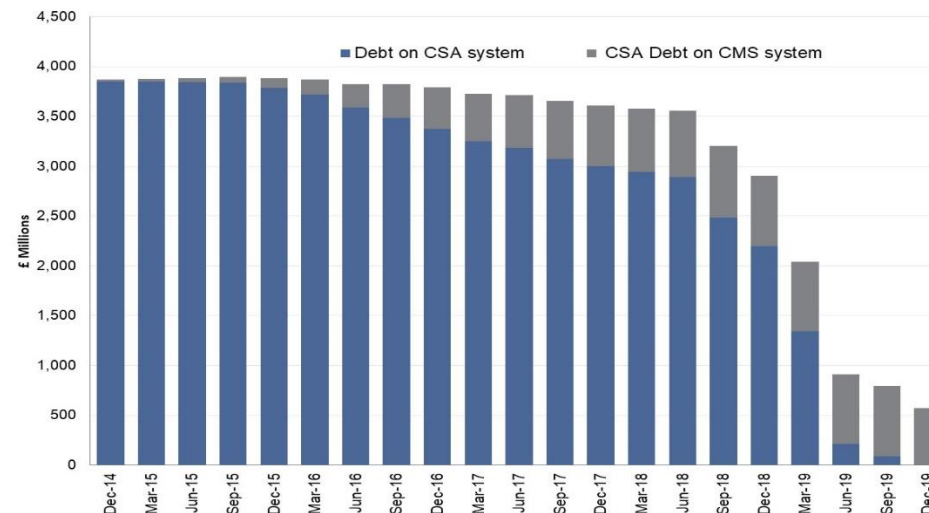
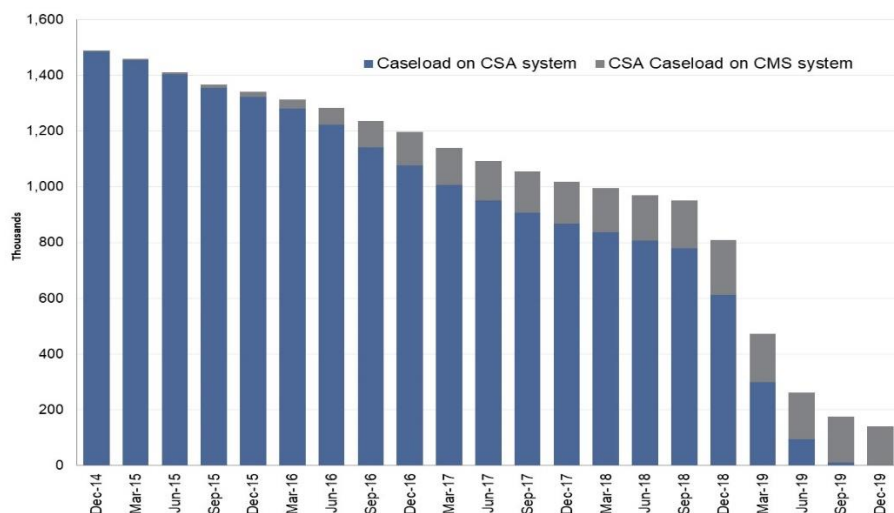


The Child Support Agency (CSA) was set up in 1993 and in 2012 the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) was created to replace the CSA. The closure of the CSA is progressing and all on-going liabilities have ended. Parents have been given the opportunity to consider afresh their child maintenance arrangement and whether they wished to apply to the CMS. A number of CSA cases remain which have historical debt built up under the CSA schemes and some of these cases have been moved onto the CMS IT systems. This remaining debt is being addressed by offering a final chance at collection where this is possible at a reasonable cost to the taxpayer, as outlined in the child maintenance compliance and arrears strategy.

Main Stories

- The CSA caseload continues to reduce. The number of CSA cases held on CSA or CMS IT systems decreased from **176,400** in September 2019 to **140,200** in December 2019. The reduction in caseload is due to the closure of cases as outlined in the child maintenance compliance and arrears strategy.
- The CSA historical debt balance continues to reduce. The amount of CSA debt held on CSA or CMS IT systems has decreased from **£797 million** in September 2019 to **£575 million** in December 2019. Debt owed to Government and debt which has no reasonable chance of being collected is written off.
- Between 13th December 2018, when the compliance and arrears strategy work started, and 31st December 2019:
 - The CSA has written to **134,900** parents with care to ask if they want a last attempt to be made to try to collect the debt owed to them. All parents with an eligible case on the CSA computer system have now been written to.
 - **410,600** cases on the CSA IT system with non-paying historical debt have had the debt adjusted or written off. System records showed these cases had a total debt value of **£1,483 million**. Of this £651m was owed to government only.



CSA caseload has declined to 140,200 from 176,400 in September 2019

Outstanding debt balance has reduced to £575 million from £797 million in September 2019

At a glance

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Author: Gail Ludlam

Lead Statistician: Belinda Selby

cm.analysis.research@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

DWP Press Office: 0203 267 5144

Feedback is welcome.

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What you need to know

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

The **parent with care (PWC)** is the parent with the main day to day care of the children. The **non-resident parent (NRP)** is the parent who does not have day to day care of the children.

Some CSA historical debt balances are **adjusted** either because the debt has already been paid, or it was created in error. Some CSA historical debt is **written off**, either because the parent with care has told us they do not want this debt or did not respond to the representation letter, it would cost more to collect the debt than it is worth or it has been deemed uncollectable.

Representation is the process of writing to parents to ask if they want us to make a last attempt at collecting the debt owed to them, where it is cost effective to do so.

This publication covers **CSA child maintenance cases** which have historical debt built up under the CSA schemes, some of which have been moved onto the CMS computer system to enable the closure of CSA systems. It does not cover cases which originated in the Child Maintenance Service.

Compliance and Arrears Strategy

The [child maintenance compliance and arrears strategy](#) sets out how government will address non-paying historical debt that built up on the CSA schemes. The CSA will write to the PWC to ask if they want a last attempt to be made to try to collect their debt in cases where:

- It has built up on CSA systems and there has been no recent payment made
- The case started before 1st November 2008 and the debt is over £1000 or
- The case started on or after 1st November 2008 and the debt is over £500

This process is called 'representation'. If the PWC responds stating that they still want their debt, the CSA or CMS (depending on where the case is held) will determine whether there is a reasonable chance of collection and proceed appropriately, in most cases by writing to the non-resident parent.

Debt less than £500 (or debt less than £1000 for older cases) will be written off. We will not ask parents in these cases if they want their debt collected, as collection activity would cost more than the debt is worth, but a notification letter will be issued to both parents explaining what has happened with their case. In cases with debt below £65, the debt will be written off and notification letters will not be issued.

All debt owed to government accrued in the CSA will be written off as collecting this debt will not benefit families and it would cost more to collect than the debt is worth. Debt owed to government built up under a CSA policy that has now ended. This policy required the NRP to repay the government for some of the benefits paid to support their children.

Parent with care representation process

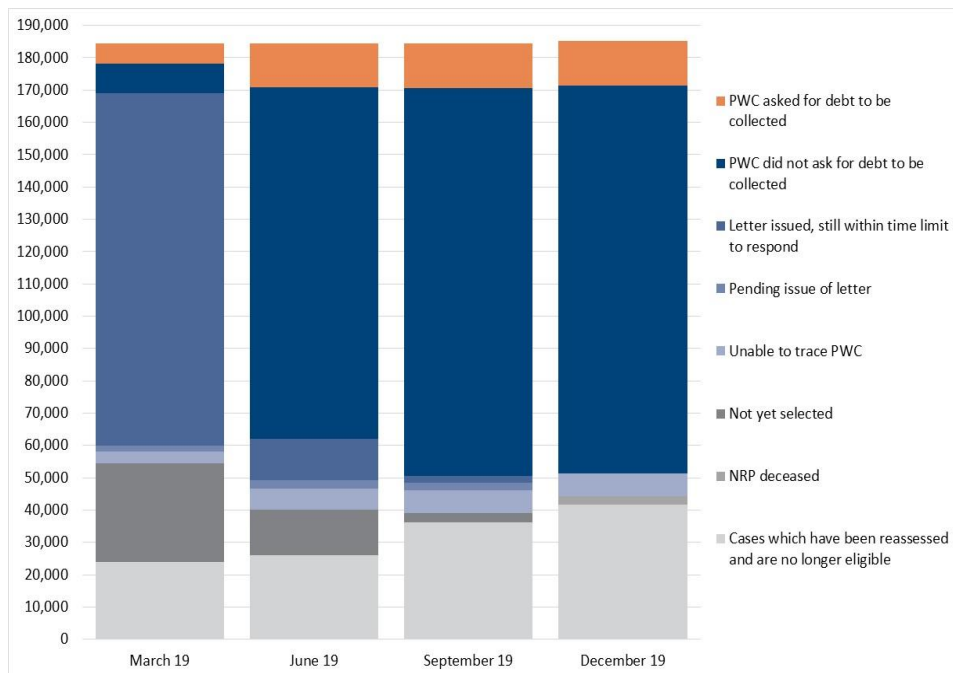
In cases where we offer the PWC the chance to ask for collection of the debt owed to them, the CSA, or CMS if the case has been moved onto the CMS IT system, will write to the PWC. They will be advised to respond (via a formal representation) if they still want the debt owed to them to be pursued. If the PWC asks for the debt to be collected the CSA will perform a number of checks to establish whether there is a realistic chance of collection and what activity is reasonable. Where the PWC does not want us to collect the debt, does not respond within 60 days of the first letter, or the case is deemed as having little chance of successful collection the debt will be written off.

These statistics do not currently include cases which were already on the CMS system before December 2018, and will therefore progress through representation on the CMS system, because activity on these cases started later than on the CSA system and the data needed to report on them requires more quality assurance. We will continue work to develop these additional statistics and will aim to include them in the March 2020 release.

All cases held on CSA systems and eligible for representation had started the parent with care representation process by the end of December 2019.

The first letters were sent to PWCs on 14th December 2018. At this date there were 184,400 cases on CSA systems with system records showing historical debt over £500, or over £1,000 depending on the age of the case. Each individual case has now been reviewed and a total of 143,900 cases went through the parent with care representation process on CSA systems. See **Tables 5 and 6** for full data.

Overall, 10% of parents (13,700) who started the PWC representation process asked for an attempt to be made to collect their debt.



As at December 2019:

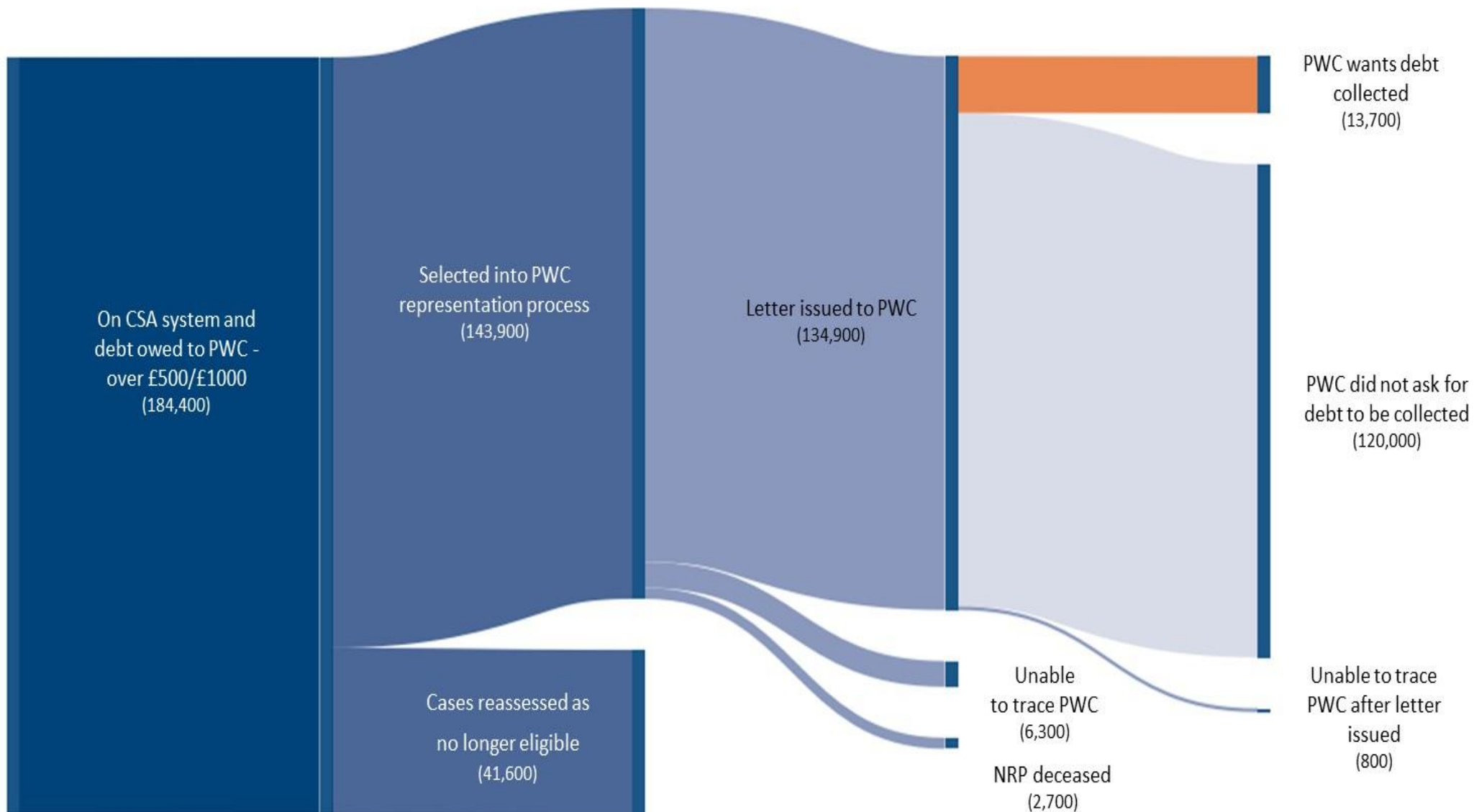
In **41,600 (23%)** cases either the debt was found to be incorrectly recorded and was adjusted to an amount below the eligibility threshold, the parent started to make payments or the case had to be processed clerically. These cases were therefore not eligible for representation on the CSA computer system.

143,900 cases have started the parent with care representation process. All eligible cases on the CSA computer system have now been selected. Some CSA cases held on the CMS computer system have also been selected but are not included in these figures.

Of the **143,900** cases that have started the process:

- In **7,100 (5%)** we were unable to trace the PWC.
- **2,700 (2%)** were unable to progress because the NRP is deceased.
- In **134,900 (94%)** cases we have written to the PWC and of these cases:
 - In **13,700 (10%)** cases parents have asked us to attempt collection of the debt owed. These cases have progressed into the non-resident parent representation process (see **Table 7**).
 - In **120,000 (89%)** cases parents have either told us that they do not want us to collect the debt, or have not responded to the letter or reminder letter within 60 days of the first letter being issued.
 - Fewer than 50 cases were still within the time limit for the PWC to respond.

Parent with care representation process



Non-resident parent representation process

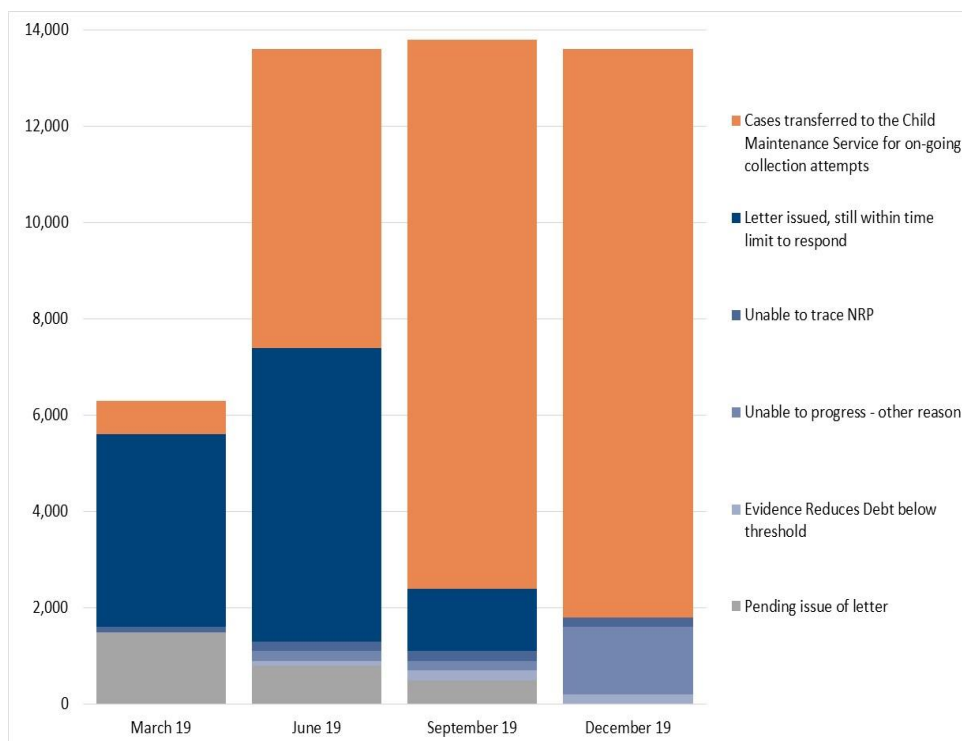
In cases where the PWC responds asking for the debt to be collected, the CSA will perform a number of checks to establish whether there is a realistic chance of collection. If there is, we will write to the NRP to ask for payment of the debt. If the NRP is unable to repay the debt in full, the case will be transferred to the CMS system for on-going attempts to collect the money owed. Where the case is deemed as having little chance of successful collection the debt will be written off.

These statistics do not currently include cases which were already on the CMS system before December 2018, and will therefore progress through representation on the CMS system, because activity on these cases started later than on the CSA system and the data needed to report on them requires more quality assurance. We will continue work to develop these additional statistics and will aim to include them in the March 2020 release.

13,700 cases held on CSA systems and eligible for representation have started the non-resident parent representation process by the end of December 2019.

See **Tables 7 and 8** for full data.

13,700 Cases on CSA systems have started the NRP representation process



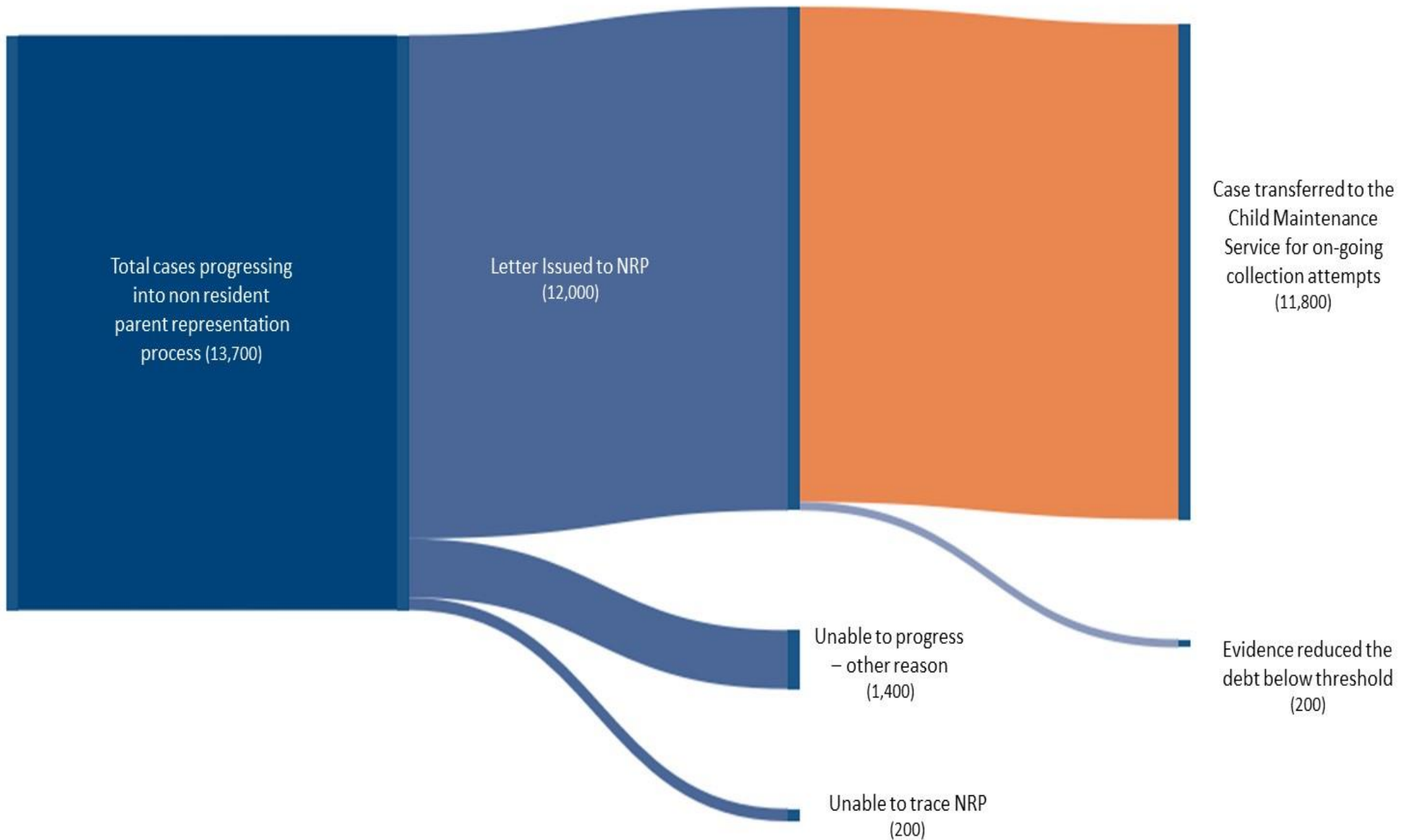
As at December 2019:

13,700 cases have started the non-resident parent representation process

Of the **13,700** cases that have started the process:

- In **200 (1%)** we were unable to trace the NRP.
- In **1,400 (10%)** we were unable to progress for another reason such as a payment has been received, the debt is deemed uncollectable, or the NRP is deceased.
- In **12,000 (88%)** cases we have written to the NRP and of these cases:
 - In **200 (1%)** cases the NRP has produced evidence which reduces the debt balance below the threshold for representation.
 - Fewer than 50 cases are still within the time limit for the NRP to respond.
 - **11,800 (86%)** cases have been transferred to the CMS system for on-going attempts to collect the debt and of these cases:
 - **9,100 (77%)** cases have a payment schedule arranged.
 - **100 (1%)** cases have a deduction from earnings order or request.
 - **300 (3%)** cases have lump sum deduction orders in process.
 - **300 (3%)** cases have regular deduction orders in process.
 - We have sent **2,800** disclosure requests to banks and other financial institutions.

Non-resident parent representation process



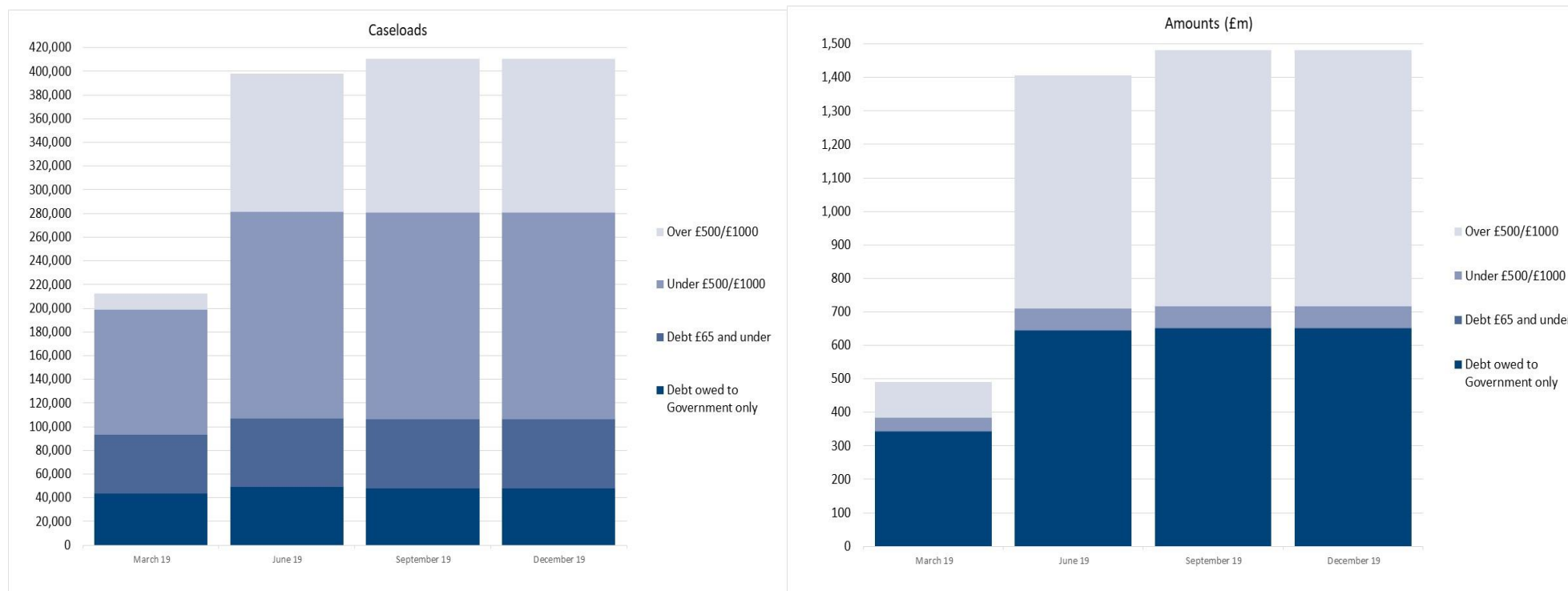
CSA debt written off

The Child Support Agency has written off historical debt on 410,600 cases held on CSA systems.

As of December 2019, there were **410,600** Child Support Agency cases held on CSA systems which have had their historical arrears adjusted or written off since the start of the compliance and arrears programme activity on 13th December 2018. These cases had system records showing a total debt value of **£1,483 million**. Of these:

- **48,100 (12%)** cases had system records showing debt which was owed to government only with a total value of **£651 million**.
- **58,300 (14%)** cases had system records showing debt owed to parents of £65 or under with a total value of **£1.6 million**.
- **174,600 (43%)** cases had system records showing debt owed to parents of £500/£1,000 or less (depending on the start date of the case) with a total value of **£64.6 million**.
- **129,600 (32%)** cases had system records showing debt owed to parents which was more than £500/£1,000 (depending on the start date of the case) with a total value of **£766 million**. In these cases, either we were unable to trace the PWC, the PWC did not ask for the debt to be collected, the debt has been adjusted due to corrections or production of evidence that payment has been made, or the debt has been deemed uncollectable. Some cases which are eligible for representation have not yet completed the process (see page 3 and 4 for more detail about representation). See **Table 9** for full data

410,600 cases on CSA systems have had their historical debt adjusted or written off between 13th December 2018 and 31st December 2019. System records showed these cases had a debt value of £1,483 million, of which £651 million was debt owed to government.



About these statistics

Caseload figures contained within this publication are rounded to the nearest hundred or percent. Amounts are rounded to the nearest hundred thousand. These statistics have been developed using guidelines set out by the UK Statistics Authority.

The statistics have been produced using new data and a new methodology which is still subject to on-going development and testing and they may therefore be revised in future publications. For this reason, they are badged as experimental statistics. Always refer to the most recent release for the most up to date statistics.

A number of cases had their debt adjusted prior to 13th December 2018 as part of the case closure programme. These adjustments were reported in the Child Support Agency case closure statistics.

In a change to the published strategy:

- The arrears write off statistics do not currently include CSA cases which have been transferred to the CMS computer system because activity on these cases started later than on the CSA system and the data we need to report on them requires more quality assurance. Some CSA cases on the CMS computer system, will have had their debt adjusted or written off.

We will continue work to develop these additional statistics and will aim to include them in the March 2020 release, which is due to be published in July 2020.

Where to find out more

This document and summary tables can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-support-agency-quarterly-summary-of-statistics-december-2019-experimental>

Previous versions of the Child Support Agency Quarterly Summary of Statistics can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/child-support-agency-quarterly-summary-statistics--2#latest-quarterly-summary-statistics>

The Child Support Agency case closure statistics can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-support-agency-case-closure-statistics-june-2014-to-december-2018>

For more information on the compliance and arrears strategy please see the information published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/child-maintenance-strategy> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/child-maintenance-a-new-compliance-and-arrears-strategy>

Some statistics on debt that has been transferred from the CSA to the Child Maintenance Service are sourced from the Client Funds Accounts. CSA Client Funds Accounts are published in full here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-maintenance-client-funds-account-2014-to-2015>

For statistics on the performance of the Child Maintenance Service please see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-on-the-2012-statutory-child-maintenance-scheme>

For details on child maintenance arrangements made after speaking to the Child Maintenance Options service, including family based arrangements please see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-based-child-maintenance-arrangements-statistics#latest-release>