



# Child Maintenance Service Statistics

Data for August 2013 to March 2019

Quarterly

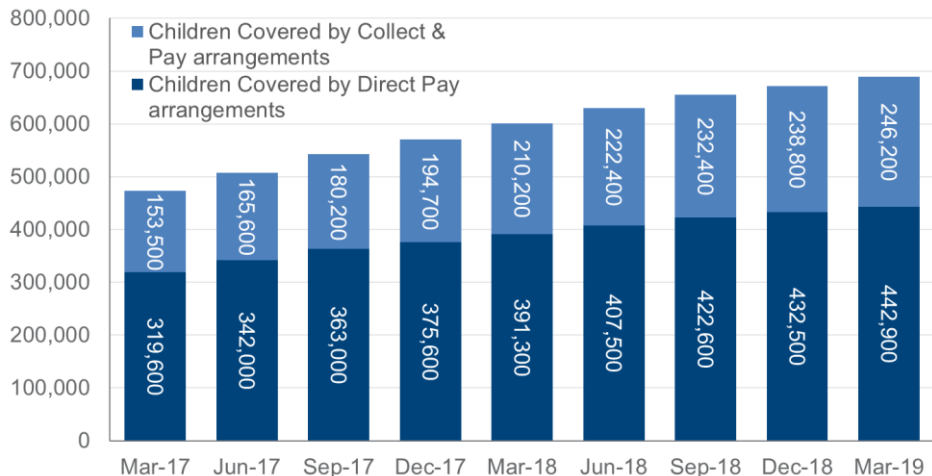
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Great Britain

Official  
Experimental

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) and is for separated parents who can't arrange child maintenance between themselves. **Direct Pay** is where the Child Maintenance Service calculates the amount of maintenance to be paid and parents arrange the payments between themselves. If 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 the **Collect & Pay** service. The Child Maintenance Service has a range of enforcement actions it can use if the Paying Parent refuses to pay their child maintenance.

This publication gives information on the performance of the Child Maintenance Service between August 2013 and March 2019.

## Main Stories



**689,100** children are covered by Child Maintenance Service arrangements.

- **442,900** through Direct Pay arrangements
- **246,200** through the Collect & Pay Service

**67%** of parents due to pay child maintenance through the **Collect & Pay** service paid some maintenance in the quarter ending March 2019, up from 60% one year earlier. This includes parents who transferred from the Direct Pay service, having failed to pay their liabilities.

## At a glance

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The Child Maintenance Service was managing 475,400 arrangements for 446,600 Paying Parents, up from 415,000 arrangements and 389,600 Paying Parents one year earlier.

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67% of Paying Parents using the Collect & Pay service were compliant in the quarter ending March 2019, up from 60% for the same period in 2018.

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£238.3 million was due to be paid in Child Maintenance between January and March 2019, up 18% from the same period in 2018.

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Feedback is welcome

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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.

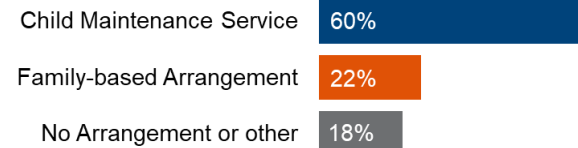
**The Child Maintenance Service** which replaced the Child Support Agency (CSA) is for when parents can't agree to a family-based arrangement. Parents wishing to use the Child Maintenance Service must first speak to Child Maintenance Options (Options).

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

Between August - October 2018:



45,500 people had a conversation with Options. They then went on to set up...



*Percentages may not sum due to rounding.*

For further 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>

## Parents, Compliance, and Children Covered

- The "**Receiving Parent**" has the main day-to-day care of the children and receives the child maintenance.
- The "**Paying Parent**" doesn't have the main day-to-day care of the children and pays child maintenance.
- **Children Covered** is the number of children for whom the paying parent has a child maintenance arrangement.
- **Compliance** is where parents using the Collect & Pay service have paid some child maintenance in the last three months.

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

Parents who want to apply to the Child Maintenance Service must pay a £20 application fee. Parents do not have to pay this if:

1. They are or have been a victim of domestic abuse.
2. They are under 19 years of age.

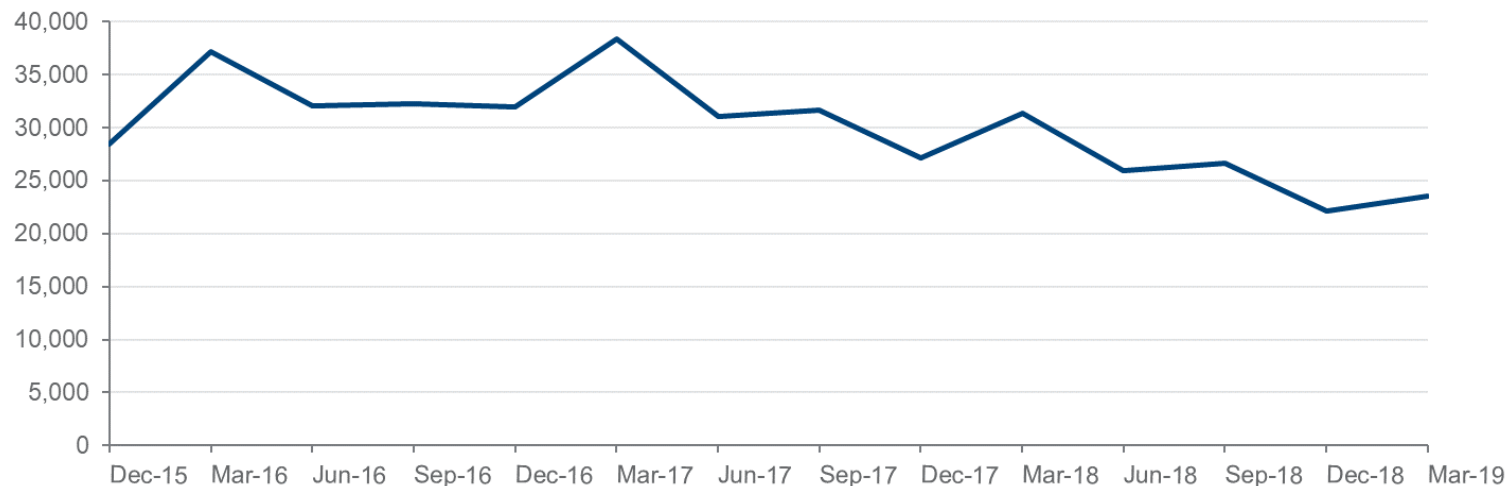
Applications to the Child Maintenance Service are from:

- Parents making their first arrangement.
- Parents who previously had an arrangement with the CSA.
  - All CSA cases with an ongoing liability were closed by December 2018. Parents were encouraged to make a new family-based arrangement or an arrangement through the Child Maintenance Service.

## The number of applications made to the Child Maintenance Service is falling

- **Between January and March 2019, there were 23,500 successful applications to the Child Maintenance Service.**

**Child Maintenance Arrangements joining the Child Maintenance Service each quarter, December 2015 to March 2019**



The fall in the number of child maintenance applications since March 2017 is partly due to fewer applications from parents who previously had a CSA arrangement, reflecting the lower numbers of parents going through the CSA case closure process. All CSA cases have now had their on-going liability to pay maintenance ended.

## At the end of March 2019, the Child Maintenance Service was managing 475,400 arrangements for 446,600 Paying Parents

**This is a 15% increase to the number of arrangements since the end of March 2018**

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

# The make-up of the Child Maintenance Service's cases

When a parent makes an application to the Child Maintenance Service, they will be told how much child maintenance should be paid. Some parents will then arrange the payments between themselves (**Direct Pay**). If the parents cannot do this or they don't pay, the Child Maintenance Service have the **Collect & Pay** service which can collect and manage the payments between the parents.

If payments are not being made by parents using Direct Pay, the Receiving Parent can ask the Child Maintenance Service to step in and switch the case to the Collect & Pay service. The Child Maintenance Service will then begin collecting the payments and any child maintenance that was previously unpaid through Direct Pay. The Child Maintenance Service issues a text message to all Direct Pay customers three months after they set up their Direct Pay arrangement and at each annual review to check the Direct Pay arrangement is working for them, and if not supports them to arrange a change to the service type.

As an effective and cooperative relationship between parents is better for children, the Child Maintenance Service encourages parents to collaborate by charging parents for using the Collect & Pay service. To use the Collect & Pay service Paying Parents are charged 20% of their child maintenance and Receiving Parents 4%. The majority of parents choose to use Direct Pay rather than the Collect & Pay service.

## Arrangements moving between Direct Pay and Collect & Pay, quarter ending December 2015 to quarter ending March 2019



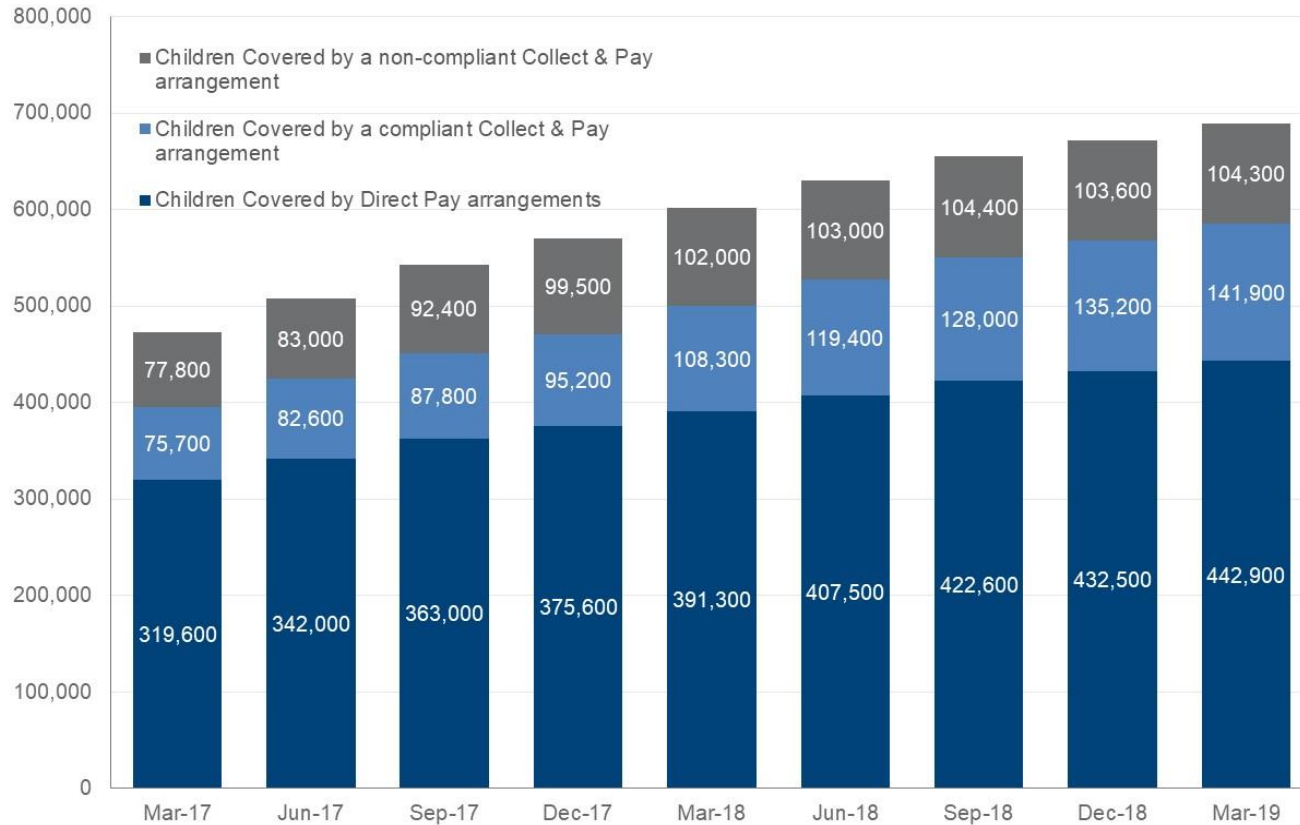
- The majority of new applications to the Child Maintenance Service choose to use Direct Pay.
- More parents move from Direct Pay to Collect & Pay than from Collect & Pay to Direct Pay. **9,500** moved from Direct Pay to Collect & Pay between January and March 2019.
- From March 2018 to March 2019 the percentage of child maintenance arrangements using the Direct Pay service has decreased from **66%** to **65%**

See **Table 4 and 5** for full data.

# Children covered by the Child Maintenance Service

## 689,100 children are covered by child maintenance arrangements through the Child Maintenance Service

### Children covered by Direct Pay or Collect & Pay arrangements, quarters ending March 2017 to March 2019



**442,900** children are covered by 307,600 Direct Pay arrangements.

**246,200** children are covered by 165,900 arrangements through the Collect & Pay service.

- **141,900** children received some child maintenance through the Collect & Pay service between January and March 2019.

The number of children covered by Direct Pay or compliant Collect & Pay arrangements continues to increase each quarter as the number of cases managed by the Child Maintenance Service continues to increase.

**87,600 more children** are covered by a Child Maintenance Service arrangement compared to the same period in 2018.

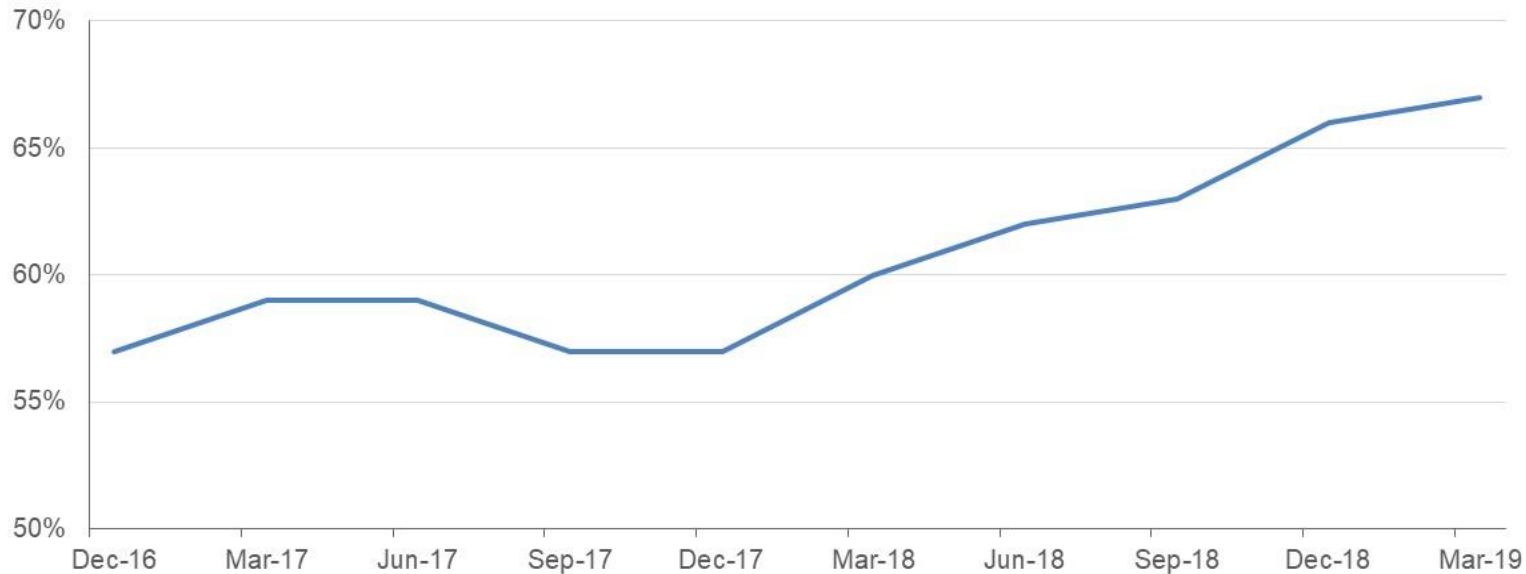
See **Table 10** for more information.

## Paying Parents on the Collect & Pay Service

This includes parents who have transferred in from the Direct Pay service having failed to pay their liabilities.

### 67% 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, quarters ending December 2016 to March 2019



Between January and March 2019, **67%** of Paying Parents using the Collect & Pay service were compliant. This means that **89,400** Paying Parents paid at least some of their child maintenance through the Collect & Pay service and **141,900** children benefitted from that money.

**Compliance has risen from 60% to 67%** between the quarter ending March 2018 and the quarter ending March 2019.

See **Table 7 and 10** for full data.

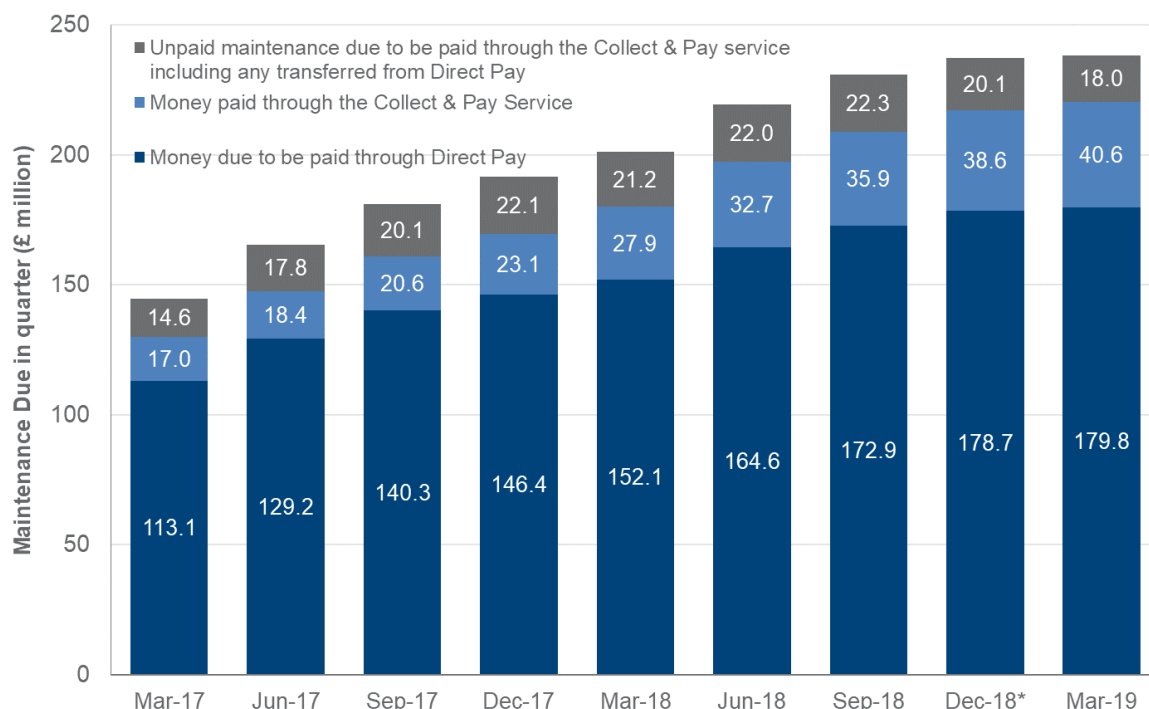
# Child Maintenance Due and Paid

The Child Maintenance Service monitors payments made through the Collect & Pay service and can take enforcement action if payments are not made. For parents using Direct Pay, if payments are not being made the Receiving Parent can ask that the case is switched to the Collect & Pay Service.

- This means that the Collect & Pay service will consist of parents who may be less likely to pay than those using Direct Pay and that cases moved from Direct Pay are likely to already have unpaid child maintenance.

## £238.3 million was due to be paid in Child Maintenance between January and March 2019

### Child Maintenance due and paid every quarter by service type, quarters ending March 2017 to March 2019



Between January and March 2019, **£238.3m** Child Maintenance was due to be paid.

- **£220.4m** was paid through the Collect & Pay service or due to be paid through Direct Pay arrangements.
  - **£179.8m** through Direct Pay arrangements.
  - **£40.6m** through the Collect & Pay service.

The amount of money due to be paid through the Child Maintenance Service has been rising as the number of parents using the service has increased.

**£18.0m** of maintenance due to be paid through the Collect & Pay service in the quarter ending March 2019 was unpaid. This has fallen from **£21.2m** during the same period in 2018, despite the sustained increase in the total amount of maintenance due.

*\* As a result of problems with data feeds, the figures in this chart for the quarter ending December 2018 are estimates. More detail is available in the background information note.*

Since the Child Maintenance Service began there is a total of **£275.3m** child maintenance which has been unpaid and now should be paid through the Collect & Pay service.

- This is **11%** of all child maintenance due to have been paid since the service began.

This includes unpaid child maintenance from Direct Pay arrangements which have been transferred to the Collect & Pay service.

See **Tables 8 and 9** for more information.

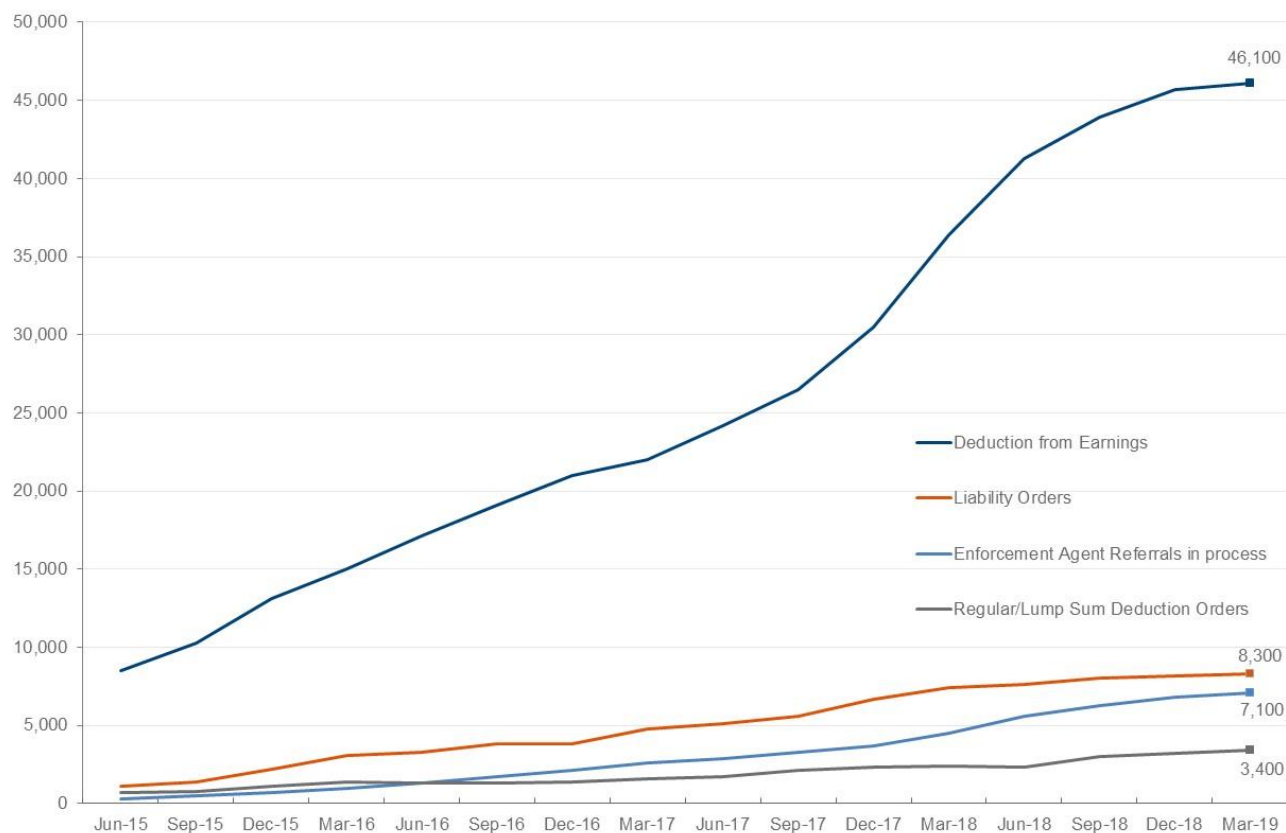


# Enforcement

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 actions 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 & 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. The Child Maintenance Service will step in and switch the case to the Collect & Pay service, and begin collecting the payments and any child maintenance that was previously unpaid through Direct Pay.

The Child Maintenance Service can collect unpaid child maintenance in 3 major 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 child maintenance. If these methods fail the Child Maintenance Service can apply for the courts to disqualify the parent from driving, holding a passport or send them to prison.



**The number of enforcement actions taking place, quarters ending June 2015 to March 2019**

**At the end of March 2019:**

- **46,100** deductions from earnings orders and requests were in place.
- **8,300** liability orders were in process.
- **7,100** Enforcement Agent Referrals were in process.
- **3,400** regular and lump sum deduction orders were in place.

In the quarter ending March 2019, **£27.9m** was collected from parents undergoing a Deduction from Earnings order/request or a Civil Enforcement action on the Collect & Pay service. This was **61%** of all money collected and paid to parents through the Collect & Pay service.

See **Table 11** for full data.



## About these statistics

Comparisons between these statistics on the Child Maintenance Service and statistics on 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.

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

The following changes were made since the previous publication

- Table 1 - Due to the closure of all Child Support Agency cases, 'paused' applications have ceased. Applications will no longer be split into those that are 'paused' and 'not paused' from the quarter ending March 2019.
- Tables 2 & 3 – Some figures have undergone minor revisions, compared to those reported in previous publications. This is a result of changes to the information sources used to produce these tables: published figures are now aligned with the most appropriate internal reports.
- Table 11 – The methodology used to report the number of disclosure requests sent to banks and other financial institutions has been corrected for this publication. Figures reported in previous publications are incorrect and have been revised in this publication.
- Table 14 – Due to operational changes, the methodology used to identify Change of Circumstances linked to CMS only is not reliable from the quarter ending September 2018 onwards. Figures for these periods have been reported in previous publications: these were incorrect. From this publication onward, the relevant statistic (percentage of changes cleared in 28 days, for changes linked to CMS only) will not be reported for the affected periods.
- Table 18: From the quarter ending June 2018, the figures provided for the percentage of calls that were answered within 30 seconds will have been significantly affected by technical issues, and should be considered unfit for purpose. Figures for the quarter ending June 2018, and subsequent quarters, will no longer be reported; any such figures provided in previous publications should be considered incorrect.

## Where to find out more

This document and the summary tables can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-maintenance-service-august-2013-to-march-2019-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>