

Child Maintenance Group Financial Investigations Unit: Complex Earners Investigations

Data for April 2016 to September 2017

Ad Hoc

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Great Britain

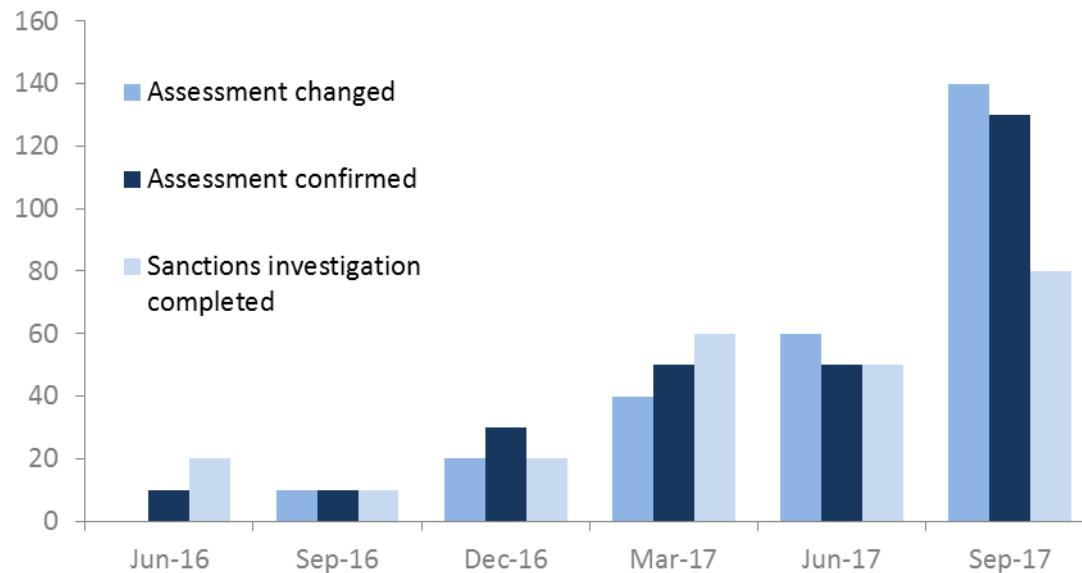
The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) facilitates child maintenance payments for separated families who are unable to make arrangements themselves.

CMS has a number of enforcement powers to ensure non-resident parents pay the maintenance they owe. Actions include deducting maintenance directly from earnings or from bank accounts, instructing enforcement agents to collect unpaid maintenance or seize goods, and in extreme cases, prison sentences. In addition, CMS has powers to ensure that the level of maintenance owed is set correctly, and to investigate the paying parent's income levels in cases where this may have been reported incorrectly.

This release provides statistics covering just one part of CMS's enforcement work: investigations by the Financial Investigations Unit (FIU) into cases of complex earners who are suspected of evading their child maintenance responsibilities by misrepresenting or withholding information about their income. Complex earners are those with multiple income streams, including company directors and the self-employed, where the parent has some control over the way in which their income is paid, and are required to complete a self-assessment by HMRC. Also available are [statistics covering other FIU work and other CMS enforcement actions undertaken \(table 12\)](#).

FIU complex earner investigations outcomes

Assessments



Main stories

- In the three months to end of September 2017, 360 complex earner investigations were completed by the FIU. This is an increase of 113% on the previous quarter, following a new approach to dealing with complex earners by CMS caseworkers since March 2017, whereby more of these complex earners are referred directly to the FIU to consider an investigation.
- Of these 360 investigations, 270 related to whether the assessment correctly reflected income. 52% of these resulted in a change in the assessment and the average change was an increase of £50 a week.

What you need to know

The FIU is part of the CMS. Its primary aim is to ensure that the maintenance calculation reflects a parent's true income. Evidence from its investigations may also be used to recover unpaid maintenance. For instance if it finds out about assets or bank accounts which could be sources of funds, this information may be passed to the civil enforcement team within CMS for further action.

This release provides figures on its financial investigations into complex earner cases only. The FIU has powers to seek information from financial institutions or other sources to uncover evidence to reassess cases or prove that the initial income figure was in fact correct.

Should the FIU uncover any evidence of criminal activity, those cases may be referred to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to consider prosecution. In all cases where the FIU discover undeclared income, the paying parent is offered an interview to discuss the findings.

About these statistics

These statistics are drawn from FIU management information, and relate to CMS cases only. They do not include information related to FIU activity carried out on cases relating to the Child Support Agency, the predecessor to the CMS.

A case is considered completed when the FIU is are satisfied that all appropriate information has been considered to confirm the accuracy of the current maintenance assessment or provide the correct gross income level on which to revise the assessment.

Where to find out more

For more information regarding the Child Maintenance Service caseload please see the [2012 Child Maintenance Scheme Statistics](#).

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Comments? Feedback is welcome

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FIU investigations

Number of complex earner investigations completed by FIU

	June 2016	Sep 2016	Dec 2016	Apr 2017	June 2017	Sep 2017
Intake (1)	50	70	135	185	530	1,100
Completed investigations (2)	30	30	70	150	170	360
Assessment changed (3)	-	10	20	40	60	140
Assessment confirmed (4)	10	10	30	50	50	130
Sanctions investigations completed (5)	20	10	20	60	50	80
Average increase to assessment (£ weekly) (6)	-	43	45	47	54	50

- (1) Intake gives the number of new cases referred to the FIU within the quarter; intake figures were previously published in Table 12 of the [2012 Child Maintenance Scheme Statistics](#).
- (2) Due to the nature of the evidence required, often including multiple requests for information from various sources, investigations typically take between 3–9 months depending on complexity
- (3) CMS cases where the assessment has changed after investigation
- (4) CMS cases where assessment stayed the same after investigation
- (5) Sanctions investigations are conducted on cases with complex earnings to identify their ability to pay prior to proceeding with civil enforcement action to disqualify from holding a driving licence or commitment to prison. The civil enforcement action will only proceed if the parent is found able to pay. This type of investigation does not result in a change to the maintenance assessment.
- (6) Average change in assessment for cases selected under (3)
- (7) Information on the FIU is sourced from management information
- (8) Numbers of cases are rounded to the nearest ten or to the nearest £1. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
- (9) "-" = less than the rounding threshold or based on 5 or fewer cases.