

The Child Maintenance Service is for separated parents who can't arrange child maintenance between themselves. The Child Maintenance Service can calculate the amount of maintenance to be paid and parents can then arrange the payments between themselves. This is called **Direct Pay**. If the parents cannot do this or they don't pay what was agreed then the Child Maintenance Service can collect and manage the payments between the parents which is known as **Collect and Pay**. The Child Maintenance Service has a range of enforcement actions it can use if the Paying Parent refuses to pay their child maintenance.

The Child Maintenance Service was introduced in December 2012 as part of the Government's Child Maintenance Reforms. It replaced the Child Support Agency (CSA)

This publication gives information on the performance of the Child Maintenance Service between August 2013 and December 2017.

Main Stories



The number of children benefiting from maintenance paid through **Collect and Pay** continues to rise.

£14.5m was collected from parents undergoing Enforcement actions on the **Collect & Pay** service.

At a glance

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Feedback is welcome

Published 28 February 2018

Next edition: May/June 2018

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What you need to know

Child maintenance is financial support between separated parents to help with the everyday costs of looking after children.

If they agree, separated parents can arrange child maintenance themselves. This is called a ‘**family-based arrangement**’ and is a private way to sort out child maintenance. Parents arrange everything themselves and no-one else has to be involved.

The Child Maintenance Service which replaces the Child Support Agency (CSA) is for when parents can't agree to a family-based arrangement. Parents wishing to use the Child Maintenance Service must first speak to Child Maintenance Options (Options).

Child Maintenance Options is a free service that provides impartial information and support to help separated parents make decisions about their child maintenance arrangements.

For information and statistics on Child Maintenance Options and family-based arrangements please see the quarterly survey results of parents who speak to Child Maintenance Options:

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

Collect and Pay, Compliance, Children Benefiting and Case Closure

A child maintenance arrangement involves two parents: The “**Receiving Parent**” who has the main day-to-day care of the children and receives the child maintenance and the “**Paying Parent**” who doesn't have main day-to-day care of the children and who pays child maintenance.

Once an application has been made, the Child Maintenance Service will calculate the amount of maintenance to be paid. Some parents will then arrange the payments between themselves, which is called **Direct Pay**. If the parents cannot do this or they don't pay what was agreed then the Child Maintenance Service can collect and manage the payments between the parents. This is known as **Collect and Pay**.

If the parents are using the Collect and Pay service and the Paying Parent has paid some child maintenance in the last three months then they are considered to be **compliant**. **Children Benefiting** is the number of children whose parent will receive this child maintenance.

Case Closure is the process of ending the liability and closing all cases on the Child Support Agency (CSA). Parents are encouraged to contact Child Maintenance Options to discuss their child maintenance needs.

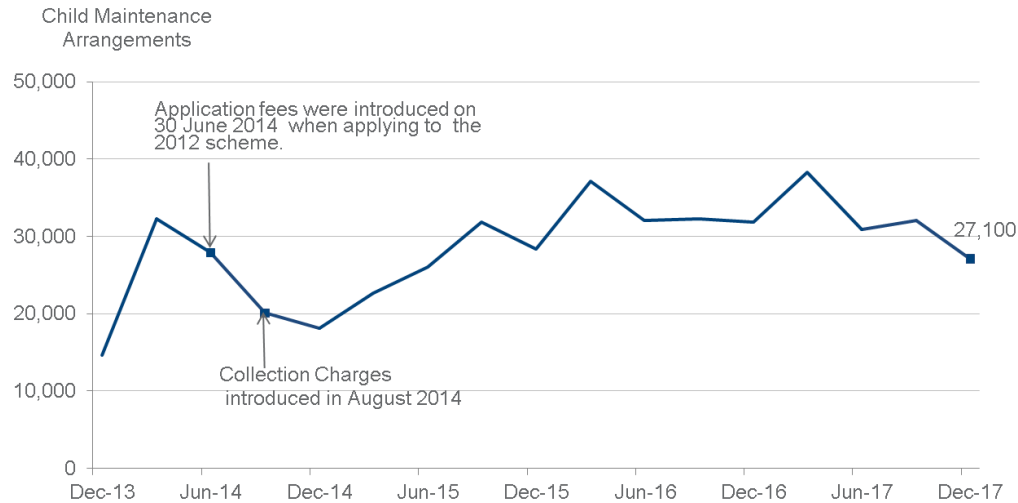
For more details see the Background Information document:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-maintenance-service-2012-scheme-experimental-statistics-background-information-and-methodology>

Applications to the Child Maintenance Service

27,100 new child maintenance arrangements joined the Child Maintenance Service between October and December 2017.

Child Maintenance Arrangements joining the Child Maintenance Service each quarter, December 2013 to December 2017



Arrangements joining the Child Maintenance Service are from:

1. parents making their first arrangement; and
2. parents who previously had an arrangement with the CSA

CSA cases are being closed so parents have to make new family-based or Child Maintenance Service arrangements.

Nearly all CSA cases have now been closed so the fall in the number of child maintenance applications since March 17 is **partly** due to fewer applications from parents who previously had a CSA arrangement.

At the end of December 2017: The Child Maintenance Service was managing 391,800 arrangements for 326,200 Paying Parents

See **Tables 1-4** for more information on the number of applications and arrangements with the Child Maintenance Service.

Collect and Pay Service and Compliance

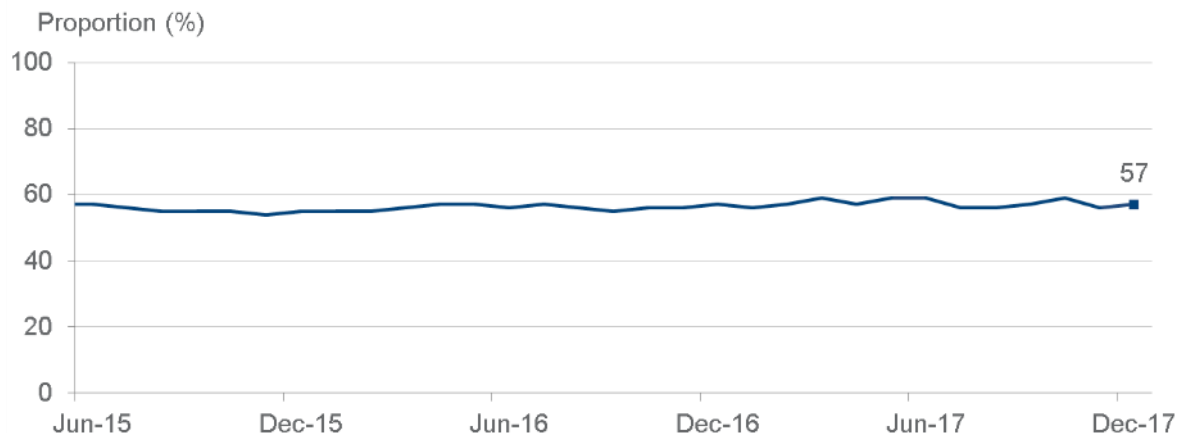
When a parent makes an application with the Child Maintenance Service, they will be told how much child maintenance should be paid. Some parents will then arrange the payments between themselves, this is called Direct Pay. If the parents cannot do this or they don't pay, the Child Maintenance Service can collect and manage the payments between the parents. This service is known as Collect and Pay.

At the end of December 2017, **32%** of Paying Parents using the Child Maintenance Service used the Collect and Pay service and **70%** used Direct Pay. **2%** of Paying Parents use both types of arrangements.

See **Table 5** for full data

Almost three fifths of Paying Parents using the Collect & Pay service are paying some of their child maintenance

Percentage of Paying Parents using Collect & Pay who are compliant during the quarter ending June 2015 to the quarter ending December 2017



Between October and December 2017, **57%** of parents using the Collect and Pay service were compliant. This means that **59,800** Paying Parents paid at least some of their due child maintenance between October and December 2017.

The Child Maintenance Service encourages parents to make family-based arrangements and arrange child maintenance themselves. If parents are unable to do this then they are encouraged to try using the Direct Pay service. If these types of arrangements are not working for the parents the Collect and Pay service is available. This means that parents using the Collect and Pay service are generally the most difficult to collect child maintenance from.

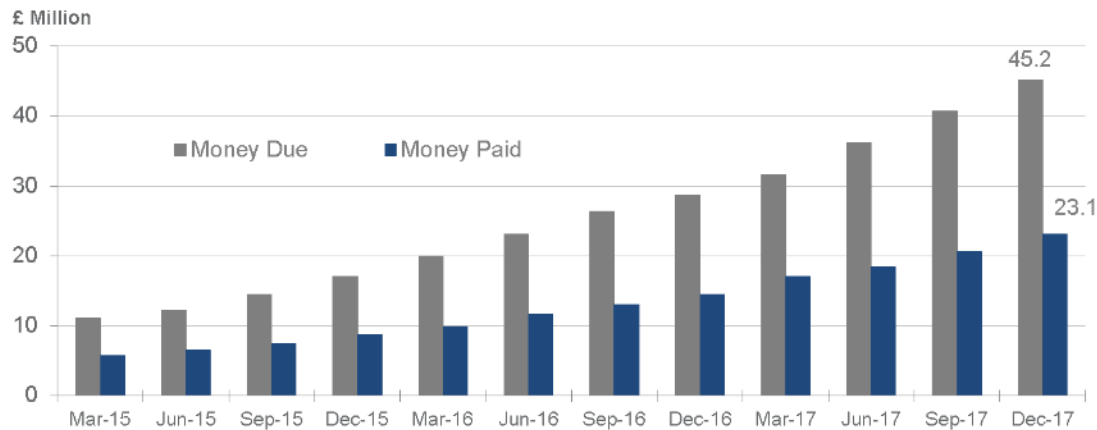
See **Table 6** for full data

Child Maintenance collected and Children Benefiting

£45.2 million of child maintenance was due to be paid by parents using the Collect and Pay service in the quarter ending December 2017.

£23.1 million was successfully collected and paid to parents through the Child Maintenance Service in the last quarter....

Child Maintenance due and paid every quarter for parents using the Collect & Pay service



At the end of December 2017, there was **£177.1 million** of unpaid child maintenance where the parents are currently using the Collect and Pay service.

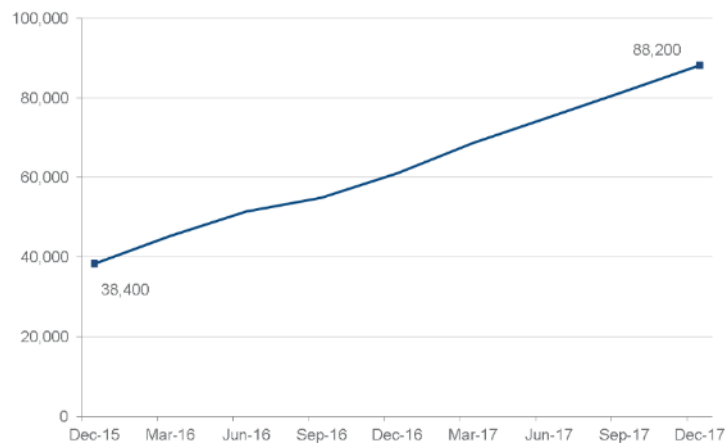
Some of this unpaid maintenance will have built up when the parents were using the Direct Pay service. The receiving parent has then asked the Child Maintenance Service to try and collect the unpaid maintenance payments.

The growth in unpaid maintenance is caused by the increase in number of arrangements using the Child Maintenance Service.

See **Table 8 and 9** for full data.

...88,200 children are benefiting from this child maintenance

The number of children benefiting from compliant arrangements every quarter for parents using the Collect & Pay service



88,200 children are benefiting from child maintenance paid to parents through the Child Maintenance Service.

A further **357,600** children are on child maintenance arrangements where the parents are using the Direct Pay service. Both of these figures continue to rise as the number of arrangements on the Child Maintenance Service continues to grow.

See **Table 10** for full data.

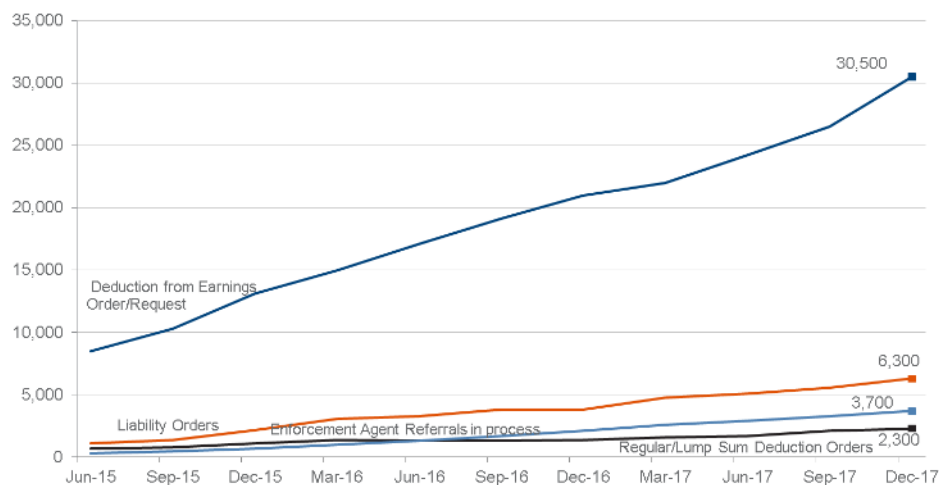
Enforcement

When a payment is missed, the Child Maintenance Service will contact the Paying Parent to find out why they haven't paid and arrange for them to pay what they owe or warn them about action that might be taken if they don't pay. If the Paying Parent doesn't respond, the Child Maintenance Service can take action to get the child maintenance owed. If the Paying Parent is using the Collect and Pay service then this will happen automatically. If the parents are paying the child maintenance between themselves (Direct Pay) then the Receiving Parent needs to ask the Child Maintenance Service to take action after moving to Collect and Pay.

The Child Maintenance Service can collect unpaid child maintenance in 3 different ways:

1. Take money from the Paying Parent's earnings through a **deduction from earnings order/request**. The Child Maintenance Service will tell the Paying Parent's employer how much to take from their wages. The employer must then pass on the money or they can be taken to court.
2. Money can be taken directly from the Paying Parent's bank or building society account by using a **deduction order**.
3. A Paying Parent can be taken to court over unpaid child maintenance. The courts can grant **liability orders** which allow the parent to be referred to Enforcement Agents who could come and sell property to pay the unpaid maintenance and any costs. The courts could also apply a **charging order** to force the parent to sell property and use the money to pay off the unpaid maintenance. If these methods fail the Child Maintenance Service can apply for the courts to disqualify the parent from driving or send them to prison.

The number of enforcement actions taking place on Collect & Pay



At the end of December 2017:

- **30,500** deductions from earnings orders and requests were in place.
- **6,300** liability orders were in process.
- **2,300** regular and lump sum deduction orders were in place.
- **3,700** Enforcement Agent Referrals were in process.

In the quarter ending December 2017, £14.5m was collected from parents undergoing Enforcement actions on the Collect & Pay service. This was **63%** of all money collected and paid to parents through the Collect & Pay service.

See **Table 11** for full data.

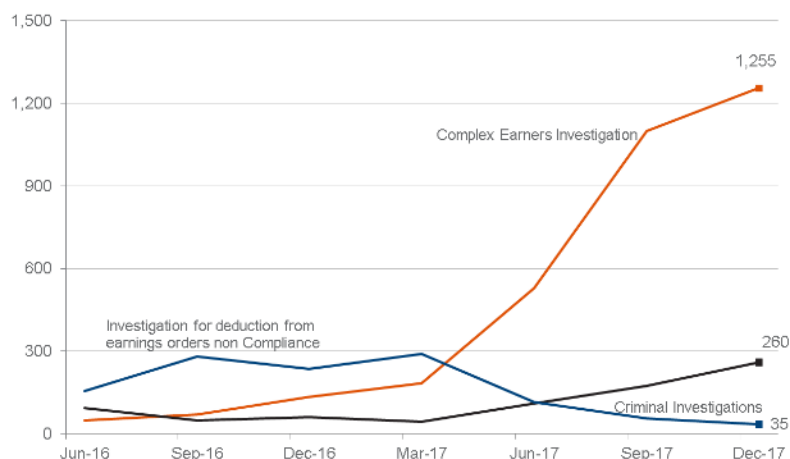
Financial Investigations

The Child Maintenance Service carries out investigations to check that the right amount of child maintenance is being paid. These investigations are:

1. **Criminal investigations** - People can be charged with a criminal offence for not complying with relevant rules. We carry out the investigation and gather all of the required evidence, which is then submitted to the Crown Prosecution Service who decide if and with what offence a person may be charged with.
2. Investigations into why **deduction from earning orders are not being successful** in collecting child maintenance.
3. Investigations into **complex earners** who are parents with multiple income streams, company directors and the self-employed. In these cases the parent may have some control over the way in which their income is paid and initial child maintenance calculations may not reflect the parent's true income. The Financial Investigations Unit will also investigate cases with complex earnings to prove the paying parent has the ability to pay child maintenance before they consider taking actions such as removing their driving licence or sending them to prison.

1,550 cases were referred for Financial Investigations between October and December 2017

Cases referred for Financial Investigations each quarter



535 Financial Investigations were completed in the quarter ending December 2017

- **35** Criminal Investigations were completed, of which **20** were dismissed for lack of evidence to prosecute and **15** withdrawn because the Paying Parent accepted they were the biological parent and therefore accepted the responsibility to pay child maintenance.
- Of the **260** investigations into why deductions from earning orders were not being paid, **210** investigations were completed and **90** arrangements got a payment. The remaining **120** were no longer suitable for a deduction from earnings order.
- **290** complex earners investigations were completed:
 - **30** sanctions investigation relating to the Paying Parent having their driving licences disqualified or being sent to prison were completed.
 - **260** of the investigations related to whether the amount of child maintenance to be paid correctly reflected the parents income. **110** of these resulted in a change to the amount of child maintenance to be paid.

See [Table 12](#) for full data.

About these statistics

Comparisons between these statistics on the Child Maintenance Service and the CSA should not be made as the two services have different aims and cover different groups. The Government's changes to the child maintenance system in 2012 were designed to encourage parents to work together to provide for their children. Child Maintenance Options was created to support parents to set up collaborative, family-based child maintenance arrangements. The Child Maintenance Service was intended for those parents who cannot make family-based arrangements.

Information on the Child Maintenance Service continues to be developed and tested. Additional measures and tables will be included in future publications when DWP statisticians are comfortable with the quality of the data.

Figures contained within this publication are rounded to the nearest hundred or percent. Percentages are calculated prior to rounding.

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

Changes to the publication

This publication contains some changes as well as new measures:

- The name of the publication has been changed from "Child Maintenance Service 2012 Scheme Statistics" to **Child Maintenance Service Statistics**.
- The report has been streamlined to focus on headline messages and some terminology has been simplified to be more user-friendly.
- The tables have been restructured to an order which reflects a typical customer journey through the Child Maintenance Service.
- We have added new measures on the Child Maintenance Services Enforcement actions in **Table 11** and the impact of the Financial Investigations Unit in **Table 12**.
- We have improved the data sources used in **Table 11** and some of the figures reported in previous reports will have changed.
- One of the measures in **Table 14** has been changed to reflect a change in definition.

Where to find out more

This document and the summary tables can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/2012-statutory-child-maintenance-scheme-aug-2013-to-dec-2017-experimental>

Older releases: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-on-the-2012-statutory-child-maintenance-scheme>

The Child Maintenance Service website has further information: <https://www.gov.uk/child-maintenance>

Information and statistics on Family-based child maintenance arrangements can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-based-child-maintenance-arrangements-statistics>