Department for Work & Pensions

Guidance

Separated families statistics: background information and methodology

Updated 29 October 2020

Contents

1. Context of the statistics
2. Purpose of the statistics
3. Definitions and terminology within the statistics
4. Source of the statistics
5. Limitations of the statistics
6. Comparisons between statistics
7. Uses of the statistics
8. Revisions
9. Feedback
10. Glossary
Print this page

1. Context of the statistics

The Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) Single Departmental Plan includes a strategic objective to continue to provide a Child Maintenance system that supports separated parents to work together to set up family based child maintenance arrangements, and to ensure that the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) is an efficient Child Maintenance service to ensure separated parents contribute towards the upkeep of their children. A key indicator relating to this objective is the proportion of separated families with a child maintenance arrangement.

This publication provides new estimates for the financial years ending 2018 to 2020 for the proportion of separated families with a child maintenance arrangement, by relevant breakdowns and trends. This has been done to revise or retire publications.

These statistics provide estimates of the following:

- the number of separated families in Great Britain and the number of children in those families
- the proportion of separated families with a child maintenance arrangement by arrangement type and whether this is statutory or non-statutory
- the number of children with child maintenance received by Parents With Care by arrangement type
- the net impact of child maintenance payments on the number of children in low income households
- breakdowns of the Parents With Care population by age and gender

In addition, the latest release provides the following estimates for the first time:

- the position of parents in separated families in the income distribution (and where they are in relation to the low income threshold) by relationship status
- breakdowns of the Non-Resident Parent population by age and gender.

How separated families might select a child maintenance arrangement

Separated families might select a child maintenance arrangement
Family based arrangement
Voluntary arrangement
Voluntary arrangement
Voluntary

10. Quality statement

These statistics are estimates based on an experimental methodology. The methodology and its limitations have been explained above. While developing the methodology, findings were compared against other data sources including the Understanding Society survey and CMS and CSA administrative databases to confirm their credibility.

The estimates are based primarily on data from the Family Resources Survey (FRS). Information about the reliability of the FRS is provided in the FRS Background information and methodology note.

Where appropriate, the FRS data has been checked for accuracy against the Department for Work and Pensions' CMS and CSA administrative databases and adjusted accordingly. Information about the reliability of CMS administrative data is provided in the Child Maintenance Service statistics background information and methodology note. Information about the reliability of CSA administrative data is provided in the Child Support Agency Quarterly Summary Statistics background quality report.

11. Feedback

We welcome feedback.

You can provide feedback on these statistics by emailing cm.analysis.research@dwp.gov.uk.

12. Useful links

Statistical releases and data tables for these statistics.

Statistics on the child maintenance arrangements made by parents who contact Child Maintenance Options.

Experimental statistics on the statutory child maintenance arrangements administered by the Child Maintenance Service.

Experimental statistics on the Child Support Agency's 1993 and 2003 statutory child maintenance schemes and on Child Support Agency case closure.

More information about the Child Maintenance Service and Child Support Agency.

More information about the Family Resources Survey.

More information about the Households Below Average Income methodology.

The DWP Single Departmental Plan includes an indicator based on these statistics ("the proportion of separated families with a child maintenance arrangement").

Is this page useful? Yes No

There is something wrong with this page

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and support

Brexit

Check what you need to do

Services and information

Benefits
Births, deaths, marriages and care
Business and self-employed
Childcare and parenting
Citizenship and living in the UK
Crime, justice and the law
Disabled people
Driving and transport
Education and learning
Employing people
Environment and countryside
Housing and local services
Money and tax
Passports, travel and living abroad
Visas and immigration
Working, jobs and pensions

Departments and policy

How government works
Departments
Worldwide
Services
Guidance and regulation
News and communications
Research and statistics
Policy papers and consultations
Transparency and freedom of information releases

Help Privacy Cookies Contact Accessibility statement Terms and conditions
Rhestr o Wasanaethau Cymraeg Built by the Government Digital Service

OGL All content is available under the Open Government Licence v3.0, except where otherwise stated

© Crown copyright