

20 February 2013

Coverage: Great Britain

Theme: Social and Welfare

## CHILD SUPPORT AGENCY QUARTERLY SUMMARY OF STATISTICS

### Introduction

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for the child maintenance system in Great Britain. It funds information and support for separating parents and runs the statutory child maintenance schemes, currently operated through the Child Support Agency (CSA).

DWP assumed responsibility for the CSA from the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission on the 1 August 2012, following an announcement on 14 October 2010 that the Commission would become an executive agency of DWP as part of the Public Bodies Reform. The Commission had responsibility for the CSA between the 1 November 2008 and the 31 July 2012, prior to that DWP had responsibility for the CSA.

The figures presented include cases managed off system.

On the 10 December 2012 a new Child Maintenance Scheme was launched. A pathfinder approach has been taken to the launch of the scheme. All new applications with four or more children relating to the same Non Resident Parent and Parent with Care are being accepted onto the 2012 scheme. The CSA QSS excludes cases on the 2012 scheme. The publication strategy for cases on the 2012 scheme is in development.

### Main Findings

- At the end of December 2012, the CSA live and assessed caseload stood at 1.12 million.



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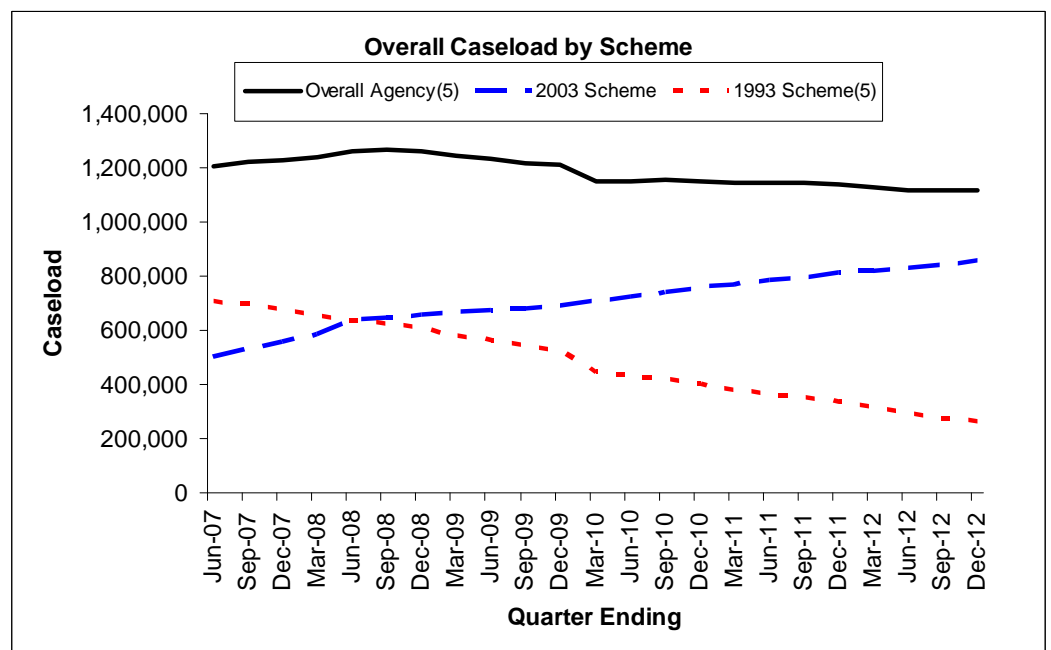
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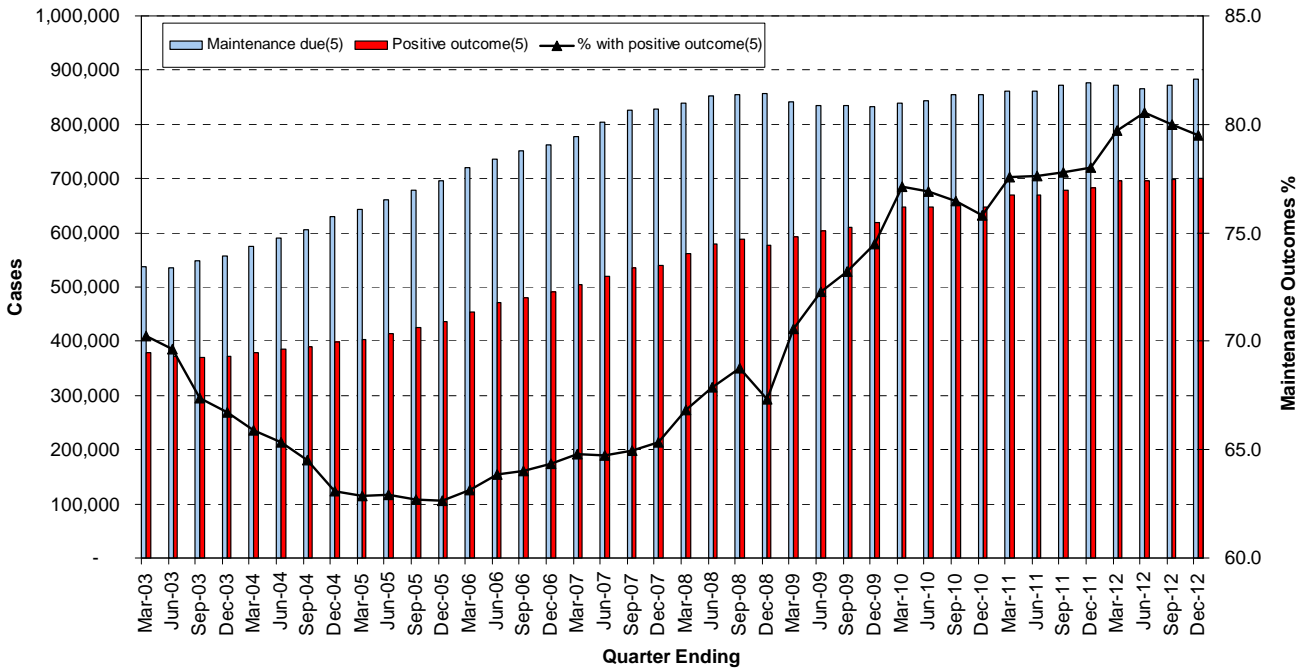
**Next Publication:**  
April/May 2013



- In the quarter ending December 2012, 79.5% of all cases in which maintenance was due had either received maintenance via the CSA collection service, or had a maintenance direct arrangement in place.
- In the quarter to December 2012, maintenance had been collected or arranged by the CSA via the statutory maintenance service on behalf of 902,500 children.
- In the quarter to December 2012, the CSA collected or arranged £307.4m in child maintenance (regular and arrears), of which £28.1m was arrears.

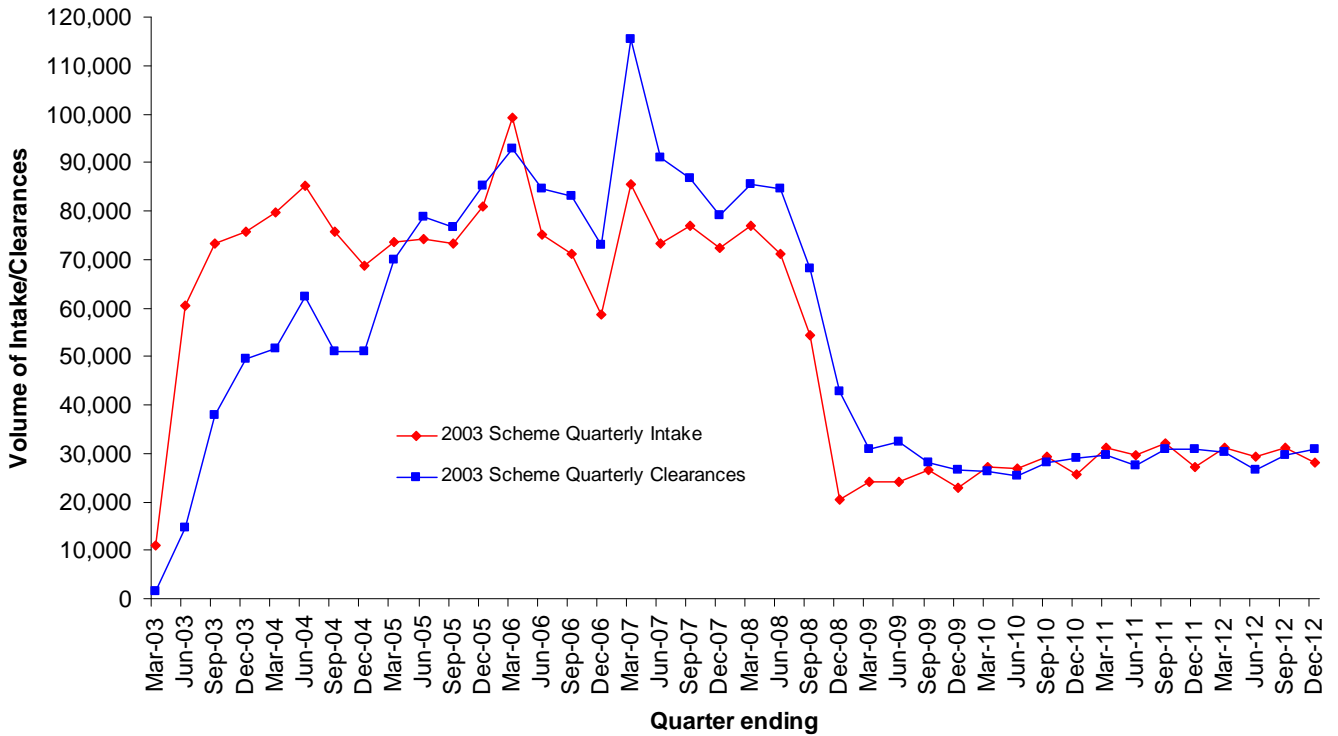
- In the year to December 2012, the CSA collected or arranged £1,214.9m in child maintenance (regular and arrears), of which £112.4m was arrears.

### Cases Benefiting from Maintenance



- 88.6% of intake received in September 2012 was cleared within 12 weeks. 94.9% of intake received in July 2012 was cleared within 18 weeks.
- Uncleared work has decreased by 3,100 to 13,900. This represents a decrease of 18.2% since September 2012.

### 2003 Scheme Intake/Clearances - March 2003 to December 2012



- Outstanding child maintenance arrears have increased from £3.814bn in September 2012 to £3.837bn in December 2012<sup>1</sup>.
- At the end of December 2012, the average maintenance calculation was £23.80 per week (including zero calculations).
- In December 2012, 89.6% of the telephone calls received were answered within 60 seconds<sup>2</sup>.
- In December 2012, there were 7,400 full time equivalent people working to support the Child Maintenance system.

Latest statistical data available from <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=csa>

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<sup>1</sup>Figures for 10/11 and 11/12 have yet to be audited and finalised. Following publication of the 2008/09 and 2009/10 Client Fund Accounts, outstanding arrears figures have been adjusted. See accounts publications for further detail on changes:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120104120950/http://www.childmaintenance.org/en/pdf/CMEC-Client-Funds-Account-09-10.pdf> Adjustments have also been made from 2010/11 onwards which are yet to be agreed with National Audit Office.

- **Notes to Editors**

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for the child maintenance system in Great Britain. It funds information and support for separating parents and runs the statutory child maintenance schemes, currently operated through the Child Support Agency (CSA).

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This publication, produced in conjunction with DWP Information, Governance and Security Directorate, contains the most up-to-date tables and breakdowns on the CSA's 1993 and 2003 statutory child maintenance schemes. It does not include information on the 2012 statutory scheme which was launched with a pathfinder approach on 10 December 2012.

The data covers the periods when DWP had responsibility for the CSA, and when the Commission had responsibility. The data also covers the period both before and after the removal of the compulsion on parents with care who are claiming income based benefits to use the CSA to collect or arrange maintenance payments. The change, which came into force on 27th October 2008, affects CSA clients who can now choose to make private maintenance arrangements with the non resident parent.

After this date, some parents with care have opted to end their child support claim with CSA. This can be seen as a fall in overall caseload after October 2008.

## **Current and Future Changes**

### **Changes in this QSS**

#### **2012 Scheme**

The 2012 Scheme was successfully introduced on the 10 December 2012. Further details on the 2012 scheme can be found in the 'Upcoming Changes' section. Following the introduction of the 2012 Scheme we have changed the way in which we refer to our child maintenance schemes. In previous publications we referred to the 'current' and 'old' schemes. We now refer to these as the '2003' and '1993' scheme respectively, the year in which the scheme was introduced. The new terminology has been used in this publication, and will be used going forward.

#### **Change to Qualifying Child Age**

In line with the introduction of the 2012 scheme on 10 December 2012, a legislative change was introduced to increase the qualifying age of a child from 19 to 20. We expect this to lead to an increase in the number of cases with a positive liability, positive outcome and the number of children benefiting, due to children remaining on cases for a longer period of time. As the change was only introduced on the 10 December we would expect the impact on figures in this publication to be minimal.

#### **Data Issues**

Due to a processing delay in allocating receipts received on 31 December 2012, some measures in this QSS will be slightly understated. Measures affected include maintenance outcomes, children benefiting from maintenance and arrears of maintenance collected.

### **Upcoming Changes**

#### **2012 scheme**

The 2012 Scheme was successfully introduced on the 10 December 2012. This scheme delivers two critical changes; material changes to the policy and regulations which simplify the approach to child maintenance calculations and a new IT system to administer the 2012 Scheme that seeks to improve our ability to deliver good service.

We have introduced the 2012 Scheme in a way that works best for clients and avoids the mistakes of 2003. We are currently only accepting new applications onto the 2012 Scheme where four or more qualifying children are named in the application, and at least four of the children relate to the same alleged non-resident parent.

Once the Scheme is working well we will subsequently open it up to new applications where there are two or more qualifying children with the same alleged non-resident parent. The Scheme will open to all cases when we are confident that the system is running well.

It is expected that over the next few years the 2012 Scheme will replace the current statutory schemes and the systems on which they are administered.

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Performance relating to the 2012 Scheme is not included in this publication. We are currently considering our publication strategy and will publish this shortly, inviting feedback on our proposals. If you are interested in being alerted to the release of this strategy please let us know.

#### **Removal of cases from uncleared work**

Investigations have shown that within our reported uncleared work figures there are approximately 100 cases which are no longer held on the CS2 computer system i.e. they are not genuinely uncleared work. These cases will be removed from the figures in the March 2013 publication.

We have also become aware that there are approximately 700 cases which have been progressed to clearance on the Clerical Case Database but with a different case number than on CS2. The use of a different case number has meant that we have not picked up the progression of the case within our standard methodology to include off system cases. Work has been done to match these cases to ensure more accurate reporting of clearance volumes. These cases will be removed from the uncleared work figures in the March 2013 publication.

#### **Commitment to Prison process**

Following a Court Of Appeal decision in October, we have carried out a review of the Commitment to Prison process to ensure it complies with the terms of the judgement given in that case. Whilst doing so, applications for Commitment to Prison have not been brought to court but we will recommence proceedings in these cases from late March 2013.

This has had an impact on the number of cases where commitment to prison has been the outcome for the quarter ending December 2012 but the greater impact will be on the quarter ending March 2013.

#### **Additional Tables**

Previously it was announced that we intended to publish additional tables and breakdowns to increase understanding of the CSA's collections and arrears. Work is ongoing to develop and finalise proposals and additional data will be published when it is considered appropriate to do so.