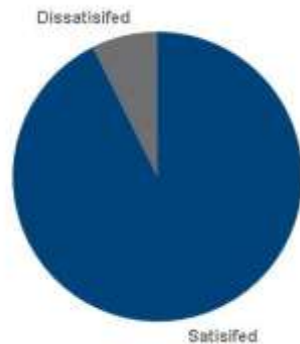


Child Maintenance Options (Options) provides free impartial information and support to help parents make informed choices about child maintenance.

## Main Stories

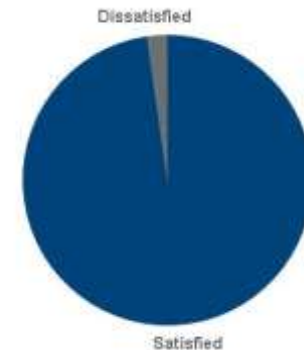
**Overall Satisfaction is 93%**  
with Child Maintenance Options



**Client Service**  
Is rated as 93%



**98%** of clients are satisfied with call waiting times



## At a glance

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93% of clients are satisfied with the service

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Client Service is rated at 93%

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Parents with main day to day care of children are more satisfied

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Case Closure clients are less satisfied

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**Lead Statistician:** Matthew Edmundson

[cm.analysis.research@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:cm.analysis.research@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

**DWP Press Office:** 0203 267 5129

Feedback is welcome

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## What you need to know

Child Maintenance Options provide impartial information and support to help parents make appropriate child maintenance arrangements. They are there to help both parents, or anyone else with an interest in child maintenance and are not biased towards any one way of arranging child maintenance.

Since November 2013, separated parents must talk to Options before they are able to use the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) to make a child maintenance arrangement.

DWP monitors client satisfaction with Options through regular telephone surveys, the results of which are reported in this publication.

### Satisfaction, Overall Satisfaction and Client Service

**Satisfaction** measures Options ability to meet or surpass client expectations. It is measured monthly through the question:

- How would you rate your overall satisfaction with the service you received from Child Maintenance Options?

**Overall Satisfaction** is measured by the response to the same question but all results between April 2014 and September 2016 are combined.

**Client Service** measures how happy the client is with the level of service provided by Child Maintenance Options. It is calculated by looking at responses to the following questions:

- I'm going to read out some statements about your conversation with the Options agent. Using a scale of 1-10, please rate each statement. The agent...
  1. Explained what the Child Maintenance Options service is about?
  2. Was easy to talk to?
  3. Was understanding of your current situation?
  4. Had appropriate information and support about child maintenance, specific to your situation?
  5. Helped me to understand the different kind of options available for child maintenance?
  6. Helped me to work out what is the best kind of maintenance arrangement for me?

**Overall Client Service** is calculated by combining the scores for every month between April 2014 and September 2016.

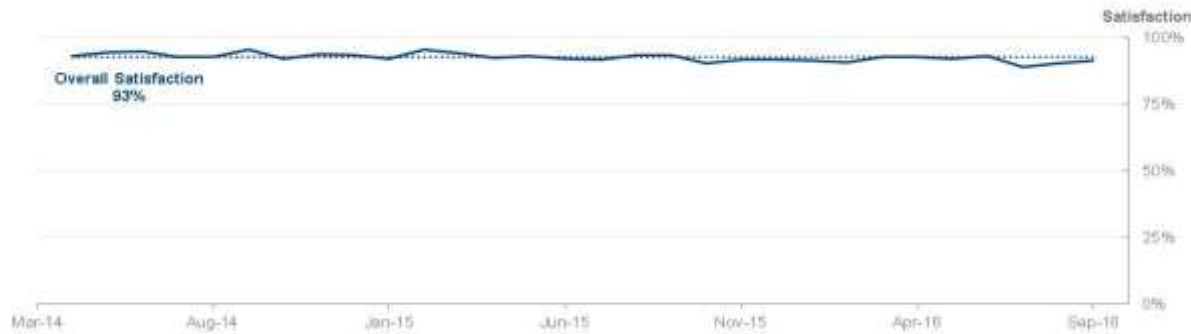
For further details see the Background Information document

# Child Maintenance Options Service Satisfaction

Every month, a sample of clients who contacted Options in the previous month are randomly selected and surveyed.

## 93% of clients are satisfied with the service...

Child Maintenance Options Satisfaction from April 2014 to September 2016

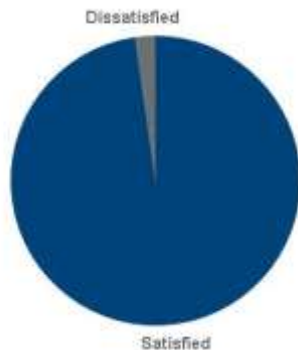


Client satisfaction with Options has been consistently high since April 2014. Its lowest value was 89% in Jul 2016.

See **Table 1** in the table's document for full summary statistics.

## ...Clients are very satisfied with call waiting times

Overall satisfaction with Child Maintenance Options call waiting times between April 2014 and September 2016



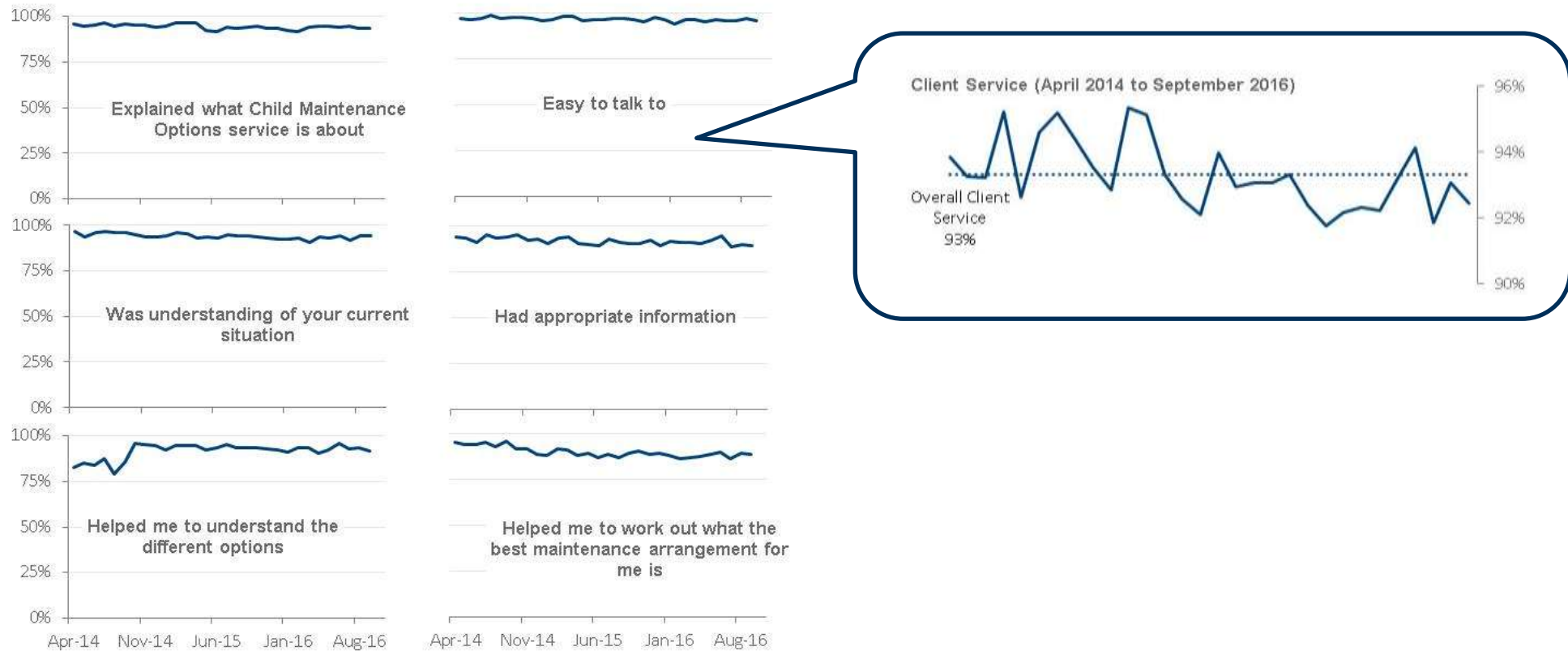
Client satisfaction with call waiting times is extremely high. Since April 2014 98% of clients are satisfied with the amount of time they had to wait for their call to be answered.

See **Table 4** for full data.

# Client Service

## Client Service is 93% for Child Maintenance Options

Individual aspects of Client Service from April 2014 to September 2016



Child Maintenance Options scores consistently highly in the six areas of client service. Since 2015, Options has not scored below 87% in any of the client experience questions. Scores for each question are stable with the only noticeable drop being between April 2014 and September 2014 in the Options Agents ability to help the client understand the different child maintenance options.

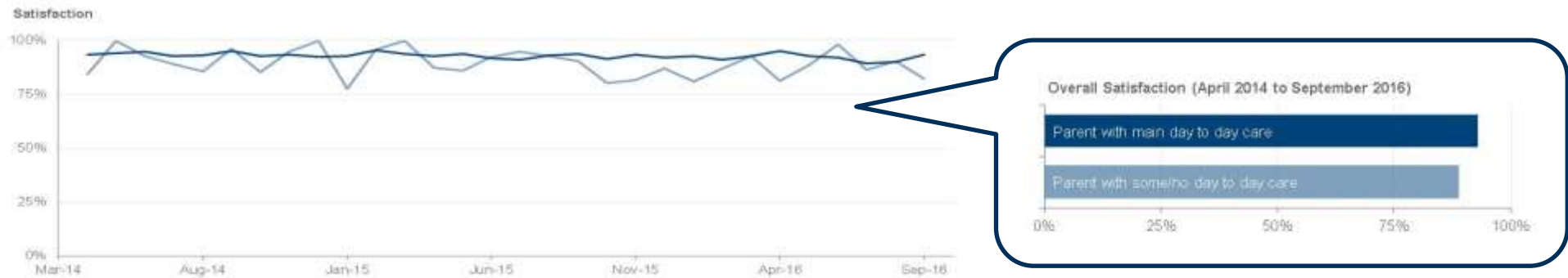
See **Tables 5-11** for full data.

# Satisfaction by Parent

Child Maintenance Options provide free impartial information and support to help parents make informed choices about child maintenance. They are there to help both parents or anyone with an interest in child maintenance.

## Parents with main day to day care of children are more satisfied with Child Maintenance Options

Satisfaction amongst parents with main day to day care of children against those with some/no day to day care from April 2014 to September 2016



Parents with main day to day care of the child have been consistently satisfied with Child Maintenance Options. This contrasts with the parent with some/no day to day care of the child. Satisfaction with these parents has fluctuated with several large drops, most notably in January 2015 where satisfaction dropped by 22% from the previous month. The fluctuations in satisfaction are probably caused by the smaller sample size for parents with some or no care, which itself is caused by the fact that most calls to Options are made by parents with main day to day care.

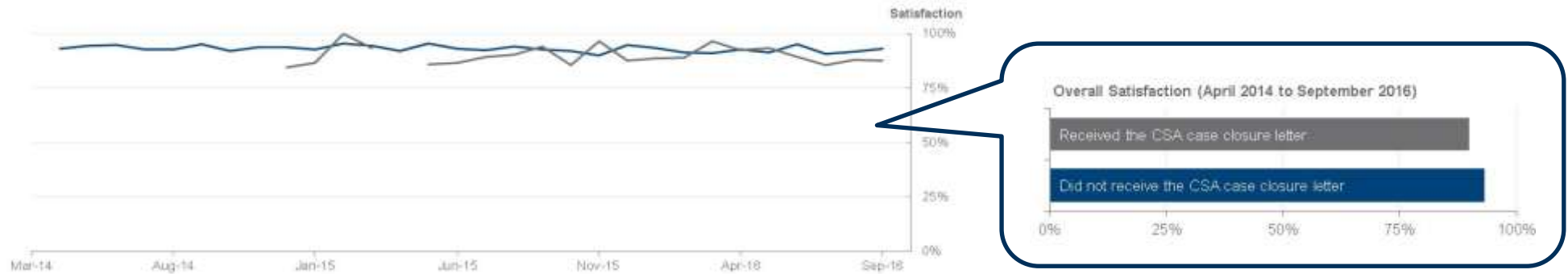
See **Table 2** for full data.

# Closing Child Support Agency Cases

The Child Support Agency (CSA) has been replaced by the Child Maintenance Service and is closing down. In June 2014 the CSA began writing out to all clients to inform them their cases will be closed and to direct them to Child Maintenance Options for support in putting a new arrangement in place.

## Clients whose CSA cases are closing are less satisfied than others

Satisfaction amongst clients who have received the CSA case closure letter compared to those that who have not from April 2014 to September 2016



Satisfaction with clients who have not received the CSA case closure letter has remained largely constant from April 2014 to September 2016. Satisfaction of clients that have received the case closure letter has been more erratic but generally lower than parents with no prior CSA case. However, sample sizes of those clients who received the case closure letter are much smaller so any comparison should only be taken as an estimate.

See **Table 3** for full data.

## About these statistics

The data is produced through monthly surveys conducted by DWP agents.

The population are clients of Child Maintenance Options who have been in contact with the service in the previous month.

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

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

For more information about the statistics see the background information document.

## Where to find out more

This document and the summary tables can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-maintenance-options-service-client-satisfaction>

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](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/387584/child-maintenance-reforms-evaluation-strategy.pdf)