

Withdrawn

This publication is withdrawn.
The publication is no longer current.

Background Quality Report: Child Support Agency Quarterly Summary of Statistics (QSS)

Introduction

The Child Support Agency QSS brings together key National Statistics on the Child Support Agency caseload operating under the two existing statutory child maintenance schemes introduced in 1993 and 2003 respectively.

The majority of tables included within the QSS are calculated from databases derived from the main Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission administrative systems – CS2, CSCS as well as a Clerical Case Database (CCD).

Relevance

The degree to which the statistical product meets user needs in both coverage and content.

On 15 May 2013 a [consultation](#) was launched seeking views on changes to existing tables and proposed new tables, which would incorporate new methodologies and data sources.

A [response to this consultation](#) was published on 19 September 2013.

The consultation proposed moving to a new methodology which allows us to compare receipts with accrued liability. Accrued Liability is the amount of maintenance which is required to be collected, regardless of the amount of maintenance requested.

Changing the methodology in this way gives a more accurate, accounting based approach to case compliance, where we can track whether an arrears balance increases or decreases, and reflects more closely the experience of clients.

Accuracy

As part of the consultation the opportunity was taken to develop the use of 100% CSCS data, rather than the previously used 5% sample, aligning all data sources to 100%, thus giving more accurate performance data.

Accuracy performance figures are derived from the CSA Quality and Assurance team sampling a number of cases each month where a new assessment calculation has taken place. There were around 451,800 new calculations on the CS2 computer system throughout 2011/12 with around 7,500 of these sampled. This represents around 1.66% of the population. From this, we can be 95% confident that the results obtained from the accuracy sample are within approximately + / - 1.3 percentage points of the real value.

Any one off issues that affect the accuracy of any performance tables within the QSS are reported directly in both the First Release and the QSS itself.

Policy changes and system changes may at times result in certain measures not being comparable over time. Such instances are documented in the QSS itself, such as the introduction of off system cases and the repeal of Section 6 which resulted in a large fall in the level of applications received.

Timeliness and Punctuality

The CSA's full National Statistics are produced on a quarterly basis – March, June, September and December.

Publications are released approximately 6 weeks after the reference date. Exact dates are announced four weeks in advance on the [UKSA Publication Hub](#). No figures are released or published externally until then.

On the very rare occurrence of non-punctual releases the reasons for this are explained in a clear update.

Accessibility and Clarity

Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data, also reflecting the format in which the data is available and the availability of supporting information. Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of the metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice.

The CSA QSS contains graphs, tables and breakdowns across CSA computer systems and schemes including those cases managed off system.

The CSA QSS is available in PDF format or to download into Microsoft Excel.

The QSS reports aggregate information at Agency level. From December 2010, and in response to stakeholder feedback new Regional Briefing tables were introduced reporting performance by local authority across key performance areas. These tables are available in excel on this website, and produced 6 monthly.

Figures within the QSS are rounded to the nearest 100 with figures in the Enforcement table rounded to the nearest 5 for disclosure control reasons. Footnotes are included and support each table. A Quality and Accessibility document is available as well as a more detailed technical note for those wishing to understand the methodology in more depth.

Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions

The processes for finding out about users and uses, and their views on the statistical products.

We recognise that our customers will have different needs and we use a range of different methods to contact them. We consult with both internal and external users of the CSA QSS on a regular basis to help us understand how they use our statistics and what their needs are. We have made use of Experimental tables to include additional information and invite further feedback.

Performance, Cost and Respondent Burden

The effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the statistical output.

Producing the statistics require resources from DWP's Information, Governance and Security Directorate as well as people within the Management Information and Performance reporting team, for Child Maintenance. Information, Governance and Security Directorate have responsibility for producing the datasets and ensuring they are accurate and robust prior to release.

The Management Information and Performance reporting team, for Child Maintenance have responsibility for producing the QSS, assuring the data and quality assuring all information.

Across both teams the production of the QSS requires approximately 20 staff days per quarter across junior and senior people.

Confidentiality, Transparency and Security

The standard DWP data security and confidentiality policies have been applied in the production of CSA statistics.