

Effective Family-based Child Maintenance Arrangements following contact with CM Options

Data for June 2016

Quarterly

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Great Britain

Official

The Government's child maintenance reforms aim to maximise the number of children benefiting from effective child maintenance arrangements. These arrangements can be through the court system, the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) or Family-based Arrangements (FBA).

Child Maintenance Options (CM Options) was created to help separated parents choose the child maintenance arrangement that best suits them. It provides free impartial information and support to help parents make informed choices about child maintenance.

DWP monitors the child maintenance outcomes for separated parents who have telephone contact with CM Options. The following release is produced quarterly and covers customers who contacted CM Options between February and April 2016.

Main Stories

Over 1 in 4 CM Options customers have FBAs

after contact with CM Options, February to April 2016.

17,500 children benefiting

from an Effective FBA after contact with CM Options, February to April 2016.

26%

17,500

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Feedback is welcome

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What you need to know

Since November 2013, the CM Options service has been the mandatory gateway to the CMS. Separated parents must talk to CM Options before they are able to access the CMS and put in place a statutory child maintenance arrangement.

DWP introduced incentives in the current statutory CMS to encourage parents to consider setting up an FBA instead of applying to the statutory CMS. CM Options plays a vital role in this by continuing to support separated parents but encouraging them to choose an FBA where this is a viable and appropriate option.

The statutory CMS is available for those parents who are unable to create an FBA. Parents who are unable to make an agreement through the CMS still have the option of using the court system to reach an agreement.

DWP monitors CM Options' effectiveness at helping separated parents to secure arrangements. This is done through regular customer telephone surveys, the results of which are reported in this publication.

FBAs, Effectiveness and Children Benefiting

Effective FBAs are child maintenance arrangements between separated parents defined as either:

- a. A regular financial agreement where at least some of the agreed maintenance amount is always/usually received on time and the parent being surveyed considers the arrangement to be working very/fairly well.
- b. An ad-hoc arrangement which includes a financial element (or transaction in kind e.g. school uniform) and the parent being surveyed considers the arrangement to be working very/fairly well.

Other Effective FBAs are FBAs not secured as a result of contact with CM Options.

Children Benefiting is the number of children covered by an effective child maintenance arrangement.

A parent could have several different child maintenance arrangements. In order to avoid double counting, a hierarchy has been applied.

For further details see the Background Information document:

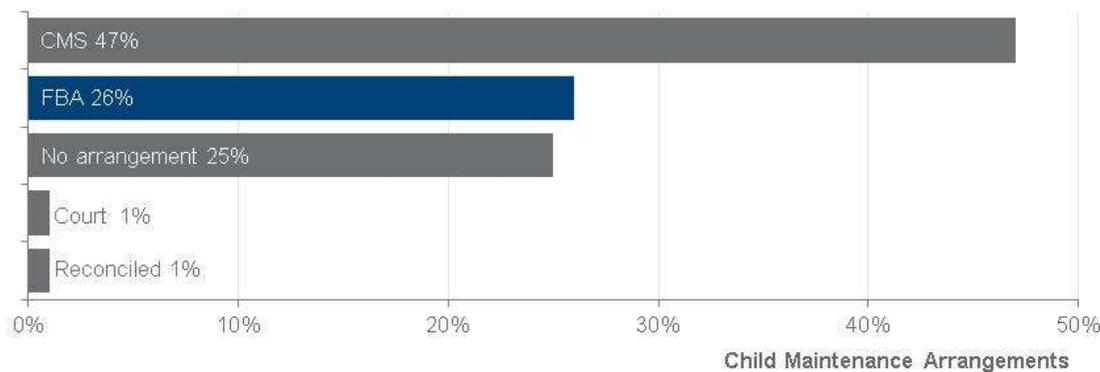
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/effective-family-based-child-maintenance-arrangements-statistics-background-information-and-methodology>

Child Maintenance Arrangements

Out of the 81,600 customers that had contact with CM Options between February and April 2016, 60,300 had a child maintenance arrangement set up. This publication discusses the outcomes of this group.

Over 1 in 4 CM Options customers have an FBA

CM Options Customers Child Maintenance Outcomes, February to April 2016



26% of CM Options customers had FBAs between February and April 2016.

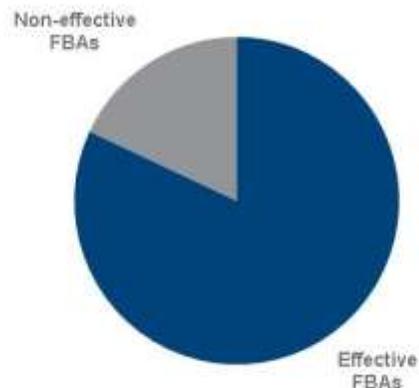
Nearly half (47%) of arrangements set up were with the CMS.

25% of customers had not agreed a child maintenance arrangement after contacting CM Options.

See **Table 1** for full summary statistics.

Of which over 80% are effective

Percentage of FBAs which are effective, February to April 2016



82% of customers with an FBA found it to be an effective child maintenance arrangement.

21,200 customers had an FBA. 17,400 were classed as effective.

Only 11,400 of these effective FBAs were as a result of contact with CM Options. The remaining 6,000 are classed as “Other effective FBAs”.

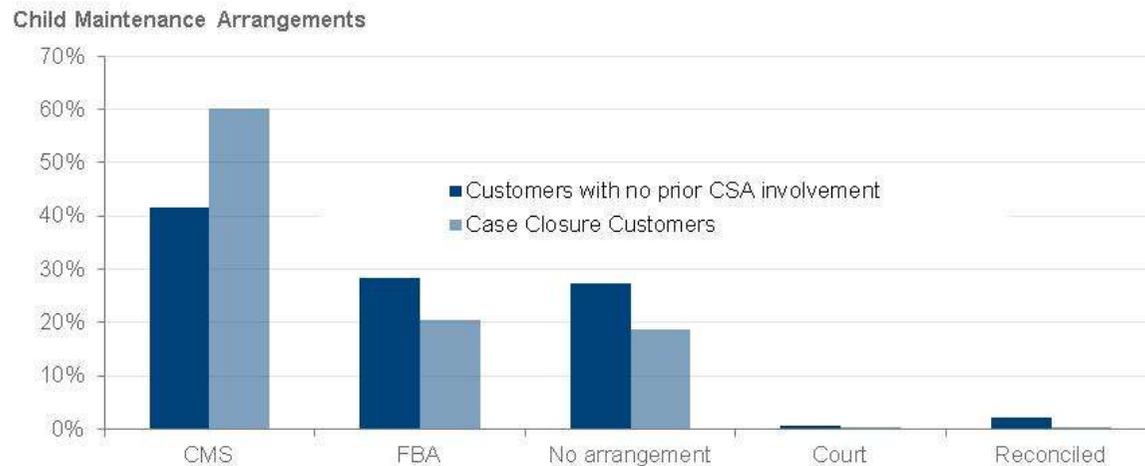
See **Table 1 and 2** for full data.

Case Closure Customers

All cases currently with the CSA (Child Support Agency) are due to have their child maintenance liability ended by 31 December 2017. From June 2014 the CSA began contacting clients to inform them that their child maintenance liability will end and directing them to contact CM Options for support in arranging a new child maintenance arrangement. This was known as the Case Closure project.

60% of Case Closure customers opted to create a statutory child maintenance arrangement with the CMS

Child Maintenance Outcomes for CM Options Customers by customer type, February to April 2016



60% of Case Closure customers who contacted CM Options decided to create a new child maintenance arrangement with the CMS once their CSA arrangement ended. This is much higher than the proportion of customers with no prior CSA involvement.

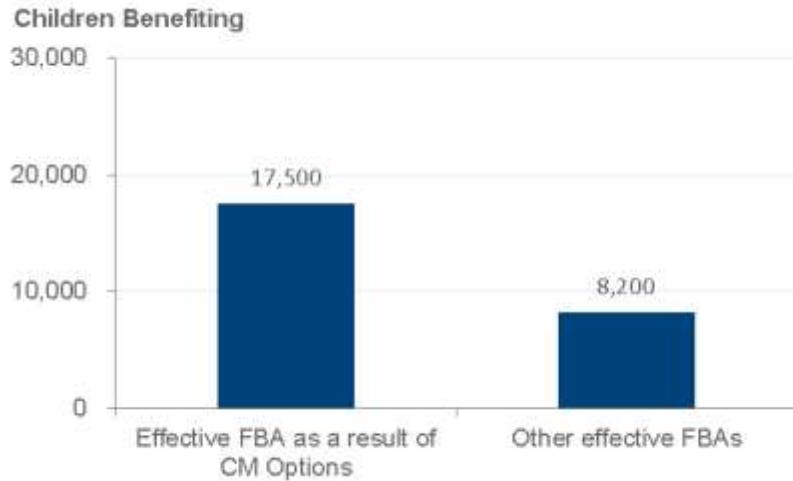
The remaining Case Closure customers who contacted CM Options decided on an FBA or did not create a child maintenance arrangement. This is a similar trend to customers with no prior CSA involvement.

See **Table 3 and 4** for full data.

Children Benefiting

17,500 new children are benefiting from effective FBAs as a result of CM Options

Children benefiting from effective FBAs after contact with CM Options, February to April 2016



25,700 children are benefiting from effective FBAs. 8,200 children are benefiting from other effective FBAs. Other effective FBAs are FBAs in place that were not secured as a result of contact with CM. These are effective FBAs that were made before contact with CM Options and have not changed since contact with CM Options.

Overall figures for each month can be found in **Table 5** and **Table 6**.

About these statistics

The data is produced through quarterly surveys conducted by the CM Options supplier on behalf of the DWP.

The target population is composed of separated parents who have had a full telephone conversation with CM Options.

The results are weighted up to the population of telephony customers who had a full conversation with CM Options to ensure the results are representative.

Certain types of customers are excluded from the sampling frame for practical purposes, including non-English speakers and customers who opt out of being contacted for research purposes.

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

Where to find out more

This document and the summary tables can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/effective-family-based-child-maintenance-arrangements-preliminary-estimates-june-2016>

Older releases: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-based-child-maintenance-arrangements-statistics>

How we plan to evaluate child maintenance reform: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/387584/child-maintenance-reforms-evaluation-strategy.pdf

The Child Maintenance Options website has further information on their work: <http://www.cmoptions.org/>