



## Guidance

# Child Support Agency statistics: publication strategy

Updated 30 May 2019

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## Background

The Child Support Agency (CSA) was set up in 1993 to calculate how much child maintenance parents should pay and if necessary manage the payments between the parents.

In 2012 the government reformed the child maintenance system, introducing the 2012 child maintenance scheme administered by the Child Maintenance Service (CMS), to replace the CSA. This was developed to help:

- increase the number of payments reaching children on time
- full and faster enforcement action for those who choose not to pay

In June 2014, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) began to close the cases managed by the CSA.

Parents have been encouraged to contact [Child Maintenance Options](#) for support:

- to help them choose whether they are able to make their own family-based arrangements
- if they need to make an application with the Child Maintenance Service

All new applications for child maintenance are dealt with by the CMS and statistics on this are published separately.

The process of closing cases on the CSA is known as “case closure”. Up until

December 2018 we produced [2 statistical publications about the Child Support Agency](#):

- the Quarterly Summary of Statistics (QSS) about the performance of the CSA
- a separate publication covering the progress of the CSA case closure programme

The case closure programme ended liabilities on all CSA cases by the end of 2018.

Because all on-going liabilities have been ended, many of the statistics are no longer relevant. The December 2018 CSA publications will therefore be the last in their current form.

A number of cases remain on the CSA, with no on-going liability to pay maintenance but with outstanding historic arrears.

## **Child maintenance compliance and arrears strategy**

The [Child Maintenance compliance and arrears strategy](#), was published in December 2017. This includes plans on how the government will address debt that built up on the 1993 and 2003 CSA schemes.

The strategy enables non-paying debt that is owed to the government (to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions) to be written off as this debt relates to a CSA policy that has now ended. Work to write off the non-paying debt owed to government was started in December 2018.

Debt owed to the Parent with Care (PWC) will be written off under the following circumstances:

- if the debt is less than £65 it will be written off and parents will not be notified in writing
- if the debt is £500 or less and the case is less than 10 years old or £1,000 or less and the case is 10 years old or older, a letter will be sent to the PWC and the Non Resident Parent (NRP) to explain that debt will be written off.

For cases with higher debt balances, the PWC will be given a last opportunity to help the CSA collect the debt from the NRP. The CSA will write to the PWC and the NRP about historical debt owed if it is over £500 and the case is less than 10 years old or over £1,000 and the case is 10 years old or over. The following must also apply:

- the case is historical debt only and has no on-going liability
- no payment has been made in the past 3 months

- the debt has built up under the CSA (it may have now moved to the CMS as part of a CSA case closure)

The PWC will be able to ask for an attempt to be made to collect this debt by providing additional information. This is called 'making representation'. Checks will then be carried out to decide if it is likely that the debt can successfully be collected. Checks could include locating the NRP and finding out about their financial status. If there is a chance the debt can be collected, the NRP will be contacted and will also be able to 'make representation'. This means informing the CSA about any reason why the debt should not be collected, and providing evidence to back this up.

After this, a letter will be sent to the PWC and NRP to say whether the debt will be collected or written off. If it is decided that the debt can successfully be collected, the amount of debt owed will be verified and the case will be moved from the CSA computer system to the CMS computer system for on-going collection.

The compliance and arrears strategy also included plans to write off debt on CSA and CMS where the NRP has been sequestrated (Scottish Bankruptcy) and the period of sequestration has expired as this debt cannot be collected.

## **Overview of changes to our published statistics**

The current case closure publication will be discontinued after the December 2018 publication because all liabilities on the CSA systems will have been ended. Two tables from this publication will be moved to the CSA QSS. They are:

- table 8 – CSA Arrears Only Intake and Caseload on the CMS
- table 9 – CSA Arrears Transitioned to the CMS

The majority of the current CSA QSS tables will be discontinued because they relate to cases with on-going liability and there will be no CSA cases of this type after the end of December 2018. Two of the current tables will be retained, these are:

- table 1 – Caseload
- table 5 – Outstanding Maintenance Arrears

To summarise, in the March 2019 CSA QSS publication, there will be 4 tables retained from the existing publications. Subject to the availability and quality of data, 6 new tables will be added to provide information on the representation process and the collection or write off of CSA arrears.

The revised CSA QSS will be populated from a new CSA administrative data source and many of the statistics will be newly developed. The statistics will

therefore be 'Experimental'. As the CSA close down activity is due to be completed by the end of 2019, at which point this publication will be discontinued, we do not plan to seek National Statistics designation for the publication.

## Detail of publication changes

Details of the planned changes are in the following tables.

### Current QSS publication tables

QSS publication table	Explanation of change
1. Caseload by scheme	Total caseload only to be retained in the amended QSS. The breakdown by 1993 and 2003 schemes will no longer be published.
2. The number of children on 'Maintenance Direct' cases or on paying 'Collection Service' cases	No longer relevant, this table will be discontinued.
3. Caseload status	No longer relevant, this table will be discontinued.
4. Child Maintenance collected and arranged	No longer relevant, this table will be discontinued.
5. Outstanding maintenance arrears	Total amount of arrears and total number of cases with arrears will be retained in the amended QSS. The breakdown by 1993 and 2003 schemes will no longer be published.
6. Arrears distribution by arrears caseload and value of arrears	No longer relevant, this table will be discontinued.
7. Arrears segmentation	No longer relevant, this table will be discontinued.

### Case closure publication tables

Case closure tables	Explanation of change
1. Case Closure overview	No longer relevant, this table will be discontinued.
1.2. Proactive Case Closure cases where the liability has ended	No longer relevant, this table will be discontinued.
2. Child Support Agency caseload	No longer relevant, this table will be discontinued.

3.1. Proactive Case Closure position	No longer relevant, this table will be discontinued.
3.2. Overall Case Closure position	No longer relevant, this table will be discontinued.
4.1. Number of cases that have ended liability	No longer relevant, this table will be discontinued.
4.2. Number of cases that have completed Case Closure	No longer relevant, this table will be discontinued.
5.1. Number of proactive Case Closure cases with a case on the Child Maintenance Service	No longer relevant, this table will be discontinued.
5.2. Number of reactive Case Closure cases with a case on the Child Maintenance Service	No longer relevant, this table will be discontinued.
5.3. Time between ending liability and Child Maintenance Service application (Proactive Cases, excluding arrears only)	No longer relevant, this table will be discontinued.
5.4. Time between ending liability and Child Maintenance Service application (Reactive Cases, excluding arrears only)	No longer relevant, this table will be discontinued.
6. Total number of Case Closure cases with a case on the Child Maintenance Service	No longer relevant, this table will be discontinued.
7. Number of arrears only cases in Case Closure	No longer relevant, this table will be discontinued.
8. CSA arrears only intake and caseload on the Child Maintenance Service	From the March 2019 publication, this table will be published in the CSA QSS.
9. Child Support Agency arrears transitioned to the Child Maintenance Service	From the March 2019 publication, this table will be published in the CSA QSS.

## Revised QSS publication from March 2019 onwards (these will be published on 26 June 2019)

Revised QSS table	Description
1. Caseload	Current CSA QSS table 1, retained without the breakdown by 1993 and 2003 schemes.
2. Outstanding maintenance arrears	Current CSA QSS table 5, retained without the breakdown by 1993 and 2003 schemes.
3. CSA arrears only intake and caseload on the Child Maintenance Service	Current Case Closure publication table 8.
4. Child Support Agency arrears	Current Case Closure publication table 9.

transitioned to the  
Child Maintenance  
Service

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5. Arrears owed to PWC above thresholds summary	New – caseload and value of arrears owed to PWCs which are above the threshold for representation to be offered. Broken down by status of the case (for example, Selected into representation process/arrears paid in full/ arrears transitioned to CMS/arrears written off).
6. PWC representation progress	New – caseload and value of arrears where a letter has been issued to the PWC offering representation. Broken down by PWC representation stage (for example, letter issued/unable to trace PWC/PWC made representation).
7. NRP representation progress	New – caseload and value of arrears where the PWC has made representation and NRP representation has been considered/offered. Broken down by NRP representation stage (for example, Unable to trace NRP/letter issued to NRP/arrears paid in full/arrears transitioned to CMS/arrears written off).
8. Collections cases transferred to CMS	New – caseload and value of cases which have been transitioned to CMS for the collection of arrears, broken down by type (agreement made to pay or various types of enforcement action).
9. Arrears written off summary	New – caseloads and value of arrears written off, broken down by category (owed to Secretary of State/owed to PWC under threshold for representation/owed to PWC over threshold for representation).
10. Complaints relating to the compliance and arrears strategy	New – the number of complaints received relating to the compliance and arrears strategy. If numbers are significant we will aim to publish a breakdown by type of complaint

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## Update on planned changes to the statistics

In a change to the published strategy, in the [March 2019 release](#) (which will be published on 26 June 2019) we will not be including statistics on:

- values – because quality assurance of the data being used to produce the values is not yet complete
- NRP representation progress – because not enough cases have reached this stage due to the length of time we are allowing parents to respond to our letters
- collections cases transferred to CMS – because not enough cases have reached this stage
- complaints – because data on complaints is not currently available in a form that is suitable for publication

We will continue work to develop these additional statistics and will aim to include them in the June 2019 release, which is due to be published in either September or October 2019.

# Feedback

DWP is always glad to hear the comments and views of customers on the CSA statistics and the publication strategy, email: [cm.analysis.research@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:cm.analysis.research@dwp.gov.uk)

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