How did this child get to be in this program?

The intention of this question is to:

- Elicit a history.
- Explore local SAM aetiologies.
- Explore treatment seeking behaviour/pathways to care (i.e., for contrast with the program's case-finding and referral methods).

The carer may start by, for example, describing events around case-finding and referral. Keep this as a 'reference point' during the interview and probe:

'What happened after that?'
'What happened before that?'

Do you know of any children in your village that are like your child that are not attending this program?

When asking and following up on this question, refer to/ask about:

- The index child's specific history (from above).
- Common SAM aetiologies (e.g., not recovered well after an illness).
- Specific signs (e.g., thin arms, swollen feet, kwashiorkor signs).
- Treatment seeking behaviour/pathways to care.

Encourage narratives/histories.

If YES: Why do you think the child is not attending this program?

Reflect back responses to elicit further information.

Probe: 'How do you know this?', 'Any other reasons?', 'Any other children?'.

Encourage narratives/histories.

Record the name and home location of the informant for follow-up.

If NO: If there were children like your child that are not attending this program, why do you think they would not attend the program?

Note the question is hypothetical. This may need explaining.

Reflect back responses to elicit further information.

Probe: 'Any other reasons?'

If I wanted to find children like your child and the children we have spoken about, how would I best describe them to other people?

The intention of this question is to discover local terms and aetiologies for SAM. Probe for definitions of local terms. Some terms will be descriptive. Other terms will reflect local/folk aetiologies (e.g., kwashiorkor is a Ga language term for 'the sickness the baby gets when the new baby comes'). You will find this useful for case-finding in surveys and to contrast with program messages.

Give examples of specific signs and ask for local terms.

Probe: 'Any other names for this?', 'Will most people understand what I am asking if I ask about [TERM]?’.

Ask about how this differs from the program messages (e.g., 'Are these [TERMS] the same thing as “malnutrition”?’).

If I wanted to find children like your child and the children we have spoken about, who would best be able to help me to find them?

Probe: 'Anyone else?' Make sure you ask directly about midwives/traditional birth attendants, traditional healers, the people mentioned in histories when exploring treatment seeking behaviour/pathways to care (above), and the people used by the program for case-finding and referral.

Probe: 'Why?' and 'Why not?'.

Confirm: 'You are saying that I should ask [PERSON] to take me to see children with [TERMS]. Is that right?’

This information will be used for case-finding in surveys.