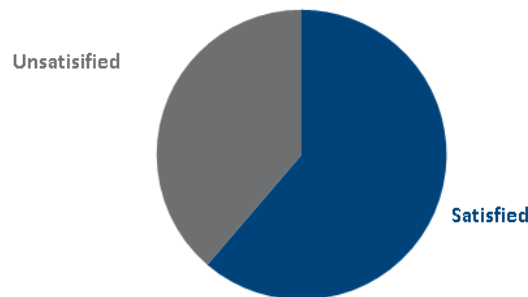


The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) was introduced in December 2012 to replace the Child Support Agency (CSA). It manages all new applications for child maintenance arrangements and uses different rules to the Child Support Agency.

## Main Stories

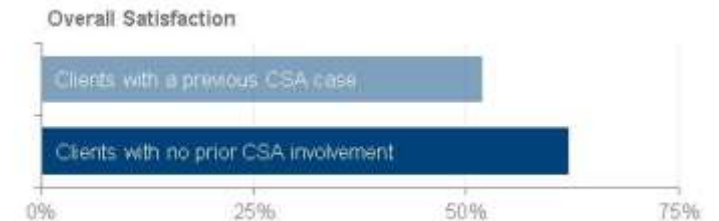
**Overall Satisfaction is 61%**  
with the Child Maintenance Service



**Client Service**  
Is rated as 79%



**New clients are more satisfied**  
than clients with prior CSA involvement



## At a glance

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61% of clients are satisfied with the CMS

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79% of clients are satisfied with the level of customer service they receive

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New clients are happier

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Feedback is welcome

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## What you need to know

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

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

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

In June 2014 the Child Maintenance Service introduced a £20 fee for making a child maintenance application and ongoing charges for collecting child maintenance. The paying parent pays an additional 20% of their child maintenance and the receiving parent pays 4% of their child maintenance amount.

### Satisfaction, Overall Satisfaction and Client Service

**Satisfaction** is a measure of the Child Maintenance Services ability to meet or surpass client expectations as a whole. This will include the client's views on whether child maintenance is successfully being collected. It is measured each quarter by responses to the question:

- Now thinking about your whole experience of the CMS, not just your (application/change of circumstances/arrears/complaint), how satisfied are you with the service the CMS has provided since....

**Overall Satisfaction** is measured by the response to the same question but all results between November 2013 and August 2016 are combined.

**Client Service** is a measure of how happy the client is with the level of service provided by the Child Maintenance Service. It is calculated each quarter by the response to eight questions regarding the client's experience.

**Overall Client Service** is calculated by combining the scores from eight questions about the client experience between November 2013 and August 2016.

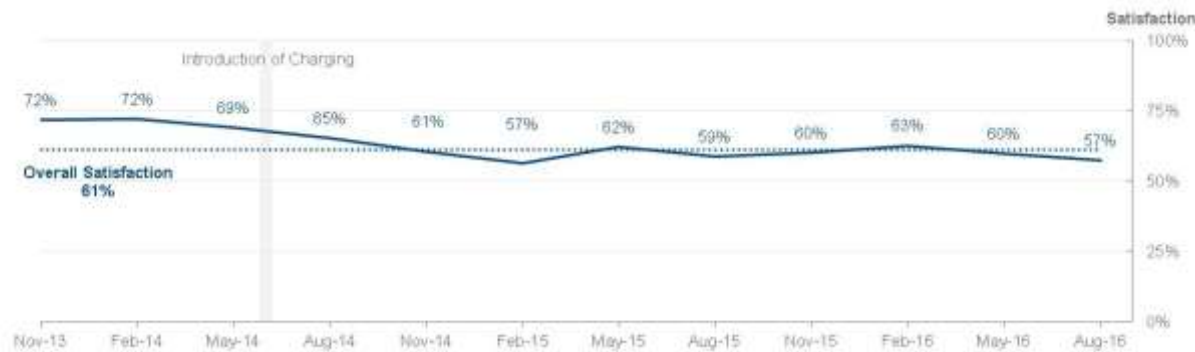
For further details see the Background Information document.

# Child Maintenance Service Satisfaction

The Child Maintenance Service began accepting applications in November 2012. Initially the service was only available to new applicants with at least 4 qualifying children and the same 2 parents named in the application. The scheme was then expanded to all new applications during November 2013

## 61% of clients are satisfied with the Child Maintenance Service

### Satisfaction with the Child Maintenance Service from the quarter ending November 2013 to August 2016



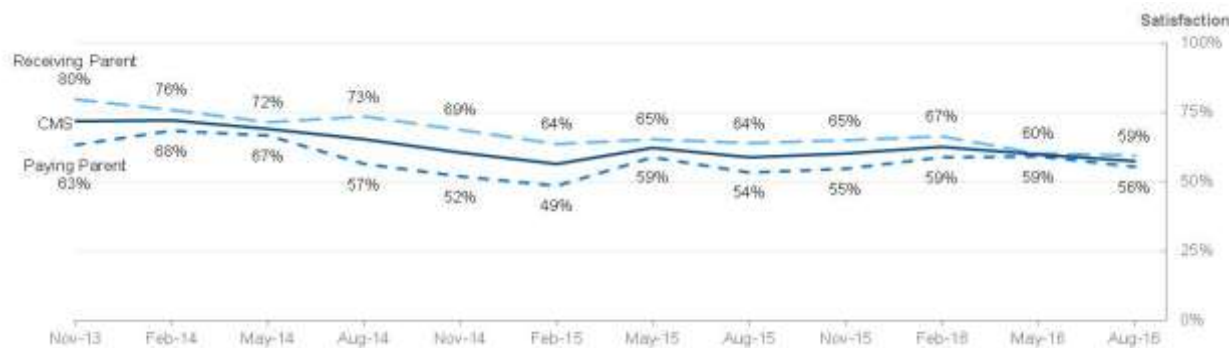
In June 2014, the Child Maintenance Service introduced a £20 application fee and on-going charges for collecting child maintenance. Client satisfaction decreased in the following three quarters.

Client satisfaction has remained stable, fluctuating around 60% since February 2015.

See **Table 1** for full summary statistics.

## Parents have become less satisfied

### Satisfaction for Paying Parents against Receiving Parents from the quarter ending November 2013 to August 2016



Paying Parents are consistently less satisfied than Receiving Parents.

The difference in client satisfaction between Receiving Parents and Paying Parents has decreased. Satisfaction has decreased among both parents but at a greater rate among Receiving Parents.

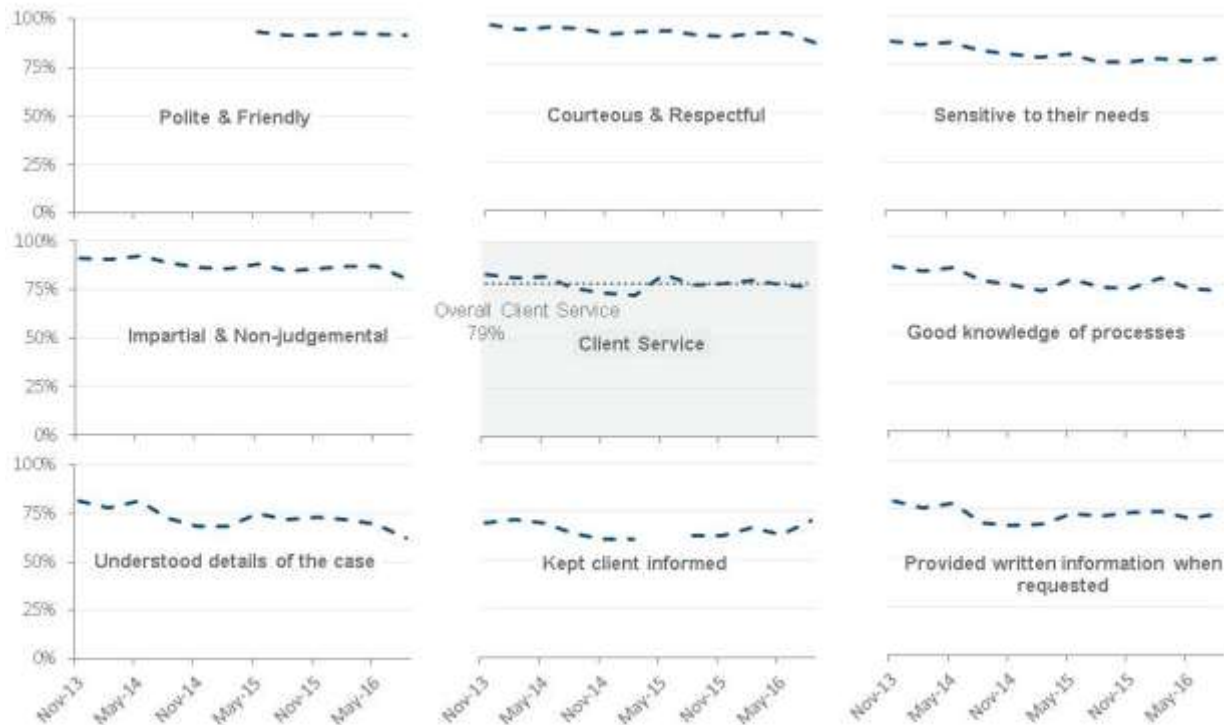
Survey sample sizes have increased since the surveys began which may mean later results are more representative of client satisfaction.

See **Table 2** for full data.

# Client Service

## Clients are more satisfied with the service they receive than with their experience

Individual aspects of Client Service from the quarter ending November 2013 to the quarter ending August 2016



79% of Child Maintenance Service clients are happy with the level of service they receive. This is significantly higher than their overall satisfaction with the service. This suggests that while clients are satisfied with the quality of the service, they are less satisfied with the overall experience and result provided by the Child Maintenance Service.

Anecdotal evidence gathered from client surveys suggest possible key reasons for this are: charges for collecting maintenance; child maintenance not being successfully collected; unhappiness with their personal situation; and historic experiences with child maintenance.

7 of the client service measures have decreased over time. Keeping the client informed has started to increase since August 2015 and is currently at its highest ever value.

See **Tables 4-12** for full data.

# Historic CSA Involvement

The CSA has been replaced by the Child Maintenance Service and is closing down. In June 2014 the CSA began writing out to all clients to inform them their cases will be closed and to direct them to Child Maintenance Options for support in putting a new arrangement in place. This could be through the Child Maintenance Service or where appropriate a family-based arrangement.

This means many Child Maintenance Service clients will have child maintenance arrangements and past experiences with the CSA.

## Clients with no previous CSA involvement are more satisfied

Satisfaction amongst clients with no prior CSA Involvement compared to those that do from the quarter ending November 2013 to August 2016



The satisfaction level for the Child Maintenance Service has remained around 60% from February 2015. Satisfaction between customers with and without prior CSA involvement has slowly converged until November 2015. The difference in satisfaction for these groups then increased before starting to decrease.

See **Table 3** for full data.

## About these statistics

The data is produced through monthly surveys conducted by DWP agents.

The population are clients of the Child Maintenance Service who have been in contact with the service in the previous month.

The sample results are weighted up to the population clients in contact with the Child Maintenance Service to ensure the results are representative

Certain types of clients are excluded from the sampling frame for practical purposes, including non-English speakers and clients who opt out of being contacted for research purposes.

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

For more information about the statistics see the background information document.

## Where to find out more

This document and the summary tables can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-maintenance-service-client-satisfaction>

Information on the case closure project can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/child-support-agency-quarterly-summary-statistics--2>

How we plan to evaluate child maintenance reform: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/387584/child-maintenance-reforms-evaluation-strategy.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/387584/child-maintenance-reforms-evaluation-strategy.pdf)