

15 May 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).

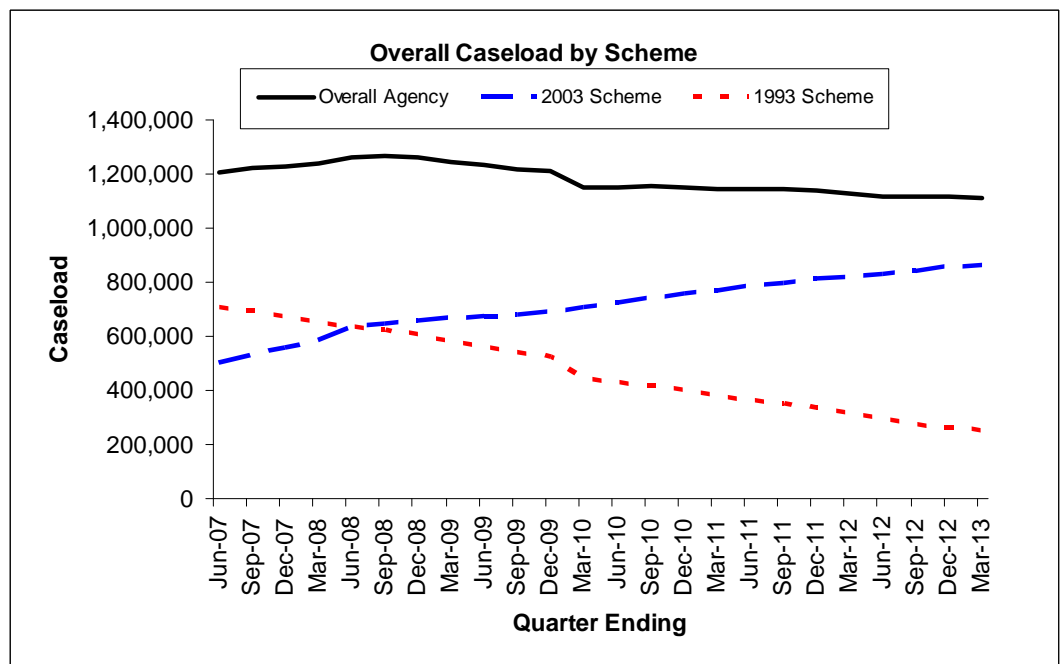
DWP assumed responsibility for the CSA from the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission on the 1 August 2012, following an announcement on 14 October 2010 that the Commission would become an executive agency of DWP as part of the Public Bodies Reform. The Commission had responsibility for the CSA 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 will be released in May 2013.

Main Findings

- At the end of March 2013, the CSA live and assessed caseload stood at 1.11 million.



- In the quarter ending March 2013, 81.0% 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 March 2013, maintenance had been collected or arranged by the CSA via the statutory maintenance service on behalf of 921,000 children.
- In the quarter to March 2013, the CSA collected or arranged £309.1m in child maintenance (regular and arrears), of which £28.3m was arrears.



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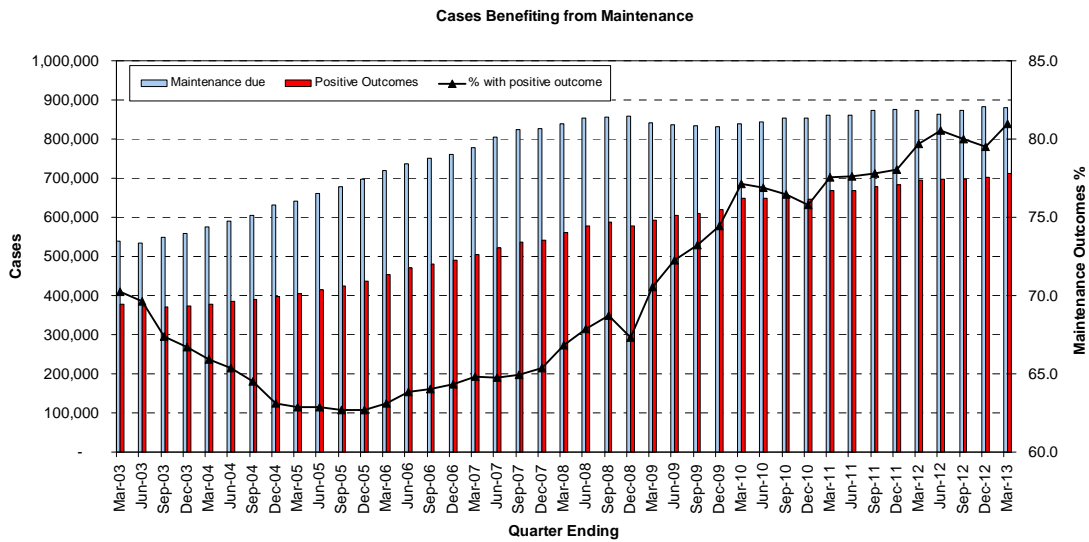
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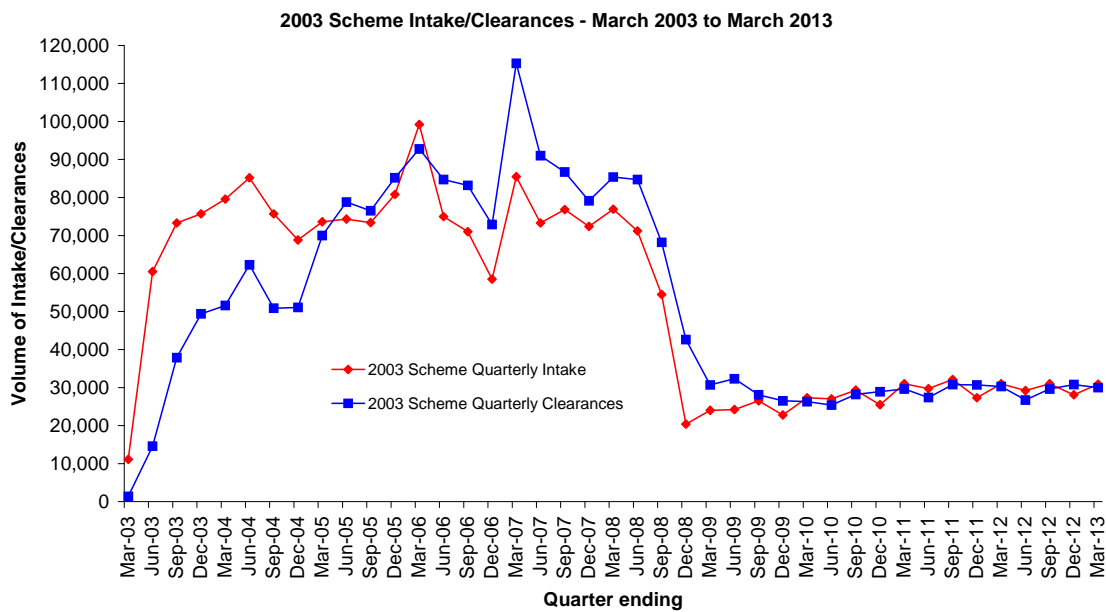
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Next Publication:
July/August 2013

- In the year to March 2013, the CSA collected or arranged £1,223.3m in child maintenance (regular and arrears), of which £112.0m was arrears.



- 88.4% of intake received in December 2012 was cleared within 12 weeks. 94.8% of intake received in October 2012 was cleared within 18 weeks.
- Uncleared work has increased by 600 to 13,700. This represents an increase of 4.6% since December 2012.



- Outstanding child maintenance arrears have increased from £3.837bn in December 2012 to £3.856bn in March 2013¹.
- At the end of March 2013, the average maintenance calculation was £24.00 per week (including zero calculations).
- In March 2013, 87.4% of the telephone calls received were answered within 60 seconds.
- In March 2013, there were 7,400 full time equivalent people working to support the Child Maintenance system.

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

¹Figures for 10/11 onwards 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/20121014120950/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).

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.

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

Removal of cases from uncleared work

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

We also became aware that there were approximately 700 cases which were progressed to clearance on the Clerical Case Database but with a different case number than on CS2. The use of a different case number 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 this publication.

Change in Commitment to Prison process

Following a Court Of Appeal decision in October, we 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 proceedings recommenced in these cases from late March 2013.

There has been no change in the number of cases where commitment to prison has been the outcome for the quarter ending March 2013 but we will monitor for impacts going forward.

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.

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.

Performance relating to the 2012 Scheme is not included in this publication. The publication strategy for cases on the 2012 scheme is planned to be released later in May 2013.

Change in methodology

A [technical paper](#) will be released alongside this publication. The paper will provide detail on the proposed move to a new methodology which will provide more accurate, accounting based information about case compliance, including whether an arrears balance increases or decreases, and reflect more closely the experience of clients.