

# Study of child maintenance arrangements

by Mari Toomse and Natalie Maplethorpe

**Department for Work and Pensions**

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**Mari Toomse and Natalie Maplethorpe**

A report of research carried out by the National Centre for Social Research on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions

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# The Authors

**Natalie Maplethorpe** is a Researcher at the National Centre for Social Research.

**Mari Toomse** is a Senior Researcher at the National Centre for Social Research.

# Abbreviations

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| CATI     | Computer assisted telephone interviewing                       |
| CSA      | Child Support Agency   |
| DWP      | Department for Work and Pensions                               |
| FACS     | Families and Children Study                                    |
| FRS      | Family Resources Survey  |
| NatCen   | National Centre for Social Research                            |
| SIC 2003 | Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities 2003 |
| SOC 2000 | Standard Occupational Classification 2000                      |



# Glossary

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Child maintenance             | Financial support from a non-resident parent to a parent with care to help with a child's everyday living costs.   |
| Child maintenance arrangement | An agreement between a parent with care and a non-resident parent regarding child maintenance. This can be in the form of a court order, a private agreement or a Child Support Agency (CSA) assessment. |
| Child maintenance case        | A case including all eligible children a parent with care has with a non-resident parent. One parent with care can have more than one child maintenance case.  |
| The Commission                | Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission.  |
| Couple family                 | A family with a dependent child(ren) that is headed by one natural or adoptive parent, and a partner.  |
| Dependent child               | Children aged 16 years or younger, or between 17 and 19 years and in full-time education.  |
| Effective arrangement         | Child maintenance arrangement where a non-resident parent provides ongoing financial support for a child.  |
| Family (unit)                 | Comprises two generations of people; at least one dependent child and at least one adult who is responsible for this child.  |

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Lone parent family</b>  | A family with dependent child(ren) that is headed by one natural or adoptive parent only.  |
| <b>Parent</b>              | The adult responsible for the child. This can be the child's natural or adoptive parent, or the legal guardian(s) to whom Child Benefit is paid. |
| <b>Non-resident parent</b> | Parent who does not have the main day-to-day care of a child. Term 'absent parent' is also used throughout the text.                             |
| <b>Parent with care</b>    | Parent who has the main day-to-day care of a child.  |

# Summary

This report presents the findings and technical details of the Study of Child Maintenance Arrangements commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions from the National Centre for Social Research. The aim of the study was to provide an estimate of the prevalence of effective child maintenance arrangements just prior to policy changes at the end of October 2008. Subsequent follow-up studies would determine to what extent these changes have been successful.

The study sample was drawn from the 2007-08 Family Resources Survey, where the information collected makes it possible to identify parents with care. Altogether, nearly 1,200 households were interviewed by telephone in the course of six weeks in autumn 2008. The overall response rate was 61 per cent.

On the basis of child maintenance cases, 28 per cent had an arrangement in place that was 'successful' on the criterion that payments were received, whether on time or less regularly. These payments supported 29 per cent of the children of the non-resident parents (excluding children whose other natural parent was unknown or deceased).

The most common type of an arrangement was a private agreement, followed by a Child Support Agency assessment. When an arrangement existed, the payments were usually received in full and on time. In general, it tended to be the older parents with care and those in employment, who had more successful arrangements.



# 1 Study of child maintenance arrangements

## 1.1 Aims of the study

The study of Child Maintenance Arrangements was commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The research is part of a long-term effort to evaluate the changes in support being introduced around the establishment of the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission (The Commission). The research findings will also contribute to an assessment of progress towards reducing child poverty, through establishing the proportion of children covered by successful child maintenance arrangements. These may be private arrangements or determined by a court or the Child Support Agency (CSA).

The survey sought to provide an estimate prior to policy changes. Therefore interviews had to be carried out prior to 26 October. From 27 October 2008, parents on benefits who have main caring responsibility for a child, including those who are already in contact with the CSA, are able to choose between using the CSA or making a private agreement. These parents are also able to retain more of their benefit income than applied in the past.

## 1.2 Background

The provision for child maintenance in Britain has evolved considerably since the initial establishment of the CSA in 1993. Part of the impetus for change has been the perception that the CSA has faced considerable difficulties in achieving its objectives. Key issues were identified as:

- non-resident parents not paying the child maintenance for which they were liable; and



- the information required to establish the maintenance payment being too complicated and detailed.

Also, the aim of the policy was mainly to reduce costs associated with benefit payments to parents with care, rather than increasing the levels of child maintenance. As a consequence, those on Income Support did not always receive any additional financial support from payments made by the non-resident parent.

Some of these issues were addressed in 2003, and the changes made at that time were partly successful in terms of increasing the overall value of maintenance collected from non-resident parents. However, some of the underlying problems of administration have persisted, being manifested in a backlog of cases and non-compliance.

In June 2008, the Child Maintenance and Other Payments Bill established the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission, to introduce a new system of child maintenance. Two key changes that took effect from 27 October 2008 are:

- parents who have main day-to-day care, who are in receipt of benefits, are able to choose whether to use the CSA or make a private agreement; and
- parents with main day-to-day care are able to retain more of their income from benefits than was previously the case.

Both of these changes are intended to increase the child maintenance reaching the child or children from the non-resident parent. This is recognised as a key element of the measures to tackle child poverty in Britain.

### 1.3 Sampling

The aim was to select a sample of 'parents with care' for a telephone survey of child maintenance issues. The sample was drawn from the 2007-08 Family Resources Survey (FRS), which had been carried out six to eighteen months prior to the Child Maintenance Study. All FRS respondents who were identified as being parents with care were eligible for the sample. Any respondents who had not given permission to be contacted for a follow up survey were dropped and the remaining eligible respondents selected for the telephone survey. A total of 2,078 respondents were provided to National Centre for Social Research (NatCen).

The sample reflects the child maintenance population at the time of the FRS interview. Due to changes in family circumstances some respondents who were contacted no longer had a child maintenance issue, mostly due to children leaving full-time education and ageing out of the sample. New maintenance situations that came into existence after the date of the FRS interviews are not reflected in the sample.

All sample members who had provided a telephone number were contacted directly by NatCen's telephone unit. There were 1,886 sample members with phone numbers. Sample members without phone numbers were contacted by

post and asked for phone details. There were 189 such respondents and phone numbers were provided for 38 of them. No attempt was made to interview the 154 sample members for whom a phone number could not be obtained. This includes three further cases where a phone number was available from the FRS, but it was either too short or too long. These cases were discovered at the later stages of fieldwork when it was too late to contact them by post.

NatCen interviewed 1,180 respondents, 926 of which had a current child maintenance issue and completed the child maintenance section of the interview. Situations where the non-resident parent had died or was not known were not considered to be cases with a child maintenance issue.

## 1.4 Fieldwork

The method of data collection employed in the study was computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). All interviews were carried out by NatCen's Telephone Unit, with 24 interviewers working on the project. On average, each interviewer conducted 49 interviews.

Fieldwork was carried out between 24th September and 2nd November 2008. It was planned to finish the fieldwork by 27th October, when the new policies regarding child maintenance were implemented, to get a snap-shot of the situation before the changes. However, as it was evident that more interviews could be achieved, it was decided to extend the fieldwork period by one week. No parents with care interviewed after the 27 October had had a change in their maintenance arrangement since the cut-off date and the whole sample can be regarded as representative of the situation before the policy change.

As a rule, the respondent selected from the FRS sample was interviewed.<sup>1</sup> If the parent with care was the respondent's partner then an attempt was made to interview him/her. However, an interview with the FRS respondent was also accepted in such cases.

## 1.5 Non-response

Contact was attempted with 1,924 households for whom a contact phone number was known (see Table 1.1). Of those, contact was made with 73.6 per cent. The refusal rate unconditional on contact was 10.8 per cent. A full interview was completed with 1,172 households and a partial interview with further eight, which results in the overall response rate of 61.3 per cent.

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<sup>1</sup> In most cases, the FRS interview involves each adult in the Benefit Unit interviewed on his/her own behalf. However, proxy interviewing is allowed in the FRS.

**Table 1.1 Summary response**

|      | <b>Outcome</b>                           | <b>Total</b> |
|------|--|--------------|
|      | <b>Issued cases</b>                      | 2,078        |
|      | <b>Attempted cases</b>                   | 1,924        |
| I    | Complete interview                       | 1,172        |
| P    | Partial interview                        | 8            |
| NC   | Non-contact, eligibility known           | 34           |
| R    | Refusal                                  | 207          |
| O    | Unable to respond and other non-response | 29           |
| UN   | Non-contact, eligibility unknown         | 466          |
| NE   | Ineligible                               | 0            |
| UC   | Contact, eligibility unknown             | 8            |
|      | <b>Standard measures</b>                 |              |
| RRo  | Overall response rate %                  | 61.3         |
| RRf  | Full response rate %                     | 60.9         |
| COOP | Co-operation rate %                      | 83.3         |
| CON  | Contact rate %                           | 73.6         |
| REF  | Refusal rate %                           | 10.8         |
|      | Issued cases not attempted %             | 7.4          |

Formulae:

$$RRo = (I+P)/(I+P+R+NC+O+UC+UN+NE)$$

$$RRf = I/(I+P+R+NC+O+UC+UN+NE)$$

$$COOP = (I+P)/(I+P+R+O)$$

$$CON = (I+P+R+O)/(I+P+R+NC+O+UC+UN+NE)$$

$$REF = R/(I+P+R+NC+O+UC+UN+NE)$$

## 1.6 Questionnaire

The study questionnaire comprised of three main sections: a) household grid, which established the household composition and whether there were any eligible children in the household, b) child maintenance section and c) section recording the main demographic characteristics of a respondent and if applicable, a partner. The topics covered in the child maintenance section were:

- whether a child maintenance arrangement existed;
- type of arrangement;
- the amount of child maintenance agreed and actually received;
- reliability of payments;
- contact with the CSA;

- sources of information and support in child maintenance issues; and
- reasons for not receiving any maintenance.

The child maintenance section was completed once for each non-resident parent. If a respondent had children who had different non-resident parents or if a respondent and their new partner both had children, the section was completed twice. Most families (88 per cent) had one child maintenance case, while 12 per cent had two. The majority of the latter (92 per cent) were families where the main respondent had children from two non-resident parents. The remaining eight per cent were families in which both partners had children from previous relationships. Two repetitions of a block were sufficient for most households – there were only five families where a third completion would have been necessary. The fact that these five cases were not covered by the study does not affect its main conclusions.

A child maintenance case may include two or more children who have the same non-resident parent. Most (but not all) of the children with a non-resident parent could be linked to a specific child maintenance case. In the majority of instances (63 per cent), there was only one child per case. In 28 per cent of the cases a parent with care had two children with the same non-resident parent and the remaining eight per cent contained three or more children.

Given the design developed for the questionnaire, data can be analysed on three different levels:

- 1 on the level of a family, N=926;
- 2 on the level of a child maintenance case, N=1,034;
- 3 on the level of a child who is eligible for child maintenance, N=1,543.

The results in this report are mainly presented on the child maintenance case and child levels, whichever is more appropriate in a specific context.

## 1.7 Interview length

The length of interview was based on interviewer estimates, as one of the time stamps was not correctly recorded by the CATI program. The mean interview length was 11.3 minutes and the median interview length was 11.0 minutes (Table 1.2).

**Table 1.2 Mean and median interview length in minutes by household characteristics**

| <b>Family characteristic</b>     | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Median</b> | <b><i>n</i></b> |
|----------------------------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------|
| No parents with care in a family | 6.7         | 6.0           | 252             |
| Parent(s) with care in a family  | 12.6        | 12.0          | 919             |
| One child maintenance case       | 12.1        | 12.0          | 813             |
| Two child maintenance cases      | 15.9        | 15.0          | 106             |
| Lone parent                      | 11.2        | 11.0          | 936             |
| Couple                           | 11.9        | 11.0          | 235             |
| Total                            | 11.3        | 11.0          | 1,171           |

Note: This table excludes eight cases where only partial interview was obtained and one case where information on the interview length is missing. The number of cases in this table is therefore lower than the total achieved.

The length of interview differed according to child maintenance eligibility and number of loops of the interview. The mean interview length for respondents that were eligible for child maintenance was 12.6 minutes. In contrast, the mean interview length for respondents that were not eligible for child maintenance was 6.7 minutes.

All eligible respondents were asked the questions in the child maintenance block of the questionnaire. Respondents with more than one maintenance case completed a loop of the block for each potential arrangement. The mean interview length for respondents completing one loop of the child maintenance block was 12.1 minutes. Completing two loops took longer – average interview length for respondents who answered questions about two child maintenance cases was 15.9 minutes.

There was little difference in interview length for lone parent and couple families. Mean interview length for lone parent families was 11.2 minutes and 11.9 minutes for couple families.

## 1.8 Weighting

If sample members who were not contacted or who refused to participate in the survey were systematically different to those who did, then the sample will be unrepresentative (as compared with the FRS, which was itself a sample survey). If a relationship existed between the sample characteristics and the survey estimates, then this could cause the survey estimates to be biased. Attrition is caused by sample members refusing to participate when contacted by NatCen, refusing permission to re-contact, or not having provided a phone number at the end of the FRS interview or in response to our letter.

Non-response weighting adjusts the achieved sample to make it more similar to the population of interest. These weights reduce bias in the survey estimates.

Selection weights were not required as all eligible respondents were selected for the survey.

A telephone interview was achieved with 1,180 respondents who were parents with care at the time of the FRS interview. For the purposes of describing the weighting, these respondents have been called the 'Parent Sample'. Once respondents had been contacted they were asked a series of questions to determine whether they were currently eligible for the child maintenance section of the questionnaire. The child maintenance section was completed by 926 of the respondents. These respondents are referred to here as the 'Child Maintenance Sample' or CM Sample; this is the group of respondents we are specifically interested in.

This feature has implications for the weighting strategy used; as we cannot identify which of the non-respondents should have been eligible, it means we are unable to directly model the response behaviour of the CM Sample<sup>2</sup> Instead, a population-based weighting strategy must be used. Weights were generated for the Parent Sample and then applied to the CM Sample, which is a sub-group within the Parent Sample. We were not able to weight the CM Sample directly to the CM population as there are no available estimates.

It was necessary to make the assumption that any differences between the weighted CM Sample and the weighted Parent Sample are due to sample composition and not non-response<sup>3</sup>.

Calibration weighting requires a set of population estimates to which the sample will be weighted, these estimates are known as control totals. The 1,180 respondents in the Parent Sample were calibrated to weighted estimates from the 2006-07 FRS<sup>4</sup>. These are the best available estimates of the population of parents with care. The control totals were; age of youngest child in the household, family status, age and sex of the parent with care (if there were two parents with care in the household, preference was given to the female) and number of hours worked by the parent with care. Calibration weighting works by adjusting the sample to make the weighted survey estimates of the control totals exactly match those of the population. The final weights were scaled to match the size of the Parent Sample (1,180).

---

<sup>2</sup> In order to model the response behaviour of eligible respondents we would need to run a model where the outcome variable was 1 = responding eligible parent, 0 = non-responding eligible parent. We are unable to do this as we cannot identify the latter group on the sampling frame.

<sup>3</sup> This assumption cannot be checked as there are no estimates of the CM population.

<sup>4</sup> Weighted estimates from 2007-08 could not be used as they were not yet available, however we expect there to be a negligible amount of difference between the two sample profiles.

**Table 1.3 Unweighted Parent Sample and weighted estimates of parents with care from 2006-07 FRS**

|   | <i>Column per cent</i>   |        |     |   |        |     |
|---|--------------------------|--------|-----|---|--------|-----|
|   | Unweighted Parent Sample |        |     | Estimates of parents with care, 2006-07 FRS |        |     |
|   | Lone parent              | Couple | All | Lone parent                                 | Couple | All |
| <b>Age group of youngest child</b>      |                          |        |     |   |        |     |
| 0-4                                     | 28                       | 32     | 29  | 32  | 29     | 32  |
| 5-10                                    | 32                       | 34     | 32  | 32  | 35     | 32  |
| 10-15                                   | 30                       | 25     | 29  | 28  | 27     | 28  |
| 16-19                                   | 11                       | 9      | 10  | 8   | 9      | 9   |
| <b>Age of group of parent with care</b> |                          |        |     |   |        |     |
| 18-29                                   | 18                       | 17     | 18  | 24  | 12     | 22  |
| 30-39                                   | 37                       | 41     | 38  | 34  | 50     | 37  |
| 40-44                                   | 22                       | 27     | 23  | 22  | 25     | 23  |
| 45 or older                             | 24                       | 16     | 22  | 19  | 13     | 18  |
| <b>Gender of parent with care</b>       |                          |        |     |   |        |     |
| Male                                    | 9                        | 3      | 7   | 8   | 10     | 8   |
| Female                                  | 91                       | 97     | 93  | 92  | 90     | 92  |
| <b>Work status of parent with care</b>  |                          |        |     |   |        |     |
| Working 16+ hours                       | 59                       | 62     | 59  | 49  | 69     | 52  |
| Working 1-15 hours                      | 4                        | 9      | 5   | 4   | 6      | 4   |
| Not working                             | 37                       | 29     | 35  | 47  | 25     | 43  |
| <b>Family type</b>                      |                          |        |     |   |        |     |
| Lone parent                             |                          |        | 79  |   |        | 83  |
| Couple                                  |                          |        | 21  |   |        | 17  |
| Total                                   | 100                      | 100    | 100 | 100   | 100    | 100 |

Table 1.3 shows the unweighted Parent Sample and the weighted FRS estimates. It can be seen that there are some differences between the profiles of the unweighted Parent Sample and the weighted FRS estimates. For example, the age distribution of the Parent Sample is skewed towards older parents. This means the weights required to make the age distribution of the weighted Parent Sample match that of the FRS are different in magnitude across the age bands. There were also differences between the two profiles by family status and hours worked.

As with all weighting schemes, there must be a trade-off between reducing the amount of bias in the sample and keeping a good level of precision. The variation in response meant a certain amount of variation in weights was inevitable if the weights were to correct the differences in sample profile caused by non-response.

Variable weights increase the size of the standard errors; this causes the confidence intervals around the survey estimates to be wider, so there is less certainty over how close the estimates are to the true population value.

The effect of the sample design and weights on the precision of survey estimates is indicated by the effective sample size (neff). The effective sample size measures the size of an (unweighted) simple random sample that would have provided the same precision (standard error) as the design being implemented. If the effective sample size is close to the actual sample size this indicates a good level of precision. The lower the effective sample size, the lower the level of precision. The efficiency of a sample is given by the ratio of the effective sample size to the actual sample size. The effective sample size and sample efficiency is given in Table 1.4.

**Table 1.4 Range of weights for the Parent Sample**

| <b>Indicator</b>       | <b>Value</b> |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Minimum weight         | 0.417        |
| Maximum weight         | 2.464        |
| Mean weight            | 1.000        |
| Unweighted sample size | 1,180        |
| Effective sample size  | 1,075        |
| Sample efficiency      | 91%          |

This weighting methodology should be considered as a temporary solution. Although the sample was drawn from the FRS, it has not yet been possible to link the information collected as part of the FRS to this study. Such a linkage would allow basing the weighting on a much richer set of variables for both respondents and non-respondents. NatCen is prepared to carry out this work once the FRS data becomes available.

## 1.9 Quality assurance

Measurement errors can stem from the questionnaire (its wording, design etc), the interviewees, the interviewers and the data collection method. While it is impossible to avoid these types of errors completely, steps were taken to reduce them as much as possible. Processing error in the case of a CATI survey can stem from data-entry by interviewers and from the in-office coding and editing process.

Most of the questions used in the study were drawn from the child maintenance block of the Families and Children Study (FACS). Not only does this make the results of the two studies comparable, but it also reduces measurement error in the Study of Child Maintenance Arrangements, because FACS questions have been tested and used for many years.

All telephone interviewers conducting the interviews attended a study-specific briefing, which introduced them to the study's aims, broader policy background,



key terms and definitions, questionnaire content and study procedures. Each interviewer also had to complete a practice interview. As a result, interviewers were very familiar with the child maintenance situations they may encounter and could probe whenever respondents were unsure of their answers, thus reducing any measurement error. The briefings also ensured that interviewers were effectively able to convince respondents of the study's relevance and persuade them to participate, thereby reducing non-response error.

In more complicated situations, interviewers could ask for advice from an experienced supervisor, who was present throughout the whole fieldwork period. When supervisors could not solve a query, it was passed on to researchers who advised on the most suitable solution. Such solutions were then communicated to all interviewers so that they could address them in the same way should they encounter them.

The questionnaire contained several questions where interviewers could record an 'other' answer as an open text, if there was no suitable answer among the existing codes. All these answers were coded during the subsequent in-office data preparation phase. Supplementary code-frames were developed by researchers based on the complete data, which ensured that they were as relevant as possible and did not lead to the introduction of processing error. Occupation and industry descriptions, which were also recorded as an open text, were coded using Standard Occupational Classification 2000 (SOC 2000) and Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities 2003 (SIC 2003) codes, respectively.

A series of checks were implemented to reduce both measurement and processing errors. The checks were of two main types: a) consistency checks, which were triggered when a value of a data item was implausible in the context of other values and b) range checks, which were triggered by unusually low or high values. Checks were implemented in three stages. First, the data entry program itself contained the most basic checks, which were triggered and had to be resolved by interviewers during the interview itself. As a second stage, several checks were added to the program later during the editing phase. All checks triggered at this stage were verified by editing staff, who either solved the problems or flagged them for researchers. As a final step the most complicated checks, which could not be programmed into the data-entry program, were executed in a data analysis program by researchers.

## 1.10 Guide to methods used in the tables

The majority of tables use row percentages, presenting the percentage of a child or family characteristic, by a particular mutually exclusive response. In these tables the percentages sum to 100. Some tables present multiple responses (the respondent could choose a number of responses rather than just one) and hence percentages may not sum to 100. Tables do not necessarily contain just percentages; sometimes they contain a measure of the average. These statistics are made clear in the appropriate tables.

In the tables the following conventions are used:

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Base      | The unweighted count of the base is presented in all tables, usually the number of respondents in the relevant family characteristic sub-group. |
| Weighting | All analysis is weighted using the grossing weight.   |
| 0         | Percentage value is greater than 0, but less than 0.5, which is rounded down.   |
| [ ]       | Figures are based on less than 50 cases and are not robust.   |
| " "       | A blank space in a table where a percent figure is expected indicates that there were no responses in the category.                             |



## 2 Main findings

### 2.1 Characteristics of families and children with care

The majority (86 per cent) of parents with care were lone parents and only 14 per cent lived as a couple with a new partner. Exactly half (50 per cent) of lone parents with care worked more than 15 hours a week (Table 2.1). The situation was the same for couples, where at least one of the partners was employed for 16 or more hours in 50 per cent of families.

The share of parents with care in their thirties (30-39) and in their forties (40 or older) was similar – each accounted for about two-fifths of the total. The remaining one-fifth (21 per cent) of parents with care were aged 18-29 years. Parents with care who lived as a couple also tended to be older than their counterparts living without a partner.

In more than two-thirds (67 per cent) of families the youngest child was aged between five and 15 years. Fewer families had very young or older children. In general, the age of the youngest child tended to be greater in couples compared to lone parents, with four per cent of couples having a youngest child aged between zero and four years as opposed to 26 per cent of lone parents.<sup>5</sup> Couples also tended to have fewer children to whom a child maintenance issue applied, but more children overall, owing to the mother having children with a new partner.

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<sup>5</sup> All differences cited in this section are significant at 0.05 level.

**Table 2.1 Family characteristics by family type on family level**

|  | Family type    |            |            | 95%<br>confidence<br>interval |
|--|----------------|------------|------------|-------------------------------|
|  | Lone<br>parent | Couple     | All        |                               |
| <i>Column per cent</i>                           |                |            |            |                               |
| <b>Family working status</b>                     |                |            |            |                               |
| All adults working 16+ hours                     | 50             | 50         | 50         | 46.3...53.0                   |
| At least one adult working 0-15 hours            | 50             | 50         | 50         | 47.0...53.7                   |
| <b>Age group of the main respondent</b>          |                |            |            |                               |
| 18-29  | 22             | 13         | 21         | 18.1...24.3                   |
| 30-39  | 37             | 47         | 38         | 34.9...41.5                   |
| 40-44  | 24             | 26         | 24         | 21.4...27.0                   |
| 45 or older                                      | 17             | 14         | 17         | 14.7...19.1                   |
| <b>Age group of youngest child</b>               |                |            |            |                               |
| 0-4 years  | 26             | 4          | 23         | 20.0...25.9                   |
| 5-10 years                                       | 37             | 33         | 37         | 33.5...39.9                   |
| 11-15 years                                      | 27             | 45         | 30         | 26.7...32.7                   |
| 16-19 years                                      | 10             | 18         | 11         | 9.1...13.0                    |
| <b>Number of dependent children in household</b> |                |            |            |                               |
| 1  | 51             | 33         | 48         | 45.1...51.8                   |
| 2  | 34             | 42         | 35         | 32.1...38.5                   |
| 3 or more  | 15             | 25         | 16         | 14.0...18.9                   |
| <b>Number of children with care in household</b> |                |            |            |                               |
| 1  | 51             | 59         | 53         | 40.0...45.9                   |
| 2  | 34             | 29         | 33         | 24.7...30.1                   |
| 3 or more  | 15             | 12         | 14         | 12.0...16.8                   |
| <b>Total</b>                                     | 100            | 100        | 100        |                               |
| <b><i>Unweighted base</i></b>                    | <i>776</i>     | <i>150</i> | <i>926</i> |                               |

Base: All families with a child maintenance issue.

Note for family unit working status: Adult includes parent with care and their partner if present.

Table 2.2 presents the main characteristics of children who were living with only one natural parent. The table shows some differences between lone parent and couple households but due to the small size of the sample used they are not statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 2.2 Child characteristics by family type on child level**

|  | Family type    |            |              | 95%<br>Confidence<br>Interval |
|--|----------------|------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
|  | Lone<br>Parent | Couple     | All          |                               |
| <i>Column per cent</i>                             |                |            |              |                               |
| <b>Work status of parent with care or guardian</b> |                |            |              |                               |
| Working 16+ hours                                  | 45             | 50         | 45           | 41.8...49.2                   |
| Working 1-15 hours                                 | 3              | 9          | 4            | 3.0...5.7                     |
| Not working  | 52             | 41         | 50           | 46.6...54.2                   |
| <b>Age group of parent with care</b>               |                |            |              |                               |
| 18-29  | 21             | 13         | 20           | 16.6...23.2                   |
| 30-39  | 40             | 46         | 41           | 37.3...44.9                   |
| 40-44  | 24             | 28         | 24           | 21.5...27.9                   |
| 45 or older  | 15             | 13         | 15           | 12.6...17.0                   |
| <b>Age group of child</b>                          |                |            |              |                               |
| 0-4  | 18             | 4          | 16           | 13.8...18.2                   |
| 5-10   | 34             | 31         | 34           | 31.2...36.4                   |
| 11-15  | 33             | 43         | 34           | 31.8...36.8                   |
| 16-19  | 15             | 22         | 16           | 14.3...18.2                   |
| <b>Total</b>                                       | 100            | 100        | 100          |                               |
| <i>Unweighted base</i>                             | <i>1,304</i>   | <i>239</i> | <i>1,543</i> |                               |

Base: All children who had a living, liable non-resident parent.

## 2.2 Child maintenance arrangements

In 28 per cent of the child maintenance cases a non-resident parent was paying child maintenance, these are categorised as effective arrangements (Table 2.3). This includes both cases where the maintenance was paid in full (25 per cent of all cases) and those where the parent with care received some, but not all, of the payments (three per cent of all cases). In a further 13 per cent of child maintenance cases the parents had made an arrangement, but the parent with care was not receiving payments.

The latter category includes cases where a parent with care was on benefits and not receiving payments from the absent parent for this reason (75 per cent of all parents with care who had an arrangement, but received no payments).<sup>6</sup> The remaining 58 per cent of the cases had no arrangement in place to pay child maintenance.

<sup>6</sup> Child maintenance was counted as income in Income Support calculation and benefit payments were reduced accordingly, meaning that no additional funds reached parents with care.

These findings are slightly different from comparable measures that can be obtained from the Families and Children Study (FACS). A comparison of the two data sources can be found in Appendix A. It is not yet possible to say with certainty which of the two data sources is closer to the true figure for 2007-08. However, we expect that linkage of this study to the data from the Family Resources Survey (FRS), when the data have been released, would allow a better assessment to be made about whether the current weighting scheme for this study is adequate in correcting for the effects of non-response.

Parents with care who were living with a new partner were more likely to have a successful maintenance arrangement than those who had not re-partnered, with 36 per cent of the former and 24 per cent of the latter receiving maintenance payments regularly, including payment via the Child Support Agency (CSA). Also, parents with care who were working at least 16 hours in a week were substantially more likely to both have an arrangement and to receive payments in full. The situation remained essentially unchanged when the child level was considered instead of that of the child maintenance case (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3 Child maintenance receipt by family characteristics on case level

|  | Status of child maintenance arrangement |                             |   |  |  | Total | Unweighted base |
|--|---|-----------------------------|---|--|--|-------|-----------------|
|  | No arrangement                          | Arrangement but no payments | Arrangement and receives some maintenance | Arrangement and receives all maintenance or paid through CSA | Arrangement and receives all maintenance or paid through CSA |       |                 |
| <b>Family type</b>                     |   |                             |   |  |  |       |                 |
| Lone parent                            | 61                                      | 13                          | 3   | 24   | 100  | 861   |                 |
| Couple                                 | 45                                      | 15                          | 4   | 36   | 100  | 162   |                 |
| <b>Work status of parent with care</b> |   |                             |   |  |  |       |                 |
| Working 16+ hours                      | 49                                      | 12                          | 3   | 36   | 100  | 565   |                 |
| Working 0-15 hours                     | 67                                      | 14                          | 4   | 16   | 100  | 453   |                 |
| <b>Age group of youngest child</b>     |   |                             |   |  |  |       |                 |
| 0-4                                    | 63                                      | 10                          | 5   | 23   | 100  | 179   |                 |
| 5-10                                   | 58                                      | 13                          | 3   | 26   | 100  | 359   |                 |
| 11-15                                  | 56                                      | 14                          | 2   | 27   | 100  | 338   |                 |
| 16-19                                  | 59                                      | 15                          | 4   | 23   | 100  | 143   |                 |
| <b>Age group of parent with care</b>   |   |                             |   |  |  |       |                 |
| 18-29                                  | 60                                      | 9                           | 6   | 25   | 100  | 150   |                 |
| 30-39                                  | 60                                      | 15                          | 3   | 21   | 100  | 390   |                 |
| 40-44                                  | 54                                      | 16                          | 2   | 28   | 100  | 256   |                 |
| 45 or older                            | 57                                      | 10                          | 2   | 31   | 100  | 221   |                 |
| <b>All</b>                             | 58                                      | 13                          | 3   | 25   | 100  | 1,017 |                 |
| <b>95% confidence interval</b>         | 55.3...61.7                             | 11.1...15.4                 | 2.2...4.6                                 | 22.6...28.1  |  |       |                 |

Base: All child maintenance cases.



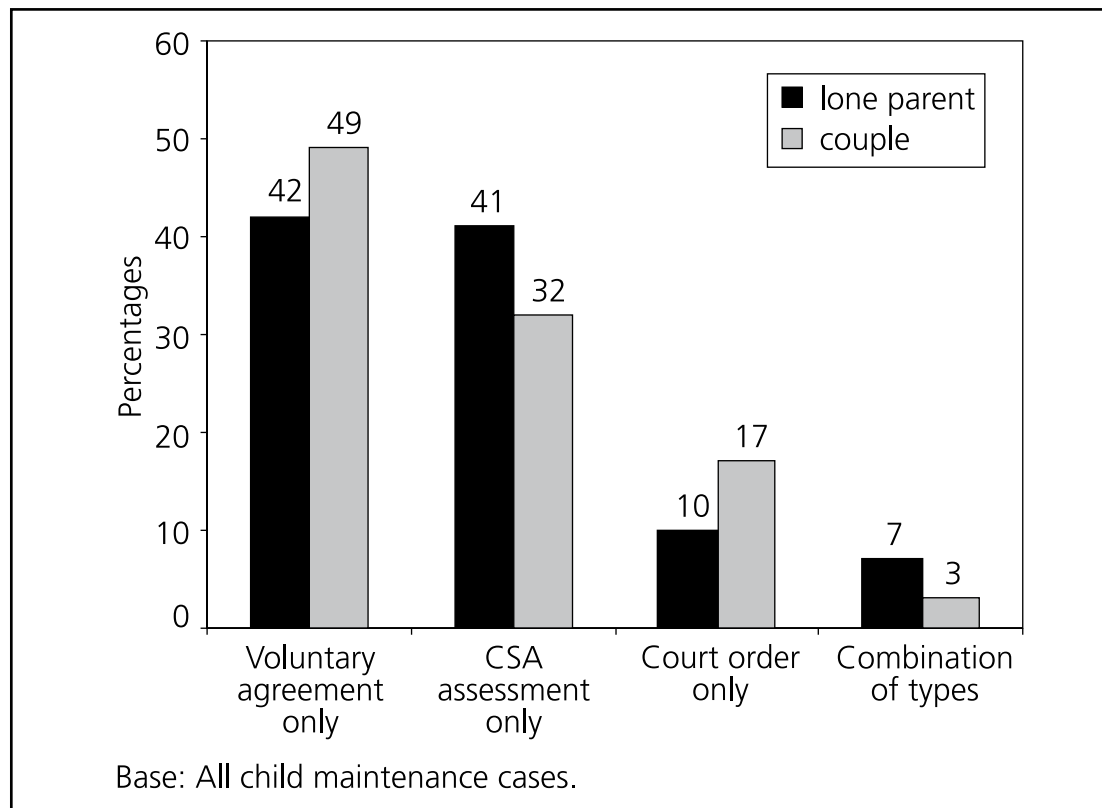
Child maintenance arrangements could be in the form of a court order, a private agreement or a calculation made by the CSA. The most common form of an arrangement was a private one (Table 2.4) – 43 per cent were arranged in this way. A CSA assessment was made in nearly two-fifths of cases (39 per cent). A court order or a combination of arrangements was much less common.

**Table 2.4 Type of agreement to receive child maintenance by family characteristics on case level**

|  | Type of arrangement |                        |                     |                      | Total | Unweighted base |
|--|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------|-----------------|
|  | Court order only    | Private agreement only | CSA assessment only | Combination of types |       |                 |
| <i>Row per cent</i>                    |                     |                        |                     |                      |       |                 |
| <b>Family type</b>                     |                     |                        |                     |                      |       |                 |
| Lone parent                            | 10                  | 42                     | 41                  | 7                    | 100   | 351             |
| Couple                                 | 17                  | 49                     | 32                  | 3                    | 100   | 92              |
| <b>Work status of parent with care</b> |                     |                        |                     |                      |       |                 |
| Working 16+ hours                      | 12                  | 48                     | 33                  | 6                    | 100   | 293             |
| Working 0-15 hours                     | 9                   | 37                     | 48                  | 6                    | 100   | 150             |
| <b>Age group of youngest child</b>     |                     |                        |                     |                      |       |                 |
| 0-4                                    | 5                   | 53                     | 38                  | 4                    | 100   | 65              |
| 5-10                                   | 11                  | 46                     | 38                  | 5                    | 100   | 160             |
| 11-15                                  | 15                  | 40                     | 37                  | 8                    | 100   | 154             |
| 16-19                                  | 9                   | 31                     | 50                  | 10                   | 100   | 62              |
| <b>Age group of parent with care</b>   |                     |                        |                     |                      |       |                 |
| 18-29                                  | 7                   | 55                     | 33                  | 5                    | 100   | 59              |
| 30-39                                  | 9                   | 42                     | 45                  | 4                    | 100   | 161             |
| 40-44                                  | 14                  | 36                     | 44                  | 6                    | 100   | 124             |
| 45 or older                            | 16                  | 45                     | 27                  | 12                   | 100   | 96              |
| <b>All</b>                             | 11                  | 43                     | 39                  | 6                    | 100   | 440             |
| <b>95% confidence interval</b>         | 8.3...<br>14.1      | 38.3...<br>47.8        | 34.1...<br>43.7     | 4.2...<br>8.8        |       |                 |

Base: All child maintenance cases in which an arrangement existed.

By family type (Figure 2.1), private agreements were the most common form of arrangement among couples – nearly half of the cases. One third of couples had a CSA assessment. In contrast lone parents were equally likely to have a private agreement or CSA assessment.

**Figure 2.1 Type of maintenance agreement by family type**

Resident parents who did not work or worked less than 16 hours were more likely to have only a CSA assessment (48 per cent), compared with parents who worked 16 hours or more per week (33 per cent). Among the latter, private agreements tended to be the most common form of arrangement.

The type of arrangement differed with the age of the youngest child. As children got older, the number covered by a private agreement decreased – 53 per cent of cases where the youngest child was aged 0 to 4 and 31 per cent of the cases where the youngest child was aged 16 to 19. Having a combination of agreements was also more common among the oldest children, probably reflecting the fact that they had been living with only one natural parent for the longest.

The trend by the age of a parent with care was not as clear. Parents aged 18 to 29, were the most likely to be have a private agreement (55 per cent), whereas those aged 40 to 44 were the least likely (36 per cent). A CSA assessment was most common among parents with care aged 30 to 39 (45 per cent) and least common (27 per cent) in the oldest age group (aged 45 or older).

### 2.3 Amount and reliability of maintenance received

On average, non-resident parents who were paying child maintenance paid £40 a week per child (Tables 2.5 shows the amounts in receipt and 2.6 shows the mean and median amounts). The median of £30 per child shows that most payments

were clustered to the lower end of the scale. The mean amount received from a non-resident parent for all children was £60 with the median being lower again at £46 (Tables 2.7 and 2.8).

**Table 2.5 Total amount of weekly child maintenance received per child by family characteristics on child level**

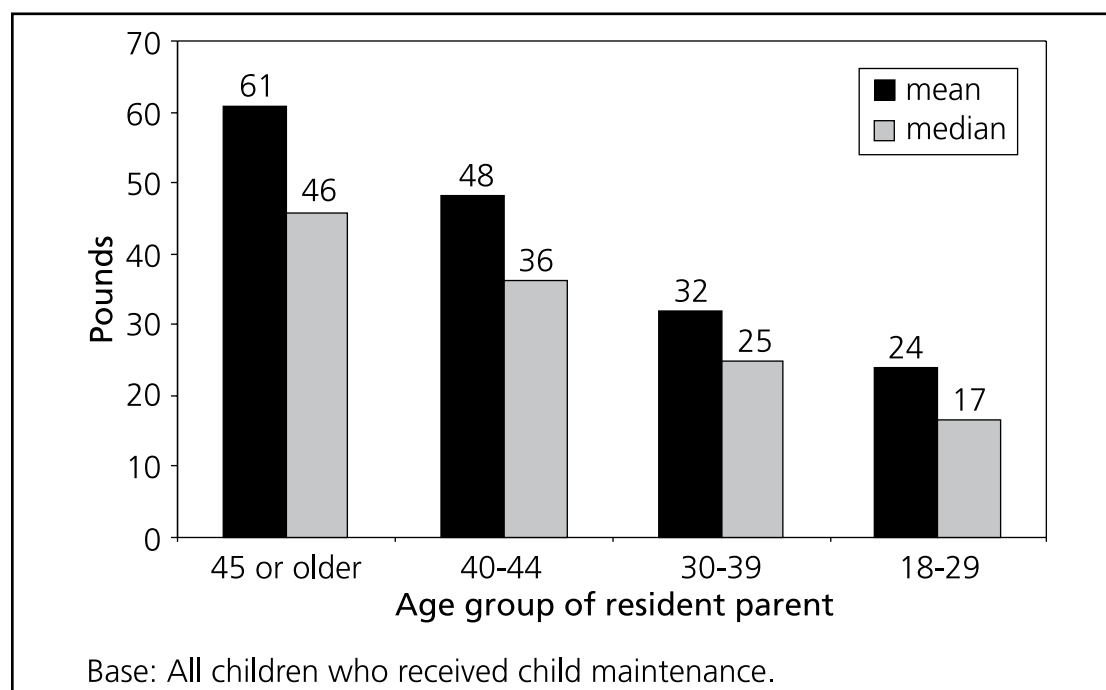
|  | Total amount of child maintenance received (£ per week) |             |           |             | Total | Row per cent    |
|--|---|-------------|-----------|-------------|-------|-----------------|
|  | £1-£24  | £25-£49     | £50-£74   | £75 or more |       | Unweighted base |
| <b>Family type</b>                     |   |             |           |             |       |                 |
| Lone parent                            | 43  | 36          | 12        | 9           | 100   | 328             |
| Couple                                 | 36  | 32          | 16        | 15          | 100   | 91              |
| <b>Work status of parent with care</b> |   |             |           |             |       |                 |
| Working 16+ hours                      | 30  | 39          | 17        | 14          | 100   | 291             |
| Working 0-15 hours                     | 60  | 29          | 7         | 4           | 100   | 128             |
| <b>Age group of child</b>              |   |             |           |             |       |                 |
| 0-4                                    | [65]  | [15]        | [15]      | [5]         | [100] | [50]            |
| 5-10                                   | 44  | 38          | 11        | 7           | 100   | 137             |
| 11-15                                  | 33  | 38          | 11        | 17          | 100   | 161             |
| 16-19                                  | 33  | 39          | 19        | 9           | 100   | 70              |
| <b>Age group of parent with care</b>   |   |             |           |             |       |                 |
| 18-29                                  | 69  | 18          | 10        | 3           | 100   | 61              |
| 30-39                                  | 48  | 35          | 10        | 7           | 100   | 139             |
| 40-44                                  | 23  | 49          | 11        | 17          | 100   | 126             |
| 45 or older                            | 25  | 33          | 27        | 16          | 100   | 90              |
| All                                    | 42  | 35          | 13        | 10          | 100   | 416             |
| <b>95% confidence interval</b>         |   |             |           |             |       |                 |
|  | 34.7...48.8   | 29.1...41.7 | 9.5..17.3 | 7.3..14.7   |       |                 |

Base: All children who received child maintenance.

**Table 2.6 Mean and median amount of weekly child maintenance received per child by family characteristics on child level**

|  | Amount of maintenance received per child |         | <i>Total unweighted base</i> |
|--|--|---------|------------------------------|
|  | Mean                                     | Median  |                              |
| <b>Family type</b>                     |  |         |                              |
| Lone parent                            | 39.02                                    | 28.82   | 328                          |
| Couple                                 | 43.29                                    | 32.31   | 91                           |
| <b>Work status of parent with care</b> |  |         |                              |
| Working 16+ hours                      | 46.64                                    | 34.50   | 293                          |
| Working 0-15 hours                     | 28.23                                    | 20.00   | 126                          |
| <b>Age group of child</b>              |  |         |                              |
| 0-4                                    | [29.11]                                  | [17.70] | [50]                         |
| 5-10                                   | 34.54                                    | 28.00   | 137                          |
| 11-15                                  | 49.42                                    | 34.55   | 161                          |
| 16-19                                  | 40.13                                    | 35.00   | 70                           |
| <b>Age group of parent with care</b>   |  |         |                              |
| 18-29                                  | 24.05                                    | 16.67   | 61                           |
| 30-39                                  | 32.04                                    | 25.00   | 139                          |
| 40-44                                  | 48.31                                    | 36.34   | 126                          |
| 45 or older                            | 60.89                                    | 46.00   | 90                           |
| All                                    | 39.57                                    | 30.00   | 416                          |
| 95% confidence interval                | 34.25...45.36                            |         |                              |

Base: All children who received child maintenance.

**Figure 2.2 Mean and median amount of child maintenance received per child by age group of parent with care (£ per week)**

The payments increased with the age of the parent with care, with those aged 18 to 29 receiving on average £24 per child per week. On the other hand, parents over 45 received £61 per child per week (Figure 2.2).

**Table 2.7 Total amount of weekly child maintenance received by family characteristics on case level**

|  | Total amount of child maintenance received (£ per week) |             |             |             | Total | Row per cent    |
|--|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------|-----------------|
|  | £1-£24  | £25-£49     | £50-£74     | £75 or more |       | Unweighted base |
| <b>Family type</b>                     |   |             |             |             |       |                 |
| Lone parent                            | 27  | 29          | 23          | 21          | 100   | 214             |
| Couple                                 | 14  | 37          | 28          | 21          | 100   | 62              |
| <b>Work status of parent with care</b> |   |             |             |             |       |                 |
| Working 16+ hours                      | 13  | 33          | 28          | 26          | 100   | 192             |
| Working 0-15 hours                     | 44  | 27          | 16          | 13          | 100   | 84              |
| <b>Age group of youngest child</b>     |   |             |             |             |       |                 |
| 0-4                                    | [47]  | [23]        | [20]        | [11]        | [100] | [45]            |
| 5-10                                   | 18  | 37          | 29          | 15          | 100   | 96              |
| 11-15                                  | 17  | 29          | 20          | 35          | 100   | 100             |
| 16-19                                  | [26]  | [29]        | [26]        | [19]        | [100] | [34]            |
| <b>Age group of parent with care</b>   |   |             |             |             |       |                 |
| 18-29                                  | [50]  | [24]        | [22]        | [4]         | [100] | [43]            |
| 30-39                                  | 22  | 41          | 23          | 15          | 100   | 91              |
| 40-44                                  | 12  | 24          | 25          | 38          | 100   | 74              |
| 45 or older                            | 14  | 29          | 26          | 30          | 100   | 65              |
| <b>All</b>                             | 25  | 31          | 24          | 21          | 100   | 273             |
| <b>95% confidence interval</b>         | 19.2...30.5   | 25.2...36.7 | 19.1...29.2 | 16.8...26.3 |       |                 |

Base: All maintenance arrangements where child maintenance was received.

Resident parents who were working 16 hours or more per week received, on average, higher maintenance payments than their counterparts who worked fewer hours or who did not work at all (£47 and £28). The payments were the highest for children in their early teens (£49) and lowest for children aged zero to four years (£29).

**Table 2.8 Mean and median amount of weekly child maintenance received per family by family characteristics on case level**

|  | Total maintenance received<br>(or sometimes received) |         | <i>Total unweighted<br/>base</i> |
|--|---|---------|----------------------------------|
|  | Mean  | Median  |                                  |
| <b>Family type</b>                     |   |         |                                  |
| Lone parent                            | 59.60   | 46.00   | 214                              |
| Couple                                 | 63.86   | 48.07   | 62                               |
| <b>Work status of parent with care</b> |   |         |                                  |
| Working 16+ hours                      | 70.51   | 50.00   | 194                              |
| Working 0-15 hours                     | 43.10   | 28.99   | 82                               |
| <b>Age group of youngest child</b>     |   |         |                                  |
| 0-4                                    | [40.96]   | [30.36] | [45]                             |
| 5-10                                   | 56.03   | 46.00   | 96                               |
| 11-15                                  | 81.54   | 50.88   | 100                              |
| 16-19                                  | [47.74]   | [45.02] | [34]                             |
| <b>Age group of parent with care</b>   |   |         |                                  |
| 18-29                                  | [34.06]   | [25.37] | [43]                             |
| 30-39                                  | 49.01   | 42.36   | 91                               |
| 40-44                                  | 82.28   | 58.00   | 74                               |
| 45 or older                            | 84.06   | 50.75   | 65                               |
| <b>All</b>                             | 60.21   | 46.00   | 273                              |
| 95% confidence interval                | 52.27...68.53   |         |                                  |

Base: All maintenance arrangements where child maintenance was received.

When child maintenance was paid, it was usually paid in full (92 per cent) (Table 2.9). Receiving partial payments was much less common. In around two-thirds (62 per cent) of cases, where a non-resident parent paid full maintenance, they did it on time. A further 30 per cent received full payments, but not always on time. As with the amount of payments, it was the older children who were in a more favourable situation than the rest.

**Table 2.9 Reliability of child maintenance payments by family characteristics on case level**

|  |  |  |   |  |       | <i>Row per cent</i>        |
|--|--|--|---|--|-------|----------------------------|
| Reliability of maintenance payments            |  |  |   |  |       |                            |
|  | Receives<br>all and<br>always on<br>time | Receives<br>all but not<br>always on<br>time | Receives<br>some and<br>always<br>on time | Receives<br>some<br>but not<br>always on<br>time | Total | <i>Unweighted<br/>base</i> |
| <b>Family type</b>                             |  |  |   |  |       |                            |
| Lone parent                                    | 63                                       | 29   | 2   | 5  | 100   | 213                        |
| Couple   | 59                                       | 34   | 2   | 4  | 100   | 62                         |
| <b>Work status<br/>of parent with<br/>care</b> |  |  |   |  |       |                            |
| Working 16+<br>hours                           | 66                                       | 30   | 1   | 2  | 100   | 193                        |
| Working 0-15<br>hours                          | 56                                       | 30   | 3   | 10   | 100   | 82                         |
| <b>Age group of<br/>child</b>                  |  |  |   |  |       |                            |
| 0-4  | [58]                                     | [32]   | [2]                                       | [7]  | [100] | [45]                       |
| 5-10   | 56                                       | 34   | 3   | 6  | 100   | 95                         |
| 11-15  | 70                                       | 26   | 1   | 3  | 100   | 100                        |
| 16-19  | [66]                                     | [29]   | [2]                                       | [3]  | [100] | [34]                       |
| <b>Age group of<br/>parent with<br/>care</b>   |  |  |   |  |       |                            |
| 18-29  | [57]                                     | [30]   | [2]                                       | [11]   | [100] | [43]                       |
| 30-39  | 61                                       | 30   | 2   | 7  | 100   | 90                         |
| 40-44  | 65                                       | 33   | 1   | 1  | 100   | 74                         |
| 45 or older                                    | 67                                       | 29   | 3   | 1  | 100   | 65                         |
| <b>All</b>                                     | 62                                       | 30   | 2   | 5  | 100   | 272                        |
| <b>95% confidence<br/>interval</b>             | 56.3...<br>68.3                          | 25.1...<br>36.1                              | 0.9...<br>4.6                             | 2.9...<br>9.2                                    |       |                            |

Base: All child maintenance cases where child maintenance was received.

## 2.4 Contacts with the CSA

Contact with the CSA had been made in over 48% of the cases (Table 2.10). In 18 per cent of all cases contact with the CSA resulted in a calculation or instruction for payment. In ten per cent of the cases a parent with care had contacted the CSA with an aim to set up maintenance payments, but a calculation had not yet been made. The remaining 20 per cent had contacted the CSA for information only. Unlike the other aspects of child maintenance considered so far, there were no obvious trends on the subgroup level.

**Table 2.10 Contact with the CSA by family characteristics on case level**

| <i>Row per cent</i>                    |                     |                                       |   |   |       |                        |
|--|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|-------|------------------------|
|  | Contact with CSA    |                                       |   |   | Total | <i>Unweighted base</i> |
|  | No contact with CSA | Contact with CSA for information only | Contact with CSA to set up maintenance but no calculation/instruction | Contact with CSA and calculation/instruction made |       |                        |
| <b>Family type</b>                     |                     |                                       |   |   |       |                        |
| Lone parent                            | 52                  | 20                                    | 10  | 18  | 100   | 854                    |
| Couple                                 | 51                  | 22                                    | 7   | 19  | 100   | 160                    |
| <b>Work status of parent with care</b> |                     |                                       |   |   |       |                        |
| Working 16+ hours                      | 57                  | 16                                    | 8   | 19  | 100   | 562                    |
| Working 0-15 hours                     | 47                  | 24                                    | 12  | 18  | 100   | 448                    |
| <b>Age group of youngest child</b>     |                     |                                       |   |   |       |                        |
| 0-4                                    | 49                  | 24                                    | 10  | 17  | 100   | 174                    |
| 5-10                                   | 52                  | 21                                    | 10  | 18  | 100   | 358                    |
| 11-15                                  | 52                  | 18                                    | 11  | 19  | 100   | 336                    |
| 16-19                                  | 52                  | 16                                    | 9   | 23  | 100   | 142                    |
| <b>Age group of parent with care</b>   |                     |                                       |   |   |       |                        |
| 18-29                                  | 48                  | 27                                    | 9   | 16  | 100   | 148                    |
| 30-39                                  | 48                  | 22                                    | 10  | 19  | 100   | 383                    |
| 40-44                                  | 54                  | 15                                    | 9   | 22  | 100   | 256                    |
| 45 or older                            | 61                  | 14                                    | 11  | 14  | 100   | 222                    |
| <b>All</b>                             | 52                  | 20                                    | 10  | 18  | 100   | 1,009                  |
| <b>95% confidence interval</b>         |                     |                                       |   | 15.9...   |       |                        |
|  | 48.4...54.9         | 17.5...22.9                           | 8.1...12.1  | 21.0  |       |                        |

Base: All child maintenance cases.



Of the parents who did contact the CSA for information, the majority (61 per cent) said that no-one recommended them to contact the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission (the Commission) (Table 2.11).<sup>7</sup> Among the rest, the suggestion was most often made either by Jobcentre Plus or a solicitor. The CSA was most commonly contacted when the parent with care intended to set up a maintenance arrangement (mentioned by 54 per cent) or when a non-resident parent was not making payments or payments were not reliable (48 per cent) (Table 2.12). Other reasons were mentioned less often, including doing it to claim benefits. The latter may seem contra intuitive given that parents with care who want to claim benefits have to contact the CSA. This is explained by the fact that the question was asked as an open question and coded by interviewers in order not to prompt the respondents and to capture the main reasons.

It is probable that some respondents who mentioned wanting to set up the maintenance payments did it because they wanted to claim benefits.

**Table 2.11 Who suggested the Commission contact on case level**

|                                |            |                          | <i>Column per cent</i>         |
|--------------------------------|------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                                | <b>N</b>   | <b>Per cent of cases</b> | <b>95% Confidence interval</b> |
| <b>Who advised CSA contact</b> |            |                          |                                |
| Jobcentre/Jobcentre Plus       | 37         | 17                       | 11.5...23.1                    |
| Solicitor/lawyer               | 28         | 13                       | 8.7...17.5                     |
| Friends or family              | 15         | 7                        | 4.1...10.7                     |
| Someone else                   | 12         | 5                        | 2.9...9.5                      |
| No-one                         | 138        | 61                       | 54.2...67.8                    |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>230</b> |                          |                                |

Base: All arrangements where CSA was contacted for information.

Note: Multiple responses are allowed so totals do not sum to 100.

<sup>7</sup> As the question referred specifically to the Commission, it is possible that some respondents did not report their contact with the CSA.

**Table 2.12 Reasons for the CSA contact on case level**

|  |            |                          | <i>Column per cent</i>         |
|--|------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
|  | <b>N</b>   | <b>Per cent of cases</b> | <b>95% confidence interval</b> |
| <b>Who advised CSA contact</b>   |            |                          |                                |
| Wanted/needed to set up child maintenance arrangements                       | 123        | 54                       | 47.1...61.5                    |
| Ex-partner was not paying or payments were unreliable                        | 109        | 48                       | 40.8...55.0                    |
| Was having arguments with ex-partner about money                             | 23         | 10                       | 6.8...15.1                     |
| Wanted a more formal arrangement   | 38         | 17                       | 12.4...22.2                    |
| Relationship with ex-partner got worse                                       | 23         | 10                       | 6.6...14.7                     |
| Parent with care or ex-partner were not happy with the payment level agreed  | 19         | 8                        | 5.4...12.8                     |
| Wanted information and advice  | 22         | 10                       | 6.5...14.6                     |
| In order to claim benefits or advised by jobcentre                           | 23         | 10                       | 6.0...16.7                     |
| Wanted third party involvement or wanted not to have contact with ex-partner | 28         | 12                       | 8.5...17.1                     |
| Other reason   | 9          | 4                        | 1.9...7.6                      |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>417</b> |                          |                                |

Base: All arrangements where CSA was contacted for information.

Note: Multiple responses are allowed so totals do not sum to 100.

**Table 2.13 Sources of information or support with making decisions about child maintenance on case level**

|   |              |                          | <i>Column per cent</i>          |
|---|--------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
|   | <b>N</b>     | <b>Per cent of cases</b> | <b>95% Confidence intervals</b> |
| <b>Sources of information and support</b> |              |                          |                                 |
| Family and friends                        | 132          | 12                       | 10.2...14.6                     |
| Jobcentre/Jobcentre Plus                  | 109          | 10                       | 8.2...12.5                      |
| A New Deal for Lone Parents adviser       | 53           | 5                        | 3.7...6.6                       |
| Citizens' Advice Bureau                   | 44           | 4                        | 3.0...5.5                       |
| Other individual                          | 83           | 8                        | 6.2...9.5                       |
| Other (voluntary) organisation            | 58           | 5                        | 4.1...7.1                       |
| Has received no information or advice     | 754          | 70                       | 66.9...73.1                     |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>1,232</b> |                          |                                 |

Base: All arrangements.

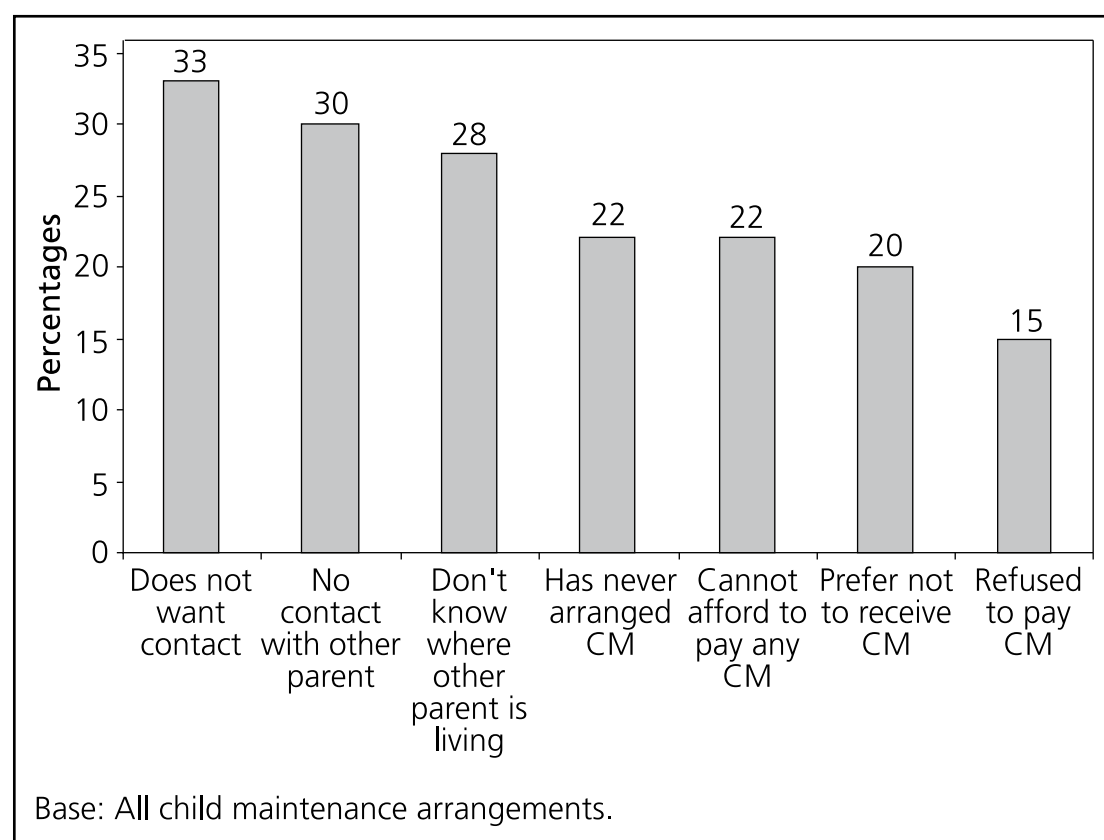
Note: Multiple responses are allowed so totals do not sum to 100.

Parents with care were also asked from whom they received information and support regarding decisions about child maintenance. Again, most of the parents with care made these decisions on their own (70 per cent) (Table 2.13). Among the rest, the most common source of advice was family and friends (12 per cent) and Jobcentre Plus (ten per cent). Parents with care also turned to a New Deal for Lone Parents advisor and Citizen's Advice Bureau, although less frequently.

## 2.5 Reasons for not having any arrangements

Parents who had no arrangements in place for child maintenance were asked about the reasons for this (Figure 2.3). The most commonly mentioned explanation was a parent with care not wanting any contact with a non-resident parent, which applied to 33 per cent of cases. Similarly, 30 per cent mentioned having no contact with the other parent and 28 per cent not knowing where the other parent was living. In 22 per cent of the cases the non-resident parent could not afford to pay maintenance. The same proportion of parents with care (22 per cent) had never asked to be given child maintenance, followed by a respondent preferring not to receive child maintenance (20 per cent). In 15 per cent of the cases the other parent refused to pay maintenance.

**Figure 2.3 Reasons why no current maintenance arrangement in place**



Parents with care who worked for 16 hours a week or more were more likely to have made their own arrangements. Parents with care who did not work or who worked fewer hours were more likely to mention that they did not know where the absent parent was living.

## 2.6 Contact with a non-resident parent

Table 2.14 shows how often children living with one natural parent had contact with the non-resident parent. One-third of children (33 per cent) saw the non-resident parent once a week or more frequently, whereas 32 per cent had no contact at all. Children in lone parent families were more likely to meet the non-resident parent each week compared to children in couple families (35 per cent and 18 per cent). The latter were more likely to see the other parent at least once per fortnight. However, the proportion of children having no contact with an absent parent was similar in both groups (32 per cent and 30 per cent).

Children living with a parent with care, who worked at least 16 hours per week, were more likely to see the other parent than children who lived with a parent who did not work or worked fewer hours. In these cases, it is possible that the increased working hours of the parent with care resulted in a non-resident parent becoming more involved in the care of the child and thus spending more time with them.

Younger children were likely to see a non-resident parent more frequently than the older ones – 46 per cent of zero to four year olds met the other parent at least weekly, while only 24 per cent of those aged 16 to 19 did the same – but there were no age-related differences in having no contact at all with an absent parent.

**Table 2.14 Frequency of contact between child and non-resident parent by family characteristics on child level**

|  |  |  |  |   |                         |              | <i>Row per cent</i>               |
|--|--|--|--|---|-------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Contact between child and non-resident parent</b> |  |  |  |   |                         |              |                                   |
|  | <b>At least<br/>once per<br/>week<br/>or more<br/>frequently</b> | <b>At least<br/>once per<br/>fortnight</b> | <b>At<br/>least<br/>once<br/>per<br/>month</b> | <b>At least<br/>once per<br/>year or<br/>less often</b> | <b>Never</b>            | <b>Total</b> | <b><i>Unweighted<br/>base</i></b> |
| <b>Family type</b>                                   |  |  |  |   |                         |              |                                   |
| Lone parent  | 35   | 11   | 7  | 15  | 32                      | 100          | <i>1,221</i>                      |
| Couple   | 18   | 22   | 16   | 14  | 30                      | 100          | <i>165</i>                        |
| <b>Work status of parent with care</b>               |  |  |  |   |                         |              |                                   |
| Working 16 hours or more                             | 39   | 13   | 9  | 15  | 23                      | 100          | <i>728</i>                        |
| Working 0-15 hours                                   | 28   | 11   | 7  | 14  | 40                      | 100          | <i>653</i>                        |
| <b>Age group of child</b>                            |  |  |  |   |                         |              |                                   |
| 0-4  | 46   | 9  | 4  | 10  | 30                      | 100          | <i>190</i>                        |
| 5-10   | 33   | 15   | 6  | 13  | 34                      | 100          | <i>464</i>                        |
| 11-15  | 31   | 13   | 9  | 14  | 33                      | 100          | <i>493</i>                        |
| 16-19  | 24   | 7  | 13   | 25  | 30                      | 100          | <i>237</i>                        |
| <b>Age group of the parent with care</b>             |  |  |  |   |                         |              |                                   |
| 18-29  | 36   | 11   | 3  | 12  | 37                      | 100          | <i>185</i>                        |
| 30-39  | 34   | 11   | 7  | 16  | 33                      | 100          | <i>555</i>                        |
| 40-44  | 31   | 15   | 10   | 13  | 32                      | 100          | <i>354</i>                        |
| 45 or older  | 33   | 10   | 13   | 17  | 27                      | 100          | <i>285</i>                        |
| <b>All</b>   | <b>33</b>  | <b>12</b>                                  | <b>8</b>                                       | <b>15</b>   | <b>32</b>               | <b>100</b>   | <b><i>1,379</i></b>               |
| <b>95% confidence interval</b>                       | <b>29.8...<br/>36.7</b>  | <b>9.8...<br/>14.7</b>                     | <b>6.3...<br/>10.1</b>                         | <b>12.3...17.3</b>                                      | <b>28.8...<br/>35.7</b> |              |                                   |

Base: All children who have a living, liable non-resident parent.

Parents with care themselves saw non-resident parents less frequently than their children did (Table 2.15). Around two-fifths (41 per cent) of parents had no contact at all. In contrast, the parents of around a quarter of children (27 per cent) met at least once a week. Frequency of contact between parents declined as children got older. For instance, 42 per cent of parents with children aged 0 to four met at least once a week compared with 17 per cent of parents with children aged 16 to 19. Where a lone parent did see a non-resident parent, he or she did so more frequently than parents with care in couple households.

**Table 2.15 Frequency of contact between parent with care and non-resident parent by family characteristics on child level**

| <i>Row per cent</i>                      |  |                             |                         |                                      |             |       |                        |
|--|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------|------------------------|
|  | Contact between parent with care and non-resident parent |                             |                         |                                      |             | Total | <i>Unweighted base</i> |
|  | At least once per week or more frequently                | At least once per fortnight | At least once per month | At least once per year or less often | Never       |       |                        |
| <b>Family type</b>                       |  |                             |                         |                                      |             |       |                        |
| Lone parent                              | 29   | 8                           | 7                       | 14                                   | 42          | 100   | 1,224                  |
| Couple                                   | 14   | 13                          | 17                      | 16                                   | 39          | 100   | 167                    |
| <b>Work status of parent with care</b>   |  |                             |                         |                                      |             |       |                        |
| Working 16 hours or more                 | 30   | 9                           | 10                      | 17                                   | 34          | 100   | 730                    |
| Working 0-15 hours                       | 25   | 8                           | 7                       | 12                                   | 48          | 100   | 654                    |
| <b>Age group of child</b>                |  |                             |                         |                                      |             |       |                        |
| 0-4                                      | 42   | 7                           | 6                       | 11                                   | 34          | 100   | 189                    |
| 5-10                                     | 29   | 11                          | 7                       | 11                                   | 42          | 100   | 466                    |
| 11-15                                    | 22   | 8                           | 11                      | 16                                   | 42          | 100   | 494                    |
| 16-19                                    | 17   | 6                           | 8                       | 22                                   | 46          | 100   | 240                    |
| <b>Age group of the parent with care</b> |  |                             |                         |                                      |             |       |                        |
| 18-29                                    | 35   | 6                           | 4                       | 11                                   | 43          | 100   | 185                    |
| 30-39                                    | 28   | 7                           | 10                      | 15                                   | 40          | 100   | 555                    |
| 40-44                                    | 24   | 13                          | 7                       | 13                                   | 43          | 100   | 358                    |
| 45 or older                              | 21   | 7                           | 13                      | 20                                   | 39          | 100   | 284                    |
| All                                      | 27   | 8                           | 8                       | 15                                   | 41          | 100   | 1,382                  |
| 95% confidence interval                  | 24.0...30.7  | 6.7...10.8                  | 6.6...10.7              | 12.3...17.3                          | 37.7...44.9 |       |                        |

Base: All children who have a living, liable non-resident parent.



# Appendix A

## Additional tables

Appendix A includes tables that add additional detail to the tables that have been included in the main body of the analysis or were too lengthy to be presented there. The findings in these tables are discussed in the analysis section.



Table A.1 Child maintenance receipt by family characteristics on child level

|  | Status of child maintenance arrangement |                             |   |  | Total | Unweighted base | Row per cent |
|--|---|-----------------------------|---|--|-------|-----------------|--------------|
|  | No arrangement                          | Arrangement but no payments | Arrangement and receives some maintenance | Arrangement and receives all maintenance or paid through CSA |       |                 |              |
| <b>Family type</b>                     |   |                             |   |  |       |                 |              |
| Lone parent                            | 60                                      | 13                          | 4   | 24   | 100   | 1,280           |              |
| Couple                                 | 46                                      | 15                          | 4   | 35   | 100   | 239             |              |
| <b>Work status of parent with care</b> |   |                             |   |  |       |                 |              |
| Working 16+ hours                      | 48                                      | 12                          | 3   | 37   | 100   | 805             |              |
| Working 0-15 hours                     | 66                                      | 14                          | 4   | 15   | 100   | 707             |              |
| <b>Age group of child</b>              |   |                             |   |  |       |                 |              |
| 0-4                                    | 63                                      | 10                          | 5   | 22   | 100   | 201             |              |
| 5-10                                   | 57                                      | 12                          | 4   | 26   | 100   | 494             |              |
| 11-15                                  | 57                                      | 14                          | 3   | 26   | 100   | 545             |              |
| 16-19                                  | 57                                      | 16                          | 2   | 24   | 100   | 275             |              |
| <b>Age group of parent with care</b>   |   |                             |   |  |       |                 |              |
| 18-29                                  | 60                                      | 9                           | 7   | 24   | 100   | 209             |              |
| 30-39                                  | 61                                      | 15                          | 4   | 21   | 100   | 602             |              |
| 40-44                                  | 51                                      | 16                          | 2   | 31   | 100   | 392             |              |
| 45 or older                            | 58                                      | 10                          | 2   | 30   | 100   | 307             |              |
| <b>All</b>                             | 58                                      | 13                          | 4   | 25   | 100   | 1,510           |              |
| <b>95% Confidence Interval</b>         | 54.4...61.6                             | 10.9...15.8                 | 2.3...5.4                                 | 22.3...28.4  |       |                 |              |

Base: All children who had a living, liable non-resident parent with an agreement to receive child maintenance.

**Table A.2 Reasons why no current maintenance arrangement in place by family characteristics on case level**

|  | Reasons why no maintenance arrangement                            |                                       |  |   |                 | Row per cent |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|--|---|-----------------|--------------|
|  | Waiting for decision to be made by court/CSA/another organisation | Other parent helps in an informal way | Other parent is equally involved with the child care | Prefer not to receive child maintenance | Unweighted base |              |
| <b>Family type</b>                       |   |                                       |  |   |                 |              |
| Lone parent                              | 6   | 14                                    | 8  | 21                                      | 489             |              |
| Couple                                   |   | 10                                    | 9  | 11                                      | 67              |              |
| <b>Work status of parent with care</b>   |   |                                       |  |   |                 |              |
| Working 16 hours or more                 | 6   | 17                                    | 11   | 24                                      | 266             |              |
| Working 0-15 hours                       | 5   | 11                                    | 6  | 18                                      | 287             |              |
| <b>Age group of youngest child</b>       |   |                                       |  |   |                 |              |
| 0-4                                      | 7   | 19                                    | 6  | 19                                      | 105             |              |
| 5-10                                     | 7   | 13                                    | 9  | 18                                      | 192             |              |
| 11-15                                    | 5   | 13                                    | 9  | 22                                      | 178             |              |
| 16-19                                    | 1   | 9                                     | 6  | 24                                      | 79              |              |
| <b>Age group of the parent with care</b> |   |                                       |  |   |                 |              |
| 18-29                                    | 5   | 16                                    | 8  | 28                                      | 87              |              |
| 30-39                                    | 5   | 13                                    | 6  | 17                                      | 217             |              |
| 40-44                                    | 8   | 13                                    | 11   | 21                                      | 129             |              |
| 45 or older                              | 3   | 16                                    | 7  | 16                                      | 121             |              |
| <b>All</b>                               | 5   | 14                                    | 8  | 20                                      | 556             |              |
| <b>95% confidence interval</b>           | 3.8...8.0   | 11.2...17.1                           | 5.9...10.5   | 16.9...24.2                             |                 |              |

Base: All child maintenance cases. Note: Multiple responses were allowed so totals do not sum to 100.

Table A.2 Continued

|  | Reasons why no maintenance arrangement  |   |   |  |   | Unweighted base |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|-----------------|
|  | Other parent refused to pay maintenance | Other parent cannot afford to pay any maintenance | Don't know where other parent is living | Respondent does not want contact with other parent | Respondent has no contact with other parent |                 |
| <b>Family type</b>                       |   |   |   |  |   |                 |
| Lone parent                              | 14                                      | 23  | 29                                      | 33   | 31  | 489             |
| Couple                                   | 18                                      | 20  | 20                                      | 28   | 26  | 67              |
| <b>Work status of parent with care</b>   |   |   |   |  |   |                 |
| Working 16 hours or more                 | 19                                      | 22  | 23                                      | 29   | 29  | 266             |
| Working 0-15 hours                       | 11                                      | 23  | 32                                      | 35   | 31  | 287             |
| <b>Age group of child</b>                |   |   |   |  |   |                 |
| 0-4                                      | 18                                      | 20  | 30                                      | 28   | 24  | 105             |
| 5-10                                     | 14                                      | 22  | 24                                      | 32   | 29  | 192             |
| 11-15                                    | 14                                      | 23  | 31                                      | 38   | 34  | 178             |
| 16-19                                    | 13                                      | 24  | 27                                      | 29   | 34  | 79              |
| <b>Age group of the parent with care</b> |   |   |   |  |   |                 |
| 18-29                                    | 15                                      | 17  | 29                                      | 35   | 30  | 87              |
| 30-39                                    | 14                                      | 27  | 27                                      | 34   | 30  | 217             |
| 40-44                                    | 18                                      | 20  | 28                                      | 31   | 30  | 129             |
| 45 or older                              | 11                                      | 22  | 27                                      | 28   | 32  | 121             |
| <b>All</b>                               | 15                                      | 22  | 28                                      | 33   | 30  | 556             |
| <b>95% confidence interval</b>           | 11.8...17.9                             | 19.0...26.3                                       | 24.2...32.1                             | 28.6...37.1  | 26.2...34.3                                 |                 |

Base: All child maintenance cases. Note: Multiple responses were allowed so totals do not sum to 100.

**Table A.2 Continued**

|  | Reasons why no maintenance arrangement    |  |                       |  | Unweighted base |
|--|---|--|-----------------------|--|-----------------|
|  | Other parent is not eligible for payments | Other parent has health or social problems | Made own arrangements | Respondent has never claimed child maintenance |                 |
| <b>Family type</b>                       |   |  |                       |  |                 |
| Lone parent                              | 10  | 6  | 10                    | 23   | 489             |
| Couple                                   | 8   | 5  | 14                    | 18   | 67              |
| <b>Work status of parent with care</b>   |   |  |                       |  |                 |
| Working 16 hours or more                 | 5   | 7  | 16                    | 26   | 266             |
| Working 0-15 hours                       | 13  | 6  | 6                     | 19   | 287             |
| <b>Age group of child</b>                |   |  |                       |  |                 |
| 0-4                                      | 10  | 3  | 6                     | 14   | 105             |
| 5-10                                     | 9   | 4  | 11                    | 23   | 192             |
| 11-15                                    | 7   | 9  | 11                    | 25   | 178             |
| 16-19                                    | 17  | 8  | 10                    | 25   | 79              |
| <b>Age group of the parent with care</b> |   |  |                       |  |                 |
| 18-29                                    | 10  | 6  | 6                     | 22   | 87              |
| 30-39                                    | 8   | 5  | 9                     | 20   | 217             |
| 40-44                                    | 12  | 6  | 12                    | 24   | 129             |
| 45 or older                              | 10  | 8  | 16                    | 23   | 121             |
| <b>All</b>                               | 10  | 6  | 10                    | 22   | 556             |
| <b>95% confidence interval</b>           | 7.3...12.4                                | 4.3...8.4                                  | 7.9...12.9            | 18.5...26.0                                    |                 |

Base: All child maintenance cases. Note: Multiple responses were allowed so totals do not sum to 100.

Row per cent



# Appendix B

## Consistency with other data sources

### B.1 Consistency with the Families and Children Study

This section compares key results from this study to results obtained from the Families and Children Study (FACS). FACS is a panel survey of families with children, which has been running since 1999 and is also commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions. The FACS questionnaire contains a section on child maintenance that was for the most part also used in the current study.

**Table B.1 Key indicators of child maintenance by study**

| <b>Indicator</b>                                       | <i>Column per cent</i>                                |   |
|--|---|---|
|  | <b>Study of Child Maintenance Arrangements (2008)</b> | <b>Families and Children Study (2007)</b> |
| No child maintenance arrangement                       | 57  | 42  |
| Arrangement but no payments                            | 13  | 18  |
| Arrangement and maintenance received                   | 30  | 39  |
| <b>Type of arrangement</b>                             |   |   |
| Court order only                                       | 12  | 5   |
| Private agreement only                                 | 43  | 45  |
| CSA assessment only                                    | 39  | 37  |
| Combination of types                                   | 7   | 13  |
| <b>Weekly amount of maintenance received per child</b> |   |   |
| £1-£24   | 24  | 40  |
| £25-£49  | 31  | 37  |
| £50-£74  | 24  | 12  |
| £75 or more  | 22  | 11  |
| <b>Reliability of maintenance payments</b>             |   |   |
| Receives all and always on time                        | 61  | 67  |
| Receives all but not always on time                    | 31  | 21  |
| Receives some and always on time                       | 2   | 3   |
| Receives some but not always on time                   | 6   | 9   |
| <b>Contact with the CSA</b>                            |   |   |
| Yes  | 52  | 53  |
| No   | 48  | 47  |

Base: First child maintenance case in the current study and all families in FACS.

One key difference between the designs used for the research studies is that FACS collects information about only one child maintenance case per family. As a result, it is not always clear to which child it relates.

The Study of Child Maintenance Arrangements allows for two maintenance arrangements per family, which allows analysis at a child level. Most of the standard tables presented in this report are based on case or child level. For a comparison with FACS, however, some of the findings are presented here at family level, giving priority to any arrangement in which maintenance was in payment, which we think could be the arrangement to which FACS respondents would tend to refer. FACS estimates are drawn from the Wave nine of the study, conducted in 2007.

In general, results from FACS paint a slightly more favourable picture of the child maintenance situation (Table B.1). The share of families with any successful arrangement is 39 per cent according to FACS and 30 per cent according to this

study. This is on the basis of any arrangement being successful in terms of payments. As the share of families with a current arrangement where no payments are made is also higher in FACS, the total number of families without an arrangement is 15 percentage points higher in this study.

The distribution of existing arrangements by type is similar in both studies. The only difference concerns the share of combined arrangements, which is somewhat larger in FACS. This is probably due to FACS being a long-established panel survey. It is possible that this may make it less representative of more recently established maintenance arrangements.

The amount of payments received is slightly higher in the current study, but this is to be expected given that studies have a different reference period (2007 for FACS and 2008 for this study). FACS estimates the payments also to be slightly more reliable than this study – the share of families receiving payments in full and on time is 61 per cent according to this study and 67 per cent according to FACS.

The share of parents with care who have contacted the CSA is very similar in the two studies however, with 52 per cent in this study and 53 per cent in FACS.

The reasons for these differences are not easy to pinpoint. Even though the response rate for this study was quite good, it must also be kept in mind that the sample excludes people who did not respond in the Family Resources Survey, who responded but did not give their consent for further contact and those for whom there was no telephone number. Although data has been weighted to correct for non-response, it is still possible that some unobserved factors, that cannot be corrected for, introduce a bias to the results. For example, the share of parents with care working for 16 or more hours is slightly higher in FACS (54 per cent compared to 50 per cent in this study). As working parents are more likely to have an effective arrangement, this may contribute to explaining some of the difference observed.

On the other hand, FACS might not be the best benchmark for a comparison either, because of its panel design. In addition, because of its origins as a study of low income families, the FACS sample design over-sampled areas of lower incomes and relies on weighting to remove this factor in the overall findings.

## B.2 Consistency with Family Resources Survey

The child maintenance study's findings can also be compared to certain published FRS results (National Statistics, 2008, [73]). Table B.2 reports the distribution of weekly child maintenance amount received per family.

Note that estimates for the Study of Child Maintenance arrangements presented here differ from those in Table 2.3, because they have been aggregated to family level to allow comparison with FRS.



**Table B.2 Amount of child maintenance received per week by study on family level**

|                        | <i>Column per cent</i>                                |  |
|------------------------|---|--|
|                        | <b>Study of Child Maintenance Arrangements (2008)</b> | <b>Family Resources Survey (2006-07)</b> |
| Less than £25          | 21  | 26                                       |
| £25-£49                | 32  | 34                                       |
| £50-£74                | 23  | 19                                       |
| £75-£99                | 11  | 8  |
| £100 or more           | 13  | 14                                       |
| <i>Unweighted base</i> | 268   | 727                                      |

Base: All families that receive child maintenance.

The overall shape of the distribution is similar in both studies – there were more families on the lower end of the scale than on the upper end. This is more pronounced in the case of FRS, where 60 per cent of families receive less than £50 child maintenance per week. The corresponding figure for the Study of Child Maintenance Arrangements is 53 per cent. This, however, is to be expected, as FRS results pertain to 2006-07 and the results of the current study to 2008. It is interesting to note that (despite having approximately the same reference period as FRS) estimates from FACS (see Table B.1) are substantially lower than those obtained from FRS.

# References

National Statistics. (2008) Family Resources Survey United Kingdom 2006-07. DWP.

This working paper presents the findings of the Study of Child Maintenance Arrangements. The aim of the study was to provide an estimate of the prevalence of effective child maintenance arrangements just prior to policy changes at the end of October 2008. The study sample was drawn from the sample of the 2007-08 Family Resources Survey.

On the basis of child maintenance cases, 28 per cent had an arrangement in place that was 'successful' on the criterion that payments were received, whether on time or less regularly. The most common type of arrangement was a private agreement, followed by a Child Support Agency arrangement. When an arrangement existed, the payments were usually received in full and on time. In general, it tended to be the older parents with care and those in employment, who had more successful arrangements. The findings provide useful lessons for developing sustainable, fit-for-purpose measures of effective child maintenance arrangements going forward.

If you would like to know more about DWP research, please contact:  
Paul Noakes, Commercial Support and Knowledge Management Team,  
3rd Floor, Caxton House, Tothill Street, London SW1H 9NA

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