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Child Maintenance Service Exit Survey

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Executive summary

This report sets out the findings of a survey of clients who have made an enquiry or a full application to the Child Maintenance Service (CMS), and the case/enquiry has subsequently been closed, either by the CMS or by the client themselves. It seeks to understand why people close their case/enquiry, and whether they set up an alternative maintenance arrangement.

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2 Abbreviations

CMS	Child Maintenance Service. This is a new statutory service which can be used to manage child maintenance arrangements, if parents are unable to make arrangements themselves. It is available to clients who previously had Child Support Agency case, and clients with a new maintenance case.
CSA	Child Support Agency
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions. DWP is responsible for the child maintenance system in England and Wales.
FBA	Family-based Arrangement. This is a child maintenance arrangement which is made between the parents, without any involvement from the Child Maintenance Service. Sometimes called a private agreement or voluntary agreement. Government policy is to encourage parents to set up a FBA wherever possible.

3 Terms

Child	For simplicity, the word “child” throughout this report also includes children.
Child Maintenance Options	A service funded by DWP to provide information and support to separated parents
Child Maintenance Service	A statutory scheme funded by DWP, set up in 2012 to arrange maintenance payments between separated parents, where they are unable to set up a family-based arrangement
Child Support Agency	A statutory scheme funded by DWP set up in 1993, and currently being closed on a phased basis, and to arrange maintenance payments between separated parents, where they are unable to set up a family-based arrangement
Closed case	A case which has been set up with the Child Maintenance Service (the maintenance amount has been calculated), and has subsequently been closed either by the client or by the CMS.
Closed enquiry	An enquiry to the Child Maintenance Service which has been withdrawn prior to the maintenance amount being calculated.
Collect and Pay	A maintenance arrangement within the Child Maintenance Service, where the CMS calculates the amount of maintenance, collects payments from the paying parent and transfers the payment to the receiving parent. The arrangement is legally binding and the CMS has enforcement powers. There is a fee for applying to the CMS, and additional charges for payments each payment made through the CMS.
Direct Pay	A maintenance arrangement within the Child Maintenance Service, where the CMS calculates the amount of maintenance but payments are made directly between the two parents. The arrangement is legally binding and if payments are not made, the case can be switched to Collect and Pay. There is a fee for applying to the CMS, but there are no collection charges if parents use Direct Pay.
Effective	Our definition of an “effective” financial Family-based arrangement is one where (1) all or some of the maintenance amount is paid <i>and</i> (2) payments are always or usually on time <i>and</i> (3) the receiving parents perceives the arrangement to be working very well or fairly well.

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Family based arrangement	A maintenance arrangement made between the two parents, without involving the CSA or CMS. This could include regular financial payments, ad hoc payments or other contributions such as buying school uniform or paying for holidays, or shared care of the child. A FBA can be written or verbal.
Nil assessed	A maintenance case with either the CSA or CMS, where the paying parent is liable for maintenance but the amount has been set at £0. This is usually because the paying parent had no income, for example if they are a student or in prison.
Paying parent	A separated parent who does not provide day to day care for their child and is responsible for paying child maintenance (regardless of whether payments are actually made). Sometimes called a non-resident parent or supporting parent.
Receiving parent	A separated parent who provides day to day care for their child and has a right to received child maintenance from the paying parent (regardless of whether payments are actually received). Sometimes called a parent with care or resident parent.
Separated parents	Parents who have a child together but are not in a relationship. This includes parents who were previously married or cohabiting, or were never in a formal relationship. It also includes parents who are now lone parents, as well as those who have re-partnered.

Summary

A programme of reforms to the child maintenance system is currently being implemented. The main focus of the reforms is to encourage separated parents to make their own arrangement for child maintenance (family-based arrangements, or FBAs) wherever possible. Where this is not possible, they are able to apply to a new statutory service (the Child Maintenance Service, or CMS).

This report sets out the findings of a survey of former CMS clients who had begun the process of applying, but had closed their application. Two groups were surveyed:

- Group 1: people who had made an enquiry to the CMS but withdrawn it before the application process was complete (that is, the maintenance amount had not been calculated).
- Group 2: people who had completed the application process (that is, after the maintenance amount had been calculated) and their case was subsequently closed.

In both cases, it was possible for the case to be closed/withdrawn by the client, or by the CMS.

The majority of cases/enquiries were made by (potential) receiving parents, but a small number were made by (potential) paying parents.

The research relates to cases/enquiries which were closed between December 2012 and December 2014.

The research was conducted by telephone interviews which were undertaken by G4S, who run the Child Maintenance Options service on behalf of DWP. Interviews were undertaken between September and November 2015 – up to three years after the original enquiry/case was closed. The total sample achieved was 884. It should be noted that the survey was not conducted by professional interviewers and there were a number of methodological issues, including low response rates and a long time lag between enquiry/case closure and interview. These factors mean that we cannot be sure that findings presented here are representative of the full population of people who had closed their case/enquiry.

FINDINGS

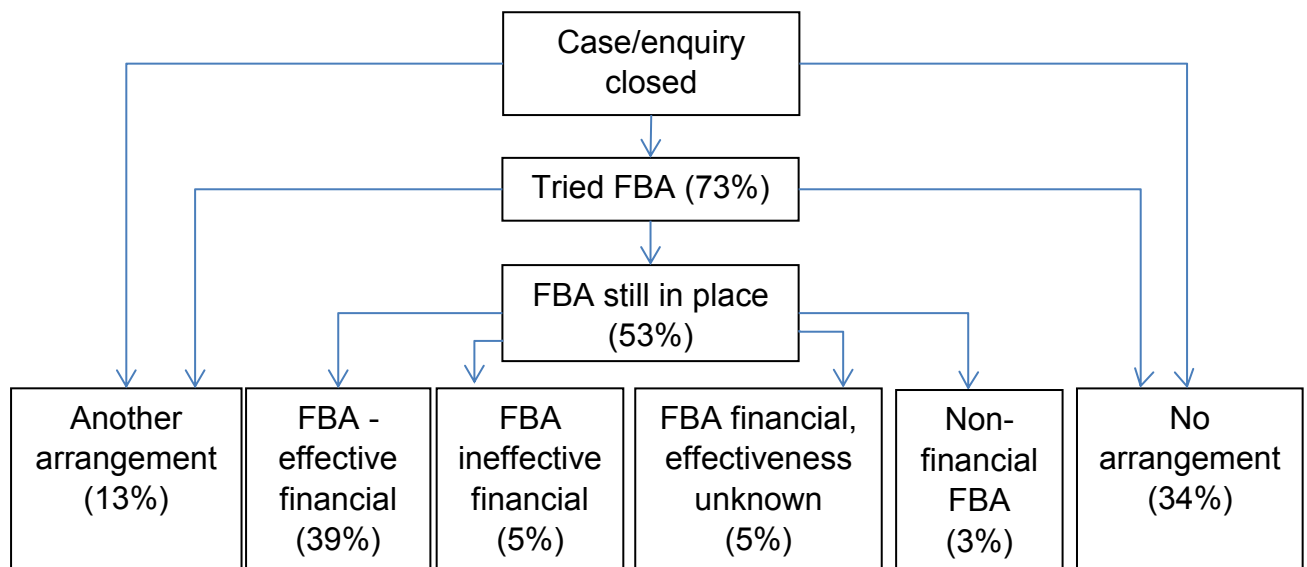
Reasons for making an enquiry. Two thirds of people who made an enquiry, but did not complete the application process, said that they had intended to set up a case with the CMS but then did not go on to do so. The remaining one third (34%) had not intended setting up a CMS case. Most of these enquirers wanted a maintenance calculation in order to set up a new FBA or review an existing one, or more information about child maintenance.

Reasons for withdrawing an enquiry or closing a case. More than half (56 per cent) of the total sample (i.e. those who did not proceed with an enquiry and those who closed their case), did so because they had agreed with their ex-partner to set up an alternative arrangement (usually a FBA). Another quarter (23 per cent) said that their case was ineligible and the CSA had closed it or in their view it was likely to be nil assessed (see note on eligibility, section 5).

Child maintenance in place at the time of the survey (Sections 6.3 – 6.7)

Those participating in the survey were asked what type of child maintenance arrangement (if any) they had in place at the same of the survey. As stated previously, this could be up to three years after the original enquiry/case was closed. Figure 1 illustrates the different child maintenance outcomes.

Figure 1: Outcomes of clients with a closed CMS case/enquiry



Looking at the total sample, 73 per cent of clients had set up, or tried to set up, a FBA . However, some of those FBAs failed, and others were ineffective. By the time of the survey:

- 66 per cent of former clients had some kind of maintenance arrangement in place:
 - 39 per cent had an effective, financial FBA
 - 13 per cent had another type of maintenance arrangement (another CMS arrangement or an agreement reached through the courts)
 - 13 per cent had an FBA which was not described as effective. This group includes ineffective financial arrangements, non-financial arrangements and arrangements where no data on effectiveness was provided. In these cases it is possible that some maintenance was being paid, or that both parents were happy with the arrangement
- 34% had no maintenance arrangement at all

Family-based arrangements (Sections 6.5 – 6.6)

Half of our sample (53%) had a FBA at the time of the survey. The most common reasons for setting up a FBA related to the relationship between the parents, including:

- the other parent did not want to use the CMS (22 per cent)
- using the CMS would cause arguments with the other parent (19 per cent)
- the relationship was good enough to support a FBA (14 per cent).

One in six (17 per cent) wanted to avoid charges for using the CMS.

Nine out of ten FBAs were financial arrangements and most financial arrangements (84 per cent) were described as effective.

In addition, 36 per cent of people who did not have a FBA at the time of the survey - they had another type of arrangement or no arrangement at all - said they had tried a FBA but it had failed. This equates to 20 per cent of the total sample. So, we can say that 73 per cent of the sample had set up a FBA, or tried to set one up. The most common reason for a FBA to fail was that the paying parent did not pay.

No arrangements (Section 6.7)

Just over a third of the sample (34 per cent) had no arrangement at the time of the survey. The most common reasons for having no arrangement were:

- the case would not be eligible for the CMS, or was likely to be nil assessed (27 per cent).
- the respondent was not in contact with the other parent, or did not want contact (23 per cent).
- the respondent did not want to pursue maintenance because this would have
- a detrimental impact on their relationship with the other parent (16 per cent) – in some cases this was linked to threats of domestic violence, or previous experience of domestic violence.

4 Introduction

This report presents the findings of a survey of former Child Maintenance Service (CMS) customers, who had made an enquiry to the CMS but not gone on to make a full application or had made an application but then closed it (after receiving their maintenance calculation). The survey was intended for internal use by Department for Work and Pensions staff. It is also part of a wider programme of research to evaluate the 2012 reforms to the child maintenance system in Great Britain.

4.1 Background

In its 2012 command paper '[Supporting separated families; securing children's futures](#)' the government set out proposals for a wide ranging programme of reforms to the child maintenance system. Under the new system, separated parents are encouraged to set up their own child maintenance arrangements, known as family-based arrangements (FBAs) wherever possible. The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) was set up in December 2012 to support parents who were unable to set up a FBA. Cases with the Child Support Agency (CSA) closed on a phased basis from July 2014 and clients can set up a FBA, or apply to the CMS. There are charges for using the CMS. At each stage of the process, including applying to the CMS, parents are encouraged to set up a FBA, if possible, rather than using the CMS.

4.2 Aims

The overall purpose of the survey was to provide early information to DWP staff, about why people chose not to continue with the CMS. Key aims were to:

- understand clients' reasons for withdrawing enquiries or closing cases,
- track parents' child maintenance outcomes following contact with the CMS.

4.3 Structure

Chapter 5 sets out our survey methodology and Chapter 6 sets out the findings:

- Sections 6.1 and 6.2 examine reasons why clients originally contacted the CMS, and why they subsequently closed their case/enquiry.
- Sections 6.3 and 6.4 examine outcomes and effectiveness at the time of the survey
- Sections 6.5 and 6.6 provide more details on FBAs, including reasons for choosing a FBA, effectiveness and reasons for the failure of a FBA
- Section 6.7 gives reasons why some clients chose to have no arrangement.

5 Methodology

5.1 Approach

The survey was conducted by telephone. This method was chosen as a practical solution which would allow us to contact clients in a cost effective manner and would minimise lack of response. The questionnaire was designed and analysed by DWP's Child Maintenance Research and Evaluation team. Telephone interviews, lasting between 10 and 15 minutes, were conducted by G4S telephone call staff. G4S are contracted by DWP to run the Child Maintenance Options service. Interviewers had some training prior to conducting the survey but were not professional research interviewers. This means there may be an unquantified interviewer effect.

Interviews were conducted between September and November 2015 – up to three years after the original case was closed/enquiry was withdrawn. Therefore there are likely to be issues of poor recall which may mean some answers are not recalled correctly. There is also a low response rate, and it is possible the findings are biased in favour of people who closed their case/withdrew their enquiry more recently. We cannot confirm whether this is the case or not.

5.2 Sample and response rates

Table 1 shows the number of valid, completed interviews and the response rate (percentage of the total sample).

Samples were drawn at random from CMG (2012 scheme) data.

- Sample 1 included enquiries which were withdrawn prior to receiving a calculation, between December 2012 and December 2014
- Sample 2 included cases which were closed after a calculation had been received, between December 2012 and December 2014

In both cases, it was possible for the case to be closed/withdrawn by either the client, or by the CMS.

The majority of cases/enquiries were made by (potential) receiving parents, but a small number were made by (potential) paying parents.

The following cases were excluded from the sample:

- Special and sensitive cases as referenced via the CMS_2102 Client file
- Cases where a member of the case group was deceased
- Duplicate records

Table 1: Full sample, response rates and weighting

	Total population	Sample provided	Interviews achieved	Response rate	Weighting factor
Enquiry withdrawn before case set up	6,834	5,130	1,43	3.9%	2.16
Case closed after calculation	12,466	9,750	741	7.0%	0.78
Total	19,300	14,880	884	5.9%	

The full samples (shown in Table 1) were used in sections 6.1 and 6.2. However, 48 respondents did not complete the full interview because they had reconciled, or described their situation as ineligible for the CMS (see Note below). This means that samples for sections 6.3 – 6.7 were reduced to 134 and 702.

Response rates were low, despite attempts to maximise responses by making multiple call attempts at different times, including evenings and weekends. Likely explanations for these low response rates include the timelag between closing the case/withdrawing the enquiry and the survey, contact details being out of date and clients having no ongoing relationship with the CMS. This means that we cannot be sure the experiences of our sample represent the full population.

All findings in the report have been weighted to reflect the distribution of closed cases and withdrawn enquiries across the population, but no further weighting has been undertaken.

Notes on the sample

Two separate samples were drawn, based on people who had made an enquiry only and then withdrawn it, and people who had set up a case (ie received a calculation) and then closed it or it was closed by the CMS because it was not eligible (see below). The survey also asked respondents which group they fell into and these self-reported figures do not always tally with administrative records. Analysis in this report is based on the self-reported data. Weights have been calculated by comparing the self-reported data in the samples, and administrative data in the populations.

It is possible that clients had closed/withdrawn multiple cases. In calculating the population data, only one case per client (the most recent) was used.

Samples 1 and 2 were analysed separately, however there were very few differences between the two groups. Where there is a significant difference this is drawn out in the text.

Note on ineligible and nil assessed cases

The questionnaire included a number of technical reasons why the case could not be progressed (would be ineligible) and was closed by the CMS, including:

- parents are reconciled
- child is now too old,

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- one of the parents is not resident in the UK
- potential paying parent is not the parent of the child.

Due to this, 48 respondents only completed the first part of the survey (Sections 6.1 – 6.2) and were then filtered out of the survey. This was because it was seen as unlikely that they would make any type of child maintenance arrangement.

In addition some parents (about 9% of all respondents) described the reason for closing their enquiry or case under the “other” response and provided the following reasons:

- Case is nil assessed under the CMS (“Nil assessed” means that the paying parent is liable for maintenance, but the maintenance amount has been set at £0, usually because they have no income (for example because they are students or in prison)
- Case was nil assessed under the CSA and the client expects this will continue under the CMS
- Other parent is self-employed and does not declare income to HMRC
- Child stays with the other parent regularly
- Other parent refuses to reply to letters from the CMS
- Other parent disputes paternity
- Client still has a case with the CSA (it is not possible to have cases with both the CSA and CMS, the client would need to close the CSA case in order to apply to the CMS)

These respondents have closed their enquiry or case because they have assumed that the above reasons would mean that they are ineligible for a CMS case. It is stressed these comments represent the client’s view and not all of the reasons given above are valid – for example maintenance is still payable if the paying parent is on benefits or self-employed.

As these cases account for a significant number of responses, they have been included in the findings under a combined heading of “ineligible/nil assessed”.

6 Findings

6.1 Reasons for original enquiry

We asked people who had made an enquiry and withdrawn it before setting up a case, why they had enquired. We did not ask people this question if they went on to set up a case. Two thirds of enquirers (66 per cent) intended setting up a case. The remaining one third (34 per cent) gave other reasons for enquiring. Most of the people who did not intend setting up a case said they had made an enquiry to help them set up a new FBA, or review an existing one. Others said they wanted more general information about child maintenance.

Table 2: Reasons for original enquiry

Intended setting up a case	66%
Wanted a calculation to negotiate a new FBA	15%
Wanted more information about child maintenance	10%
Wanted to put pressure on the other parent to co-operate with me to put a FBA in place	3%
Friends/family encouraged me	2%
Thought the CMS was the only way of getting child maintenance	1%
Already had a FBA and wanted to review it	1%
Already had a FBA and wanted to see how much I could get through the CMS	1%
Wanted to put pressure on the other parent to co-operate with me for another reason	1%
Other	6%
<i>Sample (withdrawn enquiries only)</i>	143
<i>Multiple choice possible</i>	

6.2 Reasons for withdrawing enquiry/closing case

We then asked why people had closed their CMS case/enquiry (see Table 3). More than half our sample (56 per cent) said they had agreed to an alternative arrangement. A quarter of cases (23 per cent) said this was because they they were ineligible or likely to be nil assessed (see note in section 5).

There were no differences in the reasons for closure, between the “enquiry only” group and the “full case” group.

Table 3: Reasons for withdrawing enquiry/closing case

Agreed to an alternative arrangement	56%
Ineligible/nil assessed	23%
Relationship with the other parent was getting worse because of the CMS arrangement (includes threats from the other parent)	5%
Poor experience with CMS	3%
Other parent/I couldn't afford the payments	3%
Payments were late/not what we agreed/not what the CMS had calculated	1%
I didn't want to receive child maintenance any more	1%
Thought I could get more money through a FBA	1%
Other	11%
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>887</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>884</i>
<i>Multiple responses possible</i>	

Table 4 provides more detail on the 56 per cent of respondents who said they would set up an alternative arrangement. The policy intent is to encourage people to set up a FBA rather than using the statutory service, and the vast majority of respondents who said they would set up an alternative arrangement (91 per cent) said it would be a FBA. This equates to 51 per cent of all respondents. In addition, eight per cent of clients had closed a Direct Pay case in order to set up a new Collect and Pay case, or vice versa (“alternative CMS” in table 4).

Table 4: Other arrangements planned

FBA	91%
Alternative CMS*	8%
Court	1%
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>495</i>
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>491</i>

6.3 Child maintenance in place at the time of the survey¹

At the time of the survey, (which could be up to three years after the original enquiry/case was closed) two thirds of clients (66 per cent) had an alternative

¹ (Note: the sample for sections 6.3 – 6.7 is slightly reduced as some respondents did not complete the full questionnaire. See Section 5 for details.)

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arrangement in place and one third (34 per cent) had no arrangement (as shown in Table 5).

Four fifths of these new arrangements were FBAs (80 per cent of arrangements, 53 per cent of the total sample). One fifth (18 per cent) were alternative CMS cases, for example where the client had originally had a Direct Pay case, had closed it down and then set up a Collect and Pay case, or vice versa (18 per cent of new arrangements, 12 per cent of the total sample).

Table 5: Outcomes at time of survey

	% of total sample	% of arrangements
FBA	53%	80%
Alternative CMS	12%	18%
Court arrangement	1%	1%
All arrangements	66%	100%
No arrangement	34%	---
<i>Weighted base</i>	835	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	834	

Sections 6.5 and 6.6 provide more information on family-based arrangements.

Detailed analysis has shown no significant difference in outcomes, between clients with lower or higher incomes, or between clients who closed their case/enquiry before or after they received their calculation.

6.4 Effectiveness

We define an “effective” arrangement as one which satisfies all three of the following criteria:

- All or some of the amount is received
- Payments are usually or always on time
- The receiving parent feels the arrangement is working very well or fairly well.

Using this definition, most clients described their arrangements as effective, as shown in table 6. There were no significant differences between different types of arrangement. *Please note small sample sizes for Direct Pay and Collect and Pay arrangements.*

Table 6: Effectiveness

Type of arrangement	% fully effective	Weighted base	Unweighted base
FBA (financial)	84%	371	366
Direct Pay	85%	32	30
Collect and Pay	81%	24	24

Note: Bases include only those people who provided a valid response to all three "effectiveness" questions

6.5 Family-based arrangements (still in place)

Half of our sample (53 per cent) had a FBA at the time of the survey. In addition, 20 per cent said they had tried a FBA but it had failed - at the time of the survey they had another type of arrangement or no arrangement at all. So, we can say that 73 per cent of the sample had set up a FBA, or tried to set one up.

This section provides more information about FBAs which were still in place at the time of the survey - why people chose a FBA, how quickly they set up their arrangement, the type of FBA and how effective they were. Section 6.6 provides information on FBAs which were no longer in place at the time of the survey.

Reasons for choosing a family-based arrangement

We asked why receiving parents chose a FBA, rather than continuing with their CMS case.

The relationship with the other parent was clearly a very important factor. This is consistent with other research which has shown that the relationship between the receiving and paying parent is the most important “driver” in influencing child maintenance arrangements². Research has shown that the more positive the relationship the more likely parents are to have a child maintenance arrangement in place. In our survey 14 per cent said it was influenced by positive relationship factors (they now had a good relationship with the other parent). A further 22 per cent said they had chosen a FBA because the other parent didn’t want to use the CMS – which suggests that at least these parents were communicating with each other.

This research also suggests that a desire not to want to cause a negative impact on relationships might also influence separated parents to put a FBA in place. A further

² 2011, Promotion of child maintenance: Instigating Behaviour Change, Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120716161734/http://www.childmaintenance.org/en/pdf/research/Main-Report-Vol-I.pdf>

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19 per cent said that chose a FBA because they thought that involving the CMS would make things difficult with the other parent or cause arguments.

Other reasons for choosing a FBA included not wanting to pay the charges for using the CMS in 17% of cases.

A small number of respondents (four per cent) said the CMS had advised them to set up a FBA because that would be best for them or their child, or because the case was likely to be ineligible or nil assessed.

Table 7: Reasons for choosing a family-based arrangement

Other parent didn't want a CMS arrangement	22%
Quicker and easier	21%
Using CMS would make things difficult with other parent/ cause arguments	19%
I/The other parent didn't want to pay the charges for CMS	17%
Good relationship now with other parent	14%
Best for child	10%
More friendly	8%
I receive a higher payment	7%
More flexible - we have more control over amount	7%
More private	5%
Advised by CMS	4%
We don't have to rely on anyone else	4%
Best way of ensuring payments are made	3%
Fairest arrangement	3%
Don't know/don't want to say	3%
Other (please specify)	6%
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>447</i>
<i>Unweighted base (all who had set up a FBA)</i>	<i>440</i>
<i>Multiple choices possible</i>	

Timeliness of setting up FBA

We wanted to understand how quickly people had set up their FBA, after closing their case. The majority of parents with a FBA (83 per cent) said they had not had any

other arrangement, in between closing their case/enquiry and setting up the FBA – the analysis below excludes people who had had another arrangement.

A quarter of the sample (25 per cent) could not remember when they set up the FBA. This is probably because of the timelag between the case being closed/ withdrawn and the survey. Looking at those who could remember, the majority (71 per cent) said they had set up their arrangement around the same time as they closed their case/ enquiry, and a further 20 per cent set it up before they closed their case/enquiry. One in ten (nine per cent) waited for a month or more before setting up their FBA, and seven per cent set it up at least a month after closing their case/enquiry.

Table 8: Timelag between closing case and setting up FBA

FBA set up before closing case	20%
FBA set up around the same time as closing case	71%
FBA set up more than one month after closing case	9%
<i>Base: Closed cases only. All those with a FBA at the time of the survey, who remembered when they had set up their arrangement and had not had another arrangement in between.</i>	255

Type of family-based arrangement

Most respondents with a FBA (81 per cent) described their arrangement as a regular financial arrangement, and a further 12 per cent said they had some other type of financial arrangement. The remaining six per cent had a non-financial arrangement (including shared care)³.

Table 9: Type of family-based arrangement

Financial	93%
<i>Regular financial</i>	81%
<i>Other financial</i>	12%
Non-financial	6%
<i>Shared care</i>	1%
<i>Other non-financial</i>	6%
Unknown type	1%
<i>Weighted base</i>	438
<i>Unweighted base (all with FBA)</i>	445

³ Where respondents had more than one arrangement (such as a regular financial arrangement and non-financial contributions) the financial arrangement has been prioritised in the analysis

Value of financial family-based arrangements

339 people with a regular financial arrangement were prepared to tell us the amount of child maintenance that they received. This varied from £15 to £1,000 per month, with an average (median) of £181 per month⁴.

Effectiveness of financial family-based arrangements

We asked respondents with a financial arrangement how effective it was. We define an “effective” financial arrangement as one which satisfies all three of the following criteria:

- All or some of the amount is received
- Payments are usually or always on time
- The receiving parent feels the arrangement is working very well or fairly well.

Using this definition, most clients with a financial FBA (84 per cent) described their arrangement as effective and 16 per cent said it was not effective. These figures equate to 39 per cent and five per cent of the total sample, respectively.

The third criterion is very subjective – some parents could consider their arrangement is working well even if they were not receiving payments, while on the other hand other parents would not consider the arrangement to be working well even if payments were always received in full and on time. If we remove this third criterion, 88 per cent of respondents said their arrangement was effective (ie they receive some or all of the amount and it is usually or always on time).

Table 10: Effectiveness of financial family-based arrangements

Receive all or some of the amount	100%
Payments always or usually on time	88%
Arrangement is working very well or fairly well	91%
All or some of the amount is received and it is usually or always on time	88%
All or some of the money is received, it was always or usually on time <i>and</i> the respondent felt the arrangement was working well	84%
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>371</i>
<i>Unweighted base (all who had provided a valid response to all three questions - don't knows excluded)</i>	<i>366</i>

Where the respondent said the arrangement was not working well, the most common reasons were that the paying parent did not stick to the arrangement, payments were less than the agreed amount or they were unhappy with the amount agreed.

⁴ all figures converted to calendar month amounts). Based on unweighted data.

6.6 Attempted family-based arrangements

Just over a third (36 per cent) of parents who did not have a FBA at the time of the survey said they had tried one but it didn't work. This was higher for parents with no arrangement at the time of the survey – almost half said they had tried a FBA - but only one in ten parents with a CMS or court arrangement had done so.

Table 11: Proportion of respondents who had tried a FBA

Type of arrangement at time of survey	% who had tried a FBA	Weighted base	Unweighted base
No arrangement	45%	283	292
CMS	13%	98	95
Court	8%	10	9
All	36%	390	396

Looking just at people with **no arrangement**, as Table 12 shows at the time of the survey:

- Over half (54 per cent) had not tried to set up a FBA and had not contacted the other parent
- 19 per cent had tried to discuss setting up a FBA with the other parent, but had not come to an agreement
- 27 per cent said they had set up a FBA but it did not work.

Table 12: Actions towards setting up a FBA

Didn't contact other parent	54%
Approached other parent but they would not discuss it	11%
Discussed with the other parent but they refused	8%
Set up FBA but it didn't work	27%
<i>Weighted base</i>	283
<i>Unweighted base (people who did not have a FBA at time of survey)</i>	306

Table 13 provides more details about why the FBA didn't work. In the majority of cases (88 per cent) this was because the paying parent did not pay.

Table 13: Reasons for FBA failing

Other parent promised to pay, but then didn't do so	45%
Other parent refused to pay	33%
Payments were late	4%
Wrong amount paid	1%
Other	17%
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>77</i>
<i>Unweighted base (all who had no arrangement, had previously tried a FBA but it didn't work)</i>	<i>72</i>

Three quarters of respondents who had tried to set up a FBA, or had set one up and it had failed (75 per cent), said they would prefer to receive maintenance. Of these 53 per cent said they would definitely or possibly apply to the CMS in the future.

This equates to 40 per cent of clients who had no arrangement and had tried to set up a FBA, or had set one up and it had failed.

6.7 No arrangement

We asked people with no arrangement, why they had decided not to have an arrangement. This includes people who had not tried to make an arrangement as well as those who had tried and failed, however it does not include people who had said they would possibly/definitely apply to the CMS.

The most common response, given by 29 per cent of respondents, was that the case was ineligible or nil assessed, or they assumed that it would be nil assessed (see note in Section 5). A quarter (24 per cent) said they were not in contact with the other parent, or did not want contact with the other parent – suggesting that they do not understand that child maintenance is not dependent on contact. A fifth (22 per cent) said they didn't want the hassle, some of these respondents added that the maintenance amount was too small. 17 per cent said that they were concerned that pursuing a maintenance arrangement (of any type) would make their relationship with the other parent worse, or the other parent had put pressure on them to close the case/enquiry. In some cases, this included threats of domestic violence, or past experience of domestic violence.

Table 14: Reasons for having no arrangement

Ineligible/nil assessed/likely to be nil assessed	29%
I'm not in contact with the other parent/don't want contact	24%
I didn't want the hassle	22%
We have a poor relationship and I didn't want to make things worse/the other parent put pressure on me (including domestic violence)	17%
Other parent will not pay	12%
I don't want their money/want to be independent	5%
Other parent can't afford it	5%
We have a good relationship and I didn't want to put that at risk	1%
Didn't know how to set one up	0%
Other	11%
<i>Weighted base</i>	<i>232</i>
<i>Unweighted base (all with no arrangement at time of survey, who said they would not apply to CMS in future)</i>	<i>242</i>
<i>Multiple responses possible</i>	

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

Pre-interview checks. **Please ensure that all areas below are covered before you start the interview**

- | | Complete |
|---|-----------------------|
| a. Introduce yourself and say you are calling from Child Maintenance Options, which is a part of DWP. | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. Explain the reason for calling - our records show they had a case with the CMS and now we are following up about their situation and whether they have put another Child Maintenance arrangement in place. This information will help us see where improvements can be made in our service. | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. DPA: Run through the security questions | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. Explain it normally takes between 10 to 15 minutes of their time or offer a callback. | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. Explain that their answers will be held in the strictest of confidence and will be handled securely throughout the study in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act (1998). The information provided will be used only for research purposes and research findings will not identify you. | <input type="radio"/> |
| f. Taking part is completely voluntary and you do not have to answer any questions you don't want to, but again I'd like to stress that taking part helps us to improve our service. You can withdraw from the survey at any time. Participating in this survey will not affect your dealings with Options, the Child Maintenance Service or any other part of DWP. | <input type="radio"/> |
| g. Advise customers that their calls are recorded and may be listened to for training and quality assurance purposes. | <input type="radio"/> |

1. Is it OK if I go ahead and ask you a few questions?

- Yes
- No (End – TEXT CLOSE)

2. Our records show that you have been in touch with the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) in the past. This may have been because:

- you made an enquiry about setting up a case around (month/year); or
- you set up a case and then you or the Child Maintenance Service closed it in (month/year).

Can you confirm this is correct?

- Yes, made an enquiry only - did not set up a case
- Yes, set up/started a case but then closed it/CMS closed it
- Yes, I set up a case with the CMS and it is still open (End TEXT CLOSE)
- No, I've never made an enquiry/set up a case (End TEXT CLOSE)
- Don't know (End TEXT CLOSE)

REASONS FOR ENQUIRY

3. And may I ask why you made an enquiry to the CMS? (TICK ALL THAT APPLY)

- I intended setting up a case
- I wanted a calculation to help me negotiate a new family-based arrangement
- I already had a family-based arrangement and I wanted to review it
- I already had a family-based arrangement and I wanted to see how much I could get through the CMS
- I wanted to put pressure on the other parent to co-operate with me to put a family-based arrangement in place
- I wanted to put pressure on the other parent to co-operate with me for another reason
- I just wanted more information about child maintenance
- My friends/family encouraged me to
- It was the other parent's decision
- I thought the CMS was the only way of getting child maintenance
- Other _____
- Don't know/can't remember

REASONS FOR CLOSING THEIR CASE

4. Why did you withdraw your enquiry/close your case? (TICK ALL THAT APPLY)

- Reconciled with partner
- I thought I could get more money through a Family Based Arrangement
- I had a poor experience with the CMS
- My relationship with the other parent was getting worse because of the CMS arrangement
- The other parent couldn't afford the payments
- I couldn't afford the payments
- We agreed to a Family Based Arrangement instead
- We agreed to a court based arrangement instead
- We agreed to a Direct Pay arrangement instead
- We agreed to a Collection Service arrangement instead
- I didn't want to receive Child Maintenance any more
- The payment were late
- The payments were less than the CMS calculated (Direct Pay)
- The payments were not what we agreed (Direct Pay)
- CMS closed the case - Paying Parent not usually living in the UK
- CMS closed the case - Receiving Parent not usually living in the UK
- CMS closed the case - Paying Parent not the parent of the child
- I already have a CSA case but didn't realise/told it is still open.
- Other (please specify) _____
- Don't know/can't remember

CURRENT ARRANGEMENT

5. Thinking now about the children that were covered by the above arrangement that you closed - do you currently have a child maintenance arrangement in place, or are you in the process of setting one up?

INTERVIEWER NOTES: *if the interviewee talks about more than one child maintenance arrangement (usually because there is more than one other parent), remind them to talk about the arrangement that closed.*

a) A family-based arrangement (FBA) is where parents agree between themselves how to continue providing for a child after they separate.

b) It can be a formal agreement, for example written down in an FBA form/ parenting plan — in Scotland only, a minute of agreement can count as a family-based arrangement; or it can be an informal agreement, for example a promise or pledge made verbally.

c) Parents can choose what to include in a family-based arrangement, for example who will provide what support for a child and how often. There is no set format, but a family-based arrangement can be:

- providing money regularly and at an agreed level specifically for the benefit of the child;*
- paying for agreed things from time to time for the benefit of the child (e.g. after-school clubs, school fees, holidays, pocket money, etc.);*
- non-financial contributions specifically for the benefit of the child (e.g. food, clothes or contributing towards childcare);*
- sharing looking after a child;*
- Or any combination of the above*

- Private/family-based arrangement (Go to Q6)
- Court/consent order (Go to Q16)
- CMS Direct Pay (Go to Q26)
- CMS Collection Service (Go to Q37)
- No arrangement (Go to Q49)
- No, we have reconciled (Go to Q53b)
- Do not wish to say (*End – TEXT CLOSE*)

FAMILY BASED ARRANGEMENT

6. And may I ask why you now prefer a Family Based Arrangement instead of a CMS one?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: *you can pick more than one option from the list below.*

- I have a good relationship now with the other parent/relationship improved - we can talk about money
- Best for child
- The other parent agreed to it because he/she didn't want to have a CMS arrangement
- The other parent didn't want to pay the charges for using the Child Maintenance Service
- I didn't want to pay the charges for using the Child Maintenance Service
- Quicker and easier
- I receive a higher payment
- Best way of ensuring payments are made
- It's more flexible - we have more control over the amount paid
- We don't have to rely on anyone else
- More friendly
- Using the Child Maintenance Service would make things difficult with the other parent
- Less arguments with the other parent
- More private - keep it between yourselves
- Fairest arrangement
- Don't know
- Don't want to say
- Other (please specify) _____

7. Thinking about this family-based arrangement, could you tell me the month and year that the arrangement was set up/you started setting it up?

(INTERVIEWER NOTE: *If they cannot be exact, e.g. they say summer 2013, please choose a relevant month.)*

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> December 12 | <input type="radio"/> September 13 | <input type="radio"/> June 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> January 13 | <input type="radio"/> October 13 | <input type="radio"/> July 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> February 13 | <input type="radio"/> November 13 | <input type="radio"/> August 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> March 13 | <input type="radio"/> December 13 | <input type="radio"/> September 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> April 13 | <input type="radio"/> January 14 | <input type="radio"/> October 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> May 13 | <input type="radio"/> February 14 | <input type="radio"/> November 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> June 13 | <input type="radio"/> March 14 | <input type="radio"/> December 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> July 13 | <input type="radio"/> April 14 | <input type="radio"/> Do not remember |
| <input type="radio"/> August 13 | <input type="radio"/> May 14 | |

8. And how many children are/will be covered by this arrangement?

AGENT NOTE: *By child we mean:*

Under the age of 16

Under the age of 20 and in fulltime non-advanced education (that is a course not higher than A level standard)

Between the ages of 16 and 20 and child benefit is in payment.

Additionally the child will require being normally resident in the UK and living in the same household as the parent/person with care however there are some exceptions to this rule such as children who are at boarding school or have long term hospitalization are still classed as qualifying children.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 or more
- Do not wish to say

8. Can I just check, what is your parenting role for these children?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: *if their parenting role is different for different children, or if they cannot remember which children they talked about, record the parenting role for the youngest child*

- Main day to day carer
- Parent without main day to day care
- Other

9. How would you describe the nature of your family based arrangement?

(INTERVIEWER NOTE: *Can pick more than one option from the list below. Shared care is defined as each parent spending 50-50 time with the child.*

READ OUT

- Regular payments at a set level for the support of your children (Go to Q 10)
- Payments but not always regular specifically for the support of your child (e.g. school fees, holidays, pocket money) (Go to Q10)

Child Maintenance Exit Survey

- Non-financial contributions specifically for the support of your child (eg clothes or contributing to child care (Go to Q14)
- Shared care (Go to Q14)
- Other financial (specify below) (Go to Q14)
- Other non-financial (specify below) (Go to Q14)
- If other, would you mind telling us more about it (Go to Q14)
- Rather not say (Go to Q14)

**10. Thinking about the amount you are supposed to receive/pay, do you usually receive/pay
(READ OUT)**

- All of it
- Some of it
- None of it
- Don't know/varies

11. And do you normally receive/make your child maintenance payments:

- Weekly
- Bi-weekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- 6 monthly
- Annually
- Other (please specify) _____

12. And how much do you usually receive/pay?

Amount £ _____

13. How often are the maintenance payments on time? (READ OUT)

- Always on time
- Usually on time
- Varies
- Usually late

Child Maintenance Exit Survey

- Always late
- Don't know

14a. Overall how well do you think your arrangement works? (READ OUT)

- Very well
- Fairly well
- Not very well
- Not at all well
- Don't know/too early to say

14b. If your arrangement does not work very well or not at all well, why?

15. Could I check, BEFORE you set up the arrangement we've just been talking about but AFTER

- withdrawing the enquiry we talked about earlier or**
- the CMS case we talked about earlier closed**

in between these two - did you have another arrangement which also closed?

- Yes - Private/family-based arrangement
- Yes - Court/consent order
- Yes - CMS Direct Pay
- Yes - CMS Collection Service
- No – I didn't have another arrangement before this arrangement
- I cannot remember/don't wish to say

Go to Q54

COURT/CONSENT ORDER

Q16. Thinking about this court arrangement, could you tell me the month and year that the arrangement was set up/you started setting it up?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> December 12 | <input type="radio"/> September 13 | <input type="radio"/> June 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> January 13 | <input type="radio"/> October 13 | <input type="radio"/> July 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> February 13 | <input type="radio"/> November 13 | <input type="radio"/> August 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> March 13 | <input type="radio"/> December 13 | <input type="radio"/> September 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> April 13 | <input type="radio"/> January 14 | <input type="radio"/> October 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> May 13 | <input type="radio"/> February 14 | <input type="radio"/> November 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> June 13 | <input type="radio"/> March 14 | <input type="radio"/> December 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> July 13 | <input type="radio"/> April 14 | <input type="radio"/> Do not remember |
| <input type="radio"/> August 13 | <input type="radio"/> May 14 | |

17. And how many children are/will be covered by this arrangement?

AGENT NOTE: *By child we mean:*

Under the age of 16

Under the age of 20 and in fulltime non-advanced education (that is a course not higher than A level standard)

Between the ages of 16 and 20 and child benefit is in payment.

Additionally the child will require being normally resident in the UK and living in the same household as the parent/person with care however there are some exceptions to this rule such as children who are at boarding school or have long term hospitalization are still classed as qualifying children.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 or more
- Do not wish to say

18. Can I just check, what is your parenting role for these children?

(INTERVIEWER NOTE: *if their parenting role is different for different children, or if they cannot remember which children they talked about, record the parenting role for the youngest child*

Child Maintenance Exit Survey

- Main day to day carer
- Parent without main day to day care
- Other

19. How would you describe the nature of your court order?

INTERVIEWER NOTES: *Can pick more than one option from the list below. Shared care is defined as each parent spending 50-50 time with the child.*

READ OUT

- Regular payments at a set level for the support of your children (Go to Q 20)
- Payments but not always regular specifically for the support of your child (e.g. school fees, holidays, pocket money) (Go to Q20)
- Non-financial contributions specifically for the support of your child (eg clothes or contributing to child care (Go to Q24)
- Shared care (Go to Q24)
- Other financial (specify below) (Go to Q24)
- Other non-financial (specify below) (Go to Q24)
- If other, would you mind telling us more about it (Go to Q24)
- Rather not say (Go to Q24)

20. Thinking about the amount you are supposed to receive/pay, do you usually receive/pay (READ OUT)

- All of it
- Some of it
- None of it
- Don't know/varies

21. And do you normally receive/make your child maintenance payments:

- Weekly
- Bi-weekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- 6 monthly
- Annually
- Other (please specify) _____

22. And how much do you usually receive/pay? £ _____

23. How often are the maintenance payments on time? (READ OUT)

- Always on time
- Usually on time
- Varies
- Usually late
- Always late
- Don't know

24. Overall how well do you think your arrangement works? (READ OUT)

- Very well
- Fairly well
- Not very well
- Not at all well
- Don't know/too early to say

24b. If your arrangement does not work very well or not at all well, why?

25. Could I check, BEFORE you set up the arrangement we've just been talking about but AFTER

- withdrawing the enquiry we talked about earlier or

- the CMS case we talked about earlier closed

in between these two - did you have another arrangement which also closed?

- Yes - Private/family-based arrangement
- Yes - Court/consent order
- Yes - CMS Direct Pay
- Yes - CMS Collection Service
- No – I didn't have another arrangement before this arrangement
- I cannot remember/don't wish to say

Go to Q54

CMS – DIRECT PAY

26. And may I ask why you now prefer a Direct Pay arrangement instead of one with the CMS collection service?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: *you can pick more than one option from the list below.*

- I wanted to use Collect and Pay but the other parent wouldn't agree
- The other parent didn't want to pay collection fees with the Collection Service
- I didn't want to pay collection fees with the Collection Service
- I thought the other parent was more likely to pay if the CMS was involved
- I have a good relationship now with the other parent - relationship improved - we can talk about money
- Quicker and easier
- I receive a higher payment than with the Collection Service
- I had a family based arrangement in the past but it didn't work out
- Best way of ensuring payments are made
- It's more flexible than the Collection Service - we have more control over the amount paid
- Less arguments with the other parent than with the Collection Service
- More private - keep it between ourselves
- Fairest arrangement
- Poor experience with Collection Service from the CMS
- Other (Please specify) _____
- Don't know/ Don't want to say

27. Thinking about this Direct Pay arrangement could you tell me the month and year that the arrangement was set up/you started setting it up?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> December 12 | <input type="radio"/> September 13 | <input type="radio"/> June 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> January 13 | <input type="radio"/> October 13 | <input type="radio"/> July 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> February 13 | <input type="radio"/> November 13 | <input type="radio"/> August 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> March 13 | <input type="radio"/> December 13 | <input type="radio"/> September 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> April 13 | <input type="radio"/> January 14 | <input type="radio"/> October 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> May 13 | <input type="radio"/> February 14 | <input type="radio"/> November 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> June 13 | <input type="radio"/> March 14 | <input type="radio"/> December 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> July 13 | <input type="radio"/> April 14 | <input type="radio"/> Do not remember |
| <input type="radio"/> August 13 | <input type="radio"/> May 14 | |

28. And how many children are/will be covered by this arrangement?

AGENT NOTE: *By child we mean:*

Under the age of 16

Under the age of 20 and in fulltime non-advanced education (that is a course not higher than A level standard)

Between the ages of 16 and 20 and child benefit is in payment.

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Additionally the child will require being normally resident in the UK and living in the same household as the parent/person with care however there are some exceptions to this rule such as children who are at boarding school or have long term hospitalization are still classed as qualifying children.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 or more
- Do not wish to say

29. Can I just check, what is your parenting role for these children?

(INTERVIEWER NOTE: if their parenting role is different for different children, or if they cannot remember which children they talked about, record the parenting role for the youngest child

- Main day to day carer
- Parent without main day to day care
- Other

30. Has the CMS told you how much the other parent/you should pay?

- Yes Go to Q31)
- No, but we have an arrangement (Go to Q36)
- The CMS has determined that you/your ex does not need to pay anything (nil assessed) (Go to Q36)
- Don't know/can't remember (Go to Q36)

30a. Do you make/receive payments?

- Yes
- No
- Still in the process of application
- Rather not say

**31. Thinking about the amount you are supposed to receive/pay, do you usually receive/pay
(READ OUT)**

- All of it
- Some of it
- None of it
- Don't know/varies

32. And do you normally receive/make your child maintenance payments:

- Weekly
- Bi-weekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- 6 monthly
- Annually
- Other (please specify) _____

33. And how much do you usually receive/pay? Amount £ _____

34. How often are the maintenance payments on time? (READ OUT)

- Always on time
- Usually on time
- Varies
- Usually late
- Always late
- Don't know

35. Overall how well do you think your arrangement works? (READ OUT)

- Very well
- Fairly well
- Not very well
- Not at all well
- Don't know/too early to say

35b. If your arrangement does not work very well or not at all well, why?

36. Could I check, BEFORE you set up the arrangement we've just been talking about but AFTER

- withdrawing the enquiry we talked about earlier or

- the CMS case we talked about earlier closed

in between these two - did you have another arrangement which also closed??

- Yes - Private/family-based arrangement
- Yes - Court/consent order
- Yes - CMS Direct Pay
- Yes - CMS Collection Service
- No – I didn't have another arrangement before this arrangement
- I cannot remember/don't wish to say

Go to Q54

CMS – COLLECTION SERVICE

37. And may I ask why you prefer a Collection Service arrangement? (TICK ALL THAT APPLY)

- I don't want any contact with the other parent
- It's difficult to contact the other parent
- I tried to make a family-based arrangement in the past and it hasn't worked
- I thought the other parent would be more likely to pay if the CMS were involved
- It's difficult for us to talk about money
- I wasn't sure how much maintenance should be paid
- My relationship with the other parent got worse
- I decided I needed some maintenance
- Less arguments with the other parent
- Don't know/ Don't want to say
- Other (Please specify) _____

38. Thinking about this arrangement with the Collection Service could you tell me the month and year that the arrangement was set up/you started setting it up?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| December 12 | <input type="radio"/> September 13 | <input type="radio"/> June 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> January 13 | <input type="radio"/> October 13 | <input type="radio"/> July 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> February 13 | <input type="radio"/> November 13 | <input type="radio"/> August 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> March 13 | <input type="radio"/> December 13 | <input type="radio"/> September 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> April 13 | <input type="radio"/> January 14 | <input type="radio"/> October 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> May 13 | <input type="radio"/> February 14 | <input type="radio"/> November 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> June 13 | <input type="radio"/> March 14 | <input type="radio"/> December 14 |
| <input type="radio"/> July 13 | <input type="radio"/> April 14 | <input type="radio"/> Do not remember |
| <input type="radio"/> August 13 | <input type="radio"/> May 14 | |

39. And how many children are/will be covered by this arrangement?

AGENT NOTE: *By child we mean:*

Under the age of 16

Under the age of 20 and in fulltime non-advanced education (that is a course not higher than A level standard)

Between the ages of 16 and 20 and child benefit is in payment.

Additionally the child will require being normally resident in the UK and living in the same household as the parent/person with care however there are some

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exceptions to this rule such as children who are at boarding school or have long term hospitalization are still classed as qualifying children.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 or more
- Do not wish to say

40. Can I just check, what is your parenting role for these children?

(INTERVIEWER NOTE: if their parenting role is different for different children, or if they cannot remember which children they talked about, record the parenting role for the youngest child

- Main day to day carer
- Parent without main day to day care
- Other

41. Has the CMS told you how much the other parent/you should pay?

- Yes (Go to Q42)
- No (Go to Q48)
- The CMS has determined that you/your ex does not need to pay anything (nil assessed) (Go to Q48)
- Can't remember/don't know (Go to Q48)

42. Do you receive/make payments?

- Yes (Go to Q43)
- No (Go to Q43)
- Still in process of application (Go to Q48)
- Rather not say (Go to Q47)

43. Thinking about the amount you are supposed to receive/pay, do you usually receive/pay (READ OUT)

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- All of it
- Some of it
- None of it
- Don't know/varies

44. And do you normally receive/make your child maintenance payments:

- Weekly
- Bi-weekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- 6 monthly
- Annually
- Other (please specify) _____

45. And how much do you usually receive/pay? £ _____

46. How often are the maintenance payments on time? (READ OUT)

- Always on time
- Usually on time
- Varies
- Usually late
- Always late
- Don't know (Go to Q14)

47. Overall how well do you think your arrangement works? (READ OUT)

- Very well
- Fairly well
- Not very well
- Not at all well
- Don't know/too early to say

47b. If your arrangement does not work very well or not at all well, why?

48. Could I check, BEFORE you set up the arrangement we've just been talking about but AFTER

- withdrawing the enquiry we talked about earlier or

- the CMS case we talked about earlier closed

in between these two - did you have another arrangement which also closed?

- Yes - Private/family-based arrangement
- Yes - Court/consent order
- Yes - CMS Direct Pay
- Yes - CMS Collection Service
- No – I didn't have another arrangement before this arrangement
- I cannot remember/don't wish to say

Go to Q54

NO ARRANGEMENT

49. Since you withdrew your enquiry/closed your CMS case have you tried setting up an arrangement with the other parent just between yourselves (sometimes called a family-based arrangement or private agreement)?

READ OUT

- Yes, we did set up an arrangement but it didn't work (Go to Q50)
- Yes, I approached the other parent but he wouldn't discuss it (Go to Q51)
- Yes, I discussed it with the other parent but we decided not to have an arrangement (Go to Q51)
- No and I didn't contact the other parent (Go to Q53)

50. Why didn't it work?

- The other parent refused to pay
- The other parent promised to pay, but then didn't do so
- The payments were late
- The wrong amount was paid
- Other (specify)

51. And would you prefer to be receiving maintenance payments?

- Yes (Go to Q52)
- No (Go to Q 53)

52. Have you thought about applying to the Child Maintenance Service?

- Yes, I will definitely apply (Go to Q54)
- Yes, I might apply in the future (Go to Q54)
- No (Go to Q53)

53. So why did you decide not to have a maintenance arrangement at all?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: You can pick more than one option from the list below.

- Didn't know how to put an arrangement in place
- Children too old (include if left qualifying education)
- Other parent abroad
- I am abroad most of the time
- Other parent in prison
- Other parent deceased
- I'm not in contact with the other parent/ don't know how to contact them/ don't want to contact them
- I don't want their money/I want to be independent
- The other parent can't afford it
- We have a good relationship and I didn't want to put that at risk
- We have a poor relationship and I didn't want to make it worse
- I/We didn't know how to set one up
- I didn't want the hassle
- The other parent put pressure on me
- Other (please specify) _____

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53b. Can I check, to what extent was your decision to get back together with the other parent influenced by the charges to use the Child Maintenance Service? Was your decision influenced...

- 1. A lot
- 2. To some extent
- 3. Not much
- 4. Not at all
- 5. Didn't know about charges

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

54. I am now going to ask you some questions about your household income.

I will read out some different levels of income for you to choose from. Please could you tell me if you'd prefer me to read out weekly, monthly or annual amounts.

- Weekly
- Monthly (GO TO Q62)
- Annual (GO TO Q69)
- Don't know/refused (END)

55. Weekly. Thinking of your household's total weekly income from all sources, before any deductions for tax, national insurance and so on, is it less than £200 per week?

- Yes
- No

56. And is it:

READ OUT

- Up to £49 a week
- Between £50 and £99
- Between £100 and £199

57. Is it between £200 and £500 per week?

- Yes
- No

58. And is it between

- £200 - £299
- £300 - £399
- £400 - £499

59. Is it between £500 and £1000 per week?

- Yes
- No

60. And is it between

- £500 - £599
- £600 - £699
- £700 - £769

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- £770 - £899
- £900 - £999

61. Can I confirm then that this amounts to £1000 per week or more?

- Yes
- No

62. Monthly. Thinking of your household's total monthly income from all sources, before any deductions for income tax, national insurance and so on, is it less than £867 per month?

- Yes
- No

63. And is it:

- Up to £216
- Between £217 and £432
- Between £433 and £866

64. Is it between £867 and £2,166 per month?

- Yes
- No

65. And is it between ...

- £867 and £1,299
- £1,300 and £1,733
- £1,734 and £2,166

66. Is it between £2,116 and £3,133 per month?

- Yes
- No

67. And is it between ...

- £2,167 - £2,599
- £2,600 - £3,032
- £3,033 - £3,333
- £3,334 - £3,899
- £3,900 - £4,332

68. And can I just confirm that it's £3,334 per month or more?

- Yes
- No

69. Yearly. Thinking of your household's total annual income from all sources, before any deductions for income tax, National Insurance and so on, is it less than £10,400 per year?

- Yes
- No

70. And is it:

- Up to £2,599

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- Between £2,600 - £5, 199
- Between £5,200 - £10,399

71. Is it between £10,400 and £25,999 per year?

- Yes
- No

72. And is it between:

- £10,400 - £15,599
- £15,600 - £20,799
- £20,800 - £25,999

73. And is it between £26,000 and £51,999?

- Yes
- No

74. Is it between ...

- £26,000 - £31,199
- £31,200 - £36,399
- £36,400 - £39,999
- £40,000 - £46,799
- £46,800 - £51,999

75. And can I just confirm it's £52,000 a year or more?

- Yes
- No

END: FINAL QUESTIONS AND CLOSE

76. READ OUT:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in our survey. Just before you go...

Child Maintenance Options is part of DWP. We would like to add your answers in this survey to other information we may hold on you, such as benefit, child support and tax information, etc. Combining information in this way will help us to develop an improved service. Your personal details will, of course, be kept completely confidential and your dealings with Options, Child Maintenance Service or any part of DWP will not be affected in any way.

Do you agree?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: *if pushed don't get into a discussion - suggest that you will put NO and move on.*

- Yes
- No

77. Would it be OK to contact you again at some point in the future to take part in further research? If you are re-contacted, you will still be able to decline to participate if you wish.

INTERVIEWER NOTE: If customers query this say it is so that the DWP can learn more about how clients' arrangements might change over time and how they can help.

- Yes
- No

TEXT CLOSE: Many thanks for taking part in our survey today; I don't have any further questions. Thanks again and goodbye.