (3)

(3) For instance: All 28 Organisations have the heading 'Name', whilst only 23 give the date of first contact, only 12 the birth place, etc.

The fact that some data are not found on the Face Sheet does not mean, of course, that they do not appear elsewhere in the case record. Each Organisation must decide which data are, for their own purposes, most important and useful on the Face Sheet, which should be recorded, or repeated, on other sheets, and which need not be recorded at all.

The list of the 32 possible headings is as follows, in the order of frequency shown on Table VII (Organisations):

1. Name(s).
2. Specialized Information.
3. Address.
4. Birth Date or Age.
5. Date of First Contact, Application or Admission.
6. Race or Ethnic Group.
7. Education or Training.
8. Religion or Church Affiliation.
9. Occupation.
10. Reference Number.
11. Reference or Source of Contact.
12. Income (earned).
13. Relatives.
14. Birth Place.
15. Remarks.
16. Health.
17. Employment (place and/or name of Employer).
18. Other Organisations interested.
19. Sex.
20. Service required or Problem.
21. Marital Status.
22. Date Case closed or transferred.
23. Income other Sources.
24. Recommendations.
25. Nationality.
26. Social Worker in charge.
27. Housing.
28. Language.
29. Visits.
30. Expenses.
31. Social Diagnostic Information.
32. Correspondence.

(4)

(4) A heading which has not been tabulated is "Relationship to Head of Family". This is found mainly where an Organisation deals with the whole Family as a unit.

It will be noted that headings are not listed in the same order of frequency on Table IX (Agencies) and Table XI (Institutions). For instance, Education or Training takes 5th place on Table XI and 13th place on Table IX. This is interesting because it shows to some extent that Agencies and Institutions differ in the importance they attach to certain data on Face Sheets or Application Forms. This point, as well as the relative importance of some headings to Agencies and Institutions, will be further discussed when each heading is dealt with in detail.

TABLE VII

DETAILS OF HEADINGS ON FACE- AND FACE-HISTORY SHEETS USED BY 28 ORGANISATIONS

ORGANISATIONS	H E A D I N G S																							Total												
	Name	Spec. Inform.	Address	Birthdate or Age	Date of Applic.	Race	Eductn.	Religion	Occupn	Ref.No.	Ref. or Source	Income Earned	Relatives	Birth Place	Remarks	Health	Employment	Other Orgs. Int.	Sex	Service or Probl.	Marital Status	Date Closed	Other Income		Recomm.	Nation.	Social Worker	Housing	Language	Visits	Expenses	Social Diagn. Inf.	Corresp.			
4																																		22		
3																																		21		
8																																		21		
7																																		19		
23																																			18	
17																																			18	
32																																			17	
9																																			16	
18																																				16
10																																				16
15																																				15
2																																				14
11																																				14
24																																				14
34																																				14
1																																				13
19																																				12
5																																				12
36																																				12
22																																				11
13																																				11
25																																				10
35																																				10
16																																				9
6																																				9
14																																				8
26																																				7
12																																				6

N. B. a) HEADINGS IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY

b) ORGANISATIONS IN ORDER OF NUMBER OF HEADINGS USED

c) ORGANISATIONS MARKED **N** USE COMBINED FACE HISTORY SHEETS

d) **(N)** MEANS INSTITUTIONS

TABLE VIII

NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS USING HEADINGS ON FACE AND FACE HISTORY SHEETS

HEADINGS	O	R	G	A	N	I	S	A	T	I	O	N	S	TOTAL
Name	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	28
Spec. Inform.	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	28
Address	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	27
Birthdate or Age	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	27
Date of Application	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	23
Race	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	19
Education	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	19
Religion	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	18
Occupation	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	18
Ref. No.	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	17
Reference or source	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	16
Income Earned	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	14
Relatives	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	12
Birth Place	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	12
Remarks	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	12
Health	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	12
Employment	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	11
Other Orgs. Int.	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	10
Sex	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	10
Service or Problem	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	9
Marital Status	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	9
Date Closed	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	5
Other Income	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	5
Recommds.	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	4
Nationality	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	4
Social Worker	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	3
Housing	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	3
Language	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	3
Visits	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	2
Expenses	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	2
Social Diag. Inf.	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	2
Corresp.	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	1

N. B. : HEADINGS IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY

① ONE SQUARE REPRESENTS ONE ORGANISATION

TABLE IX

DETAILS OF HEADINGS ON FACE- AND FACE-HISTORY SHEETS USED BY 18 AGENCIES

AGENCIES	H E A D I N G S																																	
	Name	Spec. Inform.	Address	Birthdate or Age	Date of Applic.	Ref. No.	Occupn	Race	Religion	Income Earned	Refer of Source	Employ	Eductn.	Other Orgs. Int	Remarks	Sex	Relatives	Marital Status	Service or Prob.	Birth Place	Health	Other Income	Housing	Recomm	Date Close	Social Worker	Expens	Language	Visits	Soc. Diag. Inf.	Corresp.	Nation.	Total	
4																																		22
3																																		21
8																																		21
23																																		18
17																																		18
9																																		17
18																																		16
10																																		16
2																																		14
11																																		14
24																																		14
1																																		13
19																																		12
5																																		12
25																																		10
16																																		9
6																																		9
26																																		7

- N. B. a) HEADINGS IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY
 b) AGENCIES IN ORDER OF NUMBER OF HEADINGS USED
 c) AGENCIES MARKED **N** USE COMBINED FACE-HISTORY SHEETS

TABLE X

NUMBER OF AGENCIES USING HEADINGS ON FACE- AND FACE-HISTORY SHEETS.

HEADINGS	A G E N C I E S																Total
Name																	18
Specialized Information																	18
Address																	18
Birthdate or Age																	17
Date of Application																	15
Refer. no.																	14
Occupation																	13
Race																	12
Religion																	11
Income Earned																	11
Refer. or Source																	10
Employment																	10
Education																	10
Other Orgs. Int.																	9
Remarks																	9
Sex																	9
Relatives																	8
Marital Status																	8
Service or Problem																	7
Birth Place																	6
Health																	6
Other Income																	5
Housing																	3
Recomm.																	3
Date Closed																	2
Social Worker																	2
Expenses																	2
Language																	2
Visits																	2
Social Diagn. Inf.																	2
Corresp.																	1
Nationality																	0

N. B. HEADINGS IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY.

☉ ONE SQUARE REPRESENTS ONE AGENCY

TABLE XII

NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS USING HEADINGS ON FACE-SHEETS

HEADINGS	INSTITUTIONS	TOTAL
Name	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	10
Specific Information	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	10
Birthdate or Age	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	10
Address	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	9
Education	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	9
Date of Application	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	8
Race	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	7
Religion	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	7
Reference or Source	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	6
Birth Place	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	6
Health	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	6
Occupation	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	5
Nationality	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	4
Relatives	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	4
Refer. No.	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	3
Date Closed	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	3
Remarks	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	3
Income Earned	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	3
Service or Problem	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	2
Other Income	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	1
Employmt.	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	1
Other Orgs. Int.	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	1
Sex	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	1
Marital Status	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	1
Language	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	1
Recommend.	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	1
Social Worker	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	1
Housing	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	0
Expenses	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	0
Social Diag. Inform.	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	0
Visits	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	0
Corresp.	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	0

N.B. ① HEADINGS IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY
 ② ONE SQUARE REPRESENTS ONE INSTITUTION

Analysis of Headings on Face Sheets.

(1) Name(s).

All 28 Organisations record the name of the client or family on their Face Sheets. This heading may not only refer to the name of the person who actually requires the services of the Organisation, but also to the names of members of his immediate family, such as wife and children, parents where minor children are the clients, one parent or guardian, or, where the Organisation deals with the whole family as a unit, the name of any other member who belongs to that unit. The names and other particulars of relatives not living together with the client(s), or forming a separate economic unit, are usually recorded under a separate heading 'Relatives'.

(2) Specialized Information.

Under this heading the investigator grouped the data which may vary with different types of Organisations according to the work in which they specialize. These data can be put roughly into 7 categories:

- (i) Special legal, medical or psychological data;
- (ii) Details of Relief given;
- (iii) Additional dates, e.g. marriage, arrival in town or district, etc;
- (iv) Name and address of landlord;
- (v) Detailed physical description of inmate or pupil;
- (vi) Additional financial information concerning contribution to maintenance in Home or Institution;
- (vii) Information on birth of child, e.g. legitimate or illegitimate.

It was found that all 28 Organisations record such specialized information, the data falling within one or more of the 7 categories.

(3) Address.

All 18 Agencies and 9 out of 10 Institutions give the address of their client(s) on the Face Sheet. In the case of Agencies this needs no further explanation. In the case of Institutions the address is often that of the parent(s) or guardian of the pupil to be admitted. A number of Organisations provide enough space on their Face Sheets to allow for several changes of address together with the date when the move took place.

(4) Birth Date or Age.

17 out of 18 Agencies and all 10 Institutions record the birth date or age of their client(s) on the Face Sheet. No further comment is needed to show the importance of this heading.

(5) Date of First Contact, Application or Admission.

15 out of 18 Agencies and 8 out of 10 Institutions record this date. Since it is also included in the information required by the Social Case Register it is important for those Organisations who send in Registration Forms. But even for those who do not register their cases, it may be useful to show this date in a prominent place in the case record.

(6) Race or Ethnic Group.

12 out of 18 Agencies and 7 out of 10 Institutions have the heading 'Race' or 'Ethnic Group' on their

Face Sheets. Where an Organisation deals exclusively with one racial group the heading would, of course, be unnecessary. Otherwise it may be important not only for identifying purposes but also to show, if necessary, the relative number of clients or families in various racial groups served by a particular Organisation.

(7) Education or Training.

10 out of 18 Agencies and 9 out of 10 Institutions have this information on their Face Sheets. It will be seen in comparing Tables IX and XI that this heading takes 5th place for Institutions whilst it only takes 13th place for Agencies. Since the majority of Institutions deal with young persons under 21 years of age, it is important to show this information in a prominent place. It can also be seen by comparing Tables VII and I that a number of Organisations have both the heading on the Face Sheet as well as a special sheet for Education. This simply means that apart from the educational standard of the client recorded on the Face Sheet, school reports or training certificates are included in the complete social case record. Where such reports or certificates are kept in separate files, or in a school-building belonging to an Institution, without copies being attached to the case record, they were not included in the tabulation. (5)

(5) Information on education and training may also be found on the History Sheet, either under a separate heading or incorporated in the text.

In what place in the social case record, or how fully, this information should be recorded each Organisation will decide according to the importance attached to these data. But it may perhaps be pointed out here that only in a very few instances is it altogether irrelevant. Whatever the particular disability, maladjustment or need of the client, in giving advice, assistance or planning treatment, the social worker will nearly always find it useful to know something of this educational or vocational standard.

(8) Religion or Church Affiliation.

11 out of 18 Agencies and 7 out of 10 Institutions include this heading on their Face Sheets. Again, as in the case of 'Race' some Organisations cater exclusively for persons of one denomination. Of the others, the majority consider this information important enough to have a special heading on their Face Sheets.

(9) Occupation.

13 out of 18 Agencies and 5 out of 10 Institutions have this heading on their Face Sheets. In the case of Institutions dealing with children, it often refers to the occupation of the parent(s) or guardian. This heading is sometimes combined with 'Employment', but in the majority of instances occupation is recorded separately, 'Employment' referring to the place of employment and/or the name of the employer. (6)

(6) Although often regarded as an important identifying datum, 'Occupation' is not included on the Forms of the Cape Town Central Case Register.

(10) Reference Number.

The Reference Number of a case record is always found either on the File Cover or the Face Sheet, or on both. Of the 28 Organisations who keep Face Sheets 14 out of 18 Agencies and 3 out of 10 Institutions put this Number on the Face Sheet and/or File Cover. A number of Organisations who do not keep Face Sheets give the Reference Number on their File Covers. Some Organisations, particularly Institutions, do not number their Files because the case load is small and the filing system very simple. But apart from their usefulness for indexing purposes, Reference Numbers also greatly facilitate communication with other Organisations. They form part, moreover, of the minimum information required by any Social Case Register.

(11) Reference or Source of Contact.

10 out of 18 Agencies and 6 out of 10 Institutions record the source of contact of their cases on the Face Sheet. This information may be very useful for reference purposes and to have it readily accessible, as on a Face Sheet, may save time and inconvenience. It is interesting to note that it is one of the data required by the Cape Town Central Case Register.

(12) Income (earned).

11 out of 18 Agencies and 3 out of 10 Institutions record the income earned by their clients. As far as Institutions are concerned it may again refer to the income earned by the parent(s) or guardian of a child.

'Income (earned)' denotes wages and salaries as distinct from 'Income other Sources' which shows pensions, grants or rents. A number of Organisations use the plain heading 'Income', with subheadings recording wages, pensions, grants, etc. Wherever an Organisation distinguishes between various types of income, the investigator used both headings, 'Income (earned)' and 'Income other Sources'.

(13) Relatives.

8 out of 18 Agencies and 3 out of 10 Institutions record the names, addresses, and other particulars of Relatives of the client(s) on their Face Sheets. Again, this information may be useful for reference purposes, more particularly in cases where material assistance is required.

(14) Birth Place.

6 out of 18 Agencies and 6 out of 10 Institutions record their clients' Birth Place. It will be noted that Institutions appear to attach more importance to this heading than Agencies. Whether it is considered relevant or not may depend on the type of work an Organisation is doing.

(15) Remarks.

9 out of 18 Agencies and 3 out of 10 Institutions have this heading on their Face Sheets. It sometimes takes the form of 'Additional Notes', 'Further Details', or 'Additional Facts regarding Case'. The space provided under these headings serves primarily to record briefly additional information which cannot easily be included under any of the printed headings and yet must be easily accessible. On the other hand,

in most instances the space is very limited and precludes any but the briefest mention of additional factors regarding the case.

(16) Health.

6 out of 18 Agencies and 6 out of 10 Institutions have a heading on their Face Sheets under which some information on the health of the client(s) is recorded. A number of these Organisations also keep separate Medical Sheets or Reports in their Files. This may mean some duplication. In the case of Institutions, however, the state of health of a pupil or inmate at the time of admission may be recorded on the application form, whilst the medical reports refer to health matters during the pupil's stay in the Institution. Moreover, Organisations dealing with the physically handicapped will, as a rule, record medical data in more detail both on the Face Sheet and on other Sheets. But in most instances the space provided under the heading 'Health' is so limited that only a general term such as 'very good', 'good' or 'bad' can be used there. On the other hand, this limited space may be used to refer to another page or Record Sheet in the File. If this is done in red ink, it draws attention to the fact that detailed information on the client's health can be found elsewhere in the case record.

(17) Employment.

As already mentioned under 'Occupation' this heading refers to the place of employment and/or the name of the employer. 10 out of 18 Agencies and 1 Institution record this information on their Face Sheets.

It is generally considered useful for reference purposes. Organisations using combined Face-History Sheets were all found to include the heading on those Sheets.

(18) Other Organisations Interested.

9 out of 18 Agencies and 1 Institution provide space on their Face Sheets for mentioning other Organisations also interested in the particular case. In most instances the name and reference number of the other Organisation is recorded, but in a few cases also the cause of contact and the service given. Organisations which register on the Central Case Register will, of course, file the forms returned to them by the Register. But there may be subsequent notifications, and Organisations dealing with complex cases may find it more convenient to have the names and reference number of others interested all in one place instead of on a number of loose sheets or slips of paper.

(19) Sex.

9 Agencies and 1 Institution have this heading on their Face Sheets. Only a small number of Organisations use this heading because Institutions usually admit persons of one sex only, whilst on the Face Sheets of Agencies the sex of a client can be understood from his name.

(20) Service Required or Problem.

Only 7 out of 18 Agencies and 2 Institutions make note under a separate heading of the problem or service required in a case. In many instances problems are, of course, complex and the real cause of a client's maladjustment may moreover often be discovered only after a thorough investigation. In such cases the

cause of contact may perhaps nevertheless be stated briefly on the Face Sheet whilst the problem can be properly discussed on the History or Analysis Sheet. To record this information on the Face Sheet may be of value to those Organisations (mainly Agencies) who, for statistical purposes, are interested in finding out how frequently they are called upon to deal with any particular significant problem. From this point of view the heading may also prove useful for social research purposes. (7)

(21) Marital Status.

8 out of 18 Agencies and 1 Institution record the marital status of their client(s) on the Face Sheet. It will be noted that this is one of the data asked for by the Central Case Register. As far as Institutions dealing with children are concerned, it would refer to the marital status of the parent(s) or guardian.

(22) Date Case closed or transferred.

2 out of 18 Agencies and 3 out of 10 Institutions record this date on their Face Sheets. One of the 2 Agencies also gives the reason for closing a case. The majority of Organisations would probably make a note of this date elsewhere in the case record. Moreover, Institutions are required to keep special Registers where dates of admission and discharge are recorded. Agencies may find it useful, however, to have this date on the Face Sheet, (a) for reference purposes, and (b) to be able to see at a glance the time spent on a case between the date of first contact and the date it was closed.

(7) See Chapter IV.

(23) Income other Sources.

5 out of 18 Agencies and 1 Institution record the income of their clients derived from other sources than wages or salaries under a separate heading. As already mentioned under 'Income (earned)' this includes pensions, grants or rents. Since these sources of income may be of a more permanent nature than wages or salaries which may fall away through ill-health or other unforeseen circumstances, the heading facilitates the assessment of the client's economic status by distinguishing between different types of income.

(24) Recommendations.

3 out of 18 Agencies and 1 Institution have this heading on their Face Sheets. It must be noted that 2 out of the 3 Agencies and the one Institution keep Face-History Sheets, whilst the third Agency keeps no History sheet. It would appear therefore that this heading is found on the Face Sheet only where a combined Sheet is used, or where no other Sheet is available to make a note of recommendations.

(25) Nationality.

No Agency records this information. It is included on the Application Forms of 4 Institutions, in the case of two referring to the nationality of the parent(s) or guardian.

(26) Social Worker in Charge.

2 Agencies and 1 Institution include the name of the social worker in charge of the investigation on their Face Sheets. Many Organisations, particularly Agencies who employ several social workers and carry

a heavy case load, may find this very useful, and it is surprising that it is not a more generally accepted practice. The investigator's name usually appears on full case reports, but for quick reference it may be of value to have it on the Face Sheet as well.

(27) Housing.

3 Agencies but no Institution record information on the housing conditions of their clients on the Face Sheet. (8) As far as Institutions are concerned, the majority would obviously not require this information unless a special investigation is to be made into the pupil's home circumstances. In many instances such investigations are carried out by an Agency and incorporated in a general report on the case. As to Agencies, information on housing is usually of great importance, but the Face Sheet is perhaps not the most suitable place to record it. Space is limited, and unless housing data are detailed they are not very useful. The information is generally found elsewhere in the case record end, as can be seen on Table III, 3 Agencies have separate Sheets or detailed sections on housing and accommodation. (9)

(8) The one Institution recording housing conditions on its Application Forms does so in such detail that the section on 'Housing' was considered to constitute a separate Sheet.

(9) One Agency which deals specifically with housing keeps this information in separate Files.

(28) Language.

Only 2 Agencies and 1 Institution record the home language of their client(s) on the Face Sheet. If this information is to be recorded at all, it would seem that the most suitable place is the Face Sheet. On opening a File the social worker would be reminded at once in which language the client is most at ease. Should a client not be familiar with one of the two official languages, the social worker can then at least make allowances for this handicap. To put the client at ease is one of the first steps in gaining his confidence, and every social worker will agree that this^{is} most important in all rehabilitative work. Some Organisations are, of course, accustomed to deal with one language group only, and might therefore consider this heading unnecessary.

(29) Visits.

2 Agencies include a brief record of visits paid to the client's home, or the client's calls at the Office, on their Face Sheets. To record this information is of value to Agencies who want to keep a check on the number of visits paid over a period of time. But seeing that space is limited on a Face Sheet and does not allow for recording details as to the nature of the visits, a Diary Sheet may be more useful for this purpose.

(30) Expenses.

2 Agencies record the expenses as well as income of their clients on the Face Sheet. (10)

(10) One Institution records 'Income' and 'Expenses' as well as a 'Summary of Financial Circumstances' in detail on its Application Form. As this section amounts practically to a separate Budget Sheet, it was tabulated as such on Tables I and V.

Since a Face Sheet is not an appropriate place to set out a budget, the more general practice is to have either a separate Budget Sheet or Section, or to incorporate this information on the History Sheet under the heading 'Financial Position'.

(31) Social Diagnostic Information.

2 Agencies record information to this effect on their Face Sheets. One of these keeps a combined Face-History Sheet. As has been noted under 'General Remarks' at the beginning of this Chapter, a Face Sheet is not designed to record social diagnostic information. Quite apart from the consideration that a social case record should have continuity and present a well-integrated whole, a social diagnosis can seldom be expressed in one or two sentences, and there would be no space on a Face Sheet to record the process of diagnosis adequately. As can be seen on Table III, 3 Agencies keep separate Analysis Sheets where the diagnosis of a case can be discussed in detail.

(32) Correspondence.

One Agency includes a special heading on its Face Sheet for recording details as to correspondence received or sent in connection with the case. Again, a Diary Sheet may be more useful for this purpose, since a Face Sheet may easily become unwieldy if too much information is crowded onto it. (11)

(11) One Institution keeps a special Sheet to record data on correspondence between pupils and their families or friends.

2. The History Sheet.

General Remarks.

The History Sheet is one of the most important Sheets in a full social case record since it records that information which forms, so to speak, the body of the whole case. Knowledge of the client's past and present history will help the social worker in her diagnosis as well as in planning treatment. The History Sheet serves to record as much as possible of the client's earlier social background; relevant data concerning his social relationships and various environmental factors; and, if possible, some information on character and personality traits, or special behaviour problems, which may be of value in assessing the client's own resources towards adjustment and rehabilitation. An analysis of the client's social assets and liabilities may follow, interpreting the data known and thereby arriving at a diagnosis and a plan for treatment. (12) The treatment history may then be recorded in detail, including interviews between the client and the social worker, action taken by the latter and the former's response to it, until the case is closed or transferred to another Organisation.

History Sheets are usually written up in narrative form. Moreover, what is here called the History Sheet is actually very seldom only one sheet.

(12) Some Organisations have special Analysis Sheets for this purpose.

Several sheets may be necessary to record all the material available or desired. These sheets are also in a sense 'continuous', since a number of contacts may take place over a period of time and new factors may emerge while treatment is in progress.

The History Sheet is therefore also one of the most flexible recording sheets. It is to-day seldom found to be a Form with printed headings. The arrangement of the subject matter is usually left to the social worker who will decide what headings and subheadings to use to make the material most readily accessible and intelligible.

This flexibility makes it difficult to devise a standardized type of History Sheet. The information recorded may vary according to the different functions of Organisations. The psychiatric social worker may place emphasis on different aspects of a client's history than the Public Assistance Officer, or the social worker employed by a Health Centre. On the other hand, Schools of Social Work often provide their students with an 'Outline of a Social Case History', or 'Social Case Report', which is designed to serve as a guide rather than a model. These 'Outlines' actually do not vary very much from one School to another, or even from one country to another. They are often drawn up with the aid of the latest suggestions in social work literature, and they are thus, in a sense, universally applicable.

As far as some standardization of History Sheets is concerned, the following points may be noted:

As the professionally trained social worker will have received some guidance in how to record a Case History, History Sheets of different Organisations employing trained workers will have a number of similar features. Quite a large degree of uniformity is also possible within a group of Organisations doing the same type of work. Government Departments and National Bodies may even find it convenient to use printed Forms.

When discussing the advantages and disadvantages of flexibility in recording case history material it should be borne in mind that History Sheets often contain the most intimate information about a client or a family. The data may be so complex that any attempt to record them according to a preconceived pattern may not reflect a true picture of the client's history.

Details of History Sheets used by Organisations included in this study.

Of the 37 Organisations included in this study 26 keep History Sheets, or 14 out of 20 Agencies and 12 out of 17 Institutions. As already noted 2 Agencies keep History Sheets in addition to combined Face-History Sheets. As can be seen on Table IV (Agencies) History Sheets take second place to Face Sheets, while on Table VI (Institutions) they take first place together with Medical Sheets.

A detailed examination of the History Sheets of the 26 Organisations reveals little uniformity except where Organisations provide the same type of service.

Plain white foolscap sheets on which the case history is set out under separate headings are used most frequently. These histories sometimes take the form of lengthy typewritten reports, which may be useful when copies have to be sent to other Organisations interested in the case. Some Organisations use sheets of smaller sizes or different colours, and a few use large and small 'Blocksheets'. Blocksheets may have printed headings, such as Case No., Race, Name, Address, and Date. Other Organisations, mainly Institutions, have no History Sheets of their own, but have either originals or copies of completed printed Forms used by the Department of Social Welfare in their Files. A few use both their own sheets and the printed Forms. These Forms may refer to the history of a child or young person prior to placement in an Institution; or may record briefly the history, while in the Institution, of a pupil released on Licence under supervision, or to be released prior to the expiration of his period of retention. These two latter Forms are completed by the Principal of the Institution and must be submitted to the relevant Authorities. A number of Institutions keep copies of these Sheets in their Files, in case they are needed for future reference.

In view of the great variety of History Sheets used by the Organisations included in this study, it was not possible to work out a Table similar to that for Face Sheets. But, broadly speaking, the following information is recorded most frequently under separate headings and subheadings:

- (a) Family history, and/or personal history of client;
- (b) Social relationships of client;
- (c) Environmental factors (living conditions, housing, neighbourhood);
- (d) Economic circumstances (financial resources, expenses, needs);
- (e) Educational, vocational, or employment history;
- (f) Health factors;
- (g) Discussion of problem in detail;
- (h) Recommendations or plan of treatment, action taken, response.

As has already been noted under 'General Remarks' in this section, different Organisations might concentrate on different aspects of the client's history according to the services they provide. The investigator found that this^{is} also true of the Organisations included in this study. But apart from these differences, not all Organisations keep History Sheets in such detail as the above outline suggests. In fact very few do, and this may be due to two reasons:

(a) for some data separate Sheets may be provided, e.g. Budget Sheets, Analysis Sheets, Medical Sheets, etc.

(b) some Organisations do not consider it necessary or practicable to write up detailed histories of their cases. This may be due to lack of time or staff to carry out proper investigations; or the problem is a simple one and can be dealt with without a more detailed knowledge of the client's history.

Institutions, apart from the printed Forms above mentioned, do as a rule not keep a record of a pupil's or inmate's history, either prior to admission or during his stay in the Institution. The investigator was frequently told by interviewees that Principals - through daily contact over a number of years - know all about their pupils or inmates, and that there is no need to keep a record of the institutional history of a pupil. Whilst this may be perfectly true, particularly where the number of inmates is relatively small, there are two points which might be mentioned here: Principals, although their term of office usually extends over many years, do after all change, and the inmates 'caught,' as it were, in such a change, may be at a disadvantage merely because the new Principal knows little about them. The other point concerns the question of whether it is always wise to rely too much on memory. Many social workers, engaged on a difficult case, must have experienced that sense of frustration when, on hearing that a client had spent part of his youth in an Institution, no detailed report of this period could be expected. Large Institutions, employing the services of a^a psychologist or other trained worker would, of course, be in a position to supply a more complete report.

A number of Institutions are required to keep punishment records. It is interesting to note in this connection that offences committed and punishments meted out are sometimes the only data recorded as far as the pupil's behaviour is concerned. No mention is apparently made of significant incidents which would throw light

on a pupil's general qualities, his potentialities for social adjustment, or his ability to give and take as a member of a group. To record such information as well may be of value in giving advice and guidance when a pupil is about to leave an Institution to face life on his own.

The investigator could find no evidence of correlation between the 'volume' of History Sheets and the number of other sheets kept. That is to say, there is no evidence that those Organisations which write up their case histories in great detail will therefore have fewer other sheets, or that those whose case histories are less detailed will have a number of other sheets to make up a complete case record. There seems to be a tendency for those Organisations which keep full and detailed History Sheets to have also more than the average number of other Sheets, and often fairly elaborate Face Sheets as well. But this tendency is not pronounced enough to warrant a generalization as far as the whole group is concerned.

The close examination of the History Sheets has revealed rather that, here again, there is little uniformity in method or system either in the way in which these Sheets are written up or in the way in which they are integrated into the case record as part of a well-planned whole.

3. The Medical Sheet.

The Medical Sheet may take the form of a more or less detailed Doctor's report on the client's general state of health, sometimes including a record of his medical history; or it may be a Doctor's Certificate supplying specific information as to the client's fitness for work or need for further medical attention. Depending on the type of service provided by the Organisation, data supplied by psychologists and psychiatrists may also be recorded on these Sheets, or on separate sheets attached to medical reports.

Strangely enough, it has not always been sufficiently realized in social work practice that a causal relationship may exist between ill-health and social maladjustment. In the past, except for Mental Health Organisations and those caring for the physically handicapped, it was seldom that detailed information on the client's physical and mental condition was included in social case records. To-day, generally speaking, much more attention is paid to such data, since the modern social worker is aware of the importance of interplay between health and social factors.

It is interesting to note that 24 out of the 37 Organisations included in this study, or 12 out of 20 Agencies and 12 out of 17 Institutions, keep Medical Sheets in their case records. As can be seen on Table II (Organisations), Medical Sheets take third place to Face Sheets and History Sheets. They take first place in frequency together with History Sheets for Institutions, (Table VI), and third place for Agencies (Table IV).

A number of Organisations, mainly Institutions, use the printed Medical Certificates of the Department of Social Welfare (Form C.A.10) which are completed by a District Surgeon. Some Institutions have their own printed Forms, completed by a Doctor attached to the Institution, in addition to the above Certificates. Others have Cards or Sheets on which periodic visits of a physician, and his findings, are recorded. Data on dental care may also be recorded on separate Sheets or Cards. Medical certificates from the client's own Doctor are often attached to a case record as well, but such certificates were not considered to be 'Medical Sheets' in terms of this study.

Of the 13 Organisations which do not have separate Medical Sheets in one form or another attached to their case records, 3 record health data at some length on their History Sheets; 4 keep all reports and certificates in separate files independent of social case records; 2 provide some space for general remarks on health only on their Face Sheets, and 2 are not concerned with health data unless relevant in any particular case; 2 record medical information, if at all, on their Diary Sheets as part of other data recorded from time to time.

The interesting fact remains, however, that the majority of Organisations do attach importance to the proper recording of medical and health data as part of social case recording.

4. The Diary Sheet.

A Diary Sheet is designed to record briefly day-to-day contacts with or about clients such as telephone calls, appointments, visits, correspondence and similar matters which must be noted but would make the Face Sheet unwieldy and would interrupt the narrative of the History Sheet. Diary Sheets may also be called 'Backing Sheets', or 'Index Sheets'. They may provide an index to reports, interviews, and other Sheets in the File, and they are particularly useful where case records are voluminous and sheets and documents may have to be numbered. Since a Diary Sheet is designed only for brief entries, some Organisations may use a simple code to refer to the various types of contact. Reference to other Sheets, letters, or documents may be made by simply stating their name or number, possibly in red ink.

The Diary Sheet may thus serve the two-fold purpose of recording routine matters in chronological order, and of acting as an Index to other Sheets, reports or documents by showing where more detailed entries can be found.

The Diary Sheet is found either at the back of a case record file or attached to the inside cover. The latter practice may prove unsuitable where numerous contacts take place and several sheets would have to be used. Diary Sheets have either printed or roneoed headings, or they are plain sheets with a margin ruled off for dates.

Of the 37 Organisations included in this study 12 use Diary Sheets. As can be seen on Table II Diary Sheets take fourth place in frequency, although they are used less than half as frequently as Face, Medical or History Sheets.

It will also be noted that only 2 Institutions keep Diary Sheets. In the case of one it is the only Sheet kept, and it therefore contains necessarily all the information available on the inmate. In the case of the other it is used in addition to a Face Sheet. The practice of keeping only a Diary Sheet and a Face Sheet can be seen to apply also to two Agencies. The investigator found in fact that these Diary Sheets serve to some extent as History Sheets as well. They could not be tabulated as such, however, because they record only briefly contacts which take place from time to time between the client and the Agency, without going more fully into his history or establishing the causes of his maladjustment. As far as the one Institution is concerned, entries on the Diary-History Sheet concern the pupil's progress, notes on behaviour, and medical information.

The fact that Institutions on the whole were not found to keep Diary Sheets is interesting since they might serve a useful purpose. At present certain Institutions keep separate books, in diary form, mainly to record offences and punishments.

A Diary Sheet might combine the functions of a punishment book with a record of the pupil's general behaviour, special problems, good marks or any other factor which should be noted.

Such notes would be useful whenever an Institution is unable to keep more detailed History Sheets.

The Diary Sheet then seems the most suitable and economic device to record an inmate's institutional history.

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5. The Educational Sheet.

The term 'Educational Sheet' is used here to denote either a special Sheet or a Card attached to a social case record which records matters concerning the education of the client; or it may refer to School Reports and Training Certificates which give some detailed information about the client's educational and vocational standard.

The importance of including some educational data in a complete social case record has generally been recognised, although the data are perhaps not always given the attention they deserve. As has already been pointed out in the discussion on Face Sheets under the heading 'Education or Training', this information is nearly always of value in assessing a client's own resources towards adjustment and rehabilitation.

Of the 37 Organisations included in this study, 10 keep 'Educational Sheets' in their case records. Of these 3 are Agencies and 7 Institutions, as shown on Tables IV and VI. In view of the importance of educational data, it may be interesting to examine the Sheets used by the various Organisations more closely.

As far as the 3 Agencies are concerned, 2 deal specifically with children, and one with the family as a unit. The first two record fully the educational background of the child including information on parents and siblings and, where applicable, a school

history and other data supplied by teachers and Principals. The remaining Agency records, apart from name, sex and birth date, the final educational standard reached by some members of the family, and the standard reached by scholars, students and apprentices, together with the respective dates and the names of the Institutions attended. Space is also provided for remarks and comments on these data.

As far as the 7 Institutions are concerned, 5 keep their pupils' School Reports in the case files. The two others, having schools attached, keep general reports on the inmates' progress and behaviour at school and during training. It must be remembered, however, that several Institutions which have schools attached to them keep educational records in separate files, either in the school building or in a central office without including copies or summaries in the main case record. These records were not tabulated. (13)

(13) One Institution transfers educational and vocational records to the main case file when the pupil has left the Institution or has been released on License.

6. The Summary Sheet.

The Summary Sheet is primarily used to recapitulate in condensed form material already recorded elsewhere in the case record. Summaries may be written up periodically to review the process of treatment and assess the progress made; or they may summarize the whole history of the case including the course of treatment and the results obtained. This is sometimes done after a case has been closed. Such summaries may be useful should the case have to be re-opened at a future date, and they are most important, in the interests of client and social worker alike, when a case is transferred to another Organisation.

Summary Sheets may be kept in narrative form, with or without headings and subheadings, following more or less the same outline as that used for arranging the material in the case record. Apart from very brief types of summary, Summary Sheets seldom have printed headings because the important features to be summarized may vary from case to case and cannot always be put under fixed headings. It is therefore also difficult to have standardized Summary Sheets, since they may be kept for different reasons and each Organisation prefers to arrange the material to suit its own particular purpose. Not all Organisations keep summaries of all their cases. Some summarize only their more complex and long-standing cases, others write up a summary only when specially required.

Of the 37 Organisations included in this study, 6 Agencies keep Summary Sheets. Two of these have sheets with printed headings, one providing space for periodic entries to record progress, the other being in the nature of a 'closing' summary kept in the case file for future reference. As far as these two Agencies are concerned, summaries are kept for all cases. The other 4 Agencies have blank Summary Sheets which are written up in narrative style with individual headings suited to each case. One of these Agencies summarizes only its 'problem' cases. It may be assumed that other Organisations included in this study have summaries written up occasionally when the need arises. But only 6 out of 37 Organisations keep Summary Sheets as a matter of routine.

It is interesting to note that Institutions do not seem to be in the habit of keeping summaries of their cases. Only one Institution submits periodic summaries when requested, on behalf of pupils who are to come up before the board of Management. As far as Institutions are concerned the advantages of summaries, particularly 'final' summaries, are obvious. The same arguments apply as those put forward in favour of institutional histories. The investigator actually found that many Heads of Institutions would like to keep Summary Sheets, but that lack of time and staff make this often impracticable.

7. The Budget Sheet.

The Budget Sheet is used to record in a clear and concise form the financial position of an individual client or a family. Income and expenditure as well as other financial assets and liabilities may be set out in parallel columns on the Sheet, or on both sides of a Card. The sources of income and types of expenditure are often recorded under a number of headings and subheadings. Some Organisations may use printed forms, others may have blank sheets or cards to be filled up as data become available. However, since a Budget Sheet is meant to give a systematic account of the client's financial circumstances, standardized forms may be more useful, provided they leave enough space for remarks and comments which may throw additional light on the figures in the columns.

Obviously not all Organisations find it necessary to keep Budget Sheets. This applies particularly to Institutions, unless they are called upon to keep and disburse money on behalf of inmates. Generally speaking, a Budget Sheet is of value not only where the client's difficulties are mainly financial, but also where economic factors aggravate the social problem directly or indirectly. Reference to the Budget Sheet will assist the social worker in discussing financial problems with the client and in planning treatment. Moreover, detailed Budget Sheets will be useful for any Organisation that wishes to calculate the Available Income Ratio of its clients in relation to the Poverty Datum Line.

Of the 37 Organisations included in this study, 3 Agencies and 1 Institution keep separate Budget Sheets. Again, a number of Organisations (mainly Agencies) include economic data on other Sheets, under a separate heading. Others record some of this information on their Face Sheets. By comparing Table III with Table IX it can be seen that two Agencies which keep separate Budget Sheets also have the heading 'Income (earned)' on their Face Sheets. The entries on the Face Sheets refer to the amounts earned by individual members of the household, whilst the income recorded on the Budget Sheet is that of the household as a whole, from various sources, such as wages, pensions, grants, etc. The one Agency again lists the contributors, but only by index number. One Agency records individual earnings on the Employment Sheet, whilst the name of the contributor to the household's total income is noted in a marginal column on the Budget Sheet. The Institution, which deals with individual clients only, includes wages on the Employment Record, and other means of support as well as the total income in the Budget Section.

Only one Agency which does not keep a special Budget Sheet calculates the Available Income Ratio of each household with which it deals.

8. The Housing Sheet.

The 'Housing Sheet' serves to record in some detail the housing conditions under which a client or a family live. It might also include information on the type of district and the immediate neighbourhood in which the dwelling is situated. It may be important to note what social amenities are available in the locality, such as transport, schools, libraries, churches, clinics and hospitals. It is perhaps also of interest to mention the existence or lack of recreational facilities such as Clubs, Community Centres and Sports Grounds.

But the main purpose of the Housing Sheet is to give a detailed description of the dwelling itself, with special emphasis on such data as the state of repair of the house, the number and size of the rooms, toilet arrangements, water supply, and provisions for heating and lighting.

Because of its social implications, housing is a most important factor in social case work. Properly completed Housing Sheets may not only assist the social worker in her efforts to rehabilitate a family, but they may also be of great value in social research.

Of the 37 Organisations included in this study 3 Agencies and one Institution have special Housing Sheets. As far as the Institution is concerned, the section on housing describes in some detail the dwelling occupied by the inmate prior to applying for admission to the Institution. Of the 3 Agencies only one describes the district where the dwelling is situated, and makes detailed notes, under separate

headings, of the furniture in the house; e.g. whether it has been paid for, is being bought under the Hire Purchase system, or is self-made. One Agency provides space on the Housing Sheet for a Ground Floor plan of the house, and describes in detail the materials used in construction and the height and thickness of the walls. One other Agency mentions also the materials used in the construction of the walls. Only one Agency records information on water supplies and the disposal of refuse. All 4 Organisations note the number and the use of the rooms, including the number of persons per room. The terms of occupancy (whether the clients are owners, tenants, or sub-tenants) and information on rent is recorded by 2 out of the 4 Organisations. Information on the type of dwelling and the general state of repair of the house, remarks on heating and lighting, ventilation and cooking facilities are other data found on the Housing Sheets of some of these Organisations. (14)

It must be remembered again that those Organisations which do not keep Housing Sheets may record all, or part of, the above mentioned data on other Sheets, especially on History Sheets after a visit to the client's home. The question arises whether it would not be desirable to concentrate all this information on one Sheet, since the Housing Sheet is one of the few recording devices that could easily be standardized. This would make the social case record more compact and readable, and it would facilitate social research with these data.

(14)

One Agency makes a note of how to get to the house. This may save the visiting social worker much time and inconvenience.

9. The Analysis Sheet.

Broadly speaking a Case Analysis is meant to discuss in some detail three major steps in the case work process, more or less along the following lines:

- (1) Information would be recorded which would show the client's social assets and liabilities, including normal as well as pathological factors; (e.g. health, personality, economic, and vocational factors).
- (2) A tentative diagnosis of the problem bringing out the interrelationship of the various factors and showing possible causes of maladjustment.
- (3) An outline of the treatment plan, indicating what results are hoped to be achieved. At a later stage an evaluation of the treatment in terms of the plan may be added.

A Case Analysis set out in the above or a similar manner would be helpful to the social worker not only from the point of view of clarifying her own thoughts about difficult and complicated cases, but it would also avoid that kind of 'trial' and error' approach in which treatment is haphazard, unconstructive and mainly palliative.

Of the 37 Organisations included in this study 3 Agencies keep Analysis Sheets. Two of these use blank sheets arranging the material as best suited to each particular case. One Agency has a Sheet

with three main printed headings: 'Social Assets', 'Social Liabilities', and 'Proposed Plan for Rehabilitation'.

Obviously not all types of Organisation would find it necessary to keep Analysis Sheets, not do the others necessarily analyse all their cases. Some Organisations include a short analysis on their History Sheets. Furthermore, as with summaries, to write out a Case Analysis takes time, and although some Organisations would like to keep analyses they may be prevented from doing so by lack of time and adequately trained personnel.

On the other hand, taking a long-term view, a properly drawn-up analysis - possibly with the client's co-operation - may save considerable time and effort in the long run by helping to solve those problems that seem often at first unsurmountable.

10. The Employment Sheet.

The Employment Sheet is meant to record in some detail the occupational history of the client, as well as data connected with present employment such as: the type of work done; wages or salaries; name and address of employer, and whether employment is permanent, casual, or subject to seasonal fluctuations. If the client is unemployed possible reasons may be stated, mentioning at the same time whether the unemployment is likely to be temporary or chronic. This latter information may also be found on other Sheets, such as the History or Analysis Sheets, since unemployment is often one of the most important factors in social maladjustment. It may also be useful to record on the Employment Sheet whether the client is a member of a Trade Union, and if so, whether his Membership Card is in order. Also, whether the Union has a Sick Benefit Society, and what are the conditions under which it functions.

Of the 37 Organisations included in this study one Agency and one Institution keep Employment Records. As far as the Institution is concerned, the Employment Section refers to the time before application for admission to the Institution was made. It states the nature of employment, wages received, length of employment in any one place and reasons for leaving, and the name and address of the last employer. The Agency records the nature of the present employment, and gives detailed information on the client's past occupational history. Other data

are past and present wages earned, periods of unemployment, reasons for leaving employment, and the name and address of the employer. No provision is made for recording data on Trade Union membership.

Employment Sheets are, of course, not indispensable. Part of the information may easily be recorded on other sheets, particularly when the client's problem is not primarily an economic one. On the other hand, where economic factors play an important part, or constitute the main problem a detailed employment record may be of great value to the social worker in assessing the client's own resources towards rehabilitation.

B. Correlation between Headings on Face Sheets and other Recording Sheets kept.

Since the Face Sheet seems to play such an important part in the case records of the Organisations under consideration, the investigator decided to enquire whether a correlation exists between the number of headings on Face Sheets and the number of other Recording Sheets kept; the assumption being that, in order to avoid duplication or overlapping in recording practices, those Organisations which use elaborate Face Sheets would not need more than a minimum number of other Sheets; or that those having more than the average number of Recording Sheets would only need comparatively simple Face Sheets. In other words, a tentative hypothesis was framed to the effect that "the larger the number of headings on the Face Sheet the smaller the number of Recording Sheets; or, the larger the number of Recording Sheets the smaller the number of headings on the Face Sheet".

It must be noted, however, that the absence of such an inverse correlation would not be the only indication of duplication of information, nor does it necessarily mean that there is duplication at all. The fact that some Organisations keep Face-History Sheets, either in place of both Face and History Sheets or in addition to History Sheets, makes it extremely difficult to ascertain how much overlapping actually does take place. Some Organisations have no Face Sheets at all but keep

elaborate History Sheets, which include practically all the information which others divide up and record on a number of different Sheets including Face Sheets.

This enquiry into possible correlations is therefore subject to qualification, and no claim is made that the results have a wider scientific application. They merely serve to show, within limits, some aspects of local recording practices. On the other hand, such an enquiry may perhaps be useful in prompting individual Organisations - not necessarily only those included in this study - to examine their recording systems more closely from the point of view of overlapping in recording data and duplication of effort generally. If it is assumed that such practices are undesirable, more enquiries along the above, or similar, lines may eventually lead to some standardization of recording devices, and possibly some simplification on a more scientific basis.

In order to discover whether a correlation exists between the number of headings on Face Sheets and the number of other Recording Sheets kept, it was necessary to calculate the correlation coefficient of the two sets of data. This was done by using the ranking method to obtain a Rank Correlation Coefficient; or ρ , according to a formula proposed by C. Spearman:

$$\rho = 1 - \frac{6 \sum (D^2)}{N(N^2 - 1)}$$

This formula is applied by first numbering the data according to their position, e.g. assigning a rank to each individual item in the two sets of data; then, calculating the difference between the two ranks given for each individual item and squaring these differences. As several items had to be given the same rank position, the 'mid-rank' method was used. This means that a rank equal to that of the middle of the tie is assigned to all items with identical values.

Calculating the correlation coefficient for Organisations, as well as for Agencies and Institutions separately, the results were as follows:

Organisations: $\rho = +.25$

Agencies: $\rho = +.22$

Institutions: $\rho = +.12$

As can be seen from these results, the measure of correlation between the number of headings on Face Sheets and the number of other Sheets kept is negligible. But it is perhaps interesting to note that the correlations, although very small, are positive and not inverse. This would indicate that Organisations which have elaborate Face Sheets also tend to have more Recording Sheets. In other words, their recording methods generally seem to be more elaborate. However, this tendency is not pronounced enough to warrant a generalisation.

The only conclusion one may possibly be permitted to draw is that, at present, there appears to be no distinct method or system in a purely mechanical sense of recording information about clients and their cases.

C. The Index Card.

The Index Card forms an integral part of most filing systems. It primarily serves to locate the case record by showing the Reference Number of the case and the name in which the File is made out. Index Cards may also serve to classify records by being in different colours or having different-coloured tags attached to them, or by indicating with symbols or code letters into which category a case falls. They may show additional information, such as the client's address, the date of first contact and the date of closing, or the name of the Organisation to which the case has been transferred. Where more than one set of files is kept, other Reference Numbers may be shown for cross-reference purposes. Some Organisations may find it useful to keep several sets of Index Cards arranged under different headings.

The threefold purpose of Index Cards is thus to locate, identify, and classify case records, and possibly give certain additional data which may be needed for quick reference.

Of the 37 Organisations included in this study 18 out of 20 Agencies and 5 out of 17 Institutions keep Index Cards. These Cards vary to such an extent, and are in some instances used to record to many additional data, that they may almost be described as 'Face Cards' or 'Summary Cards'. It is, of course, possible to combine the functions of an

Index Card with those of any other Recording Sheet or Card, but it seems an involved process to repeat information on the Index Card that may already have been recorded in one form or another in the Case File.

Although some of this information may be needed for quick reference, space on Index Cards is usually limited and the Case Record may still have to be consulted for additional data. Elaborate Index Cards may have some use where no Face Sheets are kept, or where they serve as Summary Cards after a case has been closed. But even then it is doubtful whether the continuity of a Case Record should be broken by recording part of the material in Files and part on Index Cards.

As far as the 18 Agencies are concerned, all have the client's name and address on their Index Cards, and all but one show the Reference Number of the case. (15) 5 show the age or birth date of their clients; 4 put the date of contact or application; 4 mention the type of case or problem dealt with; 3 record economic data and 3, also, record recommendations for assistance or treatment, and two mention by whom the case was referred. Other data found in various combinations on a number of cards include race, religion, marital status, reason for contact and reason for closing a case, educational standard, occupation, and income. 2 Agencies have Index Cards

(15) This Agency files its records according to the month and year when a case is opened.

in three different colours to classify European, Coloured, and African Cases, and 2 have different coloured cards to denote certain types of cases. 3 Agencies attach coloured tags to the Cards, either for purposes of classification or to mark some cases for special attention. 5 Agencies have Cards with printed headings, 3 have typed headings, and 10 write headings in ink.

The Index Cards kept by the 5 Institutions are very elaborate and serve a number of purposes. In one instance no Face Sheet is kept and the Index Card carries detailed Face Sheet data. One Institution transfers the information on the Application Form to the Index Card, adding the dates of admission and discharge and the reason for leaving. The reverse side of this card serves as Medical Record while the pupil is in the Institution. The remaining 3 Institutions use their Index Cards to record practically all available information about a pupil, partly transferred from the Face Sheet or the Application Form, and partly taken in summary form from other Sheets.

It may be added that the use of Reference Numbers is not as widespread amongst Institutions as amongst Agencies. Case Records are often filed alphabetically or according to date of admission, the Admission Register rather than a Card Index being used to 'locate' a File.

As can be seen a considerable number of Organisations repeat information which, strictly speaking, is not meant to be shown on Index Cards and, in most instances, had already been recorded on other Sheets.

D. Other Recording Devices and Practices.

Under this heading the following four points will be discussed which are incidental to recording methods generally:

- (1) The use of different-coloured Forms or Sheets;
- (2) The use of symbols or code letters;
- (3) Whether Records are kept by clerical assistants and/or social workers;
- (4) The medium of writing.

(1) Different-coloured Forms or Sheets serve mainly to draw attention to and distinguish between the various types of recording sheets used. Thus, for instance, if all Face Sheets are white, all History Sheets blue, all Budget Sheets yellow, and so forth, it facilitates the handling and reading of the Record since the social worker will be able to see at a glance where any required information can be found. This may help also in inter-office communication, as well as in dealing with other Organisations or interested persons. Should a Recording Sheet have to be detached from the File for one reason or another, a coloured sheet, being easier to locate, is also less likely to be mislaid amongst other documents and letters. Lastly, coloured sheets may be used in various combinations to classify cases or show the category to which they belong.

The aesthetic aspect of using sheets of different colours will not be discussed here since it is rather an individual matter and beyond the scope of this study.

Of the 37 Organisations included in this study, only 3 Agencies and 1 Institution use symbols. As far as the Institution is concerned, simple symbols are used on the Index Card to denote the type of case, e.g. admitted, committed, on leave, etc. Of the 3 Agencies two use simple symbols on their Diary Sheets to show action taken. One of these also uses a simple code on Index Cards to show the category into which a case falls. The other Agency uses numbers on the Face Sheet to denote the type of service required.

It is perhaps surprising that the number of Organisations using symbols should be so small. The reason may be that Organisations do not see any particular advantage in this device, and that they find the time-saving factor negligible. Since social case records are in any case meant to be treated as confidential, this point may also fall away. On the other hand, social workers might welcome a device that simplifies the recording of purely routine matters, which is a tiresome task even if ample time is available.

(3) Whether social case records are kept by clerical assistants or social workers or both is often determined by the size of an Organisation and the case load carried by each worker. In some Organisations clerical staff is not allowed to handle case records as a matter of principle. In others, a File may be 'opened' by a clerical assistant, which usually means

that the Face Sheet or Application Form and the Index Card are filled in before the File is handed over to the appropriate Department, or the social worker who is to interview the client. Routine entries and the filing of letters and documents may also be left to the clerical staff. In some larger Organisations reports or lengthy entries on History and other Sheets may be dictated to a typist, or notes made during interviews may be handed to a clerical assistant for typing.

Of the 37 Organisations included in this study 7 Agencies and 4 Institutions stated that case records are kept by both social workers and clerical assistants. The remaining 13 Agencies and 13 Institutions stated that social workers are entirely in charge of case records. It must be noted, however, that a number of these latter Organisations do not employ clerical staff at all, and the question would not apply to them. On the other hand, in quite a few instances it is only the lack of funds that prevents these Organisations, notably Agencies, from employing clerical staff. In principle, social workers would probably welcome a certain amount of help with typing and attending to routine matters. More time could then be given to the case work proper, interviews need not be rushed, and clients can be visited more often where this is necessary.

(4) Case records may be written up in pencil, in ink, or they may be typed. It is rare to-day that entries are made in pencil since this has too many obvious

disadvantages. Some of these also apply to entries made in ink in the social worker's handwriting. For instance, records may be transferred from one social worker or one Department to another, and a succession of different handwritings not only detracts from the general readability of the Record, but social workers may also waste time in trying to decipher the writing of their predecessors. Typewritten records are certainly regarded as more convenient and more readable.

It is, however, not always practicable to use a typewriter in filling in Forms or writing up Sheets. Some Organisations use hard-cover Folders with printed headings as Face Sheets, others prefer to enter Face Sheet or other information as it is given by the client, avoiding the more formal procedure of putting the Sheet into a typewriter and typing while the client talks. (16)

As far as Institutions are concerned, Application Forms which may serve as Face Sheets are often filled in by the clients themselves.

A combination of both handwritten and typewritten entries is probably at present the most frequent practice, lengthy matter such as Case Histories, Summaries, Analyses and Reports being usually typewritten, while shorter data are entered in ink. (17)

(16) It is the experience of the writer that clients find this sometimes irritating and even frightening, possibly because they can more or less follow what is being written down but cannot see what is being typed.

(17) The writer assumes that the majority of social workers can use a typewriter. Whether they should know how to type has often been discussed, but opinions seem to differ on this subject.

Of the 37 Organisations included in this study, 17 stated that entries are both handwritten and type-written. 15 use ink only, and 3 type only. 2 use ink but also make occasional entries in pencil. The division between Agencies and Institutions is not of great interest but, roughly speaking, Institutions mainly use ink as their medium of writing, whilst the majority of Agencies use both media, i.e. some Sheets are typed and others are written up by hand.

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Chapter IV.

THE SOCIAL CASE RECORD AS AN INSTRUMENT OF SOCIAL RESEARCH WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PRESENT PRACTICES.

A. General Remarks.

If the proposition outlined in the Introduction is accepted, namely that co-operation between practical social work and social research is desirable, and that discipline in case recording methods would assist such co-operation whilst, at the same time, further the recognition of social work as a scientifically based profession, certain criteria should perhaps be laid down as to what constitutes a record useful as an instrument of social research. Bearing in mind that case records are not primarily meant to be used for research purposes, these criteria would have to be acceptable to the social worker who uses the record mainly as a tool in his everyday work as well as to the research worker who looks at it as an instrument of social research.

One of these criteria would be standardization. Obviously not all recording devices lend themselves to standardization and some only to a limited degree. One of the problems involved is to reconcile the scientific lay-out of the record with flexibility. In other words, to work out some method of recording case work material in a more unified and integrated form, whilst safeguarding the individual nature of each case recorded. If all Organisations concerned

could be induced to combine their efforts in working out such a method, a generally acceptable basic standard pattern may emerge, and a more uniform system of case recording may result, which would benefit both practical work and research.

Another criterion would be simplicity. It does not follow that the construction of a record must be complicated because the subject matter is complex. Nor do individual devices have to be elaborate, as long as they are intelligible and include all relevant data. It certainly requires skill on the part of the social worker to sort out relevant from irrelevant data, and to record these in a clear and concise form.

"Effective recording, like effective listening, is always an active process of attention and selection. 'It is not the recording,' as a wise case worker once said, 'which is difficult; it is the thinking which precedes it'. If we can think clearly about the client's needs, his circumstances, and the treatment or movement, the record will shape itself easily and simply." (1) Cumbersome recording devices are apt to obscure the real issues in a case instead of clarifying them, and the overall picture of the record is one of confusion instead of discipline. The research worker, whatever his objects in consulting a series of records, would save time and labour by not having to extricate his data from a maze of Sheets, Forms and Cards which, moreover, vary considerably from one Organisation to another.

(1) Gordon Hamilton "Principles of Social Case Recording" Chapt. I, p.8.

Other criteria which are even more important for the fruitful co-operation of practical work and research are those connected with the actual subject matter of records. Since this investigation is primarily concerned with the construction of records and not with their contents, these criteria will only be discussed in so far as they link up with the use of the various recording Sheets and Forms. Naturally, some Sheets would be more useful for research purposes than others.

The Face Sheet, meant to record mainly identifying data subsequently used for quick reference, may only be of secondary interest to the researcher. Certain statistical information may be compiled from Face Sheets, but this would depend a good deal on what data are included on Face Sheets.

The History Sheet, on the other hand, when recording sufficiently comprehensive case histories, may be very valuable for an inquiry into any particular social problem. (2) Furthermore, History Sheets, where no Analysis Sheets are kept, might reveal to the practical worker as well as to the researcher the inefficacy of certain methods of treatment, which may have been considered adequate for a long time but may need revision, and possibly a change in approach to social work problems in general.

(2) See for instance Dr. Louis F. Freed's Thesis on "The problem of European Prostitution in Johannesburg", where he made use of some of the case histories kept by the Social Services Association of S.A. (Johannesburg Branch).

The Medical Sheet, if containing more than routine information, may be instrumental in pointing to causes of poverty, unemployability, behaviour difficulties in social relationships, or other maladjustments. The research worker who consults case records including socio-medical histories, may be able to show the need for more Health Centres, or for additional Health Insurance Schemes or, most important, for more preventive services.

The Diary Sheet, again, is probably of less value to research. Since it is designed mainly for recording routine matters and day to day contacts, or as an Index to other Sheets and documents, entries are necessarily brief and may thus be of use only for statistical purposes, primarily to the social worker.

As far as the Educational Sheet is concerned, it is not easy to say what its value for research could be. Its use to the social worker has already been pointed out. It can be said, perhaps, that usefulness for research depends largely on the way it is kept. While this is true to some extent of all Recording Sheets, detailed educational and vocational histories may suggest possibilities for research on the social significance of educational data, which are not immediately apparent. Institutions, for instance, and Organisations such as Child Guidance Clinics, Vocational Guidance Bureaux, and Mental Health Societies, may provide suitable material.

The Summary Sheet may be interesting to the researcher if case summaries are comprehensive and review the case from beginning to end. Depending on the research project in question, they may save the research worker the trouble of having to go through the whole case record when all important information is available in summarized form. Again, methods of treatment and their success or failure may be gauged from completed case summaries, leading to an assessment of case work procedure in general.

The keeping of Budget Sheets is in many cases essential for the practical worker. The research worker may find them of value in investigations connected with Poor Relief Measures, the working out of Means Tests, or the calculation of Available Income Ratios in relation to the Poverty Datum Line. Whilst Budget Sheets may not always be useful by themselves, they may be important when read in conjunction with information on other Sheets. For instance, to determine in how far social maladjustment is influenced by economic factors, to what extent social problems are interwoven with economic ones, and whether or not they can be separated at all.

The Housing Sheet is perhaps one of the most important Recording Sheets both for the practical worker and the research worker. It is true that there are many social problems which exist independent of housing conditions; nor is the lack of adequate housing necessarily a permanent or inevitable state of affairs. But, bearing in mind the

present position, particularly in the urban centres in this country, there are two important social problems which may be directly connected with housing: ill-health and delinquency. There is not always a causal relationship, and often other factors complicate the problem.

It is in this field, however, that co-operation between practical work and research can be of the utmost value. Social Welfare Agencies deal in the aggregate with thousands of cases a year and visits are paid to many hundreds of homes; if Housing Sheets were standardized, and if they were completed for all these cases and subsequently analysed by research workers, some very interesting facts may come to light which might prove most useful in social planning and administration.

Most of the points mentioned in connection with History and Summary Sheets also apply to Analysis Sheets. If kept in a systematic form, case analyses can give more insight into a case work situation and make a given problem easier to understand, than almost any other recording device. It is a most useful tool to the practical social worker, and is for the same reasons also of value to the research worker.

The Employment Sheet is not unlike the Educational Sheet in that, here too, much depends on the way in which it is kept. It is perhaps rather from the negative side that the social worker is interested in employment records. A history of periodic or chronic unemployment may throw light on individual behaviour problems; whilst the research worker may

find it interesting to study the causes and effects of prolonged unemployment, or the success or failure of detention in Work Colonies. Like Budget Sheets, Employment Sheets may be more useful when read in conjunction with other Sheets, provided employment histories are fully recorded.

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B. Present Practices.

The above discussion leads to the question of how and to what extent the records of the 37 Organisations included in this study can be used as instruments of social research.

From the point of view of standardization and simplicity the records are at present not very suitable for research. Each Organisation has its own system of recording, often very elaborate, using a variety of recording devices which may or may not be satisfactory for its own purposes. Taking the records of individual Organisations, however, some research may be perfectly possible, and has in fact already been done in several instances. The main points here would be method and integration to facilitate the work of the researcher. It is only when problems of wide social import are to be investigated, and a larger and more representative sample is required than any one Organisation can provide, that the question of standardization and simplification becomes important.

The answers to questions (e), (f), (g), and (h) on the Interview Cards give some indication of the use made of records as instruments of social research; and, by implication, of the attitude of Organisations towards fuller co-operation between practical work and research.

(e) "Are Statistics taken from Records?"

11 Agencies and 3 Institutions take statistical data from their records, but this information is required mainly for administrative reasons. Of the remaining

23 Organisations some Agencies compile statistics from Daybooks or Diaries kept on the workers' desks or, in the case of Institutions, from Admission Registers and other books or cards, also mostly for administrative purposes. Statistical information is in a few cases also taken from Index Cards. Some Organisations do not keep statistics at all.

(f) "Have Records been used for research purposes?"

To this question 17 Agencies and 11 Institutions answered 'No'; 3 Agencies and 6 Institutions answered 'Yes'. The research projects mentioned were mostly undertaken by staff members of the Organisations, only in a few instances were records consulted by research workers not connected with the Organisations.

(g) "Is space provided for stating briefly main problem or service required?"

This question was included on the Interview Cards to ascertain whether Organisations make a systematic attempt to classify the problems they have to deal with, or the services they are required to provide. (3)
This statement must be qualified. Firstly, all Organisations presumably put down this information somewhere in the record. Secondly, problems cannot always be stated briefly; thirdly, what the client considers to be his problem may not be the real difficulty in his case, and the service he asks for may not be the one eventually provided. Unless the

(3) This heading on Face Sheets includes 'Cause of Contact'.

case is a simple one, (although it must be remembered that many cases start simply enough and become more and more complex as they proceed) this difficulty could be overcome by entering the information only after a diagnosis has been arrived at. This method might also make it easier to state the problem briefly. The main point is to record the information in such a way that both the practical and the research worker can use it to classify cases. The purpose of this would be to see whether certain trends in social work problems could be discovered, and whether these trends are connected with other social and economic phenomena that may require investigation. Another interesting point would be to find out whether the services required to solve certain problems are available, and whether those that are available are adequate in solving the problems encountered.

15 Agencies and 5 Institutions record the cause of contact either in terms of the main problem presented or the service required. It is perhaps of interest to mention here that very few of the interviewees recognised the value of this information for research purposes.

(h) "Can Records be used for research purposes?"

The answers to this question, being only a matter of opinion, were more difficult to classify. In the case of 4 Agencies and 3 Institutions the interviewer's opinion coincided with that of the interviewee, namely that records can be used for research purposes.

In the case of 5 Agencies and 9 Institutions interviewees and interviewer agreed that records would not be suitable for research, at least not as they are kept at present. Opinions differed as far as the remaining 11 Agencies and 5 Institutions were concerned. Either the interviewer or the interviewees, or both, were doubtful as to the value of the records for social research. In two instances the interviewer was of the opinion that records could be so used, whilst the interviewees had doubts as to how this could be done.

Generally speaking, the answers to the above questions seem to show again that the use to which social case records can be put as instruments of social research has as yet not been fully realized.

Chapter V.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

As the writer previously pointed out, this study is not meant to lay down hard and fast rules about case recording, either for the practical worker or the research worker. It may perhaps serve as a starting point for further investigations into the possibilities of closer co-operation between practical work and research. It is hoped that, from this point of view, some of the findings may prove useful.

The general interest in the project was most encouraging. The investigator discovered in many instances a genuine desire to improve recording methods, although a number of objections were raised from a practical point of view. It has, on the whole, not yet been sufficiently appreciated that a certain amount of standardization in recording devices, and a simplified system of recording case work material, would be of value to both practical and research workers as well as facilitate their co-operation. Even where records would be suitable for research, they are seldom used for this purpose.

There is little evidence of co-operation between practical work and research on a wider scale. This may be due partly to the fact that too few organisations keep records which could be used as instruments of social research, and partly to a lack

of interest on the part of research workers to make use of social case records. This touches upon the question of the recognition of social work as a scientifically based profession. If research workers feel that the data they could collect from case records are not reliable, and that much time and effort would be involved in sorting out reliable from unreliable information, they will not make use of social case records for scientific investigations.

Once practical social work has acquired the status of a scientifically based profession by virtue of its performance and the recognised standards to which its members prescribe, social research workers will undoubtedly come forward in greater numbers to offer their co-operation. Mrs. Webb's challenge can then be met.

ANNEXURE 1.

Specimen of circular letter addressed to: (a) Organisations known to keep records; (b) Organisations who may or may not keep records; (c) Institutions and Hostels who may or may not keep records.

E. Esslinger,
P.O. Box 4202,
Cape Town.

September 1st, 1949.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I should be very grateful for your assistance in a research project which I am undertaking under the supervision of Professor E. Batson, Dean of the Faculty of Social Science at the University of Cape Town.

The study deals with "The Social Case Record as an Instrument of Social Research". I am interested in particular in the methods adopted by your Organisation in keeping records, and in the type of Form or Sheet used to record case work material. (1)

I would greatly appreciate it if you could grant me an interview so that I can explain to you more fully the purpose of this study.

I enclose a stamped envelope for your reply. Could you let me know when and at what time it would be most convenient for you to see me?

Thanking you for your kind assistance,

I remain,

Yours very sincerely,

E. Esslinger.

(1) Or: (b) The study is concerned with Social Case Recording and I am interested to learn whether your Organisation keeps records in any form of the work done for individual cases or families who receive your attention and assistance.

(c) The study is concerned with Social Case Recording and I am interested to learn whether your Institution keeps records in any form of the work done for the children and young persons in your care.

ANNEXURE 2.Specimen of Interview Card.

NO:		NAME:		Remarks.	
a) Recs.kept by: b) Meth.of Writ: c) Sybols used: d) Diff.col.Shts: e) Stats.t.f.Recs: f) Have Recs.been used f.res.purps: g) Space statg.br.main probl.or serv.req:	Soc.Wk.	Cl.Asst.	1.Face Sh. 2.Hist.Sh. 3.Diary Sh. 4.Anal.Sh. 5.Summary Sh. 6.Budget Sh. 7.Medical Sh. 8.Housing. 9.Education. 10.Employment. 11.Index Card.		
	Ink	Typ.			
	Simple	Code			
h) Can Recs.be used f.res.purps:		I-ee's op.	I-er's op.		

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