



Child Maintenance Service Statistics

Data to June 2019

Quarterly

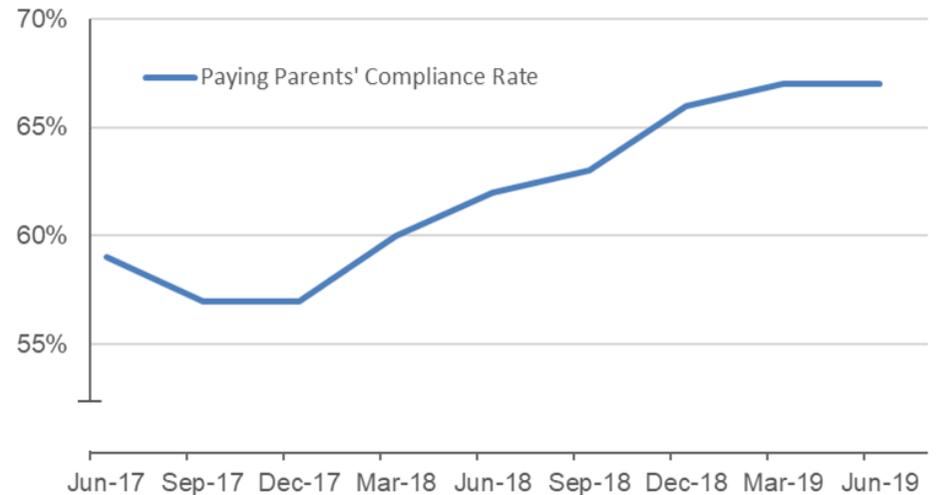
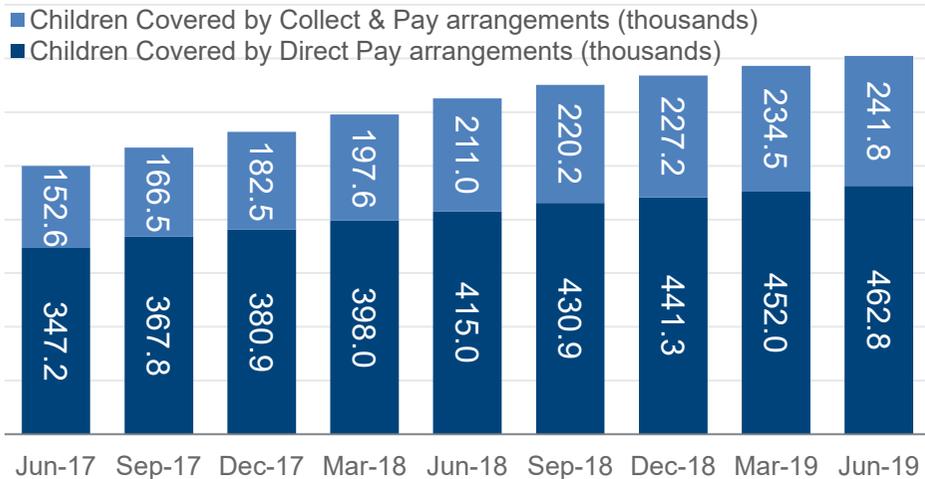
Published: 25 September 2019
Great Britain

Official
Experimental

The Child Maintenance Service was introduced in December 2012 as part of the Government's Child Maintenance Reforms. It replaced the Child Support Agency (CSA) and is for separated parents who cannot arrange child maintenance between themselves. Direct Pay is where the Child Maintenance Service calculates the amount of maintenance to be paid and parents arrange the payments between themselves. If parents cannot do this or they don't pay what was agreed, then the Child Maintenance Service can collect and manage the payments between the parents. This is the Collect & Pay service. The Child Maintenance Service has a range of enforcement actions it can use if the Paying Parent refuses to pay their child maintenance.

This publication contains statistics on the Child Maintenance Service, covering the period from January 2015 to June 2019.

Main Stories



706,700 children are covered by Child Maintenance Service arrangements.

- **462,800** through Direct Pay arrangements
- **241,800** through the Collect & Pay Service
- **2,100** not yet assigned to a service (not shown in chart)

67% of parents due to pay child maintenance through the **Collect & Pay** service paid some maintenance in the quarter ending June 2019, up from 62% one year earlier.

This includes parents who transferred from the Direct Pay service, having failed to pay their liabilities.

At a glance

Page

The Child Maintenance Service was managing 488,300 arrangements for 458,100 Paying Parents, up from 433,700 arrangements and 408,100 Paying Parents one year earlier.

3

£249.1 million was due to be paid in Child Maintenance during the quarter ending June 2019, up 14% from the same period in 2018.

7

Authors: James Kerr,

Manuella Njouoguep Laptche
& Amy Grant

Lead Statistician: Juwaria Rahman

Feedback is welcome

cm.analysis.research@dwp.gov.uk

DWP Press Office: 0203 267 5144

Published: 25 September 2019

Next edition: December 2019

© Crown copyright

What you need to know

Child maintenance is financial support between separated parents to help with the everyday costs of looking after children.

If they agree, separated parents can arrange child maintenance themselves. This is called a '**family-based arrangement**' and is a private way to sort out child maintenance. Parents arrange everything themselves and no-one else has to be involved.

The Child Maintenance Service which replaced the Child Support Agency (CSA) is for when parents cannot agree to a family-based arrangement. Parents wishing to use the Child Maintenance Service must first contact Child Maintenance Options (Options).

Child Maintenance Options is a free service that provides impartial information and support to help separated parents make decisions about their child maintenance arrangements.

Between August - October 2018:



45,500 people had a conversation with Options. They then went on to set up...

Child Maintenance Service

60%

Family-based Arrangement

22%

No Arrangement or other

18%

Percentages may not sum due to rounding.

For further information on Child Maintenance Options and family-based arrangements please see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-based-child-maintenance-arrangements-statistics>

Parents, Compliance, and Children Covered

- The **Receiving Parent** has the main day-to-day care of the children and receives the child maintenance.
- The **Paying Parent** doesn't have the main day-to-day care of the children and pays child maintenance.
- **Children Covered** is the number of children for whom the paying parent has a child maintenance arrangement.
- **Compliance** is where parents using the Collect & Pay service have paid some child maintenance in the last three months.

For more details see the Background Information document:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-maintenance-service-2012-scheme-experimental-statistics-background-information-and-methodology>

Applications to the Child Maintenance Service

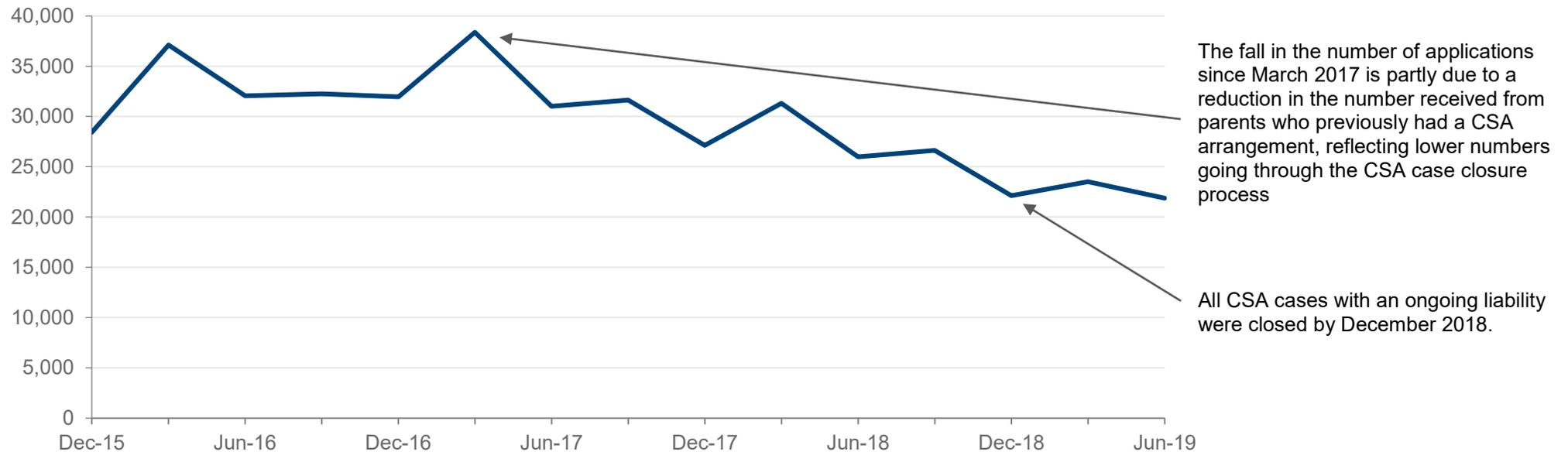
Parents who want to apply to the Child Maintenance Service must pay a £20 application fee. Parents do not have to pay this if: they have been a victim of domestic abuse; they have witnessed the abuse of their child by a current or previous partner, or a member of their own or the partner's family; or they are under 19 years of age.

Applications to the Child Maintenance Service are from:

- Parents making their first arrangement.
- Parents who previously had an arrangement with the CSA. All CSA cases with an ongoing liability were closed by December 2018. Parents were encouraged to make a new family-based arrangement or an arrangement through the Child Maintenance Service.

Intake onto the Child Maintenance Service is falling

Arrangements joining the Child Maintenance Service, quarters ending December 2015 to June 2019



In the quarter ending June 2019, **21,900** new arrangements joined the Child Maintenance Service.

At the end of June 2019, the Child Maintenance Service was managing **488,300** arrangements for **458,100** Paying Parents. This is a **13%** increase to the number of arrangements since the end of June 2018.

See **Tables 1-4** for more information on the number of applications and arrangements with the Child Maintenance Service.

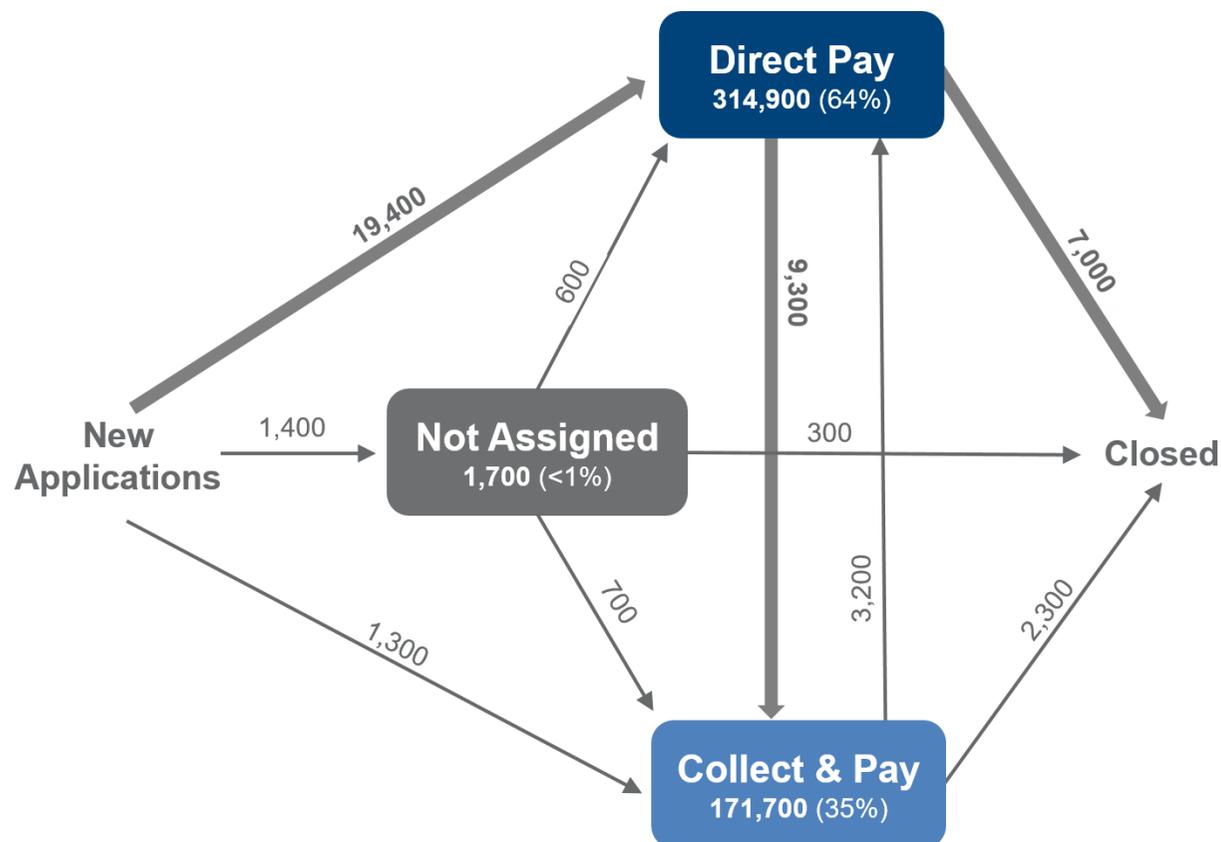
Composition of cases on the Child Maintenance Service

When a parent makes an application to the Child Maintenance Service, they will be told how much child maintenance should be paid. Some parents will then arrange the payments between themselves: this service is known as Direct Pay. Parents are issued a text message three months after they set up a Direct Pay arrangement, and at each annual review, to check that the arrangement is still effective.

If parents cannot arrange payments between themselves, or if the Paying Parent does not keep up with the payments, the Receiving Parent can ask the Child Maintenance Service to switch the case to the Collect & Pay service. This service collects and manages payments between the parents, including recovery of unpaid maintenance that built up under the Direct Pay service. This could involve the use of enforcement powers (see page 8). To use the Collect & Pay service, Paying Parents are charged 20% of their child maintenance, and Receiving Parents 4%: this is intended to encourage parents to collaborate.

Flow of arrangements on the Child Maintenance Service during the quarter ending June 2019

Each box shows the number, and percentage, of arrangements using that service type at the end of the quarter. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Arrows represent the number of cases that flowed between service types during the quarter. The largest flows (over 5,000 cases) are in bold. Some smaller flows are excluded from this diagram, but can be found in Table 5.



Most new applicants choose to start on Direct Pay: **19,400** new applicants joined Direct Pay during the quarter ending June 2019.

64% of all Child Maintenance Service arrangements use Direct Pay, with **35%** using Collect & Pay.

More parents move from Direct Pay to Collect & Pay than the other way around: **9,300** parents switched to Collect & Pay during this quarter.

More arrangements joined the service than left: the number of arrangements increased by **12,900** during this quarter.

Paying Parents switching onto the Collect & Pay service may owe unpaid maintenance which accumulated under Direct Pay.

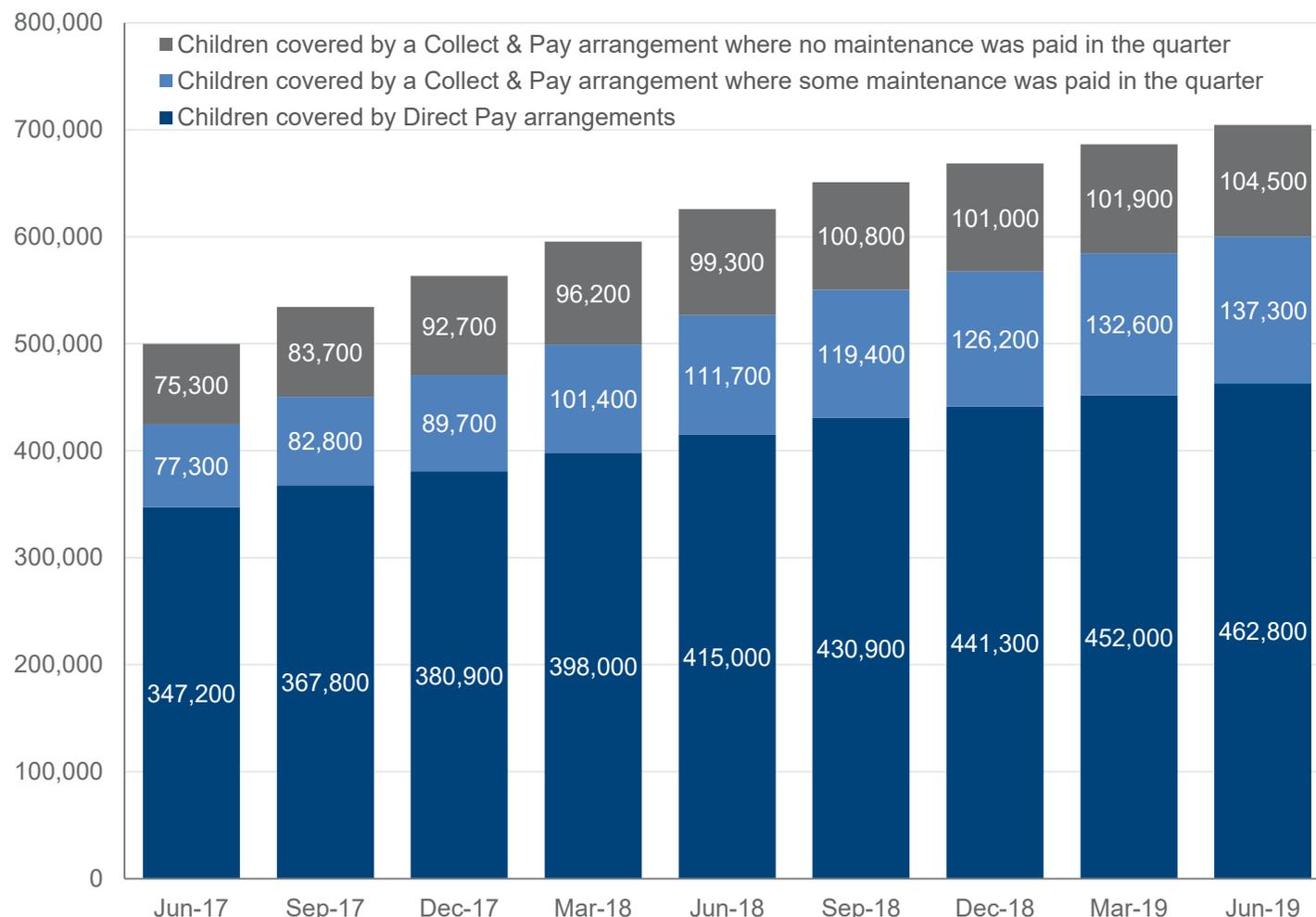
Arrangements may not be assigned to a service type for a short period following application.

See **Tables 4 & 5** for full data

Children covered by the Child Maintenance Service

706,700 children are covered by child maintenance arrangements through the Child Maintenance Service

Children covered by Child Maintenance Service arrangements, June 2017 to June 2019



462,800 children were covered by **314,900** Direct Pay arrangements at the end of June 2019.

241,800 children were covered by **171,700** arrangements through the Collect & Pay service at the end of June 2019.

137,300 of these children were covered by Collect & Pay arrangements where the Paying Parent paid some maintenance during the quarter.

65% of all children covered by Child Maintenance Service are covered through Direct Pay arrangements, with **19%** covered by Collect & Pay arrangements for which some maintenance was paid in the quarter. These proportions have changed little over the last 12 months (compare 66% and 18% in June 2018).

However, the total number of children covered by Direct Pay or paying Collect & Pay arrangements continues to increase each quarter, following the increasing number of cases managed by the Child Maintenance Service.

76,800 more children are covered by a Child Maintenance Service arrangement compared to June 2018.

Note:- For presentational reasons, a small number of children, who are covered by arrangements not assigned to a service type, have been excluded from this chart. The chart includes at least 98% of children covered by the Child Maintenance Service for all calendar quarters shown.

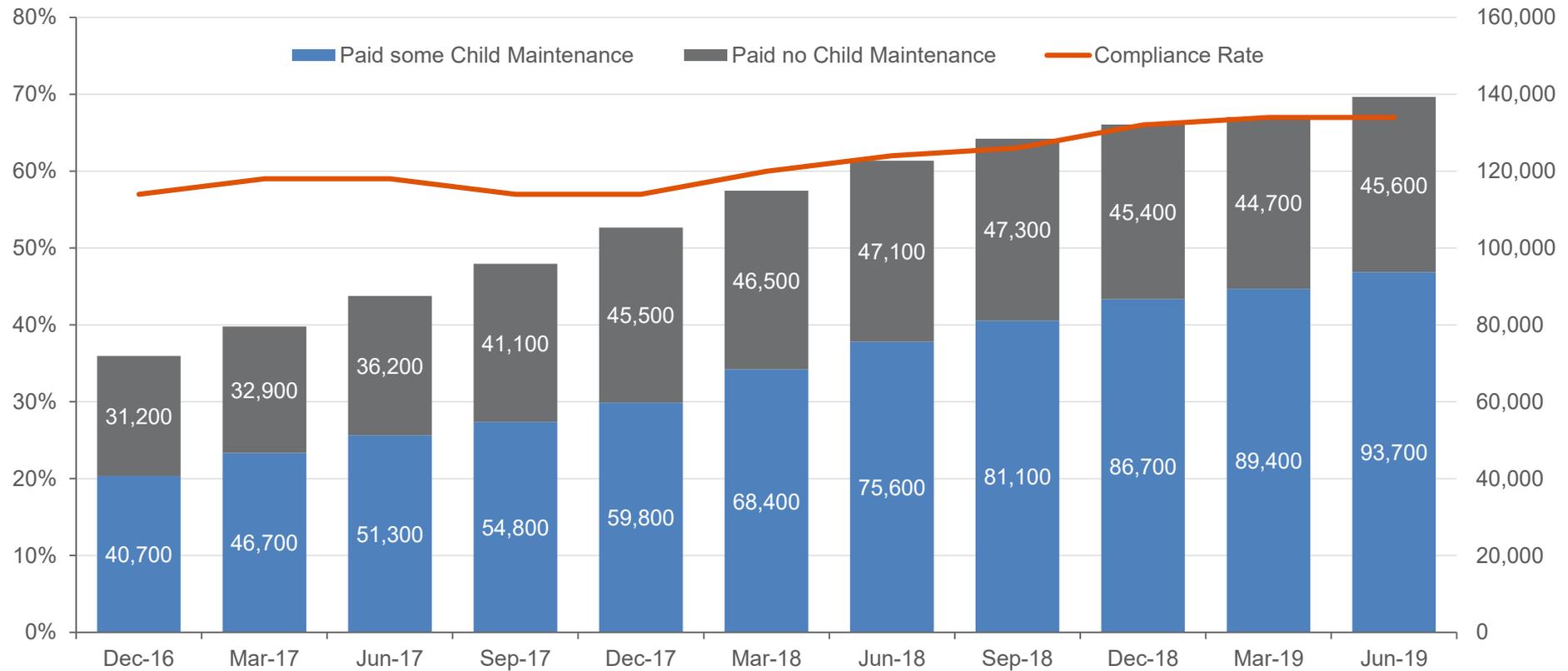
See **Table 10** for more information.

Paying Parents on the Collect & Pay Service

This includes Paying Parents transferred from the Direct Pay service because they have failed to keep up with payments

67% of Paying Parents using the Collect & Pay service are paying some of their child maintenance

Compliance rate of Paying Parents due to pay maintenance through the Collect & Pay service, quarters ending December 2016 to June 2019



In the quarter ending June 2019, **93,700** Paying Parents cleared some of their child maintenance through the Collect & Pay service resulting in **137,300** children benefiting from this money

Compliance has risen from **62%** to **67%** between the quarter ending June 2018 and the quarter ending June 2019.

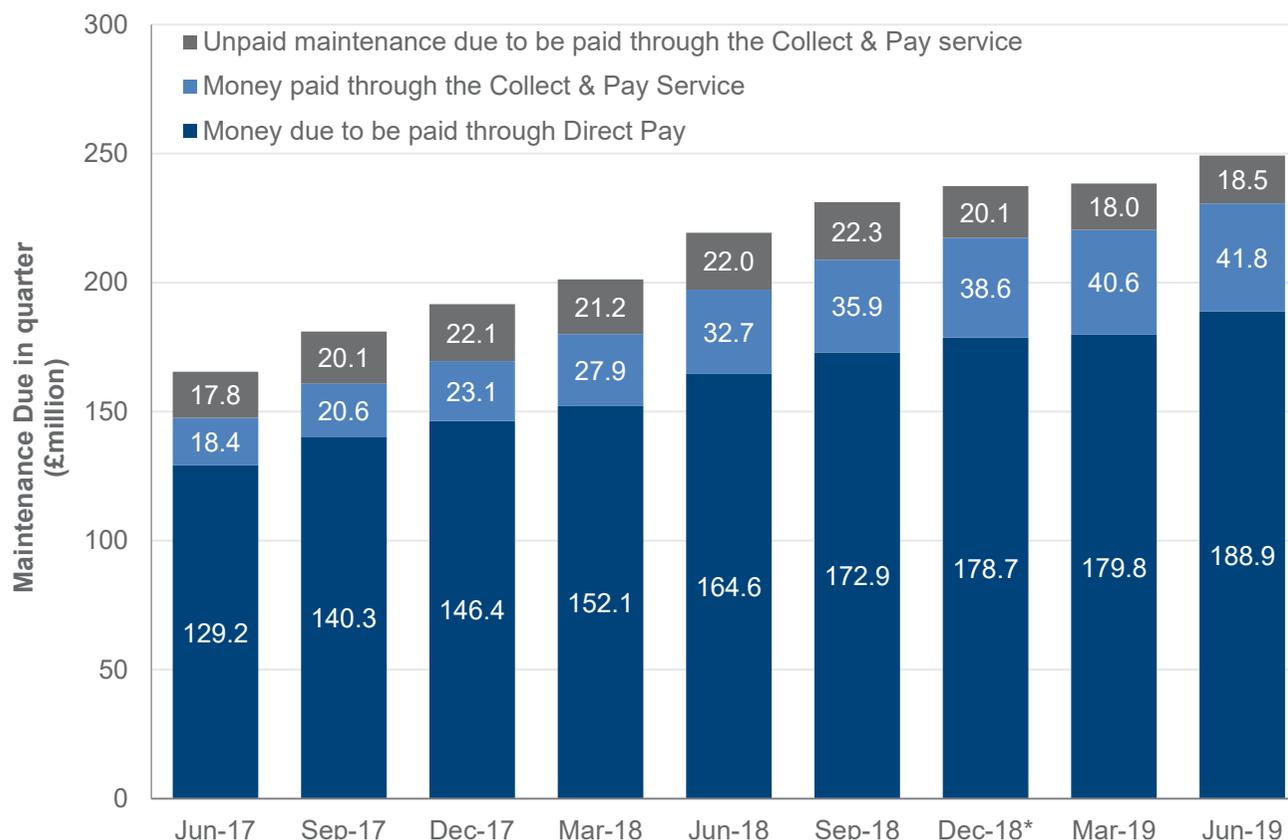
See **Table 7 and 10** for full data.

Child Maintenance Due and Paid

The Child Maintenance Service monitors payments made through the Collect & Pay service and can take enforcement action where necessary. Parents on Direct Pay with unpaid maintenance owed will first have to transfer to Collect & Pay before the Child Maintenance Service can take any action. This means the Collect & Pay service consists of a subgroup of Paying Parents who are less likely to pay.

£249.1 million was due to be paid in Child Maintenance during the quarter ending June 2019

Child Maintenance due and paid each quarter, quarters ending June 2017 to June 2019



During the quarter ending June 2019, **£249.1m** Child Maintenance was due to be paid.

£230.7m was paid through the Collect & Pay service or due to be paid through Direct Pay arrangements:

- **£188.9m** due to be paid through Direct Pay arrangements;
- **£41.8m** paid through the Collect & Pay service.

The amount of money due to be paid through the Child Maintenance Service has been rising as the number of parents using the service has increased.

£18.5m of maintenance due to be paid through the Collect & Pay service in the quarter ending June 2019 was not paid. This has fallen from £22.0m during the same period in 2018, despite the increase in the total amount of maintenance due.

Since 2012, when the Child Maintenance Service began, **£293.6m** in unpaid maintenance is owed through the Collect & Pay service. This amounts to **11%** of all maintenance due to be paid since the start of the service and includes unpaid maintenance transferred from Direct Pay to Collect & Pay.

* As a result of problems with data feeds, the figures in this chart for the quarter ending December 2018 are estimates. More detail is available in the background information note.

See **Tables 8 and 9** for more information.

Enforcement

When a payment is missed, the Child Maintenance Service contacts the Paying Parent to arrange a recovery of what is owed or to make clear the actions that may be pursued in the absence of a payment. For parents on Collect & Pay, enforcement is automatically pursued on their behalf. For parents on Direct Pay, where the Receiving Parent asks the Child Maintenance Service to take action the arrangement is first switched to the Collect & Pay service before any enforcement action can commence.

The Child Maintenance Service can collect unpaid child maintenance in 3 major ways:

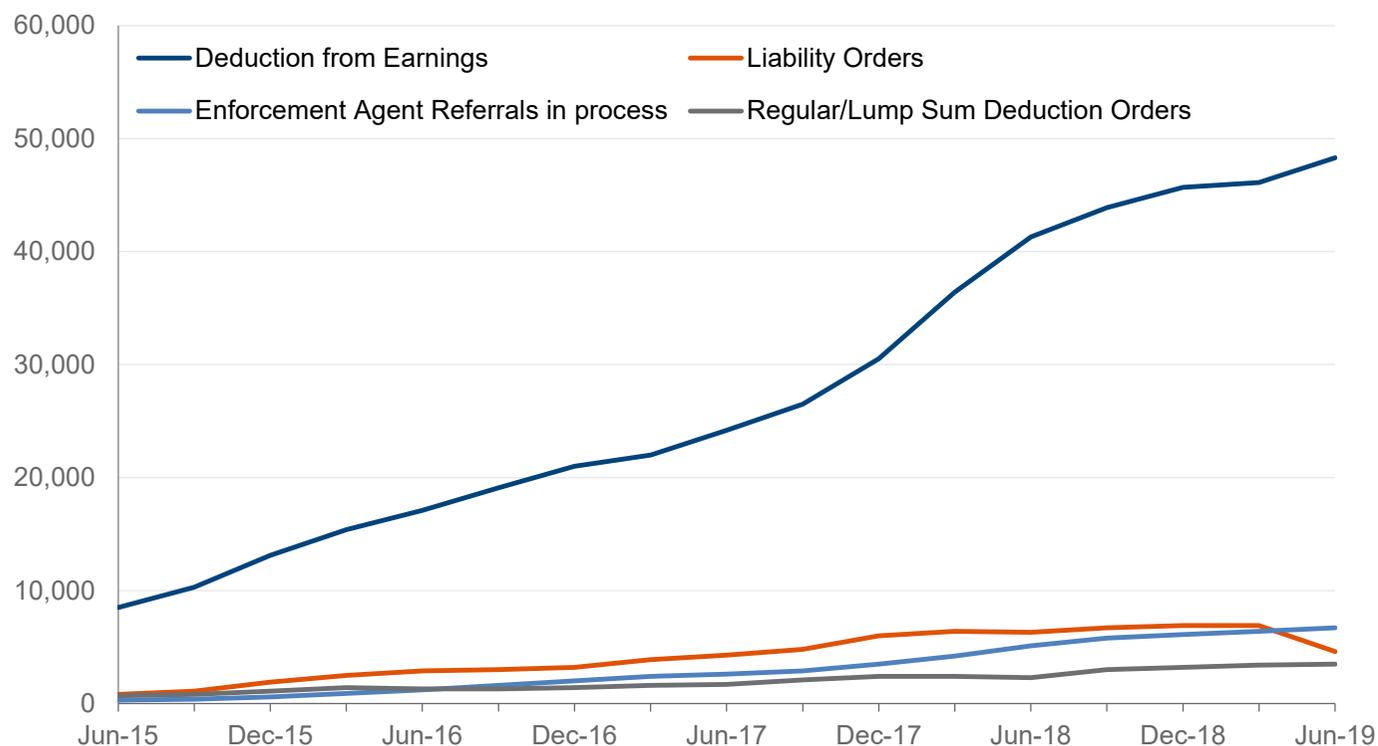
Deduction from earnings order/request - money is recovered from the Paying Parent's earnings via their employer, who will be instructed on the amount to deduct.

Deduction order – money is deducted directly from the Paying Parent's bank or building society account.

Courts – A Paying Parent can be taken to Court over unpaid maintenance. The Courts can grant Liability Orders, which allow further action to be taken, such as referral to Enforcement Agents, who can seize goods and sell them to cover any unpaid maintenance and costs. Where the Paying Parent is a homeowner, Courts may grant a Charging Order against the property, which prevents any sale without repayment of the outstanding amount. Ultimately, the court may grant an Order for Sale which forces the sale of the property. If these methods are unsuccessful, the Child Maintenance Service may apply for the courts to disqualify the parent from driving, holding a passport, or to send them to prison.

Deduction from Earnings Orders and Requests continues to rise

Enforcement actions taking place, quarters ending June 2015 to June 2019



At the end of June 2019:

- **48,300** deductions from earnings orders and requests were in place.
- **4,600** liability orders were in process. This number has been impacted by the implementation of operational changes this quarter, which will have caused a temporary reduction in the number of Liability Orders being processed. See Table 11, footnote 14 for details.
- **6,700** Enforcement Agent Referrals were in process.
- **3,500** regular and lump sum deduction orders were in process.

See **Table 11** for full data.

About these statistics

Comparisons between these statistics on the Child Maintenance Service and statistics on the CSA should not be made as the two services have different aims and cover different groups. The Government's changes to the child maintenance system in 2012 were designed to encourage parents to work together to provide for their children. Child Maintenance Options was created to support parents to set up collaborative, family-based arrangement. The Child Maintenance Service was intended for those parents who cannot make family-based arrangements.

Figures contained within this publication are rounded to the nearest hundred, percent, or £100,000. Percentages are calculated prior to rounding.

These statistics have been developed using guidelines set out by the UK Statistics Authority.

Changes to the publication

The changes briefly described below have been made since the last publication to improve or correct information. Where corrections have occurred, they are explained in detail in the background information document..

- Table 4 - the number of child maintenance arrangements using Collect & Pay has been broken down into those for which some maintenance has been paid and those for which no maintenance has been paid in the quarter.
- Table 4 & 6 - minor corrections to counts of unique Paying Parents. Now, the most recent information held to identify unique individuals is used, rather than only using information available at the end of the relevant quarter. Figures for previous quarters have been revised.
- Table 10 & Regional Tables - corrections to the methodology used to allocate arrangements (and children) to service types. This affected approximately 2-4% of all arrangements for a given quarter. Figures for previous quarters have been revised in this publication. The changes correct the following mis-allocations:
 - previously, if a Paying Parent made any payments via the Collect & Pay service during a calendar quarter, all arrangements associated with that parent would have been recorded under 'Collect & Pay - Paying', even if they were using Direct Pay at the end of the quarter; and
 - the small number of arrangements not yet assigned to a service type were previously recorded as being covered by the Collect & Pay service but now will be defined as 'Not assigned'.
- Table 11 - adjustments to the methodology used to calculate several of the data items in this table (see footnotes). Additionally, 'Money collected from Paying Parents with a Civil Enforcement Action or Deduction from Earnings Order / Request in place' is no longer reported on, as it is not fit for purpose.
- Page 4 – The chart showing the composition of the Child Maintenance Service has been replaced with a diagram representing the flows in the system.
- Page 6 – the volume of Paying Parents is now included in the chart, alongside the compliance rate.

Where to find out more

This document and the summary tables can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-maintenance-service-statistics-data-to-june-2019-experimental>

Older releases: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-on-the-2012-statutory-child-maintenance-scheme>

The Child Maintenance Service website has further information: <https://www.gov.uk/child-maintenance>

Information and statistics on family-based arrangements can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-based-child-maintenance-arrangements-statistics>