



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Child maintenance: closing cases in Segments 3 and 4 simultaneously

Consultation Response

December 2014

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Introduction

On 27th October 2014, the Department for Work and Pensions launched an external consultation on our proposal to close cases in Segments 3 and 4 simultaneously; as this required an amendment to the Child Support scheme for the timing and related matters in relation to ending liability in existing cases ('the Ending Liability Scheme').

The consultation document 'Child maintenance: closing cases in Segments 3 and 4 simultaneously' may be viewed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/closing-partially-and-fully-compliant-csa-cases-simultaneously>

The consultation was available to view online from 27th October and was open to everyone. Stakeholders were also notified of the consultation by email and invited to comment.

A list of the stakeholders notified of the consultation by email is at **Annex B**.

The closing date for responses was 27th November 2014. Four responses were received. The Department would like to thank all respondents.

Responses to the Consultation

There were no objections to the proposed change.

A table showing the text of all the contributions and the Department's response is attached at **Annex A**.

Conclusion

Having carefully considered the responses to the consultation, we intend to select cases for closure from Segments 3 and 4 simultaneously. This is to allow for a more effective and efficient deployment of resources.

The Ending Liability scheme has been amended to reflect this change to the order for ending liability and has been published alongside this consultation response.

Annex A Response to Individual Comments

	Comments	Response
1	<p>I would like to know why Segment 3 cases are handled off system. Also any potential risks involved in simultaneous case closure; for example if clients within Segment 3 may be potentially more vulnerable for whatever reason than Segment 4 (for example if a higher ratio of domestic abuse cases) then it may have been good to focus on this particular client group and tailor a service to meet their needs in terms of the types of enquiries/concerns that might emerge.</p>	<p>The cases in Segments 3 and 4 are of the same type - fully or partially compliant. The only difference is Segment 3 cases are administered off system due to IT issues.</p> <p>The IT issues do not affect specific client groups.</p> <p>There will be sensitive cases in all Segments and we have carefully managed and discrete business processes to handle these.</p>
2	<p>In principle, we have no objections to the closure of CSA cases Segments 3 and 4 occurring simultaneously, particularly if it allows for an extended pathfinder approach to iron out potential glitches, for example, a greater than anticipated number of 'case groups' leading to higher volumes than expected of linked cases to be closed down at a particular liability end date.</p> <p>However, in practice, if the separate teams managing Segments 3 and 4 are working simultaneously to close CSA cases, this will mean a larger than anticipated volume of cases being closed at an earlier date. This has a number of implications and it would be helpful to have reassurance on the following.</p> <p>Are the operators of CM Options (G4S) on track to scale up and deliver operations to the new levels required, given the likely increase in the volumes of cases flowing through to them at an earlier date than previously scheduled?</p>	<p>The Ending Liability Scheme provides for the Secretary of State to select a number of cases which meet the criteria for closure.</p> <p>Before we commence a new Segment we undertake a review, which considers the types of case in the Segment and our modelling assumptions. This determines the total number of cases selected each week and ensures we have the resources available (in CM Options, the Child Support Agency and the Child Maintenance Service) to handle these.</p> <p>We are still considering the precise number of cases which will be selected. However, the overall total will include cases from both Segments (3 and 4).</p> <p>We currently do not anticipate a larger volume of cases closing earlier than expected or increased workloads.</p>

	<p>Will there be an accelerated scaling up of the volumes of trained staff employed by the Child Maintenance Service to cope with an earlier influx of new cases, and hence increased workloads?</p> <p>Will the number of staff dealing with CSA arrears validation be scaled up faster than previously anticipated in order to deal with the earlier influx of Segment 4 cases?</p>	<p>The number of cases selected is kept under regular review and can be adjusted as appropriate.</p>
	<p>Will the training of CM Options staff be accelerated so that greater numbers are available who can deliver tailored messages to what will be a new group of callers: those currently relying on the CSA to ensure they get maintenance for their children, and who may therefore be most anxious about the consequences of case closure and their options?</p>	<p>Before we commence a new Segment all colleagues, including CM Options Agents, are made aware of the specific characteristics of each segment. We undertake targeted training to enable client calls to be handled both professionally and with the case characteristics clearly in mind.</p>
	<p>Will the earlier than anticipated start of Segment 4 closure allows greater inclusion of Segment 4 cases in the 12 month evaluation of case closure and charging?</p>	<p>The 30 month review will include evidence based on surveys and Management Information.</p> <p>Based on current assumptions about the timetable, the 30 month review will include evidence from surveys at the 3-month stage for Segments 1-3 and early Segment 4 cases.</p> <p>A 12 month survey limits the Segments and cases which can be included to those which have passed the 12 month stage. Based on current assumptions, the review will include early cases from Segments 1 and 2. We will keep this under review and include as many Segments as possible.</p>
3	<p>No objection to the proposals.</p>	<p>Thank you.</p>
4	<p>No particular views.</p>	<p>Thank you.</p>

Annex B Stakeholders

The following Stakeholders were contacted as part of this consultation.

Great Britain	
4Children	Money Advice Service
Action for Children	MoneySavingExpert.com
AVA	Mumsnet
Barnardo's	NACSA
British Association of Social Workers	National Family Mediation
BTO Solicitors	One Plus One
Buildings Society Association	Policy Exchange
CAADA	Refuge
Care for the Family	Relate
Child Poverty Action Group	Relationships Scotland
Church of England	Resolution
Citizens Advice	Rights of Women
Citizens Advice Scotland	Save the Children
Civitas	Scoop Aid
Dads House	Scottish Child Law Centre
Durham Legal Services Ltd	Scottish Women's Aid
Families Need Fathers	Stowe Family Law LLP
Families Need Fathers Scotland	The Centre for Social Justice
Family and Childcare Trust	The Children's Society
Family Links	The Fatherhood Institute
Family Lives	The Law Society
Family Matters Institute	The Law Society of Scotland
Fife Gingerbread	The Low Income Tax Reform Group
Gingerbread	The Mother's Union
Grandparents Plus	The Tavistock Centre for Couple Relationships
HM Courts Service	Women's Aid
Magistrates Association	Working with Men
ManKind	University of York
Maypole Women	YMCA Derbyshire

Northern Ireland	
Accord NI	Law Society - Law Centre NI
Advice NI	Mediation & Counselling NI
Barnardo's NI	Men's Action Network
Child Contact Centres	Men's Aid (NI)
Children in NI	Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
Citizens Advice Bureau	Opportunity Youth
Colin Neighbourhood Partnership	Parenting NI
Disability Action	Public Health Agency
Early Years (Surestart)	Relate NI
Families Need Fathers NI	Save the Children
Family Mediation NI	Social Development Committee
(Foodbanks across NI)	The Trussell Trust
Gingerbread NI	Women's Aid Federation
Health and Social Care Board	Women's Support Network